


THE THIRD WAVE OF AD WOMEN

Tradition has dictated that a woman wait for a man to give her a diamond ring. No more. In 2003 ad agency JWT, formerly the J. Walter Thompson Company, launched the *Women of the World Raise Your Right Hand* print campaign to encourage women to think of DeBeers diamond rings in a new way. The premise of empowering women was the main thrust of the campaign that targeted women aged thirty-five to sixty-four—the evolved, affluent, fashion-savvy woman who needs no one’s permission to indulge herself. The ad copy encouraged women to think of diamond rings on their right hands as expressions of personal style for the independent, worldly, assertive side of their personality. “Your left hand says ‘we.’ Your right hand says ‘me,’” read one ad. “Your left hand declares your commitment. Your right hand is a declaration of independence,” claimed another (figure 10.1). As brilliant and expensive as an engagement ring that says “we,” the promotion of the “Me-Ring” as a symbol of independence and freedom connected with many women. Sales of right-hand rings were up as much as 10 percent in the first six months of the campaign.¹

On another level, this diamond campaign is emblematic of a larger, ongoing discussion in American society about the nature of women’s economic independence and identity—a third wave in feminist



**YOUR LEFT HAND LOVES CANDLELIGHT. YOUR
RIGHT HAND LOVES THE SPOTLIGHT. YOUR
LEFT HAND DECLARES YOUR COMMITMENT.
YOUR RIGHT HAND IS A DECLARATION OF
INDEPENDENCE. WOMEN OF THE WORLD,
RAISE YOUR RIGHT HAND.**

A DIAMOND IS FOREVER

THE NEW DIAMOND RIGHT HAND RING. CONTEMPORARY, ROMANTIC, MODERN VINTAGE AND FLORAL STYLES AT ADIAMONDISFOREVER.COM

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Figure 10.1. This J. Walter Thompson campaign encouraged women to think of DeBeers diamond rings in a new way. *Vogue*, November 2003.

thinking. Called the *New Feminists*, or the *postfeminists*, they emerged on the scene in the 1980s and generally speaking fell into the categorization of Generation X, born between the late 1960s and the early 1980s, as well as those who separated themselves from the preceding wave, or *Old Feminists*, with their emphasis on oppression that made women into “victims.” This third wave viewed using makeup and wearing provocative clothing as liberating, not confining. They learned martial arts for self-defense and power, while they reveled in their sexuality and used it boldly to get what they wanted. They also could be economically independent of the men in their lives. This image of the modern, individualistic woman, which appeared in advertisements like the DeBeers diamond ad and the popular HBO television show *Sex and the City*, was attached to a particular group of professional women with new freedoms and their own income.²

Instead of molding American women of all backgrounds into a single stereotype, advertisers recognized that there has never been only one female ideal in American culture, or even only two; there are many. Emphasis on the multiplicity of ideals and cultural diversity emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. This meant that far more attention would be given to the contributions of women, blacks, Latinos, gays, lesbians, and other minority groups in American society. In order to reach an increasingly diverse audience, advertisers had to face the challenge of drawing authentic images around particular groups, or *subcultures*, which spoke to different races, genders, ethnicities, and lifestyles, rather than trying to impose a rigid archetype—a single ideal. It was in this context that the third wave of ad women appeared and built upon the gains of previous generations.

Today, women are more powerful even on men’s terms than ever before in the advertising world and the world at large. Most of the people working in advertising, fashion, retail, and mass media are women. In 2005 women accounted for over half of those employed in advertising and related services (52.2 percent), management of advertising and promotions (56.1 percent), and advertising sales agents (50.2 percent).³ But the difference between what they were doing with their lives compared with the previous generation of Old Feminists is one of the most distinctive features of the last few decades.

Instead of focusing on the oppressive aspects of the marketplace, women now were in a place to positively impact the media, as well as the promotional appeal and imagery of ads, explains Linda M. Scott. “As a result, the dialogue that began in the 1970s between those who criticize advertising and those who are in a place to positively, actively affect the content of ads, has long since gone quiet.”⁴

FROM MASS CULTURE TO NICHE CULTURES

From the perspective of the twenty-first century, the multiplicity of female ideals can be seen as a reflection of the modern values of individualism, through which women identify themselves and their groups, such as the New Feminists. The most enduring aspect of the cultural rebellion of the 1960s and late 1970s, when American men and women challenged established institutions of the nuclear family, religion, and trust in government, was an even more radical form of individualism, a *new individualism* that emphasized personal happiness and the freedom to choose. This movement also shifted the focus from social activism in the sixties to an emphasis on personal fulfillment. No longer limited to freedom of religion or politics, this view included the freedom to buy consumer goods of one’s own choice, to earn as much money as one possibly could, or to do what one desired in his or her private life as well. In sum, people should *do their own thing*.

Thereby millions of Americans believed that they could achieve happiness and sought to construct their own identities to fit their own individual needs. During the 1970s, Americans increasingly turned away from society and sought support from self-help books like best sellers *Looking Out for #1*, *I’m Okay—You’re Okay*, and the *Complete Book of Running*. In particular, the white middle class looked for greater control over their lives and greater personal fulfillment in areas besides their jobs or community. They became converts to charismatic religions, vegetarianism, drug use, psychotherapy, all-night dancing at the disco, or physical fitness. As they experimented with new kinds of community, no longer did traditional sources of cultural

authority—family, religion, ethnic customs, and the past—dominate their lives. The nation's shared common culture split into dozens of subcultures, but their lives became more intertwined with consumption as a form of self-expression and personal fulfillment, as well as images and messages from advertising, the movies, popular music, sports, television, and later the Internet.

Greed Is Good

Encouraged by the relaxation of government regulation, tax reductions, and a soaring stock market, the making and spending of money became integral components of the mainstream culture. "Greed is good," declared Gordon Gekko, a real estate and stock speculator in the 1987 movie *Wall Street*, as young money managers became heroes of popular culture. With a resurgent economy, a wave of new products, and an enthusiastic consumer base, many Americans enjoyed an aura of prosperity throughout the 1980s. Defense spending, foreign investment, and the maturation of the baby-boom generation sent the real estate, finance, retail trade, and high-tech manufacturing industries soaring. The huge sums spent on publicity and financial speculation also generated thousands of high-paying jobs for young bankers, lawyers, MBAs, and stockbrokers. As long as the market kept going up, baby boomers apparently would enjoy splendid prosperity, except, perhaps, those employees of corporations that were restructured or broken up. In 1984 it was estimated that the twenty-five- to thirty-five-year-old age group controlled an astonishing 23 percent of the country's disposable income.

At the outset of their careers, these baby boomers became a new social phenomenon—*yuppies*, the young, single urban professionals, and *dinks*, married couples with double income and no kids. In 1980 *Black Enterprise* magazine coined the word *buppie* to describe the 21 percent of college-educated African Americans who lived in suburban areas and had upscale tastes in food, fashion, and lifestyles. A decade later, nearly thirty-two million African Americans had an estimated purchasing power of between \$170 and \$300 billion, and by the year 2000 that amount would almost triple to \$889 billion.⁵

The beneficiaries of the new wealth reveled in their status in the 1980s. They not only built large tract houses—what later critics called *McMansions*—and high-end vacation homes, but they also bought expensive luxury items. These well-heeled, well-traveled young professionals seemed to have an unlimited appetite for consuming premium goods—that is, the best money could buy. They drank Perrier, ate Hagen Daaz ice cream, and worked out in exorbitantly priced designer sweats and athletic shoes. Every jacket, polo shirt, and pair of jeans seemed to be stamped with a designer logo. But it was primarily BMW, Mercedes, and other costly automobiles that became badges of success. Such successful brands spoke to the core identity of their customers by allowing them to acquire material symbols of personal and social identity, created for the most part by advertising, merchandising, and publicity.

The prototype for this lifestyle brand was Polo created by Ralph Lauren. The retail stores reflected an upper-class lifestyle with luxurious wood paneling, while the advertisements featured pictures of attractive and wealthy people. With these images, Ralph Lauren created an implicit brand promise: If you buy our products, you, too, can aspire to this lifestyle. Not surprisingly, the not-so-wealthy became caught up in the quest to “have it all.” Many people wanted to at least look as if they were rich and powerful, and so the upscale trend trickled down to department and discount stores, which built strong fashion elements into their merchandising. For example, J. C. Penney promoted a private-label polo shirt sporting a fox emblem and claimed parity at a better price than the best-selling Izod line stamped with an alligator logo. Model Cheryl Tiegs lent her name to a clothing line for J. C. Penney, and actress Jaclyn Smith did the same thing for Kmart; Martha Stewart endorsed a line of lifestyle accessories.

