



Title: Dove Real Beauty Campaign: A Local Perspective

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Dove Real Beauty Campaign

A local perspectiveⁱ

It was September 29, 2016 and Marta Quelhas, head of the Personal Care Marketing Team of Unilever Portugal and Gonçalo Bernardes, Marketing Director, were preparing for a conference call with the Global Marketing Team. The conversation was going to be about *Dove Real Beauty Beats*, a campaign that Unilever Portugal had launched 1 week earlier. Based on local research the Portuguese team had come to the conclusion that there were particular consumer insights that the Dove global campaigns were not addressing. *Dove Beauty Beats* video was designed as part of an Integrated Marketing Campaign to specifically target Portuguese consumers. First the video was launched using paid media, but soon it was clear that people were sharing and commenting and its spread did not need investment backing it up: it was reaching the entire planet organically. This conversation was expected to be challenging as traditionally the Global Office was responsible for developing master campaigns with no particular category or product and Local teams would then adapt it to local markets. Only one week had passed after the launch of the campaign and it was clear that results exceeded the expected outcome as the video had gone viral, crossed borders and it had gained a life on its own. Several countries, such as Canada, had contacted the Global Office asking to use *Dove Beauty Beats* so Marta and Gonçalo needed to decide on the next steps. This conference call was supposed to clear the doubts around the process, discuss results and make the following decision: should the Portuguese local office continue with such isolated initiatives or should they never repeat this again?

Background

Unilever, the company that owned Dove, a beauty care brand, is an Anglo-Dutch multinational consumer goods company founded in the 1880's. It is the third largest FMCG company in the world and one of the oldest. It is present in around 190 countries and its products are present in 7 out of 10 households globally. 2 billion consumers used Unilever's products every day. Its revenues were over 50 billion euros in 2016. Unilever owns around 400 brands, 13 of them with revenues of over 1 billion euros a year: Knorr, Skip, Dove, Lipton and Becel, to name a few (for the complete list see **Exhibit 1**). The mission of Unilever was "accelerating growth in the business, while reducing environmental footprint and increasing the positive impact".¹

In Portugal, the first brands of Unilever entered the national market around 1926, with Jerónimo Martins Distribution.ⁱⁱ ² In 1949, both companies formed a joint venture, with Jerónimo Martins

ⁱ Ana Amaral, Part-Time Lisbon MBA graduate, prepared this case under the supervision of Jorge Velosa, Marketing Professor at the Lisbon MBA, solely as the basis for class discussion. This case is not intended to serve as endorsement, source of primary data or illustrations of effective or ineffective management. We thank Unilever for their cooperation.

having a 45% stake in Unilever Jerónimo Martins; from here on, we will refer to the company simply as Unilever Portugal.³

Unilever's Masterbrand for Personal Care, Dove was introduced in the Portuguese market in 1992 with its flagship product, the cleansing bar. Dove's product line grew to include skin cleansing, skin care and deos⁴ and it accounted for 5% of Unilever's Portugal revenues in 2015.⁵

Dove

The story of Dove started in 1957 in the US, with the development of a new beauty-cleansing bar. Its entire communication relied on the benefit of moisturizing and not drying the skin and the Reason to Believe was its content of "one-quarter cleansing cream". It claimed that it would not dry your skin, as it was not soap and it added research to back the claim up. Over the next 3 decades until around 1987, it focused on this core message. In terms of communication, the brand changed its message only slightly, always gravitating to the moisturizing benefit. The core idea remained the same: the ¼ moisturizing cream. (**Exhibit 2**). In the late 80's, Dove focused on the neutral PH and the brand used testimonials from women, saying that their self-esteem improved due to the use of Dove: the first glimpse of the shift towards inner beauty. In 1995, the brand launched several brand extensions: the moisturizing body wash was followed in the late 90's by deodorants, body lotions, shampoos and cleansers.⁶

The Real Beauty Campaign

In the early 2000's, Dove was commercially stagnating due to lack of emotional connection. Hero products such as the Dove bar in the US, were declining at a rate of 1,95% in sales. The brand was risking being delisted from major retailers such as Walmart.⁷ Dove needed disruptive ways of turning the game around.⁸ Dove commissioned The Real Truth About Beauty Study to Strategy Oneⁱⁱⁱ "to further the global understanding of women, beauty and well-being and the relationship between them" and "to assess whether it was possible to talk and think about female beauty in ways that were more authentic, satisfying and empowering." The research was conducted in 10 countries with more than 3000 women and secondary research on materials available in 22 languages from 118 countries. This study showed that the overwhelming majority of women did not feel comfortable describing themselves as beautiful. Instead, women preferred to describe themselves as "neutral" or "average". Only 2% of the women would use the adjective "beautiful" for themselves.⁹ Hence, Dove set out to change the definition of Beauty as portrayed by media and turn beauty into a source of confidence and

