

# Contact

## DEMOGRAPHICS

# And Your Ads WILL FOLLOW

**A**SK MARILYN BATCHELOR WHAT'S WRONG WITH ADS that cater to the African American community and she'll likely reply, "Where do you want me to begin?"

"I think the biggest problem is that it was always believed that with general marketing you were reaching everyone," explains Batchelor, vice president of diversity marketing and business development at music marketing and consulting company DMI Music & Media Solutions. But nothing, she says, could be further from the truth: "You miss African Americans, Hispanics, Asians," who, according to Batchelor "respond to things differently. And how you market to us shows us whether you care about us or not."

Most African Americans agree that today's marketing is not culturally relevant to them, according to a recent Yankelovich study. "Part of [marketers failure to connect with minorities] is the misconception that it's one homogenous group," says Sonya Suarez-Hammond, vice president of multicultural marketing insights at Yankelovich. The research company has mapped out what they call "Identity Expression," a model designed to help marketers better target minorities.

"Flawed consumer research reports," are another possible source of the advertising disconnect, according to Andrea Hoffman, the founder and CEO of Diversity Affluence, a company that aims to help marketers reach affluent ethnic communities. Companies don't understand the right questions to ask of focus groups or survey participants," she says. "The nuances of a group of consumers are often missed or misunderstood. I've heard ethnic consumers, particularly African Americans, ask over and over why all ads marketing to black folks need to have dancing or a ball player in it? This can be offensive and a turnoff."

Not surprisingly, the medium is just as important as the message, Hoffman notes: "Many brands go for the more conspicuous media outlets such as *Ebony*, *Essence*, *Black Enterprise*,

*BET* or *Vibe*." Instead, she says, they should be focusing on grassroots, niche or community groups such as Jack and Jill of America, Links Incorporated, HBCU Connect, as well as minority-dominated fraternity and sorority alumni groups and collegiate step shows and drumlines, for example. These opportunities, as obvious as they seem, are thus far untapped.

As with all marketing, having the right attitude is critical. Hoffman tells a story about a colleague who stopped working with a luxury brand client because of its racist approach: After booking an event to reach affluent African Americans, the client said, "We'll bring in extra security." That kind of backsliding racist attitude can create PR catastrophes.

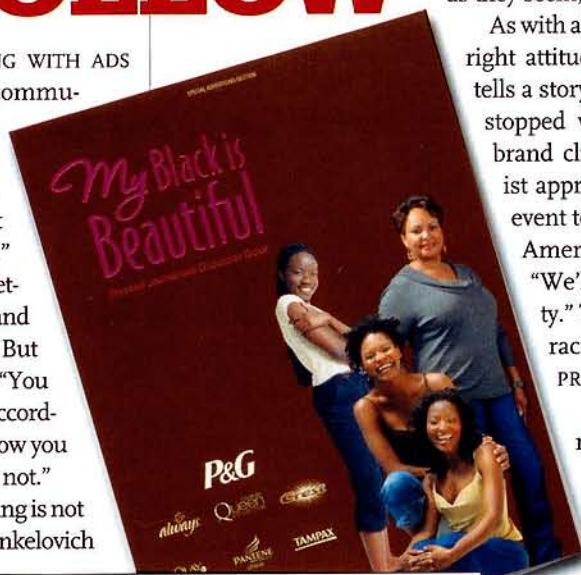
Change, however, may soon come from a sort of unexpected source: rapper Jay-Z. The unretiring hip-hop-mogul recently

announced a partnership with Interpublic Group to launch a new ad agency, Translation Advertising. Translation will focus on marketing to multicultural audiences. He feels bad for you, son.

"I think more seasoned multicultural marketers such as P&G and Toyota — those are the ones who understand that being culturally and personally relevant is key," says Suarez-Hammond. Procter & Gamble's "My Black Is Beautiful" campaign is basic, "but it's acknowledging that

there is a difference," she says. "To be able to have communication for, about and by black women — and sharing the knowledge and being able to create a dialogue and utilize self-expression is part of the identity."

Marketers would also benefit from focusing on "subjective" culture, which is more about attitudes and behaviors — than "objective" culture, which is more about what you see around you, such as trends in clothing and hairstyles, says Suarez-Hammond. All in all, it seems marketers need to free their minds. **M** Lynn Russo Whyllly



### Express Yourself: Yankelovich's "Identity Expression" Model

	MAVERICKS	ACTIVISTS	MIXERS	PRESERVERS
<b>African American population</b>	24%	24%	28%	24%
<b>Trust level</b>	Low	Low	Average	High
<b>Attachment to cultural traditions</b>	Average	Average	Low	High
<b>African American orientation in the marketplace</b>	Low	High	Average	Average
<b>The importance of racial identity</b>	Average	Very high	Average	Average
<b>Most ads I see do not reflect my culture or heritage</b>	48%	68%	50%	53%
<b>How much they trust the media:</b>				
- fell into their top 3*	10%	13%	28%	34%
- fell into their bottom 3*	45%	36%	12%	12%
<b>How much they trust businesses that sell products and services:</b>				
- fell into their top 3*	5%	5%	17%	27%
- fell into their bottom 3*	44%	26%	12%	6%

\* On a scale of 0 to 10 with 10 being "trust completely" and 0 being "do not trust at all"  
Source: Yankelovich © 2007