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# The Effectiveness of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty in Terms of Society and the Brand

Lindsey Morel

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# **The Effectiveness of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty in Terms of Society and the Brand**

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December 2008

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## **Abstract**

The following thesis aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty. The problem is that of measuring the effectiveness of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty in a form deeper than numbers. As the campaign held a secondary goal of changing women's perceptions of beauty, so should the evaluation. Thus, two measures will be employed.

First, the following thesis evaluates the campaign's effect on society by examining how the issue of beauty at large was and is communicated. Data was collected on beauty by drawing from experience, researching eating disorders, and exploring a feminist approach to the underlying causes of dissatisfaction with appearances.

Second, it evaluates its effect on the brand by exploring the use of cause marketing as a tool to increase sales. Data includes research on the best ways, times and methods to use cause marketing.

A deep description of the campaign itself is included to showcase the ways in which Dove paired with advertising agency Ogilvy to communicate its message. Included are subjective interpretations of the reasons for which each set of ads in the campaign were launched and public evaluations via blogs, interviews, and statistics.

I argue that the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty is effective both in terms of the brand and society in that it reinvigorated a previously irrelevant brand with an relevant message that is working to reshape notions of beauty.

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# **Introduction**

In 2005, Dove launched a groundbreaking campaign: The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty. The cause marketing campaign challenged women to question their notions of beauty across the globe. The effectiveness of the campaign on Dove's profits lie in its believability in the cause. The following thesis aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty both in terms of its effects on Dove sales and its chosen cause in America.

The campaign grew out of fear of a brand in decline. The Dove brand was seen as old and unchanging. Their most well-known product, the Dove beauty bar, was in the showers of the elderly. Dove recognized that without change, their brand would become irrelevant and slowly die with its users.

Dove aimed to reach a younger demographic without alienating their current consumers. Enter cause marketing. Younger populations are a generally socially conscious group, idealistic enough to believe positive change can occur in the world. They seek brands that do good, using their spending power to support the efforts. Women in particular are more likely to support brands that they perceive to be doing something positive.

Cause marketing campaigns are far more effective when the cause is relevant. Dove chose to tackle the unrealistic portrayals of beauty and its damaging effects on women after research led to the startling fact that only 2% of women worldwide would chose to describe their look as beautiful. Feeding on the beauty backlash, Dove aimed to take the conversation from the

private realm to the public, starting an international dialogue between all women.

90% of women between the ages of 15 and 64 wanted to change at least one aspect of their physical appearance with body weight ranking as the highest. Some women were dying to be thin, others destroying their bodies with endless diets. The majorities of women want to lose weight, and are losing their sense of confidence and worth in the process.

Dove shocked the nation when it unveiled its first campaign featuring eight real women dressed only in their underwear. The ad looked so different from all others currently seen in magazines. The drastic move allowed Dove to reposition itself from a beauty brand to a personal care brand while simultaneously repositioning every beauty brand as “bad” for presenting such unrealistic, damaging portrayals of beauty. Establishing itself as a personal care brand allotted Dove the perfect platform on which to launch new products. These included hair care, deodorant, shower gels, and skin care products.

Following the initial shock, Dove aimed to make women speak. Dove launched a new set of ads featuring a woman with a supposed beauty flaw, challenging women to check off a box with a positive or negative attribute such as “wrinkled or wonderful”. It further invited women to join the beauty debate.

This move inspired one of the most powerful forms of advertising: word of mouth. Women began voluntarily entering blogs and talking to



friends, neighbors, teachers. Further, the campaign incited much PR with stories appearing continuously in thousands of news sources.

To further enhance the believability of Dove's relationship to the cause, the Dove Self Esteem Fund was developed, with every purchase supporting the effort. Under the fund, self esteem workshops were created to help young girls see themselves as beautiful people. Mother Daughter Workshops were developed after listening to consumers frustrated by Dove's sole focus on the media. The workshop put a face to the vague fund.

Traffic to the Dove site was incredible, with consumers actively seeking more information. This insight led to the creation of a set of three viral videos working to unveil the beauty industry including Evolution, Onslaught and Amy. Dove now owned the brand equity of real beauty so with no mention of Dove products (a positive decision considering the media skepticism of the youth), sales rose.

To re-stir the pot, Dove introduced a commercial unfit for television. The Pro-Age spots featured older women in the nude. Consumers were furious at major television networks for banning the wrinkles while allowing less-appropriate, younger women to parade around for the masses. Consumers were moved to action.

When the economy changed and sales slipped, Dove needed to shift the focus onto the quality of their products. The Go Fresh campaign features the freshness of the ingredients and thus a compelling reason to splurge on the

higher price point of Dove products. It is a message that could not be communicated with cause marketing.

The following report details the struggle between women's relationship to beauty, aspects of the campaign itself and research on cause marketing. It concludes with a subjective opinion of the effectiveness of the campaign, both in terms of its effects on Dove sales and the society it aimed to help.

## **Beauty Ideals & Effects**

## **Hunger**

Food sits peacefully on the lowest tier of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs. It is a necessity, a tool for survival. Maslow believed it to be nothing more, nothing less. I dare to say that in places where that food is in abundance, most people would agree that food is no longer a simple tool for survival. Food is culture. It is a celebration. To each country its own menu, to each holiday his own treat, to each person, his own choice.

It is in choice where problems emerge. Shall we eat endlessly or not at all? Can we control it? Most western women have a compulsive fear of and fixation upon food (Wolf, 183). The feeling manifests itself in every body form, be it thin, fat or ever in flux. We are obsessed with the body and the manipulation of food to contort the body into a landscape. What follows is an in-depth analysis of the consequences of food and the self-hatred by which the obsession is fueled.

The ideal is forever flashed in our faces. Magazines, billboards, television shows. She isn't called a model for nothing. She is a representation of perfection. Never mind that her already beautiful body is airbrushed into a fantasy or that her genetic jackpot still takes meticulous caring for- she is what we should be. She is thin. From any sane perspective, the bones that protrude from her translucent skin look sick. Too thin? Never, despite her being thinner than 98% of women. The body of the average model is 23 percent leaner than that of the average woman. We desire her nothingness as beauty.

The following excerpt is taken from a paper written my freshman year.

I did not admit where the insight came from.

“When people take pictures, they have a habit of cheerily exclaiming, ‘Smile!’ She did, every time, but it was always fake. Her mind was never in the moment, rather focusing on sucking her stomach in so tightly that it would touch her spine. She resented the fact that she always failed at this task, even though she came dangerously close. She had morphed into a “size 00”, or so her tags read. She had been reduced to the children’s section of Macy’s. She couldn’t see her frailty, nor did she believe it. All that she could see was that with today came one slice of wheat bread (80 calories) and one apple (90 calories). She savored that apple, eating every bite, sucking closer and closer to the core as her mouth watered for more. Hunger pangs struck her insides every waking moment, and even while she slept. She sometimes awoke wanting so badly to feel a fullness that had escaped her for so long. She could not though. Her mentality was simple, like that of a child: food is bad. If anything more than her two daily allotments touched her lips, she would head to the gym and run, sweating, breathing, while her limp body struggled to lurch forward just one last step. Then she would sit at home alone, sobbing over the coldness of a toilet bowl. She thought only of food, and what not to eat- the calories and the punishment. Rather than move around and explore the world, she preferred to lie in bed, too weak for any other movement. Her skin was becoming increasingly close to ripping, too taut to mold its way over her spine and across her ribs. Her spirit had died, and then her mind, and right before her very eyes her body was suffering the same fate.”

### **Prevalence**

My insight should have come as no surprise. Too many women know the pain of hunger, the pain of anorexia. As defined by the National Eating Disorders Association, anorexia nervosa is “a serious, potentially life-threatening eating disorder characterized by self-starvation and excessive

weight loss” (NEDA). Ten million women and one million men are suffering with the mental illness at any given time in the United States (NEDA).

Anorexia has the highest premature fatality rate of any mental illness (NEDA). Between 15 and 20 percent of sufferers die from the disorder (Terzieff). Forty to fifty-percent of anorexics never completely recover (Wolf, 182). Only one-third of sufferers receive mental health care (NEDA). Four of ten Americans either suffered or know someone who has or is suffering from an eating disorder (NEDA).