But by the 1980s, mass media was fragmenting the nation’s mass market into an endless array of subcultures. No longer was the public limited to watching the same programs on three network stations (CBS, NBC, and ABC). Instead, cable television tailored shows to special audiences: MTV broadcast music videos, CNN showed news around the clock, the Cartoon Channel entertained children, Black Entertainment Television reached African Americans, and ESPN engaged sports enthusiasts. Subcultures developed around special

lifestyles that were built around leisure activities and interests. For example, people might join together in an enthusiasm for golf, foods, foreign travel, history, and any number of interests. By the end of the twentieth century, the expanding consumer capitalism and the sixties-style pursuit of personal fulfillment were inseparable. Following the currents of culture, advertisers tied their products to immediate gratification, distinct lifestyles, youth, and sexuality.

THE MOVING TARGET

Although the revived feminist movement opened up a far larger choice of opportunities for women, it also resulted in an enormous shift in the professional and educational activities of women. The number of two-income families increased and expanded the opportunities made available by an expanding consumer economy. Spurred on by affirmative action, employment opportunities for women, especially in the professions, increased sharply, while the number of homemakers dropped. In 1982 women accounted for 43.5 percent in the labor force; many professionals attained significant success and most made modest gains. Still, the question of how one should balance career and family continued to confront every professional woman who embarked on a career.

Similar to the civil rights movement of African Americans, the feminist movement also provoked a traditionalist counterattack, what Susan Faludi termed a cultural backlash. Lawyer Phyllis Schlafly's affirmation of ages-old gender roles received a warm response not only from traditionalist men but also from many religious orthodox women, working-class women, and homemakers, many of whom shared few of the values and experiences of the middle- and upper-class leadership of the feminist movement. Three states short of ratification, the Equal Rights Amendment died quietly in 1982. Although gender discrimination continued despite the organized feminist movement, the gains on behalf of women during the sixties and early seventies were by no means lost. Even if the ERA had been passed, by that time nearly all the sex-differentiated laws would have been wiped out.⁶

The Invisible Woman Becomes Visible

Looking back, popular culture was the most visible expression of the abrupt, enormous shift in the educational and professional activities of women since 1970. By the 1980s, the career woman had become a popular articulation of feminism in the mass media—brave and chic. For example, staunch feminist Anne Tolstoi Wallach of Grey Advertising wrote the Madison Avenue novel *Women's Work* in 1981. Drawing on years of ad women's hard-luck stories and spicing it up with sex, power, and success, she told the story of Domina Di Santis Drexler, who worked as a creative director at a leading advertising agency in the early 1970s. In addition, television programs of the 1980s and 1990s showed the professional female figure prominently, in such sagas as *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, as well as *Murphy Brown*, *Moonlighting*, and *Ally McBeal*. In other programs, such as *Who's the Boss?* and *Melrose Place*, women played the role of agency senior executives. This new heroine reflects a perspective on the independent, single career woman who also remains much more dependent than men on success in romantic relationships as a primary source of social identity and self-worth.⁷

In terms of images created by the mass media, what it meant to be a feminist had shifted from involvement in a network of women advocating social, political, and all other rights to being a *superwoman* or *supermom*. Two generations of women raised their education achievements and poured into the labor force. The Superwoman was the model of the new individualist who enjoyed all the pleasures of sexual freedom, marriage, and motherhood. She dressed in a power suit, carried an attaché case, and held a baby in her arms; she supposedly had it all and did it all. Not only did a career offer women individualist opportunities for self-fulfillment and liberation—so did consumption. Instead of demanding general social equality, she was driven by personal success. An example of the new individualist, the modern Superwoman turned to the marketplace, a career, and consumption for her opportunities for fulfillment and liberation. But the stereotypical, career-minded woman who swapped a briefcase for an apron was not nearly so common in real life. What we had in the mass media was a new set of clichés of women.

What Do Women Want?

In this era, marketers became increasingly perplexed about what women wanted, from financial services to cars to household items—and how to sell these things to them. Perhaps the work of Rena Bartos was the most influential in solving these problems and changing marketing to women. In 1982 Bartos, then a senior vice president and director of communications at the J. Walter Thompson Company, had written a book, *The Moving Target*, in which she analyzed the changing patterns of consumption and feelings toward consumption among women, as well as ways to reach it. Born in New Jersey, she studied at Rutgers University and did graduate work in sociology at Columbia University. After working in research at McCann-Erickson, she joined JWT in 1966.

According to Bartos, marketers generally tend to stereotype women as being married, but the reality, obviously, is that not all women are wives. Hence the aim of her book was to convince advertisers that women's role in the market is diverse and ever-changing, and a more realistic approach was needed for a changing and unpredictable marketplace. For marketers communicating with women, Bartos advised that it was particularly important to base their strategies and communications on an understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of the consumers themselves to avoid the danger of alienating valuable prospects.

Using demographics, Bartos studied populations in terms of characteristics such as age, income, and occupation. But she also recognized that many factors beyond simply age and gender came into play. Using a new form of market research called *psychographics*, which emphasizes the understanding of consumers' activities, interests, and attitudes, Bartos identified four new segments of the women's market: (1) the stay-at-home housewife, (2) the plan-to-work housewife, (3) the just-a-job workingwoman, and (4) the career woman. She also studied two other vast but largely unexplored markets: unmarried adults and people over age forty-nine. Among her findings, Bartos showed that the career woman and plan-to-work homemakers actually buy more products than stay-at-home moms, while career women use fragrances, cosmetics, and toiletries far more than just-a-job

women. Another important finding revolved around changing representations of men. Bartos showed that women favorably responded to imagery of new lifestyles that presented men in domestic roles—a father trying to make breakfast for his son or diapering an infant—rather than the usual office or factory stereotype.⁸

Even so, for the most part the advertising world assumed that the woman's world revolved around the man, due in part to the lack of women in both senior management on the client side and on the agency side. But that situation was changing partly because the marketplace was changing. By this time, a new generation of female college graduates of the late 1960s and early 1970s had entered advertising, despite their revolutionary friends' criticism of the advertising world, large corporations, and other issues. Although money was rarely cited as the motive, these aspiring ad women often listed glamour, strong interest in creative activities, and a desire for challenge as reasons to enter the profession. Others wanted to make a difference, suggesting that advertising could serve a useful purpose.

Nevertheless, discrimination toward women continued to be an inherent part of the late twentieth century. For the most part, the advertising profession was still segregated by sex, which meant continued wage discrimination, and women continued to encounter barriers to senior management positions. While the ranks of women in management continued to expand, they held only 2.5 percent of senior executive positions. African American women had even less representation. In 1992 *Advertising Age* ran an article titled "The Ad Industry's Little Secret." The story reported that African Americans filled only 5.2 percent of all the positions in the nation's advertising, marketing, and public relations companies; and among managers and professional-level employees, the figure was a minuscule 2.1 percent. In addition to race, other barriers remained for women trying to achieve senior executive positions. Some experts explained that it was the client, not the ad agency, who shut women out of the senior posts, to the extent that there remained a prejudiced view that women did not work on accounts for certain products, such as automobiles or industrial products. "Ninety-five out of 100 of the major clients are men. Most of them are not going to be comfortable with a woman at the top.

The idea of traveling with them, socializing with them, they're just not comfortable with it," explained an executive recruiter in 1986.⁹

For many other women though, a move from heading an office to heading an entire advertising agency was not a question of gender; it was a question of sacrifice. If women wanted to move to the top, they would have to be willing to give up their family. But many women rejected this view, choosing to work full-time and raise a family. Others left the traditional road to success and became consultants and freelancers, positions that would enable them to balance a career and a home. Still others opted for lives as traditional stay-at-home moms. For these reasons, the surge of women into jobs eventually shattered the notion that the female consumer market was one unbroken segment.

THE DECADE OF DECADENCE

As the purchasing power of workingwomen increased, some advertisers tried to go beyond the old stereotypes and redefine the way they advertised to women purely for economic reasons. Much of the new advertising catered to the career woman because she had more disposable income and remained loyal to specific brands.

For example, advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather created the 1985 American Express "Interesting Lives" campaign for both female and young male professionals, aiming to position the American Express Card as a symbol of people with interesting and multifaceted lives, people with unusual hobbies or unconventional careers. The American Express Card, the ads indicated, gave these holders the opportunity to indulge in their varied interests, to be spontaneous by going to an estate sale or even the Australian Outback, for example. Rather than featuring celebrities, the ads showed confident independent women using the American Express Card to take their husband to dinner or their kids to lunch, bantering with a flirtatious man in a bookstore, or checking into a hotel with suitcases and scuba diving gear. They also were planning surprise weekends, as in the case of a television commercial that pictured a woman taking her husband to a luxury inn, where they both jump on the beds like five-year-olds.

