

The Dove Real Beauty Campaign: How Does It Wash

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the Dove Real Beauty Campaign including branding successes and failures, corporate responsibilities, and the evolution of the brand development and management through a two-way symmetrical model. It analyzes the DRBC from a marketing and public relations perspective as well as a women's and gender studies perspective. Dove's Real Beauty Campaign sprung from the idea that all women are beautiful and it sought to change the status quo by showing the natural physical variation embodied by all women and inspire a broader, healthier, more democratic view of beauty. As the power of the Dove Real Beauty initiative appears to be fizzling out with its current diluted advertising, it nonetheless was a groundbreaking, revolutionary campaign that was successful in ushering in a new age of female empowerment. Dove exemplified the advantages, disadvantages, and overwhelming responsibility that came with a "real beauty" social marketing campaign. The study ultimately serves as an educational tool for the fields of marketing, public relations, and women's and gender studies.

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## **Chapter 1**

### *Introduction*

#### **Statement of the Problem**

This study focuses on existing literature surrounding the Dove Real Beauty Campaign including branding successes and failures, corporate responsibilities, and the evolution of the brand development and management through a two-way symmetrical model.

A successful branding campaign is one described as increasing visibility and desirability of products in a very competitive market. According to Jerry McLaughlin, “brand is the perception someone holds in their head about you, a product, a service, an organization, a cause, or an idea. Brand building is the deliberate and skillful application of effort to create a desired perception in someone else’s mind” (2011). Thus, branding failures can occur when these variables fall short.

#### **Background of the Problem**

For the past decade the Dove Real Beauty Campaign has experienced successes and failures in their rebranding effort. The campaign focused on promoting self-esteem, and it looked to redefine the current size 0 standard of beauty and motivate women of all ages to have confidence and to be comfortable with themselves (Westphal, 2005).

This initiative was created after a major study was released in 2004 that found 75% of women between the ages of 18 and 64 “would like to see considerably more diversity in the images of beauty” and that only 2% of women around the world would describe themselves as beautiful—were the foundational stones upon which CFRB was built (McCleary, 2014).

The campaign saw success in sparking a global conversation about the definition of beauty. It looked to target the repetitive use of unrealistic, restricting, unattainable images of women's beauty. The campaign dealt with reality, it used honesty, not traditional marketing ploys, to reach people and appeal to their feelings. One of the greatest achievements was bringing a fresh perspective to the media portrayals of women.

However, the DRBC was also riddled with problems. The absence of transgender women is a glaring omission and an exclusion of an estimated two to five percent of the world's population (Kesteren, 1996). Furthermore, none of the ads feature a woman with a physical or mental disability, clearly showing voids in Dove's attempt to be truly all-inclusive. The Dove ads also lack diversity in race and age. While ads do feature different ethnicities, they are often underscored and given less precedence than their Caucasian counterparts (as seen in the Dove's "Real Beauty Sketches" campaign).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to take a critical look at the DRBC, examining its strengths and weaknesses in terms of branding, corporate moral responsibility, and two-way symmetrical communication models.

The study will focus on Dove's major advertising tactics, shedding light on how the company advocates for progressive, woman-positive ideals, but at the same time pushes the sale of products intended to make women more beautiful.

### **Setting for the Study**

This study will be done as part of the data collection for a Senior Project at California Polytechnic State University located in San Luis Obispo, California. Interviews will be conducted with three experts in the following fields: marketing,

advertising, and women and gender studies. The experts will each be asked the same set of questions and topics. The questionnaire is specifically designed to answer the research questions and fill the gaps in previous literature on the topic of the DRBC.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the Dove Real Beauty campaign and what was its goal?
2. How was the campaign implemented/ timeline?
3. What was the corporate moral responsibility?
4. How was body image the main focus?
5. What were the strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes?
6. Looking at feedback, why was a two-way symmetrical communication model important?
7. How does the DRBC shape future campaigns?

### **Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined to clarify several of the terms on the topic and assist the reader and provide context to the remainder of the study.

Attachment Theory: a theory proven to contribute to current marketing strategies based on the quality of attachments between a consumer and a brand by creating trustworthy, loyal relationships with the consumer (Thomson, 2006, p. 105).

Brand: a name, term, sign, symbol, or design or combination of them intended to identify the goods or services and differentiate them from competitors (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 4).

Brand Alliance: the short-or-long term association of both tangible and intangible qualities associated with brand partners in order to increase visibility of one or both brands (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 7).

Brand Equity: the increased profits or benefits of a branded product, corporation or person compared to those with no brand name attached (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 7)

Brand Image: a single image perceived by the consumer based on consistent associations the consumer has with the brand name (Raugust, 2010, p. 228).

Brand Personality: a set of human characteristics that a brand associates with it (Aaker, 1997, p. 347).

Cause-Related Marketing (CRM): “The process of formulating and implementing marketing activities that are characterized by contributing a specific amount to a designated nonprofit effort” (Brønn and Vrioni 214).

Corporate Moral Responsibility: According to Wilmot, “A responsible corporation is one that behaves well - wisely, prudently and morally” and secondly, that of holding “corporations responsible for their actions in the way that we may hold an individual responsible for their actions” (2001).

Pioneering Advantage: the benefit of being the first to enter a market and occupy the best position for future competitors (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 6).

Schema Congruity Theory: a theory describing the idea that consumers have specific thoughts, memories, or feelings associated with brands, and which are then set off when a celebrity, product, or other brand name is mentioned. (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 165).

Two-way symmetrical theory of communication: attempts to ethically balance the interests of the organization and its publics by emphasizing communication exchange,

and using the feedback to manage conflicts – as a result, this model produces more long-term relationships (Grunig 1992).

### **Organization of Study**

Chapter 1 included the background of the problem, purpose of the study, and a definition of terms. Chapter 2 will take a critical look at the DRBC, examining its strengths and weaknesses in terms of branding, corporate moral responsibility, and two-way symmetrical communication models by reviewing the current literature on the topic. Chapter 3 will present the methodology of the study. In Chapter 4, the findings will be presented and organized based on the original research questions. The data will then be analyzed compared to the current literature on the topic. Lastly, Chapter 5 will include a summary of the study and recommendations for professionals in the marketing, advertising, and women's and gender study based on the evaluation of the DRBC.

## **Chapter 2**

### *Literature Review*

The review of literature focuses on existing literature surrounding the Dove Real Beauty Campaign including branding successes and failures, corporate responsibilities, and the evolution of the brand development and management through a two-way symmetrical model.

#### **Dove Real Beauty Campaign**

The Dove Real Beauty Campaign is a worldwide marketing campaign Unilever launched in 2004. Their rebranding campaign includes advertisements, videos, workshop, sleepover events and the publication of books and plays (Tanzina, 2013). Dove's goal is to change the status quo by showing the natural physical variation embodied by all women and inspire a broader, healthier, more democratic view of beauty- one that all women can own and enjoy everyday. The company looks redefine the current size 0 standard of beauty and motivate women of all ages to have confidence and to be comfortable with themselves (Westphal, 2005).

In order to accomplish this goal, according to Unilever, the campaign for real beauty has initiatives that include forums, academic research studies, advertisements, fundraising, workshops, programs, and a photography exhibit. The forums are created and designed for women to participate in a dialogue and debate about the definition and standards of beauty in their society. On a broader scale, Unilever invested in a global, academic research study aimed at exploring the relationship that women from around the world have with beauty and its links to their happiness and well-being. The Dove advertising campaign also looked to inspire women and society to think differently about

what is defined as beautiful by putting average sized, “normal” women in their ads. Additionally, the company contributed to fundraising initiatives (sponsored by the Dove Self-Esteem Fund) to help young girls with low body-related self-esteem and created Self-esteem workshops with young girls in schools to help them foster a healthy relationship with and confidence in their bodies and their looks. Lastly, the establishment of the Program for Aesthetics and Well-Being at Harvard University, through a grant from Dove, will continue to examine the way we think and talk about beauty in popular culture and the effect that this has on women's well-being (Unilever, 2004).

### **Timeline of the Dove Real Beauty Campaign**

According to the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty website, the initiative was created to provoke discussion and encourage debate.

The Campaign for Real Beauty launched in September 2004 with a much talked-about ad campaign featuring normal women whose appearances are outside the stereotypical standards of beauty. The ads portrayed plus-sized women, older women, and asked viewers to judge the women’s looks (oversized or outstanding? and wrinkled or wonderful?), and invited them to cast their votes at [campaignforrealbeauty.com](http://campaignforrealbeauty.com) (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty).

Dove kicked off the second and most iconic phase of the Campaign for Real Beauty in June 2005, with advertising featuring six real women with real bodies, curves, and skin “imperfections.” The phase of the campaign was created to debunk the stereotype that only thin is beautiful and it drove thousands of women to their website to have a discussion on beauty issues (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2014).

In September 2006, a news and media debate erupted when Spain banned overly thin models from its fashion runways, a debate that spoke to the heart of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty mission. In response, Dove produced a compelling short film, *Evolution*, depicting the transformation of a real woman into a Photoshopped model and promoting awareness of how unrealistic perceptions of beauty really are and how they are created (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2014).

As part of the campaign, the Dove Self-Esteem Fund was established. Its goal was to target girls and young women who develop low self-esteem from hang-ups about their looks, and consequently fail to reach their full potential in life. It was also created to act as an agent of change to inspire and educate girls and women about a wider definition of beauty. This same year, the brand released a commercial called *Little Girls* during the Super Bowl, reaching an estimated 89 million viewers (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2014).

Continuing its ongoing commitment to widen the narrow definition of beauty, Dove launched the third phase of the Campaign for Real Beauty in February 2007. “The Dove global study, *Beauty Comes of Age*, revealed that 91% of women ages 50–64 believe it is time for society to change its views about women and aging. The campaign celebrated the essence of women 50+—wrinkles, age spots, grey hair and all.” It was illustrated through a communications campaign created with internationally renowned photographer Annie Leibovitz (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2014).

When the Campaign for Real Beauty focused on the idea that girls are bombarded with unrealistic, unattainable images and images of beauty that impact their self-esteem, the brand consulted the entertainment industry to show that what girls see in movies and

magazines represents an unrealistic standard of beauty. Thus, an online film dramatizing the barrage of beauty images girls face was created (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2014).

“In 2010, Dove set out a bold new vision for the brand with the Dove Movement for Self-Esteem. The Dove Movement for Self-Esteem provides women everywhere with opportunities to mentor the next generation and celebrate real beauty. There are many ways to become involved. Dove invites women everywhere to join the brand in making its vision a reality. Together with experts and key partners (in the U.S., Dove supports the work of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., Girls Inc., and Boys & Girls Clubs of America) (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2014).” Dove has created self-esteem boosting, educational programs and activities that encourage, inspire and motivate girls around the world. “Dove has reached over 7 million girls so far with these programs, and set a global goal of reaching 15 million girls by 2015” (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2014).

In 2011, Dove released the findings of its largest global study to date on women’s relationship with beauty—The Real Truth About Beauty: Revisited. “The study revealed that only 4% of women around the world consider themselves beautiful, and that anxiety about looks begins at an early age. In a study of over 1,200 10-to-17-year-olds, a majority of girls, 72%, said they felt tremendous pressure to be beautiful. The study also found that only 11% of girls around the world feel comfortable using the word beautiful to describe their looks, showing that there is a universal increase in beauty pressure and a decrease in girls' confidence as they grow older” (The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2014). Though Dove efforts have moved the needle in a positive direction, they believe “there is more to be done” (The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty, 2014).

