EXPLORING DIVERSITY:

CONSIDERATIONS FOR
BRAND MANAGERS
IN FOSTERING
WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION
IN CPG ADVERTISING

Rotman

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gender AND THE economy

The Consumer-Packaged Goods (CPG) industry is one of the largest in the world. In Canada alone, this sector represents almost "One-third of Canada's manufacturing GDP and 40 percent of employment."[1] According to a Marketing article from Latana, "Naturally, human beings enjoy making decisions that they feel reflect their likes, dislikes, and preferences."[2] However, large companies in this industry have, to some extent, influenced the decisions we make as consumers today.

Through their observations, research and testing, CPG companies have been able to shape their consumers' purchasing decisions.
But with the power to influence people and improve their perception of a brand or product also comes responsibility, which in this case should be to promote an equitable and egalitarian society where everyone sees and feels represented.

Particularly in the case of women, there have been years of struggle to improve how they are represented in advertising campaigns.
Although there have been significant advances, the gender consultant Bec Brideson assures that "The way women are portrayed in advertising is still plagued by stereotypes",[3] gender roles, and submissive imagery, even unconsciously through verbal and non-verbal cues.

The relevance of this case lies in the fact that these representations not only illustrate an unrealistic image of our current society but also encourage its regression and stagnation.

Such a situation is still happening even in countries like Canada, pioneers and leaders in diversity, equity and inclusion; as McCann Worldgroup demonstrated in its study where "Only 3 of 10 Canadian women can identify with most of the women they see in ads and 66% believe there are too many gender stereotypes in advertising."[4] Nonetheless, very few have noticed, think about it or want to acknowledge the problem.


For this project, I qualitatively analyzed the campaigns carried out in the last two years (Jan '21-Jan '23) by CPG companies with the most prominent presence in Canada, reviewed specialized literature on the topics I addressed, and conducted several interviews with brand and marketing managers of most of the companies mentioned above.

From these sources, I obtained three major insights into why women continue to be represented in traditional rather than egalitarian ways in Canadian CPG advertising campaigns.

In this report, I seek to highlight them to promote gender equality and the importance of women in society to diminish stereotypes in CPG advertising as an essential business imperative.

CHALLENGING THE MYTH

ONE-SIZE-FITS ALL DIVERSITY
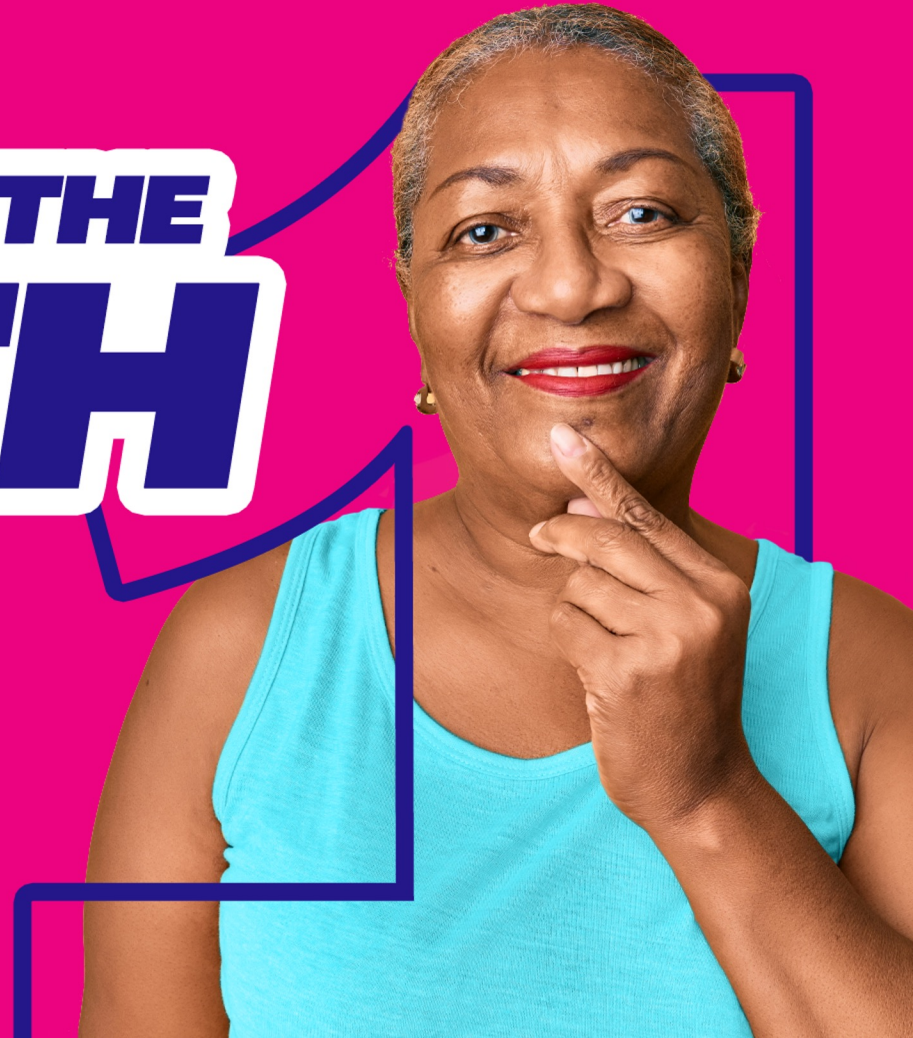
Marketing and brand managers in Canada are challenged when creating or adapting campaigns, as in most cases, they must follow the directives established by the global brand or the U.S. team.