Hunger in the child is becoming increasingly common. Forty-percent of newly identified cases of anorexia are in girls 15-19 years old (NEDA). Dieting is rampant in the fourth and fifth grades (Wolf, 215). In a study of 494 middle-class schoolgirls in San Francisco, over half described themselves as overweight while only 15 percent were, 31 percent of 9-year-olds thought they were too fat, and 81% of ten-year-olds were dieting (Wolf, 215). In a larger population, 42% of 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade girls want to be thinner and 81% of 10-year-olds are afraid of being fat. Forty-six percent of 9-11 year olds are “sometimes” or “very often” on diets, largely affected by their families of whom 82% are “sometimes” or “very often” on diets. Researchers found that parents in the United States urged boys to eat regardless of their size whereas daughters were encouraged only if they were relatively thin (Wolf, 191). The effect of parents is coupled with other factors, such as age appropriate media like Disney movies equating thin and beautiful with good and ugly and fat

with bad. Children are increasingly desiring thinness, and using extreme measures to achieve it.

### **Health Effects**

The physical medical effects of anorexia include hypothermia, edema, hypotension, bradycardia (impaired heartbeat), lanugo (growth of body hair), infertility, and death (Wolf, 183). Babies underfed by weight-conscious mothers are suffering from stunted growth, delayed puberty, and failure to thrive (Wolf, 183). The psychological effect of anorexia is a sole fixation on food.

Female fat poses very little health risks. Radiance magazine asserts, “There is very little evidence to support the claim that fatness causes poor health among women... The results of recent studies have suggested that women may in fact live longer and be generally healthier if they weigh ten to fifteen percent above the life-insurance figures and they refrain from dieting” (Wolf, 186-187). When female fat is linked to poor health, it is due to chronic dieting and the emotional stress of self-hatred (Wolf, 187).

### **Culture**

There is no urgent call to action in the healthcare industry as the number of sufferers rise (NEDA). Research funding is inadequate. In 2005, the National Institute of Health funded the following disorders accordingly (NEDA).

Illness	Prevalence	Research Funds
Eating Disorders	10 million	\$12,000,000
Alzheimer's Disease	4.5 million	\$647,000,000
Schizophrenia	2.2 million	\$350,000,000

Per individual, research dollars spent on eating disorders were \$1.20 compared to \$159 per person suffering from schizophrenia (NEDA).

Insurance companies, as it stands, do not cover the treatment of anorexia (NEDA).

The severity of the disorder is underplayed. Having never made the cover of TIME, potentially deadly weight control is relegated to the *Style* section of magazines. Anorexia has become a trend; it is an American pastime to watch and speculate on the plummeting weight of major celebrities. “Hilary Duff: ‘I definitely felt the pressure’ to be thin”, “Nicole’s [Richie] Crisis”, “Very Thin Lindsay [Lohan]”, “Keira Knightly Sues Over Anorexia Allegations” read the headlines of US! and PEOPLE magazine in the past year. Their shrinking size serves as “thinspiration” to viewers looking to celebrities as role models.

The disorder was only recently allotted a sense of severity when on Sept. 13, 2006 the decision was reached to ban underweight models from Madrid Fashion Week in Italy (Terzieff). It marked the first time that weight limits in line with the World Health Organizations guidelines for healthy body mass indices were used (Terzieff). Allowing only models with 18.5 percent



body fat or more to appear on the runway disqualified over 30 percent of the models used in the 2005 show (Terzieff). “We worked hard to restrict advertising for alcohol and tobacco because of the potential dangers to our young people, and fashion is now the only major industry without health regulations,” responded Greife of NEDA (Terzieff). While the move incited much PR and buzz around the world, Paris, London and New York decided to proceed with their shows without following suit (Terzieff).

### **Mental Effects**

American girls continue to gaze at their bodies, looking outward for meaning inward. The normative obsession pairs with serious mental consequences. Various researchers and experts have been quoted with the following. “Concern with weight leads to a virtual collapse of self-esteem and sense of effectiveness” (Wolf, 187). “Prolonged and periodic caloric restriction resulted in a distinctive personality whose traits are passivity, anxiety and emotionality” (Wolf, 188). “Starving destroys individuality; anorexic patients, like others who starve, exhibited remarkably uniform behavior and emotional patterns until they gained some weight” (Wolf, 195). “Hunger drives the hungry person to obsess about food” (Wolf, 195).

A voluntary experiment conducted at the University of Minnesota assigned 36 participants to eat an extended low-calorie diet. Participants were young and healthy with good intellectual ability and emotional stability prior to their six-month diet in which caloric consumption was reduced in half,

modeling a typical weight reduction technique (Wolf, 193-194). The following details the effectiveness of their diet.

After losing approximately 25% of their original body weight, pervasive effects of semi starvation were seen. The subjects became increasingly preoccupied with food and eating, to the extent that they ruminated obsessively about meals and food, collected recipes and cookbooks, and showed abnormal food rituals, such as excessively slow eating and hoarding of food related objects. Then, the majority suffered some form of emotional disturbance as a result of semi starvation, including depression, hypochondriasis, hysteria, angry outburst, and, in some cases, psychotic levels of disorganization. Then, they lost their ability to function in work and social contexts, due to apathy, reduced energy and alertness, social isolation, and decreased sexual interest. Finally, within weeks of reducing their food intake, they reported relentless hunger, as well as powerful urges to break dietary rules. Some succumbed to eating binges, followed by vomiting and feeling of self-reproach. Ravenous hunger persisted, even following large meals during refeeding. Some of the subjects found themselves eating continuously, while others engaged in uncontrollable cycles of gorging and vomiting. The volunteers became terrified of going outside the experiment environment where they would be tempted by the foods they had agreed to not eat... when they did succumb, they made hysterical, half-crazed confessions. They became irritable, tense, fatigued, and full of vague complaints. Like fugitives, they could not shed the feeling they were being shadowed by a sinister force. For some, doctors eventually had to prescribe tranquilizers (Wolf, 194).

The subjects were completely normal, healthy, college *men*. What happens to the body greatly impacts the mind.

## **History**

Hunger is control. From a feminist perspective, hunger makes its sufferers manageable in a patriarchal society. It wasn't until

women's emancipation in the 1920's that "the look of sickness, the look of poverty, and the look of nervous exhaustion" came into vogue (Wolf, 184). As women began entrance into the male sphere, the mass media, controlled almost entirely by men, embraced the look of excessively thin women in a way that they had not before. With this, "women's bodies became the prison that their homes no longer were" (Wolf, 184) at a time when they were gaining legal entrance into new social spheres. Self-hatred grew in correspondence with the women's movement. In 1965 model Twiggy graced the pages of magazines, looking as if a strong wind could knock her down (Wolf, 184). In 1984 a Glamour survey revealed that respondents most desired goal was to lose 10-15 pounds above success in work or love (Wolf, 185-186). Women were systematically becoming obsessed. "A cultural fixation on female thinness is not an obsession about female beauty but an obsession about female obedience" (Wolf, 187).

In fact, thinness does not naturally equate to beauty if beauty can be only moderately correlated with sex. "To ask women to become unnaturally thin is to ask them to relinquish their sexuality" (Wolf, 193). Loyola University's Sexual Dysfunction Clinic found that weight-loss disorders have a far worse effect on female sexuality than do weight-gaining disorders. Anorexics had fewer sexual fantasies, fewer dates, and less desire for sex than their weight-gaining counterparts who were eager for courtship and sex (Wolf, 193). The

anorexic is too preoccupied and concerned with her plate to focus on a world outside.

### **The Every Woman**

It is not only anorexics that experience extreme and engulfing body dissatisfaction. Eighty percent of American women are dissatisfied with their appearance (NEDA). Most of these women diet in attempts to improve their bodies. The constant stress of dieting and body-hatred can have devastatingly similar consequences to the anorexic. “The normal weight dieter who diets to look and feel thin also is vulnerable to disturbed emotional, cognitive and behavioral patterns by virtue of the constant stress of trying to stay below the body’s natural or biologically regulated weight” (Wolf, 196). Dieters experience loss of muscular strength and endurance, decreased oxygen utilization, thinning hair, loss of coordination, dehydration and electrolyte imbalances, fainting, weakness, and slowed heart rate (NEDA). Dieting also impairs the mind. People on diets have slower reaction times. Chronic dieting has been linked to depression and low self-esteem. Anxiety and stress about dieting and food actually can occupy a portion of a dieters working memory capacity. Further, dieting actually slows down the metabolism by forcing it into starvation mode (NEDA).