ⁱⁱ Jerónimo Martins SGPS, SA is a Portuguese group that operates in food retail and industry. It is present in Portugal, Poland and Colombia. Annual Revenues were 13,7 billion euros in 2015: Source: Annual Report of Jerónimo Martins 2015.

ⁱⁱⁱ A Research Firm based in New York

not of anxiety.¹⁰ Thus was born, in 2004, the Real Beauty Campaign, created by Ogilvy & Mather. Its mission was to restore self-confidence in real women, by stating that real beauty comes from their own personalities and power. 13 years later, the campaign was still running, having proved to be one of the most successful marketing campaigns in the world. Dove also launched the Dove Self Esteem Fund (DSEF), a project designed to help young women feel more confident about the way they look, by “helping parents, mentors, teachers and youth leaders deliver self-esteem education”¹¹.

The Real Beauty Campaign was first launched in the US on print and outdoors, displaying pictures of real women with a tick-box that urged viewers to choose one of the two options: “Fat?” or “Fab?”, “Wrinkled?” or “Wonderful?” Consumers could vote and discuss beauty issues on the campaign website. Then came the skin-firming ads, first launched in Europe, displaying real curves instead of size 2 models who did not need skin firming products¹² (**Exhibit 3**). The latter gained the most buzz in the US, including coverage by The Wall Street Journal, CNN and New York Times. In the US alone the campaign led to 1.5 million visitors to the Real Beauty Website. These two executions were adapted locally for each international market. It was clear that this was something women wanted to talk about and so the Real Beauty Campaign was just beginning.¹³

In 2006, Ogilvy in Canada launched the *Evolution* video^{iv}, which portrayed the transformation of an ordinary young woman into a glamorous model, through digital manipulation. It shed light on the distorted perception of beauty. This video won two Cannes Lions Grand Prix Awards and received over 1.7 million views during its first month¹⁴; and in that same month, it was the most watched video on YouTube. *Evolution* was the switch of marketing for Dove into the new digital world (**Exhibit 4**).

The global asset for 2007 was the *Onslaught* video^v, a campaign designed to promote the DSEF. It showed a little girl being bombarded by beauty stereotypes of mass media (**Exhibit 5**). It then urged parents to “talk to your daughter before the beauty industry does”. Though this video was mentioned in many blogs and received a lot of media attention, it was not, however, as successful as its predecessor *Evolution*.¹⁵

In 2008 Dove launched a pro-age campaign, engaging famous photographer Annie Leibovitz, in which, based on images of women over 50, it was demonstrated that “Beauty comes with age”. Dove stated that women could look beautiful at any age.

Perhaps it was due to the use of strong images, but the two later executions received not only a lot of media attention, but also a lot of criticism for hypocrisy.¹⁶ So, from 2009 to 2012, Dove focused more on conventional benefit claim campaigns, a safer territory for Dove. The DSEF continued to promote confidence in younger women.

^{iv} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U>

^v <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9zKfF40jeCA>

In April 2013, Dove released the *Sketches*^{vi} video, where several women describe themselves to a sketch artist, who does not see them. Then, strangers who have seen the same women describe them to the sketch artist. When the sketches are compared side by side, it is clear that the women describing themselves are much harsher critics of their own looks, than the strangers. The video was launched in the US, Brazil, Canada and Australia. Dove partnered with YouTube and Unruly^{vii} for distribution and seeding. The video was placed with media like Today Show or the Huffington Post and distributed to top media around the globe; and it was quickly shared, reaching 15 million views in a week. The video was then rolled out and uploaded in 25 languages and seen in 110 countries.¹⁷ This video won the Titanium Grand Prix, which is considered the highest honor in the Cannes Lion International Festival of Creativity.¹⁸ *Sketches* was one of the most watched ad videos ever and it relied solely on digital media. **(Exhibit 6)**