## **Corporate Moral Responsibilities**

Wilmot explains how the definition of corporate moral responsibility has two distinct meanings. First, a “responsible corporation is one that behaves well - wisely, prudently and morally” and secondly, that of holding “corporations responsible for their actions in the way that we may hold an individual responsible for their actions.”

Dove’s first advertisement for the Campaign for Real Beauty in 2004 featured real women whose appearances didn’t align with the “ideal beauty” type. Dove was trying to initiate change in the beauty industry by utilizing women that aren’t professional models and don’t adhere to the traditional model standard of beauty. The campaign instantly became viral with millions of hits on YouTube and features on shows such as “Ellen” and “The View.” Not only that, but Dove’s ‘Evolution’ advertisement also won an award at the Cannes Lions International Advertising Festival. Although a great accomplishment professionally, Dove was more proud of the fact that the message is hitting home.

However, as Dove continues its campaign to bolster women's self esteem, it finds itself continually besieged by questions about internal contradictions. Dove's message of promoting women's body images conflicts with ads from Axe, a male-oriented toiletry brand owned by Dove's parent company, Unilever. In addition, critics say that Dove's ads contradict themselves, taking aim at the beauty industry while shilling beauty products. While it is nice to think that Dove started this campaign to really try to make beauty “a source of confidence, not anxiety,” the bottom line is that Dove is still owned by a larger corporation, Unilever, and they need to generate a profit. Hub Magazine speculates that sales might not be improving due to the fact that “Unilever also is behind the arguably

misogynist advertising for the Axe brand and smell hypocrisy.” As a result, Dove’s whole campaign for real beauty seems to be built on a rocky foundation. As a result, Unilever altered the Real Beauty campaign website by increasing the prominence of Dove products in their advertisements. Again, this is just proving to consumers that perhaps their campaign was just for making money after all.

While Dove has redefined corporate social responsibility, they haven’t fully committed to their campaigns. According to Wilmot’s philosophy, Unilever and Dove still have the responsibility to behave prudently and morally and there are definite contradictions with their brother company Axe and the money driven underbelly of the corporation.

### **Body Image**

Dove’s Campaign for Real Beauty sprang from a singular insight found in a 2004 global study: only 2% of women around the world described themselves as beautiful (Unilever, 2004). To address this issue, the brand created a groundbreaking campaign that used real women in a number of shapes, sizes, and colors – without airbrushing or photoshopping. One of the greatest achievements of the Dove campaign is that it sparked a global conversation about the definition of beauty. The main issue being targeted was the repetitive use of unrealistic, restricting, unattainable images of women’s beauty. “Dove sought to change the culture of advertising by challenging beauty stereotypes; they selected real women whose appearances are outside the stereotypical norms of beauty (e.g., older women with wrinkles, overweight women)” (Celebre, 2014). The campaign saw success because the real women were relatable and thus the fresh perspective within the media was likeable and well-received (Celebre, 2014). Celebre also says the company

was successful beyond simply making people feel good about the company, “What Dove has so successfully done is reframe the function of purchasing their beauty products and toiletries from one focused on utilitarian outcomes (such as the quality and price of the products – things that are virtually never mentioned in the ads) to one that is focused on expressing important values and connecting with others.” In this way the consumer feels positively about Dove and is compelled to purchase their product. Celebre notes that the campaign has increased brand loyalty includes the fact that in 2006, with two-thirds of Dove’s sales being generated by people who bought more than one Dove product, double the number from 2003, before the start of the campaign (Neff, 2014).

However, some Dove ads and campaign tactics were not well received. Firstly, it’s important to point out that none of the Dove campaign ads feature transgender women, a glaring omission and an exclusion of an estimated two to five percent of the world’s population (Kesteren, 1996). Furthermore, none of the ads feature a woman with a physical or mental disability, clearly showing voids in Dove’s attempt to be truly all-inclusive.

A lack of diversity and thoughtfulness is an issue and is evident in Dove’s "Real Beauty Sketches" campaign in 2013. The campaign is based on the idea that women are their own worst beauty critics, and this ad is supposed to be an uplifting message that shows women that they are more beautiful than they think they are. In the viral video, an FBI-trained sketch artist draws women first based on their own descriptions and strangers' descriptions (Stampler, 2015).

Critics point out the lack of diversity in the main participants. The ad features four Caucasians, three are blonde with blue eyes, all are thin, and all are young (the oldest is

40). Although the video shows at least three black women were drawn for the project, only two are briefly shown describing themselves in a negative light and both women are lighter skinned. A black man is shown as one of the people describing someone else, and he comments that she has “pretty blue eyes.” People of color are ultimately onscreen for a total of less than 10 seconds of the 6 minutes and 36 seconds of footage (Stampler, 2015).

Stampler continues, saying that the ad teaches what it preaches against — “that beauty is paramount.” Ann Friedman agrees with the idea that there is a problem in our advertising, “that the women we see in ads and movies and on magazine covers are held to impossible standards that then trickle down to the rest of us.” However, she adds to Stampler’s frustrations, “These ads still uphold the notion that, when it comes to evaluating ourselves and other women, beauty is paramount. The goal shouldn’t be to get women to focus on how we are all gorgeous in our own way. It should be to get women to do for ourselves what we wish the broader culture would do: judge each other based on intelligence and wit and ethical sensibility, not just our faces and bodies.”

The ad also victimizes women, blaming them, rather than society, for critiquing the smallest physical imperfection (Stampler, 2015). Erin Keane's Salon article, claiming that the ad is "not feminist," takes issue with Dove's message that women are their own worst critics. She says the only thing the campaign has done in the way of women’s portrayals in the media is overtly shifting “the emphasis from sexual attraction to peer approval.” Keane writes, “All of that body image baggage is internalized by growing up in a society that enforces rigid beauty standards, and since the target demographic for this ad is clearly women over 35 with access to library cards (which is to say, women who

have had some time to figure this reality out), it is baffling that Dove can continue to garner raves for its pandering, soft-focus fake empowerment ads."

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

One of the greatest achievements of the Dove campaign is that it sparked a global conversation about the definition of beauty. It looked to target the repetitive use of unrealistic, restricting, unattainable images of women's beauty. "Dove sought to change the culture of advertising by challenging beauty stereotypes; they selected real women whose appearances are outside the stereotypical norms of beauty (e.g., older women with wrinkles, overweight women)" (Celebre, 2014).

The campaign dealt with reality, it used honesty, not traditional marketing ploys, to reach people and appeal to their feelings. It saw success in bringing a fresh perspective to the media portrayals of women. Utilizing "real women" made the company more likeable and this groundbreaking idea was well received (Celebre, 2014). Celebre also says the company was successful beyond simply making people feel good about the company, "What Dove has so successfully done is reframe the function of purchasing their beauty products and toiletries from one focused on utilitarian outcomes (such as the quality and price of the products – things that are virtually never mentioned in the ads) to one that is focused on expressing important values and connecting with others." In this way the consumer feels positively about Dove and is compelled to purchase their product. Celebre notes that the campaign has increased brand loyalty includes the fact that in 2006, with two-thirds of Dove's sales being generated by people who bought more than one Dove product, double the number from 2003, before the start of the campaign (Neff).

Another strength of the campaign was its public outreach with the “Dove’s Self-Esteem Toolkit.” The toolkit is an online resource that includes workshops, activities, guides, and videos all aimed at building girls’ self-esteem. “In addition to the online videos, these activities and workshops also reflect the advertising campaign’s mission, which is to redefine beauty” (Celebre, 2014). It is well known that self-esteem is linked to body image, particularly for adolescent girls but also included adolescent and adult males, (e.g., Choma et al., 2010, Petrie et al., 2010, and older women, e.g., Marshall, Lengyel, & Utioh, 2012).

However, there were clear weaknesses in this campaign as well. The absence of transgender women is a glaring omission and an exclusion of an estimated two to five percent of the world’s population (Kesteren, 1996). Furthermore, none of the ads feature a woman with a physical or mental disability, clearly showing voids in Dove’s attempt to be truly all-inclusive. The Dove ads also lack diversity in race and age. While ads do feature different ethnicities, they are often underscored and given less precedence than their Caucasian counterparts (as seen in the Dove’s "Real Beauty Sketches" campaign). Also evident in this campaign is a lack of emphasis on older women, the oldest woman was in her 40s. Although they do represent older women in their earlier 2004 campaign (wrinkled or wonderful?) they are given less presence than their younger counterparts in the more recent ads.

Additionally, in more recent ads the message has become diluted and gimmicky. In the latest Dove ad “Choose Beautiful” women are at a store with two entrances, and they have to choose which they should walk through; one door is labeled “Beautiful” and one is labeled “Average.” As Fast Company says, “As the campaign progresses, each

new iteration feels more forced and stunty than the last, and, again, each feels like it's putting women in the exact spot that 'Real Beauty' was meant to release them from—feeling like their entire existence is about physical beauty.” The promos have moved too far from the brand, what started off as a campaign about the state of beauty marketing has turned into a series of “PSAs on self-esteem with the women participants put in the position to account for their feelings in what feels like a melodramatic skit” (Garcia, 2015).

Dove also struggles with the hypocrisy of the misogynistic ads associated with Axe, also owned by parent company Unilever. There are internal contradictions with Dove's message of promoting women's body images and the ongoing stereotypical thin portrayals of women promoted by Axe. In addition, critics say that Dove's ads contradict themselves, taking aim at the beauty industry while shilling beauty products. While it is nice to think that Dove started this campaign to really try to make beauty “a source of confidence, not anxiety,” the bottom line is that Dove is still owned by a larger corporation, Unilever, and they need to generate a profit. Hub Magazine speculates that sales might not be improving due to the fact that “Unilever also is behind the arguably misogynist advertising for the Axe brand and smell hypocrisy.” As a result, Dove's whole campaign for real beauty seems to be built on a rocky foundation. As a result, Unilever altered the Real Beauty campaign website by increasing the prominence of Dove products in their advertisements. Again, this is just proving to consumers that perhaps their campaign was just for making money after all.

## **Two-Way Symmetrical Theory**

The two-way symmetrical theory of communication “relies on honest and open two-way communication and mutual give-and-take, it focuses on mutual respect and efforts to achieve mutual understanding while emphasizing negotiation and a willingness to adapt and make compromises” (Grunig, 1992). Grunig says this theory of communication also requires the willingness of organizations to be open to significant changes in how they operate in order to accommodate their publics.

Two-way asymmetric communications, on the other hand, involve persuasion and focus on the “short-term attitude change” (Grunig, 1992). This form of communication “is used by an organization primarily interested in having its publics come around to its way of thinking rather changing the organization, its policies, or its views” (Grunig, 1992).

The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty could have benefited from the two-way symmetrical theory by having an open and honest flow of discussion between its consumers. Open and honest conversation would have revealed the deficiencies in their advertisements and they could have positively rectified the problems in future promos. However, we can see from the above examples that the advertisements only get more gimmicky and become less genuine as the campaign continues. By listening to their constituents they could’ve revised their means of sending out their message and have it be better received overall. Specifically, the major issues of diversity could have been addressed earlier as well.