From the sickness of the individual en masse, the economy benefits. A secondary symptom of the glorification of thinness aside from control of the female is the birth of an industry that promises weight loss. Americans spend

over \$40 billion annually on dieting and diet-related products. On any given day, 25% of men and 45% of women are on a diet. Forty to sixty percent of high school girls are on diets (NEDA). Ninety-one percent of women on college campuses had dieted (NEDA). Forty-six percent of 9-11 year olds are sometimes or very often on diets (NEDA). The industry is fueled by its own ineffectiveness. Ninety-five percent of dieters will regain their lost weight in 1-5 years ensuring more consumption of the weight loss product. Some dieters will develop more serious eating disorders (NEDA).

### **Causes**

Eating disorders are caused by many factors. The following are contributory factors outlined by NEDA (NEDA).

#### **Psychological**

- Low self-esteem
- Feelings of inadequacy or lack of control in life
- Depression, anxiety, anger, or loneliness

#### **Interpersonal**

- Troubled family and personal relationships
- Difficulty expressing emotions and feelings
- History of being teased or ridiculed based on size or weight
- History of physical or sexual abuse

#### **Social**

- Cultural pressures that glorify “thinness” and place value on obtaining the perfect body
- Narrow definitions of beauty that include only women and men of specific body weights and shape
- Cultural norms that value people on the basis of physical appearance and not inner qualities and strengths

#### **Other**

- Scientists are still researching possible biochemical or biological causes of eating disorders. In individuals with eating disorders, certain chemical in the brain that control hunger, appetite, and digestion have been found to be imbalanced. The exact meaning and implications of these imbalances remain under investigations.

- Eating disorders often run in families. (NEDA, causes)

No one can predict who and who will not suffer from an eating disorder just as no one can predict the precise causes of an eating disorder for any one individual. The media is the source often touted as causing eating disorders. Research has suggested this is not true. Anorexia occurs following the interplay of a large number of factors, only one of which may be the media. The media creates a culture of thinness in which the skinny body is valued most. The media can have an incredibly powerful grasp on the development of young women in terms of self-esteem and body image.

### **Media Role**

Young women are consuming large amounts of media. The average adolescent girl watches 3-4 hours of television per day and reads one fashion magazine regularly (NEDA). The media was found to be the main source for information about women's health issues in a survey of adolescent girls (NEDA). What is the media saying? In a study of one teen magazine, over the course of 20 years, 74% of articles on fitness and exercise cited "to become more attractive" as a reason to engage and 51% wrote about losing weight and/or burning calories (NEDA). Another study of 4,294 network television commercials revealed that one of every 3.8 commercials sends an attractiveness message about what is and/or is not attractive (NEDA).

Before television was introduced to culture in Fiji, there was little talk of dieting. In fact, a compliment may be "You've gained weight", but after

the introduction of television to the island in 1995, the number of teens at risk for eating disorders more than doubled within three years. 74% of teens reported feeling too big or too fat and 62% had dieted in the past month. Fiji girls who were heavy viewers of television were 50% more likely to describe themselves as fat and 30% more likely to be dieters than non-heavy viewers (Wolf, 132).

Advertising is one of the most potent messages received by young women and, it can be toxic. Girls are told by advertisers that what matters most is their perfume, makeup, clothes, beauty, and above all else, thinness. Most destructively, they are promised it can be achieved (Kilbourne, 129). The images presented in the media can rarely be achieved by the average person. They are often false depictions of composite pictures airbrushed to perfection. After professional makeup artists and hairstylists draw on an already beautiful face, thousands of shots with unnatural light and flattering wind will be taken before one will suffice. The eyes of one woman will then digitally be plastered on a separate model's face. Her hand will be brought in from another photograph so that it delicately touches a background she's never seen. Tummy tucks and hair removal will then be performed before the image is sent for review. It is no longer a photograph. It has become a piece of art in fantasy. The lie is that the image is no longer real, but the very effectiveness of the ad is dependant on the sense that we think it is.

Advertising no longer aims to only sell a product. All ads have both a rational and emotional appeal, although one is almost always more pervasive.

For younger women, the emotional is most often at the forefront. Advertisers conduct psychological research and are well aware of the insecurities that allow a product to be successful. In a non-malicious way they know that the girl who enters adolescence has lost self-confidence, uniqueness, ambition, and the powerful voice that she had in childhood (Kilbourne, 129).

Advertisers know that teenagers are sensitive to peer-pressure and find difficulty in resisting the dominant cultural message (Kilbourne, 129). Girls at this age are vulnerable, looking for something to believe in. Advertising aims to be that thing, to infiltrate culture and stand out.

Everyone sees the messages and it affects the way girls are treated. Male college students who viewed one episode of Charlie's Angels were harsher in their evaluations of potential dates than those who hadn't seen the episode (Kilbourne, 133). Male college students shown Playboy and Penthouse centerfolds were more likely to find their girlfriends to be less attractive (Kilbourne, 133). Teachers, parents, peers, and yes, advertisers too see the messages of pop culture and are equally affected.

A researcher at Brigham Young University found that the more frequently girls read magazines, the more likely they were to diet and feel that magazines influenced their ideal body shape (Kilbourne, 132).

One advertisement featuring a litany of startlingly skinny woman is not worth a discussion. The problem lies in the fact that it is not one single ad, but many. The ads wouldn't be important at all if there weren't so many



of them (Kilbourne, 140). They create and perpetuate a culture that permeates into our subconscious, uttering the words that thin is good and fat bad.

### **Potential for Change**

The effect of a more balanced media could be more drastic than is realized. The National Eating Disorders Association estimates that “Encouraging the media to present more diverse and real images of people with positive messages about health and self-esteem may not eliminate eating disorders entirely, but it would help reduce the pressure many people feel to make their bodies conform to one ideal, and in the process, reduce feelings of body dissatisfaction and ultimately decrease the potential for eating disorders” (NEDA, media). In the hands of the media lies the potential to make the sick well again. Rather than assert that imperfections must be fixed through the aid of product X, Y and Z, the media could promote self-love and self-worth simply through the use of different visuals.

Out of fear that sales will suffer, advertisers refuse to create ads of the sort. As a result, girls and women continue to believe that until they fit into an ideal that is, in actuality, unattainable, they will never be good enough. Why shouldn't they believe this message? Who has ever told us otherwise? “The larger world never gives girls the message that their bodies are valuable simply because they are inside them” (Wolf, 205).

## **The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty**

## **The Beginning**

Dove dared. Female consumers both applaud and abhor the campaign that continues to shake the advertising scene and in turn, the world. The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty promises girls and women a different kind of sales pitch. Approaching its fifth year, women are quite accustomed to the campaign that dared to question normalcy. Dove writes,

“The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty is a global effort that is intended to serve as a starting point for societal change and act as a catalyst for widening the definition and discussion of beauty. The campaign supports the Dove mission: to make women feel more beautiful every day by challenging today’s stereotypical view of beauty and inspiring women to take care of themselves” (Brodbeck & Evans).

The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty grew out of a problem. When sales began to decline in England in 2003, Dove turned to their PR firm, Edelman, for a solution. Together they examined their own existing communications as well as the communications of competitors. What they discovered was monotony. Dove fit squarely into the beauty category in which all advertising consisted of the same promises in the same visual package. The face of the supermodel served as the only differentiator between one product and another. Dove was lost in the crowded market, unable to stand out.

Employees of Dove and Edelman used their own insight as consumers themselves to inspire their next move. Insight: I’m fed up. The culture of beauty was changing. While women continued to desire beauty, they also began to question its worth. They hated the societal expectation that they look

like the supermodels in magazines or on TV whose very job hung on their beauty alone. Where were the doctors, mothers and chefs, and why were they replaced by supermodels dressed up as doctors, mothers and chefs?

Employees of Dove and Edelman agreed: The skinny blonde supermodel shouldn't be the only woman allowed to feel beautiful. Dove then made a monumental decision to tap into the beauty backlash and to change the landscape of advertising.

### **Global Study**

StrategyOne, an applied research firm, was hired in conjunction with Dr. Nancy Etcoff, Massachusetts General Hospital- Harvard University and with consultation by Dr. Susie Orbach of the London School of Economics, to study what beauty means to women around the world. The global study drew conclusions from 3,200 women, aged 18-64, from the U.S., Canada, Great Britain, Italy, France, Portugal, Netherlands, Brazil, Argentina, and Japan between February 27, 2004 and March 26, 2004.

