

Achieving Gender Equity and Fighting Bias in Marketing and Advertising

SeeHer Education is an open-access certificate designed to empower learners with the knowledge and tools to promote gender equity and combat bias in marketing and advertising. The certificate consists of eight one-hour modules covering various topics, from historical representations of gender to ethical decision-making and strategies for career success. This teaching guide outlines some information about each module and offers guidance on potential discussion questions and class activities; how to integrate the certificate into your course; and where to go for additional resources.

Overview of Modules

Module 1: Historical Perspectives on Gender and Advertising

Main Objective: Identify and unpack important historical moments of gender representations in US advertising, especially as they intersect with race and ethnicity.

Some Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the importance of taking a historical approach in looking at gender in US advertising.
- Unpack various understandings of gender in the US and their impact on advertising, especially as it intersects with race.
- Identify key historical moments of gender representation in US advertising.
- Understand how gender has played an important role in the US advertising workplace.
- Articulate why historical perspectives are needed in advertising research and practice.
- Learn how to identify and analyze primary source materials.

Discussion Questions:

- How have gender roles been portrayed in advertisements throughout US history, and what impact has it had on societal perceptions?
- How did historical representations of gender and race work together to cement particular stereotypes about different groups of women?
- Can you think of any contemporary marketing campaigns successfully challenging traditional gender norms? How did they do it, and what were the results?
- Can advertisers leverage historical gender representations positively to promote more inclusive messages? If so, how?

Class Activity: Analyze advertisements from different time periods and discuss the gender representations depicted. Encourage students to critically evaluate the messages conveyed and consider how these portrayals might have influenced attitudes and behaviors about gender and its intersection with other identities.

Module 2: Analytics and Measurement

Main Objective: Assess how to measure gender equity in advertising and marketing from practitioner and consumer perspectives.

Some Learning Outcomes:

- Understand how gender has been measured in advertising and marketing from practitioner and consumer perspectives.
- Look at the data used in the past to represent and misrepresent women in advertising.
- Explain how gender equity is an engine for economic development.
- Detail the importance of data-driven analysis in promoting gender equity.
- Learn about various metrics and methodologies for measuring gender representation, especially SeeHer's Gender Equality Measurement (GEM) tool.
- Discuss the implications of data findings on future marketing strategies.

Discussion Questions:

- Why is it crucial for advertisers to have data-driven insights on gender representation in their campaigns?
- What are some potential challenges in measuring gender representation, and how can they be overcome?
- How can data on gender representation inform more equitable and inclusive marketing strategies?

Class Activity: Provide students with sample advertisements and ask them to conduct a content analysis of the gender representations depicted using specific analytic metrics, such as SeeHer's GEM tool. Discuss the findings and encourage students to propose alternative approaches that promote greater gender equity in the selected ads.

Module 3: Social and Cultural Change

Main Objective: Understand how advertising contributes to social and cultural change and listen to thought leaders on how brands can drive systemic and intersectional gender equity.

Some Learning Outcomes:

- Examine the connection between gender representation in media and social attitudes.
- Understand what is meant by social and cultural change.
- Assess how advertising contributes to social and cultural change, including understanding of gender as well as gender equity.
- Define key terms related to advertising's contributions to social and cultural change.
- Explore ways that brands can drive systemic and intersectional gender equity.
- Identify potential challenges and benefits of promoting gender equity on a larger scale.

Discussion Questions:

- Do advertising and marketing shape culture? Or does culture shape advertising and marketing? What is the relationship between advertising/marketing and culture?
- How can marketing and advertising contribute to challenging gender-based stereotypes and promoting more equitable social attitudes?
- What responsibilities do advertisers have in addressing social issues related to gender and representation?
- How can a gender-affirming campaign positively impact marginalized communities and promote inclusion?
- What does "cause washing" or "woke washing" mean to you? What campaign elements indicate a company engages in "washing" practices? How can a company authentically engage in social and cultural issues?

Class Activity: Host a debate on the role of advertising and marketing in promoting social change. Divide the class into two groups: one arguing that marketing should solely focus on selling products, and the other advocating for marketing to actively address social issues. Encourage students to present well-researched arguments based on specific examples and data while engaging in thoughtful discussion.

Module 4: Identities and Intersectionality

Main Objective: Define intersectionality and discover how marketers can “do” intersectionality in an authentic, effective manner.

Some Learning Outcomes:

- Define intersectionality and its relevance in marketing and advertising.
- Explore the complexities of representing various identities in advertising and marketing messages.
- Distinguish intersectionality from multicultural marketing.
- Analyze campaigns that effectively represent intersectionality.
- Learn from recommendations and best practices for pursuing inclusive marketing practices that embrace diverse identities.

