

Ocean Spray & Real Women

Women. We have plenty of issues to keep us busy, gender pay gaps, inequality in domestic labour, the pink tax to name just a few. So why do media companies insist on adding one extra issue to our plates?

The underrepresentation and perpetuation of stereotypes within global media is astounding, shown only too clearly in the now infamous Samsung Galaxy watch ad, depicting a woman, merrily running alone through a city at 2am. She's happy, calm, not a hint of fear, and so incredibly distant from the figure of a real life woman in the same circumstance. Did she perhaps have her house keys lodged between her fingers out of shot? Or does she actually speed up a bit when a random man on a bike starts doing tricks near her on a bridge? Or is this a prime example of a global brand misrepresenting female experiences and therefore alienating a core group of its audience?

The ad has been described as 'tone deaf' by Women's safety group Reclaim These Streets, and Samsung has since apologised. But it begs the question, are brands and media companies truly representative of their consumers? Do they understand the ways in which women want to be portrayed? Can (and should) the media help shape cultural perceptions and attitudes towards gender for the better?

Women are tired of the unrealistic depictions of ourselves within advertising. The assumption that through the male gaze alone can products be sold is outdated, demeaning and downright dangerous. We crave authenticity, women who look and sound like us, who wobble in the same ways we do, who snort when they laugh and who like a pint over a cocktail! Authenticity builds trust, it shows us that we're being seen by a brand, that we can gain real benefit from them, and that they understand our reality.

In stark contrast to Samsung, global drink and snack brand Ocean Spray, in conjunction with Media Bounty, have produced a much more authentic, realistic and uplifting campaign 'Be Your Berry Best'. The campaign illustrates the power of showcasing a true understanding of a target audience, by providing real representation of the women who really use the benefits of cranberries to live their best lives.

By asking **actual women**, Media Bounty found that those in the 35-55 age group feel largely misunderstood by brands, and crave more realistic, positive representations of their experiences (please no more horse riding or roller skating while on a period)! This builds on research from last year: AARP found that 47% of women over 50 felt "ads of people my age reinforce outdated stereotypes", whilst Channel 4 found that younger women were more likely to be used for brand building.

The positive outcomes of accurate representation of women in the media is two-fold. research carried out by Ipsos Mori, found that advertisements that positively and realistically portrayed women were more likely to positively contribute to the long-term brand relationship as well as short-term behaviour change that the role and portrayal of women in ads can influence.

Media Bounty wanted to capture the resilience and optimism of its audience (rather than putting them out to pasture), by amplifying real stories of women within this age group, focusing on what they enjoy doing and how Ocean Spray helps them do this, rather than their familial responsibilities, appearance or fertility. The ads capture their ethos towards the next chapter of their life, encouraging them to push themselves and keep healthy in their own way, without the overtly perfect depictions of wellness seen elsewhere.

The films feature Carol, the founder of an 'Old Girls' football club, professional drummer Emma, and office worker-turned-yoga instructor Shruti. These women are embracing the spirit of 'berry best', giving women an active role and agency through their stories. Media Bounty celebrates this overlooked audience, whilst building brand equity for Ocean Spray by illustrating their knowledge of their customers and speaking in a way which resonates with their experience.

Ellie Malpas, Strategist at Media Bounty, said, "It was inspiring talking to so many amazing women about their pursuits and how their lived experience had given them such an infectious outlook. This campaign feels like one small step towards more positive representation of women, and I am so excited to be part of that."

Francois Boshoff, Creative Director at Media Bounty, said, "I got excited when Ocean Spray were immediately onboard with the idea of championing real women from diverse backgrounds, pushing every day to be the very best version of themselves... whatever that may look like"

Caroline Bethell, Europe Managing Director at Ocean Spray, said "We are really excited to demonstrate that Ocean Spray really understands what it takes to step out of the ordinary, and we want to hero women who do – even in their everyday life."

Media Bounty was responsible for a fully integrated campaign, including creative and media strategy, media planning, campaign management and design. The production process was run in partnership with Meldrum Dent. Ads are live from today and will run until the 31st of May.