

Ramsey's Rhetorical Analysis of "Companies Can't Ignore Shifting Gender Norms".

By Ramsey Boehner

Salt Lake Community College

An analytical review of “Companies Can’t Ignore Shifting Gender Norms by Lisa Kenney” and her genuine insight and professionalism into a new emerging market that is yet to be tapped into.

Lisa Kenney makes a compelling argument in shifting gender norms and how companies are not making and advertising to those gender types that consumers are identifying with. Companies are losing lost revenue when they only advertise and make products that are based on two gender types and not three or gender non-binary. Given shifting gender trends companies should make products that consumers identify with in regards to their gender identity and products they relate to.

Lisa Kenney is a CEO of Reimagine Gender a Non-profit that speaks by addressing and expanding today's enlightened concepts of gender. Lisa Kenney published in April of 2020 an article in Harvard Business Review Magazine on gender and shifting gender norms which is giving the author credibility and uses ethos, another rhetoric appeal.

She starts with awareness and dives the reader in by asking the question why nearly all voice assistants are female? And why do they need a gender identity? Her article provides information by using logos, a form of rhetorical appeal on Gen Zers who 48% prefer non binary products and 25% expect to change their gender identity at least once in their lifetime. She also discusses millennials and how 12% identify as being transgender or gender non conforming. Kenney specifically speaks to product marketing teams and the moderator's of the studies and how their unconscious assumptions on gender identity affect a study group in determining the question that

they were given based on the moderator's own unconscious views of gender rather than giving a random non-binary questions about the products.

Marketing teams are also brought into the debate on how they market makeup products to only women, given that most women can't afford makeup or have any interest in makeup and that 56% of men used some sort of facial cosmetic at least once in 2018. Lisa Kenney gives marketing teams an insight of who is actually buying facial products. She also brings the concept of masculine and feminine and how companies assume that all parents want or agree to reinforcing gender characteristics when the statistics don't meet those conclusions. Lisa Kenney even drafts scenarios on customer service to already operating restaurants and useful tips such as avoiding using lines and phrases such as "sir" or "ma'am" based on the sound of someone's voice and how you can avoid making these presumptions so as not to accidentally offend them. Bathrooms are something that you can avoid gender norms by just pointing to where the bathrooms are rather than assuming what bathroom they prefer using. If there are single stall bathrooms or unisex bathrooms they just need to be mentioned. Lisa Kenney brings several examples of companies that have already changed its marketing and production to develop gender neutral products or gender non-binary toys from companies which is only giving more credibility using ethos. These companies are Hasbro (My Little Pony) Apple (iPhone) and Mattel with *Creatable World*. These companies have already been offering to the buyer gender neutral toys and choices of color to eliminate labeling something precisely on gender norms or reinforced gender colors and even creating an entire product line specificity on gender neutrality. Lisa Kenney uses words like "shift", "reshape the future", "reap the benefits" and

"missed opportunities" to target a business savvy reader and an emotional appeal to any business like minded individual using pathos, another rhetorical appeal, who will understand what changes are being made in the consumer consciousness minded individual and if they don't keep up with, opportunities will be missed and markets overlooked. She persuades the reader by giving examples of data from two different generations and the changing climate on gender identity in the business world and the choices new consumer's are looking for.

Lisa Kenney makes a compelling argument towards individuals who are in the customer service or product making market. Lisa seems to know her audience when she wrote this article for the Harvard Business Review. She knows what type of examples a business individual or reader is looking for and what words to use to persuade them. She doesn't scare or offend her audience with statistics on discrimination. She knows that there is a shift in gender identity and is informing and not lecturing her audience. Lisa Kenney remains educational, professional and responsible to her audience and gives a compelling argument to anyone who wishes to read this article without turning them away.

References

kenney, L. (n.d.). Companies Can't Ignore shifting gender norms. *Harvard Business Review*.

Lisa Kenney - San Francisco Bay Area - LinkedIn. (n.d.). Retrieved February 15, 2022, from <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lisakenney>