The goal of the study was to understand the way women felt about their beauty around the world. As stated by Dove,

“Dove knows that the relationship women have with beauty is complex: it can be powerful and inspiring, but elusive and frustrating as well. We sponsored this study in order to probe more deeply into this intricate relationship. Dove wanted to understand how women define beauty; how satisfied they are with their beauty; how they feel about female beauty's portrayal in society; and, how beauty affects their well-being” (Brodbeck & Evans).

This marked the first comprehensive study of its kind. Key findings are listed below.

- Only 2% of women around the world choose to describe their looks as beautiful.
- Around 75% of women rate their beauty as average and half rate their weight as too high.
- Almost half of all respondents in the US, Great Britain and Canada strongly agreed with the statement “When I feel less beautiful, I feel worse about myself in general”.
- Results indicated that women increasingly see beauty and physical attractiveness as socially mandated.

Dove quickly recognized the value in their research. While the results were upsetting in terms of women’s feelings, Dove also felt they had the power as a mass communicator to change the way women felt about their beauty. Completing the study was imperative to the production of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty. Larry Koffler, senior vice president of consumer brands at Edelman, said, “Without having a foundation in the global research study, which showed that the image of beauty was unattainable, we wouldn’t have had the credibility in creating the materials, in pitching stories and being able to answer some of the folks that didn’t agree with the campaign” (Brodbeck & Evans).

For this reason, Dove commissioned three more studies in 2005, 2006 and again in 2008. The additional studies allowed Dove to answer questions that remained from the first study and to delve deeper into the thoughts of women to better understand their perception of beauty.

The second, third and fourth studies revealed the following insights.

- 90% of all women aged 15-64 worldwide want to change at least one aspect of their physical appearance. Body weight ranked the highest.
- 67% of women 15-64 chose not to participate in life-engaging activities because they felt badly about their looks.
- 91% feel the media and advertising needed to do a better job of representing women over 50 in the media.
- 75% of girls with low self-esteem reported engaging in negative activities such as cutting, disordered eating, bullying, and smoking or drinking.

From the information gathered, Dove began to redefine their target market and core objectives. Dove held the lofty goal of communicating with all women, all ages and of all sizes (Brodbeck & Evans). While target markets are generally far narrower in definition, Dove felt that to accomplish their goals, a broader audience was necessary. They wished to do so to

“create dialogue, debate and discussion about the true meaning of beauty” (Brodbeck & Evans), to create a call to action for consumers and of course, to increase sales of Dove beauty products and new product lines (Brodbeck & Evans). New product lines to be introduced in accordance with the new campaign included deoderants, shower gels, hair care and skin care products (Wikipedia.com).

### **Firm Friends**

The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty was launched softly in October 2004. Dove used the readers of the UK's *Red* magazine to begin, perceiving them to be an audience more highly involved in the beauty backlash and receptive to participating with Dove. In partnership with the publication, Dove ran a contest to find a group of “Firm Friends”, aka: real women, to appear in their advertising campaign for Dove firming lotion. A trial pack of the firming lotion was mounted on the cover of the magazine with an offer to participate in the contest. The move drove local word-of-mouth buzz and led consumers to learn more about Dove products. Ultimately, Shanel, Julie, Lindsey, Sigrid, Gina, and Stacy were selected to appear in the ads for New Dove Firming Lotion... in their underwear. None of the women had modeled before. They ranged in size from an 8 to 12 and represented a variety of races. Most unusual about the women: they

love their curves. They served to introduce consumers to the campaign (PPA).

The campaign proved to be tremendously successful. After only six months, Dove earned a 2.3 percent market share in the hand and body lotions category (Russell). The campaign incited buzz, both from media outlets and word-of-mouth. The highest compliment to the campaign was paid when the women of the campaign were invited to join Oprah Winfrey on the Oprah Winfrey show (Wikipedia).

### **Body Nourishers**

Following the success of the Firm Friends campaign, Dove aimed to use real beauty to promote their body nourishers lotion line. They designed a print campaign using several new women who again, were not supermodels. The campaign went beyond displaying women of non-supermodel shape by calling for viewer participation in judging various attributes of the women in determining if their beauty “flaw” made them ugly, or if it was irrelevant to it.

Ninety-five year old Irene Sinclair of London, England smiled in the ad that read “Wrinkled? Wonderful? Will society ever accept old can be beautiful?”. Graying Merlin Glozer, 45, also of London posed the question “Gray? Gorgeous? Why aren’t women glad to be gray?” Thirty-four year old Tabatha Roman of New York, New York flaunted her curves in her “Oversized? Outstanding? Does true beauty



only squeeze into a size 6?” ad. Small chested Esther Poyer, 35, of London wore a tight shirt sans push-up bra in the ad that read “Half empty? Half full? Does sexiness depend on how full your cups are?” Finally, freckled 22-year old Leah Sheehan, also of London, posed the question “Flawed? Flawless? Does beauty mean looking like everyone else?” (Dove).

The ads were featured in *Elle*, *Marie Claire*, and *Cosmopolitan* among others. The brilliance of using magazines as the medium was that it allowed the real beauty to be juxtaposed to other conventional ads (PPA). Dove additionally worked with the magazines to develop a relationship in which the magazines offered to help build Dove’s beauty credentials in return for their marketing (PPA). Multiple magazines therefore began editorial debates on real beauty in light of the recent Dove campaign.

The ads pushed consumers to question their own beliefs on beauty by powerfully engaging them with a relatable individual. Viewers were directed to [www.campaignforrealbeauty.com](http://www.campaignforrealbeauty.com) to cast their votes. The voting was tracked and displayed on the website. Later, billboards with the images were displayed. New York’s Times Square held an interactive billboard that allowed consumers to text in their votes using their mobile phones. The results were displayed in real time. Much to the chagrin of marketers, the percent for fat

eventually overtook the fab number (Wikipedia) gaining some amount of negative publicity, but again striking debate as was the goal.

Dove had reached incredible success with their real beauties. The brand and its message had become major talking points among women (and some men), with message boards and blogs flooded with opinions. Contributors wrote about their struggles with eating disorders. Others admitted to getting plastic surgery, unable to love their looks as they were. Like it or hate it, people were truly beginning to call into question what they knew about beauty.

### **Hair Care**

It was in the best interest of Dove to continue forward with the campaign. Keeping in mind its original broad target audience of all women, all ages and of all sizes, Dove decided to work with a bigger canvas: television. Dove's first commercial launches its new hair care line while retaining its original message.

"Flip Your Wigs" shows hundreds of women with identical blonde hair flocking to a city where a voiceover discusses what defines beauty. In unison the women flip their wigs to reveal hair of all textures, lengths, styles and colors in celebration of their individual beauty (YouTube).

The campaign was well-received, but failed to create the buzz that the initial two campaigns had. Ad Track, an ad tracking system,

reported that among consumers 18-29, 23% liked the ad a lot, vs. the Ad Track average of 21%. Among older consumers, only 10% reported to liking it a lot (USA Today). Although sales figures were not released, Dove was reportedly pleased with the results in numbers as well as public debate (USA Today).

### **Little Girls**

Donning the same medium, Dove aimed for bigger results. The Superbowl was an unlikely pick for a brand like Dove, but it provided the opportunity for Dove to pit its message in opposition to scantily-clad cheerleaders and the ever-present busty beer ads. The stark contrast was a risk among the 500 million person audience (Wikipedia) whose heart-strings may be pulled or anger aroused at the party poopers.

The “Little Girls” spot features Cyndi Lauper’s song True Colors sung by a group of girl scouts. Elementary to high-school aged girls who “hates her freckles”, “afraid she is fat”, “wishes she were blond” and “thinks she’s ugly” are shown. “Let’s change her mind” is the next line that begins to introduce the Dove Self-Esteem Fund “because every girl deserves to feel good about herself” (YouTube).

The \$2.5 million ad proved itself successful. The contrast from the other ads forced Dove to stand out and the mass audience allowed the ad to become a collective piece of culture. Dove wanted to further

develop the idea of showing the results of an image based culture on young girls, but without the huge ad spend required for “Little Girls”.

### **Daughters**

Dove created a viral film called “Girl’s Self Esteem”, giving a rare glimpse into the minds of girls in honest and candid declarations of their beauty experience. Adding a new spin, Dove used the spot to promote a specific program within their Self Esteem Fund: Mother Daughter Workshops.

A film overview fails to capture the powerful words of the ordinary girls. Clips of their voices follow.

“And I don’t really like my weight.... I see myself as right in the middle and I want to be skinny.

“Like if I’m not pretty and people don’t accept me for who I am, the way I dress, then, it’ll make me feel bad but it will just give me more reason to pay attention in school cause I won’t have anyone to talk to the whole time.