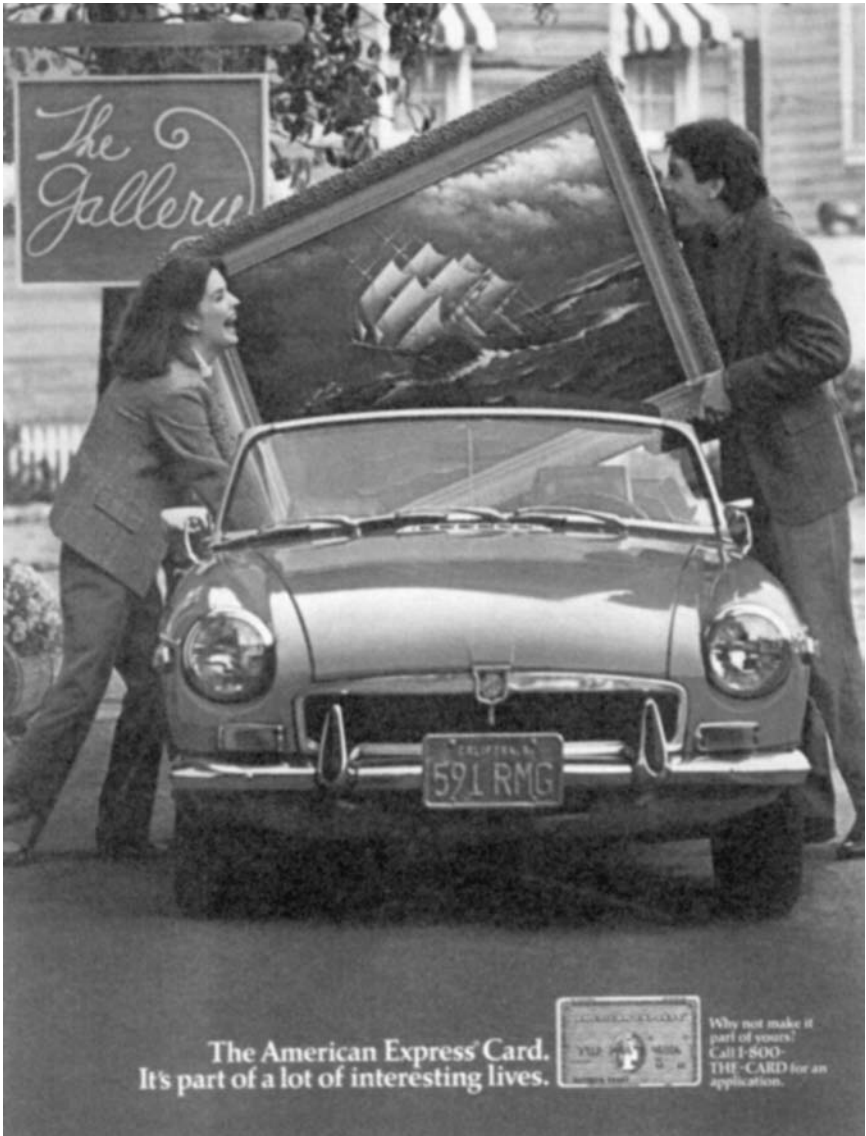


Figure 10.2. American Express went beyond old stereotypes and featured confident, independent women with interesting and multifaceted lives. *Rolling Stone*, May 9, 1985.

“The American Express Card,” the tag line says, “it’s part of a lot of interesting lives” (figure 10.2).

The ad campaign connected with women, and soon the number of female applicants doubled that of men. By 1984, 27 percent of American Express cardholders were women, compared to 10 percent in the late 1970s. Using the self-fulfillment theme, the ads no longer described why American Express was better or different than other credit cards; it simply was. Powerful images alone were expected to evoke confidence in the brand.

All the marketing to traditional stay-at-home moms and working-women did not necessarily apply to the entire woman’s market. Advertisers recognized that there were other consumers out there. The values of independence and personal fulfillment also began to assert themselves in sexually charged ads for everything from perfumes to blue jeans.

Sex and Symbolism

Whereas sex in advertising in the 1950s used a gorgeous girl in a tight sweater, expressed messages with double entendres, and was discreetly sensuous, there emerged an even greater use of sexuality in advertising in the 1980s. It can be traced to the sexual revolution, when Helen Gurley Brown’s *Cosmo* magazine came out with its first male centerfold in 1972, a nude Burt Reynolds. In the following year, the new magazine *Playgirl*, which explored women’s sexual fantasies with photos of male nudes, emerged as a counter to *Playboy*. These magazines paved the path for more sexualized ads in the 1980s and 1990s.

To enhance the allure of products, few advertisers explained the unique features or gave consumers a rational reason to buy the product. Beauty and fashion ads simply hinted at an experience showing fantasy or dream sequences resulting from using the product. This sexual adventurism is best represented with the work of Rochelle Udell, who captured the attention of women consumers. Although Udell worked as an art director on magazines such as *Gentlemen’s Quarterly*, *Self*, and *Vogue*, she did her most striking work in advertising. By the time she reached the age of forty in 1985, she had created some of

television's most sensual and provocative advertising for Calvin Klein and Chanel fragrance. Udell also headed the in-house advertising agency for Calvin Klein and later became senior vice president and creative director for Della Femimina, Travisano & Partners.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in art and education, Udell earned a master's degree in painting from Pratt School of Design. She began her career as a high school art teacher and helped her husband with his graphic design work on the weekends. To be of greater help, she took Milton Glaser's ten-month night school design course and later left teaching to start work as an art director in publishing. By 1976, after five years of working at *Vogue* and now divorced, she left and continued to work with one of her clients, fashion designer Calvin Klein. In 1980 she married Douglas Turshen, then art director with *House and Garden*, with whom she had worked.

In 1981 Udell suggested that Calvin Klein start his own in-house agency, since she felt outside agencies did not listen to him. He took her advice, launched CRK Advertising, and signed her to a two-year contract as chief executive. While pregnant with her first child, she began to create a series of Calvin Klein ads that shocked America's moral majority. To introduce the designer jeans, both Klein and Udell eventually agreed on a series of ads featuring five different types of American women, including white model Andie McDowell, teen star Brooke Shields, and black actress Shari Belafonte. Each ad was designed around the individual model. The result was sexy ads and commercial spots, such as fifteen-year-old Brooke Shields wearing a shirt and jeans while whispering: "You know what comes between me and my Calvins? Nothing." Three network-owned stations in New York banned the ads. Nevertheless, sales of the expensive jeans jumped nearly 300 percent following the first wave of commercials. The once humble "dungarees" had become big fashion.¹⁰

This foray into sexual adventures continued with advertising primarily aimed at women. With the understanding that women frequently bought fragrance for men, in 1984 Udell launched Calvin Klein Fragrance for Men in women's magazines and suggested that an erotic fantasy awaited them (figure 10.3). The following year, the launch of Obsession perfume for women took the erotic fantasy to another level,

