

Inclusion in the Media: How Award-Winning Advertising Campaigns Present African Americans

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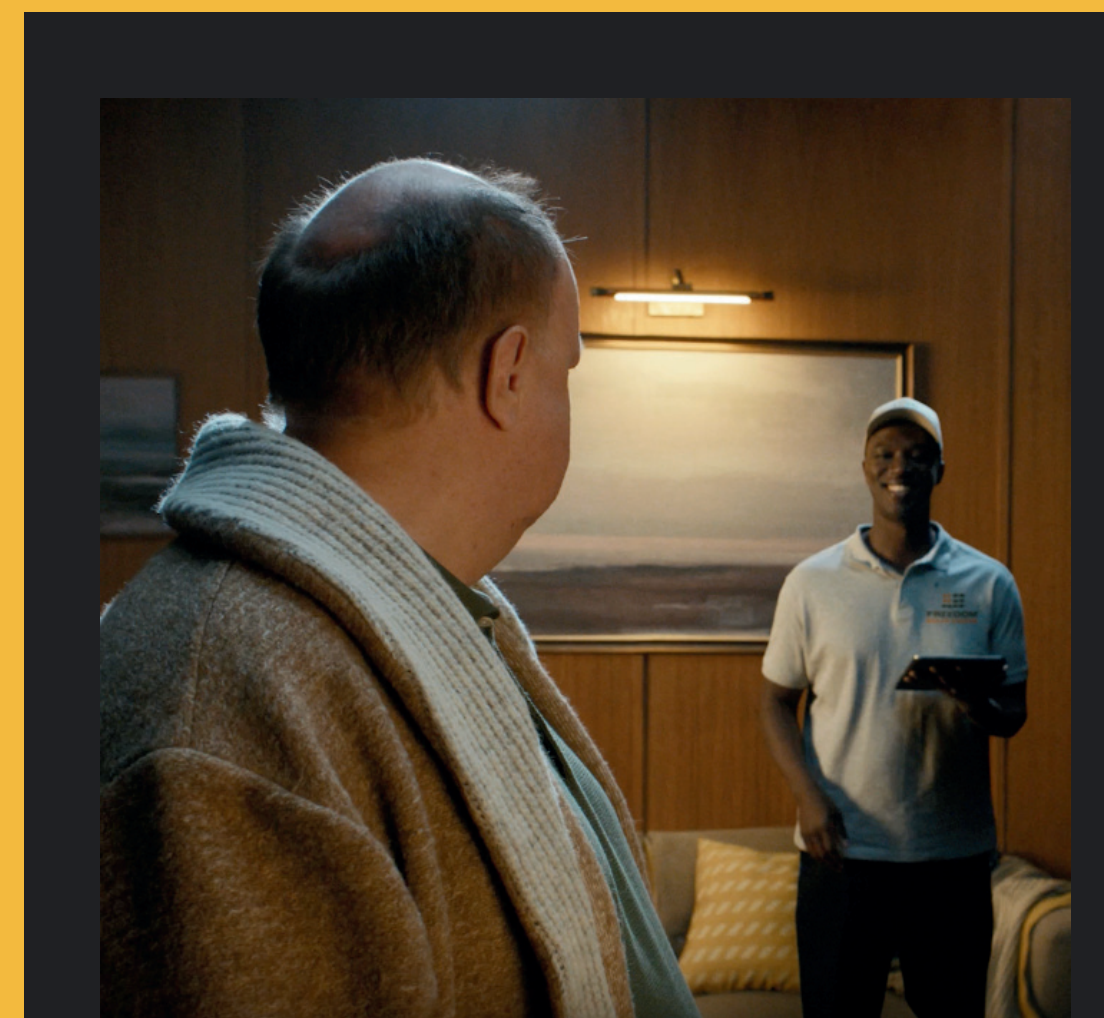


