

Joel D. Silverstein

COM 494 COMM Networks and Social Media

Date: Due 11/06/15

Choose Beautiful

In April 2015, Dove skin care launched a derivative advertising campaign called *Choose Beautiful*. The campaign is part of a ten-year concept of “Real Beauty.” Choose Beautiful’s base is a three ¾ min minute video portraying women in five international cities that are given the opportunity to pick one of two doors to enter. One is labeled “beautiful” the other “average.” Predictably most of the women enter the “average” door but soon as the music tempo increases and image of the women change, to include a proud woman walking with her daughter, a young athlete in a wheelchair, and others with different airs about them begin to enter the “beautiful” portal. The voiceover includes statements like, “I felt self-conscious having to choose which door to go though” and “I chose average.” A language change to Chinese and subtitles read “It’s too far out to reach, I chose average” Cutting to two women discussing the inner conflict they experience in the world of having been put into a box of what others perceive them to be by their looks. Then a cut to a woman stepping up and then turning away from both doors in disgust. A shift occurs and now a woman in a wheelchair approaches the average portal and spins and enters the other. A mother beaming with joy walks her awkward teen daughter through the beautiful door. Segue to mini interviews where women express they are not compelled to enter the beautiful door. “Beautiful is a great word, why not see what’s on the other side of that” voices over a girl quickly changing paths cutting to #ChooseBeautiful.

Dove skincare brands is a division of Unilever the world’s third largest consumer goods company. With products in 190 countries, it is the oldest multi-national conglomerate. The

launch of the Real Beauty initiative raised revenues from \$2.4 Billion to over \$4 billion.

Unilever has sufficient capital to invest in advertising and can reach home runs. The Real Beauty campaign was named as the best advertising campaign of the 21st century by Ad Age.

Released April 14, 2015, on YouTube, #ChooseBeautiful went viral quickly garnering over 4 million views. As of this report YouTube boasts just under 7 million views, Twitter and Facebook have hundreds of thousands of comments and discussion. Though not all the discussions are for the ad. Many believe the ad manipulates the insecurities of people and encourages them to believe if they use Dove products they can #ChooseBeautiful. Though Dove products are never shown, the purchase is implied and assumed. The ChooseBeautiful campaign is considered in the category of cause marketing. Here the cause is for women to change how they view themselves. Forbes magazine noted that cause marketing has the traps of peaking interest in a brand, then crashing and then finding its natural market level (Joni, 2011). This is evident by the large spike in YouTube views in April (4 million) and then an ongoing conversation tapering the views to under 600k per month.

However, with the high interest in the beauty of the ad itself it helps solidify the objectification of women in our society and may be the cause of why women and men buy beauty products to begin with. On a comments page on the Adweek Blog Network Longwinter68 writes:

“As a long-term strategy it seems Dove will now for the foreseeable future be associated with the debate about women's self-esteem and concepts for beauty... so that's a win for Dove. But... for cynics like me because Dove is part of an industry in general that has been vilified for so long about being a big cause of why women have beauty issues in the first place... the campaigns still always come off a bit disingenuous.”

The campaign has been effective. It went viral. It meets the five criteria necessary for spreading a virus. It started with a good product brand, backed by traditional communication methods of print, television, and radio advertising. There was excessive planning. This campaign is a derivative of an already successful program. Having a woman choose whether she is beautiful or average is provocative and a little tricky. To say this campaign had luck might be stretching it (Kaplan & Haenlein 2011). The campaign comes out of the award winning agency Ogilvy & Mather, known for highly monetized advertising, their track record indicates they have better luck than most. #ChooseBeautiful <https://youtu.be/7DdM-4siaQw>

References

- Ogilvy & Mather (Ad Agency). (2015). *Choose Beautiful - Dove* [Advertising Campaign]. USA, YouTube, . <https://youtu.be/7DdM-4siaQw>
- Joni, S. (2011, October 20). Beware the Hidden Traps in Cause Marketing. Retrieved November 5, 2015, from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesleadershipforum/2011/10/20/beware-the-hidden-traps-in-cause-marketing/>
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2011). Two hearts in three-quarter time: How to waltz the social media/viral marketing dance. *Business Horizons*, 54(3), 253-263.