Although many cases have been highly successful across borders and languages, assuming that the same campaign can be used in different regions with minimal modifications may lead to myopia.
Myopia leads to a lack of visibility into the unique needs of markets, which can ultimately hinder the campaign's success.

"Much pushback comes from a globally driven perspective because the consolidation is global.

Brands are becoming more globalized, and there is a desire that the way the brand is portrayed in Canada is the same across borders because it's easier to ensure the brand's message is the same worldwide."

Marketing Director
Food & Beverage Company

Interviewees emphasized that, in the case of campaigns launched in Canada, they try to include women representing diverse racial, ethnic and Indigenous communities.

However, in an effort to embrace this racially diverse spectrum, other significant demographic groups, such as short, overweight, disabled or older women, are excluded.

For example, according to a study by IBM Watson Advertising about Bias in Advertising, "Advertisers displayed those aged 55+ in an unfair light. Ads tend to showcase a mental decline, weakness, or a lack of understanding for technology. However, many people in this demographic would be strong target customers for brands, if companies could learn how to better connect with them."[5]
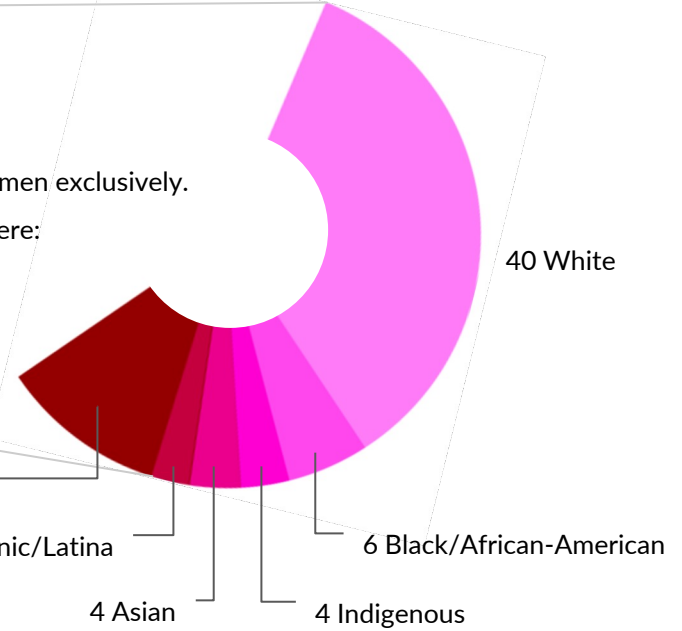
My qualitative analysis corroborates this issue. From 120 campaigns analyzed:

70 featured women exclusively. Such women were:

40 White
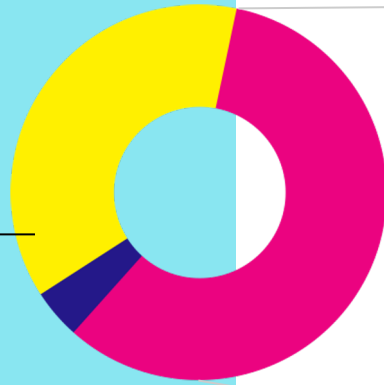
Only 45 demonstrated a balanced representation of genders. This indicates that over half of the commercials favoured one gender over the other.

