

La reacción de hombres y mujeres frente a la publicidad: del "hombre macho" al "hombre emotivo"

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Los resultados del estudio conducido por Robert Fisher (University of Western Ontario) y Laurette Dubé (McGill University) indican que en lo que se refiere a sentir emociones, los hombres pueden ser tan sensibles como las mujeres.

¿Reaccionan diferente los hombres que las mujeres ante mensajes publicitarios que evoquen la emoción? Lo cierto es que, aunque se suele pensar que las mujeres son más emocionales, no existen evidencias sólidas que apoyen esta aseveración. De hecho, los resultados del estudio conducido por Robert Fisher (University of Western Ontario) y Laurette Dubé (McGill University) indican que en lo que se refiere a sentir emociones, los hombres pueden ser tan sensibles como las mujeres.

El estereotipo de la mujer nos la presenta más emotiva que el hombre, y por lo tanto la sabiduría convencional indicaría que las mujeres tienen una mayor respuesta a la publicidad con un importante contenido sentimental. Investigaciones previas no han estudiado cómo la conveniencia social de las emociones afecta a las respuestas cuando los anuncios publicitarios son vistos en presencia de otras personas. Y aquí radica una de las causas de que se haya mantenido esa falsa creencia.

En este estudio, Fisher y Dubé estudiaron las reacciones de los participantes ante diversos spots publicitarios, en presencia de otros hombres, y en privado. De particular interés fue el hecho de que en privado, los hombres aseguraron disfrutar de los anuncios de carácter emotivo relacionados con el amor, la calidez, la ternura y el sentimentalismo. Es casi irónico que aunque a las mujeres se las considera, por una falsa creencia, más sentimentales que los hombres, las diferencias de género en respuestas privadas no resultaron significativas. Fueron los hombres quienes mostraron ser los más sensibles a la expresión de tipos específicos de emociones en determinados entornos sociales.

Los autores del estudio destacan las profundas implicaciones que esta investigación va a tener en cómo los publicistas enfocan productos hacia los hombres. Conociendo el alcance que en privado puede tener sobre ellos la publicidad emotiva, es fácil prever la adopción de estrategias de marketing basadas en anuncios dirigidos al público masculino, diseñados para ser vistos a través de medios a los que mayormente se accede de forma individual y no colectiva, como por ejemplo Internet, periódicos y revistas.

SOBRE EL MISMO INFORME (en inglés)

Emotional Advertising: The Experience,

The Expression and The Gender Differences

I came across mention of some fascinating research recently on the way men and women respond to emotional advertising. "Gender Differences in Responses to Emotional Advertising: A Social Desirability Perspective," was written by Robert J. Fisher and Laurette Dube and published in the March 2005 issue of the Journal of Consumer Research (subscription required to even see the first paragraph, unfortunately).

The gist of it, and what intrigues me, is that men and women may not necessarily experience emotions that differently, but how, and if, they express those feelings – and what that means for marketers – can vary greatly. According to secondary research cited in the article: Women are more willing to both verbally and nonverbally communicate their internal emotional states, and they are more expressive of both positive and negative emotions. Men, on the other hand, shy away from sharing their intimate feelings, and really don't want to express emotion that makes them seem weak, dependent or vulnerable – especially in a few specific environments.

The variables that matter in how men feel and express emotions with relation to ad campaigns, and what was the particular focus of the research behind this article, include:

- whether or not other people are in the room experiencing the ad with them
- whether or not those additional people are a mix of genders or just other men
- whether or not the emotion is a "high agency" emotion like happiness, sexy, joyful or a "low agency" emotion like anxious, scared, embarrassed etc.

If what I understand from reading this is correct (admittedly, with dry academic write-ups, I can never be sure I completely grasp the concepts – so feel free to correct me), if you are planning to use "low agency" emotion in an ad campaign and men are in your market, you may want to make sure men won't be experiencing the ad in a room full of men (so a Super Bowl media buy would not be a good bet). Otherwise, they will be trying so hard to hide the fact that they are affected by it, that their response to the ad will be negative overall. A print ad or an Internet ad, where no one else knows about their emotional response, might be a much better choice (for a low agency emotion), giving men the privacy and space to connect with the effort.

For women, it sounds a little more straightforward. They are, not surprisingly, more likely to experience and express emotion, high agency or low agency, and thus have a positive response or connection with such ads – whether they are with men or not, online, watching television or reading a magazine etc.

If using low agency emotion is key to your marketing efforts, and if you want to market to women but not alienate men, you might consider whether your ad campaign \"experiencers\" will be watching television in mixed groups, sitting in their private office using the Internet, or in some other media-absorbing environment.

Pharmaceutical companies, for one, know that the way to sell medication for an intimate, anxiety-ridden (low agency emotion) dysfunction is by showing positive, smiling and sexy couples (high agency emotion). Your product or service is likely a much easier case study, but it still may be worth re-evaluating the emotions you leverage in your advertising. Would you alienate fewer men, even as you focus on women, if you made a media buy shift or a high agency emotion makeover?

INFORME COMPLETO (subscripción requerida)

Gender Differences in Responses to Emotional Advertising:

A Social Desirability Perspective

Robert J. Fisher and Laurette Dube

<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/resolve?JCR310417>