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Gender Stereotypes by Tiffany Kerper Dornheim

A little girl goes into the local fast food restaurant with her mother. She sits down to eat and pulls a pink Care Bear out of her cheeseburger meal. When asked what was wrong, she asked why she was given a Care Bear. She wondered why the cashier just assumed that she would rather have the Care Bear and not the Transformer, which was what she really wanted.

The answer is gender stereotypes.

In 2008, a sixth grade class in Sweden reported Toys R Us to RO, which is a self-regulatory agency which polices marketing and advertising communications in Sweden to ensure they are in line with the guidelines established by the International Chamber of Commerce.



According to that sixth grade class, the Toys R Us Christmas catalogue featured

“outdated gender roles” because it displayed boys and girls playing in different ways. They found that the catalog featured boys playing in action-filled environments, while girls were shown sitting in passive poses.

It’s not just Toys R Us. Many advertisements for children’s toys feature girls in traditional roles such as playing house and cooking. Girls are shown playing with stuffed animals and being more concerned about being popular and beautiful; boys are shown as seeking power, speed and physical action. Depictions of aggressive behavior are almost always limited to advertisements that target boys. In commercial after commercial, girls are shown playing with dolls or makeup, while boys play with sports equipment, racing cars or battling action figures.

Recently, there has been a slight change in the stereotypical roles. With the growing national popularity of Food Network shows like *Iron Chef*

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“We need to be on Facebook.” by Richard Bosler

“We need to be on Facebook.” “What is our Twitter strategy?” “Is MySpace still viable?” These are questions that most media planners have asked or been asked over the last year or two. The trendiest thing in advertising at the moment is social media - but is it right for all companies? Frankly, the answer is an unequivocal NO.

One of the first questions that get asked in the planning stages of a media campaign these days is “How do we use social media?” The reality

is that the first questions to ask should be more fundamental. Like “Should we be using social media?” Or “What can we accomplish through social media?” And to a greater degree, “Do we have a place within social media?” A marketer has to have a compelling message and value proposition to make its brand stand out and generate value. If they do not, they are doing themselves and their customers a disservice by adding to an already cluttered social media landscape.

Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, and other social networks are the advertising world’s flavor of the year, but to blindly assume they are a fit for all companies and advertisers is short-sighted at best and financially irresponsible at worst.

Now let me caveat the rest of this article by saying that I will primarily be discussing things like the fan pages and micro-blogs that truly

differentiate social media from other online advertising opportunities. For the most part, paid placements on social media can be a valuable addition to an online media buy. Due to a high level of low cost inventory that can be highly demographically targeted, banners on social media sites can be a very cost-efficient

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Winter Olympics Revives NBC by Christina Esposito

Let's face it... earlier this year NBC was having a lot of trouble with its prime programming. Jay Leno got a prime time slot five nights a week last September, which led to disaster after the ratings were not living up to standards. NBC had to move him out of that timeslot, but was left with the daunting decision of how to replace him with different programs five nights a week. What better answer to the 10PM prime programming question than the 2010 Winter Olympics!

NBC was hopeful that the Winter Olympics would help regain larger audiences for the network. And, well, they did! Despite the first USA vs Canada hockey game being heavily advertised on

NBC and then aired on MSNBC (with Comcast customers denied the game in HD), the Olympics overall delivered great numbers. After the first seven nights of the Olympics, NBC Universal said that Nielsen estimated a total tune-in of 152 million viewers on its networks. Average viewership in the first seven nights was 26.6 million, which was 27% above the 20.9 million for the 2006 Torino games. For the first time in six years, the Vancouver Winter Olympics beat FOX's *American Idol* (30.1 million viewers in the 9PM hour versus *Idol's* 18.6 million). And in case you didn't make it to the slopes this year and notice a ton of the younger generation getting on their skis and snowboards, they too have definitely taken a liking to the Winter Olympics. The 18-24 age group was up 57% compared to the Torino Olympics, and the 15-17 age group had risen almost 40%.

Cross-platform viewing saw a huge increase for the Vancouver Olympics. Through the first eleven days of the Olympics, NBC's mobile platforms (web-site and iTunes app) generated 58.2 million page views, which was a 68% increase over the

entire 17-day page-view total for the Beijing Games in 2008. Even though the streamed viewing was mostly viewers catching up on what they missed, viewers were utilizing multiple platforms to get their Olympic coverage. Approximately 1.4 million videos were also streamed online to mobile devices, which was four times more than the Beijing Games. When the numbers increase in cross-platform viewership, advertisers benefit from any multi-platform packages they had committed to.

Speaking of advertisers, it appears that certain advertisers incorporated the Olympics as an integral part of the creative in their commercials. As Barbara Lippert of *MediaWeek* puts it, "There's an authentic narrative, a universal truth to being an Olympic athlete. It's a story of talent, discipline, focus, persistence, sheer hard work and some luck." This provides a perfect backdrop for any advertiser. The spots in turn become genuine and are filled with authentic emotion. A big advertiser during the Olympic Games was Visa. Using their "Go World" tagline, they were able to utilize the Olympics to full capacity in their spots. They would feature the athletes as your typical next-door guy or gal all while showing the amazing athletic abilities they have and how they are accomplishing their dreams from when they were children.

All in all the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver wins gold for both NBC and their advertisers.



