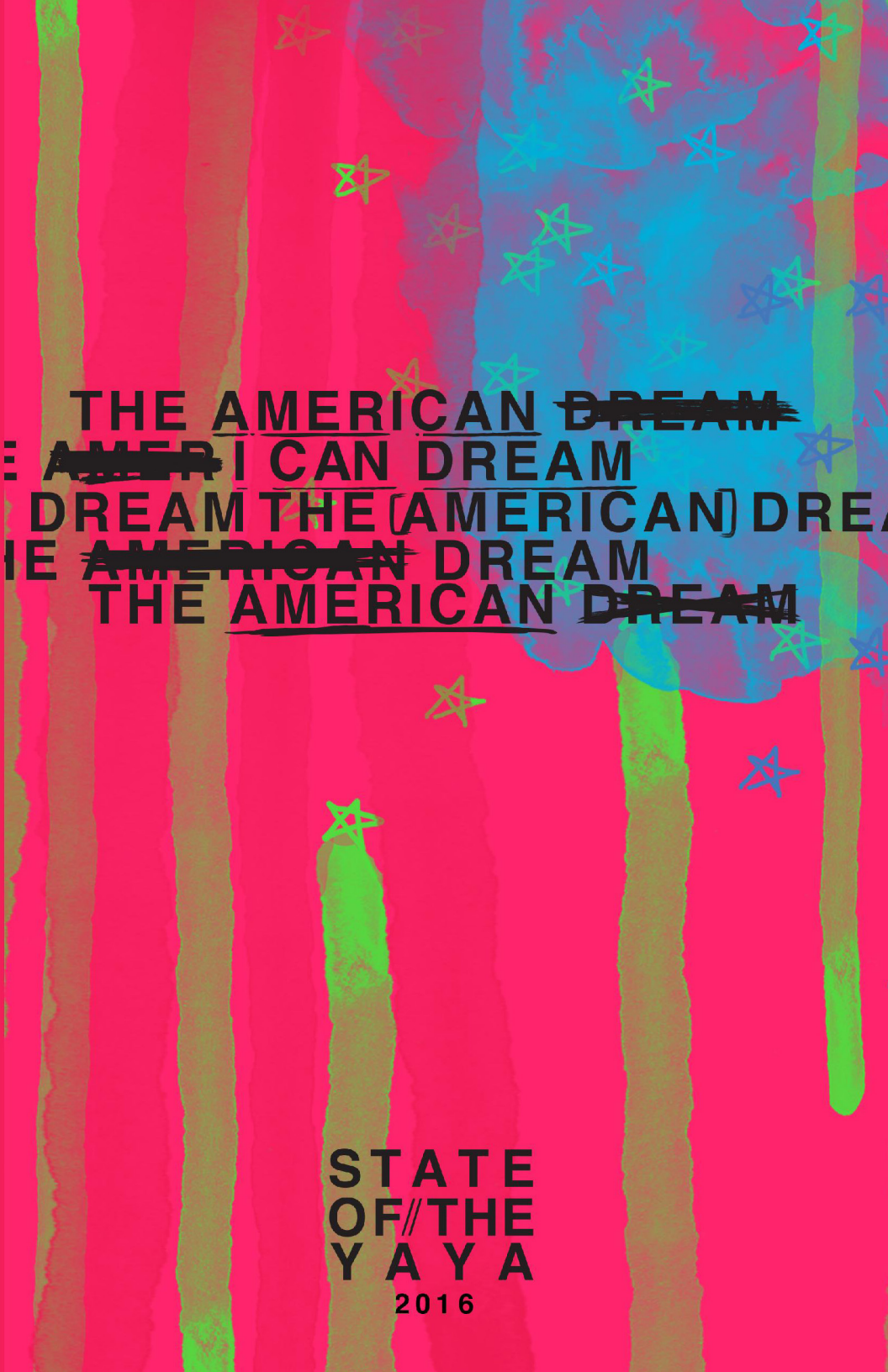

THE AMERICAN DREAM
I CAN DREAM
DREAM THE AMERICAN DREA
AMERICAN DREAM
THE AMERICAN DREAM
STATE
OF//THE
YAYA
2016

THE AMERICAN ~~DREAM~~

STATE OF THE YAYA 2016

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The American Dream is changing — at least in the eyes of YAYA consumers. They no longer dream of big houses, white picket fences or the material trappings of their parents. What they value is unique and diverse, leading them to put their own spin on the American Dream.

