

Urban Trends

MEE
MOTIVATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT

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ENTERTAINMENT:

Hip-Hop, Gospel and Groove

■ The average black Hollywood film has a budget of \$8 million to \$12 million, a fraction of the industry standard. Of the 400 movies released by American studios last year, only one, *Eve's Bayou*, was directed by a black woman. Black executives in Hollywood have difficulty launching major motion pictures because of budget constraints. However, there is a new black presence in Hollywood: black women are finally getting more cameos on screen. The release of *Amistad*, *Eve's Bayou* and *Soul Food*, all produced by black women last year, reveals the maturation of black women's roles in Hollywood. (*Newsweek*, *Ebony*)



- Urban music— rap, hip-hop, gospel and jazz—accounts for 35% of the \$13 billion generated yearly by the music industry. (*USA Today*)
- Gospel is penetrating everything from the club scene to aerobics. The New York region has seen the emergence of half a dozen gospel cafes, supper clubs and nightclubs in the last two or three years. Gospel has even inspired a New York City aerobics program, "Gospel Moves," which fuses spiritual music with aerobics. (*The New York Times*, *BET Weekend*)
- The sounds of New York streets reflect the emergence of new artists who fuse dance-driven beats with urban ethnic diversity. Many musicians such as Sergio George, Lisette Melendez, Marc Anthony, Frankie Negron, La India and Dark Latin Groove integrate hip-hop, jazz and salsa into their culturally fluid music. (*The New York Times*)

MARKETING:

Madison Avenue Wakes Up

- Marketers are becoming aware of the increasing buying power of the African American community. Blacks' total earned income in 1996 was \$367 billion, an increase from an inflation-adjusted \$243 billion in 1980, and black households are spending more than white ones on new cars, clothing, and home furnishings. Spending by blacks on new appliances doubled to \$2.2 billion, from 1995 to 1996, and spending on furnishings rose from \$8.3 billion to \$10.4 billion. (*The New York Times*)
- In 1998, L'eggs will launch a new multicultural marketing campaign around its hosiery line, Silken Mist, its first ethnic media push since the 1980s. Sampling events geared towards the African American market include: "For Sisters Only" events in Baltimore and Philadelphia, and the "Sisterhood Outreach Summit" in Memphis. African American women wear pantyhose twice as often as other consumers. (*Brandweek*)
- The African American Cultural Expo, an exhibition of African American history, arts and commerce, will visit two cities on the East Coast this year. The expo will feature enrichment seminars, motivational speakers, historical exhibits, readings/signings by best-selling authors, fine art and jewelry and performance art. Major corporations such as Coca-Cola, Chrysler, Western Union, American Express and Bell Atlantic are sponsors. (*Multicultural Marketing News*)
- Music is the future for ethnic marketing. Music events are becoming increasingly popular as corporate sponsorship vehicles for targeting ethnic groups. Music is a unifying force and a means of drawing upon the passions of diverse ethnic populations. Leading advertisers such as American Airlines, AT&T, Miller Brewing Co., Sears and Visa USA will spend \$10 million dollars each on the sponsorships of multicultural events this year, and that number should increase by 20% by next year. (*Advertising Age*)
- A 1998 survey from *How America Shops* reveals that ethnic shoppers did more shopping at outlet stores than Caucasian consumers. Home improvement stores, mass merchandisers, supermarkets and warehouse clubs were heavily frequented by ethnic consumers. (*WSL Strategic Retail*)

- Graffiti advertising is one way for corporations to reach inner cities and their ethnic populations. Spray paint is the new medium in marketing. Many graffiti artists, like Nicer, Bio and BG183 of TATS Cru, started out "painting" illegally, but are now commercial street illustrators for major companies. The TATS Cru have moved from spraying trains, which they term "rolling canvases," to achieving commercial success as legitimate artists supported by such sponsors as Coca-Cola, Reebok and Seagram's Chivas Regal. (*New York Magazine*)
- Revlon has given the Harlem Girls Choir back their voices. Their sponsorship will enable the choir to go on tour in 1998, giving as many as 125 concerts. Like the Harlem Boys Choir, sponsored by Gillette, the Girls Choir provides opportunities, such as personal attention and tutoring, for girls from Harlem. Last year, 100% of the Girls Choir who graduated from high school, went on to college. (*Newsweek*)

