

Yinghe Zhao

BUF 4700 Research Paper

Dr. Sutton

5/22/23

Option 2: CASE RESEARCH ANALYSIS: BEAUTY INCLUSIVITY

MAC Cosmetics and the Transgender Community

Both inclusivity and diversity are very important not only in the beauty industry but also in all industries (for example, the fashion industry, the food industry, the transportation industry, and so on). Not only does the beauty industry need to care about inclusivity and diversity, but all industries need to do so. It is because of the current social development that beauty is more diversified. Beauty should not be limited to fixed standards because everyone's perception of beauty is different. Inclusivity should be involved in it to show one's respect for other people's thoughts. Now women should pay more attention to what they think beauty is because their own beauty has nothing to do with others. Men's ideas of beauty should also be tolerated and respected because the beauty industry does not only serve for women but also for men.

The creator of MAC Cosmetics ended up creating this brand with a focus on beauty inclusivity. MAC Cosmetics made a lot of efforts to achieve this goal, and although it also encountered a lot of difficulties, it seems like they are never lost sight of the original goal. The strategic need MAC Cosmetics was trying to address with this issue (beauty inclusivity) was that they were marketing their products to attract public attention to these things. And it can expand its inclusiveness through product marketing because it proves that the company has launched new products to provide people of different races or genders with something to choose from. It can be said that MAC Cosmetics' inclusiveness (gender) in the beauty industry is far greater than

one person thinks. This is because, whether in the past or in the present, many people still have prejudices and stereotypes about cosmetics, especially lipsticks. Lipstick is considered to be a product used by women. Even though many people can accept a man wearing brightly colored lipstick on the street, some will unavoidably point out that it is because of prejudice and stereotype. Even though the UK is a country with diverse races, languages, and cultures (Great British Mag Content Team, 2022), it does not prevent some people from having these prejudices. In the UK, some people still think that a man will be labeled as feminine if he wears elaborate makeup before going out (Bhambra, 2021). Therefore, all of the above makes most men refuse or resist lipstick and other cosmetics, although there are also a large number of people who completely ignore these prejudices. Advertising is another reason why beauty is not inclusive enough. The majority of makeup advertisements, particularly those for lipstick, feature women, which leads many consumers to believe that lipstick is exclusively for use by women. When one searches for “Lipstick Campaign” on the search engine and clicks on “Images”, one will see that more than half of the brand’s lipstick ads are shot or endorsed by women (link 1).

With the continuous development of society, the above concepts are constantly changing. More and more brands pay attention to the inclusiveness of beauty and advocate gender equality in the beauty industry. Especially at MAC Cosmetics, MAC has launched a lipstick suitable for people of all genders (Tan, 2022), which means that there is no concept of only for women or only for men in front of this product. The opportunity MAC Cosmetics was trying to address with this issue (beauty inclusivity) was that, in addition to launching makeup products suitable for everyone to expand the inclusiveness of the beauty industry, MAC also reflected its attention to this issue through the workplace. Such as providing jobs for people of different races and

satisfying the needs of consumers by producing products that match their skin color (MAC, 2023).

MAC Cosmetics' inclusivity towards beauty actually started a long time ago. This is because all age groups are MAC's main signature. MAC is also a company that provides products suitable for various skin tones and skin types for different consumers (Reed, 2023). These inherent advantages give MAC Cosmetics a unique advantage in innovatively expanding the inclusiveness of the beauty industry. Through their understanding of MAC Cosmetics, they expand the inclusiveness of the beauty industry by breaking the boundaries of gender and race and providing enough space for consumers to express themselves, so that every consumer has a feeling of not being excluded by the beauty industry. However, not all brands have emphasized the need for increased inclusivity in the beauty industry. Even in such a diverse society today, there is prejudice against race. A consumer's personal experience can tell whether different brands are exclusive because of race. This consumer is a black woman who is full of yearning for cosmetics, but when she goes to the counters of some brands, she is excluded because of her race. The most chilling thing is that most of the answers she got were "no products suitable for her." But when she went to the MAC counters, the above situation no longer happened, and she had more choices in foundation and lipstick products (Stevens, 2020).

Frank Angelo, co-founder of MAC Cosmetics, is open about inclusivity and diversity in the beauty industry. It is precisely because of his attitude that MAC Cosmetics has a unique advantage in showing that MAC is different from other cosmetic brands. He respects all races and genders and does not give much thought to the unfavorable public perception that some decisions have caused. He had transvestite entertainers and homosexual singers endorse their cosmetics (Schiro, 1997). This can be seen through the initiative to expand the inclusiveness of

the beauty industry. This is because during the period when MAC Company (1985) came out, many people did not understand or even support transvestism and homosexuality. But the entrepreneur did not pay attention to these, just silently working hard to expand inclusiveness.

The proposed objective of MAC Cosmetics has not changed since the company was founded by two Frank (Frank Toskan and Frank Angelo). MAC Cosmetics aims to produce products that are accessible to all races, all ages, and all genders (Comparably, 2023). There are many articles describing the objectives of MAC Cosmetics. It can be seen that this objective is very important to MAC Cosmetics because it is not only related to the original goal of MAC but also marks MAC's commitment to expanding the inclusiveness of the beauty industry.

Foundation is very important for everyone who wears makeup every day or once in a while. But not every brand has foundation products suitable for all skin types, and almost the same colors come and go every time. But MAC is different; they keep their original intention in mind and they try to meet the needs of consumers, so they produce many foundations that are suitable for all types of skin and races. MAC has more choices in foundations than one might think. MAC has more than 400 different shades of foundation for consumers to choose from (Harris, 2022). That's more choices than any one brand offers consumers to choose with. For example, MAC Studio Fix Powder Plus Foundation is especially suitable for people with oily skin; MAC Studio Sculpt Foundation is waterproof (Patnaik, 2023).