Although there is no single way to describe them, there are a few things they agree on. YAYA consumers would rather share things than own them. They value experiences over possessions. They think individuality trumps conformity. To them, the American Dream is not what it used to be. And that's the way they like it.

// WHO IS MOJO AD?



MOJO Ad™ is a student-staffed, professional services advertising agency at the Missouri School of Journalism. We are specialists in all things young, specifically 18- to 24-year-olds, or as we call them, the youth and young adult (YAYA™) market. No one understands YAYA consumers quite like us. We hang out with them. We post, share and discuss things with them. We go to class with them. We are them.



The State of the YAYA™ report is compiled and written by MOJO Ad staff, and is based on insights from secondary research, as well as our 2015 nationwide survey of YAYA consumers.*

*A nationally representative sample of 500 YAYA consumers completed the survey through the e-Rewards Opinion Panel of Rewards Now.

MEET THE NEW AMERICAN DREAMER

20.2 MILLION YAYA CONSUMERS WERE EXPECTED TO ATTEND U.S. COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE FALL OF 2015 [3]



57% FEMALE

43% MALE

56% LIVE WITH MOM AND DAD [4]



BUT WHEN LEAVING THE NEST, THEY PREFER CITIES OVER SUBURBAN AREAS [5]

23% OF THE YAYA MARKET ARE MARRIED [6]



73% EVENTUALLY WANT CHILDREN [7]

23% OF YAYA CONSUMERS BELIEVE GENDER IS A SPECTRUM THAT CAN BE DIVIDED INTO MORE THAN JUST MALE OR FEMALE [8]

BUT 80% OF YAYA MEN PAY FOR MOST DATES [9]

40% REPORTED "INDEPENDENT" AS THEIR POLITICAL AFFILIATION



35% IDENTIFIED AS DEMOCRAT OR LEANING THAT WAY AND 25% IDENTIFIED AS REPUBLICAN OR LEANING THAT WAY [10]

There are 75 million millennials (18- to 34-year-olds) in the United States, with roughly 31.5 million falling into the YAYA market.[1] It is essential that marketers understand this group. Their buying power is sizeable and they are rapidly shaping the new American Dream.

This racially and ethnically diverse group is part of a new life stage, and almost a quarter of them speak a language other than English.[2] YAYA consumers are motivated, complicated and distinct, and this report will help you get to know them better.



IN WE TRUST

"It seems like every time I turn around there's another corporate or political scandal. Between the information leaks, deleted files, sexual harassment claims and bailouts, I struggle to trust leaders who will seemingly do anything to get ahead. Shows like House of Cards and Empire make me wonder where Washington and Wall Street end and Hollywood begins."

01



WHERE DO GOVERNMENT LOYALTIES LIE?

YAYA consumers are skeptical, curious and don't take things at face value. Every week they see stories of corporate greed and political scandal unfold in real time while scrolling through their Facebook timeline or watching CNN. They can't help but question if all leaders have skeletons in their closets.

The YAYA market feels most politicians cannot be trusted and many do not identify with a two-party system. Forty percent initially report "Independent" as their political affiliation, while a smaller percentage identifies solely as Democrat or Republican.[10]

Their wariness extends to big business as well. For example, 77 percent of YAYA consumers believe big corporations are "just looking out for themselves."[10] When it comes to the healthcare industry, they believe insurers and medical corporations place profits above patients.[11]

Despite their skepticism, the YAYA market wants to believe change is possible. They look to public figures and celebrities who represent their ideals and are willing to take a stand to make a difference.

THE AMERICAN [redacted] REALITY

77% of YAYA consumers feel that big corporations are just looking out for themselves, and 75% feel that most politicians can't be trusted.[10]

Only 34% of YAYA males are optimistic about the future of the United States versus 55% of females.[10]

51% of YAYA males and 59% of YAYA females say that an honest person cannot get elected to office.[10]

Approximately 60% of YAYA consumers do not think their votes count.[10]

MESSAGE TO MARKETERS

YAYA consumers want transparency. Brands need to own up to their mistakes, take responsibility and be open with the measures they are taking to move forward. The leadership within a company is as important as the image it portrays. YAYA consumers connect with brands with whom they share values. Starbucks' CEO Howard Schultz has taken a strong stance on many controversial issues. A firm believer in gay marriage, Schultz said that Starbucks support of gay marriage wasn't about making money, but about the principle of diversity. This high profile and transparent stance on an issue appealed to the YAYA consumer because it felt authentic and placed values over profits.

