

The Campaign for Real Beauty Background

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL BEAUTY MISSION

The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty is a global effort launched in 2004 to serve as a starting point for societal change and act as a catalyst for widening the definition and discussion of beauty. The campaign supports the Dove mission: to make more women feel beautiful every day by widening stereotypical views of beauty.

The brand's commitment to the mission starts with using real women, not professional models, of various ages, shapes and sizes to provoke discussion and debate about today's typecast beauty images. Employing various communication vehicles including advertising, a Web site, billboards, events, a Self-Esteem Fund and more—the campaign invites women to join in a discussion about beauty and share their views with women around the world.

LISTENING TO WOMEN

The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty was inspired by a major global study—The Real Truth About Beauty: A Global Report. The study validated the hypothesis that the definition of beauty had become limiting and unattainable, as if only thin, young and blond were beautiful.

Dove found the current, narrow definition of beauty was having a profound effect on the self-esteem of women:

- Only 2% of women around the world describe themselves as beautiful.
- 81% of women in the U.S. strongly agree that “the media and advertising set an unrealistic standard of beauty that most women can't ever achieve.”

DEBUNKING STEREOTYPES

The Dove Campaign for Real Beauty was created to provoke discussion and encourage debate. Based on the global study findings, Dove started a series of communication campaigns to challenge beauty stereotypes and invite women to join in a discussion about beauty.

The campaign launched in September 2004 with a much-talked-about ad campaign featuring real women

FYI

Dove, a global marketer of beauty products, created the Campaign for Real Beauty in 2004 to serve as a starting point for societal change and act as a catalyst for widening the definition and discussion of beauty. A form of viral marketing, the Campaign for Real Beauty spread its message through online videos, various public initiatives, and a strong presence on the Web, inviting women to participate in a discussion to redefine real beauty to include people of more diverse sizes, shapes, and ages. The press information reprinted here explains the mission and methodology of the Campaign. More information on the campaign is available at www.Dove.com.

whose appearances are outside the stereotypical norms of beauty. The ads asked viewers to judge the women's looks (*Oversized? Outstanding? or Wrinkled? Wonderful?*) and invited them to cast their votes at www.campaignforrealbeauty.com. As part of the launch campaign, Dove invited women to rediscover the beauty in their own hair. Television advertising challenged society's narrow vision that “one size fits all” hair is for everyone.

In June 2005, Dove kicked off the second phase of the Campaign for Real Beauty with advertising featuring six real women with real bodies and real curves. This phase of the campaign was created to debunk the stereotype that only thin is beautiful and it once again drove thousands of women to campaignforrealbeauty.com to discuss beauty issues.

Continuing its ongoing commitment to widen the narrow definition of beauty, Dove launched the third phase of the Campaign for Real Beauty in February 2007. The Dove global study, “Beauty Comes of Age,” revealed 91% of women ages 50–64 believe it is time for society to change its views about women and aging. Pro-age boldly challenges the “only young-is-beautiful” stereotype. The campaign celebrates the essence of women 50+—wrinkles, age spots, grey hair and all. It was brought to life through a communications campaign created with internationally renowned photographer Annie Leibovitz.

The Campaign for Real Beauty is currently focused on how girls today are bombarded with unrealistic, unattainable messages and images of beauty that impact their self-esteem. Dove has teamed up with the entertainment industry to provide girls with a reality check on what is real vs. Hollywood magic by hosting self-esteem workshops and providing new online self-esteem tools for moms and girls. The campaign was developed to help girls realize what they see in movies and magazines represents an unrealistic standard of beauty, not an everyday achievable look. As part of this effort, Dove also released "Onslaught," an online film dramatizing the barrage of beauty images girls face.

DOVE VIRAL FILMS

In September 2006, a news and media furor erupted when Spain banned overly thin models from its fashion runways. The debate spoke to the heart of the Dove Campaign for Real Beauty mission. In response, Dove produced a compelling short film, "Evolution," which depicts the transformation of a real woman into a model and promotes awareness of how unrealistic perceptions of beauty are created.

"Onslaught" is a new viral film that dramatically depicts the constant barrage of beauty images that girls absorb every day. Both visually and emotionally powerful, the film is a wake-up call for anyone concerned about the factors that impact self-esteem in young girls.

CONSIDER

- 1 Is physical beauty, whether entirely natural or enhanced by makeup, clothes, and accessories, a concept that can be altered by discussion and ad campaigns? Or do you suspect that Dove may run up against resistance at some points? What might those points of resistance be?

COMPOSE

- 2 Dove is proud that images in its ad campaign featuring real women are not altered or distorted to create an unrealistic or unattainable view of beauty. Write a short paper exploring the value of such authenticity in a world where even amateur photographers can digitally alter their shots and many films feature CGI (computer generated imagery) sequences. Is the preservation of reality more important in some circumstances than others?
- 3 Is the notion that design and fashion should feature "real" people idealistic and inspiring? Or do you feel manipulated by a company using so many commercial resources—magazine ads, billboards, foundation money, essay contests—to appeal to populist sentiments? Is everything truly beautiful, in its own way? Or does Dove simply expect to profit if more women think so?

DOVE SUPPORTS SELF-ESTEEM

The current focus of the Campaign for Real Beauty is aimed at raising the self-esteem of girls and young women through the Dove Self-Esteem Fund. In the U.S., the Fund supports uniquely ME!, a program of the Girl Scouts of the USA. The program is designed to build self-confidence in girls ages 8–17 with education resources and hands-on activities.

Additionally, the Dove Self-Esteem Fund is sponsoring self-esteem building workshops with inspirational celebrities and new online tools in an effort to educate moms, mentors and girls. Dove is working toward the goal of truly making a difference in the lives of 5 million young people globally by 2010.

JOIN THE DEBATE AND HELP MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Campaign for Real Beauty site at www.Dove.com houses a variety of tools for improving self-esteem in girls. Visitors can access new self-esteem building tools, take part in interactive self-esteem activities and join self-esteem discussion boards. They can also learn how to lead self-esteem workshops and read articles by leading self-esteem experts.

Since launching, nearly 4.5 million people have logged onto the Campaign's Web site. Thousands have shared words of encouragement, learned about self-esteem tips and joined Dove in encouraging a wider definition of beauty.