

Female Characters: **INCLUSIVE STORYTELLING GUIDE**

A division of the Association of National Advertisers (ANA), the SeeHer movement's mission is to accurately portray women and girls in marketing, advertising, media and entertainment so they see themselves as they truly are and in all of their potential.

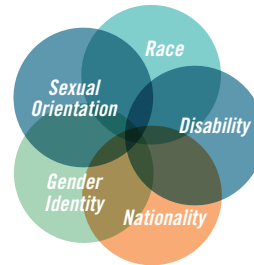
AFFIRMATION and INSPIRATION — CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Does your story include a **female lead** or **co-lead**?
- Could your script pass the **Bechdel test**—does it include at least two women talking to each other about something other than a man?
- Is there diversity among your female characters along **multiple dimensions of identity** (i.e. race or ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, etc)? Is **intersectionality** taken into account in their experiences?
- For multicultural female characters, is **cultural identity** included in the narrative?
- Do your female characters have **careers**?
- Could any of the following words describe your female characters' **personality attributes**: strong, intelligent, ambitious, charismatic, creative, trustworthy, successful, courageous, or confident?
- Are any of your female characters **over the age of 45**?
- Is there a range in **body types**, **hair texture**, and **skin complexion** among your female characters?
- Do any of your female characters have a **disability**?
- Does your **writers' room** reflect the diversity you intend to portray on screen?



NO FILM HAS MADE \$1 BILLION WITHOUT PASSING THE BECHDEL TEST SINCE 2012.

Creative Artists Agency, Shift7



INTERSECTIONALITY:
the oppression and discrimination resulting from the overlap of an individual's various social identities.



ARE WOMEN INCLUDED AMONG CHARACTERS WORKING IN SCIENCE & TECH FIELDS?



ARE THEY IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS?



“In the world portrayed in media, white males make up two-thirds of the population. Women are fewer in number, and the vast majority are under the age of 35, white and heterosexual. The young, attractive, thin women who comprise most of the narrow female population are passive and focused on relationships and domestic tasks.”

—Julia T. Wood, leading gender communications scholar and author

PITFALLS and MISCONCEPTIONS — CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS:

- If you completely **removed all your female characters** from the story, would it be inconsequential to the plot?
- Are your female characters more likely to have **personal-life oriented** roles (e.g. wife or mother) opposed to **work-oriented roles** (e.g. business executive)?
- Does your female character’s primary plot contribution involve being the victim of violence or deciding whether or not to have a romantic or **sexual relationship** with a male hero?
- Among your **LGBTQ characters**, are they more likely to be a cisgendered gay man?
- Do the female characters over the **age of 45** tend to be opposite ends of a spectrum – extremely beautiful, elegant, tall, and slim versus a caricature that is the object of scorn, ridicule, or disregard?
- Does the dialogue of the **women of color** tend to include more **profanity** and focus more on **sexuality**?
- Are the **multicultural** female characters more likely to be portrayed as having **lower socioeconomic status** than the white female characters?
- Are the female characters with **larger body types** presented as **damaging stereotypes** (i.e. lazy, physically slow, unintelligent, poorly dressed, clumsy, or as a punchline)?
- Are the female characters that have a **disability** presented as someone who needs to be **rescued**?
- Does the **culture of your writers room** perpetuate tokenism by disempowering writers to feel like “diversity slot” hires?



GAY MEN MAKE UP THE MAJORITY OF REGULAR AND RECURRING LGBTQ CHARACTERS ON TELEVISION (GLAAD)



64% OF DIVERSE WRITERS REPORTED HAVING EXPERIENCED BIAS, DISCRIMINATION, AND/OR HARASSMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE WRITING STAFF

(Think Tank for Inclusion and Equity)