Gender Diversity in the US Media, Advertising and Creative Industry

Foresight Factory & Advertising Week
Against the backdrop of the media storm over gender diversity in the industry this summer, Foresight Factory and Advertising Week conducted a study to get a directional view across the media, marketing and creative advertising industries in the US around the topic of gender diversity in the workplace.

Views from the 285 executives we surveyed demonstrate that the debate is far from f***king over. Do the men and women of the ad land share similar career aspirations? Yes. Do they feel equally supported in getting there? Far from it.

The story at large is that men and women don’t have the same attitudes when it comes to gender diversity issues and don’t experience barriers in the workplace in the same way. Male executives understand there’s an issue with gender inequality in the workplace, but when asked about specifics there was a definite gap between men and women’s responses – the urgency to push for change is just not as top-of-mind for male executives.

When asked about bolder strategies to address gender inequality in the workplace, an overwhelming majority welcomed exploring parental leave policies like the UK and Scandinavia – a case of the grass is greener, or an indication this is one of the biggest frustrations amongst industry employees?

The results show gender inequality in the US media and advertising industry is pronounced. The gap in optimism felt by Gen Y and Gen X women indicates disappointment will be inevitable for female talent entering the industry, unless decisive action is taken to address gender inequality.

Executive Summary
Setting the Legislative Scene

Gender Pay Gap

- In 2016, full-time working women are paid 79 cents for every $1 men make. At current rates of change, it’s estimated the US wage gap won’t close before 2059. The worldwide pay gap across all industries will take 188 years to close.

Transparency in Pay Executive Order

- In January 2016, the Obama administration announced an Executive Order to expose discrimination, and reduce the gender pay gap. Companies with >100 employees will be required to report on pay to the Federal government, splitting out compensation by race, gender and ethnicity.

Former Fortune 500 Female CEOs

- Fortune examined the career trajectories of women who dropped out of their “Most Powerful Women” list over the last 15 years. Of them, only 13% (that aren’t either retired or deceased) are in, or had been in, another major operating role in a large company.

- Their investigation showed female CEOs tended to get shorter tenures, get forced out more often and receive more shareholder activist attention than their male equivalents.

4. Why Top Women Are Disappearing From Corporate America, Fortune, September 2016
Their ambition is not a vertical ambition, it’s this intrinsic, circular ambition to be happy.
Do you feel the need to be a leader?

The majority of the men and women in the industry feel a need to take on leadership responsibilities.

This is felt more strongly by Gen X female executives than their male counterparts.

- 91% women aged 30-44 agreed they feel the need to be a leader vs 71% of men aged 30-44.
Do you feel a need for successes in life to be acknowledged?

More than men, women (especially Gen X women) feel a strong need for successes in life to be acknowledged by others.

Female executives across the industry want to lead, but there’s a sense of frustration: their achievements aren’t being recognized fully enough by either their peers or their company.
Aiming for the C-Suite
24% of men vs. 31% of women in the media, advertising and creative industry aspire to become a C-Suite Executive.

Aiming for the Top Job
A quarter of male executives aspire to become CEO/Founder compared to 11% of female executives.

These results raise questions about how desirable the top jobs are to current executives in the industry and how best to strategize talent retention.
#thingscanonlygetbetter
FORTUNE 500
FEMALE CEOS
4%
Earning as much as their peers?

Only **23%** of women in media, advertising & creative think their pay *is* equal to their male peers

…while only **12%** of men in media, advertising & creative think their pay *isn’t* equal to their female peers
Personally Experienced Gender Discrimination

There is a marked difference between male and female respondents’ experiences at work – 40% of women claim to have encountered discrimination because of their gender in their workplace vs 5% of men.

- 24% of 18-29 women answered that they have experienced gender discrimination in the firm they work at – this is particularly worrying given that these women have had less time in the workplace.

Believe there is Gender Discrimination in the Industry

56% of men believe there is gender inequality in the workplace (vs 77% of women).
#youdoyou
1 in 2 global consumers strongly value socialising with friends and family through instant messaging. Emojis form an increasingly important part of how we express ourselves online.

In response to a push from Google employees for emojis to better reflect the diversity of women’s careers, the Unicode Consortium announced that in 2017 they will add 11 new emojis of men and women in a range of professions.

Is this a needle mover?

Source: FFonline Research | Base: 1000-5000 online respondents per country aged 16-64 (Indonesia & S. Africa 16-54), 2015 February
By being ‘me’ at work I will be able to have the career I want

Having What it Takes to Succeed

- 59% of women aged 18-29 have confidence in their abilities to have the career they want. The gap in optimism between them and the older female executives is stark: just 38% of older women agree.

- Male executives on the other hand retain their optimism and self-belief, with 76% agreement amongst 18-29s and 75% agreement amongst the 45+ group.
#acceleratetechchange
Redefining Women

H&M’s newest campaign encourages people to use the hashtag #ladylike to share what modern “ladylike” behaviour could be; bad-ass, independent, free-willed, entertaining, opinionated and off-beat.
Building future success

Career Development

Three quarters of young male executives feel they have support to progress in the workplace, whereas half of all female executives disagreed there is even a career development programme at their company in the first place.

Role Models

A third of all women working in the industry struggle to find role models (vs. a fifth of men).

Amongst 18-29s, only 6% of male respondents say they find this hard, but for young women, it’s still nearly a third.
“Egg freezing should be a part of company benefit packages”

% Agree

28% men
41% women
“My industry would benefit from having a quota for women at board level”

33% Men disagreed

57% Women agreed
“The US should follow markets such as the UK and Scandinavia and adopt countrywide policies that encourage longer maternity leave and/or shared parental leave” | % Agree

73% men
87% women

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CONTINUE THE DEBATE

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APPENDIX
About the study sample

- Total: 285 respondents
- Fieldwork conducted online for four weeks between June and July 2016 in the United States
- Male: 27%
- Female: 73%
- Age: 40% 25-34s, 25% 35-44s, 15% 45+
- Generational Split: 50% Gen Y, 45% Gen X, 6% Baby-Boomers
- Region: 68% North East, 13% South, 10% West, 8% Mid West
- Sector: Mixed but the biggest groups of respondents belonged to (20%) Agency-Creative, (21%) Media Company/Publishing
- Company size and type: 48% of respondents work for a big company (250+ employees), 48% work in an independent company, 48% work in a company that is part of a bigger corporation group, 4% don't know