

Brand humanity marketing trends 2020

 By Sheila McGillivray

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2019 saw some poignant and outstanding advertising - cutting through old-style brand "boasting" and putting people (different kinds of people) in the spotlight.



Image source: Gallo/Getty Images.

With our lives now firmly rooted in digital culture and serviced by chat-bots and virtual assistants, clever marketing is going to be an antithesis to our mobile-driven lifestyle by showcasing untold stories. Merely giving the customer what they want is not enough in 2020 – we need to give them something they crave – brand humanity. Here are four ways in which I see this happening.

1. Disability is not different

"One in four adults has a disability; there's not one in four marketing campaigns that features that." Robin Lally, Help Us Gather (HUG)

A campaign for Surf Style in Florida using Ethan Holt, who has Down syndrome, ticks all the right boxes for a brand showing it's real side. But it didn't happen without some gentle pressure from Help Us Gather (HUG) who worked on pairing Ethan up with Surf Style. HUG works to break down barriers for those with special needs, help others be more inclusive and provide social experiences.

Surf Style's marketing manager, Tara Malinasky, aptly predicts a future trend of ads featuring people with disabilities saying, "We hope this sets an example for other brands to feature those with disabilities in their marketing efforts, as well." We'll see more collaboration between non-profit organisations such as HUG and big brands in the future.

2. The whole spectrum

"The fact that Loop is a non-verbal female Autistic POC, and the rainbow infinity symbol is used and no puzzle piece, it gives me hope." Tiffany Cavanaugh, Autistic Advocate & Inclusion Consultant

If Disney and Pixar are doing it you can bet it will become mainstream soon. Pixar's short film programme "Sparkshorts" was designed to break the ice over particularly sensitive topics and the outstanding "jewel" in this program is "Loop" – a short film featuring an autistic girl of colour as the main character.

It's due out on 10 January 2020 but already the Autistic awareness community are commenting and showing support, as Autism Entertainment Consultant says, "I'm very glad that this character will be a girl and also nonverbal, two groups who are underrepresented in our entertainment industry currently." We'll see this subject being broached by bold marketers next year – in fact, Microsoft already has by using differently-abled children in their beautiful Superbowl commercial with We All Win.

3. Age is just a number

"Women aged 65 and older will be the fastest-growing female age segment through 2025, rising 36%, while Millennial-aged women (24-to-44 years) will only increase by 9%." Forbes.com

According to Forbes.com those people closest to the customer have the most sway with regards beauty products, for example. Specifically - friends (50%), mothers (49%) and sisters or other family members (41%). So it would make sense that marketing reflects people who are like friends and relations – i.e. real people not Influencers.

Age is also a major factor- with women from 65+ being the largest growing segment through 2025. Brands like L'Oreal are already tapping into this by using older women to market their brands - to powerful effect. Think Jane Fonda in their Golden Age commercial – and she's also someone who is still being arrested for protesting against climate change at the age of 81.

Consumer expert Pamela N. Danziger writes this about what women want from their beauty brands and this list accurately describes the more human face of advertising we'll see more of.

- 54% of women want positivity reflecting their age
- 51% want to see images that show reality (i.e. cellulite, tooth gaps, scars, gray hair, wrinkles), not photo-shopped perfection
- 49% say embracing the beauty in all body sizes
- 42% say race/ethnicity matters.

4. All the colours of the rainbow

"The new Renault Clio advert is a tender lesbian love story and should win all the Oscars immediately." Lily Wakefield

Truly Renault's "30 Years in the Making" advert is beautiful storytelling with a superb soundtrack of Oasis's Wonderwall sung by Rahel Debebe-Dessalegne. Writer Lily Wakefield confirms, "Many said they were moved to tears when Renault said gay rights."

People have fallen "completely in awe" of the commercial and it puts a lesbian relationship squarely in the spotlight. In some ways, looking at world politics, it feels like we stepped back a decade this year – but if brands like Renault can make a hit-commercial like this I feel there is hope for us embracing all the gender colours and relationships of the rainbow in 2020

and beyond.

ABOUT SHEILA MCGILLIVRAY

Sheila McGillivray's knowledge of the advertising industry spans four decades. Sheila's energy, enthusiasm and passion for her work has grown with every new position and challenge. Her experience in the industry is exceeded only by her willingness to keep learning and innovating.

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