## **Future Campaigns**

As the power of the Dove Real Beauty initiative appears to be fizzling out with its current diluted advertising, it nonetheless was a groundbreaking, revolutionary campaign that was successful in ushering in a new age of female empowerment. As Dove celebrated the tenth anniversary of its Campaign for Real Beauty in 2014, Mallory Russell says, “the video space is finally seeing the effects of its influence with a recent outpouring of female empowerment-themed campaigns.” Russell gives the examples of Always’ #LikeaGirl, Pantene’s #ShineStrong and #NotSorry, and GoldieBlox’s toys geared towards facilitating an interest with girls interested in engineering (a normally male dominated career). She credits this advancement to Dove’s decade long campaign to encourage positive body images in women is still the gold standard of female empowerment.

Despite glaring missteps in the Dove Real Beauty campaign, it was the first to challenge the status quo and inspire a broader, healthier, more democratic view of beauty – a message that has only gained popularity in current campaigns. Always, the Female personal care brand is the latest to embrace female empowerment in its videos with its “Like A Girl” campaign. It released a heart-warming ad campaign challenging the notion that to “throw like a girl” is a criticism and calls for girls to embrace the term as a positive attribution. Pantene’s “Shine Strong” and “Not Sorry” is another current campaign that shows the tendency women have to over apologize in unwarranted situations. The scenarios replay with an assertive, apology free tone that empowers women and challenges women to be just as assertive in their dialogues. These campaigns

of empowerment are made possible by Dove leading the way in 2004 with their first, drastic look at the realities of our society.

## **Chapter 3**

### *Methodology*

This chapter presents the methods used to collect data for the study including the data sources, collection and presentation of the data, and delimitations.

#### **Data Sources**

For this study, one expert from the field of marketing, public relations, and women and gender studies were interviewed based on a single questionnaire. This questionnaire was specifically developed to answer the original research questions regarding the development and management of personal brands. The marketing expert selected for the interview was

#### **Participants**

Maggie Cox, is the President and CEO of BCA, an award-winning advertising agency in San Luis Obispo, California. The public relations expert selected was Mary Verdin, president of Verdin Marketing, a well-known public relations firm in San Luis Obispo, California. The women's and gender studies expert selected was Dr. Jane Lehr. Lehr is the chair of the department of Women's and Gender Cities at Cal Poly and is the associate professor in ethnic studies.

#### **Interview Design**

The following questions were asked each of the experts and served as data sources for the study:

1. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe the components of a successful branding campaign?

2. What is corporate moral responsibility in the field of marketing/ public relations/ women's gender studies? What responsibility does Dove have to its consumers when it comes to the advertisement/ branding of "Real Beauty?"
3. In what ways do you think the Dove Real Beauty campaign succeeded in its branding campaign? And in what ways did it fell short?
4. What are the positives and negatives of two-way symmetrical communication? In what ways could Dove have benefited from this communication model?
5. How did the DRBC set precedence in advertising/ future campaigns?

### **Data Collection**

The method of data collection for this study was three individual interviews with each expert. The interviews were conducted during May and June 2015 and lasted approximately 20 - 30 minutes each. "Since intensive fieldwork can be time-consuming, the ethnographic approach can adopt a clinical perspective, where qualitative interviews are the main research instrument" (Heding, Knudtzen, & Bjerre, 2009, p. 67-68). During the interviews, experts were asked questions from a single questionnaire designed to provide answers to the original research questions while gaining insight into current personal and celebrity branding strategies.

### **Data Presentation**

The data collected during the each interview was documented through audio recordings using a digital voice recorder as well as written verbatim notes during and after the interviews to document any additional information that could potentially clarify the context of the responses. This method of data collection ensures that the data is presented in the most complete and objective way possible.

## **Delimitations**

There are limitations to this study based on the type of data collected and interview process. The study was conducted to gain insight into the Dove Real Beauty Campaign in the experts' respective fields as well as their own personal opinions on the branding campaign. Therefore, some limitations may exist based on the assumption that the responses are qualitative and opinion-based and therefore cannot be generalized. Additionally, there are time restraints being on the quarter system and only having a few weeks to conduct all the research. Although the audio from the interview was recorded, there are some potential limitations based on the clarity and informality of the interview.

## **Chapter 4**

### *Data Analysis*

Chapter 4 will provide descriptions of the experts interviewed in the study and summarize the respondents' answers to the questionnaire. Since the data was collected through recorded interviews lasting approximately 20-30 minutes, it will be presented in the form of direct quotations or paraphrased responses. The answers will then be analyzed and compared to the original research questions and the existing literature on personal and celebrity branding as reviewed in Chapter 2.

#### **Description of Participating Experts in Related Fields**

##### **Marketing**

Maggie Cox, is the President and CEO of BCA, an award-winning advertising agency in San Luis Obispo, California. Whether it's garnering news coverage about a client's success or helping a company navigate the tricky channels of government, Maggie is well known for her record of success. Maggie's diverse background in public relations, government relations, media development, community organizing and advertising is a cornerstone of the company she founded with her husband, Dave. She, too, worked in broadcasting, and she has a hand in all aspects of BCA account activity. She is at her best when it comes to direct contact with clients.

##### **Public Relations**

The public relations industry expert selected for the study was Mary Verdin, the President and Chief Strategy Officer of Verdin Marketing. She helps clients build enduring brands that truly engage target audiences. With more than 20 years of experience planning and implementing full-scale marketing and public relations efforts

for nonprofits, businesses, and municipalities, it's no wonder she was named by the 2012 Stevie Awards for Women in Business as Female Entrepreneur of the Year. She's actively involved in the Central Coast community and plunges feet-first into problem solving without losing her personal touch and eagle-eye focus on clients' business goals.

### **Women's and Gender Studies**

The women's and gender studies expert selected was Dr. Jane Lehr. Lehr is the chair of the department of Women's and Gender Cities and is the associate professor in ethnic studies. She received her PhD and MS in Science & Technology Studies from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, with concentrations in the social, cultural, and political studies of science and technology, and Women's Studies. In 2005-06, she served as a Research Officer in the Center for Informal Learning and Schools (NSF ESI-0119787) in the Department of Education and Professional Studies at King's College London. Her current research explores how formal and informal education serves as a site of training for future participation by scientific and technical experts and public(s) in personal and public decision-making practices, with particular attention to issues of social justice, cultural and national differences, and democracy.

### **Dove Real Beauty Questionnaire**

Each expert was asked to respond to the following questions and probes regarding personal branding and celebrity status:

1. How would you, as an expert in your field, describe the components of a successful branding campaign?

Question #1 was asked to gain insight in ways professionals would define branding as a positive tool and why it exists in each field. The question was designed to clarify what branding means in all aspects of the term to make the following questions more easily understood for both the experts and the reader.

- Maggie Cox: “It has to be memorable, it has to be appropriate for the audience, and it has to have a vehicle for execution that reaches the audience. So if, it is kind of like the three-legged stool – you have to have all of it. The great idea, if you don’t know how to get it out there isn’t a great idea. The great idea you know how to get it out there but you get it to the wrong group is a miss, so it’s got to have all three.” (Appendix A).

- Mary Verdin: “We always approach any campaign that we do very strategically, because you can have some beautiful ad that can win awards, but if it is not accomplishing the objectives, it’s just a pretty picture. You can have an ad that doesn’t win awards, it’s kind of okay, but it accomplishes the objectives and it is really successful. So, we always start by, you know, what’s the goal for doing – for doing this Real Beauty campaign or whatever it is, what’s the goal of this? What do we want people to do? How do we want people to feel at the end of this campaign? Say it’s the year – say it’s for 2015, where do we want to be in December – on December 31? The next thing – so, the goal is very global. It is a very overall kind of perspective. Here is what we are trying to accomplish. Then, the specifics come in when you look at the objectives. ” (Appendix B).

- Jane Lehr: “The question of advertising and inclusivity is very interesting, I might actually go so far as to suggest that advertising around beauty is always exploitative. And so then the question of what makes good advertisement from that

perspective within Women's and Gender Studies is that no advertisement for products related to proving beauty counts as a good advertisement. I think a lot of our students in Women's and Gender Studies respond really positively to the idea of finding advertisements on target with them with the message that they, too, are beautiful. You know, Dove becomes really complex within Women's and Gender Studies because on the one hand, yes, they're expanding what counts as beautiful and that is very positive. But, on the other hand, they are still marketing a particular idea of beauty in asking us to buy particular products in order to be considered beautiful. It's a site of debate within Women's and Gender Studies." (Appendix C).

2. What is corporate moral responsibility in the field of marketing/ public relations/ women's gender studies? What responsibility does Dove have to its consumers when it comes to the advertisement/ branding of "Real Beauty?"

Question #2 was designed to investigate the variations between corporate moral responsibilities with regards to branding in each of these fields. The question was especially important in relating those responsibilities to the DRBC specifically. It serves as a source of comparison between traditional marketing branding techniques and the women's and genders study view on promotion tactics.

- Maggie Cox: "Well I, we're a small company, and I personally feel very strongly that the need for morality and integrity in everything that goes on and the clients we work with, that sort of thing. That is a little different when you get on a huge multinational corporation level, but I think what we are seeing is really interesting, what would you call it, intersection of people wanting to do the right thing and people of your

generation demanding the right thing be done. There has been a shift in what moves consumers, particularly millennials.”

- Mary Verdin: “There are really two levels of it, the way I see it. So there’s – I’m a big corporation and I have a responsibility to be truthful and to fix problems and to, I think, give back, must have some sort of philanthropy and peace – you know, give back to do the right thing and those are all social responsibility pieces, but because Dove decided to go in the direction of the Real Beauty, that adds a whole other light. Now, if they were McDonald’s and they were talking about having fun – come have fun at McDonald’s and now we have apples in the kid’s meals, so we’re healthier and isn’t that great? They are not having the level. They are taking on more responsibility by saying they are going to be Real Beauty, because now people are looking at them and now it’s also a PR campaign.”

- Jane Lehr: “I think a lot of folks within Women’s and Gender Studies might suggest that the whole connection between beauty and consumers and capitalism is one that we should be challenging. On the other hand, I think there are lots of teacher scholar activists in the Women’s and Gender Studies as well as a lot of Women’s and Gender students who are trying to think about this idea – socially responsible advertising and inclusive advertising and so, I think – I guess I would say if I am looking and companies and marketing and social responsibility or inclusivity, I would want to be looking both, of course, at the images, but also as a Women’s and Gender Studies scholar around the production of the different products and so, you know, is anybody being exploited in the production of these products in addition to the question of are people being exploited in the marketing aspect as well as I would want to closely examine, sort of – just an all

safety of product use and so I think for me, as a Women's and Gender Studies scholar, if I am going to be talking about more socially responsible or more inclusive marketing, it's not just about the images. The images are a place to start, but then there is also this sort of production and consumption angle. I think other – looking particularly at the images in Dove advertising, definitely they are more inclusive of a wider array of bodies, but there are so many types of bodies that aren't included in the Dove advertising and so, you know, looking at body size, there's a whole range of body sizes that aren't included. There are all sorts of different bodies that aren't imaged as part of Dove advertising. And so I think if you were going to focus specifically on the imaging, there is still a lot of work that you could do there, around more visibility of more types of bodies. Because, in a sense, Dove has expanded what casts as beautiful, but they're still people on the outside and so trying to disrupt that seems important.”