EXTRA EXTRA NEWS



02

"I want to know more about what's going on around the world, but there's so much information I don't even know where to start. I feel pressure to stay as informed as my friends, so I appreciate when things are simplified so that I don't feel overwhelmed."

Most people couldn't handle keeping up with the world 24/7, but YAYA consumers feel like they have to. This is a heavy burden, especially when they want to appear informed in front of their friends, who might be just as confused as they are.

YAYA consumers' thirst for news is satisfied by a constant stream of stories that find their way into their social media feeds. News and current events are part of their daily conversation on social media. Instead of actively searching The New York Times for that latest article on veganism, the story pops on to their newsfeeds and into their minds.

Although they want to know what's going on in the world, the sheer amount of information, conflicting perspectives, and even the multiple layers to a story can be overwhelming. This is especially stressful when YAYA consumers feel compelled to be a part of the conversation.

However, the YAYA market has found a friend in news aggregation. Websites like BuzzFeed or comedic commentators like John Oliver act as a spoonful of sugar to help some of these hard-to-swallow concepts go down. They offer highlights of the news, presented in fun, interesting and understandable ways.

02



I KNOW EVERYTHING, BUT DO I KNOW ANYTHING?

THE AMERICAN DREAM REALITY

82% of YAYA consumers agree that it is important to know what is going on in the world.[10]

85% of YAYA consumers agree that they don't have to pay for news because they can get it for free.[10]

36% of YAYA consumers say Facebook is the first place they find out about news.[10]

In a typical week, YAYA consumers encounter news or current events from YouTube (32%), news gatherers (32%), Buzzfeed (26%) or a comedian or celebrity they follow on social media (20%) at least once per day.[10]