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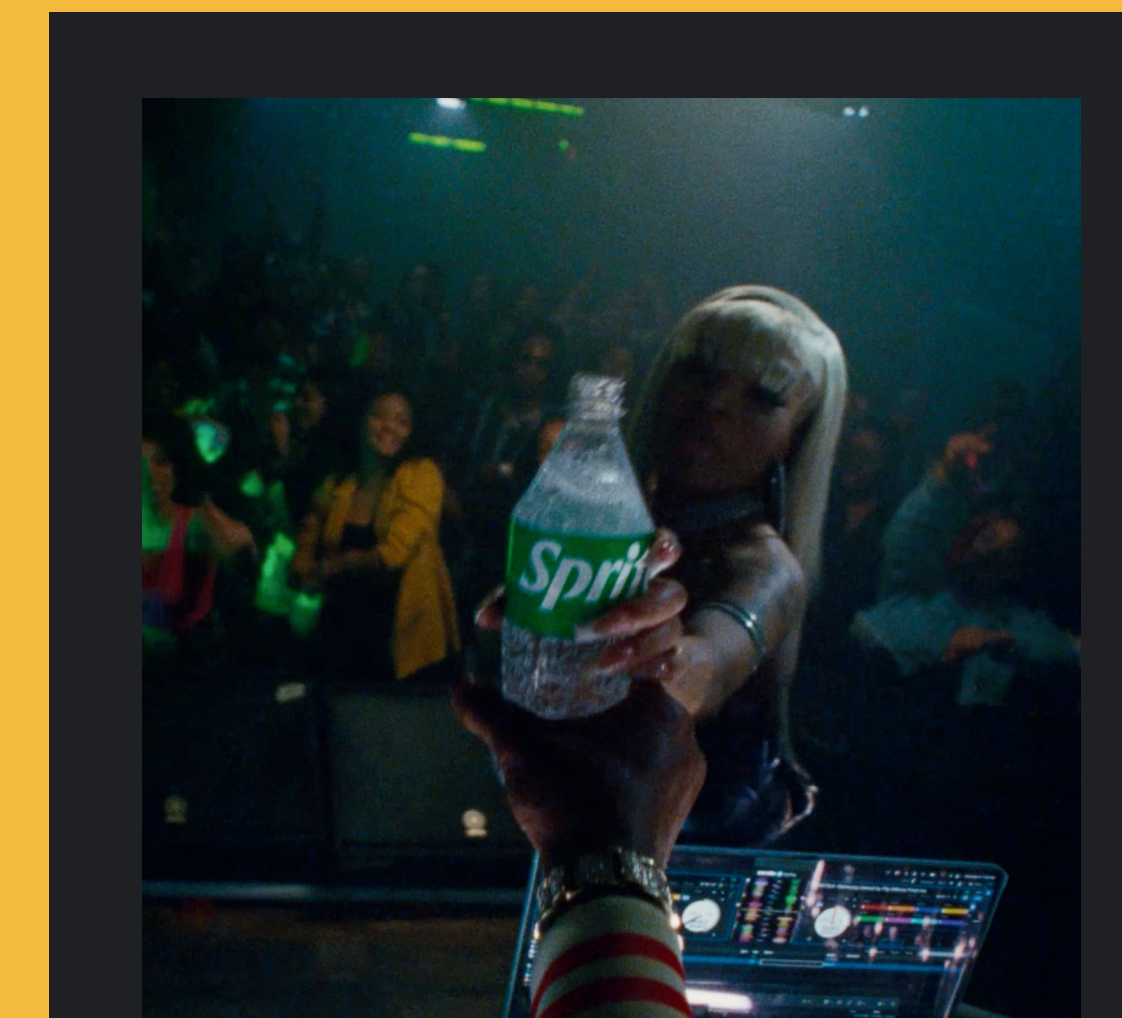
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OVERVIEW:

Digital advertising has existed for 83 years and—even in current times—has been subject to criticism due to portraying harmful messages and stereotypes. In an interest of seeing if advertising campaigns have evolved to include more accurate and stereotype-free portrayals of people of color (with a focus on African Americans), this research studies the representation of African Americans in five advertising campaigns that have placed at the American Advertising Awards (an awards competition that claims to be the most representative of its kind).



The only African American in Freedom Solar Power's "Power Ballads" advertising campaign had approx. two seconds in the spot and was a delivery man. (photo courtesy of Freedom Solar Power)



Sprite's advertising campaign "Icon's Delight" won the Gold ADDY for Film/Video/Sound Branded Content (photo courtesy of Sprite)

