Dove Show Us Campaign Deconstruction

I. COMPANY OR ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

Dove was created in 1952 when Unilever acquired a new French patent for a new soap bar (Unilever, 2023). There was a problem with the current soaps on the market. They left people's skin feeling dry. However, this soap bar was radically different from the ones before it, as it was infused with moisturizers that left the skin feeling clean and soft (Unilever, 2023). Thus, the Dove Beauty Bar was born, launching in the United States in 1957 (Unilever, 2023). The soap became a big hit, and between 1991 and 1994, Dove expanded into 55 new countries, including Brazil, South Africa, and China (Unilever, 2023). After the success of the soap bar, Dove expanded into deodorants, body washes, lotions, hair products, and facial products between 1995 and 2000 (Unilever, 2023). In 2010, Dove launched the Dove Men+Care range, followed by Baby Dove in 2017 (Unilever, 2023). Dove makes more than 5.8 billion in products annually and is the No. 1 dermatologist-recommended brand in the US, Canada, and France (Unilever, 2023). Dove has been targeted towards women and people who identify as women. Because of this, Dove became a leader in advancing women's beauty standards and straying away from stereotypical media representations. Such as, in 2004 Dove started a campaign for Real Beauty, which widened the definition of beauty for women globally (Unilever, 2023). Dove is not just about beauty, but about defying what society deemed classic beauty standards. For 21 years now, Dove has been working towards changing narrow beauty ideals and giving women confidence through their products (Unilever, 2023).

II. MISSION STATEMENT

On Dove's website, their mission statement is as follows: "We believe beauty should be a source of confidence, and not anxiety. That's why we are here to help women everywhere develop a positive relationship with the way they look, helping them raise their self-esteem and realise their full potential" (Dove, 2022). Dove also specifically mentions that they are on a mission to help the next generation of women so that they can feel happy and confident with their bodies (Dove, 2022).

III. BRAND POSITIONING

To: Women, Non-Binary, and female-identifying people who seek confidence and self-acceptance (Unilever, 2023).

Brand is the: Beauty and personal care products

That: Are a source of confidence that helps women develop a positive relationship with the way they look (Dove, 2023).

Because: When women choose not to participate based on their looks, society misses out as a whole (Dove, 2023).

IV. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM OR OPPORTUNITY

In 2019, Dove launched a global survey which found that 70% of women don't feel represented in images they see every day in media and advertising (Diedrichs, n.d.). They also found that 71% of women wanted to see industries represent more women of diverse physical attractiveness, such as age, race, shape, and size (Diedrichs, n.d.). Through this research, Dove saw a clear opportunity for change that people wanted to see. People wanted a new definition of beauty, and Dove was willing to be that systemic change (Diedrichs, n.d.). Through their research, Dove found that "If women don't feel represented, it can hold them back from reaching their full potential. The effects are vast, negatively impacting health, career, and relationships"

(Contagious I/O, 2021). Dove's research also found that six out of ten women said they would feel more confident in their own beauty if there were more diverse advertisements showing women's authentic bodies. This shows that representation is important in women's health, both physically and mentally. Dove saw a gap in the market, people wanting change, and a negative impact. This was shown on a global scale. Different countries may have different beauty standards, but no matter the national boundary line, women did not feel like they were enough (Shorty Awards, 2019). People were not seeing real action by brands to diversify the bodies being shown in their advertisements (Shorty Awards, 2019). Brands could say they were inclusive, but no one was seeing action. Dove then took it upon themselves to be the change and tap into a want in their market. It aligned with Dove's mission statement and brand positioning to take advantage of this opportunity, as they want to make women feel more confident in their own skin.

V. RESEARCH

Some questions Dove likely considered to guide research:

- How does stereotypical media affect women's views on their bodies?
- Do women feel represented within the media?
- What would make them feel more represented?
- How are they treated in society based on non-stereotypical attributes?
- What are beauty ideals in countries worldwide?

Primary Qualitative Research:

- Conducting market-specific research across 39 different countries to determine each country's beauty ideal, who is represented in media, who is marginalized, and why

(Shorty Awards, 2019). It is assumed they did this through a variety of focus groups, analyzing media, and historical documentation.

Primary Quantitative Research:

- Research on women's views and feelings about global equality movements and media representation (Shorty Awards, 2019). These were likely shown with percentages and numbers in how many in the study felt this way.
- Commissioning a comprehensive report on the impact of body esteem, pressures, and confidence on girls globally to better understand the audience (Griffin, 2024).

Secondary Research:

- Looking at studies on stereotypical media representations and how they affect women (Shorty Awards, 2019)
- What advertisements are gaining popularity amongst women and what they are supporting.
- What is trendy and popular amongst women groups in the current climate.