3. In what ways do you think the Dove Real Beauty campaign succeeded in its branding campaign? And in what ways did it fell short?

Question #3 was created to get a brief description from respondents regarding their opinion of the DRBC's successes and failures. I also wanted to gain insight from each individual regarding the strategies one should take when developing advertisements in the marketing, public relations, and women and gender studies fields. This question was also included to get the experts' knowledge of any additional tactics professionals used in the past and are currently using to brand companies.

- Maggie Cox: “I think they broke a stereotype that women in advertising were all beautiful, very positive messaging for girls, although I don't know how many girls are consumers of that messaging, it is really more women with children saying don't do that

to your kids, but yeah. I don't know, the purpose of marketing is to sell product, I don't know if they sold, it's sounds like they did, they retained their share because they are a product that is aging and so to stay relevant they had to do something. [However,] I think there is a sameness to it or a predictability if you are predictable without being really entertaining, you know it's even like you look at the reality TV shows it's sort of the measure and they run their course because after a while ok, I've seen all the dancers, I've seen all the singers, so, yeah."

- Mary Verdin: "I think it succeeded, first of all, because they were just – they have a lot of money and they are able to get it out everywhere. And so that's – I mean, how people – it's changed over the years. They used to say you had to – somebody had to see a message four times before they remembered it, but now we are bombarded everywhere we look and so now it's ten. You have to see a message 10 times within a certain period of time before you really remember it. So, they have that going for them. They have a very large budget. It felt authentic. I think that that was a real success point. I think it started other companies doing similar things. I don't know how – was it great PR, but at the end of the day did it sell products and not to be too commercial about the whole thing, but it's okay to want to sell products and it's – if you can sell products and be successful and also be educating people and doing something good, I think that that's fabulous. So, I don't feel like it's a sellout. They're only doing that so they can sell products. I think it was – I don't think they could execute it if they didn't have people. So, I don't really know where it fell short."

- Jane Lehr: "I think transwomen are underincluded. Think about the sort of different fat rights movements against sizes. Like, there's – definitely Dove has

expanded the literal amount of space that the women in their ads take up, but it's still actually quite narrow compared to what some women's bodies look like and so, as I was saying in the previous question, I think there's – it's a really good project to expand what counts as beautiful, but what are the ways in which the Dove campaigns are still redefining certain ideas about whose in and whose out and they also seem to be missing bodies of people who are visibly disabled and so that's another way in which the sort of ideal body is renormalized because you have this campaign that is supposed to be about pushing norms and it's reproducing the same norms around physical able-bodiedness. It was very – I noticed it seems to me like a lot of the images they provide of women who are older are women who are older who are actually really skinny. And so they – they again, sort of took on one particular aspect and then said you can be beautiful at any age, but they only provide us with one way to be beautiful at age 60, which is right to have maintained a particular small body and so, you know, Dove is – Dove is – I mean in part, they want to make money and I think the question of what they should – if their goal is to make money, then they're doing things well, which brings us back to the question we started with, like should we, as feminists, as people within Women's and Gender Studies, should we be celebrating things like Dove or should we be taking on the beauty industrial complex and see that Dove is just a part of that? It's a new marketing technique potentially, which is what some people have suggested. And I, personally, feel conflicted about Dove in particular, in large part because so many of my students in my classes experience the Dove advertisements as liberatory and as a first positive moment for thinking about beauty in society and so, I – in that way – sort of educationally, they have been tremendously valuable. I have to think not just for my students, right, but for

students and young people, right, from a wide range of perspectives, but at the same time I want to bring the type of critical engagement with the imaging that you're addressing in your project. I think – so I guess I would say, you know, that for me, speaking for myself as a Women's and Gender Studies scholar, at least at this moment I'm in a both end position where I do see value and importance especially in the start of the Dove campaign. At the same time, I have these types of questions and I continue to think about, you know, does my – if I support the Dove beauty campaigns, does that mean I am supporting this beauty industrial complex and what does that mean for me, my students, for the world, etc.?"

4. What are the positives and negatives of two-way symmetrical communication?  
In what ways could Dove have benefited from this communication model?

Question #4 was designed for the marketing and public relations professionals specifically. The question is used to gain insight on how this communication model works in the real world and how companies like Dove can/ could have benefited from user feedback in their campaign.

- Maggie Cox: "I think the challenge with two way communication is that it is so labor intensive and I mean it is definitely the model of the future, you get people talking about you, and also when they talk badly about you, you have a problem to resolve so you can't, you know we have clients who as soon as somebody says something bad about them on Facebook they say take it down. I say no, you want to know, they are saying it anyway, so I think you just have to be staffed up for it, it really takes a lot of people to do it right."

• Mary Verdin: “I think, well, it’s – it’s necessary because that’s what it is. So, whether you like it or not, it’s not going to go away. One thing I told – especially the earlier days of social media where – blogs. And people are like, should I have a blog? I don’t have a blog. If I have a blog should I make so people can’t comment because people, you know – what if I do Facebook? It’s always something mean. It’s like, you know what, they’re saying it anyway. At least now you know and you have an opportunity to give them some information and even if that person – because we have a client that’s a restaurant – and Yelp is the bane of their existence. It’s like, you know what, someone had a bad experience – because somebody had a bad day and they come in and they write this horrible review and we remembered that guy and we gave him his lunch for free and he said everything was fine and then he goes and give us a one star review. You know, right? And so it’s like, here. Let me help you draft a response. No. That guy’s a jerk. You know what? The response is not for that guy. The response is for everybody else who is reading it and you need to remember that this is a community. This is not one on one communication unless they are private messaging you. And, so I think – I think it’s good. I think there is a definite passive aggressive behavior that happens with that, but in a lot of cases it does give you the opportunity to find out if people are unhappy about something that maybe you wouldn’t know or you wouldn’t know until it became a big problem.”

##### 5. How did the DRBC set precedence in advertising/ future campaigns?

Question #5 was designed to get perspectives from each expert on their ideas of the current marketing world. It was asked to gain insight in the changes of this field

overtime, taking a critical look at Dove's impact and other similar campaigns that have started since.

- Maggie Cox: "I think it absolutely set a precedent with one of the first to step out with that kind of perspective. I think as time goes by it is not as interesting, you know we have very short attention spans now on what's hot is hot for a minute and then it moves on. It's like the ALS ice bucket challenge. You know by the 50th one of those you got ok, let's get another good idea. I think that's the challenge for marketing is that you just have to keep upping the ante all the time with new ideas."

- Mary Verdin: "I don't remember anybody doing something to that extent before they did it and it's – before that we had heard a lot of people complaining about the model on the runway are too skinny, that we have this unrealistic of what beauty – I mean, people have been talking about that for some time, but no one – I haven't seen anyone really actually do something tangible to support that that's awful. Oh, yeah. It's terrible. I'm Calvin Klein and that is terrible. Those models are so skinny, but here's my little 80-pound wife who has going to wear her – you know, they all – oh yeah, but we're still going to do it. You know, so this was like, actually something – doing something and in stepping out there a little bit, maybe showing the brands, it's okay to – it's not just – because sometimes people say that they want something and then you give it to them and they don't really want that."

- Jane Lehr: "I have very mixed feelings about it because I think feminism as a marketing strategy is lower extremities harmful than other marketing strategies, but is it the social change that we wish to see? At the same time, like I was saying before, you know what I really want to know – maybe you've looked at this in your research studies

– is has there been research on the impact of the Dove campaigns on, for example, the self-esteem and body size awareness of young people? And so, if we could know more about the specific impacts of the Dove campaigns in a measureable longitudinal way, that would help me make a more final assessment and I would want to know about it for each of the individual campaigns. So, I guess what I’m saying is it’s not – I’m not automatically happy if women’s empowerment is used as a marketing tool. But, I do think it is often better than what was previously used as a marketing tool, but I still have these questions about marketing at large and about the representations of empowerment in these commercials. So, a lot of times the representations of empowerment are about sort of individual sense of self, like I feel powerful, and social change requires more than sort of individual changes and how we think of ourselves. It is part of a social change effort, but that is a very individualistic model of feminism and social change making and so – and it’s a consumer base model. Whereas if I can see these products then I am a better feminist and that’s not a big enough definition of what empowerment looks like for me.”

### **DRBC Research Questions**

For this project, the following five research questions were created for the study to examine the DRBC and determine the practices and strategies that are being used among marketing, public relations, and women’s and gender study professionals. Expert opinions were collected on the DRBC and a measurement of branding successes and failures was taken.

Research question 1: What is the Dove Real Beauty campaign and what was its goal?

- “The Dove Real Beauty Campaign rebranding includes advertisements, videos, workshop, sleepover events and the publication of books and plays” (Tanzina, 2013).

- “Brand equity is the “incremental cash flows which accrue to a branded product over and above the cash flows which would result from the sale of a product with no brand name” (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 6-7).

Research question 2: How was the campaign implemented/ timeline?

- “The Dove Real Beauty Campaign is a worldwide marketing campaign Unilever launched in 2004” (Tanzina, 2013).

Research question 3: What was the corporate moral responsibility?

- According to Wilmot, “A responsible corporation is one that behaves well - wisely, prudently and morally” and secondly, that of holding “corporations responsible for their actions in the way that we may hold an individual responsible for their actions” (2001).

Research question 4: How was body image the main focus?

- Dove kicked off the second and most iconic phase of the Campaign for Real Beauty in June 2005, with advertising featuring six real women with real bodies, curves, and skin “imperfections” (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty).

Research question 5: What were the strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes?

- “One of the greatest achievements of the Dove campaign is that it initiated a global conversation to widen the definition of beauty.” (Celebre & Waggoner Denton, 2014).

- However, a question is raised, ““Could Dove’s ad campaign potentially be even more harmful than traditional ad campaigns?” —due to the fact that young girls may still

feel like they are falling short in comparison to the ‘real women,’ but have not been taught buffer techniques towards these types of ads.” (Celebre & Waggoner Denton, 2014).

Research question 6: Looking at feedback, why was a two-way symmetrical communication model important?

- “Since the dawn of social media, brands have been trying to engage and interact with prospects, leads and customers in a way that makes them appear human. One way that companies and brands can achieve that type of relationship is with a two-way conversation” (Edgecomb, 2013).

Research question 7: How did the DRBC shape future campaigns?

- "The video space is finally seeing the effects of its influence with a recent outpouring of female empowerment-themed campaigns. From Always' #LikeaGirl to Pantene's #ShineStrong and #NotSorry and GoldieBlox's The Princess Machine, Dove's decade long campaign to encourage positive body images in women is still the gold standard of female empowerment." (Russell, 2014).

### **DRBC Branding Data**

For this study, it was important to see what the various experts said due to their diverse backgrounds and experience on the subject. In order to acquire this data Maggie Cox, a marketing expert, Mary Verdin, a public relations expert, and Jane Lehr, a women's and gender studies expert were interviewed for the study. They were each asked identical questions specifically designed to answer the original research questions in an individual interview setting. The following tables present the respondents' answers in the form of their individual perspectives on the original research questions.

Research question #1: What is the Dove Real Beauty campaign and what was its goal?