“And then they started writing how I was anorexic... because we were really skinny.

“The first time I ever heard I was ugly, at school, I was in grade three or four. It was the first time anyone ever told me that so I didn’t know what to feel but I just felt it all the time.

“I don’t like my legs. Every time I wear a skirt I’ll keep tugging it down because I think my thighs are fat.

“It doesn’t seem so important what’s inside.

“I started losing weight, like I came back in grade nine and I was thinner and stuff and people just started talking to me, like, I had friends.

*(Mother)* “It’s hard because I do know what its like for them. I can’t give them my teenage answer, but I can’t give them my mom answer, because they won’t get it yet. I don’t even get it yet.

“Things won’t change until we change them” reads across the screen, directing viewers to learn more about Dove Mother Daughter workshops.

Dove strategically chose the new twist of promoting the workshop. Dove had developed the idea of creating a campaign fueled by the cultural backlash against the beauty industry. Dove continued to listen to consumers, some of whom were becoming frustrated with the campaign in terms of its sole emphasis on the media as the source for low self-esteem. Dove was receiving increased criticism that they were promoting self-esteem only to promote their bottom line. By including the Mother Daughter Workshops in the film, Dove is extending a sincere effort to raise girl’s self-esteem by tackling it from all angles and not solely from the standpoint of the media. The workshop put a face to the vague Self Esteem Fund and consumers responded accordingly.

With the leftover budget from the Daughters campaign, Dove began production on three mini-movies (Wikipedia). The films, like the Daughters film, were released virally on YouTube.com and on the Dove website. Two of the films championed as Dove’s most successful efforts to date.

### **Evolution**

“Evolution” was the first released. It gives viewers a glimpse into the evolution of an image, finally exposing the contrast between Doves real, untouched women and the fantasy land of other ads.

It opens with a woman taking a seat. Swarms of make-up artists and hair stylists enter to transform her from average to beautiful. Still frames are snapped with a camera while the artificial wind from a fan blows in her hair. Her image is then transported into a computer program much akin to Photoshop where her neck is made longer, her shoulders reshaped, her eyes larger, nose smaller, lips plumper, hair lighter before being plastered onto a billboard for all to see. “No wonder our perception of beauty is distorted” reads the final line (YouTube).

The video was the brain-child of producer Tim Piper who was inspired after seeing the amount of time his girlfriend spent applying makeup. His girlfriend, Stephanie Betts, was the woman in the film (Wikipedia).

The results were incredible. Within the first day, it was viewed over 40,000 times and 1.7 million times in the first month (Wikipedia). The film originally intended only to drive people to view the Daughters video had 12 million hits in the first year (Wikipedia). Traffic to the Dove site almost tripled when compared to the results following the Superbowl ad (Vox). The majority of bloggers wrote positively about the film (Wikipedia). Bloggers made the film one of the 15 most-linked-to-videos according to blog-tracking system Technorati (Vox.). Segments of the spot were featured on mainstream media including Ellen, The View, CNN, Entertainment Tonight and Fox’s *Geraldo* (Vox) despite having never paid anything to post the spot on YouTube.com. Spots for the Mother Daughter Workshop closed almost immediately (Vox).

The 75 second film was later used on TV and in cinema in the Netherlands and Middle East (Wikipedia).

Numerous copycat versions were posted onto YouTube. The most popular, “Slob Evolution” was created by Blink Productions. The video features a teenage boy eating unhealthy food, drinking and smoking. Just as in Evolution, pictures are taken, he is Photoshopped to be less-attractive, and is plastered on a billboard. The final line reads “Thank God our perception of real life is distorted. No one wants to look at ugly people” (YouTube). It was used primarily as a way to raise awareness of the studio. It won acclaim and was nominated for a number of industry awards (Wikipedia)

The film costs only \$50,000 to make, but Ogilvy and Mather estimated the exposure value to be over \$150 million (Wikipedia). Within the advertising industry it won two Cannes Grand Prix Lions (Garfield, Dove’s New Onslaught), an Epica D’Or award and a Clio (Wikipedia).

### **Onslaught**

The follow-up viral video, “Onslaught”, astoundingly gained equal popularity as measured by number of views. It exposes the pervasiveness of the beauty industry and its effect on children. Bob Garfield of Advertising Age magazine wrote “In one brief moment, it indicts the culture’s obsession with Barbie-doll exteriors, raises the consciousness of girls and women and exposes the inner ugliness of the so-called beauty industry (Garfield, Dove’s New Onslaught).

Onslaught opens with a young girl looking into the camera. To the tune of “Here it comes” she is bombarded with images from the beauty industry of perfect, bikini-clad women, magazines featuring diet and beauty-related headlines, products offering “younger, smaller, lighter, firmer, tighter, thinner, softer” results, a woman’s binge and purge weight-loss-gain battle, and the needles of plastic surgery. “Talk to you daughter before the beauty industry does” reads as the original young girl crosses the street. Of course, the video directs viewers to download information about the self-esteem program (YouTube).

The majority of consumers thought positively of the video. “A worthy cause, a brilliant strategy, a flawless video. It all amounts to something very close to perfection. So, yes, absolutely, four stars” (Garfield, Dove’s New Onslaught). Creativity.com ranked it as one of the most viewed viral videos of 2007. Some ad critics argued that it lacks the no-language barrier that Evolution did (adgoodness).

Viewers again posted copycat videos. The most famous copycat is Onslaughter. It documents the deforestation of Indonesia’s lowland and forest suggesting the majority of it is cut down to supply palm oil that is used as an ingredient in Dove products. The ad was made by GreenPeace (YouTube).

### **Amy**

The third viral video in the Daughters series failed to attract the same attention as the previous two. “Amy” shows a boy riding his bike. When he



arrives at his destination he cries out “Amy” through the gate until sunset. Across the screen reads “Amy can name 12 things wrong with her appearance. He can’t name one. Sent to you by someone who thinks you’re beautiful” (YouTube). Although the Dove Self Esteem Fund logo appears at the end, Dove lost the big push for the fund at the end. It demonstrates Doves ability to sell the brand with little mention of it. Dove has captured the brand equity of real beauty to such an extent that its work stands to represent the brand sans the Dove name.

### **ProAge**

The next Dove campaign was the most controversial. Dove ProAge was introduced to 40 million aging baby boomers in the US on February 19, 2007 (Konrabida, TIME). Around the world, anti-aging products account for \$13 billion (TIME). While the market is huge, the product doesn’t fall as neatly into the real beauty campaign as others. The new product, although renamed, is an anti-aging product. It is difficult to sell a product that asserts older women must stop the aging process while maintaining that they are beautiful as they are. Ogilvy and Mather carefully worded the communications such that rather than flaunting the power to remove wrinkles and signs of aging, ProAge allowed women to flaunt their age in the most beautiful way possible. Dove says “It is important to care for rather than disguise your changing physical appearance” (funny business).

The campaign featured print, TV and outdoor elements. All elements showed nude women, posing in a Calendar Girls-esque fashion. The TV spot featured many women, all “too old to be in an anti-aging ad”. Text read “but this isn’t anti-age, this is proage.” Controversy arose when the ad was banned from television by the FCC in America because it “shows too much skin” (The Tenth Muse). Bloggers once again were not shy in posting responses. Some argued, “The public is not ready to see that” and “Dove is right that we don’t want to look 25 when we’re 50, but we don’t want to look so natural either” (TIME). Supporters argued back, “The women who appear in the current Dove Pro Age ad are hardly sexualized. Unclothes, yes- sex objects that might warm teen sensibilities? NEVER” (digital hive) and “Excuse me...Victoria Secret models can strut and pole dance across our TV screens but Dove’s revolutionary ProAge commercial, a beautiful and sensitive portrayal of bodies of women 50+, is banned in the US?!” (funny business). Another blogger believed the ban was no accident. “It’s a shame the ad was lifted but then again, smart companies don’t mind creating a bit of controversy (see Marketing two-step) to get their message across, so mission accomplished for Dove” (funny business). There is no reason to believe this was not the case.