VI. SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS (SWOT)

STRENGTH	WEAKNESS
- Already a pioneer within the beauty world for women and women's real beauty - Strong foothold with previous ads such as Real Beauty, Self-Esteem Project, Speak Beautiful, and No Distortion (Griffin, 2024). - Dove was one of the first brands to talk about stereotypical beauty and its harms. - Consistent messaging, so the brand has been firmly rooted in empowering women (Griffin, 2024). - Global brand recognition.	- Previous controversies with diversity. The 2011 ad for VisibleCare body wash showed a black woman in the "before" and a white woman in the "after" with "more beautiful skin" (Griffin, 2024). - They also faced another controversy in 2012 for its Summer Glow Lotion as being for "normal to dark skin" (Griffin, 2024). - Contradictory messaging, with Dove being for women, but the parent company Unilever selling products that were anti-feminist. Unilever also owns Axe Body Spray, which has ads objectifying women and sells a skin lightener product

	(Kurtzleben, 2013).
OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
- The increase in influencers and content creation on social media as advertising (Griffin, 2024). - There are gaps between what women want to see represented in media and what is actually represented in media when it comes to body representation (Griffin, 2024). - Increase in diversity and inclusion. Brands say they're inclusive, but are not doing enough proactive things to show diversity.	- The rush of "Femvertising," with other brands selling empowerment (Iqbal, 2014). - The risk of competition copying and drowning out Dove's advertisement. - New brands like Glossier and Drunk Elephant are pointed at younger female audiences with new products and new advertising (Contagious I/O, 2021).

VII. STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

- Dove has the unique advantage of being the first big brand to challenge beauty stereotypes. Through previous advertisements such as Real Beauty in 2004, Dove has an edge of authenticity and credibility amongst its audience (Unilever, 2023). With its presence on the global stage and its consistent messaging, Dove can build upon its commitment to building body confidence and self-esteem for millions of people (Dove, 2024). This allows Dove to get an edge over competitors who might be seen as selling diversity for their own personal gain.
- Up to 70% of women, non-binary, and female-identifying individuals do not feel represented within the advertisements and media they consume (Diedrichs, n.d.). This lack of representation affects women's health, relationships, and opportunities negatively. People want to see more diversity and inclusion within advertisements, and they think that advertisements right now are not doing a good enough job (Diedrichs, n.d.). Dove

can fill the gap in the media with advertisements focused on diverse body types and making women feel confident.

- Social media is becoming more popular, with over double the engagement over the last few years (Mehta, 2018). The audiences on social media interact, react, and hold businesses more responsible (Mehta, 2018). Part of the personalization comes from the rise in influencer marketing, where people buy products based on who is recommending them (Brenner, 2019). This widens the reach of an advertisement as well as making it more authentic. This desire for more personal social media interaction creates a need for Dove to focus on social media strategies as a part of its advertising and campaign.
- The media landscape is already saturated with other brands hopping on the trend of body positivity and feminism (Iqbal, 2014). The increase in "femvertising" risks Dove falling into the pit of just being one of the many brands selling empowerment. Dove has to focus on doing something new and different to distinguish itself within the field. This bold distinction will prevent brands from copying and new competition from leeching.

VIII. COMMUNICATION GOALS

- To create a more inclusive vision of beauty by shattering “stereotypical” depictions of women in media and advertising worldwide, with Dove being communicated as the spearhead of this change. (Razorfish, 2020).
    - Most women, non-binary people, and people presenting as women do not feel represented within the media. To help combat this, Dove will become the leader in the space, driving change and helping people feel more comfortable in their own skin.

This goal is not only in line with Dove's mission statement but also addresses the problems that Dove found within its research. It tackles the problem they see within the market, while also boosting Dove's brand positioning within the market.

IX. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES

- To address the 70% gap of those who feel underrepresented in media, leverage partnerships to launch a stock library of at least 5,000 photos by the end of Q1 2019, of authentic and unedited photos of diverse women and nonbinary individuals to increase representation in media and create a positive impact on how women see their bodies (Mahoney, 2019).
- After 2019's photo library, push the industry to implement photos from the library by the end of the year. Tracking stock photo search trends to see if the campaign encourages advertisers and media to adopt more inclusive imagery can help monitor this. Dove leads this charge to create lasting impact beyond a single campaign by changing the landscape as a whole (Getty Images, 2019).
- After the launch in 2019, increase awareness about beauty stereotypes and authentic representation through user-generated content, hashtags, and social media campaigns to build a foundation for the movement straight from the community for the rest of Q2 at least. Encourage women and non-binary people to submit their own photos and track engagement throughout platforms like likes, comments, reposts, etc. (Li, 2019).

