For immediate release

Marketing in a polarized nation: Providing trust, truth and sanctuary creates a pathway for US brands

WARC launches Spotlight US, a special series offering guidance and insights to help brands market effectively in the United States

January 25, 2021 – As the United States welcomed a new president, there remains concern among citizens and brands about the country’s deep polarization. WARC’s first Spotlight US series, “Marketing in a polarized nation,” explores how brands can chart a path forward.

While some brands embrace polarization, WARC explains how most Americans are actually moderate, and many are looking to brands for trust, truth and even sanctuary during a time that remains disruptive.

WARC Spotlight US is a new bimonthly series, with each edition focused on a timely topic geared towards helping brands market effectively in the US. The series is a capsule collection of expert commentary and insights, tackling each topic from a range of angles. Contributors to the series are highly-regarded industry professionals offering the latest advice into what’s working.

Launching with the theme ‘Marketing in a polarized nation’, this first Spotlight US includes eight exclusive and diverse pieces bringing together varying points of view and research for brands to draw on at a time of disruption.

Cathy Taylor, US Commissioning Editor, WARC, says: “This quote by the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan made a comeback during the Trump years: “You are entitled to your opinion. You are not entitled to your own facts.” A lot of the current polarization emanates from America currently being a nation that cannot agree on its own facts. The challenge for brands is to reach customers with such varying beliefs and attitudes.”

“While there are no easy answers, some themes have emerged from this first edition of our Spotlight US series, such as the changing nature of influencers. As a growing share of Americans feel corporations should use their influence to impact important issues, how brands respond to current times will greatly influence where customers spend their hard-earned dollars, as will their ability to build and maintain trust.”

WARC’s Spotlight US “Marketing in a polarized nation” consists of the following pieces:

- Interview with renowned political marketing strategist Mark Penn on why the US is actually moderate. View here
Kirsten Maryott, Strategy Director, Wieden+Kennedy, explains why polarization, for brands, is a good thing. She says: “Polarization - in politics and beyond - gives us passion groups. When it’s clear what a brand stands for, and what they stand against, things get interesting.” Read here.

'It's not just political: The cross-currents buffeting US consumers’ is an article by Victoria Sakal, Managing Director, Brand Intelligence, on the role of brands in a post-election world.

Shawn Francis, Head of Creative, WeAreSocial NY, addresses the role of influencers in his piece ‘Polarization in the U.S. is fueling a new wave of reliable, authentic influencers.’

Anita Schillhorn, Director of Strategy, McKinney LA, looks at what unifies Americans in her article ‘After the riot: How brands can respond to an ever-changing US political climate.’

In 'US consumers voted for stability over disruption, and that has implications for brands’ J.Walker Smith, Chief Knowledge Officer, Kantar discusses consumer tension around disruption.

Avin Narasimhan, US Head of Communications Planning, PHD looks at why “Brands need values, not politics.”

Read WARC’s Cathy Taylor’s opinion piece detailing the report's key themes and why they create a pathway for brands here.

The topic for WARC’s next bimonthly Spotlight US, to be released in March, is US media spend and strategy. Spotlight US complements WARC’s Spotlight Southeast Asia, India and Australia series, with further market-specific Spotlights being released over the coming months.

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For over 30 years WARC has been powering the marketing segment by providing rigorous and unbiased evidence, expertise and guidance to make marketers more effective. WARC services include 18,000+ case studies, 90,000+ best practice guides, research papers, special reports and advertising trend data, webinars, awards, events and advisory services; has 1,200+ client companies, 21,500+ active users in 100+ countries; collaborates with 50+ industry partners; has offices in the UK, US, China and Singapore.