It wasn’t until months later that the next controversy followed the ProAge ad, threatening the entire Real Beauty campaign. Reporter Lauren Collins profiled prominent photography retoucher Pascal Danging. She commented on the hours that went into retouching the photos for the Real

Beauty campaign which Dove had always maintained were in fact, real. She quoted Danging as saying “Do you know how much retouching was on that. But it was great to do, a challenge, to keep everyone’s skin and faces showing the mileage but not looking unattractive” (Neff, Retouching, 1). The hypocrisy of retouching an image presented as real, an image whose entire campaign is based on its reality, created quite a stir for Dove. Dove and Ogilvy and Mather adamantly denied any wrong-doing and Danging reported his quote was taken out of context, but The New Yorker stood by its story (Neff, Dove, 2). The controversy created buzz, but its long-term effects were relatively minute.

Apart from the controversy surrounding the campaign, the effectiveness of Dove’s efforts remain to be seen. While Dove found that women over 50 say they are not represented in the media, they failed to ask their target if they cared. The Real Beauty campaign works because consumers were fed up with the size two supermodel. Is there a subtle backlash against the deep seated fear of aging that is required to make the campaign work?

## **Hair**

After the controversial ProAge campaign, Dove released two viral videos on their website. The first video, “Hair” is set to techno music. It shows a women getting her hair styled into umpteen different do’s with the help of unnatural processes and materials like bonding glue, 2100 watts, 300

stitches and shoe polish. By the end viewers are asked “Do you really want that Hollywood hair?” Viewers are told to “Love your hair” and are directed to [doveloveyourhair.com](http://doveloveyourhair.com) (Dove).

Actress Ali Larter of the popular show “Heroes” chose to work with Dove by doing her own hair for the 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Primetime Emmy Awards. She said, “There is a lot of work that goes into Hollywood hair and I want women to know that it is unrealistic for every day. I am going to go out on a limb by doing my own hair for the Emmys without any stylists. I am going to use Dove Hair Care products for five days, get my hair in great shape and I am going to rock the red carpet. I am doing all of this to help women realize the potential of their own hair and feel more confident every day” (Heroes).

### **Under Pressure**

The second video, “Under pressure” shows a girl standing in the street looking at a bus stop ad. In much the same way as Onslaught, a montage of beautiful women are bombarded before her. We see the child again, sitting on the couch clearly in front of the television. The screen reads, “Girls are under more pressure than ever. So Dove created Self Esteem Workshops. So far, 2 million girls have begun to see themselves as beautiful.” A girl is shown in one of the workshops telling the audience, “I promise to think of myself as a beautiful person” (Dove).

Neither viral video has received much attention or created buzz.

## **Go Fresh**

Dove's Go Fresh campaign was launched in 2008. It includes traditional media like TV and print as well as online featuring Alicia Keys. While the print includes lines like, "No girl should need a guy to get that tingly-all-over feeling" and television depicts a more physically "normal" girl enjoying herself in her body (Dove), its emphasis is on product quality. It fails to overtly express the real beauty message. The message shift was likely intentional.

One limitation of cause marketing is that it fails to communicate product quality (GOOD). This is because product quality messages are most often wrapped in rational appeals about more technical features whereas cause marketing relies on an emotional appeal. Dove needed to reestablish itself as a quality brand and thus chose to focus on the freshness of its ingredients over real beauty.

## **Self Esteem Fund**

The Dove Self Esteem Fund "was developed to help free the next generation from self-limiting beauty stereotypes" (Dove Self Esteem Fund). Its goal is to reach 5 million girls by 2010 with its message that beauty exists in many shapes and forms. Feelings of physical inadequacy often lead to low self-esteem which prevents girls from living up to their full potential (Dove Self Esteem Fund).

The fund “develops and distributes resources that enable and empower women and girls to embrace a broad definition of beauty” and “provides needed resources to organizations that foster a broader definition of beauty” (Dove Self Esteem Fund). The campaign invites involvement by asking volunteers to host beauty workshops or donate monetarily (Dove Self Esteem Fund).

### **Beyond Compare**

Dove’s photography exhibit, “Beyond Compare” toured globally with photographs showcasing diverse images of female beauty from 67 female photographers. It aimed to demonstrate that beauty is about much more than just stereotypes, to inspire dialogue and to challenge women to question beauty stereotypes (JGK).

The display was made by The Taylor Group of Brampton, Ontario (JGK).

## **Cause Marketing**

## **The Business**

Dove's campaign was well-developed, based on insights of an emerging trend. The public began a serious conversation on an international level about beauty, a conversation that had been relegated in the past to an intimate group of friends. Love it or hate it, Dove incited dialogue.

While Dove did set out with the goal of promoting conversation, as a business, their primary goal is always to increase profits. Dove aligned itself with a greater good as a means to increase sales by gaining the moral approval of customers.

The following will detail research in cause marketing and the ways in which it is best suited to the Dove brand.

## **Cause Marketing**

Cause marketing is a powerful marketing tool that aligns a for-profit business with a non-profit organization for mutual benefit. It has gained popularity as the marketplace has become increasingly crowded and store brands more competitive (Why). Additionally, media fragmentation makes it more difficult for brands to demand premium pricing (Why).

Research also shows that today's consumer desires more from brands. Consumers are looking to purchase products that align with personal values (Why). Brands that develop a social bond with consumers, appealing to their emotions with a connection to a cause, experience increased sales and brand loyalty (Why).



The primary benefit of cause marketing for Dove is in brand differentiation. Existing in a crowded market, Dove failed to stand out from the competition in its message. In a market of such large, successful competitors, it also failed to beat the competition in terms of share of voice. Dove needed to not only change their message to step away from the crowd, but to change their message so drastically as to differentiate themselves from an entire category.

### **The Target**

Cause marketing does not appeal to all consumers in the same way. Younger women of a higher SES are the most likely to opportunistically believe that they have the power to help promote change, to see good in the world, and the most likely to change behavior based on cause-marketing. Changing their purchasing behaviors to match brands that promote good causes gives consumers the sense that “we are there with you in your efforts to change the world” (GOOD).

Women are more affected by cause marketing because they are more likely than men to make the connection between something that is good for the self and good for others (Walsch). 63% of women said that taking care of others is a part of taking care of themselves (Walsch). 77% of women compared to 64% of men consider a company’s reputation when purchasing gifts (Proving). By participating in doing good, women are able to create their “Idealized Self” (Walsch).

Women of a higher socio-economic status are more likely to purchase brands that are socially responsible. Consumers who feel guilt for what they have as compared to others enjoy purchasing brands that do good because they aid in alleviating such guilt (GOOD). 36% of women surveyed in a group of women with a HHI of \$50,000+ reported feeling guilty that they have so much while others have so little (GOOD). This guilt correlated to income- more people with higher incomes felt guilt than people with lower incomes (GOOD).

Younger consumers are more responsive to brands that do good. (Younger here is used as a relative term to describe pre-teens to 50-year old women.) College students are among the most socially responsible consumers, apt to purchase products that engage with their values (College). This is an important group to target because they are more likely to have financially backed purchase power in the future and because they are early adopters and influential in the success of a product (Young). In a study by Alloy Media & Marketing, Harris Interactive and Cone Inc it was found that 1 in 4 college students purchased a product in the last year because it was viewed as socially conscious (College). When probed about factors that drive purchase decisions, 33% indicated that they prefer brands that give back to the community, are environmentally safe, or that are connected to a cause, beating responses such as humor and celebrities (College). "We are seeing that today's young people expect corporations to be socially responsible and that students prefer to associate with brands that they perceive to be positive

contributors to the community", said Samantha Skey, SVP, Strategic Marketing, Alloy Media + Marketing.

The ideal consumer of cause marketing is a young woman of higher SES and the ideal consumer of Dove is a young woman of higher SES. The Dove brand produces primarily products for females. At a higher price point than other brands, it additionally targets people who are wealthier and can afford the luxury of Dove. Lastly, the ideal consumer of Dove is younger. While this is ideal, Dove had previously failed to speak to a younger audience. Dove was seen as an old brand. It was bound to die with its aging consumers if it did not breathe new life and make itself young again. Without change, Dove recognized it would cease to exist. Cause marketing was used to appeal to a younger demographic, eager to participate in brands that are socially conscious.

As a whole, people are positively responsive to cause marketing campaigns. The following is statistics on how cause marketing campaigns impact consumers perceptions and behavior.

- 92% of consumers consider it important for corporations to contribute to non-profits (Proving).
- If price and quality were equal, 90% of teens claimed they would switch to the cause-related brand (Proving).
- Of American consumers surveyed, 76% said they have contributed to a cause-marketing campaign (Proving).