In 2014, *Patches*^{viii} was launched. This time, a group of women tested a pharmaceutical beauty patch, which they needed to wear for a couple of weeks. This patch made women feel more beautiful. All women reported feeling more confident about themselves and more beautiful. Then they learn that the patch is a placebo and that the change of spirit came from within. This video was rolled out in 65 countries simultaneously and had paid media support from the start, until it gained traction organically. This video had 4,5 million views within 2 days on YouTube and 25 million globally, *via* all channels.¹⁹ **(Exhibit 7)**

Dove launched in 2016 the *My Beauty My Say* campaign^{ix} in Canada, US, Brazil and UK. This video shows women saying how they overcame judgment about their appearance. The video teaches us that each woman should define her own path, regardless of what society says. In the first week, it got 3.6 million views in the US YouTube Channel and 2.3K shares.²⁰ **(Exhibit 8)**.

Real Beauty in Portugal

Until 2016, the marketing team in Portugal was advertising for Dove-specific categories and new launches of products focusing more on functional benefits, rather than on the core emotional Masterbrand campaign, maintaining compatibility with the Real Beauty language. The proximity to the Real Beauty Campaign depended on the specific product or category. The communication for the Masterbrand was under the responsibility of the global team and was not addressing any particular category. It was clear that the brand's strength lay in the Real Beauty message. Real Beauty content reached Portugal about a year after it had been launched in the first tier countries like the UK or the US, thus diminishing its impact: much of the target audience had already had contact with the content.

^{vi} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XpaOjMXyJGk>

^{vii} A video Ad Tech Company

^{viii} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EGDMXvdwN5c>

^{ix} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=em6ooEv_Nuk

Being a small country for Unilever on a global level, often the power of the Portuguese office to influence was small.

Dove ranked #5 in the Portuguese market in Personal Beauty seen as a whole, had 5% of sales within Unilever's total business and 36% of the sales of total Personal Care of the company. Dove was not present in significant categories of Personal Care such as Oral Care and Hair Care. Although Dove had steady sales and an increasing market share, the team wanted to push it further to the market leader position. As Unilever Portugal had a few very strong categories, the weight of Personal care was relatively small, compared to that of other countries. Dove's main competition was Nivea, Palmolive, and Johnson & Johnson and the market was severely affected by price promotions, a dominant trend for several years, which showed no sign of fading away.²¹ Private label was also strong especially in the skin-cleansing category with 23% market share, ahead of Dove with 17%.²² To bring Dove in Portugal up to its full potential, the team needed to understand their local market in depth and how Dove came across to Portuguese women. This was something that the global campaigns could not possibly address. The Dove Portuguese team decided to come up with their own ideas for a communications campaign.

In order to gain local insights and scientific knowledge on the perception of self-esteem of women in Portugal, Dove conducted local quantitative^x and qualitative studies^{xi}, in order to understand how Portuguese women looked at self-esteem in their lives. The company conducted surveys online and focus groups with over 1000 women, from February to April 2016. These studies revealed that the main source for Portuguese women's self-esteem is compliment/recognition by their relevant others in the various dimensions of their lives: their family role, their professional achievement and the perception of their own beauty (**Exhibit 10**). Of the many strong insights brought by the studies, this one really seemed to catch everyone's attention. The studies also revealed the Portuguese feeling that media portrayed an unachievable standard of beauty. 2 out of 10 women claimed that some brands made them feel more confident, but Dove was not the main one (**Exhibit 11**). Dove Portugal decided to address these particular concerns of Portuguese women, integrating them in their own execution of Real Beauty. Obviously, this aimed at reinforcing the Portuguese consumers' connection to the core Real Beauty message.

The first kick for the Real Beauty unique adaptation in Portugal came on June 18th, 2016, when Dove Portugal, together with *Oficina de Psicologia*, an online platform that offered services in several areas of psychological issues, created the Dove Real Beauty hub (Dove Beleza Real). It emerged as an aggregator of topics related to self-esteem, in order to contribute positively to its community, namely women. The content of the platform offered testimonials about self-esteem, tips on how to improve