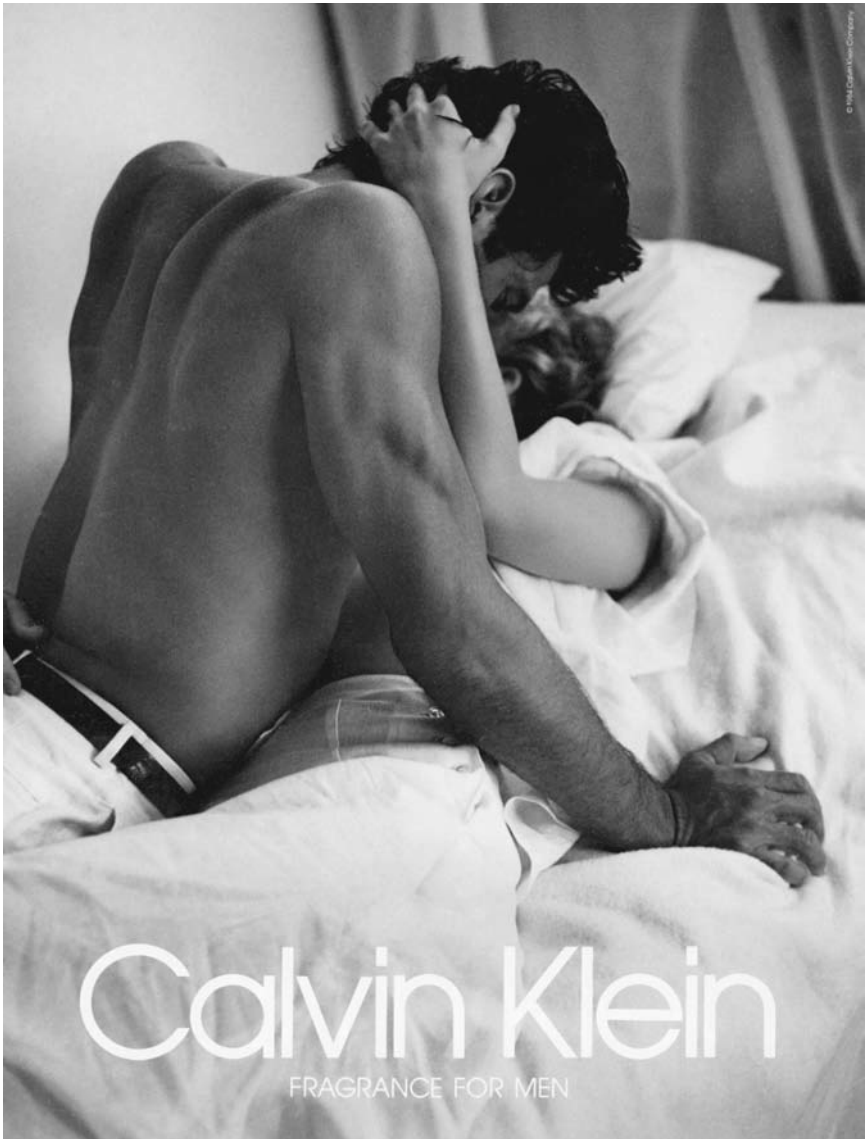
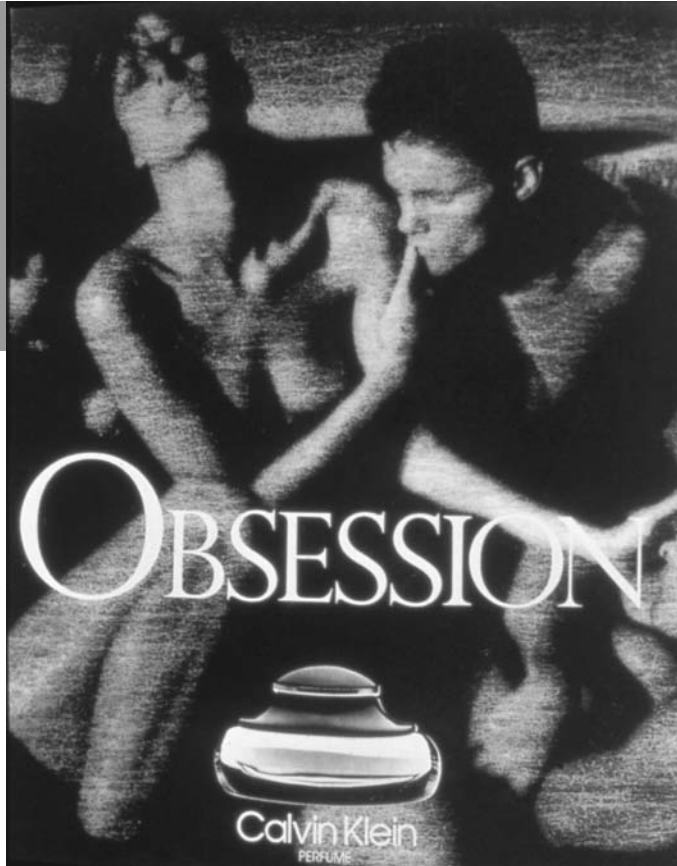


Figure 10.3. The use of erotic fantasy in men's fragrance ads was primarily aimed at women consumers, such as this Calvin Klein Fragrance for Men campaign in 1984.

showing images of intertwined nudes. The scintillating campaign shot the unknown Obsession perfume to the top of the market within months. The firm spent \$17 million to launch Obsession, and within one year, it was selling \$40 million worth of the perfume (figure 10.4).

Figure 10.4. The promotion of Obsession suggested an erotic fantasy world awaited consumers, 1985.



Many people found the sexual candor refreshing, even healthy, as long as it did not portray women in demeaning ways. In ads that were an expression of the product—soaps, lotions, cosmetics, lingerie, fragrance—sensuality worked. Much to the surprise of her many sister feminists, Gloria Steinem approved Calvin Klein’s Obsession campaign for *Ms.* magazine, which she founded and edited at the time. “Sexuality and nudity are a part of life, and if it’s appropriate, fine,” explained Steinem. “There’s a difference between women in tight jeans—where the ads are aimed at pleasing men—and ads like the Calvin Klein Obsession ad, where a man and woman are in positions of equality.”¹¹

So provocative, so distinctive, and so consistent have these images been, that sex and the Calvin Klein brand have virtually become one and the same. But what was the effect of more explicit and more pervasive sexuality in advertising? Sex had become part of the consumer culture.¹²

After decades of selling products by depicting women as sex objects, the image of a nude or nearly nude man as a prop became standard fare in magazine ads and television commercials for the women's market. Of this trend, business writer Jennifer Foote observed that advertisers had switched "bimbos," going from depicting women as "anxious half-wits and sultry sex objects" to "it's his torso, stripped and moist, promoting everything from Calvin Klein underwear to Kodak film." Not only did ads show more skin, but another set of provocative ads revolved around sexual fantasies with women in control.¹³

"The most risqué copy I have ever seen was for Paco Rabanne men's cologne," said David Ogilvy in 1983. Called *Man in Bed*, one of television's sexiest thirty seconds opened with a French-accented man stirring himself awake as the telephone rang. "Hello," he yawned into the phone. "You snore," a woman's voice informed him. "And you steal the covers," he responded jokingly. As the conversation continued, paintings and discreet camera angles hid his nudity; viewers never saw the woman. In a gender-role reversal, it was now the woman who rose at daybreak to go on a business trip, leaving the lovesick man in bed. A print and promotional campaign also ran; sales for Paco Rabanne went up 24 percent.¹⁴

This evolution of images of men was the result of the sexual revolution of the 1960s coupled with the breakthrough thinking and sexual candor of a new generation of feminists. The gains women had made in the workplace had actually made them more receptive to ads that represented their desires, or desirability, concluded marketing researchers. In the narratives of these ads, the source of women's power may have been her money or beauty and sensuality; nevertheless the man was under her domination. "Women like it when they're portrayed as taking charge of a situation," noted Rena Bartos. "It implies power."¹⁵

GLOBALIZATION

By the 1990s, economic realities combined with changing demographics and lifestyles created massive shifts in consumer behavior and buying patterns. Global competition had put American corpora-

tions under pressure to restructure, consolidate, and simplify, while the overall US economy shifted from an industrial base toward one rooted in information technology and services. Firms pared down their organizations to an essential core, slicing away layer after layer of the workforce through right-sizing, reengineering, and downsizing. In place of large corporate staffs, firms hired temporary workers on a project-by-project basis. Though the economy stabilized and even improved by 1995, the recession drove home the message that the seeming abundance was in fact finite.

Elaboration of Market Niches and Specialized Media

The classic American dream that hard work brings rewards was fading in the 1990s. For the first time, it seemed that a generation might not surpass or even match its parents' standard of living. Skyrocketing real estate prices vastly inflated the financial worth of many older Americans and placed home ownership out of the reach of many younger people. These emerging trends also coincided with the baby boomers settling down and starting families of their own, as well as often shouldering the burden of caring for their aging parents. Surveys showed couples divorced, entered short-term relationships, and experimented with joint households rather than live in the mythical American family in which the husband works and the wife stays at home with the children. In order for middle-class families to maintain or slightly improve on earlier income levels, increasingly husbands and wives had to work for additional money to pay for childcare, activities for children, and ownership of a second home. At the same time, costs for healthcare, housing, and college soared—all at a time when better jobs were moving overseas. Moreover, the baby boomers represented perhaps the last dominant WASP generation, as America also became more racially and ethnically diverse.

Given the confusion and complications of American culture, it had become almost impossible to speak to women in any single voice, their lifestyles had so dramatically changed with the economy and work world over the last thirty years. Now consumers might be baby boomers, New Feminists, Generation Xers, teens, older Americans,

gays, lesbians, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, and so on. And, all these different groups are composed of people with highly different lifestyles and values.