- 60% of consumers reported intention to purchase a product that contributed a portion of sales to a cause over the holiday season (Proving).
- 48% of American and British consumers reported to be or have been moved by cause-marketing to change brands, use a product more, try a new product, or get information about a product (Proving).
- When consumers are made aware of a company's affiliation with a cause, they rate it higher in terms of trust, endorsement, bonding and innovation (Proving).
- A survey of MBA graduates from top business schools found that over 97% of respondents were willing to sacrifice up to 14% of financial compensation to work for a company that is socially responsible and ethical (Proving).
- 87% of employees at companies with cause-marketing campaigns are loyal to their employers compared to only 66% of those without such programs (Proving).

The above statistics indicate that consumers are responsive to and appreciate companies that do good. The psychology behind the response is interesting. When probed, it was discovered that consumers enjoy affiliating themselves with a brand that does good because it makes them feel better on a personal level (GOOD). It helps the consumer feel like the person he/she wants to be (GOOD). The customer moves closer to his/her idealized self with each purchase (GOOD).

Consumers were asked how they feel about themselves after making a purchase from a good company. 70% felt more socially responsible, 54% felt that they were living their values, and 27% even felt smart (GOOD).

Additionally, 71% of consumers found it appealing that purchasing from a company related to a cause allow them to support said cause without much effort (GOOD). People multitask and are increasingly expecting their money to multitask too (Walsch).

### **The Cause**

When choosing a cause, companies must remember relevance: relevance to the brand and relevance to the consumer. The cause serves as a meeting ground for the two on which to develop a powerful and lasting relationship.

First is relevance to the brand. People notice causes, but often have a difficult time recalling the brand that is linked to a cause. It must be noted that not all successful cause marketing campaigns promote causes that are relevant to the brand as is the case with the MAC AIDS Fund, but it is more rare and difficult to establish. Dove carefully navigated the ground between relevance and hypocrisy. As a beauty product, it was difficult for Dove to combat beauty. Dove repositioned itself as a personal care brand to avoid foreseeable criticism.

Second is relevance to the consumer. Dove found that appearances and the constant social pressure to physically fit in is very relevant to young

women today. The problem was coming into social consciousness and on a more impersonal level was already beginning to pervade many media. A collective language around the issue had been developed and thus a foundation for the campaign was laid.

Dove proceeded then to make decisions about the nature of their relationship with the cause. Dove desired their commitment to be long-term rather than a short-term promotional period. The reason for this decision is detailed below in the Methods section. Dove additionally wanted the cause to be across product lines rather than attaching the cause to a single product and hoping for positive associations across products. This decision coincided with their upcoming product launches into many new product categories like hair care. Finally, Dove desired to reach a massive target: all women, and thus needed the vast majority of their budget to be spent on communications. These three factors led Dove into creating an awareness campaign. (Many other cause-marketing campaigns aim to contribute monetarily to a cause.) The campaign's initial success followed by increasing criticism of Dove's true commitment led Dove to create programs (ie: the Mother-Daughter Workshop and Self Esteem Fund) funded by the purchase of any Dove product.

### **Buzz**

Inciting "buzz" is one of the most powerful ways to communicate a cause-marketing campaign. Buzz can include PR, word-of-mouth, media reports or more. Buzz is important and powerful because it is free and has the

power to reach millions in a way that advertising cannot. It provides consumers who are wary of advertising an additional reason to believe.

When presented with information about a company's cause, consumers most trust people or organizations that have been helped by the company (Doing). Dove's campaign aims to reach an entire community of women for involvement and thus consumers needed only to turn to a friend for word-of-mouth information on the ads. The second most effective source for communicating the good a company does is through news television, radio, newspaper or magazines. In the case of Dove, media sources jumped at the chance to report on the campaign because it was a story that they were already telling. Dove did tremendously well in inciting buzz, making a small budget far more powerful.

### **Impact on Profits**

Cause marketing has a high potential to increase sales of a product. Research conducted by GolinHarris found that good corporate citizenship inspires consumers to (in rank order)

- 1.) Try the company's products for the first time
- 2.) Welcome the company into the community
- 3.) Recommend the product to friends and family
- 4.) Improve trust of the company, employees and products
- 5.) Improve opinion of the company's reputation (Doing).

Despite the highly positive potential that cause marketing has, few companies are participating. The same study found that only 25% of consumers surveyed believe that corporate America is doing an excellent or good job in its commitment to corporate citizenship (Doing). A study commissioned by Self Magazine found that 32% expect companies to do good and 85% would like to see companies do more good. The “low expectations and high hopes suggest that now is the perfect moment to affiliate with good” (GOOD).

Perhaps more companies have opted out of cause marketing because it is difficult to grapple with its effectiveness in terms of impact on profit. While it is often easy to measure the impact that cause marketing has on the non-profit that is aiding, it is often more difficult to accurately measure the effect it has on the for-profits bottom line.

The following examples demonstrate the potential effectiveness of cause marketing for the cause. Cause marketing helped American Express raise \$1.7 million in 1983 for the Statue of Liberty restoration (Proving). McDonald’s gathered \$9 million for its Ronald McDonald House in 1994 and Avon has thus far generated over \$300 million to fight breast cancer worldwide (Proving). A successful and strategically planned cause marketing campaign does generate aid, often monetary, for the deserving cause.

While the for-profit company is eager to help, they are also eager to test the effectiveness of their campaign for their own brand. The following are examples of ways in which cause marketing has helped a company’s sales and profits.



- During a 6-week promotion in over 400 Walmart stores that donated 15 cents per purchase to MAAD, Coke sales increased 490%.
- After American Express partnered with a hunger-fighting organization transaction with the card increased and more merchants began to accept the card. Cardholders expressed support and increased satisfaction with American Express and employees began volunteering their time to fight hunger.
- Engine makers Briggs & Stratton partnered with the National Wildlife Federation to produce an online campaign educating the public about the importance of mower maintenance in cutting pollution emissions. The company saw a tripling of tune-up kit sales.
- Cephalon Corporation co-branded several of its poorly-selling pans with Share Our Strength, donating \$5 of every purchase to the non-profit. Sales increased 250%.
- Major British telecommunications service, BT Group, offered anyone who signed up for its voicemail service a donation to ChildLine, a 24-hour helpline for children in danger. Sign-ups increased 25% and direct mail response was three times the normal rate during the promotion.

Further, cause marketing adds value to a product. Consumers are willing to spend more money on a product that they believe is doing good-

fact, they're willing to spend an average of 6.1% more on a product just because of its connection to a cause (GOOD). In a more concrete breakdown, the category that cause marketing raised the brand value of the most is beauty and health (GOOD).

### **Growth of Cause Marketing**

Cause marketing is expected to grow, hitting a record high in 2008 with an anticipated \$1.5 billion spent on cause marketing according to the IEG Sponsorship Report (Growth). The following shows the growth of cause marketing over the last few years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>\$ Spent</b>	<b>% Increase</b>
2007	\$1.44 billion	10.40%
2006	\$1.34 billion	20.20%
2005	\$1.17 billion	18.40%
2004	\$988 million	7.20%
2003	\$922 million	6.30%
2002	\$816 million	13%
1990	\$120 million	

### **Methods**

If produced correctly "Good brands have the power to make their consumers feel better about their purchases and themselves" (GOOD). The GOOD study commissioned by Self Magazine discovered four better business practices for companies pursuing cause marketing campaigns. They include transparency commitment, consistency and advertise and are detailed below (GOOD).

The more transparent a company is, the more honestly it is perceived. For consumers, it's not just about the brand doing good, but about how the individual consumer does good too. Only when the consumer trusts a brand can she/he begin perceive the self as doing good via purchase power (GOOD).

Commitment equates to sincerity for the consumer who desires to know that the corporation truly wants to help. A committed company means a committed customer (GOOD).

Consumers want consistency in cause marketing campaigns. The campaign must extend across all advertising media. Any mixed message can equate to confusion and skepticism. The consumer needs to know that the commitment is authentic (GOOD).

Finally, it is essential to advertise. Often, consumers fail to support a brand with a cause because they are unaware that the cause exists. The top two reasons for not supporting a good brand is 1.) not knowing enough about what the company is doing and 2.) forgetting once in-store (GOOD). Only 4% are not interested (Walsch). One consumer noted "I could probably rattle off a handful of names of companies that are doing good. And there are probably thousands. So I think that they could be doing a much better job of getting the word out" (GOOD). 96% of consumers learn about a cause through marketing communications. The advertisement should not only inform, but should additionally seek to develop an emotional connection with the customer. Advertising the cause that a company is linked to "invites the consumer to see the brand in ways she most wants to see herself" (GOOD).