These objectives help the communication goal of creating a more inclusive beauty by shattering "stereotypical" depictions of women in media and advertising. By being a big brand, they can get the ball rolling in changing the way beauty standards are set. By partnering with other brands and

using social media, they can increase their reach. With a vast photo library, they give other brands an option to use diverse individuals for their ads, pushing industry change.

X. TARGET AUDIENCES

- Women and non-binary individuals of all ages, sizes, genders, sexualities, and backgrounds all around the world. Although it is a priority to speak to all women, the focus is on young women (Dove, 2024). Younger women are more likely to be on social media more and therefore, engage with more harmful beauty standards. On social media platforms like Instagram, 67% of people aged 18- 29 use the app (Perrin & Anderson, 2019). By focusing on young women, Dove can change the beauty standards of the younger generations that feel the negative effects of stereotypical representation the most.
- Advertisers and brands, specifically within the beauty field (Contagious I/O, 2021). Advertisers and other brands are encouraged to use the photo library to integrate more diversity into their advertising. This is a crucial audience if Dove wants to change the industry as a whole and increase representation worldwide and brand-wide. In giving tools and resources to brands and advertisers, they can implement more diversity with less trouble or spending. It gives other brands no excuse not to have more diverse advertising.

XI. CURRENT AUDIENCE BRAND PERCEPTION

- Young women, advertisers, and other brands mostly see Dove in a positive light, with campaigns like Real Beauty helping to show women's self-esteem and rejection of beauty standards. However, some feel as though Dove lacks strong representation of women of color with past advertising mishaps, making their representation feel inauthentic sometimes (Griffin, 2024).

- The audience perceptions make sense as Dove was a pioneer in “femvertising.” It makes sense that Dove would stick with its female empowerment marketing, but it needs to think now about how to get the audience to not think of this campaign as another forced, inauthentic attempt at representation and how to differentiate itself in the crowded “femvertising” market.

XII. DESIRED AUDIENCE BRAND PERCEPTION

- The target audiences see Dove as the leader and pioneer in women's beauty. They should see that Dove is still committed to its mission statement of empowering women while also showing women's beauty in all of its authentic diversity (Razorfish, 2020).

This perception not only reinforces Dove’s mission statement, but it also helps in making Dove feel like a more authentic brand to show that they have learned and grown from their past errors and controversies. It puts the brand ahead of its competitors in reclaiming its spot as the leader, while also addressing internal weaknesses.

XIII. KEY MESSAGES

Single-minded Message

- Dove helps boost women's self-esteem while giving access to authentic and diverse representations of beauty for other companies to use.

Audience-Specific Messages

- Dove makes me feel better about my own body and beauty.
- Dove’s ad makes me want to add more diverse representations of beauty to my campaigns.

These connect back to the communication goal of an inclusive vision of beauty in media and advertising, with Dove being the spearhead of this change. The audience of young women should

feel better about their bodies by the end of the campaign if it succeeds. Other brands should also feel moved to advertise with more diversity. Having other brands follow also puts Dove in a position to be looked at as the leader of the change.

XIV. CREATIVE PLATFORM

- To challenge beauty stereotypes by building a library of images of authentic, real, diverse women and nonbinary individuals that will be freely available for other advertisers and brands to access. (Dove, n.d.).

By making this their creative platform, Dove can address its audiences and key messages. This aligns with their brand and their mission statement of helping women feel better in their bodies and keeping their position as the leader in the market. It is culturally relevant with social media and digital media becoming ever more popular. It also addresses the need for women to feel accurately represented within the media.

XV. STRATEGIES

- **Leverage partnerships for photo library (Shorty Awards, 2019)**
- By using partnerships, Dove can expand the reach of the campaign. Partnering with brands and people worldwide who have that reach helps in getting the word out.
- **Leverage the social media landscape for broadened reach (Li, 2019)**
- Social media is an ever-growing platform, specifically for younger women. By focusing on a creative digital media campaign, it can broaden the reach and help target key audiences more efficiently.
- **Get the community involved/ engaged (Shorty Awards, 2019)**
- For the campaign to continue to be relevant, achieve as many authentic versions of beauty, and be widespread, Dove has to leverage community engagement to help in

sharing and adding to the campaign. This way, the campaign continues to be relevant and stand out amongst competitors.