This research question was studied in order to reveal the history of the DRBC and its impact in each of the fields of studies. It was used to gain insight on advertising campaigns in general and why they exist/ how they are seen in these three fields as a way to promote a wide spectrum of products, services, and corporations. The Dove Real Beauty Campaign is a worldwide marketing campaign Unilever launched in 2004. Dove's goal is to change the status quo by showing the natural physical variation embodied by all women and inspire a broader, healthier, more democratic view of beauty- one that all women can own and enjoy everyday (Westphal, 2005). This question was asked to clarify and define branding and its goals in all aspects of the term in order to make the proceeding questions more easily understood for both the experts and the reader.

Table 1 summarizes the answers to this question. The answers elicited were fairly consistent and tied closely to the literature on the topic. All three of the respondents viewed branding as a way to differentiate a product, person, service, or company from competitors in one way or another. However, Jane Lehr had a different take on what constitutes “good advertising.”

**Table 1**

*Examining branding campaigns and the basis for the DRBC*

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Respondent	The DRBC	Current tools and tactics used by professionals in pertinent fields
Maggie Cox	There is an intersection of people wanting to do the right thing and people of the up coming generation demanding the right thing be done	Be memorable, appropriate for audience, and have vehicle for execution that reaches the audience
Mary Verdin	They are taking on more responsibility by saying they are going to be Real Beauty, because now people are looking at them and now it's also a PR campaign	Look at the goals and accomplish objectives
Jane Lehr	DRBC is expanding what counts as beautiful but they are still marketing a particular idea of beauty in asking us to buy particular products in order to be considered beautiful	No advertisement for products relating to beauty is good advertising

Research question #2: How was the campaign implemented/ timeline?

This question was studied to reveal the changes that have occurred over time with the DRBC and to examine how campaigns are implemented from the start and carried out overtime. This question allows us to look at the way professionals would define or describe the process of branding and the process of gaining widespread public knowledge of a company or product.

This research question was studied in order to find out what the main differences are between the processes and goals of branding product/ corporations overtime. "The

Campaign for Real Beauty launched in September 2004 with a much talked-about ad campaign featuring normal women whose appearances are outside the stereotypical standards of beauty” (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty).

**Table 2**

*The DRBC and advertising timelines*

Respondent	The DRBC	Examining the timeline and the process
Maggie Cox	They initially had an innovative, stereotype-breaking message. But now there is a sameness and predictability to their advertising	The message is lost if you aren't doing new/ innovative things to catch your audience's attention. You have to keep upping the ante
Mary Verdin	The DRBC is global and their perspective needs to be all encompassing. Then, the specifics come in when you look at the objectives (selling products)	First discuss your goals and what you want people to do, examine how you want people to feel at the end and where do you want to be in a year
Jane Lehr	Less harmful than other marketing strategies, but the representations of empowerment in these commercials are often one-sided	Feminism has always been a marketing strategy

Research question #3: What was the corporate moral responsibility?

This question was designed to investigate the variations between corporate moral responsibilities with regards to branding in each of these fields. The question was especially important in relating those responsibilities to the DRBC specifically. It serves as a source of comparison between traditional marketing branding techniques and the women's and genders study view on promotion tactics.

According to Wilmot, “A responsible corporation is one that behaves well - wisely, prudently and morally” and secondly, that of holding “corporations responsible for their actions in the way that we may hold an individual responsible for their actions” (2001). This question was used to examine what each professional felt were responsibilities of a major corporation to its consumers.

**Table 3**

*The DRBC and corporate moral responsibility*

Respondent	Personal standard	The DRBC
Maggie Cox	I feel very strongly in the need for morality and integrity in everything that goes on and the clients we work with	That is a little different when you get on a huge multinational corporation level, but there has been a shift in what moves consumers
Mary Verdin	Being a big corporation you have a responsibility to be truthful, to fix problems, and to give back.	A new level arises when going in the direction of “real beauty,” because now they take on the responsibility of living up to that standard and properly promoting that image.
Jane Lehr	Companies have the responsibility to make sure the product they are putting out is safe and is non-exploitative.	Looking at socially responsible or more inclusive marketing, it’s not just about the images. The images are a place to start, but then there is also this sort of production and consumption angle.

Research question #4: How was body image the main focus?

This research question was studied to find what strategies professionals are using in the fields of branding and how the DRBC utilized body image as their main imaging focus for their advertisements. This question explored both the innovativeness of the

“real beauty” marketing tactic and the ramifications that come with connecting beauty and consumers and capitalism.

This question was studied to get a brief description from the experts on their opinion of effective, cotemporary advertising tactics. Specifically focusing on their opinions of the use of body images when attempting to appeal to a broader subset of women.

**Table 4**

*Advertising and body images*

Respondent	Personal standard	The DRBC
Maggie Cox	The purpose of marketing is to sell product, I don't know if they sold, it's sounds like they did, they retained their share because they are a product that is aging and so to stay relevant they had to do something	They broke a stereotype that women in advertising were all beautiful, very positive messaging for girls, although I don't know how many girls are consumers of that messaging
Mary Verdin	It's ok to want to sell products and at the end of the day if it did that and educated people too then it was successful.	They were doing something good, so it's not a sellout, they're only doing that so they can sell products They couldn't have executed it if they didn't have the people and imaging
Jane Lehr	Focusing specifically on the imaging, there is still a lot of work that you could do there, around more visibility of more types of bodies. Because, in a sense, Dove has expanded what casts as beautiful, but they're still people on the outside exploitative.	Definitely they are more inclusive of a wider array of bodies, but there are so many types of bodies that aren't included

Research question #5: What were the strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes?

This question was studied to get a brief description from the experts on the effectiveness of marketing, specifically examining their opinions of the effectiveness of the DRBC. After asking the experts to describe branding, this question now compares and clarifies the variations between the opinions on this campaign. It was important to then gain insight into each respondent’s personal practices for the creation of a brand, as well as their knowledge of their respective fields current strategies for practice.

“One of the greatest achievements of the Dove campaign is that it initiated a global conversation to widen the definition of beauty.” (Celebre, 2014). However, a question is raised, “‘Could Dove’s ad campaign potentially be even more harmful than traditional ad campaigns?’ —due to the fact that young girls may still feel like they are falling short in comparison to the ‘real women,’ but have not been taught buffer techniques towards these types of ads.” (Celebre, 2014).

**Table 5**

*Strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes*

Respondent	The DRBC	Ultimately successful campaign?
Maggie Cox	Strength: breaking stereotypes, selling product, revamping image Weaknesses: predictable	Yes
Mary Verdin	Strength: money to fund campaign, authentic, great PR, sold products Weaknesses: none	Yes
Jane Lehr	Strength: more body sizes were included Weaknesses: didn’t go far enough (transwomen and people with visible disabilities not included)	No

Research question #6: Looking at feedback, why was a two-way symmetrical communication model important?

This question was designed for the marketing and public relations professionals specifically. The question is used to gain insight on how this communication model works in the real world and how companies like Dove can/ could have benefited from user feedback in their campaign. This question was studied to discover what is currently the best means of consumer feedback and how it helps companies in assessing their marketing strategies. Looking specifically at the DRBC, how could their marketing strategy have benefited from this communication model?

“Since the dawn of social media, brands have been trying to engage and interact with prospects, leads and customers in a way that makes them appear human. One way that companies and brands can achieve that type of relationship is with a two-way conversation” (Edgecomb, 2013). The two-way symmetrical theory of communication “relies on honest and open two-way communication and mutual give-and-take, it focuses on mutual respect and efforts to achieve mutual understanding while emphasizing negotiation and a willingness to adapt and make compromises” (Grunig, 1992).

**Table 6**

*Two-way symmetrical communication model*

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Respondent	Benefits	Disadvantages
Maggie Cox	You get consumers talking about you and you can resolve problems	Labor intensive
Mary Verdin	Necessary, allows for feedback and responses with consumers	Passive aggressive behavior
Jane Lehr	Would have a more encompassing view of “beauty” and an understanding/ inclusion of all body types	None

Research question #7: How does the DRBC shape future campaigns?

Question #7 was designed to get perspectives from each expert on their ideas of the current marketing world. It was asked to gain insight in the changes of this field overtime, taking a critical look at Dove’s impact and other similar campaigns that have started since. This question was asked to see how the experts felt the DRBC set precedence in the marketing/ branding/ advertising field (or if they believed it did at all). And in what way the DRBC contributed to bigger ideas and movements from other companies.

As Dove celebrated the tenth anniversary of its Campaign for Real Beauty in 2014, Mallory Russell says, “the video space is finally seeing the effects of its influence with a recent outpouring of female empowerment-themed campaigns.” Russell gives the examples of Always’ #LikeaGirl, Pantene’s #ShineStrong and #NotSorry, and GoldieBlox’s toys geared towards facilitating an interest with girls interested in engineering (a normally male dominated career). She credits this advancement to Dove’s

decade long campaign to encourage positive body images in women is still the gold standard of female empowerment.

**Table 7**

*The DRBC and future campaigns*

Respondent	Current thoughts on DRBC	Did it set precedence?
Maggie Cox	As time goes by it is not as interesting, shorter attention spans now	Yes
Mary Verdin	DRBC is the first of it's kind, it showed brands it was ok to step out of the box	Yes
Jane Lehr	Part of a social change effort, but that is a very individualistic model of feminism and social change making and so it's a consumer base model	Yes

## Chapter 5

### *Discussion and Recommendations*

#### **Summary**

This study was performed in response to the groundbreaking Dove Real Beauty Campaign. Dove is a household name and its multinational advertisements are recognizable across generations. This study focuses on existing literature surrounding the campaign including branding successes and failures, corporate responsibilities, and the evolution of the brand development and management through a two-way symmetrical model.

To find more information on current strategies being used by professionals and the response to the DRBC in these fields, one expert in each field was interviewed based on a single questionnaire designed to answer the following research questions for the study:

1. What is the Dove Real Beauty campaign and what was its goal?
2. How was the campaign implemented/ timeline?
3. What was the corporate moral responsibility?
4. How was body image the main focus?
5. What were the strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes?
6. Looking at feedback, why was a two-way symmetrical communication model important?
7. How does the DRBC shape future campaigns?

Each research question was altered slightly to create applicable questions for interviews with each respondent. The questionnaire elicited a variety of responses that were tied to the literature on personal and celebrity branding strategies.

## **Discussion**

By analyzing the data collected from Chapter 4, connections made between experts' responses provided during the interview process, and the existing literature found in Chapter 2, it is possible to make conclusions regarding the following original research questions.

### **Research question #1: What is the Dove Real Beauty campaign and what was its goal?**

All three of the experts responded by discussing their knowledge/ experience with the campaign and their perspectives on branding in general. This research question was studied in order to reveal the history of the DRBC and it's impact in each of the fields of study. It was used to gain insight on advertising campaigns in general and why they exist/ how they are seen in these three fields as a way to promote a wide spectrum of products, services, and corporations.

The literature reflects a similar perspective. "A brand is an emotional response to the image or name of a particular company, product, or person" (Deckers & Lacy, 2011, p. 25). Schwabel used the example of choosing Advil or Tylenol over a generic painkiller. This is an example of brand equity, or the added profit value by creating a brand name for a product (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 7).

All three of the respondents viewed branding as a way to differentiate a product, person, service, or company from competitors in one way or another. However, Jane Lehr

had a different take on what constitutes “good advertising.” Both Maggie Cox and Mary Verdin saw the campaign as successful, where Lehr found it to be lacking because it was not all inclusive and she felt no advertisement for products relating to beauty is good advertising.

