

How has the women's lingerie industry demonstrated inclusivity of all body types?



Kalindy Williams, 2020 for JBC Lingerie

written by
Renee Young

"Size does not dictate sex appeal."

- *GBC Lingerie*

"The average size of an American woman is now between 16 to 18." (Nunes, 2019) with this in mind lingerie brands across western cultures are amending their standardised sizing to fit a broader range of body type. Australian brands, as well as international labels, have recently begun focusing on adapting their products to be more accessible to a larger range of body types. Companies that aren't willing to adapt to evolving sizes are being scrutinised and examined as to why they've chosen not to accommodate a wider range of body types. The question remains are lingerie brands implementing enough change to cater for all women's body proportions within the industry?

During New York Fashion Week 2018, pop singer Rhianna, launched her latest collection of lingerie under her Fenty X Savage label. The show featured an array of women including industry size zero models, two visibly pregnant women, plus-size models and women of colour. Challenging visible norms of the "type" of model NYFW generally sees on the runway. X Savage sizing begins at size 0 through to size 22 catering to a wider range of body types, generating accessibility to women who haven't been included in lingerie previously before on popular platforms such as New York Fashion Week. Plus-sized industry model, Paloma Elsesser, who walked the Fenty show told Vogue Magazine "I think to radically change the industry we must address sample sizing." (BBC, 2018) Rhianna's brand challenged the norm by not only one account but by using multiple women of different sizes in her show implies that there isn't a personal incredulity in her presentation, she's researched and established a brand that answers the need for readjustment on extending her sizing chart. Typically viewers would fall into the halo effect due to Rhianna's beauty standards and sexual presence yet even Rihanna acknowledges "I'm not built like a Victoria's Secret girl, and I still feel very beautiful and confident in my lingerie." (Bobb,2018)



Savage X Fenty autumn/winter '18/'19 show. Image credit: Getty Images

Unlike X Savage, Victoria Secrets recently came under scrutiny for not including an array of body types in their infamous runway shows. "Victoria's Secret would not feature transgender or plus-size models in its fashion show, arguing that their brand was based on fantasy and being "politically correct" wasn't part of their brand." (Walker, 2018) this resulted in a public outcry for Victoria Secrets to adjust their range of models. This sunk cost fallacy led to their CEO Jan Singer resigning the following week. (Walker, 2018) Presenting themselves with cognitive bias resulted in backlash, industry workers and models took to social media to express their disappointment in Victoria Secrets "No matter how many extravagant outfits they create...as long as Victoria Secrets doesn't have plus-size models, THEY ARE GONNA FLOP." (Kajakdjian,2018) Although Victoria Secrets do include women of colour the lack of diversity in body forms left viewers unfulfilled. In 2018 the Victoria Secrets show brought in 3.3 million viewers a decrease from 2016 of 6.7 million and 9.7 million in 2013. (Low, 2019) Victoria Secrets have cancelled their runway shows since the downfall of their viewers in 2018 and have no interest in any future shows that include plus-size models and transgender women.



Victoria Secrets 2018,Vogue

Local Melbourne brand, JBC Lingerie, is well established in the Australian lingerie scene offering endless sizing and providing customers with the ability to custom order pieces tailored to their size at no extra cost. "No matter your shape, race, age, gender, sexuality" (JBC,2020) Every photoshoot released by JBC includes trans-women, plus-size women and women of colour. Photos are left raw without editing "it's about capturing something real...are un-retouched and give an honest portrait representation." (JBC,2020) With a fast-growing customer base online JBC has gained 25.5 thousand follows on Instagram. Local feminist established writer, Clementine Ford, featured in their latest campaign shoot obtains the same values. Promoting the brand to her 76.7 thousand followers on Instagram. Clementine has a great amount of power and political value to her followers, advocating for JBC aids in a bandwagon effect to follow JBC. Not only are local brands promoting body positivity in lingerie but even well-known Australian brand, Bonds, has adapted to changing their sizing availability now ranging from size 8 to size 26. Like JBC,

Bonds are also focusing on body positivity by using plus-size models in their marketing campaigns promoting a kinder, more accepting brand to the community. Bonds are widely accessible to their market sectors and are available for purchase via online, in-store and major retailers allowing a greater reach and inclusivity of all body types.



Paloma Elsesser for Bonds, February 2020,

Throughout the past years customers, models, and well-known fashion industry persons have acknowledged and made a clear and proud stances for the uprising of adapting to inclusivity of all body types in lingerie. Rhianna has questioned and disrupted the runway scene by including an array of body types on a global scale. Local Melbourne brand JBC has

pushed even further for inclusivity and accessibility by offering custom made pieces of any size. Well-known Australian label Bonds proudly support models of all sizes promoting them publicly in marketing campaigns. Not adapting to change has led Victoria Secrets to lose revenue and cancel their well known and once looked forward to infamous runway show. Lingerie brands are taking a step in the right direction towards change and body positivity by implementing a wider range of sizes accessible for purchase.

word count: 888

Reference list

Andrea Kajakdjian 2018, 'No matter how many extravagant outfits they create, or bring a thousand of guest singers, as long as #VictoriasSecret doesnt have plus size models, THEY ARE GONNA FLOP.', @AndreaaxK, viewed 19 March 2020, https://twitter.com/AndreaaxK/status/1060790011023552513?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.abc.net.au%2Fnews%2F2018-11-20%2Fvictorias-secret-backlash-is-a-21st-century-labour-dispute%2F10510318.

Bobb, B 2018, 'Marabou Handcuffs, Satin Pasties: Rihanna Designs a Sexy New Line of Bedroom Accessories', *Vogue*, viewed 19 March 2020, <https://www.vogue.com/article/rihanna-savage-fenty-lingerie-accessories>.

Low, E 2019, 'Why the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show Was Canceled', *Variety*, <https://variety.com/2019/tv/news/victorias-secret-fashion-show-canceled-why-1203413186/>.

MARY NUNES 2019, 'It's True: The Average Size of the American Woman Is No Longer 14', *Byrdie*, <https://www.byrdie.com/average-body-weight>.

Nast, C 2018, 'Every Look from the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show', *Vogue*, viewed 19 March 2020, <https://www.vogue.com/article/victorias-secret-fashion-show-see-every-runway-look>.

OKWODU, J 2018, 'Rihanna's Savage x Fenty lingerie show proved the time for inclusivity and body positivity is now', *Vogue Australia*, viewed 19 March 2020, <https://www.vogue.com.au/fashion/news/rihannas-savage-x-fenty-lingerie-show-proved-the-time-for-inclusivity-and-body-positivity-is-now/news-story/bf3e2684f21286434694796bc07ede5a>.

'Rihanna's Fenty lingerie show praised for diversity' 2018, *BBC News*, <https://www.bbc.com/news/newsbeat-45508232>.

team, bonds 2020, 'Meet Paloma Elsesser – force to be reckoned with and face of BONDS Organics - Blog', *Bonds Australia*, viewed 19 March 2020, <https://www.bonds.com.au/blog/interview-paloma-elsesser-organics-range.html>.

Walker, M 2018, 'When models strike back: Victoria Secret's 21st century labour dispute', *ABC News*, viewed 19 March 2020, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-11-20/victorias-secret-backlash-is-a-21st-century-labour-dispute/10510318>.