^x Self-Esteem Beauty, by Netsonda

^{xi} Self-Esteem of Portuguese Women, by The Research Makers

one's self awareness and well-being, an assessment on the level of self-esteem, recipes for healthy eating, suggestions for apps that help people meditate, reading suggestions, etc. The content aimed to raise awareness, to educate and highlight the importance of self-esteem for women: Dove believed it could inspire more women to feel unique.²³ In the summer of 2016, Dove Portugal released a video *You are beautiful. Do you feel beautiful?*^{xii xiii}, which questioned women on the source of their self-esteem. It started off by questioning how appearance conditions self-esteem and it built on to other sources of confidence such as relations and family, which gained higher importance compared to the first topic. The punch line was that beauty comes from our inner Self and “self-esteem is in your hands”.²⁴ Within a month, the video had over 150k visualizations on YouTube, with 4% watching the entire video, which was twice as much as the standard in video within Personal Care. On Facebook, it got over 240k visualizations, with 6% watching the entire video.²⁵

Taking these new insights, the team decided to move into something different and further leverage on the insights obtained on the studies conducted. Together with Black Ship^{xiv}, Dove Portugal created the *Real Beauty Beats* digital video^{xv} (**Exhibit 9**). This video was created mainly to provide content to The Real Beauty Hub and it was released on Youtube. More than an ad, it is a social experiment. As a very flexible and small-sized communication agency, Black Ship was just what Dove Portugal needed: tailor-made response to needs and cost effective. Real men sat on chairs, strapped on heart monitors and compared their heartbeats, when watching pictures of perfect models and pictures of important women in their lives. These men were also asked to verbalize their thoughts and feelings when watching these pictures. The pictures of the loved women caused the heart rates to rise and heartfelt descriptions, while the reactions when watching the models were quite superficial and neutral. The tagline is “Real beauty touches the heart”. The campaign shows the power of emotions, affection and gratitude that come when men see the women they love. *Real Beauty Beats* was launched on YouTube and Facebook on September 26, 2016.²⁶ First, Dove Portugal was relying on paid media but it soon became clear that the video was triggering strong emotional responses and that consumers were posting and sharing this video and so Dove Portugal stopped paid media. One week into the launch of the campaign and the video had reached countries like Argentina, Thailand, Italy or India with over 2 million views on YouTube and Facebook²⁷ (**Exhibit 12**).

Organizational Change

Before 2000, Unilever had around 1600 brands and each of them was managed and developed locally by the brand managers. This led to a lack of brand identity cohesion across different markets and

^{xii} És bonita. Sentes-te bonita?

^{xiii} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n_iws9IcCFU

^{xiv} Black Ship is a communication agency based in a creative Hub that hires freelancers for specific assignments

^{xv} <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBwkjSRfHtw>

waste of resources. In 2000, Unilever changed brand strategy and reduced them to 400 brands. Unilever created Masterbrands, which served as umbrella brands for a range of products. Dove was one of them. Dove had a global brand strategy and vision and was managed by 2 divisions:

The Brand Development team was responsible for brand positioning, brand advertising and innovations worldwide. It was a global team in charge of the medium and long-term strategy and responsible for maintaining a consistent brand on a global scale.

The Brand Building team operated in the local markets, implementing the strategy onsite. This team was concerned with local insights, promotion, local media, engagement with culture and language of the specific country, ensuring alignment with global strategy. They were responsible for execution and the short-term results. Brand Building reported to the General Manager of the country.²⁸

In September 2016, Unilever changed its structure into a One Marketing Team. This was Unilever's way of addressing a globalized consumer: creating a globalized team. The local marketing teams would now be reporting to the global marketing team, instead of to the country's General Manager. This meant a significant centralization of the Marketing structure and its main goal was to cut down on internal bureaucracy and provide the local markets with a direct connection with the global Office, so as to address their needs better. On the one hand, local teams were losing autonomy; on the other hand, they would have a voice and the power to influence the global team. Increasingly, digital communication and marketing presented the need for better alignment and coordination. Unilever was aiming to bring the marketing teams closer.^{29 30 31}

Dove Beauty Beats was planned on the side of this new organizational structure as the video was only intended to complement the Real Beauty Hub content targeting Portuguese women. However, due to the power of digital, this video went well beyond its purpose and it gained global visibility.

Next Steps: Decision time

For the upcoming call, Marta and Gonçalo were looking at the first tracking measures of the campaign, which were outstanding, and they needed to align strategy and argumentation. Could they convince the global team that this was the right way to go, by showing these results? Was Portugal relevant enough as a market to defend a parallel strategy running side-by-side with Global Dove campaigns, even if Unilever strategy was to centralize? Or would the global team view the independent actions of a small local company as off-strategy and a waste of resources, which could be better allocated in executing the content provided by the global team? What were going to be the next steps for Real Beauty in Portugal? If this video was considered successful, could it mean that the new organizational format would take into account creativity and local initiatives to build the brand and

could these local initiatives be adapted in other countries as well? Both Marta and Gonçalo knew it was very likely that it would go in one of two ways: this video could become a model to further encourage the local campaigns that could be global, or very simply, this could never be repeated.

