

Insight & Strategy: Labels Against Women

Contagious interviews Pepe Torres, Pantene's brand manager in the Philippines

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Campaign /

In December 2013, a 60-second ad for **Procter & Gamble**-owned haircare brand **Pantene** from the Philippines became the first Filipino ad to be exported to the US.

The **Labels Against Women** ad tapped into a growing awareness of feminism and women's rights, aiming to demonstrate the inequalities that exist between men and women in the workplace. So while a man might be a 'boss', his female equivalent is 'bossy'. A man is 'persuasive', while his female colleague is 'pushy' and a woman looking in the mirror is 'vain', while a man is 'neat'. Gary Jules's cover version of Tears for Fears' *Mad World* plays in the background and the tagline reads: 'Don't let labels hold you back.'

The ad, by **BBDO Guerrero** in Manila, aired twice on TV in the Philippines and was then posted online. Following a positive endorsement from Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, whose *Lean In* book and movement was one of the most influential of 2013, the ad went viral. Today YouTube views have surpassed 34 million. What's more, it was discussed widely on blogs, social networks and traditional media outlets.

Results / The agency claims that the video received 46 million views, becoming one of the most viewed ads of 2014. Reportedly, the ad garnered more than 1 billion impressions, earning more than \$25m in earned media. The agency reports that the brand's value shares grew by 3% in the 8 weeks post launch.



P&G backed up the creative work by commissioning a third party research agency to conduct a survey that gave Labels Against Women more context.

We interviewed **Pepe Torres**, Pantene's brand manager in the Philippines, to find out more about Pantene's purpose to help women shine.



Is Labels Against Women part of a wider strategy for Pantene?

Pantene's purpose is to help women to shine: we need to connect with consumers

beyond Pantene's functional benefits to show what the brand stands for. We can bring that purpose to life by focusing on what might be holding them back. From there, working with BBDO Guerrero in Manila, we arrived at gender bias as a starting point.

There's still an inherent bias against strong, driven women

– Pepe Torres, brand manager, Pantene, the Philippines

Despite the 2013 Global Gender Gap Report ranking the Philippines fifth in gender equality, there's still an inherent bias against strong, driven women. Later on, as we brought the campaign to life, we made sure to validate what we understood to be true qualitatively from a survey by a local agency. It was a very conscious decision. We wanted to make sure that we approached this issue with a genuine seriousness and understanding of the data. We also knew that this would generate debate and opposing views and we felt that the best way to ensure that our message came through with the help of the data.



Who is your target audience?

We're talking to all women, regardless of age, and want to ensure that the message reaches a broad set of women. However, a woman in the workplace might be more likely to feel that gender bias is holding her back.

Why is this particular film so relevant to women in the Philippines?

We know what women experience day-to-day and I think this is probably easiest expressed in the work environment. We are sensitive to the fact that women tend to be labelled unfairly, or that they hold themselves back altogether doing something they want to do for themselves or some achievement they want to attain. The survey really supports that. The most startling statistic that represents the current state of the Philippines with respect to gender bias is that 70% of men think that women need to downplay their personalities to be effective. That really reflected what we knew.

Sheryl Sandberg endorsed the ad, which helped its YouTube views rocket. How important was her contribution?

We quickly grew from 4 million views to 19 million. Sheryl Sandberg wasn't just important in terms of generating views, she was also important to the crafting of the movement internally because a lot of us are inspired by her.



A screenshot of a Twitter post from Sheryl Sandberg (@sheryl_sandberg). The post includes a profile picture of Sheryl Sandberg, her name, follower count (1,253,288), the date (December 7 at 6:26pm), and a 'Follow' button. The tweet itself is a quote from the video, followed by a link to the video.

is one of the most powerful videos I have ever seen illustrating how when women and do the same things, they are seen in completely different ways. Really worth watching! In prize of the day for sure!

gratulations to Marc Pritchard and the Pantene team
Andrew Robertson and the BBDO team.



A screenshot of a YouTube video thumbnail for 'Pantene Philippines | #Whiplt | Labels Against Women'. The thumbnail shows a woman's face. The video title and URL (www.youtube.com) are visible, along with a brief description: 'It's time we put an end to labels against women. Pantene believes that when you stand



Dove is in the same sector and has its long-running Real Beauty campaign, what is different about Pantene's approach?

I can't really comment on Dove's approach but I can talk about what makes ours unique. First, it's about helping women achieve their true potential. That's why we looked at what's holding her back and identifying gender bias as a territory where we could make an impact. We will continue to be consistent with our brand purpose, which we feel is distinct and relevant to our target.

How did you choose the music?

This cover version of *Mad World* by Gary Jules was originally released for the film *Donnie Darko* and it's particularly haunting. The lyrics seem to speak about a broken society or an unfair social class system. We were open to exploring other soundtracks but in the end, we decided this was the best fit.

Have you noticed any sales uplift?

It's too soon to see the impact on sales but so far we're happy with the fact that it's been one of the most trending videos of last year. It's also generated so much conversation and coverage that we're confident that it has established an emotional connection with our target audience.

What are your future plans for Pantene? Is there going to be more in this vein in 2014?

We're committed to this campaign and this is only the beginning. If we really want to sustain this relationship that we've started with our audience, we need to do more to service our purpose to help her shine. There's more coming in 2014 from the Philippines and hopefully from other countries too.