## **Conclusions**

The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty is nothing short of advertising brilliance. My evaluation has led me to conclude that the campaign was in fact effective in terms of both society and the brand.

Dove drew upon the urgent relevance of beauty and the evolving beauty backlash as the central cause for its campaign. Unrealistic portrayals of beauty, including those portrayals that exist in the media, urge girls and women to aspire to a false perfection. While it arguably affects the psychology of all in that it lowers self-esteem and self-confidence, for some it has deadly consequences as the aspiration to be thin suffocates all other goals. Dove's continued commitment through various communication efforts, inspired dialogue, and the Dove Self Esteem Fund ensured to consumers the authenticity of Dove's concern. Further, the campaign seems to be working. When asked about the images in Dove ads, 76% described the women in the ads as beautiful and 68% admitted that the ads made you think differently about the brand (Russell).

Cause marketing is the most effective way for Dove to communicate. Cause marketing reestablished the dying Dove brand as relevant by appealing to a younger, wealthier female target that is most likely to use spending power to support a brand behind a cause. The effort extended the budget by inciting word of mouth advertising and PR, thereby effectively competing with the large share of market of other beauty brands. Dove successfully spent only one-fifth of a normal personal care product launch on their firming lotions, but generated a 2.3% market share within six months (Russell). Overall, "The

campaign resulted in a 24% sales increase during the advertising period across the entire Dove brand” (Russell).

While I appreciate the effort made by Dove to use their advertising budget for a greater purpose, I must qualify any statement by arguing that cause marketing campaigns do not work for all brands. Axe is a Unilever product under scrutiny for supporting a message oppositional to Unilever’s Dove. Axe regularly depicts women as busty and beautiful, eager to jump on any man with the right scent (YouTube).

Unilever reps demand that the ad is in good fun and I have to agree. The ads are such extreme and overt depictions of a false “fantasy land” that they are not harmful. As Garfield put it, “Therein the confounding question: Is advertising that postures as refreshingly honest-only to engage in the business-as-usual of exploiting vanity, insecurity, and self-delusion- better or worse than the standard supermodel Big Lie?”(Women). I believe it is ads that more covertly support harmful or negative messages but that mask as the norm that are more harmful than fantasy land depictions. Not all brands are suited for cause marketing, nor should they be lest the consumer becomes disillusioned by the monotony. Axe produces successful advertising in a manner different than Dove. While it doesn’t help in the way Dove aims to, it is my opinion that it doesn’t hurt either.

With the launch of the Go Fresh campaign, I found myself personally enraged with Dove. By embarking on a new path, Dove has to some degree abandoned real beauty and in turn abandoned the millions of consumers that

believed in Dove's efforts. The Go Fresh campaign looks and feels like other beauty ads, placing Dove squarely where they began. I fear that Ogilvy and Dove will realize too late that the most positive advertising decision would be to continue on with real beauty. Consumers will distance themselves from the campaign and the product, feeling hurt by the deceit of false authenticity and commitment to a greater good. Without Dove, the international dialogue will abruptly end at a time when the conversation is far from finished. The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty only started to scratch the surface of a deep issue. Dove has the chance to change culture, affecting not just individuals but entire societies. The campaign has not run its course. It could and should continue for generations and it is my hope that Dove resurges efforts so that every woman can begin to see herself as a beautiful person.

My idealistic self hopes that more brands will begin using their large budgets as a tool to both sell a product and promote or support a greater good. I graduate now with the same dream that I entered Syracuse University with: to use advertising as a tool with which to communicate to the masses to promote positive change. Be it through overt, extensive cause marketing that aims to sell an ideal or financially support a cause or merely through more covert efforts to reduce stereotypes in the media, I believe that advertising should aim to better the world. Advertisers have great power in communicating to the masses, and with this power come great responsibility. Dove offers hope as a brand that moved from representing "submissive



femininity” (Russell) to female empowerment while dramatically increasing sales.

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## Capstone Summary

In 2005, Dove launched a groundbreaking campaign: The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty. The cause marketing campaign challenged women to question their notions of beauty across the globe. The effectiveness of the campaign on Dove's profits lie in its believability in the cause. My thesis aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty both in terms of its effects on Dove sales and its chosen cause in America.

The campaign grew out of fear of a brand in decline. The Dove brand was seen as old and unchanging. Their most well-known product, the Dove beauty bar, was in the showers of the elderly. Dove recognized that without change, their brand would become irrelevant and slowly die with its users.

Dove aimed to reach a younger demographic without alienating their current consumers. Cause marketing was the optimal solution. Younger populations are a generally socially conscious group, idealistic enough to believe positive change can occur in the world. They seek brands that do good, using their spending power to support the efforts. Women in particular are more likely to support brands that they perceive to be doing something positive.

Cause marketing campaigns are far more effective when the cause is relevant. Dove chose to tackle the unrealistic portrayals of beauty and its damaging effects on women after research led to the startling fact that only

2% of women worldwide would chose to describe their look as beautiful.

Feeding on the beauty backlash, Dove aimed to take the conversation from the private realm to the public, starting an international dialogue between all women.

90% of women between the ages of 15 and 64 wanted to change at least one aspect of their physical appearance with body weight ranking as the highest. Some women were dying to be thin, others destroying their bodies with endless diets. The majority of women want to lose weight, and are losing their sense of confidence and worth in the process.

Dove shocked the nation when it unveiled its first campaign featuring eight real women dressed only in their underwear. The ad looked so different from all others currently seen in magazines and certainly from other beauty ads. The drastic move allowed Dove to reposition itself from a beauty brand to a personal care brand while simultaneously repositioning every beauty brand as “bad” for presenting such unrealistic, damaging portrayals of beauty. Establishing itself as a personal care brand allotted Dove the perfect platform on which to launch new products. These included hair care, deodorant, shower gels, and skin care products.

Following the initial shock, Dove aimed to make women speak. Dove launched a new set of ads featuring a woman with a supposed beauty flaw, challenging women to check off a box with a positive or negative attribute such as “wrinkled or wonderful”. It further invited women to join the beauty debate.

This move inspired one of the most powerful forms of advertising: word of mouth. Women began voluntarily entering blogs and talking to friends, neighbors, teachers. Further, the campaign incited much PR with stories appearing continuously in thousands of news sources.

To further enhance the believability of Dove's relationship to the cause, the Dove Self Esteem Fund was developed, with every purchase supporting the effort. Under the fund, self-esteem workshops were created to help young girls see themselves as beautiful people. Mother Daughter Workshops were developed after listening to consumers frustrated by Dove's sole focus on the media. The workshop put a face to the vague fund.

Traffic to the Dove site was incredible, with consumers actively seeking more information. This insight led to the creation of a set of three viral videos working to unveil the beauty industry including Evolution, Onslaught and Amy. Dove's ownership of real beauty allowed them to simultaneously increase profits without any mention of Dove products.

To re-stir the pot, Dove introduced a commercial unfit for television. The Pro-Age spots featured older women in the nude. Consumers were furious at major television networks for banning the wrinkles while allowing less-appropriate, younger women to parade around for the masses. Consumers were moved to action.

When the economy changed and sales slipped, Dove needed to shift the focus onto the quality of their products. The Go Fresh campaign features the freshness of the ingredients and thus a compelling reason to splurge on the



higher price point of Dove products. It is a message that could not be communicated with cause marketing.

The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty is nothing short of advertising brilliance. My evaluation has led me to conclude that the campaign was in fact effective in terms of both society and the brand. When asked about the images in Dove ads, 76% described the women in the ads as beautiful (Russell) and “The campaign resulted in a 24% sales increase during the advertising period across the entire Dove brand” (Russell). Dove offers hope as a brand that moved from representing “submissive femininity” (Russell) to female empowerment while dramatically increasing sales.

My intention is to encourage Dove to move forward with the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty. The most recent Go Fresh ads indicate that Dove is embarking in a new direction apart from real beauty. In turn, Dove has abandoned the millions of women and consumers that believed in their efforts. Sales will decline when personally touched consumers distance themselves from the campaign, feeling deceived by the false authenticity and commitment to a greater good and when Dove’s ads begin to once again mimic all other beauty ads. Without Dove, the international dialogue will abruptly end at a time when the conversation is far from finished. The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty only started to scratch the surface of a deep issue. Dove has the chance to change culture, affecting not just individuals but entire societies. The campaign has not run its course. It could and should continue for

generations and it is my hope that Dove resurges efforts so that every woman can begin to see herself as a beautiful person.