LIFESTYLE/CULTURE: Evolving Markets, Mores and Megachurches

- Family values are showing up as themes in the hip-hop community. Today's rappers are pro-family and pro-parenting. LL Cool J, Coolio, and Snoop Doggy Dog are following a new hip-hop family trend in both their lives and music. Rap music promoting pro-family concepts include Common's "Pop's Rap" and "Retrospect for Life." These songs suggest that more mature, soulful hip-hop could catch on, particularly with people in their late 20s and 30s who grew up listening to rap, but no longer identify with hard-core rap music and now empathize more with family-oriented themes. (*Newsweek*)



- Black churches are becoming more popular as they incorporate holistic approaches to their ministries. Preachers are incorporating programs geared toward the social needs of baby boomers and youth populations. These megachurches, as they are called, are reaching communities with

URBAN



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YOUTH: Moving Into the Year

Urban youth represent a culture which is “oppositional” to the values, norms, and institutions of mainstream culture. This male-dominated culture is suspicious of mainstream media messages. Attempts to co-opt this population are invariably viewed as misguided or unauthentic. The majority of urban youth spend time attempting to differentiate themselves from mainstream culture in exchange for identification with and acceptance from their peers.

Urban youth are dealing with a major shift in societal values that is impacting their behavior, attitudes towards life, and how they make decisions. For the first time in American history, teens across all ethnic lines are realizing that they may not have better lives than their parents. In their lifetime, these young people have witnessed massive layoffs, government debt, HIV/AIDS, crime and violence, inadequate education, alcohol and other drug abuse, racism, and, in many instances, their own parents’ separation or divorce. Many inner-city youth perceive no future worth living because of constant discrimination, poverty, oppression, and other unhealthy influences that impact them daily.

Urban youth are redefining their value structure and approach to living by refocusing on *relationships, self-expression and individualism, self-reliance and living for the moment.*

Relationships -

Young people are refocusing on closer relationships with family and friends. With less trust in corporations, government leaders and adults, personal relationships have become of greater importance. Urban youth are building networks of comfort and trust based on people they can rely on in hard times.

Self-Expression and Individualism -

Today’s urban youth often reject mainstream traditions, values and messages of conformity. Instead, they are building their own legacies by focusing on values from their culture which support self-exploration, independence and individuality.

Self-Reliance -

Creating their own well-being and charting their own course is a must for today’s urban youth. Many believe they must make their future a reality while also being prepared to handle life’s challenges and uncertainties.

Living for the Moment -

Many young people are living each day as if it could be their last. For some, this is a way to escape their daily realities and the constant stress placed on their lives. Others have decided to have fun at all costs and enjoy life while they can.

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economic development initiatives and mentoring programs for young black males. The rising popularity of black churches can also be linked to contemporary preachers who take biblical passages and illustrate them with issues such as racism, sexism or healing a broken heart. (*Black Elegance*)

Electronics, Visa, DNKY, Gillette and others are on board in search of a young urban audience. A new publication, *The Source Sports*, will preview in May and publish three times a year, and a weekly two-hour syndicated radio show will launch mid-98. *The Source’s* publisher, David Mays, is also negotiating a hip-hop awards show for fall ‘98. (*Advertising Age*)

watch programs about whites and blacks watch programs with all-black casts, has been the rule: of the top 10 most watched shows among adults, not a single show could be found in common between the races. But the under-20 crowd likes shows that make them laugh, and apparently they don’t care about race: “Martin” and “Sabrina the Teenage Witch” have equal appeal. Many network executives are rethinking their programming strategies and focusing on multi-ethnic programming to target the younger audience. According to a recent survey conducted by *Who’s Who Among American High School Students*, only 6% of teens admit to prejudice against blacks and Hispanics, and this seems to be reflected in their viewing habits. (*The New York Times, Mediaweek, Teen*)

MEDIA: The African American Market Goes Mainstream

■ *The Source*, a voice for the multicultural hip-hop generation, has grown from a two-page college newsletter into a media powerhouse in ten years. With the increasing influence of urban music, fashion and culture in mainstream society, *The Source* is attracting the attention and advertising dollars of corporate America. Coca-Cola, Pioneer

■ Today, black households watch 43% more television than non-black households. The gap, however, has narrowed by 7% since 1993. Black households currently watch 72.4 hours for black households versus 21.6 for non-blacks. Blacks view much more daytime TV than whites, but blacks average only an hour more of prime-time television than white viewers. Black children and teens, especially, watch more primetime TV than whites. (*Mediaweek*)



■ Children and young adults are exhibiting “crossover” television viewing habits which are very different from their parents. “Segregated television,” where whites

■ One of the most popular drive-time radio talk shows today is “The Tom Joyner Morning Show,” a mix of rhythm and blues, humor and social activism. Reminiscent of black radio’s past role in civil rights struggles, the show discusses community issues and reaches five million listeners in 95 markets. (*Newsweek*)