13 Mix

4 Hispanic/Latina

6 Black/African-American

4 Asian

4 Indigenous

Additionally, only five of the commercials included transgender women. However, it should be noted that these were isolated cases, explicitly targeting the transgender community to increase brand awareness.

Of the 13 that showed a mix:

1 had a disability.

1 did not conform to traditional feminine dress norms.

8 conformed to conventional beauty stereotypes.

10 were young.

Further analysis showed that of the total number of campaigns:

73% Showed women with bodies very close to traditional beauty standards: tall, slim, long-haired, without scars or marks, and few signs of aging.

45% Portrayed white and light-haired women.

6% Included a woman with a visible disability. However, the campaigns were focused on promoting specific products or commemorating special dates for this sector.

76% Showed young women.

11% Included older women.

16 out of 18

That showed women in the home showed them performing stereotypical tasks for their gender.

Only 3% included women wearing clothing typically associated with men's fashion.

At most 4% of the campaigns included transgender people.

This selective representation of women in advertising raises questions about the underlying motivation of brands to include women of diverse races and ethnicities, and whether they genuinely want to provide a platform for diverse voices or merely want to fulfill a representation quota.

Such partial inclusivity of campaigns may hinder their effectiveness and limit their reach from a business perspective.

"We just went through an experience choosing the talent for our national campaign.

The US team sent female talent around 23 years old.

Although there was a diversity of ethnicities, they were all super thin, you know? Like runway models.

So the proposal was sent back. Although they ultimately chose the models, sending them back was a first call not to send us women who, although it could work in their market, are not the women who would consume our products in Canada."

Marketing Manager
Retail Company

The current scenario presents a complex situation. Some brands have achieved a certain degree of diversity in their campaigns by including women of different races or ethnicities.

However, the reality is that these women often still conform to other stereotypical standards that do not fully represent the true diversity of the Canadian population.

Additionally, women with disabilities, plus size bodies, short stature, or non-feminine dress styles are rarely represented in mainstream campaigns.

When they are included, most campaigns explicitly target these demographics as part of a season or particular product rather than as part of the brand's regular communications.

"I have seen that in some campaigns, there are oversized women, but I see them in campaigns from retailers that sell clothes, and in fact throughout the commercial they overemphasize the extra sizes. So in my head, I relate it as:

«If I show these women, I will sell more.»

Same happens with makeup, they need to show people with different skin colours, but it's because they want to increase their sales, not because they really care about them."

Brand Manager
Food & Beverage Company

EMBRACING DIVERSITY

## MOVING BEYOND THE STATUS QUO OF SALES

In general, the primary objective of any CPG company is to increase sales and gain market share for their products. However, in this pursuit to enhance their short-term monetary value, companies may risk overlooking the significance of comprehending the unique needs of their diverse consumer base.

But this short-sighted vision not only results in a deficiency in meeting the expectations of the whole spectrum of consumers. It also disregards fundamental aspects such as market innovation and disruption, which manifests in marketing challenges.

Research from Forbes Magazine[6] noted that:
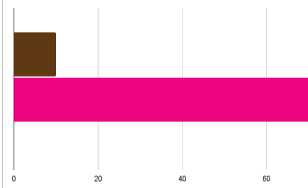
CPG companies invest six times more in marketing and advertising than R&D.
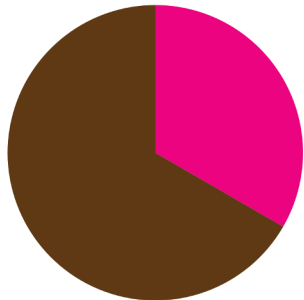
Only about a third of launches are new products. The rest are new packaging, variety, line extensions, reformulations or relaunches.