Exhibit 1 Main Brands of Unilever

TWO BILLION PEOPLE USE UNILEVER PRODUCTS EVERY DAY TO FEEL GOOD, LOOK GOOD AND GET MORE OUT OF LIFE.

13 €1 BILLION BRANDS

OUR CATEGORIES AND BRANDS

Our Personal Care, Foods, Home Care and Refreshment categories each contain a portfolio of brands that aim to deliver consistent, competitive, profitable and responsible growth supported by investment in innovation and marketing.

We have 13 brands with sales of €1 billion or above and a growing number of Sustainable Living brands, such as Dove and Knorr, that deliver strong social or environmental benefits.

We actively manage our portfolio and in 2015 added a Prestige skin care range in Personal Care through acquisition, and focused some of our Foods brands in a new Baking, Cooking and Spreads business.

13 €1 BILLION BRANDS

1. Axe
2. Dove
3. Heartbrand
4. Hellmann's
5. Knorr
6. Lipton
7. Lux
8. Magnum
9. Omo
10. Rama
11. Rexona
12. Sunsilk
13. Surf

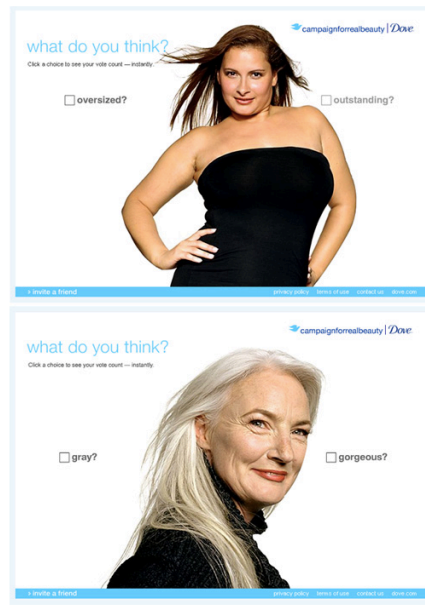
Source: Annual Report And Accounts 2015, Strategic Report

Exhibit 2 Dove Ad from 1980, Ogilvy & Mather



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mRqMup7Zp1Q>

Exhibit 3 Real Beauty Campaign 2004



Source: In Mindmap Dove Campaign, Sara Maaria, Portrait by Annie Liebovitz



Source: In The Emily Program Foundation, Evolution of Dove "Real Beauty" Campaign, by Awazi

Exhibit 4 *Evolution* Campaign, 2006



Source: Advertising Age, Dove: The Evolution from Evolution, by Jack Neff 2013

Exhibit 5 Dove Real Beauty, *Onslaught* Campaign, 2007



Source: Afterellen, Dove's True Colors: Beautiful or Bad, by Dorothy Snarker, October 2007

Exhibit 6 Dove Real Beauty Campaign, *Sketches* 2013



Source: True Beauty: Dove's Real Sketches, Katherine Schwarzenegger, May 2013

Exhibit 7 Dove Real Beauty Campaign, *Patches*, 2014



Source: The Wall Street Journal, Viral Video: Dove's Patches Outpaces Real Beauty Sketches, Nathalie Tadana, April 2014

