

Goodbye, boys' club! Time's up, advertising...

By Leigh Andrews

19 Mar 2018

The #TimesUp hashtag is now more relevant to the industry than ever before, with more than 180 female C-suite advertising agency leaders - the first new industry vertical to do so - formally aligning with Time's Up to form Time's Up Advertising.



Time's up, advertising...

"1 in 5 C-suite leaders is a woman. Fewer than 1 in 30 is a woman of colour."

So states [Times Up Advertising on Instagram](#). That should be enough to get anyone with a flair for fairness sitting up a little bit straighter in their chairs and paying attention.

While the original Times Up movement kicked off the year, with women in the entertainment industry, campaigning for underrepresented groups to be treated fairly, Times Up Advertising was introduced just last week.



#FairnessFirst: Making modern movies in 2018

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[Moneyish](#) predicts the 'end of the *Mad Men* era', while [AdAge](#) welcomed the news by stating, "Goodbye, boys' club", as the movement is set to address systemic inequality in the workplace.

#TimesUpAdvertising: Sexual harassment, lack of representation, inequity and silence

[CNBC](#) is calling it an anti-harassment group, but it's so much more than that. In particular, time's up on sexual harassment, lack of representation, inequity and silence in the advertising industry. The signatories have said:

“ As leaders, it's on us to foster a workplace where people are challenged but still respected. Sexual harassment is not OK. Never. No exceptions. No amount of talent, missed cues, or being great in the room unchecks the No Sexual

Harassment box. ”

“ Time's Up: 180+ female advertising leaders launch a major initiative to address sexual harassment and systemic inequality in the workplace. <https://t.co/yW2foAx6xB> #TimesUP pic.twitter.com/wKUyuKkpxx— Ad Age (@adage) [March 13, 2018](#) ”

It was also a week in which [The Guardian's Long Read](#) focused on the “male glance”, which Lili Loofbourow dubs “a narrative corollary to the “male gaze”, that we’re all guilty of and that’s ruining our ability to see good art as we fail to take women’s stories seriously.

“ Thanks for the food for thought @guardian #ThisWeek'sLongReads. What impact, FCBers, does this phenomenon have on advertising? <https://t.co/7dffo1mOV8>— FCB Africa (@FCBafrica) [March 12, 2018](#) ”

There’s no denying good art forms the basis of much of advertising, so the fact that we’re not saying #TimesUpAdvertising could not have come at a better time.

Gender equality and diversity: More than buzzwords

CNBC confirms that former ad industry head Cindy Gallop called for women in the advertising industry to email her their experiences of sexual harassment back in October. She told CNBC at the time:

“ Sexual harassment and bias and sexism is a systemic cultural problem in my industry... Achieving gender equality and diversity are the buzzwords at the moment but which will never happen as long as sexual harassment is endemic in every industry. ”

Adweek confirms the group is committed to “...fixing policies that have failed us, leveraging the experiences of industry leaders with diverse backgrounds and adopting employee training to make the ad industry more inclusive and safe.”

According to [The Drum](#), the anonymous whistleblowing group Diet Madison Avenue noted the following:

“ Change is not a spectator sport, and the fact that Time's Up Advertising has been created must be applauded and supported. Time's Up Advertising likely wouldn't have worked 5 years ago. Even 1 year ago. But right now, in this very moment, we all find ourselves in, it truly might. And think of the possibilities. Addressing sexual harassment might lead the way for us to begin the addressing of racial discrimination and other issues that lead to toxic work environments in our industry. ”

Earlier this year, the world’s biggest advertising group WPP took a big step in the right direction by distancing itself from the 33-year strong black-tie, male-only President’s Club fundraising dinner, following allegations of sexual misconduct.



#FairnessFirst: #PresidentsClubDinner and #LarryNassar trial light up World Wide Web

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This tweet at the time summed things up perfectly to me:

“ Every business deal, every dinner, every meeting, every hospitality booth, every AGM, literally every day in the office is a chance to ask “wait, is that sexist?” If that sounds patronising, it's a reflection of the dire state of things. <https://t.co/AzZWf7LSI7>— Louise Ridley (@LouiseRidley) [January 25, 2018](#) ”

Hey Sister, we know...

And now, with ‘silence breakers’ raising their voices everywhere, it's time for the #TimesUp movement to shift to advertising.

“ This Wednesday at 21:30pm: The creative mind behind some of the best advertising in the country [@AhmedTilly](#) joins [@JohnPerلمان](#) on [#UnderTheSkin](#) to share insights into transformation, or the lack of it. [#DStv403](#) <pic.twitter.com/7QzYzw27rF>— eNCA (@eNCA) [March 12, 2018](#) ”

It's long been seen as one in most dire need for transformation across the board, especially in SA, where creative ideas are largely decided by ‘old white men’ despite their target audience largely comprising young, black females.

So while signatories are mainly from the USA thus far, according to the official [Times Up Advertising](#) website, this is intended as a global force for business reform across industry categories. “And a commitment to reform represents common ground where we can gather in optimism and move forward, together.”

Follow the Time's Up Advertising movement on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) through the #TimesUpAdvertising hashtag. There's never been a better time to say ‘Time's up, advertising!’

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ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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