

April 27, 2017

SheaMoisture social media backlash

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Beauty brand backlash

LI BUSINESS

■ **SheaMoisture** yanks ad after social media erupts

■ **Customers:** Campaign ignores black women, loyalty

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SheaMoisture, a natural hair products brand of Amityville-based Sundial Brands, pulled an advertisement this week after facing social media backlash from customers who felt it slighted the product's traditionally black consumers.

The video ad posted on its Facebook page last week opened with a black woman discussing the challenges of dealing with her natural curly hair, but then transitioned to three white women — two redheads and a blonde — talking about their hair experiences.

The video, part of a SheaMoisture campaign that aims to be more inclusive of all women and different hair textures, from straight to curly, centered on the message: "Break free from hair hate with a million ways to love your hair instead."

Many of SheaMoisture's customers felt insulted by the minimal representation of black women in the ad. Historically, SheaMoisture's products have been predominantly pur-

chased by African-Americans.

SheaMoisture posted an apology Monday on its Facebook page: "Wow, okay — so guys, listen, we really . . . [expletive] this one up. Please know that our intention was not — and would never be — to disrespect our community, and as such, we are pulling this piece immediately because it does not represent what we intended to communicate."

Sundial founder and chief executive Richelieu Dennis told Newsday: "We recognize that we are a brand that stands for inclusion, not exclusion, so we want all women represented in our ads and that ad did not represent our core consumers [African-American women]. Even as we grow, we will continue to serve them and we will be thoughtful on how we continue to serve."

For one Facebook poster, the online apology was not enough. "Keep your apologies. You intended to cut out a major portion of your customer base, and now you'll feel it," she wrote.

Other customers came to the company's defense. "Thank you for listening. It's nothing wrong with having Caucasian sisters on your commercial. In fact, I hope your clientele is broadened. Just don't neglect the . . . hair types who got you to where you are now," a poster wrote.



SUNDIAL BRANDS

A recent video from SheaMoisture, a natural hair products brand of Amityville-based Sundial Brands, riled up its black client base.

Sundial, founded in 1992, is a majority family-owned and -operated business. Sundial's other natural skin and hair care product brands include Nubian Heritage, Madam C.J. Walker Beauty Culture and nyakio. Its products are made from raw materials such as shea butter, coconut and herbs, and are sold in Walmart, Walgreens, Target, Ulta

Beauty, CVS Pharmacy and Stop & Shop, among others.

In September 2015, Sundial announced it had sold a minority stake to Boston-based private equity firm Bain Capital in an effort to grow the business. Sundial employs about 400 people, most of whom work on Long Island at its two facilities in Amityville and two others in Farmingdale.