MAC's lipstick products are another example of how they want to expand the inclusivity of the beauty industry. MAC has always been bold in its color selection and is constantly developing and innovating new products to suit everyone. By the beginning of 2023, MAC has about 190 shades of lipstick, which included 150 shades of solid lipstick and 40 shades of liquid lipsticks; such as MAC MATTE LIPSTICK Deep brown for consumers with dark skin tone;

MAV SATIN LIPSTICK Soft muted brownish-pink for consumers with tan skin tone (Hyde & Rud, 2023).

The socio-economic context and cultural context that supported MAC's innovation and initiative (inclusivity) in its success are related to, first, the fact that a lot more people are learning that diversity and inclusivity in all industries are very important. Since customers learned about this, they are more likely to pursue beauty products that fit them (Faitaveccoeur, 2021). However, MAC has accurately captured this demand from consumers. The second point is that they focus on the social problems that people are facing now, which it can be said that people have always been facing - the phenomenon of inequality and a lack of tolerance. MAC uses practical actions (the production of different products) as their response to social issues they care about.

The above contributions have had some good effects on consumers. When MAC Cosmetics makes these contributions to consumers and society, consumers are very happy because they will feel that they (everyone) are really valued by MAC. One believes that consumers will prefer MAC Cosmetics over brands that are less concerned about social issues (inclusivity). That is because anyone would love to go into a store that actually welcomes people in, rather than being told that the brand does not have what consumers want or is not the right brand for a particular consumer (Stevens, 2020). MAC Cosmetics has been taking care of the above social problems since the establishment of the company and has brought some good influences to MAC. For example, the sales of MAC will increase because their objective (taking care of all races and ages of people) will attract more consumers to become interested in MAC. And the popularity of the brand will increase day by day. This is because most of the usual living habits (person to person). When a person has experienced friendly treatment from MAC, they

may choose to share it with their friends or suggest that their own friends buy cosmetics from MAC. The implications for the industry as a whole are likely to be that other brands will follow the MAC's lead when they see the benefits it brings to brands by focusing on some social issues. In the absence of plagiarism, it is good for the entire industry because it can prove that this social problem has attracted more attention from merchants. Through continuous innovation and changes in merchants, the problem of not being inclusive enough in the beauty industry has been improved.

It is a good thing that MAC has been contributing to expanding inclusion. But because MAC was too "impatient" in trying to introduce more to the customers, some scandals emerged. The latest Vibe Tribe series launched in 2016 is considered cultural appropriation because both the packaging of the product and the advertisements shot for this series involve cultural elements of a Native American tribe, have a large number of similarities, and do not indicate where inspiration comes from (Bryant, 2016). The impact of this on consumers is that they may think that the MAC brand has been discredited because MAC appropriates something belonging to a third party and does not inform the public, which will cause consumers to lose confidence in the brand. This is certainly a "suicidal" act for the brand itself, and consumers may boycott MAC products because of the brand's move.

Inclusivity in the beauty industry—this topic has some connection with people's discussions of modernity. One of the discussions of modernity is about racism; there are many businesses and sometimes even individuals who treat Asian and Black consumers differently than other races (Hamilton, 2023). Racism is somehow related to inclusivity in the beauty industry because inclusivity also includes race. Beauty brands should be more inclusive due to individuals' different needs, not less inclusive because of the backgrounds of some consumers

who cannot change. The most accessible meaning of “lack of inclusivity” is that a brand does not welcome specific groups of customers (based on different ages, genders, or races) to purchase something from their brand. One person just experienced being treated differently because of their race a month ago. One person thinks that the inclusiveness of this store needs to be strengthened. If the brand does not do that, the negative reviews from consumers would likely increase, and the customers who resonated would refuse to buy from the brand. More than a month ago, one went shopping at an outlet in New York States. When a person enters a store, it seems that the employees in the store are not very enthusiastic about one (an Asian), but on the other hand, the employees are very enthusiastic about the other two customers sitting next to one person. When a person asked a question about the style and asked to try it on, the employee dealt with us in a perfunctory manner. The opposite attitude was true for another group of consumers (whites). While one person was waiting in line to pay, the employee swapped her number for an item the person was about to pay for. The number card represents two meanings, one is a sign about the item itself, and the other is a sign about the sales volume of employees. After the employee’s confusing maneuvers, a person directly handed over the number card to the security guard at the door and walked out. However, when a person walks into another store, one feels the attention from the clerk, even if one does not buy anything at the end. The clerk is still explaining patiently.

Beauty evolves with modernity by changing the idea of beauty. Changes in people's ideas of beauty. Now the understanding of beauty is more diversified and people’s pursuit of beauty has changed, and more people of different races and ages are involved. Whiteness is not the only criterion or choice in the beauty industry. MAC, which has been mentioned in this research analysis, has shown the audience their support for the new concept of modern beauty with

practical actions. MAC Cosmetics can see people with different faces, whether it is the spokesperson or the employees (MAC, 2023). And now some other brands besides MAC are also following this concept, such as Estée Lauder cooperating with Asian models (Betts, 2018).

To sum up, MAC Cosmetics and now some brands are trying their best to eliminate the inequalities in the beauty industry, and they aim to expand inclusivity in beauty through innovation and initiative.

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Link 1: “Lipstick Campaign” on search engine

https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C5CHFA_enUS864US864&sxsrf=APwXEddWg1HDshFDVLLcnmHEkknsQTcHPg:1684562960705&q=lipstick+campaign&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi2m_-GnoP_AhV-L1kFHcCfD9YQ0pQJegQIDBAB&cshid=1684563096243743&biw=1280&bih=645&dpr=2

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