

WARC

Press Release

For immediate release

P&G stands up for racial equality in a divided nation

USA, 13 November 2017 – Procter & Gamble, the consumer-packaged goods manufacturer, is actively seeking to tackle racial inequality with its multicultural marketing finds WARC, the global marketing intelligence service.

The current societal and political unrest in America has landed the country at a “cultural crossroads,” according to Marc Pritchard, Chief Brand Officer at Procter & Gamble. And this “unique moment in time,” he warned, requires marketers to react to a chaotic shift in values that threatens to undermine a decades-long march towards marketplace parity among different consumer groups.

As he delivered the opening-day keynote address to the Association of National Advertiser’s 2017 Multicultural Marketing and Diversity Conference, held recently in Miami, he added a personal point of passion to his on-going march to industry integrity: The challenge to create responsible, powerful multicultural advertising, he said, “has affected me personally, since I’m half-Mexican.

“My father was Mexican-American, but he was adopted by a man with an English name. Growing up, I had the ability to move between White and Latino cultures. But when entering the workforce, I suppressed my Mexican heritage, for fear of being labelled, because I had heard these denigrating terms used many times in my life.... I came to grips with my own biases to change my attitudes and behaviour. I recognized the privilege of being viewed as White, with a name like ‘Pritchard’ and decided to share my personal story and open up a dialogue within our company. ”

Pritchard’s impassioned speech outlined his company’s belief that shattering “myths” about multicultural marketing is vital to moving brands in the right direction.

“At P&G, we’ve made a choice to step up and use our voice in advertising as a force for good and a force for growth by taking a stand on racial equality,” said Pritchard.

Pritchard has outlined three steps the multinational has taken to tackle marketing biases:

Representation & portrayals: Alongside dramatically increasing the diversity depicted in its ads, P&G stands in opposition to pernicious and inaccurate stereotypes. This notion is epitomized by ads for Swiffer, Dawn and Luvs that feature dedicated, doting African-American dads. Pritchard says: “Black fathers are often unfairly stereotyped as being absent or inattentive. We view our advertising right with Black families as the highest bar to clear.”

Products: Pantene's Gold Series haircare products, introduced in March 2017, is tailor-made for African-American women. This new product undermines two common biases. The first, explains Pritchard, "is that the brand's existing offerings were designed for straight and round hair rather than for the characteristics of Black hair," and secondly it challenges unfair online illustrations of African-American hair by deliberately celebrating Black women's hair as "unique, strong and beautiful."

Social action: In reaction to racial prejudices re-surfacing, P&G have crafted a multi-brand platform entitled "My Black is Beautiful" designed to celebrate African-American cultural identity and start a conversation around racial biases.

Geoffrey Precourt, WARC's US Editor WARC concludes that his speech was significant "because Pritchard's remarks were particularly impressive in that they elevated marketing and advertising from a powerful brand-focused business practice to a force that can react to—and shape—public affairs. When Pritchard cites a chaotic shift in values that threatens to undermine decades of a march to marketplace parity among different audiences, he's also calling for business leaders to step up and take a leadership role against bias.

"Even as multicultural audiences are growing in size and affluence, they are also witnessing renewed pushback from the less-progressive corners of American society."

Precourt added: "I've never seen any marketing-conference audience moved to a standing ovation. And, in 10 years of covering meetings for WARC all over the U.S., I've never seen a speaker more passionate about his subject. He demonstrated that the world's largest advertiser also has one of the largest hearts."

As consumers across the board are growing more interested in the social preference of the companies they do business with, WARC summarises that for effective brand marketing in today's world, understanding and reflecting the unique characteristics of different demographics is essential for delivering campaigns that truly respect the individual.

Additionally there is both a moral and financial imperative for marketers to address racial inequality by taking on stereotypes and prejudices.

More information on how P&G is tackling racial inequality see WARC's ANA event reports:

[P&G's Pritchard boldly call on marketers to stand up for racial equality](#)

[P&G shatters multicultural marketing biases](#)

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