In recent years, skilled marketers merged information on where people live with the US Census Bureau demographic data to produce a form of market segmentation, or *geodemographics*, that identifies neighborhoods by zip codes with similar lifestyle characteristics throughout the country. Such systems like PRIZM provided powerful tools to marketers because they were able to tell what type of segment existed in a particular region or even country—for example, middle-income, urban office workers. Other advertisers continued to use insights from psychographics to segment markets based on lifestyles—consumer activities, interests, and opinions, such as the VALS 2 system developed by SRI International, which organizes the market into eight lifestyles.

Hence, advertisers addressed the new realities of the American family, pitching long-lasting, valuable time-saving features and rock-bottom prices, as well as wholesomeness to health-conscious parents. But consumers increasingly were tuning out televised sales pitches with remote controls, videocassette recorders, and DVD players; or they used software programs to block advertising from showing up on Internet Web sites. They had become too smart, too quick, and too elusive for the slow-moving conventional advertiser. Across all income groups, consumers were also more selective in their buying behavior and were opting for discounted, private-label goods instead of nationally advertised brand names. But images of workingwomen ironically became even scarcer than they had been during the great women's movements of the 1920s and 1970s, even though the two-paycheck family had become the norm. It seemed that the workingwoman had become such an integral part of American social and economic matrices that perhaps the advertiser and society took her work and independence for granted.

Third-wave feminism emerged out of this new generation, and feminists clashed over issues relating to sexuality, women's bodies, and cultural representations. Pop singer Madonna personified the postfeminism of this younger generation that was brought up on television, video games, and personal computers. Cars, magazines, music, and

clothing—it was hard to name a product marketers were not trying to sell to this prized audience. Advertisers more and more cast off sexual restraint, and pornography moved out of movie theaters and onto the Internet, videos, and later, DVDs. Fashions in clothing became more revealing. Increasingly, marketers began targeting preteens and teens, a group that became known as Generation Y and wielded enormous purchasing power by supplying schools with everything from branded refrigerators and school buses to athletic gear and computers.

Yet Generation Xers had little in common with their boomer parents, who came of age in the reactionary 1960s. These younger adults watched less network television, read different magazines, and were frustrated that the American dream seemed out of their reach. A dollar simply wouldn't buy as much as it had for their parents twenty or thirty years earlier. These young people, who made up 23 percent of the workforce in 1993, earned nearly one-third less than their parents at the same age. In 1973 the typical man age twenty-five to thirty-four earned nearly \$30,000 a year; in 1993 he earned only \$21,604 in inflation-adjusted dollars. Advertisers recognized the marketing message had to be one of long-lasting value to help consumers justify their purchases in these tight times. For these consumers, quality, durability, and reliability dictated their buying decisions. They also expected advertisers to represent products truthfully and to provide generous warranties that would be honored.¹⁶

Since too much diversity existed in the needs and preferences of these groups of consumers, further segmentation based on other demographic and lifestyle variables was called for before an appropriate target market could be located. So it had become popular for marketers to choose a relatively small group of consumers with a unique set of needs and who typically were willing to pay a premium price for goods and services that met those needs. An approach called *niche marketing* then grew in popularity, as the mass media continued to splinter into a more complex and narrowly defined array of special advertising vehicles.

Although television was one of the most striking examples of the dramatic shift from a national culture to subcultures, the use of the Internet exploded in the 1990s and the early years of the twenty-first

century. The new media had become the ideal marketing tool to identify and access market niches. Millions of Americans logged onto specialized Web sites where they could participate in an enormous array of chat groups, play games, and read newspapers and magazines that replaced the mass-circulation periodicals. The rush was on to create interactive multimedia advertising. With this new medium, advertisers could customize their message. Since Google has become a household word, it has become easier to sell billions of dollars of advertising services and to deliver ads to those people most likely to be interested in the messages without buying expensive broadcast or print campaigns.

THE EMPOWERMENT WAVE

Although a power shift from women to men had already started in the 1980s, in the 1990s women were at senior levels in sufficient numbers to break into the top layer of management. Women with far stronger credentials than ever before—graduate degrees, sales and marketing experience, and client contacts—moved into editorial, publishing, marketing, advertising, publicity, merchandising, and broadcasting fields, where the most plentiful, lucrative, and accessible positions appeared. They came to oversee the creation and the management of the world's largest ad campaigns. They moved into executive suites to hold senior posts and accounted for 65 percent of the entry-level and lower-middle-management jobs in advertising agencies. Corporations also sent thousands of women overseas to introduce goods all over the world, as they began to discover that the client was finally accepting them, since not only were more men willing to work with women, but the number of women had also risen on the client side.¹⁷

The Year of the Woman—1992

The *Year of the Woman* became a popular label attached to the year 1992, after the election of four female senators in the United States. Never before had four women been elected to the Senate in a single election year. The hotly contested Senate confirmation hearings for

Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas then heightened awareness of the issue of sexual harassment in the workplace, coupled with the Hillary Clinton phenomenon and a resurgence of feminism that generated more women's involvement in political activity.

This heightened awareness of sexual harassment led Americans to make a connection between sexist advertising and more serious offenses within the workplace. The allegedly satirical television commercials for Stroh's Old Milwaukee Beer, from Hal Riney & Partners, crossed the line for many viewers in 1991, when a group of attractive young women in bathing suits—dubbed the Swedish Bikini Team—canoed, parachuted, and climbed mountains to deliver beer to male beer drinkers. Consumers not only complained about the scantily clad women, but also five employees of the Stroh Brewery Company claimed that the company's sexist advertising campaigns communicated a tolerance for sexual harassment in their workplace. The volume of complaints had become a force inside the industry. By this time, women were suddenly saying, "It matters to us what your company is saying and how you're portraying women—if we don't like the message, we'll buy elsewhere," explained Barbara Feigin, then Grey Advertising's head of research. Still, there were other external forces at work in the marketplace that generated more women's involvement.¹⁸

When Charlotte Beers became the new chairwoman and chief executive of Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide in 1992, she became the most powerful woman in the advertising business. No woman had ever headed an ad company this large before. Five years later, she relinquished her responsibilities as chief executive to another woman, Shelley Lazarus, a long-time Ogilvy executive who capped her career by later heading J. Walter Thompson, another advertising behemoth. Louise McNamee served as agency president with Della Femina, McNamee WCRS; Mary Moore became president of Wells Rich Greene; and Jane Newman was appointed president of Chiat/Day's New York office. Among other women in such prestigious positions were Cheryl Greene, Deutsch, Inc.; Nina DiSesa, McCann-Erickson's first female executive creative director; Donna Weinhem, BBDO; Linda Kaplan-Thaler, Wells Rich Greene; Mary Louise Quinlan, N. W. Ayer; Helayne Spivak, Interpublic Group's Amierati

& Puras-Lintas; and Anne Tolstoi Wallach, vice president/creative director at Grey Advertising, among others.

Whereas many women found success in agency management, another group became highly visible in the media business. Just as radio in the 1930s and television in the 1950s had created new opportunities for women, the Internet did so in the 1990s. A new generation of computer technology and electronic communication networks transformed the visual communications field, and the World Wide Web, the graphical portion of the interconnected computer networks, emerged as the fastest-growing portion. Publishing companies, restaurants, music stores, television networks, florists, airlines, and other companies soon recognized the advertising possibilities and began creating Web sites that provided information about services and products.¹⁹

Although advertisers proved willing to experiment with the new medium, the absence of a system measuring the effectiveness of Internet advertising remains an issue. The online ad system has yet to devise a universally agreed-upon definition for standard measures, such as *hits* and *page views*.

Less than a decade ago, the sole source of women's and teen magazines were the stacks of slick, paper-based magazines filling mailboxes: *Good Housekeeping*, *Parents*, and *Woman's Day*. For teens there was *Teen Beat*, *Bop*, and *Seventeen*. Those days are gone. The 1995 launch of online magazines, or *e-zines*, or *zines*, such as *HotWired*, *Vibe*, and Time Warner's *Pathfinder*, provided advertisers with a way to reach a new generation of young, affluent consumers who had access to the Internet. The insurgence of cheap, fast, and easy publishing on the Web also spawned *iVillage*, one of the most successful online communities for women, while other new Web sites featured *grrrl-zines* for the younger woman, such as *Wench*, *Smile*, *Act Nice*, *Bust*, and *Hipmama*. In theory, this new women's culture embraced not only Web sites and magazines but also books, films, television series, and online magazines that circumscribed and catered to women's interests ranging from cosmetics to childcare, from personal grooming to personal relationships. Women could easily move from browsing to shopping and buying what they wanted, all without even having to get dressed.

