

ABSTRACT

Purpose Marketing: A Genuine Way for Companies to Advocate for Change or a Deceitful Sales Tactic?

Emily Flinchpaugh

Director: Randy Hacker, MBA

This thesis explores the implementation of purpose marketing in modern day advertising. Studies have shown that consumers are willing to switch to brands that support causes they believe in, and brands have started to capitalize on this trend. In particular, I will analyze brands that have released controversial ad campaigns and attempt to uncover the motives behind their seemingly philanthropic efforts. Advertising today is under high levels of scrutiny due to the internet and the prevalence of social media, so if a campaign comes across as inauthentic or inconsistent with a brand's identity, customers can lose trust in the brand. I will then examine brands that are commended for their purpose marketing, evaluate why their campaigns are received well, and point out how other brands can learn from them.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS:

Mr. Randy Hacker, Department of Marketing

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM:

Dr. Elizabeth Corey, Director

DATE: _____

PURPOSE MARKETING : A GENUINE WAY FOR COMPANIES TO ADVOCATE
FOR CHANGE OR A DECEITFUL SALES TACTIC?

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
Baylor University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Honors Program

By
Emily Flinchpaugh

Waco, Texas

May 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: Introduction.....	1
What Is Cause Marketing?.....	3
What Is Purpose Marketing?.....	4
Why is Corporate Social Responsibility Important?.....	5
How Are Brands Getting It Right (and Wrong)?.....	6
Why Has Purpose Marketing Failed in the Past?	7
How Can Brands Convey Their Support for Social Causes Authentically?.....	10
Chapter Two: Successful Purpose Marketing.....	13
TOMS.....	13
Aerie.....	17
Fenty Beauty.....	20
What Brands Can Learn From Successful Purpose Marketing Tactics.....	24
Chapter Three: Controversial Purpose Marketing Campaigns.....	25
Gillette.....	25
Nike.....	29
Burger King.....	32
What Can Brands Learn from Controversial Campaigns.....	34
Chapter Four: Suggested Changes for Controversial Campaigns.....	35
Gillette and The Best a Man Can Be.....	35
Nike and Colin Kaepernick.....	37
Burger King and the Unhappy Meals.....	39
Purpose Marketing's Place in Today's Advertising Space.....	40
Works Cited.....	42

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Advertising is a cornerstone of our society and economy today. It has evolved over time to match trends within our culture and adapted to technological advances. Although there is an unclear definitive starting point, some historians hypothesize that it began with the early Mesopotamians, Chinese, Greeks and Romans (Beard). Of course, it has since then become more sophisticated. In Frank Beard's "The Ancient History of Advertising," he proposes that print advertising started in 1692 with John Houghton promoting his goods in his own newspaper. In the 1900s, pioneers such as James L. Kraft and Albert Lasker are believed to have shaped modern advertising in America (Beard).

The general purposes of brands and advertising have remained constant over time. Brands are meant to demonstrate status, power, and personality, and different methods of advertising are used to accomplish these objectives (Beard). According to Richard Pollay's study of 2,000 print advertisements from 1900-1980, advertisements from the 1900s primarily relayed information regarding product features rather than potential benefits a consumer could experience by using the product. Along with promoting product features, advertisements also mirrored current cultural trends ("Wanted"). Pollay found that in the 1920s, advertisers appealed to ideals of youth and vanity with their promotions ("The Subsidizing Sizzle"). He noted that starting in the 1950s, there was a greater focus on the benefits a product could provide to a consumer, as well as the comparative advantages between products of different brands ("The Subsidizing Sizzle"). Throughout the years, the focus of advertising has shifted back and forth between

highlighting product attributes and benefits. Currently, advertisers focus on demonstrating benefits for users, and images within advertisements are expected to increasingly portray people using their products in order for potential customers to see themselves in their shoes and identify with the advertisement (“The Subsiding Sizzle”).

Advertising has shifted over the years to match buying habits among consumers, so it is no surprise that brands are now shifting their focus to purpose marketing, as there is a rise in conscious consumers. The purpose of this report is to evaluate the effectiveness of this growing trend and the motives behind these campaigns. I begin by assessing the reasoning behind the benefits and potential pitfalls of brands engaging in purpose marketing. Next, I will compare advertising campaigns of different brands and evaluate consumers’ responses. I will set out to discern whether brands truly believe in and stand behind the causes they appear to be advocating for, or if they are simply capitalizing on the growing segment of people more willing to support socially-conscious brands, and whether their motives should matter to consumers. To do this, I will first highlight the brands that have been successful in their attempts at purpose marketing. I will then evaluate brands that have released controversial advertising campaigns in regards to purpose marketing by assessing the brand’s mission statement and beliefs, past campaigns it has released, individual components of the current campaign in question, and the consumer response. I will then offer possible solutions to the brands that have fallen short. From the perspective of a smart and conscious consumer, I believe that while it is important for companies to support worthy social causes because they have power in our society, it is equally important for them to be authentic and genuine in their support.

What Is Cause Marketing?

According to analyst Mike Gallinari, brands currently have an opportunity to engage in cause marketing by executing charitable initiatives to build a following among consumers with charitable predispositions. Gallinari observes a rise in cause marketing, which is when a company partners with a charity or nonprofit organization to build awareness for both the company and philanthropy. However, cause marketing is consistent with other types of marketing, in that brands need to be conscious of their target market segments because consumers will have differing needs and opinions regarding causes they wish to support. Shifting consumer expectations of companies are responsible for these cause-based marketing efforts. In a survey conducted by Mintel, 64% of 2,000 internet users aged 18 expect companies to have a moral/ethical viewpoint, 59% expect companies to be environmentally friendly, 50% expect companies to prioritize people over profits and do good for the world, and 27% expect companies to support causes they care about (Gallinari). Furthermore, Mintel data reveals that in the last twelve months, 74% of consumers had donated to a charity they believed in, showing that they are willing to financially support worthy causes (Gallinari).

Companies are aware that consumers today are concerned with their stance on social issues and their charitable efforts, so consumers must decide if these companies are acting selflessly. Although 79% of consumers respect companies that support charitable causes, 43% are distrusting and believe companies are supporting charitable causes to make themselves look compassionate (Gallinari). Gallinari defines this dissent between companies being respected or distrusted for their philanthropic efforts as an authenticity gap. The gap is the widest among younger generations, with over half of iGeneration

consumers holding the belief that companies are acting charitably for the sake of their own image (Gallinari). Although supporting charitable efforts is important for companies in the eyes of most consumers, brands must take caution in how they represent themselves to be authentic and genuine in their support.

Not only do the majority of consumers believe that it is a company's responsibility to give back, but 61% of the iGeneration and Millennials would be willing to switch to a company that supports a cause they believe in (Gallinari). However, a study conducted by Shelton Communications Group reveals that 64% of consumers believe that the causes a company supports should align with the products they are providing (Gallinari). For example, TOMS, the shoe company, is known for its "One for One" campaign in which it donates one pair of shoes for every pair purchased. Unlike TOMS, companies with marketing efforts that are inconsistent with their product offering or mission statement can be seen as inauthentic. This is a problem that purpose marketers currently face (Vredenburg et al.).

What Is Purpose Marketing?

Similar to cause marketing, "woke" or purpose marketing involves campaigns centered around social and political issues. Some have also coined this technique "activism marketing." Many of these issues are polarizing and spark debate between opposing parties, but brands still see the value in engaging in this tactic. Younger consumers show aversions to traditional forms of marketing, so advertisers are forced to get creative, resulting in more emotional appeals and controversial elements ("The Year of 'Woke-Washing'"). According to a study performed by consulting firm DoSomething Strategic, 58% of Gen Z consumers could be influenced to make a purchase based on a

brand's association with a social issue, and 66% said that this association would positively influence their impression of the brand (Levine).

According to The Conversation, the current social climate is behind the increase in corporate activism. A lack of sufficient public venues to protest due to increased monitoring and privatization lead those socially active to seek out other spaces in the corporate realm to speak their voice (Böhm et al.). The advent and growing presence of new technology and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat that allow for mass communication have also led to an increase in activism in the corporate world (Böhm et al.). Furthermore, business leaders and CEOs experiencing dissatisfaction with political leaders feel a responsibility to speak out against controversial issues (Böhm et al.). Distrust in the ability of the government to advocate for social change, as well as changing norms in society, lead to a rise in corporate activism, as well as the support and promotion of brands that use their power to take a stand.

Why Is Corporate Social Responsibility Important?