According to Gregory Carpenter, a marketing professor at Northwestern University, "Bigger companies have the budget to aim for bigger breakthroughs. But they have failed to create blockbusters that consumers simply must have."[6]
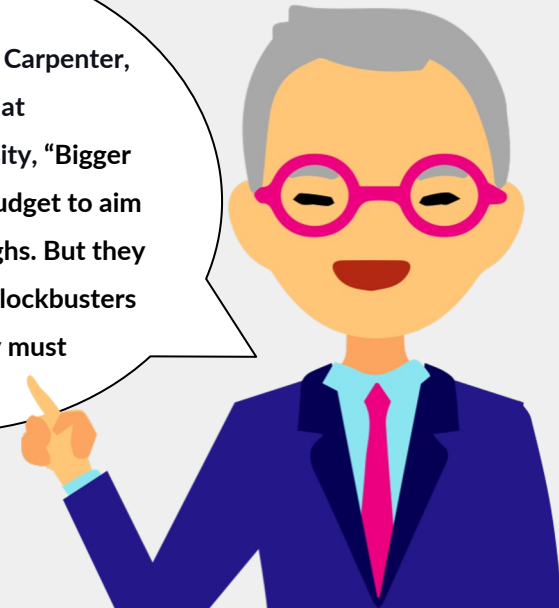
To understand why the vast majority of campaigns focus on a particular segment of women and leave out many others, we must take a step back and understand that even before marketing campaigns, it is their R&D that does not even recognize other segments of women as potential consumers.

There are numerous examples of products that were born outside these large companies, as innovation came from small start-ups that rapidly scaled their operations or even unlikely sources such as war.

For instance, in response to the unique hair care needs of African American communities, Madam C. J. Walker, a small businesswoman, created hair products after being unable to find a solution for her own hair loss.

Similarly, during the First World War, nurses observed that cellulose was much more effective at absorbing blood than cloth bandages, leading to the creation of menstrual products such as sanitary napkins.

These impacts on brand communications can be analyzed as a series of interrelated factors. Firstly, the inadequacy of product innovation emanates from the lack of recognition of the requirements of the full spectrum of the consumer base. From the outset, brands tend to focus on majorities, which are not necessarily the same in different geographies.

But limiting products to the preferences of a particular group of women does not end there, because it is subsequently reflected in advertising campaigns where women continue to be typecasted, as marketing communications predominantly target a narrow range of women.

As a result, women who do not fit this spectrum are again left out, leading to a lack of diversity in brand communications.

In a landscape where industry titans prioritize short-term sales over comprehending the unique needs of diverse communities, they are not only disregarding potential business opportunities but also evading the challenge of disrupting the status quo of both the market and their own brands.

According to Avi Dan, CEO of a consulting firm specialized in advising marketing professionals, "Today's consumer demands more than a mass-market product created for everyone. They want localness, natural, personalized products that reflect authenticity and their values."[6]

It is noteworthy that most interviewees revealed that they do not directly collect feedback once their campaigns are launched. On the contrary, they limit themselves to evaluating campaigns before launching them, through various tests on social networks.

"To measure the success of a campaign,
we look at sales levels.
We always have to see how
much is being sold and where.

Some provinces are more inclined towards certain products. If it is an innovation campaign, we usually focus on the upper funnel, that is, in awareness.
If it is a campaign for an existing product, we look at the mid-funnel, like trials or repurchases."

Brand Manager
Food & Beverage Company

Conversely, some interviewees mentioned that they only collect feedback through agencies or third parties. However, these feedback surveys are typically multiple-choice and do not offer the opportunity to provide open-ended responses or other specific feedback.

According to research from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, part of the problem is that these companies should be aiming for incremental but significant improvements, rather than looking for breakthroughs.

"Larger consumer-goods organizations tend to be reluctant to look outside their own companies for new ideas. But they could benefit by borrowing a tactic employed by pharma and tech firms: turning to academia or startups to seek out promising early phase research."[7]

BREAKING THE TABOO

OVERCOMING SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

Several interviewees highlighted that, in many instances, their brands have chosen to refrain from engaging with contemporary topics, such as including transgender women, lesbians or homosexual families, often due to the perceived risk involved or lack of experience on the matter.

