

# Three approaches to gender when marketing to Hispanics: An analysis of internal industry documents

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## Objectives

Tobacco marketers and social marketers alike often need to develop marketing campaigns for priority groups from different cultures. To do this, we often take campaigns developed for mainstream audiences and adapt them. The purpose of this presentation is:

- To compare three approaches to gender used to market cigarettes to women.
- To identify how ethnicity and gender affect the tobacco industry's marketing of cigarettes to Hispanic consumers

## Methods

- Based on analysis of 64 internal tobacco industry documents made available to the public as a result of the Master Settlement Agreement (1998)
- The documents are available in online depositories: Tobacco Documents Online, American Legacy Foundation and industry sites.
- Initial key word searches included: Hispanic, qualitative research, consumer research, market research, survey, focus group, women, female
- Followed by snowball search
- Document analysis by research team
- Abstracted, indexed, and made available on The Women's Collection: From Marketing to Counter-Marketing (tobaccodocuments.org/women/)

## Context (See Chart 1)

In the late 1980s and early 1990s Philip Morris started conducting marketing and advertising research on Hispanic smokers. These early attempts to reach the Hispanic market tried to translate and adapt mainstream advertising campaigns. Often only the text was changed. Sometimes a Hispanic model was added to the foreground.

Translation of the mainstream advertising was not simple. The mainstream advertising copy often referred to popular or mainstream American culture. Issues for the mainstream smokers were not always relevant for the Hispanic consumers. Words and phrases had to be tested multiple times to ensure that the translation was accurate and culturally relevant. In this process, the researchers were forced to simplify the advertising concepts down to the essential concepts they wanted to convey to the consumer. The internal reports, summaries and memos between Philip Morris staff and contractors documented the entire process. By explicitly discussing the intended meanings and desired responses for the advertising being created, Philip Morris revealed how it approached gender in marketing, not only to Hispanics, but to women in general.

The first three brands that Philip Morris adapted to the Hispanic market were Virginia Slims, Marlboro, and Benson & Hedges. These mainstream brands had very different target markets and advertising goals, and as a result, they experienced different challenges in adapting to the Hispanic market.

## Conclusions & Implications for Public Health

Marlboro reaches women in part because it has a "feminine" extension, Marlboro Lights. Virginia Slims reaches women because that is all it is trying to reach. Benson & Hedges reaches women by marketing class and never acknowledging that its characteristics skew towards the feminine.

If a brand is marketed only to women, it does not matter what men think – and it can break the strict gender dichotomy and appeal to a more "masculine" characteristics in women without risking alienating or confusing men. If a brand is popular with men, it may also appeal to women. Gender neutral brands can appeal to both men and women.

It is important to remember that there are many ways to appeal to women. Women are not all alike, and public health campaigns may need to use a variety of strategies and approaches to reach large numbers of women. Some women will need to be addressed directly as women, while others may be more accessible if gender is addressed indirectly, or not at all.

	Question	Marlboro	Virginia Slims	Benson & Hedges
Brand Profile	What percentage of BRAND X smokers are women?	40%	99%	66%
	Among Hispanics, what percentage of BRAND X smokers are women?	26%	99%	50%
Market Share	What percentage of women smokers buy BRAND X?	40%	2%	5%
	What percentage of Hispanic women smokers buy BRAND X?	36%	5%	10%
	Of cigarette brands smoked by women, what rank is BRAND X?	1	7	8
	Of cigarette brands smoked by Hispanic women, what rank is BRAND X?	1	5	3

## Consumer Data (See Chart 2)

Two parameters that Philip Morris uses to examine who buys its brand are brand profile and market share. Brand profile statistics describe the people who smoke a particular brand of cigarettes. Market share statistics describe which brands particular people smoke. For example, brand profile statistics show what percentage of a brand's smokers are women, while market share statistics show what percentage of women smoke a brand. The chart reveals that the statistics come to two different conclusions about which cigarettes women smoke.

Consider brand profile:

- Marlboro is smoked by more men than women. The gender difference is more pronounced for Hispanics.
- Virginia Slims is smoked almost exclusively by women. This is true for Hispanics as well.
- Benson & Hedges is also smoked by more women than men. For Hispanics, it is even.

Consider Market share:

- Marlboro has a large market share. It ranks 1<sup>st</sup> among Hispanic women.
- Virginia Slims has a small market share. It ranks 5<sup>th</sup> among Hispanic women
- Benson & Hedges also has a small market share. It ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> among Hispanic women.

Virginia Slims and Marlboro present two different approaches to reaching women smokers, including Hispanic women smokers:

- Virginia Slims is a brand that is marketed to women, is bought almost exclusively by women, but attracts only a few women.
- Marlboro is a popular brand that attracts many people, including many women.

The two different approaches to marketing result in different advertising dilemmas:

- Virginia Slims advertising can address women and their issues directly and explicitly.
- Marlboro must strike a balance between addressing women and not alienating the male consumers.