Underneath this new media that seemingly gave women what

they wanted was a newly visible group of female CEOs and marketing consultants who were positively and actively affecting relationship marketing. For example, Candace Carpenter, a cofounder of *iVillage*, and Geraldine Lavbourne, chairwoman of Oxygen Media, combined a cable TV and Internet network into an entertainment and marketing conglomerate intended predominately for women. Another group of enterprising female entrepreneurs set out to reach women in their teens and twenties. Among them, twenty-four-year-old Heidi Swanson launched in 1998 *ChickClick*, a community of young, female-oriented zines with links and excerpts, with her sister, twenty-one-year-old Heather, who worked at Imagine Media. The site includes free e-mail, discussion forums, and personal homepages with the aim of creating a virtual community. Within one year, *ChickClick* had evolved into a large network consisting of over 2.5 million registered users and generating tens of millions of page views a month. In fact, it has become one of the highest-trafficked properties aimed at young women on the Internet, with many name-brand advertisers and sponsors supporting the site. Clearly, modern ad women not only survived, they thrived in a rapidly changing world.²⁰

Celebration of Women's Power

We are now at a point where the daughters of the feminist mystique generation appear to be continuing the aspirations that increased the number of professional women over the last thirty years. Marketers who understood the boomer and postboomer women's markets quickly changed their fashion, beauty and cosmetics, and even automotive advertising. For many of these brands, the first step was reducing the images that offended feminine sensibilities and addressing women as active, confident, and professionally accomplished.

The most visible changes in women's product advertising began in early 1992, coinciding with the start of women's greater political activity in the campaigns for Congress. The bold new advertising campaigns celebrated feminism, as evidenced in a series of underwear campaigns, at that time a \$2.7 billion market for men and women. Historically, advertising for women's underclothing not only

showed a seminaked, stiffly posed model, it often relied on stereotypes of women as sex objects and slaves to fashion. As a family business, the Jockey Company did not want to promote sex. The philosophy behind real people as models for its underwear campaign was that the people shown were not the sports heroes or the Marilyn Monroes. Research had shown that idealized models were being viewed with increasing skepticism, and consumers reacted more intensely to people like themselves, people with freckles, moles, and blemishes. Instead, women readers were seeing female airline pilots, dentists, and a truck driver in these ads, but often their unsightly bulges and blemishes were airbrushed out (figure 10.5). Susan Small-Weil, former director of Warwick Advertising, who worked on the Jockey campaign, explained that the real-people themes were a careful attempt to appeal in a specific way to a specific type of underwear consumer. “You can either forget that your body looks the way it does, and want to look like Cheryl Tiegs,” she said, “or you can feel you’re doing more with what you have.” The advertisements also generated publicity, and hundreds of people wrote letters inquiring about being models.²¹

Citing new research that said women would not buy products whose ads offended their feminine sensibilities—and that they expected companies to reflect their values in ads, Maidenform relied on an antistereotype campaign developed to cast off their outdated sexist image. Under the direction of Rochelle Klein of Levine, Huntley, Vick & Beaver, a New York agency, the selling message was that Maidenform was a company that supports women and knows that there is not just one way to be a woman. The new campaign poked fun at the notion that women had to conform to society’s picture of them. One ad showed a Barbie doll, a tomato, and a fox, with the new tagline “A helpful guide for those who still confuse women with various unrelated objects.” Another spot in a series of television commercials showed multiple images of women bound in corsets and bustles, with a female voice-over saying, “Isn’t it nice to live in a time when women aren’t being pushed around so much anymore?” The Maidenform bras and panties are notably absent.²²

This is a dramatic departure from Maidenform’s long-running

"I enjoy the freedom of the open road ahead, and the total comfort of Jockey For Her underwear."



Monica Schappagh
Truck Driver
Pekin, Illinois



So Comfortable
JOCKEY
For Her

For Pantyhose That Fit . . . Wear Jockey For Her Pantyhose with LYCRA

LYCRA® is a registered trademark of Du Pont.
©1987 Jockey International, Inc., Kenosha, WI 53140 USA
JOCKEY FOR HER, SO COMFORTABLE and Jockey figure are registered trademarks of Jockey International, Inc.

John Woodward

WOODWARD & LOHMEYER

Figure 10.5. This ad was one in a series that used "real people" as models for the Jockey underwear campaign.

campaign from 1949 to 1969, featuring the scantily clad “Maidenform Woman” who had many dreams and actually had achieved some of them. When the Maidenform “I dreamed” campaign no longer appealed to younger women in the 1980s, Maidenform launched the “Dream Men” campaign in 1990, which did not even show the underwear. Instead the celebrity ads featured actors talking about women they have known (figure 10.6). But the campaign was not without its critics. The detractors argued that such images implied women buy underwear just to please men and that the ads risked offending women simply by reminding them of the prevalence of sexism.²³

Ironically, a campaign from Kirshenbaum & Bond made sexism the theme for another lingerie campaign. They poked fun at slang terms to describe women’s breasts by picturing a set of headlights, doorknockers, and melons—all ridiculous images men have used to describe women’s breasts—with the tagline “Bamboo Lingerie, a company owned by two women. Put that in your pipe and smoke it.” Some women’s empowerment ads were far more explosive. Body-Slimmers lingerie by Nancy Ganz showed a sexy woman from the neck down wearing a one-piece undergarment; the copy read: “While you don’t necessarily dress for men, it doesn’t hurt, on occasion, to see one drool like the pathetic dog that he is” (figure 10.7). Of course, all women did not share this mind-set, so ad makers continually faced the challenge of how to reach a new balance, adjusting approaches in favor of women and following the currents of culture.

But it was the Wonderbra that *Time* magazine called one of the top ten products of the year in 1994. The push-up bra featured several strategically placed pads to enhance a women’s figure, and marketing positioned it as a tool to empower women. Advertisements showed models wearing only the Wonderbra, with slogans underneath such as “Who cares if it’s a bad hair day,” “Look me in the eyes and tell me that you love me,” and “Live it up” (figure 10.8). With a suggested retail price of twenty-six dollars, the bras began selling at a rate of one every fifteen seconds, and stores could not keep the bras on their shelves. But many feminist groups voiced their opposition, saying the advertising message was that women should focus on their breasts for attention. Sara Lee Corporation countered these criticisms with the

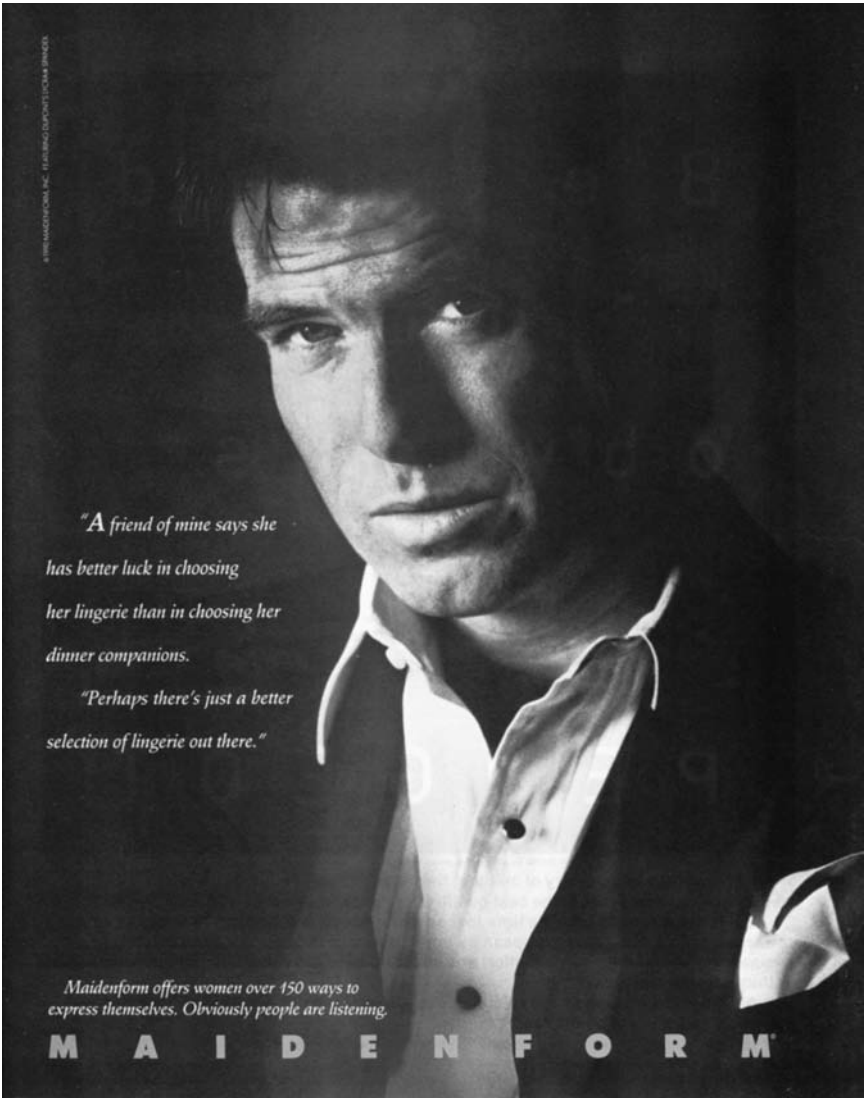


Figure 10.6. Maidenform's campaign "Dream Men" featured celebrities such as Pierce Brosnan talking about women they have known, 1990.

argument that the campaign was created by women and therefore could not possibly exploit women.