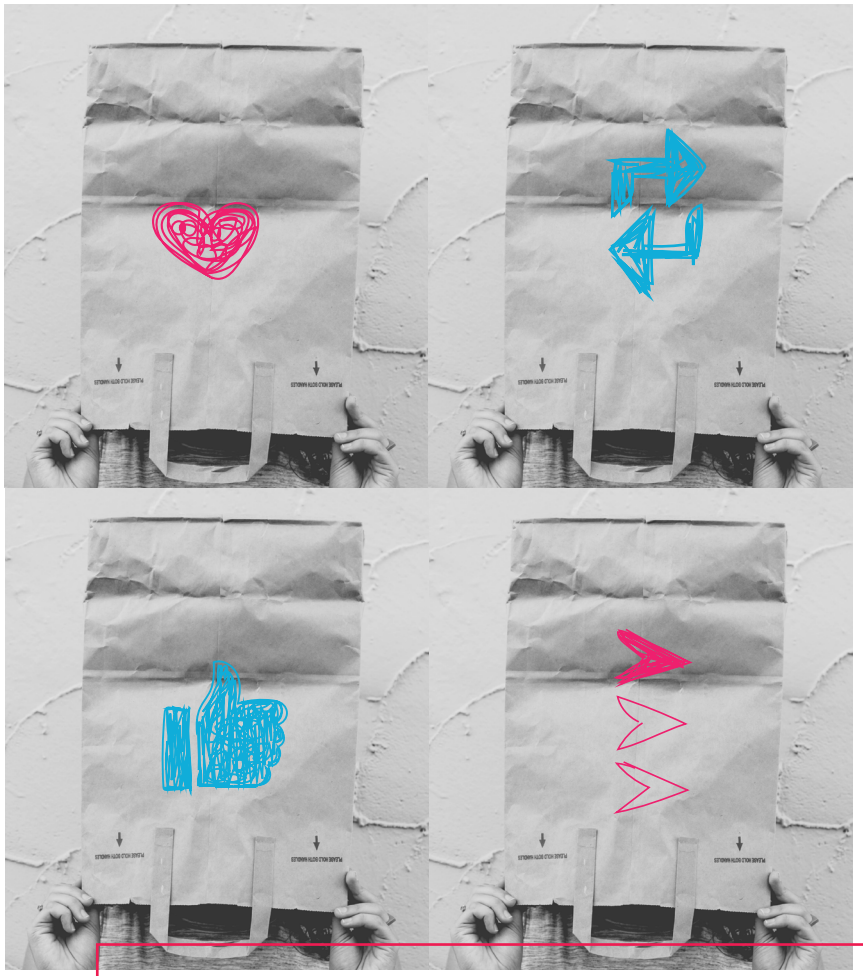
MESSAGE TO MARKETERS

In a world of information overload, it is more important than ever for brands and news organizations to simplify their messages. YAYA consumers want their news to be both easy to follow and entertaining. Snapchat Discover provides daily updates and short stories from sources like CNN and Comedy Central in a format that is visually engaging and suited to the narrative. In just a few minutes, YAYA consumers can watch a video, see a cool infographic or follow a complex story through a simplified timeline — all within the context of a social media platform that is easy to share with their peers.

03

I HATE THAT I LIKE LIKES





"Social media is great because it helps me keep up with my friends, but it can also be really toxic. I hate to admit it, but I sometimes put too much value in the amount of likes I get on a post. I wish I didn't care so much about what others think."

Like Kim Kardashian, YAYA consumers are always in the spotlight. Social media is a constant part of their lives, offering them the ability to connect with friends and family through photos and posts. This can be powerful and enriching, but it can also lead to feelings of self-doubt.

The YAYA market knows their latest profile picture or Instagram post may be viewed by peers, potential employers or their most recent Tinder prospect looking to develop an online impression. They feel pressure to create clever and articulate personas that will stand out amongst their Internet friends.

But it isn't just the amount of attention that YAYA consumers get that matters. It's the amount of attention they see other people getting. They can't help but make comparisons and wonder why their hour-long prom photo shoot didn't get more favorites than a friend's post about getting her nails painted a new shade of fuchsia.

This dark side of social media means that Facebook envy can be especially toxic for YAYA consumers.[12] It can lead to depression and dissatisfaction, especially when they constantly compare their real life to their friends' carefully edited lives on social media.

WHEN DID I GIVE UP CONTROL OF HOW I SEE MYSELF?

03



THE AMERICAN ~~DREAM~~ REALITY

45% of YAYA consumers say that they draw comparisons to their own lives after viewing others' social networks.[10]

58% of YAYA consumers report using Facebook several times each day. They use YouTube (44%), Instagram (35%) and Twitter (23%) daily.[10]

77% of YAYA consumers like to give the impression that their life is under control.[13]

A 2014 joint research study conducted by the University of Missouri, Bradley University and Nanyang Technological University found that heavy Facebook users experienced stronger feelings of envy than light Facebook users.[14]

A 2013 University of Michigan study of college students found a negative correlation between frequency of Facebook usage and emotional state.[15]

MESSAGE TO MARKETERS

Marketers should acknowledge the pressures that social media puts on YAYA consumers and positively encourage them to rise above it. After all, to YAYA consumers, authenticity is key. Brand stories about the underdog or achieving the best version of yourself are inspiring to the YAYA demographic. Dove recently found that nine out of 10 girls want to change at least one thing about their physical appearance.[16] With the Change One Thing campaign, Dove inspires young girls to realize they don't need to change anything about themselves, regardless of what social media says. Additionally, Dove has launched the Dove Self-Esteem Project with a Pinterest page filled with esteem-building topics and sample scenarios to help girls deal with tough issues.

04



~~PHONE~~LIFELINE

"I got my first phone when I was 11, so now I can't imagine going a day without it. Not because I need to constantly check my Facebook and Instagram, but because it keeps me connected to all the things I need and people I care about. It's my security blanket."

DON'T MAKE ME PUT MY LIFE ON HOLD



YAYA consumers have navigated the world with a cell phone since middle school. They've grown dependent on it as an important part of their daily lives. Their smartphones are key to managing a world that is fast-paced and full of information, and it all happens in the palm of their hand.

The YAYA market gets a bad rap for being tied to their phones rather than actively participating in the world. But despite their constant tweeting, texting and posting, this age group's tie to their cell phones is not merely an obsession with social media.

Their phones are more than simply a way of communicating with friends. Most YAYA consumers have reached double digits in downloaded apps on smartphones, transforming the device into video editors, guides to the nearest Starbucks, credit cards and lifelines all-in-one. Their smartphones allow them to access anything, anywhere at any point in time. Having this unlimited access is addicting, and YAYA consumers can't imagine their lives without it.