## Brand Image (See Chart 3)

Brand profile often determines – or is determined by – the brand image. Market share reveals how successful that image is at capturing the market. Both statistics have significant implications for the brand's marketing/advertising.

Chart 3 compiles the descriptive language used by the participants, researchers, and Philip Morris decision-makers from the research for the three advertising campaigns. Words and short phrases that described the brand and/or consumer image were selected from the research reports, summaries, and memos. Similar language was grouped together and divided into categories. The matrix was created by brand and category in order to be able to read any one category across the three brands.

As a result of significantly different language used by the participants and researchers to describe Marlboro's brand extensions, the brand has been divided into Marlboro Lights and Marlboro Reds,

Consider row one:

- Marlboro Reds is considered masculine.
- Marlboro Lights is considered feminine.
- Virginia Slims is considered feminine.
- Gender is not mentioned for Benson & Hedges.

Compare column one and two:

- Except for the category of Disposition, Marlboro Lights characteristics are the opposite of Marlboro Reds.
- Reds is active, Lights is passive
- Reds is rough, Lights is refined
- Reds is not well-educated, Lights is intellectual

Compare column two and three:

- Virginia Slims is generally described similarly to Marlboro Lights
- Both are considered delicate and refined
- Both are described as upscale or inspirational
- Both are described as sophisticated

Look at row four of column one and three:

- Virginia Slims and Marlboro Lights differ on one main point. For the Strong/Weak category, Virginia Slims is more similar to Marlboro Reds. Both sets of consumers are described as knowing what they want (See highlighted text).

Consider column four:

- The gender neutral Benson & Hedges is consistent with both Virginia Slims and Marlboro Lights in the categories of Rough/Refined, Class and Education.
- Judging from both the Consumer Data and Brand Image charts, Benson & Hedges skews slightly feminine by marketing itself as a more upscale cigarette.
- However, both researchers and participants never identified it as a feminine cigarette.

Key documents: Marlboro: 2048685773, 2040190484, 2500086146, 2500086141, 2041755297, Virginia Slims: 2040303524, 207934418, 2047923124, 2040303558, 2047934481, 2047934426, 2040303560, 2047934446, 2047923060, 2047923074, 2047923072, 2047923065, 2040332648, Benson & Hedges: 2047263775, 2047263869, 2040712711, 2041792576, 2061811475, 2061811478, 2047273141, 2044352689, 2047263826, 2041792581, 2047263887, 2047192671, 2041792578

	Marlboro Reds	Marlboro Lights	Virginia Slims	Benson & Hedges
Gender	*Male *Masculine	*Feminine *Less masculine *Likely female	*Feminine *For women	
Disposition	*Free spirit *Fully enjoys life *Mature *Popular *Parties *Social *Temperamental *Trustworthy	*Enjoys simpler life *Mild-mannered *Friendly *Nice *Responsible *Soft spoken *Social	*Happy *Humorous	*Desirable *Pleasurable *Serious
Active/Passive	*Active *Aggressive *Athletic *Energetic *Full of energy	*Not very active *Passive *Peaceful *Serene *Tranquil		
Strong/Weak	*Confident *Knows what he wants *Strong *Strong character/personality *Stubborn	*Lacking strong personality	*Achieved goals *Freethinking *Knows what she wants *Independent *Liberated *Not afraid of what people say *Sure of herself	
Refined/Rough	*Rough *Rugged	*Delicate *Elegant *Finer *Refined	*Beautiful *Delicate *Elegant *Not strong *Pretty *Quality *Refined *Thin	*Elegant *Distinction *Refined *Quality
Class	*Every day *Drives a sports car, truck, motorcycle, or jeep *Wears jeans, boots, and leather jackets	*Drives better car *Upscale *Wealthy *Well-dressed	*Aspiration	*Class *Premium *Upscale *Want the best
Education	*Not well-educated	*Educated *Intellectual *Reads *Sophisticated	*Sophisticated	*Sophisticated

Brand	Dates	Methodology	Purpose
Virginia Slims	1984, 1989-90	Four qualitative research studies: Mall intercepts, one-on-one interviews	With the Virginia Slims research, Philip Morris wanted to reassure more socially traditional Hispanic women that it was acceptable for a woman to smoke. The researchers struggled with making the "then and now" vignettes depicting women's liberation as culturally relevant and intelligible to Hispanic women.
Marlboro	1990	One qualitative research study: One-on-one interviews	With the Marlboro research, Philip Morris wanted to communicate the concept of light cigarettes to Hispanics unfamiliar with the concept of low tar. The ads needed to differentiate Lights from Reds without undermining the masculinity of the brand. Tranquil images tested the best for Lights, but had more feminine associations than Philip Morris felt comfortable with.
Benson & Hedges	1993-94	Four qualitative research studies: Triad interviews, consumer psychologist report	With the Benson & Hedges research, Philip Morris wanted to address smoking restrictions, but found the issue was irrelevant to Hispanic smokers. Although they tested advertising with more women than men – reflecting their consumer profile – they never mentioned gender in their findings.