Discussion Questions:

- How can advertisers and marketers incorporate intersectionality into their campaigns to better represent and connect with diverse audiences?
- Can you think of any examples where a lack of intersectionality in advertising has resulted in push back?
- How can an intersectional approach in marketing and advertising contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society?

Class Activity: Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to create a marketing campaign that embraces intersectionality. Have them present their campaigns and explain how they consider various identities and notions of equity in their messaging.

Module 5: Business of Diversity

Main Objective: Explore why achieving gender equity is not only good for business, but also why it’s the right thing to do for a more inclusive society.

Some Learning Outcomes:

- Define the business case for gender equity and diversity.
- Explain the importance and benefits of the business case for gender equity and diversity.
- Learn about the benefits of workplace diversity.
- Explore case studies of companies that successfully incorporate gender equity and concerns about diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into their brand identity.
- Identify potential barriers to implementing gender-equitable business strategies and how to overcome them.
- Discuss the sustainability of gender equity and DEI initiatives as well as best practices.
- Engage in self-reflection to increase self-awareness and expand knowledge of foundational concepts related to the business case for DEI.

Discussion Questions:

- How can a gender-equitable marketing strategy positively impact a company's bottom line?
- What challenges might companies face in implementing gender-equitable practices, and how can they address them effectively?
- What are some key elements that should be included in a business case for promoting gender equity in marketing?

Class Activity: Assign students to research a company that has successfully integrated gender equity and/or DEI into its advertising and marketing practices. Have them present their findings and discuss the strategies and outcomes of the company's efforts.

Module 6: Leadership in Ethical Decision Making

Objective: Identify the ways organizational leaders view and address ethical issues related to gender and advertising while reflecting on how to demonstrate leadership in making decisions ethically.

Some Learning Outcomes:

- Identify the ways organizational leaders view and address ethical issues related to gender and advertising.
- Examine frameworks for ethical decision-making.
- Reflect on the ways you can demonstrate leadership in ethical decision-making concerning issues of gender and advertising.
- Learn about the ways gender representations in advertising and marketing matter and how they can present ethical issues.
- Hear from industry leaders in advertising and marketing on important issues of gender and advertising and how they make decisions on what is good for the brand and good for people.
- View examples of ethical decision-making frameworks that can help guide analysis and decision making on gender-related ethical issues in advertising.
- Practice and reflect on one's role as a moral agent and ways to demonstrate leadership in ethical decision making on issues of gender and advertising.

Discussion Questions:

- How can ethical frameworks be applied to advertising decisions related to gender representation?
- Can you think of any real-world examples where companies faced ethical dilemmas in their advertising or marketing strategies? How did they navigate these situations?
- What steps can advertisers take to ensure ethical decision-making and accountability in their campaigns?

Class Activity: Present students with case studies of real-world ethical dilemmas in advertising and marketing related to gender representation. Encourage them to analyze each case and propose ethical solutions to address the challenges presented.

Module 7: Inspiring Social Change

Main Objective: Pinpoint different ways executives, changemakers, and everyday individuals can pursue positive change in advertising and reflect on how to translate inspiration into action.

Some Learning Outcomes:

- Identify ways individuals can pursue positive change in regard to gender and the advertising industry.
- Reflect on how to translate inspiration into action.
- Read foundational material on social change and hear from executives and changemakers in the advertising, media, and entertainment industries on how they pursue positive social change and how they hope to inspire others to follow suit.
- Learn about a case that seeks to initiate a social conversation on gender roles.

Discussion Questions:

- What stakeholders should advertisers consider when using advertising and marketing to promote social change through the advertising ecosystem?
- What recent advertising marketing campaigns have successfully sparked positive social change? What made them effective?
- How can advertisers ensure their campaigns genuinely contribute to social change rather than merely capitalizing on societal issues?
- What qualities make someone a changemaker? How can you inspire social change? What did you learn from the various people interviewed in this module?

Class Activity: Ask students to design an advertising or marketing campaign for a social cause they are passionate about. Encourage them to consider ethical implications and align their messaging with authentic social change objectives.

Module 8: Career Guide

Objective: Learn from practitioners at different career stages about how to successfully manage a career in advertising while taking steps to present your authentic self and be the change you seek in the industry and life.

Some Topics Covered:

- Discover what it is like to work in advertising and marketing from practitioners at different career stages (early, mid, and senior levels).
- Learn about the importance of mentorship and networking for career advancement.
- Find ways to develop personalized career plans aligned with one's values.
- Empower oneself to present one's authentic self.

