

Diversity is Just Good Business

Advantage Communications, Inc.

In 2011, I wrote a whitepaper called “Simply Smart Marketing: How to Speak to the Needs of Multicultural Consumer Segments.” In it, I spoke to the importance of marketing and noted that advertising agencies must hire talent from diverse backgrounds in order to provide services and capabilities to reach this century’s more diverse markets¹. In looking for high-performing advertising agencies to reach your ever-diversifying audiences, you should invest in equally diverse marketing teams to get the job done and get it done right.

Advantage Communications, Inc. embraces market segmentation to the very core by investing in diversity and attracting talent from various walks of life. At Advantage Communications, Inc., we adhere to the value of diversity. Our team – diverse by age, race, gender, geography, language, and skill-sets – produces cutting-edge work that is culturally relevant thanks to the input of our varied backgrounds and rich experiences. Agencies like ours more effectively reach multiple consumer markets, because our marketing teams look like those changing markets. According to the 2010 Census, nearly 40% of the total US population is African American, Hispanic American or Asian American – an increase of nearly 17% in the last decade. However, multiculturalism is more than racial and ethnic diversity. Markets can be segmented in numerous other ways: by gender, tax status (i.e. single heads of household or married), income level, zip code and many others. The most effective advertising agencies employ talent from a variety of these groups.

As we saw in the 2012 presidential election, diversity is no longer the exception but the rule. Multicultural marketing is mainstreaming, and the most effective corporate participants are those that reflect the changes occurring around them. Diverse advertising agencies are more in-tune with their environments and can, therefore, adapt more easily and quickly to change. They craft more relevant consumer

communications. Many advertising agencies are becoming irrelevant in their “one message for all” marketing policies while others are reducing multiculturalism to stereotyping. Diverse advertising agencies are less likely to take such a monolithic approach. For example, at Advantage Communications, Inc. we understand that it is not enough to hang signs sporting brown faces in “certain” neighborhoods. Our approach is based on knowledge – our experiences and dedication to in-depth market segment research.

Multicultural advertising agencies also adapt more quickly to changes in technologies and new marketing mediums. As I pointed out in “Simply Smart Marketing,” we now live in an age where consumers have become immensely smarter and shrewd with their decision-making for goods and services. Much of this can be attributed to the astounding accessibility of information and the wireless devices that keep us connected 24/7. In response, “digital marketing” is experiencing growth. eMarketer reported that “global digital advertising spending broke \$100 billion” in 2012 and is expected to grow another 15.1% this year². To respond to rapidly changing marketing vehicles (i.e. social media, texting, etc.), marketers must stay abreast of this movement and utilize talented team members that can easily navigate the digital age. Therefore, at Advantage Communications, Millennials make up 50% of our team. Millennials (born between 1980 – 2000) came of age in the new century, make up America’s largest generation and are emerging as the country’s most powerful market share. It just makes sense to employ talented Millennials to keep advertising agencies current, effective, and insightful on future trends.

Finally, diverse advertising agencies have a more positive social impact. Advantage Communications engages in several communications campaigns encompassing health initiatives, consumer goods and services. In these cases, it is imperative to reach each consumer effectively, because – if not – you cause disparities. If multicultural advertising is not relevant, it disappoints both consumers and clients. Multicultural marketers have a significant responsibility to the community and to clients to provide the most intrusive and relevant advertising. This not only serves the economic interest of clients but also positively impacts our environments and respects the multiculturalism of our markets, our country and our world.

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At Advantage Communications, Inc., inclusion is our standard. Diverse advertising teams like ours reach modern American consumers, because they look and think like modern American consumers. We understand that as our world diversifies, market segmentation and knowing and meeting the needs of each group are critical to our clients' bottom line. Diverse advertising agencies understand the importance of employing Millennials, African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, members of the LGBT community and other multicultural groups to keep abreast of the changing marketplace including the digital movement and reaching the eighty-million strong Millennial market. These agencies reflect the diversity of the modern world and set a standard for enacting positive change.

Overall, diversity is just good business. Hiring a talented and qualified advertising agency is a given. Hiring a talented, qualified and diverse advertising agency to partner with your company, organization, or agency will result in significant ROI to you and your team. You will reach more markets with more relevant messaging. Your brand will communicate the value of diversity and stand out as an innovator in your industry. Your campaigns will remain cutting-edge even as your environment changes. Look for diversity in your agency partnerships, and ask yourself, "Is your brand reaching the more diverse group of modern consumers?" Are you ready to invest in a multicultural ad agency relationship?

Sources

¹ Steele, Michael. "Simply Smart Marketing." *Advantage Communications, Inc.* 2012. 9 January 2013. <http://advantageci.blogspot.com/2011/06/simply-smart-marketing.html>

² Mashable, *Report: Digital Advertising Broke \$100 Billion in 2012*, <http://mashable.com/2013/01/09/digital-advertising-100-billion/> (January 9, 2013).