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and *Throwdown with Bobby Flay*, schools like Creative Cooks in New York (a cooking school designed just for kids) are becoming more popular with boys. About 40% of the students who take classes at Creative Cooks are boys. According to Emily Rios, the school's founder, boys like the physicality of it, they like to use knives and get dirty. They also love to use the hand mixers and food processors.

According to Nielsen, shows like *Throwdown with Bobby Flay* are more popular with boys ages 2-11 than the older male population. The overall audience of this show is 36% male, but that percentage jumps to 47% male within the 2-11 age bracket. Similarly, the overall audience for *Iron Chef America* is 36% male, but 45% male in the 2-11 age bracket.

Despite the Nielsen data, there is little evidence that marketers are interested in targeting boys in advertisements for



cooking toys. For example, the manufacturers of the Easy Bake Oven continue to only use girls in their ads and on their packaging. Girl Gourmet, a company that sells toys such as cake decorating kits, ice cream sandwich makers and frozen yogurt makers, never uses boys in their advertising collateral.

These companies need to recognize that cooking and other domestic household toys appeal to boys as well. In a recent statement from Hasbro, they claim that both market research and buying patterns indicate that the primary interest for Easy Bake Ovens comes from girls. However, they declined to share the specific

data.

Some toy makers, such as Little Tikes, are taking a more gender-neutral approach. In a recent interview with Isaac Larian, CEP of MGA, the parent company for Little Tikes, he commented, "The last time I checked 50% of the population are boys and they like to cook. We don't like to stereotype." They use boys alongside girls in their packaging, advertising and website images for their toy appliances and cookware.

The key is to produce cooking toys that boys will find as cool as the girls do. Items like the pink Easy Bake Oven and the pink retro kitchen sold by Pottery Barn don't fit the bill. WowWee, an Optimal Group company, is hoping that they can fill the void. With products like the Chuck E Cheese Pizza maker, Icee Instant Slushee Maker, and Jamba Juice Smoothie and Ice Pop Maker, they continuously roll out cooking toys that they hope boys will have just as much of a passion for as the girls. Also, by using primary colors on the products and not making everything pink, boys will feel better about wanting to play with them. Although WowWee has only shown girls in their advertising thus far, this year they are starting to feature boys as well.



It will take a while for gender-biased stigmas to fade away. Certain toys will always be geared toward girls as opposed to boys and vice versa. But with changing times and the stereotypes diminishing, advertising and marketing efforts need to reflect current social norms and realities. And hopefully some day, kids will be asked if they want a Care Bear or a Transformer with their meal, regardless of whether they are a boy or a girl.

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Social Media

way to reach a target audience. However, banners on social media sites need to be concise, with a compelling message, or they risk being ignored and in some cases removed due to user backlash against their content.

Any company looking to venture into social media needs to ask itself "What product or service do we offer that will break us through the clutter?" Currently there are over 10,000 companies with Facebook pages. For all intents and purposes this can be considered a saturation point.

Any company looking to engage in social media needs to commit itself to executing it the right way. Fans pages need to be handled with caution, care and dedication. They need to provide a user with a clear reason to join and must be regularly updated with compelling content and offers in order to be successful. The maintenance of these fan pages can potentially be a full time job, but if done poorly it can cost a company both money and time, while generating little to no benefit. In some extreme cases, a poorly maintained brand page, coupled with an obscure or irrelevant product or service can damage a brand's reputation.



The use of Twitter poses similar challenges. While there is no monetary cost associated with Twitter, it requires a significant amount of time and effort to make it successful. In order to gain and maintain followers, a company needs to have a compelling and charismatic writer(s) who can capture a user's attention. They need to provide updates on their company and products that go beyond "Our stock rose two points today" or "We are releasing a new product whose release is already common knowledge." In addition, this type of public forum opens a company up to public comments and potential criticism. The mishandling or outright avoidance of this criticism can lead to the loss of customers and significant brand damage.

Unfortunately, even P.T. Barnum couldn't generate buzz around certain products or services. Certain industries lend themselves to social media, such as entertainment, music, electronics and clothing. Conversely, industries like insurance and finance do not. There are many people who want to hear about the production process on a blockbuster movie or an recording artist's thoughts on their latest album. The amount of people who want to hear about and additional .025% yield they can currently get on a 6-month IRA is significantly less.

As media professionals, it is our obligation to partner with our clients to ensure that we are helping them achieve their short term and long term objectives. In some cases, a comprehensive social media strategy is the proper course of action, but in many cases it is not. For companies that are not a fit for social media, the deluge of other companies investing in it should be seen as an opportunity. We have probably all heard the phrase when we were younger, "If everybody was jumping off a bridge, would you do it too?" If your competitors are jumping of a bridge with their social media strategy, go ahead and let them while you invest your marketing budget into something that will improve your business and maximize the ROI on you advertising dollar.

Around the Harmelin Water Cooler

This Month's Question:

What primetime shows do you regularly watch other than during their scheduled live telecast (i.e., online, on-Demand, or watching on your DVR)?

Lost (ABC)	30%
The Office (NBC)	21%
All Primetime Viewing	16%
24 (FOX)	14%
30 Rock (NBC)	12%
American Idol (FOX)	10%
Parenthood (NBC)	8%
The Pacific (HBO)	8%
Survivor (CBS)	6%
Grey's Anatomy (ABC)	6%
None	4%



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