

Dove: Communications Audit

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DOVE COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

Background & Purpose:

In this Communications Audit, we will be discussing Dove's target market and assessing five marketing campaigns from the past two years. More specifically, we will be looking at the following criteria for each activity: target audience; messaging; coordination, consistency, and synergy; and IMC analysis.

Dove is a personal care brand owned by Unilever, a British-Dutch conglomerate based in the United Kingdom and first introduced in the U.S. in 1957. The brand was launched as a revolutionary beauty cleansing bar soap, but since then has evolved to a full range of products including; body washes, lotions, facial cleansers, hair products and much more. Dove is a global brand, which sells products in every major grocery store, pharmacy, as well as online.

Target Market:

According to data collected from MRI University Reporter, as well as other statistical resources, a target market profile has been developed for the Dove consumer. The primary Dove consumer is women (59.76%) ages range from 18-65+. Among heavy Dove users the average household income is \$75,000 - \$149,999. However, based on campaign targeting and other resources the age group falls from young girls who are targeted through self-esteem education programs and older women who utilize the pro-age care line.

Beyond basic demographic considerations, the Dove consumer is someone who takes extra care of their body, hair and physical well being. They also want products that have minimal or no chemical effects from using their personal care products. Having moisturized skin, and smelling their best gives the customer the confidence to take on their day. The brand is targeting women that struggle with their self-esteem and want to be more confident. Dove customers

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recognize a positive brand, and it is easily accessible in many drugstores and pharmacies. The consumer is active on social media and utilizes hashtags to connect with others. Dove's products are highly used among the target, and the customers remain loyal to the brand because of their values and products.

Marketing Communication Activities/Analysis:

#ConfidentGirl

<https://www.dove.com/us/en/stories/campaigns/help-a-girl-you-know-be-a-confident-girl.html>

In 2018, the Dove Self-Esteem Project partnered with the Cartoon Network's *Steven Universe*, and created the campaign, #ConfidentGirl. The Self-Esteem Project has been an ongoing campaign that has helped over 35 million young adults improve their self-esteem and confidence in their body (Unilever, n.d.). The campaign #ConfidentGirl consists of the creation of six short films that educate young girls about confidence and self-esteem (Dove, 2018). The short film will consist of the same style of animation used in the hit show *Steven World*. This will help the next generation gain confidence watching their favorite show and characters (Dove, 2018). Dove has had the most success in recent years due to the growth of social media. There was a 12% increase in young adults reached from 2017 to 2018, and this consisted of 6.3 million people (Unilever, n.d.).

Dove states on their website that 80% of young girls hold back from activities because they are concerned about their looks (Dove, n.d.). Having low confidence about your body as a young adult can impact your relationships with people, influence school grades, and health. This project provides resources for parents, teachers, and mentors to educate young people about

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self-esteem (Dove, n.d.). There are different resources and workshops for each of these groups that are involved in young people's lives. These resources also include workshops on body image. This information will help young adults with their self-image, which will benefit them in their everyday life activities (Dove, n.d.). The Self-Esteem Project also consisted of articles directed towards parents that allow them to understand what their child is experiencing. The articles on their website are separated by topic and age group and this makes it easy for parents or young adults to navigate (Dove, n.d.). There's the option for people to sign up for a newsletter to be involved and updated about "building body positivity" (Dove, n.d.).

Dove has an active social media presence and this allows them to connect with their target audience. This campaign showed Dove's audience that they are a brand that cares about their consumers and that they are making a positive change in the world. This positive message results in loyal followers. The resources for this campaign are listed on the Dove website as its own tab and this makes it easy for consumers to find. Dove is constantly adding new information and resources on their website.

The CROWN Coalition

<https://www.dove.com/us/en/stories/campaigns/the-crown-act.html>

The CROWN Coalition stands for *Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair*. It is a partnership between Dove and the National Urban League, Color of Change, and Western Center on Law and Poverty. The goal of the Coalition and Campaign is end hair discrimination for black women and create a more inclusive beauty experience for black women and girls. The coalition is part of a greater push for change in the form of the CROWN Act,

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which makes hair discrimination illegal. The CROWN Act and Coalition are gaining support nationwide with the help of Dove and other organizations to help sponsor a lasting change.

