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Race And Marketing: Does Skin Color Still Matter In America?

By Marketing Basics

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This article was written as a result of a heated discussion we had on a particular Internet marketing forum recently, regarding another article we wrote titled, "Why People Buy: The Psychology Of Sales And Marketing."

The subject of race came up during the discussion, and we didn't feel that an Internet marketing forum was the proper forum to discuss racial issues. So, we decided to write this article to voice our opinions and viewpoints about the subject of race and marketing.

There's a strange phenomenon occurring in the National Basketball Association. The league is getting whiter and more foreign, and many African-American fans and players suspect there's a lot more going on than international meritocracy.

The perception—and perception is reality in matters of race—is that the NBA is trying to phase-out African American players because of corporate (white) fans and international marketing money. In other words, the thinking is, more white guys who can play equals big bucks. So what, if they're from another country.

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What's going on here? Is this blatant racism at work? We think it is, yes. However, those who debunk the race theory are quick to point out the fact that the stockholders, ticket buyers, and corporate sponsors are predominately white. And it's simply not smart business to ignore your financial backers. Therefore, they argue, it goes a lot deeper than blatantly phasing-out African Americans. It's about money, and the people who control it.

What a bunch of bull! Let's get real here, shall we? We're talking about big business, people. This should be strictly

about putting the best possible product on the floor every night—period. The color of a player's skin shouldn't matter, but to some, it clearly does. The NBA is obviously "too black" for some in corporate America. A small percentage of corporate America wants to see more white players. It's that simple. And what corporate America wants, corporate America usually gets—even if it ends up turning into an unnecessarily expensive lesson in economics in the long run.

We just don't understand that kind of backward-ass thinking. Here's why: Over the last 20 years, Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods phenomenal popularity has been unprecedented in the history of sports marketing.

Currently, Tiger Woods is practically the epitome of sports marketing as he transcends the sport itself, which is exactly what makes him unique. Nike CEO Philip Knight explains that every time they discover a one of a kind athlete like this one, they have to "adopt" him. The reason behind this is that such an athlete is bound to result in something unique no matter what.

Tiger is the world's greatest athlete and he is getting compensated accordingly. Fans across the globe are glued to their television sets to see his next amazing exploit, even if they don't know the difference between a 3-wood and a 9-iron. Tiger has elevated the seemingly mundane game of golf to another level. He has single-handedly brought golf to the masses.

With the phenomenal success and popularity of Tiger Woods and other African American athletes, it's obvious, that the

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average white person walking the streets in America could care less about skin color. This is especially true of young, white adults in the 18 to 24 age group--the ones who propel the majority of CD sales.

How else do you explain the mind-boggling success of hip hop music, which has become the dominant music genre in America and around the world?

These white kids simply don't care what the artist's skin color is. They just like the music. That's all they know and care about. It's the decision makers running our private and public institutions, and largest companies whom apparently have the biggest problem with race.

Yet, it's also obvious that the vast majority of corporate

America does not practice racism. This is evidenced by the growing number of African American and other minorities appearing in television commercials as well as receiving their own tv shows on cable. So, perhaps what we're talking about here is more a problem of institutional racism, than anything else.

Perhaps that's why most of the African American television shows are on cable. And perhaps that's why major network television shows like Seinfeld, Friends, Home Improvement and many others present a world completely devoid of color. These shows are completely white. What major city in America has no black people?

Yet, there is no complaint from mainstream America about the lack of proper representation of minorities on network television. And corporate America eagerly buys ad space on these lily-white tv shows. In fact, NBC used to boast about having a "Women Only" lineup with no African-American women. Since when is femininity solely the realm of white women?

The aforementioned example speaks volumes about television executives in Hollywood. Until their narrow-minded, racist attitudes change, we'll continue to see "non-reality" television shows like Friends and Seinfeld on network television.

On the flip side of that are Hollywood movie executives.

They're finally starting to see the "big picture" (no pun intended.) Never before in the history of movie-making have we had six African American major box office stars, all at the same time: Denzel Washington, Will Smith, Eddie Murphy, Morgan Freeman, Samuel L. Jackson and Wesley Snipes.

Slowly but surely, corporate America is finding out the hard way that racism just doesn't work anymore. However, learning those lessons has been extremely expensive for corporate America. In 1992, Shoney's paid \$132.8 million to settle a class-action discrimination suit brought by 20,000 employees and unsuccessful job applicants.

In 1994, Denny's paid \$54.4 million to settle two class-action suits brought by black customers who claimed some restaurants refused to seat or serve them. Yet, both companies appeared in FORTUNE magazine's inaugural list of the best 50 companies for African Americans, Asians and Hispanics just four years later.

How did they become role models for diversity? First, by

recognizing and acknowledging the fact that race does indeed matter. Secondly, by finally opening their eyes and becoming business savvy by realizing that African-Americans, Asians and Hispanics spend an estimated \$920 billion annually and that this is a business, not a social issue for them.

\$920 billion annually and growing is a tremendous amount of clout and buying power. And any institution that consciously chooses to ignore the specific ethnic groups responsible for those numbers, is not only engaging in abhorrently bad business practices, but stupidity as well!

Perhaps the offending institutions should ask their stockholders what they think about that.

Finding the Right Foundation For Your Skin

By Tara Grant

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The job of foundation is to give the appearance of naturally gorgeous skin, and to cover slight flaws,

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not to change the skins color. Foundation should blend in with your natural skin color to compliment your skin tones and should be unnoticeable to anyone but you. How many times have you been in public and saw a woman's who's face was a different color than her neck? Her face looked that way because she is using the wrong color foundation or powder.

So How Do I know what color I should use?

The only way to find the right color for your skin is to go shopping with no foundation on and try the bases on your face or your hand. Blend a small amount onto your cheek, near your jaw, or rub a small amount onto your hand. If it is the right color you'll barely see it, it should match and blend right in with your actual skin color. If it is to dark, try a lighter color until you find the closest match. If you can not seem to find a perfect match, mix 2 colors together.

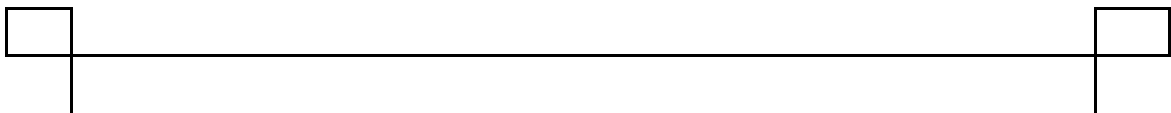
Example: If you find a shade that is almost your skins natural color, but it is to dark, try to mix that with a lighter shade, until you get the desired color.

If you don't have the time to go foundation hunting, there are several companies that offer free samples. Try contacting a Mary Kay or Avon rep to see if she can offer you some samples.

This article may be republished with the resources box included and links are hyperlinked. Tara Grant, owner of <http://www.awomansresource.com>. Tara is a warm-hearted entrepreneur, mother of 2 small children and an avid networker in the wahn and parenting community!



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