- *Essence* and *Ladies Home Journal* sponsored a joint project in their March issues to study what divides women on issues of race. The article, "What Still Divides Us," reveals that black women are more upset than white women with black/white racial inequality, 63% in comparison to 42% of white women. Although both black and white women express overall satisfaction with their lives, black women attribute happiness to their extended families and their appearance, and white women's satisfaction comes from their careers, finances, friends and spouses. (*Ladies Home Journal, Mediaweek*)

EDUCATION: A Link to the New Millenium

- Today's urban minority children make up 43% of approximately 11 million children attending public schools in cities. But urban schools are suffering from problems of over-crowding, violence and poor teacher qualification. Students' performance levels are also suffering. The percentage of New York urban fourth-graders who scored at the basic level or higher on standardized achievement tests in reading, math and science was considerably below that of non-urban students. The results in each subject category were, for urban students, 39%, 39% and 29%, respectively. For non-urban students, tests results in reading, math and science were 70%, 75% and 73%, respectively. Editors at *Education Week Journal* believe the nationwide focus on standards will lead to an improvement in urban scores. (*The New York Times*)



- A survey conducted by Recruiting New Teachers, a non-profit research group, found that two-thirds of urban school systems relied on uncertified teachers. More African American, Hispanic and Asian teachers are needed to reach non-white children, particularly Hispanics and Asians. According to the National Education Foundation, nearly 89% of the nation's teachers are white. Black teachers make up 7% of the teaching force, 4% are Hispanic, 1% are Asian and 1% are American Indian. (*The New York Times, The Washington Post*)
- East Harlem's school choice program allowing students to choose which schools to attend has created a model of school reform. Achievement scores have risen significantly and steadily since the program began in 1974, a time when District 4 in East Harlem ranked last in New York City. Scores have gone up in both neighborhood and alternative schools. Neither "have" nor "have-not" schools

suffered a population flux. (*The New York Times*)

- In 1996, 74% of African Americans aged 25 and older had at least a high school diploma and 14% had a bachelor's degree, an increase from 51% and 8%, respectively, in 1980. In 1995, more than a quarter of black 18-to-24-year-olds attended college. (*U.S. Census Bureau*)

FASHION: A Fast-Growing Connection

- Recently, African American kids have been taking fashion hints from Anglos: ski gear, polo shirts, hiking boots and NHL jerseys are more popular than the gold chains and dangling clocks of the 1980s. Sweaters in bright primary colors with POLO on the front, ski jackets pumped up to Michelin Man magnitudes and jeans, the baggier the better, are all on the street. The \$5 billion male urban-clothing scene is growing faster than any other apparel category except lingerie. Hip-hop artists promote these fashions by wearing them in videos and on their album covers. (*Time*)
- Black women are fragrance connoisseurs, on average owning and wearing as many as six different scents, twice the amount of other ethnic women. Four out of five African American women say that fragrances boost their self-image and self-esteem. Ninety percent of African American women say they prefer lighter fragrances. (*Heart and Soul*)

DEMOGRAPHIC:

Back to the South, and in Cities

- The African American population is markedly younger than the American white population. Census data reveals that more than half of the African American population is under the age of 30. The median age for blacks is 28.4 and 34.9 for whites. (*Emerge*)
- Of the total U.S. population (268 million) in 1997, African Americans make up 39 million and Hispanics represent 29 million of the population. The median income for blacks is \$23,500 and for Hispanics, \$24,900. The buying power of African Americans is \$469 billion and for Hispanics, \$348 billion. Business is taking note of this expanding market with new products and targeted ad campaigns. (*Advertising Age*)

- There are 23 million potential African American voters in the United States, but only 14 to 15 million are registered and 11 to 12 million actually vote. (*Emerge*)
- The Hispanic baby boom....The number of babies born to Hispanic women in the United States has increased to 18% of the total number of births, according to a report by the National Center for Health Statistics. The birth rate of whites and blacks has declined while the Hispanic birth rate continues to rise. The birth rate for Hispanic teenagers has exceeded black teenagers, although more Hispanic teenagers are married in comparison to blacks. Even if immigration decreases, the Hispanic population will continue to grow in large numbers. (*The New York Times*)

