

# FAST TALK

Interviews by Kate Rockwood



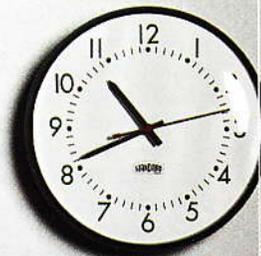
**George Carrancho**  
> National Sales and  
Marketing Manager, LGBT Community  
**AMERICAN AIRLINES**  
> FORT WORTH, TEXAS

## > Partnering With Pride

Marketing to gays and lesbians is rich with potential—approximately \$700 billion in annual buying power—but still fraught with peril.



San Francisco  
Los Angeles



Denver  
Phoenix

### Join the Community

*GEORGE CARRANCHO, 43, manages American Airlines' Rainbow Team, the first dedicated LGBT sales staff and Web site to target the \$65 billion American gay and lesbian travel industry.*

"Even as the rest of American Airlines shrinks, the Rainbow Team is growing. Our revenue from [aa.com/rainbow](http://aa.com/rainbow) and our newsletter subscribers have doubled this year. To maintain our lead, we go beyond buying ads and building pride-parade floats, and offer the community useful services. Our events calendar lists as many gay-themed national events as we can, from Human Rights Campaign dinners to rodeos, and it's a major draw for visitors. We offer special discount codes if you book travel whether we're a sponsor or not. Whatever the event is, we want you to fly American Airlines to get there. At the end of the day, this is a bottom-line decision."

# FASTTALK

> Gay Marketing

## Creating Context

LISA SHERMAN, 51, launched Logo, MTV Networks' television channel for a gay and lesbian audience, in 2005, with just three advertisers and 13 million homes. It has since grown to 150 advertisers in every product category and more than 40 million homes.

"When we launched Logo, there was some question whether companies would take the risk to participate in an LGBT channel. Our only advertisers were Orbitz, Paramount Pictures, and Subaru; we had to do a lot of education about the consumer power of this market. We learned that our viewers are 81% more likely to watch commercials and want to support those brands that are supporting them.

We develop marketing that helps contextualize brands with our audience. For instance, Levi's developed a campaign around living an authentic, unbuttoned life to promote 501 jeans. We married that with a block of late-night programming and developed spots and interstitials for Levi's to reinforce the idea of revealing your authentic self. Also, we push to connect with brands beyond the channel: We curate the entire LGBT section of Netflix, and in June, we took over that section on Amazon. An affiliation with Logo helps companies signal that they get it."

**Lisa Sherman**

> Executive Vice President and  
General Manager, Logo

**VIACOM**

> NEW YORK, NEW YORK



## Watching the Watchmen

*RASHAD ROBINSON, 30, organized GLAAD's inaugural Media Awards in Advertising in October to applaud gay-positive creative in both the LGBT and mainstream press.*

"It's still very brave when companies advertise to and support the LGBT market. Pepsi is currently being boycotted for supporting Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Wells Fargo had accounts pulled over advertisements. Campbell's ignited a fire among the religious right when it ran a full-page ad in *The Advocate* that showed two real lesbian moms feeding their son

a bowl of soup. Those boycotts have not been successful. Campbell's and Wells Fargo continue to run ads with gay folks.

Part of our role at GLAAD is to herald their bravery, but we often help companies while they're still storyboarding an ad to make sure they get the tone right. Bromance is an advertising trend now, and it's meant to walk a humorous tightrope, but it often falls far short. In a Snickers Super Bowl commercial a few years ago, two men accidentally kiss over a candy bar and one bashes the other's head into a car. Viewers were horrified, and the ad was pulled immediately. Believe me, if there was no need to advocate for these issues, we would have no need for this program."



**Rashad Robinson**

> Senior Director of Media Programs

**GAY AND LESBIAN ALLIANCE  
AGAINST DEFAMATION**

> NEW YORK, NEW YORK

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**Corliss Fong**  
> Vice President of Diversity Strategies  
**MACY'S**  
> CINCINNATI, OHIO

## Make the Right Statement

*CORLISS FONG, 59, helps the nation's largest department-store chain reach gay and lesbian customers across its 850 stores, managing everything from its shift to a more inclusive gift registry to the controversy that erupted after one of its Boston stores removed a gay-themed window display.*

"Nonaction is a statement in itself. If we weren't celebrating pride or promoting our registry to same-sex couples, we'd be sending a message that we're not inclusive. When someone in Boston made

a decision to take that window display down, without realizing the history that Macy's has had with Boston Pride, it was certainly not a decision that we felt good about.

This is the first year Macy's decided to take on pride as a national campaign, but we don't look at diversity inclusion as being a political statement. It's about supporting our associates and our customers, and it is, of course, about the business. You can't get away from that, particularly when you look at how diverse our communities are, from New York and San Francisco to Cincinnati and Moscow, Idaho."

## Take Aim

**HOWARD BUFORD, 50**, has created LGBT-targeted advertising for companies such as JPMorgan Chase, Hyatt, and Showtime. Each year, Prime Access reports on which brands are perceived to be the most and least gay-friendly.

"Economically, it's not efficient to spend money on broad national advertising to reach the 7% to 12% of the population that identify as LGBT. Technology is driving more efficient ways to target the audience. For Hyatt Resorts, our digital planners use specific social-media sites where LGBT customers are sharing their travel experiences, such as gaycities.com and purpleroofs.com. Technology has allowed us to be so fine-tuned that we can advertise only on the pages that are about the specific destinations where Hyatt has resorts. At the same time, we reach out to the LGBT travel blogs and offer content, in the form of an interview, for example, with a Hyatt executive. It pushes beyond banner ads and shows a certain seriousness, placing all that information in context. You can't just tell somebody something."

