

Dove blunder highlights the need for ethical transformation

 By [Madelain Roscher](#)

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The recent social media storm over Dove's latest advertising campaign bears testimony to the increasing power of social media platforms and how brands are being held accountable for their every move.



This follows the online posting of an advertisement showing a black woman removing her top to reveal a white woman in the next frame.

The world is becoming increasingly mindful and watchful to political, social and environmental issues. People are demanding greater transparency from their politicians, brands and leaders. Dove may not have intended to be racist, but the interrogation process of its recent communication was not thorough enough.



Dove apologises for 'racist' whitewashing ad, social media won't accept

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Given that Dove is no stranger to controversy around some of its advertising campaigns, it is surprising that the recent ad did not raise a 'red light'. As custodians of the brands they produce work for, marketers need to consider every possible reaction to their communication in the public domain.

Consumers are putting pressure on brands

While this incident may not cause the brand irrevocable damage, it has resulted in considerable negative sentiment. This will grow if the brand continues to make similar gaffes going forward.

More than ever, consumers are putting pressure on brands, companies, individuals and governments to understand that really having and demonstrating strong ethics (and not just marketing it as a core values), has become an absolute necessity.



'White like me' advert grounds Dove

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Dove's mistakes are offset by some excellent campaigns that have positioned it as champion for women's empowerment. The brand could, however, quickly lose market share if it is not cognisant of the issues that are particularly sensitive to the markets in which it operates. To reinvent its brand credibility and to prompt meaningful and emotional connections with its consumers, Dove needs to demonstrate genuine ethical transformation. Failure to fix a consistently murky strategy could see consumers looking for an ethical alternative.

ABOUT MADELAIN ROSCHER

Described as a Public Relations (PR) guru by her peers, Madelain Roscher is the CEO of PR Worx, a full-service marketing-communications agency, which she established in 2001. With 22 years' in-depth industry experience based on an impressive consulting and corporate career, the firm has achieved remarkable successes under her leadership.

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