Consumers today wish to support companies strong in their corporate social responsibility, as some have lost hope in the government to be an instrument for positive social change. Mintel defines corporate social responsibility as “operating a business in a manner that accounts for the social and environmental impact created by the business” (Macke). CSR can be in the form of adjusting business operations or labor practices, or supporting charities and social issues. Consumers have turned to the private sector and ways of personal activism to support their ideals and beliefs.

Now more than ever, companies are using social media to reach their target customers, and sometimes even employ them as influencers for their products through affiliate marketing. Because of this rise in social media usage, it is difficult for companies to hide their actions, whether they are positive or negative, which results in increased accountability. In a 2018 study conducted by Mintel of 2,000 internet users, 97% believe that it is somewhat important that companies act ethically (Macke). This is a significant increase from 2012, when only 76% of those surveyed believed companies should act ethically. Furthermore, 54% expect brands to be a positive avenue of change, and 57% avoid unethical brands (Macke). If the majority consumers are not willing to support brands that have values that do not align with their own, brands could potentially isolate half of their target market if they behave unethically. According to a study conducted by SAP News of 1,000 consumers in the United States, brand values are the second-most important consideration when making purchase decisions, with price being the largest contributing factor (SAP News). It is evident that ethical behavior is an important component in profitability and success among those concerned with corporate social responsibility.

How Are Brands Getting It Right (and Wrong)?

Advertising campaigns and brand missions will be evaluated further in this report, but a brand exceling with regards to its corporate social responsibility is Fenty Beauty, a cosmetics company spearheaded by entertainer and entrepreneur Rihanna. Upon its initial launch in September of 2017, it catered to people of all skin tones by offering an inclusive shade range of foundation. With a brand slogan of “Beauty for All,” it is evident that Rihanna set out to create a brand “so that women everywhere would be

included,” making her brand appealing to a wide demographic (“Fenty Beauty: Targeting Women”). Since the debut of Fenty Beauty, many other brands, such as L’Oréal and Kylie Cosmetics have become more shade range-conscious, mirroring Fenty’s efforts.

On the other hand, L’Oréal failed at its attempt to be inclusive by falling victim to tokenism, or appearing to demonstrate equality by one perfunctory act. In January of 2018, the company featured a model wearing a hijab to promote its line of haircare products (“Avoiding Tokenism”). Many were suspicious of this move because it was seen as a capitalistic attempt to exploit the lack of diversity in the beauty industry. The advertisement did not address real problems that Muslim women face, nor did the new line of haircare products better cater to this new group of users L’Oréal was trying to reach (Malik). Consumers respect and appreciate when brands are socially aware, but it can be difficult to discern if a brand truly stands behind what it is promoting. In this instance, columnist Nesrine Malik worries that L’Oréal’s campaign is “where Muslimness becomes collapsed into an image of an over-filtered, hot, bourgeois, fair-skinned hijabi woman, whose highlighter is “on fleek,”” demonstrating her distrust of L’Oreal’s thoughtless campaign and the exploitive nature of “woke” advertising (Malik).

Why Has Purpose Marketing Failed in the Past?

If marketers are not cautious in their approach to purpose marketing, campaigns can easily be seen as appropriation and a deceptive marketing tool (Vredenburg et al.). Brands must take care to ensure the causes they are supporting align with the company’s mission statement or product offering, and demonstrate a commitment over time to the cause, or else its attempt at purpose marketing will likely not yield desired results.

Nike is known for its advertisement featuring Colin Kaepernick in which he advocates for civil rights and equality for those who are oppressed. Although the campaign itself was profitable and successful for Nike, it was not without controversy. In a study conducted regarding this campaign, 73% of respondents said that this was a relevant topic for Nike to associate itself with, but only 45% of respondents believed that Nike had a genuine commitment to these values (Vredenburg et al.). Consumers still harbored doubt regarding the authenticity of Nike's stance on these issues, which could be attributed to its history of disregarding basic human rights, evidenced by less than ideal working conditions for its employees in other countries such as Cambodia and Indonesia. Nike is loud in presenting itself as an advocate for civil rights by showing support for female athletes and people of different races, but remains silent when it comes to supporting the rights of its own employees. These workers endure abhorrent working conditions and long hours for incredibly low wages, and receive an even smaller share of Nike's profits than they did in the 1990s (Lemon). It is difficult to believe brands when their current business operations contradict the causes they supposedly support.

Socially and politically aware advertising can also cultivate an overall distrust in brands. When brands support causes that are disparate of their brand image with poor execution, it can leave consumers feeling confused and used. For example, Burger King's partnership with a mental health nonprofit seemed inconsistent with its past marketing efforts and was too heavy of a topic for a fast food restaurant to address for it to be successful ("The Year of 'Woke-Washing'"). Mary Noel, director of DoSomething Strategic, said that "if it is not done with the intention that the weight of the issue merits, the authenticity will be called into question," meaning that the severity of the cause at

hand must be matched by the tone of the campaign and company (“The Year of ‘Woke-Washing’”). Gillette, a razor company, was also criticized for supporting the #MeToo movement because it was out of character and inconsistent for the brand. With a history of advertisements contrary to this cause, and an unclear target segment for the commercial, skepticism surrounding the company is not surprising.

In a study published in the Journal of Advertising Research titled “How Intensity of Cause-Related Marketing Guild Appeals Influences Customers,” it was found that intense levels of emotion and guilt do not connect consumers to a cause, but actually create distrust of the brand because it appears it is trying too hard to deceive and manipulate consumers (“Surprising Don’ts”). Consumers are wary of brands that are too strong or intense in their emotional appeals, and are more receptive to campaigns that are more mild in their approach. Intense tactics, such as extremely emotional commercials, can engender feelings of skepticism from consumers. Therefore, consistency in a brand’s social activism is more effective than its intensity, which can scare consumers away.

John Matejczyk, co-founder and chief creative officer at M/H VCCP, a well-established advertising firm, warns that “when a very specific social cause is used by a marketer to make headlines, it can seem quite desperate,” and that a grab at elevated press coverage is not worth engaging in purpose marketing if it is inauthentic (“The Year of ‘Woke-Washing’”). Consumers value companies that support worthy social and political causes, but not at the cost of a brand’s integrity or identity. If purpose marketing lacks a clear direction or origin within a company’s positioning, the campaign is likely not going to be well-received. A lack of built up brand equity to properly position a brand for a dramatic social campaign is also large factor contributing to the failure of “woke”

marketing (“The Year of ‘Woke-Washing’”). Additionally, Adams claims that many brands do not continue their efforts past their initial launches, so the efforts fail because it is apparent to consumers that the brand is not dedicated and committed to backing the cause it is supposedly supporting. Perceived inauthenticity can lead to a catastrophic advertising campaign failures, so brands must avoid appearing deceptive and manipulative.

How Can Brands Convey Their Support for Social Causes Authentically?

Although it can be difficult to accomplish, marketers should not abandon purpose marketing tactics, as they can still be valuable differentiating factors for brands.

Remaining neutral on important topics and appearing ambivalent are not answers to remaining in the good graces of consumers (Vredenburg et al.). Experts urge consumers to engage in brand activism typology to evaluate the alignment of the degree of activism marketing with the degree of authenticity to formulate a personal opinion regarding a campaign’s integrity (Vredenburg et al.). Ultimately, each individual consumer has the freedom to determine their trust in a brand and whether or not they wish to support them.

Other factors that contribute to the success of activism marketing include appearing credible and transparent because it can build consumers’ trust in a brand. According to a study conducted by SAP News of 1,000 shoppers in the United States, 67% believe that transparency is essential in business practices to convey authenticity (SAP News). If companies are open to the public about their business practices and operations, and address negative comments and concerns, they demonstrate to consumers that their opinions are a priority of the company. This begins to build positive brand equity, which a brand also needs to maintain credibility to speak out on social topics.

Consumers want to support brands that advocate for relevant and worthy causes, but it is up to them to decide whether authenticity and honesty of the company will play a role in their perception of the brand.

Contrary to suggestions of other marketers in the field, Meredith Ferguson, managing director of DoSomething Strategic, believes that a brand should not be concerned with matching a cause to its offerings, as long as it remains strong and consistent in its advocacy (Levine). Dove Beauty is well-known for its advocacy for body positivity and self-love, and the main reason for this top-of-mind recall among consumers is the company's continued dedication to the cause since 2004 (Levine). The cause it supports aligns with the products Dove offers since it manufactures beauty products for women, but the strength over time is what solidifies it as an authentic and socially-aware company.