However, failing to address such issues can perpetuate the problem, as it implicitly endorses the status quo. Furthermore, by refraining from entering the discussion or amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, brands indirectly support the persistence of gender-based disparities and ignorance towards women who do not conform to traditional gender norms.

Therefore, it is imperative that brands take a proactive stance on current issues and contribute to the advancement of more equitable and inclusive narratives.

"I think the categories we fail the most as brand managers are personal care and drugs. For example, [Drug's Name] never shows a woman with a disability, and it's not that they don't get a headache, but the company is still cautious about what kind of women to show and which ones not to show. We still strive for an aspirational mode. The thin, young and pretty woman."

Brand Manager
Pharmaceutical Company

While it is true that there has been a trend towards inclusivity in recent years, it is essential to note that the efforts made by brands often need more meaningful change.

For example, although women who do not fit into traditional beauty standards, including transgender women, are being featured more frequently in advertising, these efforts are often superficial and guided by two clear criteria:

1

Women are still primarily white, tall, young, thin, and without any visible disability.
In other words, the issue is being addressed but in a very superficial way.

2

These representations tend to be limited to specific seasons, products, or campaigns, resulting in a lack of genuine and sustained representation.

While these observations were also confirmed in my qualitative analysis of the visual aspects of advertising, a more in-depth study is necessary to explore the messaging and language used in these campaigns.

In most cases, the space allocated to diverse representations of women is extremely limited or entirely absent, relegated to a brief voice-over that merely alludes to the product's benefits or qualities.

Therefore, brands must move beyond tokenistic efforts and prioritize meaningful and sustained representation of diverse women.

"There is a massive swing in diversity in advertising, but it has been so quick that it doesn't feel genuine.

There is a need for social pressure that everybody is swinging over.

It feels like such a swing of a «push» rather than a «pull». Social pressure makes companies put more authentic people each time, but that doesn't mean they do it because they really believe in it."

VP Marketing
Food & Beverage Company

In light of the situation, I do not suggest that brands should recklessly approach taboo subjects in their campaigns. Instead, brands should address these topics sincerely and authentically, with the assistance of experts in the field.

Only a few interviewees mentioned that their companies collaborate with institutions, programs, and government bodies or have dedicated internal departments to ensure women are represented inclusively in their advertising efforts. It is worth noting that these companies performed the most favourably in our qualitative analysis.

To that end, it may be beneficial for brands to engage with these specialists before tackling complex issues.
Alternatively, brands could involve members from these underrepresented communities during campaign debriefing. By doing so, brands can ensure that their messaging and approach are sensitive and effective.

CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, progress has been made in the advertising industry's efforts to include more diversity in their campaigns, particularly in Canada. Nonetheless, as evidenced by the qualitative study, a significant gap still exists in equal representation as brands often comply with a single diversity spectrum at a time, further exacerbating this issue.

On the other hand, interviewees agreed that much work still needs to be done in this area. However, they also highlighted other challenges that undermine these efforts, such as global team guidelines, financial constraints in adapting campaigns, and a desire to avoid sensitive issues that could potentially harm the brand's reputation.

Given this complex landscape, brand and marketing managers find themselves challenged, as decision-making should ultimately stem from senior leadership.

Proposing a universal solution that addresses all companies and brands is unrealistic. Instead, I offer a series of recommendations that may be considered by the teams responsible for generating and adapting campaigns in Canada. While these suggestions are not exhaustive, they may provide a useful starting point from their end:

1) **Reconsider the adaptation process. If generating a campaign from scratch with Canadian consumer insights or adjusting the talent, audio, or message of the campaign is not feasible, brand managers could explore more cost-effective or even free ways to reach the intended audience.**
   For instance, utilizing social media reels, posts, or hashtags featuring women who have been historically underrepresented could help brands connect with consumers who have yet to feel accurately represented.

2) **Focus on the specific needs of minority/ underrepresented groups. This could benefit both the brand's communication and marketing efforts as well as their R&D initiatives. Such an approach could open up opportunities for new product development and create new business prospects for the company.**
Additionally, large corporations could collaborate with small startups that have identified a specific market niche and utilize that window of competitive advantage to target sectors that have yet to be satisfied.

