

The African-American Market

Market Experts and Business Leaders

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“Keeping it Real”: The Black Consumer Marketing Edge

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Black consumers are “multi-cultural” consumers. We speak English, Spanish and French. Our roots are in the Caribbean, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Africa and America. The African Diaspora spread our ancestors around the world. If there is any doubt that America is fast becoming a multi-cultural country, one only has to look at the historic inauguration of the first black president, Barack Obama, on Jan. 20, 2009.

Black consumers are trendsetters.

If you are looking for “the next big thing” recall that jazz, rhythm and blues, and hip-hop were born in black communities. Black consumers are trendsetters. Seventy percent of all rap music is purchased by general market youth. We are aspirational. We like to see community members as role models, leaders and mentors. We value family reunions, holidays and community cultural events. Keep in mind that general market messages may not always resonate with these consumers.

With the buying power of 39 million black consumers set to rise to \$1.2 trillion in 2013, this is no small

matter. The Selig Center for Economic Growth (www.uga.edu) notes that black-owned businesses have grown four times faster than the number of all U.S. firms. The number of black youth attaining high school diplomas increased 10% between 1993 and 2003, the largest gain reported for any group. Black consumers, who skew younger (median age is 30.2 years) are entering the work force and graduating from entry-level jobs. There is a growing segment of aging black baby boomers who need financial planning, notes Aaron W. Smith in his book, “In the Black: Live Faithfully, Prosper Financially.” He reports that 9 million black boomers are set to retire between now and 2029. Be it noted, the well-known association for older/retired people, the AARP, has named an African-American, Barry Rand, a former Xerox executive, as its president.

Affluent black households have grown. There are 2.4 million households with incomes of \$75,000 or more. These account for 45% of total black buying power. Companies that offer luxury items and financial services have an advantage. “In many product categories, ranging from automobiles to pack-

aged goods, the African-American propensity for buying branded, high-ticket and high-margin items makes them more loyal and profitable customers than any other consumer segment,” notes Pepper Miller in her book, “What’s Black About It? Insights to Increase Your Share of a Changing African-American Market.”

The health and beauty care category is growing. “Eighty-eight percent of the absolute growth in the U.S. female population from 2000 to 2007 was attributable to women of color,” notes Miriam Muley, author of “The 85% Niche: The Power of Women of all Colors – Latina, Black, and Asian.” Packaged Facts estimates that cosmetics, skin care and hair care products consumed by diverse women will grow to “over \$11 billion by 2010.”

Yankelovich research says “96% of African-Americans are inclined to buy products advertised directly to

them in their own neighborhoods.”

They note that a “real person” is often the best spokesperson. “Celebrity sells” and online Web executions can sizzle, but in multicultural marketing there is nothing like traditional methods (high-touch) and access (getting the gatekeeper go ahead and endorsement.) The “digital divide” is a factor as eMarketer.com notes: 70% of white consumers will be online in 2013 compared on 56% of black consumers. In the age of the Internet, iPhone and iPod, striking a balance between “High Tech” and “High Touch” is a new challenge, especially for multicultural marketers. Some of the best methods involve the traditional, hands-on, in the neighborhood, “real people” approach. That’s why we like to say, “keeping it real” for black consumers is the multicultural marketing edge.

**We are
aspirational.**

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African-American Market Experts and Business Leaders

The following companies have expertise in marketing to African American consumers, or are headed by an African American business executive.

Advertising Agency

Advantage Communications, Inc.
CultureVue
E. Morris Communications, Inc.
Footsteps, LLC
Muse Communications, Inc.
Prime Access, Inc.

Custom Publishing

SMSi-Urban Call Marketing, Inc.

Digital Agency

Acento Group

Direct Mail/Marketing

Ethnic Technologies, LLC

Field Marketing

SMSi-Urban Call Marketing, Inc.

Graphic Design

Fresh Concentrate LLC

List Manager/Broker

Specialists Marketing Services -
21st Multicultural

Market Research Firm

Amber Multicultural Marketing
C R Market Surveys, Inc.
Campbell-Communications, Inc.
Creative Consumer Research
Horowitz Associates, Inc.
ICR/ International Communications
Research
In-Culture Connection, LLC
Miami Market Research
MRSI (Marketing Research Services, Inc.)
New American Dimensions
Phoenix Multicultural

Marketing/Communications

DDR Global, LLC
IMAGES USA
Octagon
VanguardComm

Marketing/Promotions

Lunch Truck Advertising
Marketing Werks, Inc.
SMSi-Urban Call Marketing, Inc.

Media-Cable

Black Entertainment Television

Media-Website

DiversityInc

Product Sampling

SMSi-Urban Call Marketing, Inc.

Professional/Not-for-Profit Organization

American Advertising Federation (AAF)

Public Relations Firm

Multicultural Marketing Resources, Inc.