



TRADITIONAL AMERICAN VALUES ARE THRIVING AMONG MUSLIMS IN THE U.S.

Study Reveals Muslim Communities Long to Be Acknowledged As Part of Mainstream America

NEW YORK, April 30, 2007 — Many American Muslims feel simultaneously overexposed in the media and invisible as part of the American mainstream. But while they generally perceive themselves to be under constant suspicion, a new study shows that Muslims still believe in the American dream and are quietly living out traditional American values.

“One of the most crucial things to emerge from the study is that American Muslims want to feel less singled out and to be simply acknowledged and accepted,” says Marian Salzman, executive vice president and chief marketing officer of JWT Worldwide. “They’re hyphenated Americans in a country where religious observance is normal.”

JWT, the largest advertising agency in the U.S. and the fourth-largest in the world, commissioned this wide-ranging study on America’s estimated 6 to 8 million Muslims; it includes in-depth interviews with noted American Muslims, ethnographies of ordinary Muslims and a survey of 350 Muslims that used face-to-face interviews. An adapted version of the survey was also fielded online to more than 450 Americans representing the general population.

“We quickly found out that Muslims have become wary of discussing themselves and their faith,” notes Salzman. “Many have felt a lot of hostility directed at them and didn’t want to risk expressing opinions on anything vaguely controversial. It took a lot of effort to convince enough Muslims that our study was purely market research, not for political purposes.”

Participants balked most notably at questions related to 9/11 and its effects, adds Ann Mack, JWT’s director of trendspotting. “America’s post-9/11 focus on Muslims has forced them to grapple with some tough questions that few other Americans have had to face: How public should they be about their faith? Should they stand up for it or avoid confrontation? Are there conflicts of loyalty between their faith and their country?”

Among the key quantitative findings:

- Over two-thirds (69 percent) of American Muslims say they are often judged by events outside their control, a view of Muslims shared by 60 percent of the general sample. At a time when Arabic names or Muslim attire routinely attract unwelcome attention, more than half of Muslims (53 percent) fear that their right

to express their religion is under attack, and 39 percent of the general population agrees with them.

- Much of Muslim angst is driven by widespread perceptions of anti-Muslim bias in the media. Well over half of Muslims (57 percent) feel that media coverage is always/mostly biased, and another third (34 percent) feel it is occasionally biased. The general public senses an anti-Muslim slant as well, with 25 percent agreeing that coverage is always/mostly biased and 48 percent saying it's occasionally biased. More than three-quarters (78 percent) of Muslims say they are increasingly angry about the way the media characterizes and portrays Muslims.
- When it comes to the stuff of everyday life, however, Muslims are like other Americans. Both Muslims and the general population place a high priority on feeling safe outside their home (89 percent of both samples), personal freedom (89 percent of Muslims vs. 93 percent of the general sample), education (90 percent vs. 88 percent) and, to a lesser extent for both, career (75 percent vs. 69 percent).
- On the topic of advertising, Muslims generally reflect mainstream American views, with a slant toward the conservative. A little over 70 percent of both samples agreed advertisers should accept greater responsibility for setting a moral standard. Sixty-nine percent of Muslims vs. 59 percent of the general sample feel that most advertising sets a low moral tone for younger and more easily impressed viewers; 60 percent of Muslims vs. 47 percent of the general sample agree that the advertising they see is too suggestive or immodest.
- Muslims' biggest gripe with advertising is that it doesn't acknowledge their existence: A high 71 percent of Muslims (vs. 34 percent of the general sample) agreed that "Advertisers rarely show anybody of my faith/ethnicity in their advertising," and 72 percent said that if they felt advertisers generally wanted or appreciated the business of Muslims, they would pay more attention to ads.
- While most Muslims (61 percent) feel that it's hard to be a Muslim in America, many are optimistic; indeed, 73 percent said they are confident that Western society would one day accept Islam.

Muslims are not necessarily looking for marketers to provide any specially targeted products, although Islam does require specific food and packaged goods (halal), clothing (modest) and financial transactions (shariah-compliant). What they are primarily looking for is acknowledgment from marketers, says Mack. "The challenge and the opportunity for brands are to connect with Muslims in a low-key way that recognizes their Americanness and seeks to understand their particular attitudes."

"Every step of this study has been hugely instructive for us and for our clients," says Salzman. "We started out with the intention of learning about the 'Muslim community.' We quickly found out that there is no such thing as a single American Muslim community, much as there is no single Christian community. Muslims vary hugely by ethnicity, faith, tradition, education, income and degree of religious observance, to name a few factors."

JWT will make the study available to key clients and will also sell the findings on its proprietary “smarts” Web site (www.jwtintelligence.com) starting May 1. A comparable study of the Muslim market in the U.K. will be launched on May 21. The study was done in collaboration with Market Probe, NoFormula and Attention Space.

About JWT

JWT ranks as the largest advertising agency brand in the United States and as the fourth-largest full-service network in the world. Its parent company is WPP (NASDAQ: WPPGY). JWT’s heritage of brand-building excellence extends back to 1864, making us the world’s oldest advertising agency brand. In 1939, JWT pioneered the first national consumer research panel. In 1988, we created the first research study of consumer lifestyles, “Life Stages.” We believe in being anthropologists first, advertising people second.

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