Other successful brands engaging in purpose marketing are Savage x Fenty and Patagonia. Leslie Pascaud, Senior Partner and Head of Brand Practice at Kantar, a research and data company, maintains that activism marketing must mirror who a brand is historically, what it stands for, and what it does rather than just what it says ("The Year of 'Woke-Washing'"). Therefore, if a brand is perceived as having socially-aware practices or viewpoints, purpose marketing could be a successful tactic when compared to companies that do not have a history of being socially conscious (Vredenburg et al.). Patagonia has seen success by embracing controversial topics that match its brand image. By championing environmentally-conscious causes, it exhibits consistency since it is an outdoor brand. Similarly, Savage x Fenty not only claims to promote diversity and inclusion, but truly lives it by using diverse models and providing a wide product offering

(Levine). The brand takes a unique stance within the industry and truly personifies the social issues it supports.

When a company supports a cause that is inconsistent with its business operations or mission statement, it can come across as inauthentic. Returning to Nike's campaign with Colin Kaepernick, it was highly criticized because it championed for civil rights, yet it is a well-known fact that Nike utilizes sweatshop labor and does not afford basic human rights to its employees. This disparity leads to distrust and even negative brand perceptions among consumers. In order for purpose marketing to achieve its goal and be successful, "brands should be genuine, relevant to their core purpose or brand promise, and ensure their practices support their communications," (Vredenburg et al.). Brands also need to understand their target markets in order to fully understand their needs to tailor advertising to them. Executed correctly, purpose marketing can benefit the consumer, the company, and the cause they are championing.

CHAPTER TWO

Successful Purpose Marketing

Brands have an opportunity to engage in effective cause marketing efforts, as long as they are truthful and authentic in their approaches. Successful campaigns often align with a company's mission statement or brand image, relate to a brand's product offering, or are backed by an evident commitment to the cause over time. However, campaigns that revolve around a specific cause can be perceived as insincere and a desperate attempt to increase sales if done incorrectly, so brands must take caution and follow the examples set by industry leaders in purpose marketing, such as TOMS and Aerie. In this chapter, I will evaluate brands that have launched successful purpose driven advertising and marketing campaigns. First, I will look at the brand's history and mission statement, consider its current marketing tactics, and discuss consumer response and reception.

TOMS

Background

Blake Mycoskie was inspired by a trip to Argentina to create a business to help children in need, thus sparking the launch of TOMS Shoes in 2006 ("The TOMS Story"). He also dreamt up the "One for One" program, which started by donating one pair of shoes to a child in need for every pair the brand sold ("Your Impact"). Although the company sells shoes, its slogan is "We're in the Business to Improve Lives," which connects its entire purpose of being in business to serving others ("Your Impact"). This establishes it as a socially responsible corporation, since its foundation is rooted in

improving communities around the world. Specifically, TOMS focuses on supporting physical safety, mental health, and equality of opportunity for all (“Your Impact”). For every \$3 TOMS earns, it allocates \$1 towards its philanthropic efforts, such as donations and grants (“Your Impact”). Although TOMS is a for-profit business, serving those in need is clearly a priority in its business operations and a driving force for the company.

For over 13 years, the program has impacted 96.5 million lives in over 70 countries through donations and grants (“Your Impact”). In 2011, TOMS saw another need arise, so it began selling eyewear and extended the “One for One” program to this new product line (“The TOMS Story”). The company provides not only prescription glasses, but also eye exams, medical treatments, and ophthalmologic surgeries (“The TOMS Story”). Then in 2014, TOMS Roasting Co. was born, introducing the brand into the coffee roasting industry (“The TOMS Story”). Of course, the “One for One” program applied to this new product offering as well, so TOMS has been able to use proceeds from coffee beans to establish sustainable water systems to provide communities with reliable access to safe water, which has far reaching impacts on overall economic health and improves access to other resources (“The TOMS Story”). Expanding further, TOMS released a bag collection as a means to give back with birthing kits and training for birth attendants to safely deliver babies (“The TOMS Story”). Every pair of shoes, bag of coffee beans, pair of eye glasses, and purse purchased helps someone in need and serves the global community.

TOMS’ initial efforts to give back to the community by donating shoes to children in need match its business operations and product offerings. It was an introductory and genuine step that greatly impacted the communities it served. This

focused and specific donation has withstood the test of time, which demonstrates the company's commitment to its cause. Starting with shoes enabled TOMS to earn brand equity in the purpose marketing space, which laid the foundation for other philanthropic efforts. Its dedication to serve those in need has evolved and gotten stronger over time to encompass many other impactful causes. Because this growth aligns with TOMS' mission statement and occurred over many years, it comes across as authentic and believable.

Current Efforts

TOMS' advertising and marketing efforts marries its products and brand identity with the causes it supports. The shoe company started the annual "One Day Without Shoes" campaign in May 2015, which encouraged social media users to take to Instagram to show their support (Hoffman). A pair of shoes were to be donated to a child in need for each photo tagged "#WithoutShoes" displaying bare feet (Hoffman). This allowed people to participate in the "One for One" program that TOMS is known for without even having to make a purchase. The campaign has evolved over the years and now allows consumers to choose a cause to support that resonates the most with them, whether it is safe water, ending gun violence, homelessness, mental health, or women's rights (Peters). By supporting nonprofits and donating shoes without requiring a monetary contribution from consumers, TOMS continues to be a strong example of a brand that truly cares about the causes for which it advocates.

The incorporation and consistency of the "One for One" model in all of the company's marketing materials is an effective method to establish credibility and garner

support for the brand and its giving programs. TOMS is able to be an advocate for the various causes it supports, while staying true to the brand image and product offering.

Consumer Reception

In general, customers are pleased with and applaud TOMS' charitable efforts (Peters). Other companies have even taken a page from TOMS and incorporated the "One for One" models in their businesses, like Warby Parker, which gives a pair of eyeglasses for each pair purchased, and State Bags, which donates a packed backpack to children in need for each of its bags purchased (Peters). However, critics have argued that based on recent findings, donating shoes can disrupt local economies since many times, the shoes enable people to not have to repurchase shoes, which hurts local shoe manufacturers (Peters). TOMS looked further into the matter and did not see negative impacts on the communities receiving aid, but still took other efforts to bolster local economies by moving some of its own manufacturing into these areas (Peters).

Staying true to its original purpose of going into business, TOMS has adapted to changing times and consumer preferences to encompass a more diverse portfolio of causes ("Your Impact"). The company expanded its product offering to include bags, eyeglasses, and coffee beans, and incorporated a way to give with each new line that is related to the product, which is preferred by consumers. According to the study conducted by the Shelton Communications Group, the majority of consumers think that the causes a company supports should be related to the products it sells (Gallinari). Although the company's philanthropic efforts have faced criticism in the past, its steps to remedy the issues continue to exemplify its mission and purpose for being in business. It

is a testament to its authenticity and commitment, and a reason that it is able to maintain a genuine brand image.

Aerie

Background

Aerie was created under parent company, American Eagle Outfitters, in 2006, expanding on its parent brand's staple offering of denim and casual clothing ("Women's Sleepwear"). The sister brand focuses on lingerie and loungewear, and has established itself in the market by expanding into more lifestyle clothing for another stream of revenue. This gives Aerie an advantage over its competitors, like Victoria's Secret, because its diverse brand identity allows it to easily sell casual and comfortable clothing, swimwear, and active wear in addition to intimates.

In 2014, Aerie started its campaign, "#AerieReal," in which it stopped airbrushing and manipulating photos of its models ("Women's Clothing"). Mantras like "Power. Positivity. No retouching." and "Let the Real You Shine" can be found throughout the brand's website and shape the way it markets to consumers ("Aerie Introduces Eight New #AerieREAL Role Models"). This kickstarted a movement of representation and authenticity that the brand has continued to this day. It was important for the brand to showcase a realistic and identifiable image to its customers, while engendering self-confidence. According to a study conducted by Mintel, the majority of women would support a brand with models that are average sized and not airbrushed since they are more relatable and believable ("Women's Clothing"). Furthermore, Mintel reported that 56% of women agreed that they would buy more clothes from a company with "real"

models, with a large amount of support coming from mothers and women ages 18-44 (“Women’s Clothing”). The brand’s new campaign would meet these needs and hopefully pave the way for other retailers to do the same. A year following the launch of the campaign, Aerie saw a 20% YOY increase in sales, proving that customers will support companies they agree with using their wallets (“Women’s Clothing”).