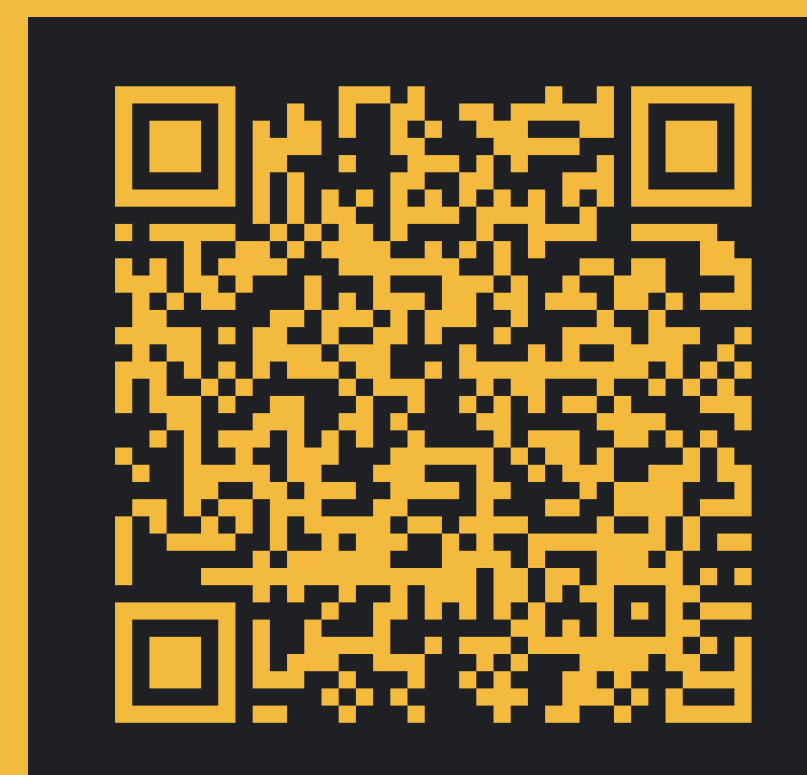
PURPOSE:

Assess how award-winning advertising campaigns present African Americans and whether or not the portrayals are stereotype-confirming.

CAMPAIGNS:



eBay



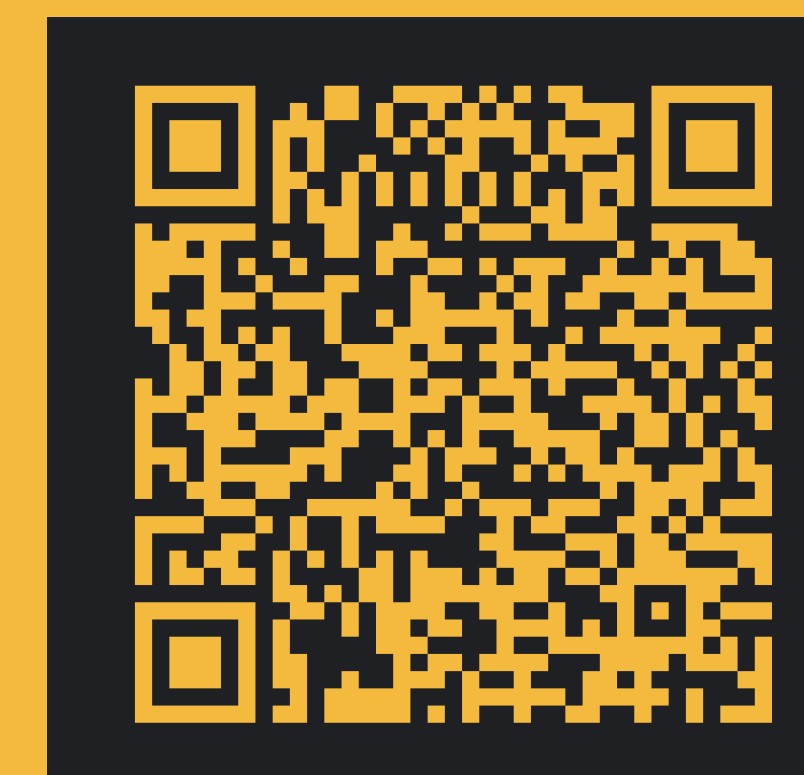
Sprite



Smart Water



Freedom
Solar Power



Driving
While Black

CRITERIA:

- Authenticity of Representation
- Diversity in Portrayal
- Positive Empowerment
- Inclusivity and Context

CONCLUSION:

- By attempting to include more representation, the advertising campaigns appear to be overcompensating by including portrayals of typically underrepresented subgroups and excluding variety in the representation.
- By including African Americans to add diversity to their campaigns, advertising agencies did not put as much care and research into minority placement as they should have, leading to negative stereotypes being perpetuated.

APPLICATION:

Understanding how award-winning advertising campaigns present African Americans allows for future research of how the campaigns affect the people belonging to the ethnic group on an emotional and psychological level. The results will aid in increasing awareness of the importance of thoughtful minority representation in the media.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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