

# Gillette's 'We Believe' campaign - is it the best a brand can do?

 By [Rachel Thompson](#)

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Gillette has ignited debate across traditional and social media with "We Believe", a short film that urges men to be their best and leave behind toxic behaviours like mansplaining, bullying and sexual harassment.

Though it has been warmly received by many commentators, it has also been heavily criticised by others, with [Ritson](#) calling it "the worst marketing move of the whole year". With around 26 million views for the official video on Youtube and 711,000 likes compared to 1.2 million dislikes (as of 25 January), the campaign has certainly polarised viewers, and potentially alienated as many consumers as it has engaged.



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## Lack of empathy

The way the ad twists the Gillette payoff line - "the best a man can get" into "the best a man can be" is clever; what's more, the campaign reflects the wider trend we see towards brands embracing a purpose of social good in their pursuit of profits.

However, based on GfK research, I think the video shows a lack of empathy in its execution and perhaps a limited understanding of how male consumers today see themselves and the world around them.

Masculinity is evolving. Men are redefining the idea of masculinity in a world where they embrace the notion of gender equality - especially true among Generation Z. The global *GfK ConsumerLife Study* reveals that the traditional mindset is declining globally over time (22% in 2014 down to 16% in 2018) with the emerging socio-rational value segment (up 4%).

This trend is especially evident in South Africa. Gillette's short film ignores the progress and change of the past decade and isolates its audience by criticising them. An insert that recognised men's movement from so-called toxic masculinity and supported them as they claim a new masculinity may have resonated better with the audience and inspired men to be better, in line with the brand's intent.

## ABOUT RACHEL THOMPSON

Rachel Thompson is the Insights Director at GfK South Africa. She has 16 years of experience in market research, working first for Research International and then moving to GfK South Africa in 2009. She has experience across a wide range of research disciplines and a strong interest in innovation. Rachel has an Honours degree in Economics from the University of Natal.

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