Current Efforts

Aerie has stayed faithful to its #AerieREAL campaign. The brand started small by not airbrushing or doctoring images, thus depicting a realistic representation of what consumers could expect to look like in Aerie’s clothing. Over time, the models have evolved to include women of different races and body types. The brand has even featured women with different disabilities and skin conditions, being one of the first brands to do so. Aerie has demonstrated a clear commitment to representation in its ads and models on the website. This makes it a relatable brand that consumers can identify with since the models represent a diverse population. Furthermore, Aerie promotes its actual customers by featuring their pictures on the website, social media, and product pages if they use the hashtag #AerieREAL. Engagement and awareness for the brand is increased and it is able to build its brand identity of standing for realness and coming as you are.

The brand also partners with well-known figures and calls them Aerie Role Models to inspire customers. The chosen Role Models are women that are activists or leaders in their fields and include athletes, scientists, and actresses (Hanbury and Tyler). They are strong female figures that customers can look up to and emulate. Notable 2020 Role Models include Manuela Barón, a sustainability activist, and Dre Thomas, the founder of Smile On Me, an organization designed to support girls by providing hygiene

products (“Aerie Introduces Eight New #AerieREAL Role Models”; “Wake Up”). Aerie promotes women that are doing good for the community and achieving their goals in hopes of setting a positive example for its customers.

To further support its customers, Aerie is awarding 20 grants totaling \$400,000 at the end of 2020 (“Aerie Introduces Eight New #AerieREAL Role Models”). The brand is hoping to “hear stories of triumph, hope, and resilience” from the Aerie community (“Aerie Introduces Eight New #AerieREAL Role Models”). The winners’ stories will be shared to showcase their efforts to improve their communities and create change in hopes of inspiring others to do the same. By hosting contests that are rooted in admirable accomplishments, Aerie increases brand awareness while staying true to its mission of instilling positive values and empowering women.

Consumer Reception

Since launching the #AerieREAL campaign, the company has seen massive success and has its sights set on more growth and expansion. The campaign and movement towards wider representation in the apparel industry clearly resonates with customers, since at the end of 2018, Aerie had celebrated double-digit growth in sales for the 16th consecutive quarter (Hanbury and Tyler). On the other hand, the market share leader of the intimates industry, Victoria’s Secret, has seen a decrease in market share and overall sales (Ell; Hanbury). Customers are abandoning well-known Victoria’s Secret (VS) in favor of Aerie in part for the stark differences in their advertising focuses. VS and Aerie’s advertisements are polar opposites, with Victoria’s Secret’s being racy and seemingly targeted towards men, and Aerie’s body positive and empowering messages

(Hanbury). Aerie's brightly lit, uplifting, and organized stores are also appreciated, compared to Victoria's Secret's dark and provocative stores (Hanbury).

Customers also support Aerie and its values because it appeals to a wide demographic and accepts women that are different from the status quo. The campaign was not a one-time inclusion of a unique model, but rather an overall shift in the marketing plan and goal of the brand. Aerie has shown a true dedication over time to promoting realness in its models and customers. Furthermore, the brand was one of the leaders in promoting body positivity and highlighting diversity and inclusion in its marketing. This allows it to prove itself as more authentic since it was a first mover and appear less like it is capitalizing on a trend (Ell). Customers are willing to support Aerie and purchase its products since they support what the brand stands for and perceive it to be genuine and authentic.

Fenty Beauty

Background

The beauty industry has seen an increase in celebrities getting involved in the cosmetics industry, like Jessica Alba's Honest Beauty and Drew Barrymore's Flower Beauty ("Fenty Beauty: Targeting Women"). Entertainer Rihanna continued the trend by partnering with luxury brand LVMH to launch Fenty Beauty in 2017 ("Fenty Beauty Is One of TIME's 50 Genius Companies"). Unlike many traditional makeup brands in western countries, Rihanna was dedicated to cultivating a brand defined by inclusivity by designing products that people of all skin tones could use and enjoy ("Fenty Beauty: Targeting Women"). The brand's tagline is "Beauty for All," exemplifying Rihanna's

mission of building a brand that caters to everyone (“Fenty Beauty: Targeting Women”). Fenty Beauty continues to stand out in the market with its unique advertising techniques. Rihanna is not the face of the brand or advertisements, and rarely appears on social media posts (“Fenty Beauty: Targeting Women”). Instead, the brand highlights other men and women of all skin tones to showcase its commitment to inclusivity.

The brand’s first launch was a foundation offering 40 shades and multiple skin undertones to appeal to all users (“Fenty Beauty Is One of TIME’s 50 Genius Companies”). A study conducted by Mintel revealed that about a third of Black and Hispanic women were frustrated with finding cosmetics that matched their skin tones (Gaither). Having also experienced these frustrations herself, Rihanna wanted her first product to enable everyone to find their proper shade of foundation (“Rihanna Talks Breaking Boundaries”). The brand performed extremely well with its launch and earned \$100 million in the first 40 days on the market (“Fenty Beauty Is One of TIME’s 50 Genius Companies”). Furthermore, experts are seeing the “Fenty Effect,” which is causing other brands to expand their shade ranges to stay relevant and meet the needs of consumers (“Fenty Beauty Is One of TIME’s 50 Genius Companies”). Inspired by Fenty, Kylie Cosmetics launched a concealer in 30 shades at the end of 2017, which was more shades than typically seen with concealers (Gaither). Other cosmetic brands like Estee Lauder and CoverFX also placed more emphasis on their existing shade ranges by shifting their advertising efforts (Gaither). The brand set a new standard for acceptable shade ranges, leading makeup wearers to demand more from cosmetic brands. The success the company has seen, as well as the effect that it has had on the entire beauty

industry earned it a spot on TIME Magazine's list of genius companies in 2018 ("Fenty Beauty Is One of TIME's 50 Genius Companies").

Current Efforts

Fenty's most recent marketing effort has been the creation of a beauty space in the form of a TikTok house, undoubtedly inspired by the Hype House ("Rihanna Opens Fenty Beauty House"). TikTok is a rapidly growing platform that allows users to create and post short and entertaining videos. The Hype House is a mansion in Los Angeles that was established to house 20 of the most popular young TikTok stars (Ward). Founders Chase Hudson and Thomas Petrou saw the benefits that one space for content creators to gather created for popular YouTube collectives, so they expanded the idea to TikTokers (Ward). Videos filmed at the Hype House or with members of the house experience astounding engagement, and creators amass millions of followers in a short amount of time (Ward). Since houses meant specifically for content creators have been incredible tools of growth, a space dedicated for makeup and beauty influencers could prove to be successful. Rihanna wanted to provide a space for what she calls the most creative generation by partnering with those that are inspiring others in the community ("Rihanna Opens Fenty Beauty House"). Among the first five creators to live at the Fenty Beauty Space are make-up artist Emmy Combs and influencer Savannah Palacio, who will have access to a fully stocked makeup pantry and studio lighting to assist in delivering makeup-centered TikToks ("Rihanna Opens Fenty Beauty House"). Although it is not the first house to come out of TikTok, the Fenty Beauty Space is the first of its kind in the beauty industry and will reach more makeup users on an untapped platform.

Posts on Fenty's social media accounts are also different than other cosmetic brands, and have even inspired other brands to shift their content. Posts include makeup looks done by customers, product features, and memes to stay up to date with current trends. The main difference is that Fenty's Instagram features not only women, but also men of all colors wearing its products. Fenty establishes itself as a brand that is truly dedicated to creating beauty products for every makeup wearer, regardless of race or gender. It follows the growing trend of diversity in advertising in cosmetics industry but is also innovative in regards to product offering, since they are formulated with a diverse customer base in mind ("Fenty Beauty: Targeting Women").

Consumer Reception

In today's beauty space, underserved and underrepresented customers are not staying quiet and are demanding products that they can use too ("Fenty Beauty: Targeting Women"). Rihanna also struggled when she would get her makeup done for events out of a lack of confidence in products that would suit her skin tone, so her first-hand experience means that customers can trust in her abilities to create a great product ("Rihanna Talks Breaking Boundaries"). Customers believe in and stand behind the brand's mission and products, and like to support brands with wide shade ranges ("Color Cosmetics"). Reports from Mintel also reveal that product lines with wide shade ranges show more growth in sales ("Color Cosmetics"). The need for a foundation with a many shades coupled with Rihanna's expertise resulted in a successful launch and great sales numbers ("Fenty Beauty Is One of TIME's 50 Genius Companies").