Overall, Cox sums it up best by saying a successful marketing campaign is like a “three-legged stool,” it needs to be memorable, appropriate for audience, and have a vehicle for execution that reaches the target audience. It is possible to conclude that one gains visibility through the creation of a brand by a variety of factors including brand equity, a lasting impression on the audience, as well as finding a point of differentiation from competitors.

**Research question #2: How was the campaign implemented/ timeline?**

This question was studied to reveal the changes that have occurred over time with the DRBC and to examine how campaigns are implemented from the start and carried out overtime. This question revealed the way professionals would define or describe the process of branding and the process of gaining widespread public knowledge of a company or product step by step.

This research question was studied in order to find out what the main differences are between the processes and goals of branding product/ corporations overtime. “The Campaign for Real Beauty launched in September 2004 with a much talked-about ad campaign featuring normal women whose appearances are outside the stereotypical standards of beauty” (Dove Campaign for Real Beauty). Being the first through the wall, Dove also had pioneering advantage, benefiting from “being the first to enter a market and occupy the best position for future competitors” (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 6).

### **Research question #3: What was the corporate moral responsibility?**

When the experts were asked to briefly describe what corporate moral responsibility was and how it is implemented in their field of study, each answered similarly. They elicited the importance of corporate moral responsibility in their field of study and why it's so crucial.

According to Wilmot, "A responsible corporation is one that behaves well - wisely, prudently and morally" and secondly, that of holding "corporations responsible for their actions in the way that we may hold an individual responsible for their actions" (2001). This question was used to examine what each professional felt were responsibilities of a major corporation to its consumers.

Cox and Verdin stated that, in regards to the DRBC, there has been a shift in what consumers are looking for in the integrity of the products they buy and that Dove took on a new level when going in the direction of "real beauty," because now they take on the responsibility of living up to that standard and properly promoting that image. Jane Lehr felt like Dove still could have gone further in being all-inclusive, "looking at socially responsible or more inclusive marketing, it's not just about the images. The images are a place to start, but then there is also this sort of production and consumption angle."

### **Research question #4: How was body image the main focus?**

This research question was studied to find what strategies professionals are using in the fields of branding and how the DRBC utilized body image as their main imaging focus for their advertisements. This question explored both the innovativeness of the "real beauty" marketing tactic and the ramifications that come with connecting beauty and consumers and capitalism.

Dove's Campaign for Real Beauty sprang from a singular insight found in a 2004 global study: only 2% of women around the world described themselves as beautiful (Unilever, 2004). To address this issue, the brand created a groundbreaking campaign that used real women in a number of shapes, sizes, and colors – without airbrushing or photoshopping (Celebre, 2014).

This question was studied to get a brief description from the experts on their opinion of effective, contemporary advertising tactics. Specifically focusing on their opinions of the use of body images when attempting to appeal to a broader subset of women. Cox and Verdin took a more critical marketing perspective, stressing the fact that at the end of the day marketing is really only about selling products, and if “it did that and educated people too then it was successful,” according to Verdin. Lehr felt like there was more work to be done with Dove and its imaging tactics. “Focusing specifically on the imaging, there is still a lot of work that you could do there, around more visibility of more types of bodies. Because, in a sense, Dove has expanded what casts as beautiful, but they're still people on the outside exploitative,” said Lehr.

##### **5. What were the strengths, weaknesses, and outcomes?**

This question was studied to get a brief description from the experts on the effectiveness of marketing, specifically examining their opinions of the effectiveness of the DRBC. After asking the experts to describe branding, this question now compares and clarifies the variations between the opinions on this campaign. It was important to then gain insight into each respondent's personal practices for the creation of a brand, as well as their knowledge of their respective fields current strategies for practice.

“One of the greatest achievements of the Dove campaign is that it initiated a global conversation to widen the definition of beauty.” (Celebre, 2014). However, a question is raised, “‘Could Dove’s ad campaign potentially be even more harmful than traditional ad campaigns?’ —due to the fact that young girls may still feel like they are falling short in comparison to the ‘real women,’ but have not been taught buffer techniques towards these types of ads.” (Celebre, 2014).

Dove succeeded in acquiring brand alliance as they had a recognizable campaign and had “short-or-long term association of both tangible and intangible qualities associated with brand partners in order to increase visibility of one or both brands” (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 7). Both Cox and Verdin saw this campaign as successful (in the regards that it sold product, broke stereotypes, and was authentic). However, from the women’s and gender studies perspective, Lehr felt like the campaign that prided itself on being all-inclusive didn’t go fair enough in including all body shapes and sizes and excluded large populations of people (like transgendered women and people with visible disabilities).

**Research question #6: Looking at feedback, why was a two-way symmetrical communication model important?**

This question was designed for the marketing and public relations professionals specifically. The question is used to gain insight on how this communication model works in the real world and how companies like Dove can/ could have benefited from user feedback in their campaign. This question was studied to discover what is currently the best means of consumer feedback and how it helps companies in assessing their

marketing strategies. Looking specifically at the DRBC, how could their marketing strategy have benefited from this communication model?

Both Cox and Verdin agreed a two-way symmetrical theory of communication is the most beneficial. It “gets consumers talking about you and you can resolve problems,” said Cox. Verdin agreeing that it’s a necessity, “it allows for feedback and responses with consumers.” Lehr believed a two-way symmetrical theory of communication might have provided feedback that would have led to Dove having a more encompassing view of “beauty” and an increased understanding/ inclusion of all body types.

The literature reflects similar responses to the research question and the experts. “Since the dawn of social media, brands have been trying to engage and interact with prospects, leads and customers in a way that makes them appear human. One way that companies and brands can achieve that type of relationship is with a two-way conversation” (Edgecomb, 2013). The two-way symmetrical theory of communication “relies on honest and open two-way communication and mutual give-and-take, it focuses on mutual respect and efforts to achieve mutual understanding while emphasizing negotiation and a willingness to adapt and make compromises” (Grunig, 1992).

**Research question #7: How does the DRBC shape future campaigns?**

Each expert believed the DRBC was ultimately groundbreaking and set precedence. Verdin sums it but by saying that the campaign basically showed other companies it was ok to step out of the traditional marketing box. This question was designed to get perspectives from each expert on their ideas of the current marketing world. It was asked to gain insight in the changes of this field overtime, taking a critical look at Dove’s impact and other similar campaigns that have started since. This question

was asked to see how the experts felt the DRBC set precedence in the marketing/ branding/ advertising field (or if they believed it did at all). And in what way the DRBC contributed to bigger ideas and movements from other companies.

As Dove celebrated the tenth anniversary of its Campaign for Real Beauty in 2014, Mallory Russell says, “the video space is finally seeing the effects of its influence with a recent outpouring of female empowerment-themed campaigns.” Russell gives the examples of Always’ #LikeaGirl, Pantene’s #ShineStrong and #NotSorry, and GoldieBlox’s toys geared towards facilitating an interest with girls interested in engineering (a normally male dominated career). She credits this advancement to Dove’s decade long campaign to encourage positive body images in women is still the gold standard of female empowerment.

However, both Cox and Lehr point out its current shortcomings. Cox said, “As time goes by it is not as interesting... people have shorter attention spans now.” And Lehr adds, “Part of a social change effort, but that is a very individualistic model of feminism and social change making and so it’s a consumer base model.”

### **Recommendations for Practice**

After completion of the study, substantial data has been collected and analyzed on the topic of the DRBC. Given the information, it is important to highlight the most eye-opening content and present it for future marketing, public relations, and women and gender study professionals. Some recommendations for practice include capitalizing on practicing what you preach when it comes to corporate moral responsibility, being truly all-inclusive (if that what your marketing strategy boasts), and utilizing two-way communication as often as possible to hear from your constituents.

### **Standing out with something new**

When it comes to creating a one-of-a-kind and memorable marketing campaign, it is essential to unearth unique aspects of your product or company that differentiates you from competitors. As Kahle and Kim (2006) discussed, pioneering advantage is used strategically to increase brand equity and public interest. The DRBC was unique in that it was the first of its kind to break stereotypes in advertisement imaging and spark a global conversation about the definition of beauty. By doing this, Dove appealed to the emotions of its consumers to evoke a positive response around their company and to gain brand equity.

The literature reflects a similar perspective. “A brand is an emotional response to the image or name of a particular company, product, or person” (Deckers & Lacy, 2011, p. 25). Schwabel used the example of choosing Advil or Tylenol over a generic painkiller. This is an example of brand equity, or the added profit value by creating a brand name for a product (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 7).

### **Product and company integrity**

All of the experts elicited the importance of corporate moral responsibility in their field of study and why it’s so crucial. Cox and Verdin stated that, in regards to the DRBC, there has been a shift in what consumers are looking for in the integrity of the products they buy and that Dove took on a new level when going in the direction of “real beauty,” because now they take on the responsibility of living up to that standard and properly promoting that image. Jane Lehr felt like Dove still could have gone further in being all-inclusive by having transgender women and women with disabilities incorporated into their ads. “Definitely Dove has expanded the literal amount of space

that the women in their ads take up, but it's still actually quite narrow compared to what some women's body's look like. Looking at socially responsible or more inclusive marketing, it's not just about the images. It is part of a social change effort, but that is a very individualistic model of feminism and social change making and so – and it's a consumer base model. Whereas if I can see these products then I am a better feminist and that's not a big enough definition of what empowerment looks like for me," explained Lehr.

### **Communication is key**

Receiving feedback from your consumers is invaluable. Some of the pitfalls of under-inclusivity could have potentially been avoided had Dove utilized a two-way symmetrical communication model. Relying on open and honest communication, the two-way symmetrical theory of communication provides a "mutual give-and-take", focusing on "mutual respect and efforts to achieve mutual understanding while emphasizing negotiation and a willingness to adapt and make compromises" (Grunig, 1992).

Both Cox and Verdin agreed a two-way symmetrical theory of communication is the most beneficial. It "gets consumers talking about you and you can resolve problems," said Cox. Verdin agreeing that it's a necessity, "it allows for feedback and responses with consumers." Lehr believed a two-way symmetrical theory of communication might have provided feedback that would have led to Dove having a more encompassing view of "beauty" and an increased understanding/ inclusion of all body types.

## **Study Conclusion**

In conclusion, as the power of the Dove Real Beauty initiative appears to be fizzling out with its current diluted advertising, it nonetheless was a groundbreaking, revolutionary campaign that was successful in ushering in a new age of female empowerment. Dove exemplified the advantages, disadvantages, and overwhelming responsibility that came with a “real beauty” social marketing campaign, and while it was revolutionary it missed the mark in many regards. The study ultimately serves as an educational tool for the fields of marketing, public relations, and women’s and gender studies.

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## Appendix A

### *Interview Transcripts: Maggie Cox*

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a marketing perspective based on a questionnaire about the DRBC.

Interviewer: Jessica Dieny

Respondent: President and CEO of BCA (Maggie Cox)

Date of Interview: 06/03/2015

#### *Interview Transcription*

Jessica Dieny: As an expert in your field describe the components of a successful branding campaign. Just in general.

Maggie Cox: It has to be memorable, it has to be appropriate for the audience, and it has to have a vehicle for execution that reaches the audience. So if, it is kind of like the three-legged stool – you have to have all of it. The great idea, if you don't know how to get it out there isn't a great idea. The great idea you know how to get it out there but you get it to the wrong group is a miss, so it's got to have all three.