While two-year-olds may find comfort cuddling with a teddy bear, YAYA consumers are sleeping with their smartphones. Since they are part of the first generation that grew up "wired-in," technology is a necessity instead of a luxury. Their smartphones give them a sense of security because they don't know how to navigate the world without one.



THE AMERICAN ~~DREAM~~ REALITY

87% of YAYA consumers currently own smartphones.[10]

56% of YAYA consumers don't feel safe without their cell phones.[10]

77% of YAYA consumers have used their cell phones to avoid an uncomfortable situation.[10]

65% of YAYA consumers have at least 11 downloaded apps on their smartphones.[10]

63% of YAYA consumers like to be connected at all times by either phone or Internet, and 65% of YAYA consumers say that it's important to always be reachable.[6]

MESSAGE TO MARKETERS

Marketers must be willing to connect with consumers on their phones and provide user-friendly mobile platforms. Access to brand information and services is key for this constantly connected group. YAYA consumers no longer need to know street names or carry around cash for a cab. Uber capitalized on this opportunity by creating a mobile app allowing users to track their rides. Uber tracks their locations, sends drivers and allows for wireless payments — all through a smartphone app. This provides the YAYA market with mobile access and the sense of security they crave.

05



"My friends and I share everything. Whether it's our clothes or Netflix, we rely on each other for anything we need. Why would I pay for my own things when sharing brings us closer and makes more sense?"

For YAYA consumers, money is tight. It's why they self-mockingly refer to themselves as a "broke college kid" or "fledgling employee." They aren't jumping at the opportunity to purchase big-ticket items — unless it's coming out of someone else's bank account.

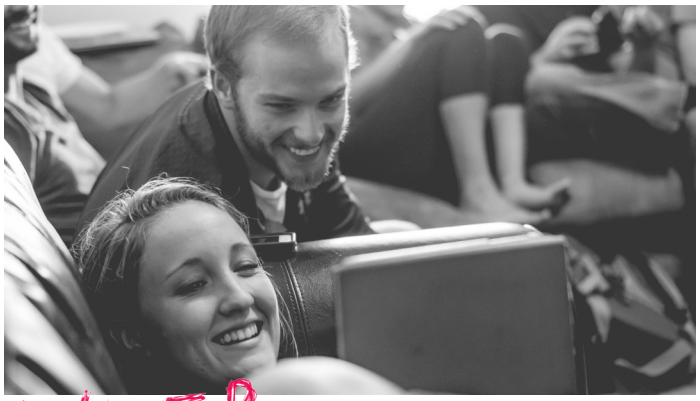
They turn to friends, family and roommates to share the burden of expenses like video-streaming services or rent. This age group doesn't need to have cable or an expansive wardrobe as long as they have a friend who will share their Netflix password or let them borrow a cute shirt for a hot date. Sharing allows them to enjoy products and services without breaking the bank.

Whether it's booking a timeshare with buddies from work or renting a car together for a cross-country road trip, the prospect of interacting with others makes sharing services exciting.

The sharing economy also appeals to the YAYA market because it is a step away from hyper-consumption. YAYA buyers care about the impact their purchases have on the environment, and around half say they participate in sharing items like cars because it reduces their carbon footprint.[17] YAYA consumers gravitate toward cities where they can use public transportation, bicycles and car-sharing services.[18]

50





OWNERSHIP IS LIMITING

THE AMERICAN ~~DREAM~~ REALITY

18- to 24-year-olds are the age group "most excited" about the sharing economy.[19]

56% of YAYA consumers share video-streaming accounts with a family member or friend and do not pay for the services on their own.[10]

87% of YAYA consumers use Netflix to watch entertainment programming.[10]

75% of YAYA consumers have streamed at least three hours of video online without a break.[10]

51% of YAYA consumers say that a company's environmental record is important to them in purchasing decisions.[6]

MESSAGE TO MARKETERS

Marketers must adapt to the reality of the sharing economy. YAYA consumers enjoy leveraging the power of community to lower individual costs, so brands should establish communities for networking and sharing while considering partnerships with complementary products and services. Sharing services like Airbnb allow the YAYA market to embrace the social aspect of sharing someone's home while traveling and meeting new people, all while keeping costs at a minimum.

