

A young girl with blonde hair, wearing a grey hoodie with a red cross on the back, blue jeans, and red shoes, stands in front of a brick wall. The wall has a large, white, stylized graffiti of a woman's face. The girl is looking towards the camera. The background is a brick wall with some white graffiti, and the foreground is grass.

# How can brands capture what it means to be a woman in 2020?

GLOBAL INSIGHT TEAM 13 MAR 2020

The celebrations seen on International Women's Day from brands divided opinion, largely on the topic of authenticity

It is said that brands are still second-guessing or ignoring women's brand experiences, but to what extent does this still ring true?

According to a recent study "[The new normal: Rethinking marketing to Women](#)": WARC *Exclusive January 2020*, over the past 15 years marketing to women has undergone a rebellious paradigm that has displaced the diminishing 'good girl' cultural script, which presented women in a way that is primarily pleasing to men, to one that portrays women as strong, outspoken and vocal.

Personal care brand, *Dove*, was a pioneer of this new paradigm, challenging the ideal 'thin' stereotypes prevalent in the early 2000s. If the first model was based on biases and clichéd stereotypes, the second model aimed to cut through a male-dominated view and ensure that women's voices were heard.

However, the rebellious cultural script narrative still does not accurately reflect how women think and feel about themselves or marketing. According to a Foresight Factory 2019 survey, seven in 10 women see gender identity as important to their personal identity and the second model is too disturbing for the status quo.

In 2020 a new paradigm is predicted to emerge. The 'new normal' woman seeks 'to be comfortable in their own skin' and is the stage that necessitates the re-think of marketing to women following on from the rebellion narrative.

This seismic shift from the last decade and a half begs the question of how should brands communicate with women in 2020? Here are our three core requirements to brands:

### 1. Don't stereotype

For years women have been voicing their anger about being presented on what they are expected to be, rather than who they see themselves to be. LIVE Panel, GroupM's proprietary consumer survey, shows women see themselves just as adventurous, active and cultured as their male counterparts, so move away from simplistic binary models and avoid reinforcing stereotypes.

### 2. Focus on women's values

Effective marketing to women requires moving away from generalising and looking through the old lenses of age, marital status or motherhood. Women want brands to focus on their values rather than perceived weaknesses. They see themselves as intelligent, strong, kind, adventurous and confident.

### 3. Be equal

For too long sex in advertising was used as a selling point for men. Foresight Factory informs that one of the key emerging trends in 2020 is sex-positivity. Until now, under-research and under-represented female sexual desires were seen as taboo, are now being lifted and brands like [Durex](#) are paving the way to put all pleasure on equal grounds.

Traditionally, marketing to women was largely based on the assumption that women were the main household shoppers within set product categories. Our data however, shows this is outdated. Globally, 48% of men buy half or more household groceries. Moreover, across the categories, women have as much decision – making power as men (LIVE Panel, 2019). Marketers need to make sure to find relevant and appropriate ways of engaging with a vast and lucrative audience.

At MediaCom we partner with the best research agencies globally, enabling us to use multiple sources to present different perspectives and bring research data to life and capture, as best as we can, what it means to be a woman in 2020.