

**Campaign Title: Love Has No Labels**

**Brand: Ad Council**

**Company(s) Involved: R/GA (Agency), Ad Council (Client), Mindride (Experience Design), Persuade & Influence (Production), Brewster Parsons (Post Production)**

**Category: Cross-Platform**

## **Summary**

Bias and discrimination are perhaps the most polarizing problems facing America today. Yet most Americans consider themselves unprejudiced and resist messages suggesting they are biased. We developed approachable creative that helped people recognize the biases they didn't know they had: An x-ray screen hid the identities of real people, as viewers filled in the blanks of what constituted friendship, love, and family. When the identities were revealed, so were individual biases, as each relationship spanned different religions, races, etc. In 6 months, the campaign achieved over 160 million video views and significantly shifted attitudes and behaviors surrounding inclusion.

## Marketing Challenge

Prejudice and discrimination are perhaps the most polarizing problems facing America today. For example:

- One in five LGBT Americans feel that there is little or no acceptance of their community (Pew Research Center, 2013).
- Six in ten Latinos say that anti-Latino discrimination is a major problem (Pew Hispanic Center, 2013).
- Six in ten African Americans say that they are not satisfied with the way they are treated in society (Gallup Poll, 2013).
- Up to eighty-five percent of students with disabilities experience bullying (American Association of People with Disabilities).

Though issues surrounding discrimination and prejudices are pervasive in our society, 85% of Americans consider themselves to be unprejudiced (Perception Institute), yet only 37% of adults report that they are regularly accepting and inclusive of others and/or encourage others to be more accepting and inclusive (Ad Council Omnibus Tracking Study, Feb 2015). This leaves a lot of grey area where people may mean well but are unintentionally perpetuating negative stereotypes, disparities, and discriminatory outcomes through their own implicit biases.

Implicit bias is the bias in judgment and/or behavior that operates without intentional control. These biases are often manifested in both small and large ways, whether it's specifying someone's race when it's not relevant to the conversation, assuming your female co-worker's spouse is a man or avoiding eye contact with someone with a disability. It has profound implications for how we view and interact with others who are different from us. It also fuels negative stereotypes within and across communities and can perpetuate disparities by altering someone's ability to find a job, secure a loan, rent an apartment, or get a fair trial.

Since most adults will resist messages that suggest they are prejudiced or discriminatory, we decided to focus our communication efforts on a more approachable solution that helped people recognize the biases they didn't even know they had.

## Methodology

Through in-depth literature reviews and primary interviews with a wide range of Americans across age, gender, race, and ethnicities, there was one insight that rose to the top:

Most Americans consider themselves to be unprejudiced (Perception Institute).

We all want to be perceived as kind and fair; however, we unconsciously hold negative associations against those who we see as different than ourselves.

The way we reduce biases is to educate individuals about their unconscious associations, replace stereotypical responses with non-stereotypical responses, and demonstrate positive examples of diversity and inclusion.

Eight leading nonprofits that represent various discriminated classes joined the campaign and provided their expertise and content to ensure our message and calls to action were effective in combating bias. Our nonprofit partners included the Anti-Defamation League, Southern Poverty Law Center, National Women's Law Center, Human Rights Campaign, American Association of People with Disabilities, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Muslim Advocates, and AARP.

## Creative Execution

We filmed a live installation on Valentine's Day that featured x-ray skeletons dancing, hugging, and kissing, allowing the crowd to mentally fill in the blanks and guess who was behind the screen. The real couples and relationships were later revealed: a mixed race heterosexual couple, Muslim and Jewish friends, a homosexual couple and their adopted son, and more. This stunt exposed viewers' implicit biases and reminded us that no matter how we are labeled on the outside, we're all human on the inside. The recorded stunt was used for TV PSAs and an online video that drove viewers to test their own biases on the campaign website and share their stories of love and diversity.

With no paid media budget, the campaign relied on an exclusive partnership with Upworthy and their community of nearly 8 million social do-gooders. Within 24 hours after the video debuted on the Upworthy's Facebook page, it was viewed 11 million times and has since become the one of the most successful PSA campaigns in history (currently 2nd behind only Kony), the best performing video on Upworthy ever, and has generated over 150 million online views, and an estimated 1 billion media impressions.

## Business Results

### 1. AWARENESS: Results: Six months after the launch of the campaign:

- 35% of adults recognize the campaign assets after only six months, which is higher than most Ad Council campaigns after a year in market ("Public Affairs Tracking Omnibus," Ipsos, February 2015 – August 2015).
- 15% of adults report being aware of the website or hashtag "Love Has No Labels" after only five months ("Public Affairs Tracking Omnibus," Ipsos, February 2015 – August 2015).
- The online video has been viewed over 160 million times, shared 2.6 million times and liked 1.8 million times.
- Facebook is the only platform where the video can be liked and accounts for approximately 100 million of the total views.
- It is the second most viewed community and activism campaign of all time (Visible Measures, 2015).
- The video is the most viewed branded video campaign of 2015 today and is Upworthy's best performing video of all time (Upworthy, 2015).
- The campaign received over 1.5 billion impressions resulting from media coverage, which included: Good Morning America, World News Tonight, Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, and Mashable.
- Influencers shared the LHNL message with their millions of social followers including Michelle Obama, Sofia Vergara and George Takei.
- The video makes up roughly 50% of the overall views on the Ad Council YouTube channel and generated 96% of the likes and shares on the channel (Fullscreen, 2015). Though our intention was to reach US adults, the message resonated with people internationally, as our video was viewed in over 230 countries.

### 2. ENGAGEMENT Results: Six months after the launch of the campaign:

#### Website

- 1.1 million visits to the website since launch.
- 65 thousand quiz engagements with a 52% completion rate, which is more than three times the average completion rate of 14%, according to the 2015 FormStack Report.
- Thousands of users engaged with the Love Has No Labels campaign and brand by using the Faces of Love photo tool.

#### Social

- Facebook community grew from 0 to 70 thousand since launch and garnered 17.5 million impressions and over 238 thousand engagements (shares, likes, comments).
- LHNL Twitter handle has been mentioned 91 thousand times and there have been 27 thousand uses of the hashtag #LoveHasNoLabels.

## Business Results, continued

### 3. ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS: Results: Six months after the launch of the campaign:

- Significantly more adults report that they are regularly accepting and inclusive of others and/or encourage others to be more accepting and inclusive (37% to 42%\*).
- Significantly more adults report they have recently discussed the issue of discrimination and prejudice with friends, family, or colleagues (58% to 64%\*).
- More adults report they have recently discussed the issue of discrimination and prejudice with friends, family or colleagues (58% to 64%\*).
- More adults report that the issue of 'supporting diversity and acceptance around race, gender, sexual orientation, religion and, disability' is "very important" to them personally (33% to 38%\*).
- More adults agree that "biases can lead to discrimination" (73% to 78%\*).

\* Statistically significant differences at the 90% confidence interval ( $p < .1$ ) ("Public Affairs Tracking Omnibus," Ipsos, February 2015 – August 2015).