Gradually—some might even say reluctantly—magazine advertising began to more subtly convey an understanding of women's lifestyles and priorities, communicating a "We know what you're

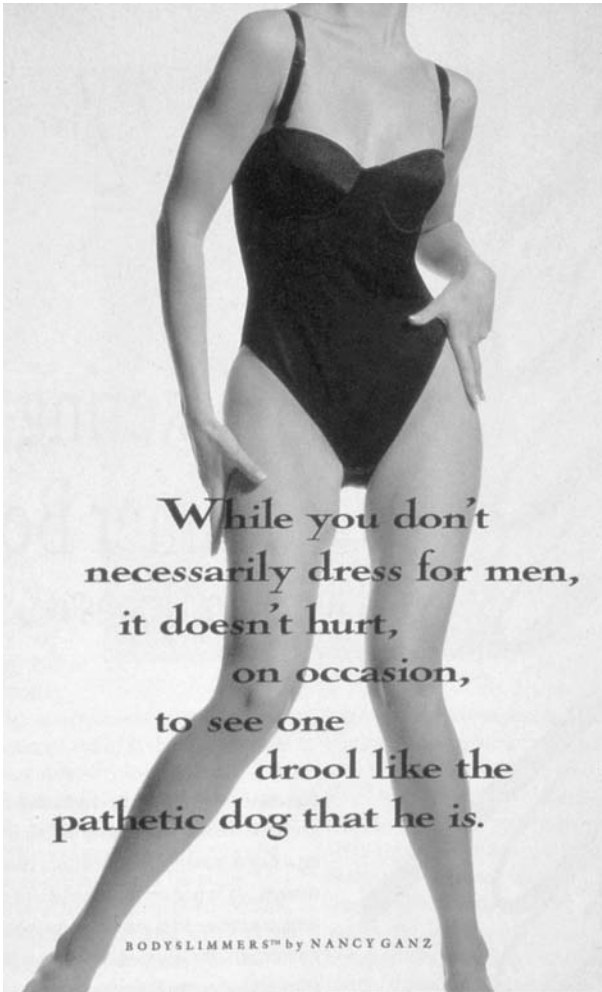


Figure 10.7. Ads for BodySlimmers reflected the emerging “I don’t need a man attitude” in the 1990s.

going through message.” One reason for this heightened sensitivity to the women’s market was women themselves. Now more women held marketing and advertising positions and positively impacted the basic promotional appeal for many accounts. They took the lead in the development of many campaigns to ensure that women were treated fairly and respectfully. Rejecting the traditional fantasy-and-romance approach to advertising, they drew attention to the underlying drives that contributed to women’s buying actions and developed campaigns that established emotional ties with consumers. These ads creatively addressed such women’s issues as maintaining

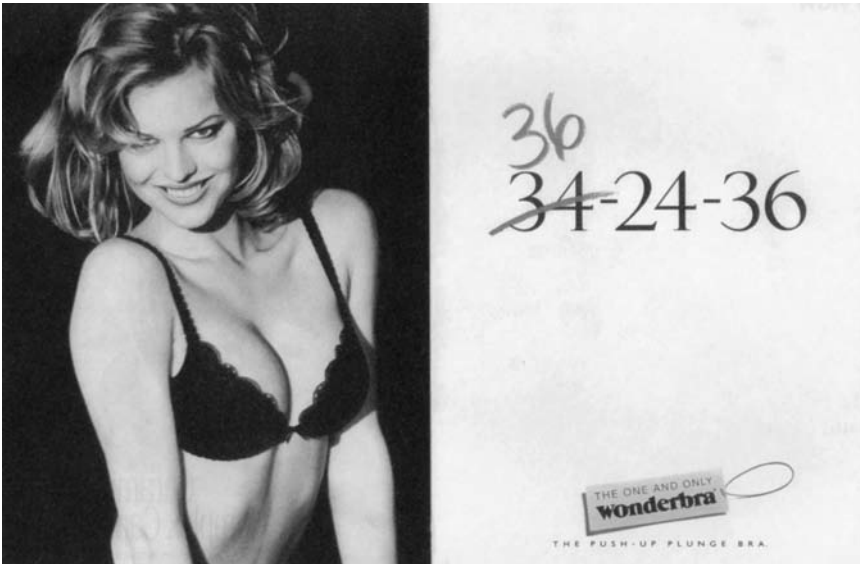


Figure 10.8. In 1994, *Time* magazine called the new push-up bra one of the top ten products of the year. *Vogue*, March 1995.

control without being a superwoman, combating fatigue, balancing family and work, and so on.

For example, the creative team Janet Champ and Charlotte Moore were partners in the creation of the groundbreaking Nike print campaign for women in the 1990s, an inspirational campaign that not only generated hundreds of thousands of responses from women but also spawned a larger debate about the portrayal of women in advertising and the method in which they were addressed. The Weiden and Kennedy copywriters were selling Nike athletic shoes, but first and foremost they were creating a small public forum for talking about women, their bodies, their feelings, their self-images, and self-esteem. What they said so eloquently was that women are often measured by nothing more than their bodies. Instead of saying, “I’m more than what I look like,” they said, “I’m strong and I dream and I want to be fantastic.” They also celebrated women in sports, as evident in a 1995 commercial titled “If You Let Me Play.” The ad featured young girls talking about the benefits society reaps when females participate in sports, such as higher academic performance by girls in school, fewer teenage pregnancies, and reduction of male violence targeted at

women. Such athletic shoe advertising to women proved inspiring, uplifting, and even empowering. It also served as a new model for developing campaigns that established emotional ties with women.

Other advertisers attempted to jump on the soulful bandwagon. Similar to Nike, Levi's blue jeans also offered a nurturing message. When Foote, Cone & Belding launched Levi's award-winning "Women in Motion" print campaign, they used abstract illustrations to demonstrate the fit of the jeans and created the most sensitive campaign ever for female jeans wearers. Several years later, stunning television commercials brought the drawings to life. The animated spots had virtually no copy, no voice-over, and no slogans. Instead, they simply conveyed emotional truths about women's lives, touching on such hot buttons as men, love, pain, and food. Pop-up titles included "Women Not Feeling Blue," "Women Finding Balance," "Women Finding Love," and "Women Getting Things Off Their Chest." Many women identified with this type of product advertising that did not use the too-perfect model (figure 10.9).

Men Become the Babes

As women became more comfortable with their professional success, the emphasis on sexuality and gender-bender stereotypes in advertising continued to flourish. In earlier decades, role-reversal ads revolved around the theme of male emasculation as reflected in the stereotypical househusband, who was unrealistically childlike or ludicrous in the traditional domain of women—the kitchen, the nursery, and the living room—often dressed in frilly aprons and struggling with the simplest of household tasks. The message to women was that the advertised product made the task so simple that even a man could do it in those little emergency situations. By the 1980s, the role-reversal version revolved around a *boy toy*, a term that referred to a generally sexually attractive man who is controlled by a woman. However, the emasculated male began to be replaced by the androgynous male in the last years of the century (figure 10.10). Such changing pictures of romantic partnership reflected the changing ideals of American masculinity as well as changing expectations of women.