The target audience of the CROWN Coalition campaign is primarily Black women as the campaign seeks to end discrimination against black hair. However, this campaign is important to all women, in the campaign Dove states “Narrow beauty standards make it difficult for women to freely celebrate our own beauty. While all women experience pressure to conform to certain standards of appearance, Black women are unfairly impacted” (Dove, n.d.). While this specific campaign is supporting a cause that primarily affects Black women, the nature of this discrimination based on social bias is something all women can relate to.

The primary messages of this campaign are to stress that no one should be discriminated against based on their hair texture, hairstyle and heritage and urge all people to support this movement by signing the petition. They state that their mission is “to advance efforts to end hair discrimination and to create a more equitable and inclusive beauty experience for black women and girls” (Dove, n.d.). They are utilizing social media, specifically Twitter and the hashtags “#hairdiscrimination and #TheCROWNAct” to garner support on this platform. This has helped reach a younger demographic to support this campaign. They created an animated short film called Hair Love which won the academy award at this year’s Oscars. This campaign has been incredibly successful from winning an Oscar for a short film supporting the cause to getting the law passed in three states as of December 20, 2019. The medium of Twitter has been appropriate as the primary target of this campaign is young girls in school and young women in the workforce, this fits with the demographic of Twitter users. Within the campaign Dove has

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created a consistent message of ending discrimination and empowering these women to take a stand.

“Dear Future Dads” Campaign - Men+Care Line:

This line was started in 2010, and it was Dove’s way of branching out to target males. For Sharon McLeod, Global VP, “honouring and empowering dads was a top priority...She knew that would resonate with the male target on a more emotional level, just as the women’s lines have for years.”(Dunne, 2019)

Around Father’s Day in 2018, the “Dear Future Dads” campaign was launched. Dove worked with Virtue, a Vice Media-owned creative agency, to target millennial men, specifically young fathers. Nick Soukas, VP of Skin Cleansing & Baby Care for Unilever said in a press release, “By supporting this important initiative...<http://ow.ly/p5wD30qlyQJ>” (Albright/Edelman, 2018)

There are multiple facets to the campaign, two of them being the Pledge for Paternity Leave and the Paternity Leave Fund. They ask anyone to take the pledge on their website to support making paternity leave the new standard, and they made a “\$1 million commitment to fund paid paternity leave.” (Dove, 2018)

Dove sponsored *DADS*, a documentary directed by Ron Howard that was released in September 2019 and includes interviews with celebrity dads such as Judd Apatow and Neil Patrick Harris, among others. 100% of the profits went to the Paternity Leave Fund.

Dove’s website has resources for new and expectant dads, including advice from real dads. This extends to their social media, which is an appropriate and effective form of communication since they are targeting millennials. Besides the Facebook page, they created a

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Facebook group nine months ago called Advocates for Paternity Leave with information on how to contact elected officials and have conversations with your employers. Their Twitter feed is packed with news about paternity leave legislation. Their Instagram has more “feel good” posts relatable to dads.

In addition to marketing, they offer promotions to help with the “ratchet effect” (Moran, 1978) with coupons (<http://ow.ly/C1Yt30qlySp>) and contests (<http://ow.ly/qVa330qlyUk>) at the same time of the campaign.

Keeping with the consistency of Dove’s brand and reputation, the Men+Care line cares about their customer. They use differentiated positioning to stand out from their competitors, and their marketing is user-orientated, focusing on the needs of their target audience – millennial dads who are very different than the older generations and are tired of the traditional male negative stereotype. The men’s campaign also adds value to their campaign for women, showing that Dove cares about gender equality.

#GirlCollective Campaign:

<https://www.dove.com/us/en/stories/campaigns/girl-collective.html>

Dove’s #GirlCollective campaign was created to challenge beauty stereotypes for all women and girls. With this campaign and self-esteem workshop, Dove wanted to connect powerful women in the media and young girls (Dove, 2020). Through their line-up of speakers, interactions with the crowd at the event, and use of social media to connect young women from all over, Dove has built a strong campaign through their self-esteem initiative.