Consumers are also demanding that inclusion needs to be incorporated not only in product design but also in advertising. Furthermore, a survey done in July of 2015

revealed that 18% of makeup wearers in the UK agreed that not enough women of different ethnicities were being represented in cosmetics advertising (“Avoiding Tokenism”). Fenty was perceived by consumers as authentic because it was able to align the product design with its advertising tactics; a foundation with a wide shade range was matched with diverse representation across social media (“Avoiding Tokenism”). There was a clear brand identity and an evident dedication to standing for inclusion. Fenty did not merely hop on the bandwagon of diversity in the cosmetic industry. Instead, it took the trend to the next level to create a new standard for other brands to match. Fenty is a successful company with a believable and genuine brand mission, backed up with effective products.

What Brands Can Learn From Successful Purpose Marketing Tactics

Successful brands tailor their purpose marketing to what is popular or garnering the attention of consumers at the time, but the efforts are also backed up by continued commitment. The ways that these brands give back, serve a need, or raise awareness also match their product offering or brand mission. Furthermore, TOMS, Aerie, and Fenty were on the forefront of their respective causes, making them seem more genuine because they were first movers and not merely capitalizing on a trend for monetary gain. Companies that are interested in engaging in purpose marketing need to make their efforts sincere by aligning the marketing to the brand purpose or product offering and show a genuine dedication to the cause over time.

CHAPTER THREE

Controversial Purpose Marketing Campaigns

As purpose marketing grows in popularity, consumers have seen campaigns that have been wildly successful, such as the efforts by TOMS, as well as those that have been criticized, like certain campaigns by Gillette and Nike. Brands have the potential to capitalize on purpose driven marketing, while maintaining their brand images and integrity. However, when brands do not align causes with their mission statements or do not dedicate enough time or resources to the campaigns, consumers can view the campaigns as inauthentic and lose trust in the brand. In this chapter, I will analyze companies that have recently unveiled controversial purpose driven marketing efforts. I will first compare the campaign to the brand's mission and history of marketing efforts, then discuss consumer response, and finally evaluate the brand's response to the incident.

Gillette

Background and "The Best a Man Can Be" Campaign

Gillette is a personal care brand that has been producing innovative and high quality razor blades for men and women since 1901 ("The Best Men Can Be." *Our Commitment*). The brand became the official razor of the United States with the establishment of a contract with the government during World War I (Tiffany). History of the brand is rooted in standing for strength, toughness, and masculinity. Gillette cites shaving and providing quality products to customers as its passions. It also takes pride in

listening to feedback from customers, so prices on its products have been lowered to better serve the target market (“The Best Men Can Be.” *Our Commitment*).

Beginning in 1989, Gillette established its dominant presence in the market by employing the slogan “The Best a Man Can Get” to exemplify the quality of its products (“The Best Men Can Be.” *The Best a Man Can Get*). 30 years later in January of 2019, Gillette replaced this tagline with “The Best Men Can Be” in an attempt to align with the #MeToo movement. A video was released that depicted sexism in the workplace, harassment of women, and violence between boys (“The Best Men Can Be.” *The Best a Man Can Get*). It urged consumers to expect more out of men. However, we cannot forget that the main purpose of the video was to sell razors and promote the brand. While the message was one that is relevant to today’s society and it is true that human beings as a whole should expect more out of each other, there seems to be room for improvement in the execution.

Consumer Response to “The Best a Man Can Be”

Gillette currently holds 50% of the market share, which has decreased by 20% over past 10 years (Taylor). This loss of dominance is occurring for many reasons. The population of the United States is aging, which means a decreased need for razors due to less hair growth. Furthermore, according to a report from Mintel, 22% of men and 25% of women ages 18-23 are much more accepting of visible underarm hair on women (Tiffany). Not only is Gillette losing sales, but Mintel also predicts that the entire industry of shaving and hair removal tools will continue to see a decline in sales and will not experience growth for years (Tiffany). Because of increased options of different brands of razors, like Harry’s Shave Club and Dollar Shave Club, Gillette will need to

differentiate themselves from their competitors to maintain its prominent position (Tiffany). Promoting the quality of its products while continuing to innovate with new razors, such as an extravagant heated razor, or customizable 3D-printed razors, has been a part of the effort to stay relevant. In 2017, Gillette also reduced the prices of its products by an average of 12% in an effort to appease customers (Tiffany).

All of this considered, the “The Best a Man Can Be” campaign has been seen by some consumers as a desperate grab to reclaim market share and relate to the current social climate. Due to the history of Gillette’s marketing efforts being manly, the condemning of “toxic masculinity” in the ad is inconsistent with the brand image (Taylor). The commercial was ridden with dangerous and insulting stereotypes, leaving men feeling insulted that there would even be a question that they would participate in such behavior. Furthermore, the blanket use of the term “toxic masculinity” generalizes an entire gender, which is the brand’s primary target market segment. Questioning the integrity of customers does not yield favorable or profitable outcomes. This isolated the main target market, as well as potential customers that now have reason to doubt Gillette’s authenticity.

Many have turned to social media to express their anger with Gillette for targeting an entire gender and promised to never purchase from Gillette again. Consumers also showed their distaste through their wallets. Parent company Procter & Gamble experienced a net loss of \$5.24 billion at the end of the quarter on June 30, 2019 because of an \$8 billion charge on Gillette (J, Naidu). In the same quarter a year prior, the company saw a net income of \$1.89 billion, so this loss in 2019 was significant (J, Naidu). Although the market for razors was already expected to decrease, some of these

losses can be attributed to the backlash over the campaign released in January. Negative brand attention along with increased competition for market share resulted in a difficult quarter for Gillette.

Gillette's Response

In an attempt to display the brand's ongoing commitment to its cause, an important factor in the believability of a campaign, Gillette is promoting human interest stories on its website. A veteran firefighter, compassionate police officer, hardworking counselor, and an athlete with depression have all been featured to highlight "The Best Men Can Be," and the way men are positively impacting their community and advocating for change ("The Best Men Can Be." *Our Commitment*). This reinforces the intended message of the video that men have the potential to be leaders and positive influences in society.

Gillette is also donating \$1 million every year for the next three years to non-profits with programs to "help men of all ages achieve their personal best" ("The Best Men Can Be." *Our Commitment*). The Boys & Girls Club of America, Boys to Men Mentoring, and 4th Dimension Recovery Center are among the programs supported by Gillette. By supporting programs that attempt to mitigate the problems portrayed in the video, Gillette can begin to show a dedication to its cause over time, which can create a sense of authenticity.

Starting with a bold statement in support of the values of the #MeToo movement was possibly the incorrect way for Gillette to go about engaging in purpose marketing. While it certainly started a conversation and brought the brand to the front of consumers' minds, the losses suffered call into question whether it was worth it or not. The efforts following

the initial campaign were smaller and less intense but still support the cause, which are more believable to consumers. Starting with these small tactics rather than the commercial would have allowed Gillette to build brand equity, establish itself as a brand that supports social causes for genuine reasons, and gain experience in purpose marketing before releasing such an bold video.

Nike

Background and Partnership with Colin Kaepernick

As a brand, Nike stands for innovation, inspiration, and improving the domestic and international community. Over the years, it has continued to support movements for getting children active and has partnered with organizations such as International Rescue Committee and Chicago Run (“What We Do”). Nike also has a history of inspiring greatness in all of its consumers, starting with its slogan “Just Do It.” It brands all of its consumers as athletes, which it defines as anyone possessing a body (“What Is Nike’s Mission?”). Advertisements typically display either professional and nonprofessional athletes overcoming various types of adversity and achieving greatness (De Luce).

In order to continue its stance of inspiring change and greatness, Nike partnered with Colin Kaepernick, the former quarterback of the San Francisco 49ers, who stood against racial injustice and police brutality by doing just the opposite. Kaepernick advocated for change by kneeling in protest during the national anthem of football games (De Luce). In 2018, to demonstrate that athletes can have a positive influence over fans to affect change, Nike released a commercial and a print ad with Kaepernick donning the phrase “Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything.” (De Luce). The

ad immediately garnered both positive and negative attention online, inspiring conversation between people with vastly differing opinions.