JD: And as far as corporate moral responsibility, how would you describe that and looking at the Dove Real Beauty campaign what responsibilities do you think a huge company like Unilever and Dove have to its constituents?

MC: Ah, that's interesting. Well I, we're a small company, and I personally feel very strongly that the need for morality and integrity in everything that goes on and the clients we work with, that sort of thing. That is a little different when you get on a huge multinational corporation level, but I think what we are seeing is really interesting, what would you call it, intersection of people wanting to do the right thing and people of your

generation demanding the right thing be done. There has been a shift in what moves consumers, particularly millennials. Millennials which are the new you know group everybody is going after have high values, care deeply about companies doing the right thing and reflecting good values and that sort of thing, so it's good business to be moral besides just being the right thing to do, so that's why I feel, I think every company has a responsibility to not just sell something but to do it in an honorable way. That's a very naïve point of view but it is what I personally believe is what we do in our own business and have for 27 years. And I am also the mother of daughters and so I care very much about that. Well I think particularly those companies that play to a girl's body and self images have an even higher measure, higher mark to make and that again may be because I am female and I am the mother of daughters, I have watched over a couple of generations what we have done to girls and what they think is the standard and how tortured they are by it. I would hate to be part of any company that plays to that.

JD: In what ways do you think the Dove Real Beauty campaign fall short?

MC: I think there is a sameness to it or a predictability if you are predictable without being really entertaining, you know it's even like you look at the reality TV shows it's sort of the measure and they run their course because after a while ok, I've seen all the dancers, I've seen all the singers, so, yeah.

JD: And then what was the positive that you thought of the Dove Real Beauty Campaign?

MC: I think they broke a stereotype that women in advertising were all beautiful, very positive messaging for girls, although I don't know how many girls are consumers of that messaging, it is really more women with children saying don't do that to your kids, but yeah. I don't know, the purpose of marketing is to sell product, I don't know if they sold,

it's sounds like they did, they retained their share because they are a product that is aging and so to stay relevant they had to do something.

JD: As far as two-way communications models, that was one specific question I wanted to ask you. The positive and negatives and how do you think Dove could have benefitted from that?

MC: I think the challenge with two way communication is that it is so labor intensive and I mean it is definitely the model of the future, you get people talking about you, and also when they talk badly about you, you have a problem to resolve so you can't, you know we have clients who as soon as somebody says something bad about them on Facebook they say take it down. I say no you want to know, they are saying it anyway, so I think you just have to be staffed up for it, it really takes a lot of people to do it right.

JD: And do you think that the Dove Real Beauty Campaign set a precedence in advertising? Can you see that it made a change as one of the first ones?

MC: Yeah. I think it absolutely set a precedent with one of the first to step out with that kind of perspective. I think as time goes by it is not as interesting, you know we have very short attention spans now on what's hot is hot for a minute and then it moves on. It's like the ALS ice bucket challenge. You know by the 50th one of those you got ok, let's get another good idea.

## **Appendix B**

### *Interview Transcripts: Mary Verdin*

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a public relations perspective based on a questionnaire about the DRBC.

Interviewer: Jessica Dieny

Respondent: President and Chief Strategy Officer of Verdin Marketing (Mary Verdin)

Date of Interview: 05/22/2015

#### *Interview Transcription:*

Jessica Dieny: All right. So, just to start off, what are some of the components that you would say of a successful branding campaign?

Mary Verdin: We always approach any campaign that we do very strategically, because you can have some beautiful ad that can win awards, but if it is not accomplishing the objectives, it's just a pretty picture. Right? So – and – or you can have an ad that doesn't win awards, it's kind of okay, but it accomplishes the objectives and it is really successful. So, we always start by, you know, what's the goal for doing – for doing this Real Beauty campaign or whatever it is, what's the goal of this? What do we want people to do? How do we want people to feel at the end of this campaign? Say it's the year – say it's for 2015, where do we want to be in December – on December 31? The next thing – so, the goal is very global. It is a very overall kind of perspective. Here is what we are trying to accomplish. Then, the specifics come in when you look at the objectives. So, okay, what are the objectives to reach that goal? What are we going to do, specifically, and I – in PR planning there's talk about the way you have an effective objective is who is doing what by when. So, I am going to answer your questions today. That's one of

your objectives to reach your goal of finishing your senior project, right? So I think that is really important to say, okay, if we want – if the goal at the end of the day – I'm just going to make up stuff for Dove – if the goal is we want to increase our customer base by 10% by the end of the year, then maybe one of the first things we are going to do is develop a campaign that has social media attraction by February. Then that gives them 10 months to, you know – so they are going to be very specific. Then under that are going to be all the tactics of, okay, so what do we need to do to do that well? We need to do some research and find out what resonates with people. We need to find out what the issues are. We need to find out what kind of language do we use to talk to our constituents. We need to find out what are their pain points. That is a real big thing. Right? It's like, yeah I need to take a shower or I take a shower every morning and I just hate it when my soap dries out my skin, or you know, whatever. That might not be something someone answers. Do you like Dove? Do you like Ivory? Yes. Sure. Sure. Sure. But if you're really looking deeper, finding out what their pain points are. And that is the whole world of research really. And defining the metrics. So, at the end of the day – at the end of 2015, we want to have a 10% increase. We know what that metric is. The problem with it is we don't know if we've achieved it until the campaign is over. So, what can we be monitoring along the way to make sure we are headed in the right direction? So, if the metrics are we want to be sure on social media that this campaign gets shared X number of times. We want to make sure that we get this engagement or this number of fans or we expand in this geographic area where we don't have a lot of attraction and there is some opportunity or – you know really looking at those lead measures. Right? Things that we can look at now and if we are accomplishing those

things, probably we are going to do good down the line. I think another really important thing, and this has gotten a lot easier as things have gone more digital, is just really constant evaluation. You got to know where you are all the time and you got to adjust because some parts of marketing, as much as businesses don't like this, some parts are trying things. We think, based on the research that we've done, this tells us this is going to be the message that is going to work and then you've got to test it and when you implement it, you've got to pay attention and see, is it doing – God, we have these objectives – is it meeting those? It is not? It is working great over here, but not over here. What is going on over here? What do we need to adjust? So, there is constant adjustment. You don't just put the ad out there and then come back in 10 minutes to see if you have achieved the goal. Right? It's all very – it's not sexy at all. Right? The key to successful branding is hard work. Doing the research, getting something that feels like it is on point, testing it, constant checking in on it and making sure things are going in the right direction and then hopefully, you get to the end of the year and it's like, we increased by 12%. We exceeded our goal. We did such a good job along the way.

JD: And then looking at – what you would – how would you describe a corporate moral responsibility when it comes to marketing and how do you think Dove, being such a big corporation, kind of has the responsibility to its consumers, especially when it comes to Real Beauty. What do you think? How do you think those two worlds collide for a large corporation like that?

MV: It's interesting because there's – there are really two levels of it, the way I see it. So there's – I'm a big corporation and I have a responsibility to be truthful and to fix problems and to, I think, give back, must have some sort of philanthropy and peace – you

know, give back to do the right thing and those are all social responsibility pieces, but because Dove decided to go in the direction of the Real Beauty, that adds a whole other light. Now, if they were McDonald's and they were talking about having fun – come have fun at McDonald's and now we have apples in the kid's meals, so we're healthier and isn't that great? They are not having the level. They are taking on more responsibility by saying they are going to be Real Beauty, because now people are looking at them and now it's also a PR campaign. Right? So, it's funny because people often say marketing and PR and to me, those are not separate things. Marketing include PR, because marketing is just about getting your message to your audience. Getting the right message to the right person at the right time. And, PR is a big part of that. And so, you know, I think that level of responsibility goes up because now they are talking about Real Beauty and it can't just be an ad campaign. It can't just be, aren't we awesome, because look we have somebody who doesn't fit that. You know, the cover of Vogue in a bathing suit, beautiful person who is actually 18 years old and airbrushed. They're saying these are real people. We believe in real people. This is beautiful. We are going to redefine beautiful. That is something that you don't just say. You have to live it and it has to show in every other area of who you are as a campaign. That make sense? It's interesting because – and I think the campaign is great. I really – I think it's great. And, it's funny to me how there have been all these celebrities, Cindy Crawford, not that long ago, had something, right? Here's an untouched photo of me. Jamie Lee Curtis has done it. Here's a picture of me before they photo shopped my body. And she – and both of them have always been super fit, super into fitness and health living and they were so photo shopped. It's like, gosh, if they have a work – they are perfect and this is

ridiculous. You know? But then on the other side of it, you hear about, like Pink. You see all the social media stuff about, you had a baby and now you're fat and I can believe anybody loves you, you're no good and hey, lose weight. It's like quit. But, over here you're saying you appreciate Real Beauty and now you're casing on – let me see a picture of you. So, people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. You know? So, hopefully I answered your question.

JD: And then, let's see, in what ways do you think the branding campaign succeeded? So, you kind of touched upon that. In what ways do you think it fell short? Specifically, looking at Dove and their Real Beauty.

MV: I think it succeeded, first of all, because they were just – they have a lot of money and they are able to get it out everywhere. And so that's – I mean, how people – it's changed over the years. They used to say you had to – somebody had to see a message four times before they remembered it, but now we are bombarded everywhere we look and so now it's ten. You have to see a message 10 times within a certain period of time before you really remember it. So, they have that going for them. They have a very large budget. It felt authentic. I think that that was a real success point. I think it started other companies doing similar things.

JD: I feel like, you know, they really went for being more authentic and doing new things, but in what ways do you feel like they did – kind of missed the mark. You also talked about that a little bit.

MV: You know, I can't think of too much in that regard. It would be interesting to know, I mean, from a numbers perspective. I don't know how – was it great PR, but at the end of the day did it sell products and not to be too commercial about the whole thing, but it's

okay to want to sell products and it's – if you can sell products and be successful and also be educating people and doing something good, I think that that's fabulous. So, I don't feel like it's a sellout. They're only doing that so they can sell products.

JD: And looking at two way symmetrical communication models – receiving feedback from you audience and things like that – how would you describe the importance of that in marketing campaigns? Would you say that's kind of the best communication theory?

MV: I think, well, it's – it's necessary because that's what it is. So, whether you like it or not, it's not going to go away. One thing I told – especially the earlier days of social media where – blogs. And people are like, should I have a blog? I don't have a blog. If I have a blog should I make so people can't comment because people, you know – what if I do Facebook? It's always something mean. It's like, you know what, they're saying it anyway. At least now you know and you have an opportunity to give them some information and even if that person – because we have a client that's a restaurant – and yelp\* is the bane of their existence. It's like, you know what, someone had a bad experience – because somebody had a bad day and they come in and they write this horrible review and we remembered that guy and we gave him his lunch for free and he said everything was fine and then he goes and give us a one star review. You know, right? And so it's like, here. Let me help you draft a response. No. That guy's a jerk. You know what? The response is not for that guy. The response is for everybody else who is reading it and you need to remember that this is a community. This is not one on one communication unless they are private messaging you. And, so I think – I think it's good. I think there is a definite passive aggressive behavior that happens with that, but in a lot of cases it does give you the opportunity to find out if people are unhappy about

something that maybe you wouldn't know or you wouldn't know until it became a big problem. So, I think it's more proponents of doing surveys and, you know, ask your customers what they want rather than what you think and this is a way to do it. I mean we test things on social media. It's like, hey, here's some new, you know, tag lines for Morro Bay tourism. What do you guys think? Well, let's ask the tourists what they think. That doesn't make any sense. I would never, you know – but I like that one because that totally is why we come to Morro Bay. Right? So it gives you a free way of testing things and just kind of gaging a sentiment.