2) **Seek partnerships with specialists. To effectively address these issues, advertising campaign creators may seek support from specialists who have expertise in the topic or communities being represented.**
This collaborative approach can enhance the visual aspects of the campaigns and extend to joint events with these communities or institutions, adding further value to the brand.

METHODOLOGY

I started by selecting the 20 CPG companies with the most extensive presence in Canadian territory. Although the vast majority are not endemic to this nation, I tried to have a good mix of companies among different CPG categories, such as food, beauty, pharma, toys, clothing, alcoholic beverages, home care and personal care.

Once the companies were selected, I focused on identifying their top 1-3 best-selling brands - ensuring that most of the products were not targeted to a specific gender - and their most recent advertising campaigns.

In total, my selection included 54 brands and 120 campaigns launched in Canada during the last 24 months alone, i.e., from January 2021 to January 2023, which gives us a good benchmark of the spectrum that has been advertised in the country considering only visual media such as digital platforms, television and print.

To analyze this information, I selected 9 metrics to determine the representation of: gender, standard body beauty, race/ethnicity, dress style, disability, age, gender stereotypes, on-screen leadership and voice balance. It is very similar to what the Geena Davis Institute is currently doing through its Inclusion Quotient and Spellcheck for Bias, an automatic audio-visual tool to analyze media content.

			TOTAL	%
GENDER		Men	2	2%
		Women	68	57%
		Trans	5	4%
		Mix	45	38%
PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	Beauty Standard Body	Yes	87	73%
		No	27	23%
		N/A	6	5%
	Race/Ethnicity	White	54	45%
		Black/African-American	15	13%
		Asian	5	4%
		Hispanic/Latino	4	3%
		Indigenous	5	4%
		Mix	37	31%
	Style	Female	103	86%
		Male	3	3%
		Neutral	14	12%
DISABILITY		Visible	7	6%
		Non-Visible	112	93%
AGE	Young	Yes	91	76%
		No	29	24%
	Middle-Aged	Yes	47	39%
		No	73	61%
	Old	Yes	13	11%
		No	107	89%
GENDER STEREOTYPES	Domestic Occupations	Yes	16	13%
		No	2	2%
		N/A	102	85%
SCREEN REPRESENTATION	Voice	Men	19	16%
		Women	63	53%
		Trans	5	4%
		Mix	12	10%
		N/A	21	18%
	Leadership	Men	10	8%
		Women	76	63%
		Trans	5	4%
		Mix	22	18%
		N/A	7	6%

COMPANY	SEGMENT	BRAND	CAMPAIGN	AD	GENDER Men/Women/Trans/M	PHYSICAL APPEARANCE Beauty Standard Bo	Race/Ethnicity	Style	DISABILITY Visible/Non-Visible	AGE Young	Middle-Age	Old	GENDER STEREOTYPES Domestic Occupations	SCREEN REPRESENTATION Voice	Leadership
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	Women
					Mix	No	White	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	Mix	Mix
					Mix	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Men	Men
					Mix	Yes	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Men	Mix
					Women	Yes	Indigineous	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	Women
					Women	No	Asian	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Women	Women
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Mix	Mix
					Women	Yes	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	No	White	Female	Visible	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Women	Women
					Mix	No	Asian	Female	Non-Visible	No	No	Yes	N/A	Men	Women
					Women	No	White	Female	Visible	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	No	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A	N/A
					Women	No	Black/African-American	Neutral	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Mix	No	Mix	Neutral	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Mix	Mix
					Mix	No	Mix	Neutral	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Mix	Mix
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Mix
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
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					Mix	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Men	Mix
					Women	No	White	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Women
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					Women	Yes	Indigineous	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Mix	N/A
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	No	No	Yes	N/A	Women	Mix
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					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	Women
					Mix	No	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Mix
					Mix	Yes	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	Women
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					Women	Yes	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Mix	Yes	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	No	Men	Women
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Women	N/A
					Mix	N/A	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Men	Men