Consumer Response to Kaepernick's "Just Do It" Campaign

Bringing politics and race into its ad campaign in 2018 made it inevitable for viewers to hold extremely contrasting perceptions. The ad went viral and consumers were expressing their opinions from both ends of the spectrum. Some cut the iconic swooshes off of their products and vowed to boycott the brand, while others renewed their love and support for Nike out of its strong political stance (Thomas). Critics predicted that the ad would result in losses for the brand, and at the end of the ad's release day, Nike's stock was down by about 3.2% (Thomas). However, the brand ultimately celebrated an increase in sales of 31% and a \$6 billion brand value increase, which can be attributed to Kaepernick's advertisement (Beer, "One Year Later"). Overall, there was still a sizable group of customers that were willing to support the brand either despite the advertisement, or in support of it.

Nike's Actions Following Controversy

The Nike ad featuring Colin Kaepernick can be seen as an example of purpose marketing that was financially successful, but still created controversy by promoting values that fail to align with a company's business practices. The ad features Kaepernick, who is known for protesting police brutality and racial injustice. This positions Nike as also having a regard for civil rights for all, regardless of origin or background. However, Nike has a history with negative press regarding its use of sweatshops and poor treatment of its workers in other countries such as Vietnam, Cambodia, and Thailand (Jamieson).

Following the scandals, Nike established itself as having strong corporate social responsibility by addressing concerns about its supply chain and implementing monitoring of its factories (Jamieson). However, the audits of factories are either voluntary or conducted by groups that are partly funded by the corporations they are investigating (Jamieson). This does not offer a candid or accurate assessment of the conditions of the working environment. Furthermore, in 2016, it was reported that over 500 female workers in factories producing goods for Nike, Asics, and Puma were suffering from fainting due to stress, exhaustion, and extremely high factory temperatures, and were not being paid a living wage (McVeigh). This is just one example of mistreatment of factory workers by Nike and other mass retailers. If Nike truly stood with the values that Kaepernick embodies and believed in the stance that was portrayed in this ad campaign, it would also take steps to improve conditions for its workers.

Nike's treatment of its professional athletes is not always marked by equality or justice either. Former Nike athlete Allyson Felix spoke out against the brand in 2018 when she was unable to secure protections regarding her performance surrounding the time of her pregnancy (Beer, "Gap's Athleta Brand"). Felix then teamed up with Athleta, a brand that saw value in her purpose and drive to empower females (Beer, "Gap's Athleta Brand"). Nike claims that it values rights for all people and supports standing up for what you believe in, but the instance with Felix demonstrates that the brand has miles to go in matching its business practices to the values it preaches in its ad campaigns.

Furthermore, Nike has neglected to follow up to its initial ad with Kaepernick. He has continued to advocate for his cause, unlike Nike. The brand capitalized on the attention that was placed on him at the time, but failed to continue its efforts to support

the social issues it previously addressed. Although it paid off financially, it appears that Nike exploited a figure that was popular at the time and promoted values that it does not carry through to other business practices, presenting a hypocritical brand image.

Burger King

Background and “Real Meals”

Burger King (BK), home of the Whopper, has been a hallmark in America for over sixty years. Ads for fast food restaurants tend to be cheeky and humorous, and the popular burger joint has a history of engaging in bold and creative advertisements, such as promoting a moldy Whopper to demonstrate to consumers that its food was not ridden with harmful preservatives (Dan). In May of 2019, Burger King attempted to convey two messages with its latest dramatic ad campaign. As May is Mental Health Awareness month, Burger King partnered with Mental Health America to roll out Unhappy Meals to select cities, which featured meals with different emotions, such as the Salty Meal, Yaaas Meal, and the Pissed Meal (Graham). This was also a way to poke fun at Happy Meals from McDonald’s. To further the campaign, it also released a video on YouTube to highlight multiple emotional states and the idea that it is normal to not be happy at all times (Graham). Aside from the overarching purpose of selling burgers, this campaign was supposedly meant to bring awareness and reduce the stigma around mental health.

Consumer Response

As with all controversial topics, the ad sparked conversation and resulted in both positive and negative reactions. Some applaud BK for bringing light to a trivial issue and addressing a difficult subject. Getting people talking instead of avoiding the topic can be

seen as a success. However, many were upset because the gravity of mental health did not match the seriousness of the campaign (Graham). By making a joke out of a serious topic with meals designed after trendy moods, it appeared to many that Burger King was not taking the issue seriously. Mental health issues are not a trend or fad to capitalize on, but rather a serious area of concern. The campaign was ineffective because it made light of moods and emotions that have significant impacts on those that struggle with mental health problems.

The campaign was also seen as distasteful due to its attempt at targeting McDonald's. The title of "Unhappy Meals" alone makes it seem as if the main purpose of the campaign was to sell burgers and beat the competition, which ruins the authenticity of the campaign. The marriage of a fast food restaurant advocating for such a serious topic like mental health could be seen as odd, but it had the potential to succeed if done tastefully and respectfully. Unfortunately, the Unhappy Meals were not successful due to the lack of tact and thoughtfulness.

Burger King's Response

BK does have a history of supporting worthy causes, evidenced by its McLamore Foundation where it supports education around the world (Burger King Corporate Responsibility). However, this ad campaign was the restaurant's first time to touch on mental health, so there is no prior history nor continued commitment to the specific cause it attempted to capitalize on with the Unhappy Meals. Without existing brand equity in supporting a cause, proper follow up is necessary to demonstrate sincerity ("The Year of 'Woke-Washing'"). A year following the campaign, the website does not mention anything about its dedication to mental health awareness, nor has it engaged in any

further efforts to support the cause (“Burger King Corporate Responsibility”). The lack of follow up conveys to consumers that BK does not truly care about this topic, and that the main goal was to stay on trend and sell hamburgers.

Furthermore, the company refused to participate in interviews related to the campaign (Graham). BK did donate to Mental Health America, but the amount was undisclosed (Graham). A lack of transparency evidenced by the refusal to speak on the campaign, as well as the ambiguous donation creates an image of dishonesty.

What Can Brands Learn from Controversial Campaigns

The campaigns from Gillette, Nike, and Burger King were not necessarily failures in their entirety, but they did fail to demonstrate authentic and genuine cause marketing. Attention was called to the brands in each campaign, which increases brand awareness. This can lead to financial gain, as experienced by Nike following its ad with Colin Kaepernick (Beer, “One Year Later”). Although not all reception was positive, enough people were still willing to support the brand. However, as the desire to support socially conscious and authentic brands grows, it will be more difficult for brands to recover from ad campaigns that superficially support a social issue or are perceived as inauthentic. Brands should look to these controversial campaigns to learn how to avoid backlash when engaging in effective purpose marketing in the future.

CHAPTER FOUR

Suggested Changes for Controversial Campaigns

The campaigns mentioned in Chapter Three supported noble causes, but the execution was lacking and resulted in consumer confusion and backlash. In this chapter, I will offer suggestions for changes to the campaigns that could have made them more successful, based on consumer reception of the controversial campaigns and how brands in Chapter Two were able to be successful in their purpose marketing efforts.

Gillette and “The Best a Man Can Be”

The goal of Gillette’s failed “The Best a Man Can Be” campaign was to establish the brand as a supporter of the #MeToo movement while inspiring its customers to be the best people they can be. While there is nothing inherently wrong with the message of holding men accountable for their actions and needing them to be better, the execution offended the majority of its customer base. Instead of inspiring men to be the best they can be, the commercial negatively stereotyped an entire gender and was inconsistent with the brand image and history of advertising.

Starting with a very bold statement without having a reputation for advocating for social issues contributed to some of Gillette’s problems with the commercial. In order to introduce customers to a new facet of the brand’s mission and marketing tactics, Gillette should have started with a smaller and less intense effort and grown the support over time to be perceived as more authentic. After releasing the commercial, the brand featured profiles on the website highlighting strong male figures that are impacting change, such

as a veteran firefighter and support group leader. It could have been more effective to start posting on social media to celebrate these strong men and then move into launching donation initiatives before releasing a commercial.

The commercial to promote the brand's new tagline was also ineffective because it vilified masculinity, which has been a hallmark of the brand's identity. Instead of producing a video that depicted negative traits of men to inspire them to be the best they can be, Gillette should have promoted positive aspects of masculinity. Men would be less likely to be offended, since they would not be negatively stereotyped. A commercial promoting strong masculine figures, like the heroes featured on the website, would provide positive examples and role models for customers to aspire to emulate. Furthermore, one commercial is not enough to display Gillette's commitment to supporting the cause. Additional commercials or marketing efforts need to be made over time to reinforce the brand's efforts.