Exhibit 8 Dove Real Beauty Campaign, *My Beauty My Say* 2016



Source: *Style Has no Size*, Edith Dohmen, June 2016



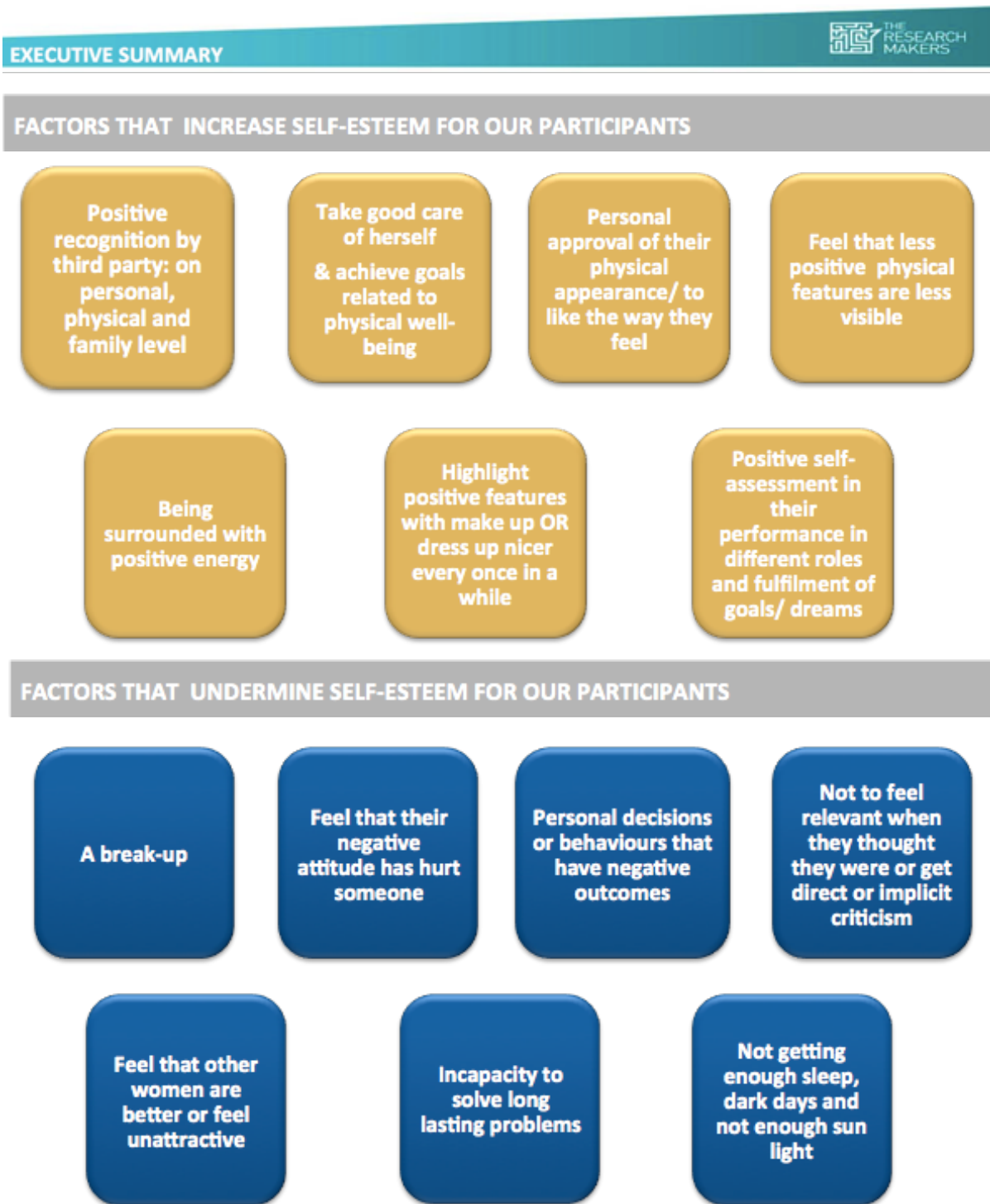
Source: *The Huffington Post*, 6 Women Share How They've Redefined Beauty In New Dove Campaign, by Alanna Vagianos, September 2016