// JOB OPPORTUNITY

JOB ~~STABILITY~~ OPPORTUNITY

06



"I graduated two years ago and I'm already on my third job. I didn't switch jobs because I couldn't make up my mind, but because I was afraid of not living up to my full potential. If I stay in the same position for too long, it feels like I'm failing. Plus, I might miss out on a great opportunity."

YAYA workers are passionate and excited about the prospect of making their mark on the world. Although money is the most important factor when choosing a job, they are part of an age group that is more likely than previous generations to place a high value on enjoyment of their work.[10]

Feedback is key to making the YAYA consumer feel fulfilled in the workplace. YAYA workers tend to flourish in jobs where they find a sense of purpose and recognition.

Problems arise when YAYA workers do not feel valued or when they perceive their employer hasn't done enough to recognize their full potential.[20] Whether it's a weekly meeting or a pat on the back from their boss, YAYA workers want to know where they stand. This isn't because they crave praise or attention; they simply need to know that they are on the right track. They don't mind waiting for a promotion or raise, as long as they know it is coming and what they need to accomplish in order for it to happen. When feedback doesn't come, they might worry that their progress has peaked and decide to move on.



ALL THE THINGS YOU'VE WANTED TO DO?

GO DO THEM.

THE AMERICAN DREAM REALITY

91% of YAYA consumers place high importance on their employer recognizing their value to the company.[10]

84% of YAYA consumers say that it is important to seize professional opportunities in order to live up to their highest potential.[10]

52% of YAYA employees expect bonuses each year, and 44% expect performance feedback every three months.[10]

64% of YAYA consumers say that they are confident that they will achieve their dream career in the next five years.[10]

75% of the YAYA market said it is hard to get a good job. [10]

MESSAGE TO YAYA EMPLOYERS

YAYA employees want to know that they provide value in the workplace. Companies looking to tap into the potential of the YAYA workforce and avoid costly employee turnover must evolve to meet the needs of the YAYA demographic. An annual review will not be sufficient. Employers must be willing to provide consistent feedback and a clearly defined path for advancement. New skills and challenges are necessary for YAYA employees to feel like they are progressing. Employers should identify specific goals and benchmarks to motivate YAYA workers and improve job satisfaction. YAYA workers need to know there is a way to achieve their goals within the organization or they will begin looking elsewhere.

// DON'T SELL ME SHORT

DON'T SELL ME SHORT

07



"It seems like brands are always trying to group me and other people my age together, assuming that we all like the same things and act the same way. I don't want to be defined by my age, gender or any other label. I am an individual. We are all individuals."

The YAYA market feels boxed-in by brands that don't recognize their individual interests. Advertisers tend to alienate this age group when they target them solely on demographics and generalizations. Most YAYA consumers believe it is more important to be unique than popular, and they want brands to understand this.

These consumers enjoy standing out, because they think labels undermine what sets them apart. Internet-savvy YAYA consumers are rejecting shallow demographic targeting based on broad generalizations and stereotypes. For instance, a female YAYA consumer doesn't want to see pink pens popping up in her browser just because advertisers know she is a woman.

Each YAYA consumer is different. And proud of it. The YAYA market wants advertising to reflect the social and ethnic diversity that defines them.

They want their advertisements to reflect their unique tastes and interests. They are willing to give up some privacy as long as they get more relevant advertising in return. They don't mind their Google searches being tracked if they get a good deal on their next concert ticket.





WHY DO YOU THINK YOU KNOW ME?

THE AMERICAN ~~DREAM~~ REALITY

77% of YAYA consumers say it is more important to be unique than to be popular.[10]

75% of the YAYA market says advertising should portray more diversity.[10]

74% of YAYA consumers think advertising makes people more materialistic.[10]

62% of YAYA consumers say friends are the most important things in their lives.[13]

60% of YAYA consumers say that their cultural/ethnic heritage is an important part of who they are.[13]

MESSAGE TO MARKETERS

Marketers must move beyond shallow demographic targeting in order to embrace YAYA consumers' unique interests. This means providing relevant, customized content that the YAYA market can relate to and engage with. As a group, the YAYA market considers their friends to be the most credible source of product information, because they understand them as individuals in a way that others do not.[21] Word-of-mouth is an authentic and sharable form of advertising that encourages interactions between consumers. The successful "Share a Coke" campaign released 1,000 popular names that are all featured on the Coke bottles.[22] Consumers even had the option to order a Coke bottle with a specific name, enabling them to express themselves individually while being part of a collective.