Over the years advertisers may have exploited images of women

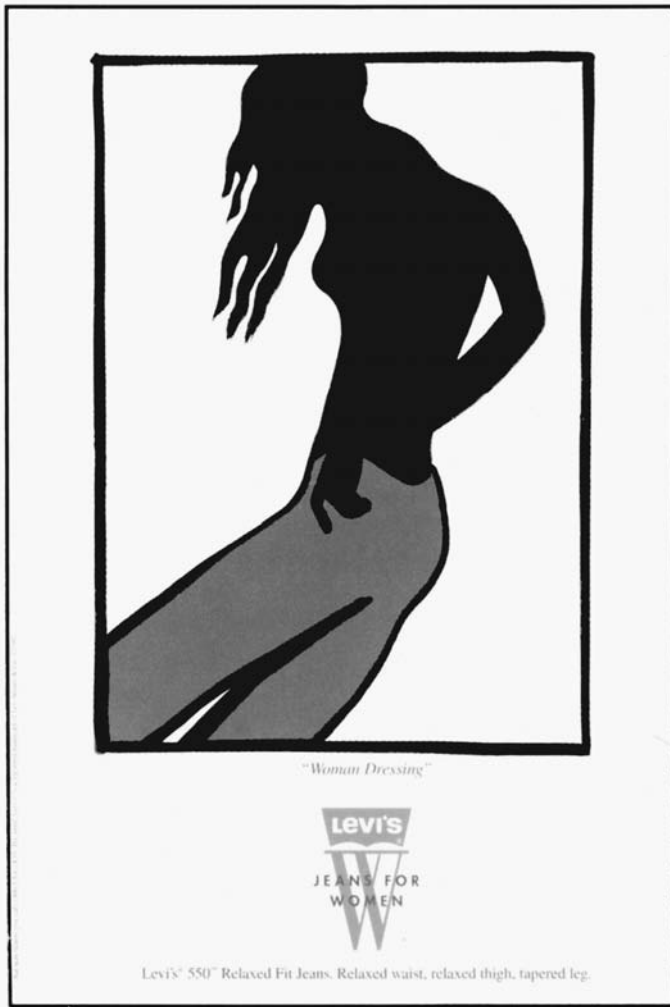


Figure 10.9. Levi's award-winning "Women in Motion" print campaign.

in advertising, but the image of the American male also served marketers well. After consumers complained about the Swedish Bikini Team for Old Milwaukee Beer, a new genre of role-reversal ads emerged to objectify men in the 1990s—that is, *reverse sexism*. In a much-talked-about Hyundai ad called “Parking Lot,” for example, two women scoff at men who drive racy sports cars, arguing that they buy powerful cars because they are worried about the size of a certain appendage, whose name is never spoken. “Must be overcompensating for a . . . shortcoming,” one says. When a handsome man drives up in an economy Hyundai Elantra, the second woman muses: “I



Figure 10.10. The androgynous male became a theme in advertising during the late 1980s and 1990s, representing the discarding of manly stereotypes.

wonder what he’s got under the hood.” If ads portrayed women in the same manner, it could be definitely called sexist. But the turning point in the role-reversal theme came with the “Diet Coke Break” television commercial. Rather than portraying the strong man in a stereotypical power role, as an emasculated househusband, or even as a boy toy, this particular ad portrayed the man as a sexual object. Like clockwork, women in the office take an 11:30 a.m. Diet Coke break. Only they do not drink the soda. Instead they race to the window to watch, with unabashed admiration, a sweaty, muscular construction worker who strips to his bare chest and refreshes himself with a cool Diet Coke. As they stare down from the window, they fill their imaginations with all sorts of fantasies. At the end of the break, the women, seemingly fulfilled, move away from the window but not before saying, “Same time tomorrow?” to their colleagues. The idea, of course, is a twist on the stereotype of male construction workers ogling women as a spectator sport. Why the turnabout?

On one level, these images were far more than mere sexual fan-

tasies for women; they were statements of women's assertiveness and power. For example, on HBO's *Sex and the City*, the episode "Hop, Skip and a Week" featured sexy public relations specialist Samantha Jones (Kim Cattrall) making a deal for her latest love interest to appear nude in a provocative advertising campaign called *Absolut Hunk*. In the episode, Samantha's campaign is a huge success; the ads are appearing all over New York City, and an impressive display on a giant billboard in Times Square shows him nude with his modesty hidden by a strategically placed bottle of Absolut vodka. Yet for all the talk of equality, such sentiments may reflect how much political correctness has overevolved. "The more de-babed we get," explains media critic Barbara Lippert, "the more men have to become the babes because we need babes in advertising."²⁴

Gender-Free Advertising

As the distinction between male and female segments of the consumer market began to blur, marketing strategies increasingly turned away from gender-based marketing of products, which focused on one sex, toward dual marketing or *gender-free* advertising. In some ads for products traditionally targeted at women, no images of women even appeared. Commercials for Motrin IB, for example, mirrored the trend that fathers were participating in childcare. Ads for Cheer laundry detergent used a middle-aged, bald man to demonstrate the product's cleaning power. With the exception of some categories like feminine hygiene and cosmetics, the idea of gender began to disappear.

The big winners in this period were attuned to the middle-class American feminist movement and followed the currents of culture. By reviewing their products and services in a serious, consistent way, a number of companies repositioned them as tools that empower a woman rather than as something to enhance self-esteem or make her a better housewife. They also sought to find advertising messages that would resonate with reality and that were not condescending. In so doing, advertisers at this level attracted consumer's interests and the brand loyalty that came with such audiences. With the aging of the baby boomers, a generation of women now in their peak earning years

were making the financial decisions in their households. Women were buying houses by themselves and purchasing everything from golf equipment to life insurance products—items that were once almost exclusively advertised to men.

Probably one of the most common arguments against gender-based marketing was that targeting female consumers might alienate the male market. In fact, what women wanted often turned out to be what men also wanted, but no one ever bothered to ask them. Take Home Depot, for example. The hardware retailer had known for some time that, while women accounted for half of the company's sales, their influence on overall purchases was even higher. Recognizing that women focused more on projects and less on products, Home Depot installed design showrooms that presented a focus on decor, trained its sales associates to double-check with customers that they had everything they needed for a project, and made its stores brighter, cleaner, and less cluttered. Although the improvements particularly appealed to women, they also benefited their male customers, because the motivations for home improvement were the same, whether you're a man or a woman. It's about pride of home.²⁵

Another reason against marketing differently to the sexes was that young people in their twenties were erasing the lines between traditional male and female roles in education, athletics, and family life. For example, the Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, was all male until 1996; in the same year, the Women's National Basketball Association was formed as the women's counterpart to the National Basketball Association. Furthermore, some younger husbands have voluntarily pulled back on their careers (or quit entirely) to care for kids and live off their wives' income. Though the number is small, many economists think the number is growing. But the last couple of decades have not been enough to make a difference after centuries of clearly defined roles for men and women.

Despite far-reaching social changes over the last century and men's increasing participation in childcare, studies show that women continue to do most of the cooking, shopping, and cleaning.²⁶ So, although a growing number of companies are repositioning their products and services as tools that empower women, the majority of advertisements

continued to show women in two different worlds. The traditional one was a rerun of the 1950s that lingered past reality with images of apron-clad homemakers and devoted stay-at-home moms putting dinner on the table, caring for the children, and cleaning the house; while in the real world, women took on additional roles outside the home. Nonetheless, such ads for household cleaners, foodstuffs, and over-the-counter medications were still effective for the modern workingwoman, for whom the tableaux mirrored real life. Or, they showed a modern world with workingwomen planning their next mutual fund investment, taking husbands away for the weekend, or buying diamond rings.

Still, there was a constant interplay between consumers and manufacturers, and advertising made it easier to communicate with prospective customers. As markets and consumer identities changed, popular stereotypes, marketing strategies, and advertising messages shifted to connect with well-defined groups of consumers. With women a more powerful force than ever before in the marketplace and workforce, the feminine viewpoint became the nexus connecting consumption, manufacturers, and advertising in modern America. This symbiotic relationship among the consumers, the mass-consumer industry, and advertising has created the greatest consumer market in the world, one in which women themselves played a pivotal role.

NOTES

1. The wedding ring is worn on the left hand because people believed that a vein of blood ran directly from the fourth finger to the heart. So, matrimonial procedure dictated that a wedding ring be worn on this finger, which had supposed magic power.

2. The second-wave feminists criticized the new industrial economy, mistrusted advertising, and made sweeping claims, as evidenced in the late 1970s' *Decoding Advertisements*, a book by Judith Williamson, and *Killing Us Softly*, a series of videos produced by Jean Kilbourne. In the 1980s, examples include Susan Bordo's *Unbelievable Weight*, Diane Barthel's *Putting on Appearances*, and Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*. On an analysis of the feminist critique, see Linda M. Scott, *Fresh Lipstick* (New York: Palgrave, 2005) pp. 316–26.

3. Statistical Tables 11 and 14, *Women in the Labor Force: A Databook* (Washington, DC: US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006), pp. 28, 31, and 43. See <http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-databook2006.htm> (accessed January 23, 2008).