Gillette is also donating \$1 million to three non-profits for the next three years. The time limit placed on the donations is questionable because it conveys that Gillette is not dedicated to championing the values of creating valuable members of society over an extended period of time. To further its efforts and maximize the dedication to supporting strong leaders, the brand should find a cause that it can truly invest in indefinitely, whether it is through monetary means or through the creation of programs to provide assistance and positively impact communities. Removing the time limit will keep the brand from looking like it is trying to stay relevant by jumping on the trend of supporting the #MeToo movement, and will show customers that Gillette actually stands behind wanting men to be the best they can be.

The shift from “The Best A Man Can Get” to “The Best A Man Can Be” is a step in the right direction for Gillette to both stay relevant and be a leader in the purpose marketing space. The brand should have started with smaller steps to firmly establish its position of supporting leaders in the community and then released a commercial that promoted positive male characteristics. Gillette should also reinforce its efforts by investing in a program that it believes in or launching its own initiatives to improve communities and support the growth of strong leaders.

Nike and Colin Kaepernick

The partnership between Nike and Colin Kaepernick was intended to show support for Kaepernick’s courage in standing for what he believes in, while establishing Nike as a brand that stands with its athletes and commends people for supporting worthy causes. However, since Kaepernick was supporting causes that are typically political, controversy was inevitable. There was also a disconnect between the advertisement and Nike’s business operations, since Kaepernick is a supporter of civil rights and equality, and Nike has a history of not treating its factory workers humanely.

To avoid much of the controversy that Nike faced by partnering with Colin Kaepernick, the brand could have picked a more universal and less polarizing cause or athlete to be the face of the campaign. If the brand still wanted to align itself with a cause that has political undertones, it needed to do so in a meaningful and authentic way. Making matters worse, results from a study regarding the campaign revealed that only 45% of respondents believed that Nike had a genuine commitment to these values (Vredenburg et al.). Since Kaepernick was wildly popular and well known at the time due to his protests during NFL games, some saw this as an inauthentic attempt to capitalize

on his popularity. Nike needed to follow up on the campaign by either continuing to feature Kaepernick in other promotional advertisements to show its full support of his beliefs, or highlight other similar figures that are advocating for change in their communities. Brands like Aerie and TOMS have stayed true to their respective causes of supporting body positivity and helping communities in need over the years and continue to improve and grow their efforts. Nike could learn from these brands and extend its efforts to encompass more issues over time to demonstrate its authentic commitment.

Another source of criticism stems from Nike's business practices that contradict values of civil rights and equality promoted in the campaign. Fast fashion is known for being produced with unethical labor practices, so Nike is not alone in having a questionable supply chain when compared to similar brands. However, as a brand that is built on inspiring consumers, it should do better with its own business practices. If Nike is going to take a stance and support civil rights, it should also support rights for its workers to present a consistent brand image and set an example for other brands.

The partnership between Nike and Colin Kaepernick was financially successful, but the brand could have improved the reception and avoided criticism if the campaign was executed differently. By either picking a less controversial figure or including additional athletes that also stand for social issues, sticking to the campaign for an extended period of time, and improving working conditions for its factory workers, the campaign could have been more widely accepted and paved the way for future purpose marketing efforts.

Burger King and The Unhappy Meals

Burger King's main objective with the Unhappy Meals was to raise awareness for mental health and destigmatize the taboo subject. The meals were also a not-so-subtle jab at its biggest competitor, McDonald's, which is known for its Happy Meals. While some applauded the fast food chain for bringing light to a sensitive topic, the execution did not match the level of seriousness the cause deserves. The meals were named after trendy moods, rather than actual mental health problems, and the reference to McDonald's turned the campaign into a joke.

Overall, the campaign was not taken seriously and Burger King seemed like it was making light of a sensitive and serious topic. Names for individual meals made reference to memes and popular culture, and did not give mental health the proper attention that it deserves. Instead, Burger King should have placed an emphasis on the idea that it is okay to not always be okay and focused on ways to destigmatize the subject rather than trying to be trendy. Resources for people struggling with mental health could have been printed on bags and cups, and social media posts could have been tailored to supporting people with mental health problems. This would allow Burger King to actually support its cause and not engage in unbelievable and ineffective purpose marketing techniques.

Calling the meals "Unhappy Meals" and using the slogan "No One is Happy All the Time" relates the campaign to rival McDonald's and takes attention away from the real cause. Credibility is taken away from the brand's attempt at promoting mental health awareness. If it was an important objective of the marketing plan to take market share away from its competitor, Burger King could have chosen to contrast the meals with the

well-known Happy Meals from McDonald's without linking them to mental health awareness efforts. Picking one main objective for the campaign would have resulted in a more effective campaign and would have avoided cheapening the brand's efforts attempt at supporting mental health.

The burger joint did not disclose the amount of the donation made to Mental Health America. While the exact dollar amount should not impact the authenticity or motive behind the donation, it creates an image of dishonesty and lack of transparency. Burger King should have been more open with the ways that it was supporting the nonprofit. Furthermore, this was a one-time donation, and the company has not engaged in any other ways to follow up in regards to supporting mental health awareness since. This dedication over time is needed to make a meaningful impact and demonstrate that this is an issue that the brand stands behind.

Although there is not an automatic connection between a fast food restaurant and mental health, the campaign still has the potential to raise awareness and be successful. The meals should not have been named after trendy, fleeting emotions, and cheap jabs at competitors should have been avoided. Following up by continuing to promote mental health awareness over time, as well as treating the cause with the seriousness it deserved would have resulted in a successful and authentic campaign.

Purpose Marketing's Place in Today's Advertising Space

Studies have shown that consumers are more likely to support brands with values they also believe in, and are even willing to switch to brands that are more ethical and socially aware (Gallinari). Knowing this, it is likely that brands will increasingly engage in marketing efforts that intertwine social issues or charitable causes. However,

consumers sometimes have a distrust of purpose marketing campaigns, as they believe that brands are only trying to make themselves appear charitable and have selfish motives (Gallinari). For brands to succeed in the purpose marketing space, their advertising campaigns need to be authentic, continue over an extended period of time, and align with their product offerings or mission statements.

WORKS CITED

- Adams, Peter. "The Year of 'Woke-Washing': How Tone-Deaf Activism Risks Eroding Brands." *Marketing Dive*, Industry Drive, 8 July 2019a, <https://www.marketingdive.com/news/the-year-of-woke-washing-how-tone-deaf-activism-risks-eroding-brands/557606/>.
- Adams, Peter. "Surprising Don'ts for Cause-Related Marketing." *Marketing Dive*, Industry Drive, 18 Mar. 2019b, <https://www.marketingdive.com/news/surprising-donts-for-cause-related-marketing/550454/>.
- "Aerie Introduces Eight New #AerieREAL Role Models to Inspire You to Make 2020 the Year of Change." *Business Wire*, Business Wire, Inc., 23 Jan. 2020, www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200123005191/en/.
- "An Open Letter from the Thousands of Men and Women at Gillette." *About Gillette | Gillette®*, Procter & Gamble, <https://gillette.com/en-us/about>.
- Beard, Fred K. "The Ancient History of Advertising: Insights and Implications for Practitioners: What Today's Advertisers and Marketers Can Learn from Their Predecessors." *Journal of Advertising Research*, vol. 57, no. 3, Sept. 2017, pp. 239–244. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.2501/JAR-2017-033.
- Beer, Jeff. "Gap's Athleta Brand Signs Track Star Allyson Felix, Who Left Nike Over Its Pregnancy Policy." *Fast Company*, Fast Company, 30 July 2019, www.fastcompany.com/90383544/gaps-athleta-brand-signs-track-star-allyson-felix-who-left-nike-over-its-pregnancy-policy.
- Beer, Jeff. "One Year Later, What Did We Learn from Nike's Blockbuster Colin Kaepernick Ad?" *Fast Company*, Fast Company, 4 Sept. 2019, www.fastcompany.com/90399316/one-year-later-what-did-we-learn-from-nikes-blockbuster-colin-kaepernick-ad.
- Böhm, Steffen, et al. "What's behind the Current Wave of 'Corporate Activism'?" *The Conversation*, The Conversation US, Inc., 28 Mar. 2019, <https://theconversation.com/whats-behind-the-current-wave-of-corporate-activism-102695>.
- "Burger King Corporate Responsibility." *Burger King*, Burger King, <https://www.bk.com/corp-respon>
- "Color Cosmetics - US - July 2018." *Mintel Academic*, Mintel Group, Ltd., reports-mintel-com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/display/904708/?fromSearch=?freetext=

fenty%20beauty.

