Measuring Gender Portrayal in Advertising

In line with the pledge that all Unstereotype Alliance members have signed up to, there is a requirement for all advertisers to monitor the advertising content they produce to ensure they continuously improve on unstereotypical and progressive gender portrayal.

Measuring our advertising content before final production with a rating from our consumers will ensure that we are able to free our content of any unconscious biases that may have crept in, it will give us the confidence that our advertising is truly unstereotypical and progressive.

To serve the above purpose, we have especially designed a global metric - the Unstereotype Metric which is a single measure question that can be added to any advertising research, pre or post-test. The UM developed with our Alliance partner Kantar, has been validated in multiple countries to help advertisers discriminate between progressive and regressive gender portrayal of characters in advertising, both in developing as well as developed markets.

Empirical evidence from the UM testing shows that progressive gender portrayal drives business outcomes. For example, In the technology vertical, through UM testing across Kantar’s database shows that ads that were rated strong on the UM for positive gender portrayal of women (compared to rest) were:

- 2.7x times better on Ad Likeability
- 3.3 x times better on Purchase Consideration
- 1.3x times higher on Brand Opinion

In order to help the Unstereotype Alliance members benchmark their content on progressive portrayal, UN Women will work with research agencies like Kantar to help maintain and publish norms on female and male gender portrayal in various markets, industry verticals and various demographic sub-groups. This will enable advertisers to assess how their own content compares to the best-in-class in the industry, and how they
improve over time on this measure. Like Kantar, other research agencies that our members work with will be requested to contribute data on the UM from their extensive copy-test and ad tracking database.

The UM along with its market level norms are offered at zero cost to all Unstereotype Alliance members, and they will also have access to a variety of tools to guide their efforts in developing and monitoring progressive gender portrayal in advertisements. This will include Norms for the UM published semi-annually in top 10 markets and annually in 25+ markets once available. Norms will be broken down by ad format (finished film, animatic, etc.), industry vertical and consumer demographics as the UM database builds.

More guidance on how to collect data on the UM within advertising research studies is provided in the next section. The Alliance plans to host periodic workshops for members to share learning related to progressive advertising portrayal, how consumers respond to various themes related to gender and intersectionality, and how progressive advertising impacts responses to the advertised brand.

Data-basing UM scores and building Norms:
The Alliance members and/or their research partners are requested to database the UM data from their research studies and to share this data every month with the Alliance. The attached database form shows the format in which you are requested to send data; all variables are stripped off brand/ad/ respondent identity to preserve research confidentiality when you send data; however, it is recommended that you save more details such as the ad video link, brand and category, so that you can cull meta-learnings from your measurement as your own database builds. The norms will be aggregated by the Alliance and published semi-annually to the Alliance members.

More guidelines on how to measure ads using the UM are provided below.

**WHEN do we include it?**
Any time an ad features female and / or male characters, even if the appearance of either female or male characters is minimal (e.g. a photo of woman is shown briefly). Include it for each gender that is featured in the ad. So, include the female question when a woman/women is/are featured, the male question when a man/men is/are featured and both when both genders are portrayed.

**WHEN shouldn’t we include it?**
If there is no gender featured in the ad (e.g. cartoon of product pack, cartoon voiceover) or if the ad only features a male or female voiceover.
WHERE do we ask the UM?
It is best to incorporate the UM at the end of the survey right before classification. This will ensure any other normative comparisons from the survey aren't potentially disrupted.

HOW do we ask the question(s)?
To make it easy for implementation, we have included how to set up instructions for the questions to be incorporated into an ad-testing questionnaire, as shown below.

Please indicate which UM type is needed based on what is featured in the ad.

Guidelines:

- If there is no gender featured in the ad, do not include any UM questions (e.g. cartoon of product pack, cartoon voiceover)
- If there is no gender featured but does have a male or female voiceover, do not include any UM questions
- If you have female character(s) only, include UM TYPE 1 only
- If you have male character(s) only, include UM TYPE 2 only
- If you have both female and male character(s), include UM TYPE 3
- Please include UM questions even if the appearance of either female or male characters is minimal (e.g. a photo of woman is show briefly)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male characters/actors only shown in test ad</th>
<th>UM Type 2</th>
<th>Show UM 2 only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both Female and Male characters/actors shown in test ad</td>
<td>UM Type 3</td>
<td>Show both UM 1/2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IF UM TYPE = 1 OR 3 ASK UM1 OTHERWISE SKIP TO UM2

UM1: FEMALE UNSTEREOTYPE ALLIANCE MEASURE

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

This advertising presents a positive image of the female character/s that sets a good example for others

Strongly agree
Somewhat agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Somewhat disagree
Strongly disagree
UM2: MALE UNSTEREOTYPE ALLIANCE MEASURE

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

This advertising presents a positive image of the male character/s that sets a good example for others

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Where will the Database be stored? Who will have access to it?
The Database will be stored in a server hosted by UN Women; aggregated norms will be shared to Alliance members.

Why does the Database form ask for data on all 5-points off the Agree-Disagree scale, if UM is based on the Top2 Box ratings?
Recording responses at each of the 5-points in the scale gives us the flexibility to periodically assess the best way to get discrimination, be it Top2 Box, Top Box or a calculated Net Score like (Top Box less Bottom box scores).

Why does the Database form asks for scores by sub-groups and study details?
We can report UM by Gender and Age-groups as our database builds. Similarly, we can report norms by category, ad format and media channel as long as we have more than 30 ads in each sub-group.

What is the purpose of the Ad Characteristics codes in the Database?
The Ad Characteristics are codes generated based on the researcher’s own judgement of male/ female character portrayal in the ad. It follows the Alliance playbook of the 3Ps (Presence, Perspective, Personality) to code the ad; it will allow us to examine how these 3Ps impact consumer perceptions of gender portrayal when we do a meta-analysis of the database periodically.

For further information please reach out to unstereotypealliance@unwomen.org