Exhibit 11 Dove Beauty Beats, 2016



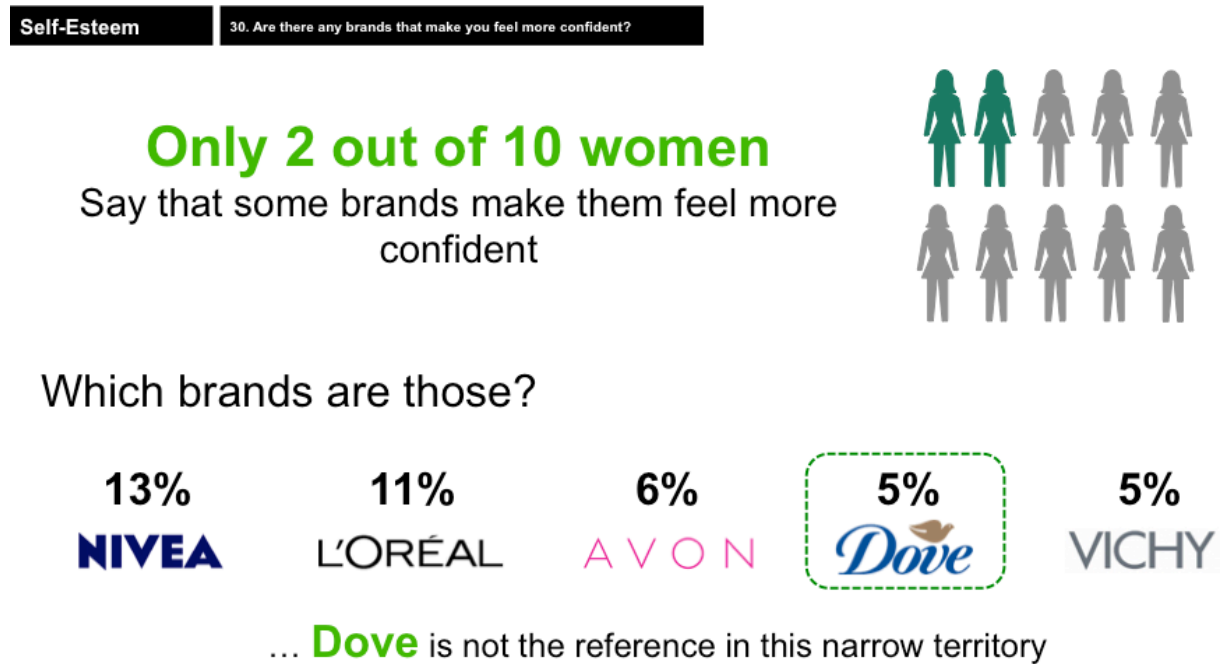
Source: The Stable, Who is doing what in the world of commercial creativity, accessed in April 2017

Exhibit 10 Factors that interfere with women's self-esteem



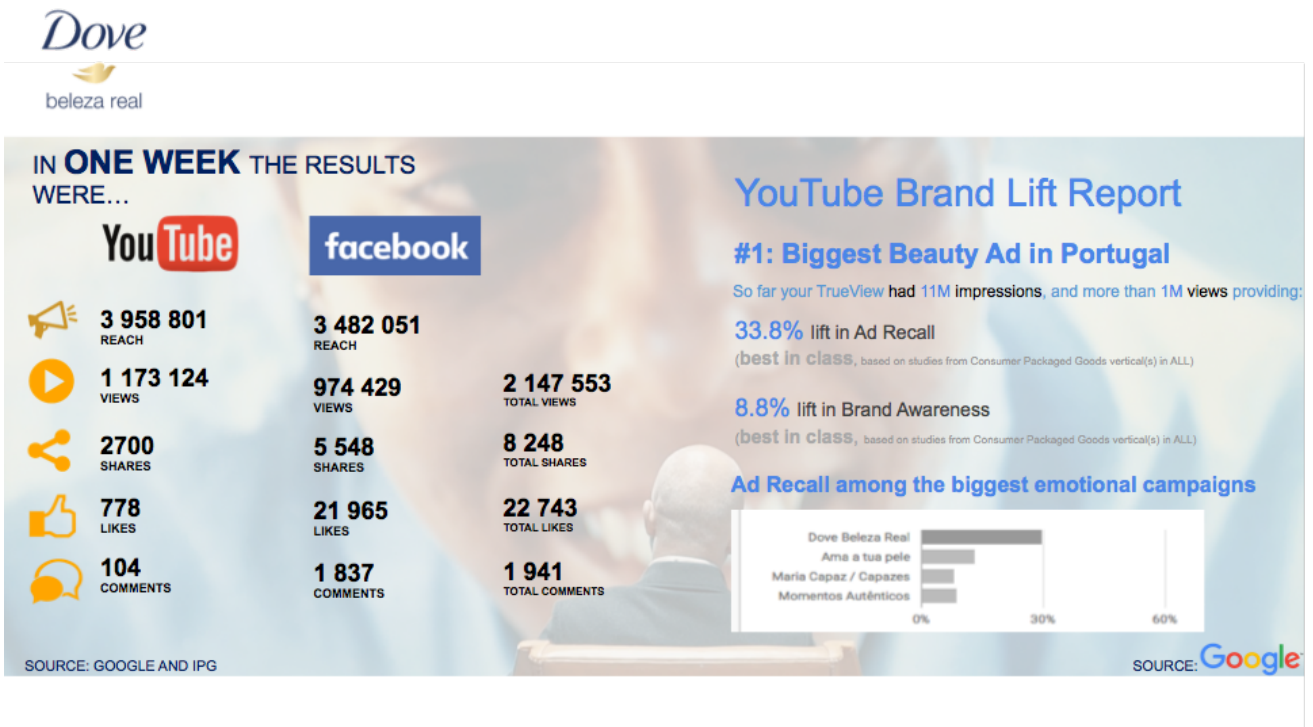
Source: Qualitative Study, Self-Esteem of Portuguese Women, by The Research Makers for Dove Portugal. Conducted from 22nd to 29th of February 2016.