COMPANY	SEGMENT	BRAND	CAMPAIGN	AD	GENDER Men/Women/Trans/M	PHYSICAL APPEARANCE Beauty Standard Bo	Race/Ethnicity	Style	DISABILITY Visible/Non-Visib	AGE Young	Middle-Age	Old	GENDER STEREOTYPES Domestic Occupations	SCREEN REPRESENTATION Voice	Leadership
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					Women	Yes	White	Neutral	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Men	N/A	Indigenous	Male	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	Men	Men
					Mix	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	Mix
					Mix	Yes	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Mix	Mix
					Mix	No	Mix	Neutral	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Mix
					Mix	No	Mix	Neutral	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mix	Mix
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	No	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Men	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
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					Mix	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Mix	Mix
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Neutral	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	Women
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					Women	Yes	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
					Trans	Yes	Hispanic/Latino	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Trans	Trans
					Trans	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Trans	Trans
					Trans	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Trans	Trans
					Women	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	N/A
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					Women	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Trans	Yes	Mix	Male	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Trans	Trans
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	Yes	Women	Women
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Neutral	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Mix	Yes	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Mix	Mix
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	Yes	N/A	Women
					Mix	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	Yes	Women	Mix

COMPANY	SEGMENT	BRAND	CAMPAIGN	AD	GENDER	PHYSICAL APPEARANCE			DISABILITY	AGE			GENDER STEREOTYPES	SCREEN REPRESENTATION	
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					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	Women
					Women	No	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	No	White	Female	Visible	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	No	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	Indiginous	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	Asian	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	Indiginous	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	Mix	Neutral	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	Women
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Mix	Mix
					Women	No	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	N/A	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	N/A	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	Asian	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	Mix	Mix
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Women	Women
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	No	N/A	Men	Men
					Women	N/A	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	Yes	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	No	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	N/A	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	N/A	N/A	Women
					Mix	Yes	Mix	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	Yes	N/A	Men
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	Yes	Women	Women
					Women	N/A	White	Female	Visible	Yes	No	No	Yes	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	No	Yes	No	Yes	Women	Women
					Women	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Men	Men
					Women	Yes	Black/African-American	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Men	Women
					Trans	Yes	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Trans	Trans
					Mix	No	White	Female	Non-Visible	Yes	No	No	N/A	Men	Mix

Interviews

I contacted Brand/Marketing Managers, Directors and even Vice Presidents of most brands and companies selected in the study. Unfortunately, some did not answer, others refused to participate, and others cancelled their participation after being instructed not to share any information, which is also understandable.

I conducted 15 interviews, understanding that all information related to their name, position and company would be completely anonymous; some of their most relevant quotes have been previously mentioned in this document.

Interviews

Through a series of questions, I tried to understand the root of the problem. Without letting them know what the objective of the project was, I asked everything from how they generated the campaigns that were launched in Canada and what their definition of success was to whether they had faced pushback when attempting to implement less stereotyped representations of women in advertising.

Although, like the selected campaigns, these interviews only represent a slice of the big pie that is the CPG market in Canada, the interviews revealed crucial insights that perfectly match the qualitative analysis of the campaigns and, in turn, corroborate in part the McCann Worldgroup study.

1. How do you get the insights to create a new advertising campaign?
2. Does a Canadian team create the campaigns, or do they receive direction from a global/non-Canadian team?
3. When evaluating advertising campaigns, what are your criteria for success?
4. Does your organization think explicitly about or have guidelines for the ways that the genders are represented in ads? If so, what does that look like? Do you specifically identify ways to represent women in non-stereotyped?
5. Who approves the campaigns, and what are the criteria they use?
6. Do you collaborate with other companies, foundations or programs to ensure that women are well-represented in campaigns?
7. Do you collect audience/consumer feedback on your advertising campaigns? If so, have you ever received feedback (positive or negative) on how the genders are represented in the ads?
8. What actions is the company taking to ensure that women are not represented in stereotyped ways? Do you think there is anything else that your organization or other organizations could be doing to address potential bias in advertising campaigns?
9. Have you faced any barriers or pushback when attempting to implement less stereotyped representations of women in advertising?
10. Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about this topic that we haven't covered already?

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