

Campaigns for Black Consumers

By STUART ELLIOTT

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In a shift likely to influence many other companies, America's biggest packaged-goods marketer, the [Procter & Gamble Company](#), is making significant changes in the way its agencies develop and create advertising aimed at black consumers.

The changes, effective July 1, the start of Procter's fiscal year, will team up the agencies specializing in campaigns aimed at African-Americans with their general-market counterparts. Previously, the minority pitches for Procter products like Crest toothpaste and Tide detergent were typically developed through a separate process, after ads were created for the general market.

Also, Procter will start sponsoring campaigns aimed at black consumers for about a dozen big brands like Bounty, Charmin, Folgers, Pampers and Pringles, which did not have separate campaigns before. That will mean a major increase in spending on such ads, which now account for a tiny fraction of Procter's annual American ad budget of \$2.2 billion.

Procter executives said they hoped the closer ties between the types of agencies, which the company will announce formally today, will yield ads that will sell more household, food and cosmetic products to mainstream and minority shoppers.

"It's taking what used to be separate efforts through ethnic agencies and making them part of the core marketing effort," said Howard Buford, chief executive at Prime Access in New York, an agency that specializes in ads aimed at black, Hispanic, Asian-American and gay and lesbian consumers.

"It is a big deal and potentially trend setting," he added, "raising the stakes by taking ethnic

markets from afterthoughts to the name of the game."

The Procter changes are emblematic of how the changing demographics of the United States are forcing marketers to pay more attention to minority consumers. Black and Hispanic consumers now account for more than 25 percent of the total population. And white consumers, particularly those ages 12 to 34, are increasingly influenced by the fashion, dining, entertainment, sports and music tastes emerging from minority communities, from hip-hop to salsa-flavored ketchup. But few if any big marketers have coordinated their general-market and minority campaigns in the way Procter plans.

"We're recognizing that the influence of African-American consumers goes beyond the African-American market into our general-market consumer," said Susan Mboya, who was named four months ago to the new post of associate director for the African-American multicultural business development organization at Procter in Cincinnati.

"We believe we have an opportunity to develop more effective and relevant advertising across the board," she added, "even with brands we're already doing well with" among black consumers.

To support the initiative, Procter is considerably expanding its ties with two agencies that work with the African-American market, assigning them many more brands in addition to those they already handle or have handled in the past. The agencies are Burrell in Chicago, which is 49 percent owned by the [Publicis Groupe](#), and Carol H. Williams Advertising in Oakland, Calif.

Burrell will be paired with three general-market agencies, all owned by Publicis: Leo Burnett

Worldwide in Chicago, Publicis Worldwide in New York and Saatchi & Saatchi in New York.

"Never have we worked in this holistic way with the general-market agencies," said Tom Burrell, chairman at Burrell, which has handled campaigns for Crest, Nyquil, Pantene and Tide aimed at black consumers. "I see this definitely becoming a trend."

Tim Love, vice chairman for international at Saatchi & Saatchi, echoed Mr. Burrell.

"There is really a lot to be gained by being more proactive in looking at other markets" along with mainstream consumers, said Mr. Love, who is also the relationship manager for all Procter accounts at the three Publicis agencies. "It takes a while to adjust when your momentum is geared to a mass approach."

Mr. Burrell said he was especially pleased that Procter wanted the agency teams to develop campaigns for general-market and African-American consumers at the same time.

"After the meat comes out of the oven, it's difficult to add a whole lot," Mr. Burrell said.

Burrell will work with Burnett on Cheer and Gain detergents and Always and Tampax feminine-hygiene products; with Publicis Worldwide on Bounty and Charmin paper products; and with Saatchi & Saatchi on Crest, Folgers coffee, Iams pet food, Luvs and Pampers diapers, and Tide.

Williams will get one general-market agency partner, Grey Global Group in New York, and work with it on Cover Girl cosmetics, Pantene hair-care products and Pringles snacks.

Advertising to black consumers "is not just a feel-good situation, the right thing to do," said Carol H. Williams, president, chief executive and chief creative officer at Williams. "It is smart marketing that could increase your bottom line significantly."

"This also recognizes the impact the multicultural market has on the general market," said Ms. Williams, whose agency has in the past created ads for Tampax aimed at African-Americans.

"It's getting to the point when I see an Asian kid or a white kid and he looks just like the black kid," she added, "and sounds like him, too." Williams is also being assigned Texture & Tones, a new beauty-care brand Procter is creating solely for black women.

Neil I. Kreisberg, group executive vice president and executive managing director at [Grey Global](#) who oversees the Procter accounts there, said: "We've been sort of assumptive that what we've been doing for the general market has been making sure African-Americans buy our brands, but it is probably not the extent we would like or P.& G. would like."

Grey Global and Williams could find "other opportunities moving forward" to collaborate on Procter campaigns, Mr. Kreisberg said, for brands like Clairol hair-care products.

Procter's intensified interest in African-American consumers comes after it increased advertising intended for Spanish-speaking consumers. A Hispanic business development effort, parallel to Ms. Mboya's for black consumers, has existed for about four years, and many brands that have not had ads aimed at black shoppers have run such campaigns aimed at Latinos.

"We wanted the learning under our belts with one before we went after both," Ms. Mboya said.

Though the general-market and African-American agencies will work closely together, they will still produce different campaigns. That makes sense, said Luke Visconti, partner at Diversity Inc. in New Brunswick, N.J., which publishes magazines and newsletters about multiculturalism, because of what he called "the concept of invitation."

"People who are not in the majority do not necessarily feel invited everywhere or that every general-market message is directed to them," Mr. Visconti said. "Therefore a marketer as savvy as P.& G. will surely use multicultural models and messages."

"A white audience will say, 'That's a nice picture of a mother and child,' " he added, "and an African-American audience will say, 'Ahhhh, an African-American mother and African-American child; this product gets me.' "