Exhibit 11 Brands that make Portuguese Women feel more confident



Source: *Self-Esteem Beauty*, by Netsonda for Unilever Portugal. Quantitative research conducted in April 2016

Exhibit 12 One week Results



Source: Unilever Portugal

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- ¹ Unilever Annual Report and Accounts 2015
- ² On Jerónimo Martins website, accessed on 18 of February 2017
- ³ Adapted from Annual Report of Jerónimo Martins, 2015
- ⁴ “Dove comemora 20 anos em Portugal” in *Marketeer*, 21st of November 2012, viewed on 18 February 2017
- ⁵ Interview with Marta Quelhas and Gonçalo Bernardes on 19th of December 2016
- ⁶ Lucy Saddleton in “The Evolution of Dove”, *Strategy*, 1st December of 2007. Viewed on 18 February in <http://strategyonline.ca/2007/12/01/tributedove-20071201/>
- ⁷ From *Dove’s Big Ideal: from real curves to growth curves*, Warc
- ⁸ Nina Bahadur in “Dove Real Beauty Campaign turns 10: How a Brand Tried to Change The Conversation About Female Beauty” in *Huffingtonpost.com*, 6th February, 2014
- ⁹ From *The Real Truth about Real Beauty: a Global Report*
- ¹⁰ Fernando Machado, Global Brand VP for Dove at Unilever
- ¹¹ From <http://www.dove.com/uk/dove-self-esteem-project.html>
- ¹² Adapted from Philippe Harousseau, Dove’s Marketing Director for NBC News.
- ¹³ Nina Bahadur in “Dove Real Beauty Campaign turns 10: How a Brand Tried to Change The Conversation About Female Beauty” in *Huffingtonpost.com*, 6 February, 2014
- ¹⁴ “Dove Evolution goes viral, with Triple the Traffic of Super Bowl Spot”, in *Marketing Vox*, 31 October 2006
- ¹⁵ Bob Garfield, in *Adage* in 8 October 2007
- ¹⁶ “Dove Campaign for Real Beauty”, by Kaitlin Elyse Goins, 2011
- ¹⁷ Adapted from Laura Stamper, “How Dove’s Real Beauty Sketches Became the Most Viral Video of All Times”, for *Business Insider*, retrieved on February 2017
- ¹⁸ Laurel Wentz, “Dove Sketches Campaign Takes Titanium Grand Prix at Cannes”, June 2013 in *AdAge*
- ¹⁹ Jack Neff, “Dove’s Real Beauty Hits a Rough Patch”, in *AdAge*, April 2014
- ²⁰ Source Google Analyst, data provided by Unilever Portugal
- ²¹ Source: Euromonitor International, *Grocery Retailers in Portugal*, December 2016
- ²² Source: Nielsen
- ²³ Adapted from <http://www.dovebelezareal.pt/sobre-dove-beleza-real/> accessed on January 7, 2017
- ²⁴ Adapted from <http://www.dovebelezareal.pt/sobre-dove-beleza-real/> accessed on January 7, 2017
- ²⁵ Source: Unilever Portugal, Personal Care Marketing
- ²⁶ In Campaign, “Dove Portugal Real Beauty Beats by Black Ship”, October 2016
- ²⁷ Source: Unilever
- ²⁸ Adapted from US Campaign, an interview with Keith Weed, CMO of Unilever, September 2015
- ²⁹ Adapted from M&M Global Staff, September 2016
- ³⁰ Adapted from Gemma Charles and Omar Oakes, “Unilever consolidates Local and Global Marketing Units”, September 2016
- ³¹ Adapted from Mike Anthony, “Unilever-Is a Centralized Marketing Structure a Good or Bad Idea?”, September 2016