- **Focus on capturing authentic and diverse bodies (Shorty Awards, 2019)**
- For the campaign to be effective, there needs to be as much diversity and authenticity when it comes to the people shown in the campaign and in the library. Failing to be authentic could be more of a detriment to the brand, which some criticize for already being inauthentic.

XVI. TACTICS

Partnerships

- Partner with Girlgaze and Getty Images (Earned/Paid Media). Partnering with Girlgaze allows Dove to connect with female and nonbinary photographers around the world and recruit them to take images of diverse women. By partnering with Getty Images, Dove can create a vast library of these photos for stock use. Getty can make it so that the images are free for use and that women can define their search descriptions and tags (Getty Images, 2019).
- Partner with leading global publications like Stylist, Marie Claire, Cosmopolitan, People, Elle, O, and Bazaar to explore the problem of representation in a deeper editorial format (Earned Media). By partnering with global publications, Dove can get the word out about the campaign while also opening the discussion of representation in media. By going to publishers, it can start the ball rolling in changing the media landscape and hold other brands responsible (Razorfish, 2020).

Social Media

- Start #ShowUs on Instagram and Twitter (Owned/Shared Media). By using a hashtag, it will be easy to track whenever people use the hashtag, as well as encourage women and non-binary people to show off their own beauty with the hashtag. The hashtag itself not only increases engagement but unifies the campaign and community under one motto: show us. Using specifically Instagram and Twitter because they are photo-sharing, very popular apps, Dove can share women's and nonbinary people's stories as well as ask audiences who they want to see in the #ShowUs series (Ayyad, 2022).
- The #ShowUs Pledge (Owned/Shared Media). The pledge sets boundaries for the campaign that show that people have to be authentic by having people pledge not to digitally distort pictures of themselves, be an active role model by utilizing body-positive language, and promise to support laws that promote beauty inclusivity for women and girls (Ayyad, 2022).
- Partner with social media influencers like Thickleeyonce and Elle Rose (Paid/Earned). By partnering with social media influencers, Dove can also encourage its influencers to encourage their audience to take part in the campaign and show their true beauty (Li, 2019).

Overall, Dove did a good job when it came to tactics for the campaign. They were able to leverage all aspects of the PESO model in their delivery. I think in community engagement, they can keep the campaign going for longer, making generational changes. Making it a project to expand on makes Dove stay relevant and continue to add to diversity in the advertising space.

XVII. KPIs

- To measure the first objective, look to see if the project was launched on time with enough photos, and then measure the next quarter to see if women are having a more

positive relationship with their bodies. This can be measured through surveys with participants engaged in the campaign by watching or submitting photos.

    - In this case, Dove did hit the projection with the campaign launching in March of 2019 with over 5000 photos. Audiences of the campaign have also reacted positively, with 73% of women in key markets believing it inspired them to feel more positive about their appearance (Razorfish, 2020).

- To see if the industry is implementing diversity and using the resources, measure how many companies use, download, or search for photos from the campaign by the end of the year. Also, measure audience sentiment towards brands that use ShowUs imagery, so it can measure if there is a positive association.
    - This goal was also hit within the campaign, with over 2500 companies using the images, like Apple, Airbnb, and Adidas. There was also a statistic that 80% of the photo collection was downloaded in over 60 countries (Razorfish, 2020).
- For the last one, see how much engagement the campaign had, measure engagement on social media platforms, usage of the hashtag, and how many people submitted photos by the end of the next quarter.
    - Although it is not possible to see how many likes, comments, and shares the campaign got overall, it is easy to assume it was enough to be successful, with a large number of people knowing and interacting with the campaign. It also shows that with just over 5000 photos at the start of the campaign, with over 7500 photos by the time of the Shorty Awards (Shorty Awards, 2019)

Overall, these are good measurements that Dove could use to see if they were on track and hit their communication goals. Through measuring community engagement and industry

engagement, as well as audience surveys based on the sentiment of Dove and companies that use ShowUs, Dove can paint a clear picture of success through their tactics.

XVIII. TIMELINE

Pre-2018	Jan. 2018	27 Mar. 2019	End of 2019	Post-2019
Research on women's self-esteem, thoughts on representation and authenticity in media, and how they feel about their own beauty	Start building the photo library (Diedrichs, n.d.)	ShowUs Launch (Shorty, 2019)	Report on KPIs, with an increase in positive sentiment, engagement, and brands using iverse advertising.	Show Us continues to garner images, with brands continuing to use the images.

The timeline gives Dove an accurate representation of what has to be done. By giving themself a year to collect the images, they make sure to have time to get the diverse repertoire of women and non-binary people while still staying relevant to their research and the frustrations at the time. The timeline gave them enough breathing room before and after to build up the campaign for reach and longevity.

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