National brands have been slow to respond - so far

TODD EVANS is the president and CEO of Rivendell Media and a pioneer in gay advertising. His New Jersey-based company represents about 94% of LGBT publications and digital media across the nation to national advertisers.

FLORIDA AGENDA: Your company spans three decades as the leading national advertising agency for LGBTQ media. How has advertising in LGBTQ media changed over that time?

EVANS: Well, so much has changed really while at the same time so much remains the same. Advertising has taken its normal course and so has progressed from token insertions [by national brands] in the LGBT press to real campaigns, and likewise the campaigns have evolved, too. A normal progression is [for major national brands] to test the waters with their mainstream creative and then when ready to slowly craft their outreach to

LGBT specific [advertising messages]. What has remained the same is that still today, in 2015, most of the largest efforts come from, and have some, LGBT champion on the corporate level. Agencies are glad to include LGBT when they think it is appropriate, but real dedicated efforts must have the champion on the corporate level to move it along. So while the business case for pursuing the LGBT market is quite clear for many sectors of the economy, it still lags as an opportunity for most.

FLORIDA AGENDA: Corporate America has shown tremendous support for LGBTQ equality issues, including same-sex marriage. Do you see this support manifesting itself into national advertising to the LGBTQ market as well?

EVANS: Yes, however it really all depends with the level of commitment. It is one thing to support equal rights but quite another to pursue the LGBT market-

place. The surge we are seeing now is the doubling down by all the companies that have been pursuing the marketplace for some time. Many other companies have failed to use their support of equal rights as their entry into the LGBT market.

FLORIDA AGENDA: Can you give us an example? EVANS: Nabisco and the Rainbow Oreo ad come to mind as a good example of an opportunity that was never fully realized. The Rainbow Oreo ad, which was so timely and such a nice statement in social media, was never executed into a real advertisement as their entry into the LGBT marketplace. That image could have been used with a campaign in the gay press to provide a "real" call to action in the market. Now, I'll bet, except for the professionals in the LGBT market, the ad is fading from memory. Worse yet is that I've heard some opinion makers say about this ad, and others at the time of

the SCOTUS decision, that really they took advantage of the market and have no intention of supporting it with real dollars. The idea is that companies like Nabisco, Starbucks or Apple can take their support of equal rights and bring that into their advertising to the LGBT community and ultimately make the LGBT community advocates for their companies. That would be the true win-win.



TODD EVANS
President/CEO
Rivendell Media

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE RAINBOW OREO?

On June 25, 2012, a picture of an Oreo cookie with six layers of frosting in the colors of the rainbow flag was posted on Kraft Nabisco's Facebook page. The image was accompanied by the captions "June 25 | Pride" and "Proudly support love!" in recognition of LGBT Pride Month in the United States. The Facebook image post was instantly met by polarized opinions between support-



ers and critics of gay marriage, quickly escalating into a lengthy debate of more than 23,000 comments in the first 24 hours.

SOURCE: COMMUNITY MARKETING INC., 2015 LGBT COMMUNITY SURVEY



71% visit LGBT websites/blogs weekly



hours per day active in social media