JD: This is my last question, but the – what we had kind of talked about – how the Real Beauty campaign set a precedence for ads and the future campaigns with Always, Pantene, the sorry and not sorry. So, the importance of this campaign would you say that it was successful in bringing about a new age of advertising and kind of revolutionary in that way?

MV: Yeah. I would agree with that. I think – I don't remember anybody doing something to that extent before they did it and it's – before that we had heard a lot of people complaining about the model on the runway are too skinny, that we have this unrealistic of what beauty – I mean, people have been talking about that for some time, but no one – I haven't seen anyone really actually do something tangible to support that that's awful. Oh, yeah. It's terrible. I'm Calvin Klein and that is terrible. Those models are so skinny, but here's my little 80-pound wife who has going to wear her – you know, they all – oh yeah, but we're still going to do it. You know, so this was like, actually something – doing something and in stepping out there a little bit, maybe showing the brands, it's okay to – it's not just – because sometimes people say that they want

something and then you give it to them and they don't really want that. So, it was a way of other brands saying, gosh, people said that they didn't like how they remember being portrayed. They took a chance and showed us this other way of approaching it and people really responded to that. So, maybe that's good. And it is changing that kind of mentality. It's like steering a battleship. Right? It's like you don't just go, okay, you know what? Now, we are going to appreciate everyone for how they really are and not expect it. You know? It's not like that. It takes a long time and so, if they're doing, they're getting other people on board to do it, that can only be a good thing.

## Appendix C

### *Interview Transcripts: Jane Lehr*

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a women's and gender studies perspective based on a questionnaire about the DRBC.

Interviewer: Jessica Dieny

Respondent: The chair of the department of Women's and Gender Studies and an associate professor in Ethnic Studies (Jane Lehr)

Date of Interview: 06/01/2015

#### *Interview Transcription:*

Jessica Dieny: So, my first question is from all women's and genders' point of view, what would you say are the components of a successful advertising campaign as far as being all inclusive? What are the components that you say would be positive for a successful?

Jane Lehr: so the question of advertising in inclusivity is very interesting because some folks, scholars, teachers, activists in Women's and Gender Studies are in feminism. I might actually go so far as to suggest that advertising around beauty is always exploitative. And so then the question of what makes good advertisement from that perspective within Women's and Gender Studies is that no advertisement for products related to proving beauty counts as a good advertisement. I think a lot of other folks, though, in Women's and Gender Studies, there is a range of opinion and so a lot of people have been very positive and others have questions, but a lot of people have been very positive about the Dove campaigns in terms of their efforts around body size, inclusively. I think a lot of our students in Women's and Gender Studies respond really

positively to the idea of finding advertisements on target with them with the message that they, too, are beautiful. You know, Dove becomes really complex within Women's and Gender Studies because on the one hand, yes, they're expanding what counts as beautiful and that is very positive. But, on the other hand, they are still marketing a particular idea of beauty in asking us to buy particular products in order to be considered beautiful. It's a site of debate within Women's and Gender Studies.

JD: And as far as the moral responsibility that a company has, how would you describe that? Like as far as marketing and things like that, when it comes to making a profit, how would you go about it? Would you just eliminate the idea of beauty altogether?

JL: Well, I think – I think a lot of folks within Women's and Gender Studies might suggest that. The whole connection between beauty and consumers and capitalism is one that we should be challenging. Not everybody in Women's and Gender Studies takes that particular position, but it is definitely a position that lives within Women's and Gender Studies. On the other hand, I think there are lots of teacher scholar activists in the Women's and Gender Studies as well as a lot of Women's and Gender students who are trying to think about this idea – socially responsible advertising and inclusive advertising and so, I think – I guess I would say if I am looking and companies and marketing and social responsibility or inclusivity, I would want to be looking both, of course, at the images, but also as a Women's and Gender Studies scholar around the production of the different products and so, you know, is anybody being exploited in the production of these products in addition to the question of are people being exploited in the marketing aspect as well as I would want to closely examine, sort of – just an all safety of product use and so I think for me, as a Women's and Gender City scholar, if I am going to be

talking about more socially responsible or more inclusive marketing, it's not just about the images. The images are a place to start, but then there is also this sort of production and consumption angle. I think other – looking particularly at the images in Deb advertising, definitely they are more inclusive of a wider array of bodies, but there are so many types of bodies that aren't included in the Dove advertising and so, you know, looking at body size, there's a whole range of body sizes that aren't included. There are all sorts of different bodies that aren't imaged as part of Dove advertising. And so I think if you were going to focus specifically on the imaging, there is still a lot of work that you could do there, around more visibility of more types of bodies. Because, in a sense, Dove has expanded what casts as beautiful, but they're still people on the outside and so trying to disrupt that seems important.

JD: Which leads directly right into my next question of what you think they did well and where do you think they fall short – Dove specifically. So, the body images, like you said, are somewhere included. It was a bigger deal.

JL: I think transwomen are – see to be underincluded. The men who, you know if you think about the sort of different fat rights movements against sizes. Like, there's – definitely Dove has expanded the literal amount of space that the women in their ads take up, but it's still actually quite narrow compared to what some women's body's look like and so, as I was saying in the previous question, I think there's – it's a really good project to expand what counts as beautiful, but what are the ways in which the Dove campaigns are still redefining certain ideas about whose in and whose out and they also seem to be missing bodies of people who are visibly disabled and so that's another way in which the sort of evil body is renormalized because you have this campaign that is supposed to be

about pushing norms and it's reproducing the same norms around physical able bodiness. It was very – I noticed – I mean I'm sure you've studied this much more closely than I have, but it seems to me like a lot of the images they provide of women who are older are women who are older who are actually really skinny. Right? And so they – they again, sort of took on one particular aspect and then said you can be beautiful at any age, but they only provide us with one way to be beautiful at age 60, which is right to have maintained a particular small body and so, you know, Dove is – Dove is – I mean in part, they want to make money and I think the question of what they should – if their goal is to make money, then they're doing things well, which brings us back to the question we started with, like should we, as feminists, as people within Women's and Gender Studies, should we be celebrating things like Dove or should we be taking on the beauty industrial complex and see that Dove is just a part of that? It's a new marketing technique potentially, which is what some people have suggested. And I, personally, feel conflicted about Dove in particular, in large part because so many of my students in my classes experience the Dove advertisements as liberatory and as a first positive moment for thinking about beauty in society and so, I – in that way – sort of educationally, they have been tremendously valuable. I have to think not just for my students, right, but for students and young people, right, from a wide range of perspectives, but at the same time I want to bring the type of critical engagement with the imaging that you're addressing in your project. I think – so I guess I would say, you know, that for me, speaking for myself as a Women's and Gender Studies scholar, at least at this moment I'm in a both end position where I do see value and importance especially in the start of the Dove campaign. At the same time, I have these types of questions and I continue to think

about, you know, does my – if I support the Dove beauty campaigns, does that mean I am supporting this beauty industrial complex and what does that mean for me, my students, for the world, etcetera? And it's better. The question is it good enough?

JD: And as far as this campaign setting up precedence, I think we can agree that it was new and it was different and in that way, how do you see that as positive going forward? Do you see it growing? There are other campaigns that kind of came out. Always did one with girls running.

JL: Right.

JD: And Pantene did one with not being sorry.

JL: Oh, I did see that.

JD: Women not being sorry and things like that. So do you think this is going to be more positive moving forward? Do you think it is going to just keep growing or – as far as a future ad campaigns.

JL: Yeah. It's very interesting because in a way, now it seems as if we are at a – this happened – you know if you look in the 1960's at advertising with Virginia Slims, they picked up the language of feminism to advertise cigarettes and so there was this intimate connection, right? And feminism was being used as a marketing strategy. And, again, I have very mixed feelings about it because I think feminism as a marketing strategy is lower extremities harmful than other marketing strategies, but is it the social change that we wish to see? At the same time, like I was saying before, you know what I really want to know – maybe you've looked at this in your research studies – is has there been research on the impact of the Dove campaigns on, for example, the self-esteem and body size awareness of young people? And so, if we could know more about the specific

impacts of the Dove campaigns in a measureable longitudinal way, that would help me make a more final assessment and I would want to know about it for each of the individual campaigns. So, I guess what I'm saying is it's not – I'm not automatically happy if women's empowerment is used as a marketing tool. But, I do think it is often better than what was previously used as a marketing tool, but I still have these questions about marketing at large and about the representations of empowerment in these commercials. So, a lot of times the representations of empowerment are about sort of individual sense of self, like I feel powerful, and social change requires more than sort of individual changes and how we think of ourselves. It is part of a social change effort, but that is a very individualistic model of feminism and social change making and so – and it's a consumer base model. Whereas if I can see these products then I am a better feminist and that's not a big enough definition of what empowerment looks like for me.

JD: Like moving forward, like an ideal marketing campaign, would it have none of these – like sexism, feminism? How would you see an ideal...

JL: I don't – I mean I think it depends. Different people are going to see that differently. You know, there are some people within Women's and Gender Studies, again, who would suggest that we need to shift out of capitalism, right? Like and have these broader types of critiques to imagine a world that is not based on consumerism. That is based in other types of social practices and if that's your perspective, then I think you're going to want to see a much decreased role of advertising. If we start thinking about it within the world that exists, at least within the contemporary United States, which is a consumer society – I mean for me, as a consumer, I am really interested in, sort of, data about the specific products. Like what I was talking about before, like, you know, how was this

produced? How are human beings and the environment impacted? What's the, sort of, sustainability record? How is it distributed? What happens when I use this on my body? Does it happen not just to my body, but potentially to the broader environment when I pee it out? What happens, right, when I'm done with this product and I recycle it or I trash it? The, sort of, life cycle analysis. We could imagine a consumer society where social responsibility looks like advertising about product life cycles rather than the sort of models of individual consumerism. And so I guess for a lot of Women's and Gender Studies scholars, if we must have advertising, it's that type of advertising about human and environmental impacts as well as the sort of impacts on whether we think of ourselves as individuals or as a collective. That is going to be more exciting than what we've already achieved with the Dove campaign.

JD: Yeah. I think that's perfect. I think you really summed it up. That was pretty much all my questions.

JL: Great.

JD: Is there anything you wanted to add?

JL: I think I – like I was saying, the Dove campaign is – it's a hard one. And I think, you know, the key and what I was hoping to highlight in our conversation is that there is no single Women's and Gender Studies perspective on the Dove campaign. There is no single feminist perspective and so you are going to get a range of different analysis, depending upon which Women's and Gender Studies scholar, which feminists that you ask. And then, it is also possible for people to, I think what I was sort of modeling was really these both end positions. I am personally conflicted about the Dove campaign because it is an intervention and it is better, but around this question of is it enough and is

this what – the question you were asking about is this the vision I am working towards or in a sense, does, you know, having more feminists consumption, does it actually delay a broader social change.