At the event, young girls were provided with self-esteem materials, put through confidence workshops, and given the tools they need to create strong confidence within

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themselves. #GirlCollective is a sisterhood made to build confidence and challenge stereotypes through honest and authentic conversations for young school-age women because of the harsh judgement that they face everyday in school (Cotton, 2018).

The active communication Dove promotes through their partnerships with strong individuals and groups shows their commitment to providing effective ways for their messaging to reach their intended audience. Shonda Rhimes, an American television producer, teamed up with Dove to participate in a panel at their Self-Esteem workshop with young women discussing representation in the media, body positivity, and happiness. Rhimes said, “...I was inspired by the power of women and girls connecting to tackle issues that impact so many of us. I'm proud to be a part of this remarkable community which illustrates the magic we can unlock when we work together to inspire change and build confidence.” (Cotton, 2018).

The face-to-face conversations at the event are missing in the lives of today's young women and girls and yet it is so vital. Some of the other panelists spoke about defining beauty identities, challenging the ideas of gender, and coming up with positive ways for girls to be champions in their schools and communities. Dove wanted to extend the conversation through social media, so they created a Facebook group which is dedicated to the sisterhood formed at the event and allows the campaign to reach a larger audience of young women and girls.

#GirlCollective stays synergetic with Dove's brand messaging and promotion. The Director of Marketing at Dove, Amy Stepanian, said, "We launched the Dove Self-Esteem Project in 2004 with the intent of helping the next generation develop a positive relationship with beauty and provide parents and mentors the resources to impact the self-esteem of the girls in their lives.” (Cotton, 2018).

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#ShowUs Campaign:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OufbVVpqV0>

Dove collaborated with Getty Images and Girlgaze over a span of 18 months to release the #ShowUs campaign urging the advertising industry to expand the definition of beauty and to authentically depict women how they are, rather than how they should be. The idea for the campaign was inspired by the statistic that “70 percent of women still don’t feel represented by everyday images in the media, and 90 percent of stock photography is shot by male photographers” (Allen, 2019). This campaign specifically focused on women ages 18-65+ and specifically focused on women who do not feel well-represented in the media. In efforts to reach their audience, they partnered with positivity influencers like Elle Rose and Siphokazi Vetu to help spread their message (Ndelu, 2019). The link below shows real stock footage from the campaign: <https://www.gettyimages.com/showus>.

Dove’s main message is to promote body positivity and create an environment where all women feel represented and equal. The campaign is centered around empowering women to accept their flaws rather than be ashamed of them. The tagline for the campaign is “ShowUs more women who look like me” where Dove directly targets the advertising agency to improve diversity in the media (Dove, 2019). Project #ShowUs further supports Dove’s corporate social responsibility and motivates their audience to choose their products for having well-rounded core values. A combination of billboards, social media, tv commercials, and digital photo galleries were all messaging strategies Dove used for the #ShowUs campaign (Ndelu, 2019). Since the launch of Project #ShowUs on March 27th, 2019, reports garnered 100% positive sentiment. This campaign inspired Getty Images to increase women in their workforce by 35% (Shorty Awards,

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2019). Their campaign was massively successful as 62% of women report that #ShowUs better reflect women how they are (Shorty Awards, 2019).

“Dove has consistently championed body positivity and over the years it has produced campaigns that have encouraged women and girls to view their bodies through a different, more positive lens.” In relation to Dove’s social mission statement, their aim as a powerhouse brand is to help diminish stereotypes and limitations that affect women in their day to day lives.

IMC Analysis:

All of the previously mentioned campaigns - see above - seamlessly connect to their marketing strategies and key message of body positivity. Using real people across all platforms in every advertisement is a strategic IMC tactic to appeal to audiences through emotional vulnerability. Dove’s diverse campaigns tend to rely on consumers consciously processing advertisements which supports top-down processing. Dove’s brand marketing model is to “SAY less, DO more”. Their company outlook is that global change starts at a local level. Dove maintains relevancy by using a combination of print, television, social media advertisements, as well as utilizing promotional coupons and sponsorships to create synergized content. The brand was created to make women feel powerful, find the beauty within themselves, and be confident. Despite past controversies, Dove has been able to maintain their image and reputation as a company that promotes inclusion and advocates for an end to unrealistic beauty standards and to progress towards gender equality in the media.

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