

Wooing Women: It's a Head Game

by Maria Reitan



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A few years ago before the ethnic slurs and controversial films, Mel Gibson starred in a successfully romantic comedy, *“What Women Want.”* He played a hard-charging advertising executive who thought he knew what women wanted until one day he woke up, and he could hear the actual musings inside women’s heads. He was stunned to discover he was way off base. Eventually, Mel’s character got it right and got the girl in the process.

Wouldn’t it be easier if marketers could just read women’s minds? Women with children control \$1.6 trillion in household spending. Looking at those figures, if marketers are smart they have an opportunity to “get it right” and “get the girl.”

Here are some tips for getting inside the head of the home’s chief purchasing officer.

1. Time crunched

Mom is pulled seven different ways from Sunday and she’s looking to your company to help her get organized, streamline her “busy-ness” and deliver products and services that improve her family’s lives. Mom purchases from companies that are relevant to her multi-tasking lifestyle. Your communications to her must be multi-dimensional as well: pricing, service, messages and actions all play a role. If you don’t deliver on your promises, she’ll go someplace else.

2. The friend factor

Mom is a marketer’s best friend. If you can’t reach a specific type of woman directly, tapping her friend may serve the same purpose. Seventy-five percent of mothers research a product before buying it¹, about the same rate as men do at 74 percent, but 90 percent of women prefer brands recommended by other moms². That’s nearly double the average consumer at 50 percent, according to the 2005 Consumer-Generated Media (CGM) and Engagement Study. The upshot – “word-of-mom” marketing is a significant way to make an impression that lingers all the way to the check-out aisle.

3. Technology is “queen”

Check that techno-phobia stereotype at the door. Women purchase \$55 billion worth of technology every year³. Technology saves time

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Did you know?

The United States has 82.5 million mothers; 55 percent of 15-44 year-olds are moms (Census Bureau, 2004)

There are 10.4 million single mothers living with children younger than 18, up from 3.4 million in 1970. (Census Bureau, 2004)

Wooing Women: It's a Head Game (Cont.)

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and keeps moms informed – lessons learned from tips one and two. Women snap up gadgets such as computers, MP3 players, PDAs and cell phones. Sixty percent prefer to be reached via the Internet, but because they are so connected, you can reach mom through a variety of mediums. You can reach her children, too. Forty-three percent of moms go online with their children⁴. And if you are marketing in the technology space, you should be selling DTM (direct-to-mom).

4. The mom-stage

The cookie-cutter mom doesn't exist. The average age of first-time grandparents is 48 (the average life expectancy just a century ago). More than 100,000 women over the age of 40 become mothers every year⁵. The birthrate for women 45 and older more than doubled between 1990 and 2002, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report. These statistics alone show the diversity of motherhood. Marketers who connect with women through their shared experiences based on lifestyles and lifestages, no matter what their demographic, will make their products more relevant and believable.

Be relevant. Deliver on your promises. Create some buzz. Get your message in front of mom in many places and many ways. Don't treat all women the same. Follow these tips, and like Mel Gibson's character in the movie, you too can capture her heart (and her disposable income in the process).

Sources:

¹ "All About Women Consumers;" BSM media research, 2005

² Haystack Group survey, December 2006

³ Wireless News, February 2006

⁴ Brandweek.com, March 2004

⁵ 2000 U.S. Census