- In a nationwide trend that contradicts predictions made in the 1980s, professional and middle-class blacks are bypassing the suburbs and steering a new gentrification movement in cities across the nation. Even though the black middle class expanded very rapidly from 1990-1996, jumping 19.4% to 4.9 million, many remained in the city instead of retiring to the suburbs. Overall, black households in cities increased 10%, to 6.8 million, from 1990 to 1996. Being black in the suburbs can be a very isolating experience, and often African Americans want to support and strengthen established black city communities. (*USA Today*)



HEALTH: Statistics Worth Tracking

- Salons have become sources for health education. The University of California at San Diego Cancer Center sent eight trained cosmetologists to African American neighborhoods in order to alert black women about the screening and treatment options for breast cancer. The program's success has led the Cancer Center to expand the program to 20 San Diego salons, addressing both breast cancer and diabetes. (*Self*)



FINANCIAL/ECONOMIC: Entrepreneurship— Future of Urban Youth

- Among sexually active AIDS patients, 46% were black, 23% Hispanic and 27% were white. Of that whole, 69% were men. Whites and Hispanics were three times as likely to inform their partners of their HIV status as blacks. The problem appears to be a matter of taking personal responsibility, rather than a lack of information about HIV transmission risks. *(The New York Times)*
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, women have the fastest growing rate of HIV and AIDS infections, and 76% of those women are African American or Hispanic. *(Emerge)*
- Although AIDS has declined among children in New York City, black children make up more than half the victims 12 years old or younger. *(The New York Times)*
- Black infants are more than twice as likely as white infants to be born with low birth weights, a condition which could lead to developmental problems and affect the children's future. Health experts have associated infant mortality with late or inadequate prenatal care. *(The New York Times)*
- The Centers for Disease Control's 1990 survey revealed that over half of the nation's high schoolers have had sex. Fifty-two percent (52%) of white students, 52% of Hispanic students, and 72% of black students claimed to having been sexually active. High school males were more prone to be sexually active than girls. *(Black Child)*

- Good news and bad...The economic gap between blacks and whites is narrowing, according a recent White House report. Since 1993, the increase in the median income of black families was larger than the increase for white families. The poverty rate for black families is at a record low. But at 40%, the level still remains high. Last year, poverty among black children fell to its lowest level in decades, and the unemployment rate among black men fell to its lowest rate in 23 years, 8.6%, still twice the unemployment rate for white men. *(The New York Times)*
- In February, Vice President Gore proposed a government aid plan to provide \$1.4 billion in loan guarantees over the next three years to African American entrepreneurs. This program is similar to a government program providing \$2.5 billion in loan guarantees for Hispanics, proposed in January 1998. Surveys show that 82% of minority small business with an annual revenue of \$100,000 or less applied for loans last year and were turned down. *(The Wall Street Journal)*

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Welcome to the premiere issue of **UrbanTrends**, the quarterly newsletter designed to help you better understand, target and serve urban African Americans and other minority consumers.

UrbanTrends is a time-saving tool that will help you understand and more effectively communicate with urban consumers. Whether you are a brand manager, public health expert, social marketer, movie or music executive, or community program director, **UrbanTrends** can help you reach, attract and influence your audience. It's the communication experts' choice for urban consumer information.

UrbanTrends is published by MEE (Motivational Educational Entertainment) Productions Inc., a communications firm internationally recognized in developing socially responsible, research-based communication strategies targeting African Americans and other minority populations, with a special focus on low income youth. Over the years, clients and community partners have asked us to find ways to share our urban market research findings. **UrbanTrends** is our answer to those requests.

UrbanTrends explores today's urban lifestyle:

- culture
- media
- advertising
- health
- education
- entertainment. . . and more
- relationships
- fashion
- technology
- leisure
- sports and fitness

Since 1990, MEE has focused on how urban populations see their world and the world around them. Our primary mission is to reach and positively impact urban minority consumers. MEE first received national prominence with the 1992 release of its primary study, *The MEE Report: Reaching the Hip-Hop Generation*, focusing on the cultural and communication dynamics of urban teens.

Along with our market research findings, **UrbanTrends** will report on the newest and most interesting research culled from our database of hundreds of print publications, reports and studies from foundations and government agencies. Future issues will include information from MEE's current research, *The Urban Youth Population: Trends For the Year 2000 and Beyond*, which focuses on new and developing urban market trends and strategies of interest to communications professionals.

As a valued member of MEE's network, you can reap the benefits of **UrbanTrends** at a special 1998 introductory rate of \$99.00 for four issues.

We hope that you join communication professionals nationwide who now subscribe to **UrbanTrends** – the expert's choice for urban consumer information.

Sincerely,
Ivan Juzang
President, MEE Productions Inc.

P.S. Our reduced price offer expires July 31, 1998. So subscribe now!