- Dan, Avi. "Can Burger King Sell Fast Food with This Baffling, Repulsive Ad." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 21 Feb. 2020, www.forbes.com/sites/avidan/2020/02/21/can-burger-king-sell-fast-food-with-this-baffling-repulsive-ad/#3de89592009e.
- De Luce, Ivan. "26 Nike Ads That Shaped the Brand's History." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 1 Sept. 2013, www.businessinsider.com/25-nike-ads-that-shaped-the-brands-history-2013-8#did-you-learn-anything-2010-23.
- Ell, Kellie. "Aerie Rapidly Gaining Market Share Off Social Media and 'More Authentic' Women." CNBC, CNBC, 23 June 2018, www.cnbc.com/2018/06/22/aerie-is-a-standout-with-body-positive-ads-and-real-models.html.
- Gaither, Alison. "Color Cosmetic Brands Experience 'the Fenty Effect'." *Mintel Academic*, Mintel Group, Ltd., 19 Dec. 2017, reports-mintel-com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/display/873755/?fromSearch=?freetext=fenty%20beauty.
- Gallinari, Mike. "Cause Marketing - US - August 2018." *Mintel Academic*, Mintel Group, Ltd., Aug. 2018, <https://academic-mintel-com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/display/860619/#>.
- Hanbury, Mary, and Jessica Tyler. "We Shopped at American Eagle's Aerie Store and Saw Why It's Achieved Explosive Success." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 16 Dec. 2018, www.businessinsider.com/american-eagle-aerie-success-story-explained-2018-12.
- Hoffman, Ellen. "Toms Will Give Free Shoes to Children If You Instagram Your Bare Feet." *Business Insider*, Business Insider, 5 May 2015, www.businessinsider.com/toms-one-day-without-shoes-2015-5.
- Jamieson, Dave. "Watchdog Group Kept Out Of Nike Supplier's Factory After Worker Strike." *HuffPost Business*, Huffington Post, 3 Mar. 2016, www.huffpost.com/entry/nike-labor-rights-vietnam_n_56d893f2e4b0000de403b7d0.
- Khanom, Roshida. "Fenty Beauty: Targeting Women of All Colours - 22nd September 2017." *Mintel Academic*, Mintel Group, Ltd., 22 Sept. 2017, <https://academic-mintel-com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/display/856163/>.
- Khanom, Roshida. "Avoiding Tokenism in Beauty Advertising - 13th February 2018." *Mintel Academic*, Mintel Group, Ltd., 13 Feb. 2018, <https://academic-mintel-com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/display/881383/?highlight#hit1>.

- Lang, Cady. "Fenty Beauty Is One of TIME's 50 Genius Companies 2018." *Time*, Time USA, LLC., 4 Oct. 2018, <https://time.com/collection/genius-companies-2018/5412503/fenty-beauty/>.
- Lang, Cady. "Rihanna Opens Fenty Beauty House for TikTok Content Creators." *Time*, Time USA, LLC., 10 Mar. 2020, <https://www.time.com/5800155/rihanna-fenty-beauty-house-los-angeles-tik-tok/>.
- Lemon, Jason. "Social Media Users Call out Nike for Low Wages in Asia amid Colin Kaepernick's Ad Promotion." *Newsweek*, Newsweek, 6 Sept. 2018, <https://www.newsweek.com/nike-factory-workers-still-work-long-days-low-wages-asia-1110129>.
- Levine, Barry. "Brands' Cause Marketing Efforts Fail to Break through with Gen Z, Report Says." *Marketing Dive*, Industry Dive, 9 May 2019, <https://www.marketingdive.com/news/brands-cause-marketing-efforts-fail-to-break-through-with-gen-z-report-sa/554437/>.
- Macke, Dana. "Attitudes toward Corporate Social Responsibility." *Mintel Academic*, Mintel Group, Ltd., July 2018, <https://academic-mintel.com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/display/860573/>.
- Malik, Nesrine. "Thanks, L'Oréal, but I'm Growing Weary of This Hijab Fetish | Nesrine Malik." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 25 Jan. 2018, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jan/25/oreal-hijab-fetish-amena-khan-muslim-women.
- McVeigh, Karen. "Cambodian Female Workers in Nike, Asics and Puma Factories Suffer Mass Faintings." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 24 June 2017, www.theguardian.com/business/2017/jun/25/female-cambodian-garment-workers-mass-fainting.
- Naidu, Richa, and Soundarya J. "P&G Posts Strong Sales, Takes \$8 Billion Gillette Writedown." *Reuters*, Thomson Reuters, 30 July 2019, www.reuters.com/article/us-procter-gamble-results-idUSKCN1UP1AD.
- Peters, Adele. "Toms Made Buy-One, Give-One Famous. Now It's Updating the Model." *Fast Company*, Fast Company, 6 May 2019, www.fastcompany.com/90344987/toms-made-buy-one-give-one-famous-now-its-updating-the-model?partner=rss&utm_source=facebook.com&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=rss+fastcompany&utm_content=rss&fbclid=IwAR1Yk075OHvAWAceJZVP8yfiUTOydP2EG1uiQfp8OHReRz36XVr447Pei88.

- Pollay, Richard W. "The Subsiding Sizzle: A Descriptive History of Print Advertising, 1900-1980." *Journal of Marketing*, vol. 49, no. 3, Summer 1985, pp. 24–37. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1177/002224298504900303.
- Pollay, Richard W. "Wanted: A History of Advertising." *Journal of Advertising Research*, vol. 18, no. 5, Oct. 1978, pp. 63–68. *EBSCOhost*, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=6630066&site=ehost-live.
- SAP News. "SAP Study: For Holiday Shopping, Socially Conscious Companies Preferred." *SAP News Center*, SAP News, 4 Dec. 2018, <https://news.sap.com/2018/12/socially-conscious-companies-holiday-shopping-season-sap-study/>.
- "The Best Men Can Be." *Our Commitment | The Best Men Can Be | Gillette®*, Procter & Gamble, <https://gillette.com/en-us/our-committment>.
- "The Best Men Can Be." *The Best A Man Can Get | Gillette®*, Procter & Gamble, <https://gillette.com/en-us/about/the-best-men-can-be>.
- "The TOMS Story: TOMS." *TOMS Official Site*, TOMS, www.toms.com/about-toms.
- Thomas, Lauren. "Nike Shares Fall as Backlash Erupts Over New Ad Campaign Featuring Colin Kaepernick." *CNBC*, CNBC, 4 Sept. 2018, www.cnbc.com/2018/09/04/nike-shares-tumble-after-company-reveals-new-ad-campaign-featuring-colin-kaepernick.html.
- Tiffany, Kaitlyn. "The Absurd Quest to Make the 'Best' Razor." *Vox*, Vox, 11 Dec. 2018, <https://www.vox.com/the-goods/2018/12/11/18134456/best-razor-gillette-harrys-dollar-shave-club>.
- Vredenburg, Jessica, et al. "Woke Washing: What Happens When Marketing Communications Don't Match Corporate Practice." *The Conversation*, The Conversation US, Inc., 5 Dec. 2018, [https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10292/12164/Woke washing_what happens when marketing communications don't match corporate practice.pdf?sequence=2](https://openrepository.aut.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10292/12164/Woke%20washing%20what%20happens%20when%20marketing%20communications%20don't%20match%20corporate%20practice.pdf?sequence=2).
- "WAKE UP." *Smile On Me*, www.smileonme.org/wakeup.
- Ward, Tom. "The Hype House Is Changing The Face Of TikTok." *Forbes*, Forbes Magazine, 24 Feb. 2020, www.forbes.com/sites/tomward/2020/02/24/the-hype-house-is-changing-the-face-of-tiktok/#23c955357c1b.

“What Is Nike's Mission?” *Nike | Get Help*, Nike, Inc., www.nike.com/help/a/nikeinc-mission.

“What We Do.” *Nike Social & Community Impact*, Nike, Inc., <https://communityimpact.nike.com/what-we-do>.

“Women's Clothing - US - July 2017.” *Mintel Academic*, Mintel Group, Ltd., 2017, reports-mintel-com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/display/843821/?fromSearch=%3Ffreetext%3Daerie.

“Women's Sleepwear - US - December 2011.” *Mintel Academic*, Mintel Group, Ltd., 2011, reports-mintel-com.ezproxy.baylor.edu/display/604640/?fromSearch=%3Ffreetext%3Daerie.

“Your Impact: TOMS.” *TOMS Official Site*, TOMS, www.toms.com/impact.