



YOUTH

Bodyform Advert

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Intro

Up until 2016, a real life sanitary pad had never been seen in an advert before. Bodyform changed that with their revolutionary 'no blood should hold us back' campaign. One year later, Bodyform are challenging an entirely different taboo: period blood itself. Bodyform's video campaign, #bloodnormal, shows a woman in the shower with blood running down her thigh and a man buying sanitary towels.

In our qualitative study we interviewed 56 of our Tribes (12 male & 38 female) about what they felt about this more honest representation of periods and whether the advert achieved it's goal of abolishing menstrual stigma.

**CONTRARY TO
POPULAR BELIEF
WOMEN BLEED
BLOOD.**



"The purpose of the ad is to let us be more open and honest about talking about periods, rather than it being a taboo subject that no one is really open and honest about talking about"

IanB (M, Mainstream, Short:Snaps)

"The ad aims to make being on your period normal and something we can talk about freely for women"

Emily (16, F, Mainstream, Short:Snaps)

"Its purpose is to break the stigma that society has around periods and make women, especially younger girls, feel less insecure about having periods"

Enchantedlittleme (16, F)

Purpose of the Ad



Of our female Tribes, the vast majority understood that the advert was aiming to normalise the concept of periods and break the taboo that surrounds them. Many girls acknowledged it as an attempt to remove the stigma of publicly discussing periods, and subsequently help people (both men and women) feel more comfortable talking about something that is only natural.

All female respondents were positive about the ambition to break down these social barriers, with several indicating their previous insecurities and embarrassment surrounding their period, despite recognising it as such an important part of being a woman.

"The ad aims to achieve the goal of making girls/women more comfortable about their periods. The logo at the end, 'live fearless', shows that we shouldn't feel self-conscious about periods as it is only a natural occurrence that happens to every woman."

Emilyjenkins (17, F)

Our male Tribes gave mixed responses after watching the ad. A few realised its purpose was to show people that periods are natural and therefore should be considered normal. While one response recognised that there is a need to be more open and honest about talking about periods.

A couple of males highlighted that the advert was effectively promoting the product and showing that it was of a high quality. However, one male didn't approve of the advert at all as believed the topic to be too personal.

Meg, 20, F

“The Bodyform advert is breaking down the barrier of what should be perceived as normal. Women have hair, women bleed, women aren’t always glam and make-up ready and no ordinary guy expects that either. This is normal life, why shouldn’t that be shown?”

**Naomiepriscilla,
18, F**

“The advert is attempting to normalise periods, which is an understandable goal I guess. But I think as powerful as it is to do this visually, we also need to educate. Education is another way to normalise this.”

Changing Perspectives

Every female and male Tribe member, bar one, agreed with the overall goal of the Bodyform advert. They understood the need to be able to talk about periods, or buy sanitary products, without feeling embarrassed or awkward.

In addition, the Tribes recognised the important social shift of showing red blood in the advert, rather than a blue liquid which has commonly been used as a substitute when promoting sanitary products in the media.

“Yes I completely agree with this, we should all be able to talk about our periods, or buy sanitary products without feeling embarrassed. It shouldn't be a big deal because 99% of females get them”

1Debbie (19, F, Mainstream, Pop:Socials)

“I do agree with this advert, blood is red. Everyone has seen blood. So why show blue liquid in the place of blood?”

Mariellej (20, F)



“Hell yes I agree with this ad! I hate my period but it makes me feel like a woman if I bleed, as all women do, let's be proud of it not ashamed”

Erinm2017 (22, F, Mainstream, VOD:Socials)

EveL, 20, F,
Leading
Edge,
Short:Snaps

“This advert is a great idea, periods are not sexual or disgusting. There is no reason why we shouldn’t be talking about them”

The specklet, 20, M

"I 100% agree with the goal of this advert. I think normalising periods is something that should've happened years ago. It's as natural as breathing. It's a part of a women's life that is often not spoken about and shyed away from in conversation. I have many female friends and we often talk about their periods, even joke about them. As a man I can't begin to imagine what it's like bleeding from your vagina once a month from such a young age. Let alone all the pain that goes along with it and how uncomfortable period products can be. It's something that needs to be in our media, something that is spoken about more."

The Impact

From the Tribes that were happy to speak to us about the topic of periods, there was a mixed reaction towards the advert. Most of the girls said it made them feel happy and empowered but a few said they were left in a state of shock or discomfort. A few also agreed that the advert may have been taken too far by using 'real blood' in the shower scene. Surprisingly, of the few male Tribes that spoke to us most didn't feel uncomfortable or shocked, and were mainly impressed and interested by the bold campaign. That said, we did have a limited number of boys willing to take part.

"Ironically, the advert made me feel slightly uncomfortable. This is probably because I'm not used to seeing things like that in the media, which is what I think Bodyform is trying to change."

1Debbie (19, F, Mainstream, Pop:Socials)

"It made me feel a little excited, it's a starting point for being more open and honest about the subject. It's an interesting advert as well as using old clips helps give it an edge."

IanB (M, Mainstream, Short:Snaps)

"It made me feel uncomfortable because even though I'm very candid and comfortable talking about periods, I don't want to see anyone's period especially just running down their leg"

KuzcoLlama (17, F, Mainstream, Short:Snaps)

"It made me feel empowered, as it wasn't awkward or using blue liquid in a lab; instead, it was depicting periods for what they are, which is real and often messy"

EveL (20, F, Leading Edge, Short:Snaps)

"At first I was saying "what on earth is happening?!" and was kinda in a state of shock, but then I thought "wow, finally something a little more realistic and less girly!". It is odd to watch, since it is different, but it's good."

FionaLigerOrange (17, F, Alternative, Pop:Socials)

As a 24 year old woman who's lived with periods for the last 14 years, it's so refreshing for a brand to show the reality of blood, as I've always wondered why it's depicted as blue on screen (are we all Avatars?!). I feel happy, this is a positive move forward for women all over."

RacheelV (24, F, Mainstream, Short:Snaps)

**Njs99 (23, F,
Mainstream,
Short:Snaps)**

"I found it inspiring, since it's a sanitary towel advert that finally has the guts to show what it would look like on your period."

**Beckyjmarsden
(20, F, Aspirant,
VOD: Bingers)**

"Fresh, happy, content. Trying to seem down to earth and promote the product. I like it."

Golden_ellen
, 18, F, Urban,
VOD: Bingers

“I think this advert is trying to break the taboo of periods. And I love and respect that! I am more than comfortable talking about my period, because why on earth should I be ashamed of it? It’s a normal bodily function, yeah it’s a little strange and details aren’t always that nice to hear, but it’s a period. Something that pretty much 50% of the world’s population will experience. I feel empowered by the fact that they showed that ladies periods are made of blood and not fancy blue liquid! That always really frustrated me. I’m happy Bodyform are trying to break down the social conventions of periods as a taboo subject of conversations.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Bodyform advert was largely well received by the Tribes. All of the girls recognised that the advert was trying to break down social barriers and normalise the conversation about periods. The boys were also aware of the need for change, and that it was time to help society feel comfortable and secure with talking about periods or buying sanitary products.

Whilst the creative of the advert was too graphic for some viewers, the majority of Tribes found the message refreshing and powerful. With even the boys acknowledging that it was a necessary step in the right direction.

Overall, the Tribes felt happy and impressed with the progress being made by the media to push the idea that society must accept periods as the 'new normal'.



Thank you!

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