Discussion Questions:

- What are ways that one can prepare to work in advertising? What challenges and opportunities have different groups of people faced in the industry?
- How can individuals advocate for gender equity in the workplace and contribute to fostering an inclusive environment in the marketing and advertising industry?
- What strategies can individuals employ to overcome gender bias and advance their careers in the field?
- How can mentorship and networking opportunities positively impact career growth and opportunities in the marketing and advertising industry?

Class Activity: Assign students to develop and share a personal career plan incorporating their values and commitment to gender equity in marketing and advertising. Encourage them to set short-term and long-term goals and outline the steps they will take to achieve these objectives.

Additional Resources

Advertising & Society Quarterly, <https://muse.jhu.edu/journal/18>

ADText Online, <https://adtextonline.org/>

ANA Educational Foundation (AEF), <https://aef.com>

Duke University Hartman Center, <https://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/hartman>

Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, <https://seejane.org/>

Girlhood (It's Complicated), National Museum of American History, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/girlhood>

GLAAD Media Institute, <https://glaad.org/institute/>

National Museum of American History, <https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/subjects>

Race & Ethnicity in Advertising, <https://raceandethnicity.org/>

SeeHer, <https://www.seeher.com/>



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Strategies to Integrate the Certificate into Your Course

To ensure a seamless and engaging learning experience, consider these four approaches (or a combination) to integrate the SeeHer Education Certificate into your curriculum:

1. Dedicated Class Session and Sign-Up: Dedicate a class session or part of a class session to present an overview of the certificate and its importance. Explain the value of completing the entire certificate and encourage students to sign up for the program during the class. Provide them with clear instructions on how to access the certificate materials and resources.

Advantages of this approach:

- **Immediate Engagement:** By introducing the certificate in class, you capture students' attention and motivate them to participate from the outset.
- **Clear Guidance:** Providing sign-up assistance in class ensures that all students have access to the materials and know the expectations.

2. Completing the Certificate Together Over Two Weeks: Allocate two weeks to complete the entire certificate collaboratively with your students. Assign 1-2 modules per class and use in-class activities to build upon the certificate content. This approach allows for real-time discussions and interaction, enhancing students' understanding.

Advantages of this approach:

- **Interactive Learning:** In-class discussions and activities foster dynamic and interactive learning experiences.
- **Immediate Application:** In-class activities allow students to apply the concepts immediately, reinforcing their understanding of materials from the certificate.

3. Independent Completion Over 2-3 Weeks, Followed by Dedicated Class Sessions: Give students the flexibility to complete the certificate independently over 2-3 weeks. Afterward, dedicate one or two class sessions to discuss what was covered in the certificate, address questions, and facilitate peer-to-peer sharing of key takeaways.

Advantages of this approach:

- **Individual Pace:** Students can work independently, accommodating their unique schedules and learning preferences.
- **Focused Discussions:** Dedicated class sessions allow for focused discussions about the material covered, encouraging deeper insights and critical thinking beyond what was completed asynchronously.



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4. Create Assignments Based on the Certificate and Encourage Creative Sharing: Develop assignments that draw from the certificate content and ask them to synthesize/summarize what they learned. Alternatively, students could do an additional research project based on certificate content. Students can then share their findings and takeaways through creative outlets, such as short TED Talk-like presentations, infographics, social media videos, or other multimedia formats.

Advantages of this approach:

- Promotes Creativity: Allowing students to express their understanding creatively and nurtures innovative thinking and communication skills.
- Diverse Perspectives: Different presentation formats encourage diverse perspectives and keep the learning experience engaging and fresh.

Implementing any of the above approaches will enhance the integration and impact of the SeeHer Education Certificate within your class. By providing a clear pathway to access the certificate, facilitating discussions, and encouraging creative sharing, you can create a supportive and stimulating environment for students to learn about gender equity and how to fight bias in marketing and advertising.

Your commitment to administering the certificate effectively will empower your students to become advocates for positive change within industry and society more generally. As an instructor, you play a pivotal role in nurturing socially responsible and conscious marketing professionals, and the SeeHer Education Certificate provides an excellent platform to achieve this goal. By engaging students in meaningful discussions, interactive activities, and practical applications, you can inspire them to drive significant change and foster an inclusive society and workplace for the future of marketing and advertising.

SeeHer Education Academic Advisory Board

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Questions or Suggestions?

If you have any questions or suggestions about the Certificate or this guide, please contact Megan Pénisson at mp@aef.com.



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