SHARE YOUR MIND



08



"Who I support and the issues I care about are a big part of who I am. It's important to passionately share my beliefs with others, even if it's just online. By sharing my perspective, I can make the world a better place."



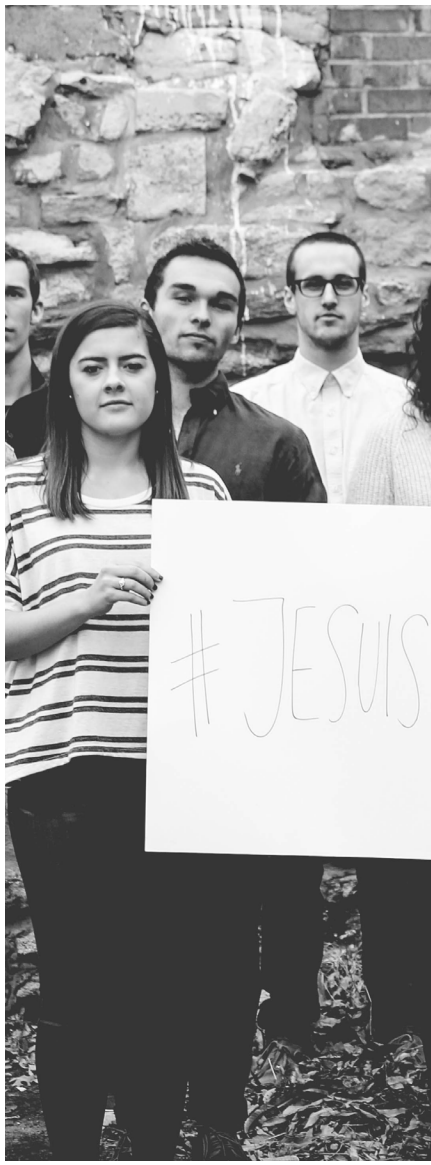
LET YOUR VOICE CARRY

YAYA consumers are all about creating an open conversation space. Older generations typically avoided topics of politics, religion and sex, but YAYA consumers dive right in. This group of activists have taken their efforts beyond traditional channels. Since they don't have a lot of money to spend, the YAYA market prefers to fight for their causes on social media.

Taking the conversation online is the YAYA consumer's version of chaining themselves to a tree. They make themselves heard by exchanging their diverse viewpoints online and posting content about causes they care about. What they choose to share on social media acts as a catalyst for change.

While they're short on cash, YAYA consumers will open their wallets for a cause that interests them. They'll give that extra dollar to St. Jude's when picking up their prescription at Walgreens, especially since it is easy and convenient.

However, YAYA consumers are more likely to share cause-related information online than donate money or attend a protest. Posting a video in support Paris or using the hashtag #jesuisparis is how the YAYA market spreads awareness. Most importantly, YAYA shoppers are true to their convictions, with more than half saying that they would be unlikely to support a business that opposed an issue like the legalization of gay marriage.[10]



THE AMERICAN ~~DREAM~~ REALITY

93% of YAYA consumers say that it is important to hear the ideas of others, even if they differ from their own.[10]

48% of YAYA consumers are more likely to share cause-related information online than the 22% that would attend a protest or event.[10]

59% of YAYA shoppers make a special effort to buy from brands that are environmentally conscious.[10]

67% of YAYA consumers were politically active on social networking sites in 2012, and 48% of YAYA consumers have been directly involved with a civic group or activity.[10]

80% of YAYA consumers are more apt to donate online after hearing about an issue on the Internet.[23]

MESSAGE TO MARKETERS

YAYA activists are vocal about their stances on controversial topics and want to purchase from brands that genuinely champion important causes when it's convenient and affordable. Marketers must be willing to promote the socially and environmentally responsible aspects of a brand on social media where they can engage YAYA consumers in the conversation. This will raise the brand's street cred in the eyes of the socially-conscious YAYA market. For example, Facebook's gay pride filter was extremely successful, and was used by 26 million people.[24] This form of social activism gave YAYA consumers a sense of pride, but could still be done in 30 seconds, whereas attending a protest could take the whole day.

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