

#Femvertising

A New Kind of Relationship Between Influencers and Brands



Women currently comprise a \$14-trillion market, and their purchasing power is expected to grow significantly over the coming years. As their piece of the purchasing pie grows, women are increasingly demanding that brands build more respectful and empowering messages and images into their ads that target women. The result? #Femvertising – defined as advertising that employs pro-female talent, messages, and imagery to empower women and girls.

It's the latest wave in advertising, and it's working. Female-friendly campaigns are outperforming ads that perpetuate overused or passé stereotypes.

While pro-female advertising has been on the rise, propelled by campaigns like Dove's pioneering Real Beauty campaign and Always's #LikeAGirl campaign, does it actually influence women's purchasing behavior? The answer is a resounding "Yes," according to a SheKnows Media survey conducted in late September 2014. Of the 600-plus women who responded to the survey, more than half (52 percent) said they have bought a product specifically because they like the way the brand portrays women in its advertising and messaging. Nearly all respondents (91 percent) believe the way women are portrayed in advertising has a direct impact on girls' self-esteem. Other insightful findings from SheKnows Media's #Femvertising survey include:

- » **51%** like pro-female ads because they believe they break down gender-equality barriers.
- » **81%** said ads that positively portray women are important for younger generations to see.
- » **71%** think brands should be responsible for using advertising to promote positive messages to women and girls.

- » **94%** believe portraying women as sex symbols in advertisements is harmful.
- » **52%** have bought a product because they liked how the brand and their advertising portrays women.
- » **46%** have followed a brand on social media because they like what the company stands for.

These results clearly show that the pro-female advertising movement doesn't go unnoticed by female consumers. This is good news, not only for women, but for online influencers who are building their brands and their businesses on the foundation of a trusted, authentic relationship with their communities. How can you, as one of those influencers, participate in #Femvertising and make it relevant to your work in the advertising space?

A FEW CONSIDERATIONS

1. Define what #Femvertising means for you:

Only you can define your boundaries around what kind of advertising you're willing to host and, therefore, stand behind. Understand the range of what you feel comfortable with. Obvious advice, but what does that look like in practice? One example is campaigns that focus on children and young people. Such campaigns may not feel relevant or well aligned with how you approach your own boundaries around privacy and your family, so that even if the images and messaging are pro-female, the campaign isn't right for you. Another example is all about sex. That's right... a campaign may be pro-female and sex-positive (or not), and the approach taken simply may not work for you and your personal brand. It's as important to apply your values consistently to #Femvertising opportunities as it is with any other kind of campaign.

2. Identify your ideal brand partners:

Create your own brand wish list – brands whose messaging is in alignment with your values and those of your community. It's always easier to collaborate when you're in alignment, and it will help you create more effective and authentic branded content. When you're creating more effective content, you're, in turn, helping your clients build a deeper, more meaningful connection with the women they're seeking to respect and empower. It's a virtuous circle of social capitalism!

3. Do your homework about those brands:

Once you have proactively identified the brands that embody your definition of #Femvertising, study their imagery and messaging, and their reputation in the market. Take a look at how their marketing has evolved over time. If it aligns with your personal brand and your audience, think about what you can do to support that evolution.

4. Maximize social media to build relationships with those brands:

Find your ideal brands on social media, then connect with, follow, and engage with them. You'll gain valuable insight into how they connect with your audience and have more ammunition to pitch how you can extend your services to support their campaigns and their day-to-day social engagement.



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5. Know the bigger picture: If you intend to use your platform to make money, it is an often-overlooked part of the job to understand the market landscape in which you're operating. A successful consultative approach requires that you're solving a problem for your client. So, you need an awareness of your prospective client's challenges, including the pain points in the bigger landscape – the industry in general. *iBlog* magazine is a great inside-baseball resource around professional blogging, but there are countless trade papers, magazines and daily newsletters that explore the worlds of advertising, affiliate marketing, search marketing, branded content and content marketing, mobile marketing, and many, many more. Subscribe and learn. Learn the landscape your customer is traversing. Learn the language your customer is speaking. And then offer your unique perspective and content solutions to address their issues. You can position yourself as the go-to influencer for your niche by being savvy about theirs.

#Femvertising is a powerful trend, and we think it's only going to become more dominant. As it does, it enables mindful monetization and lets you build a business while being part of the advertising revolution that's better for us all.



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