

Seven Secrets of Successful Marketing to Women

Marketing to women is about getting more than your fair share. Because women already buy most of almost everything, you're rarely going to get them to buy "more" of a category. Your job is to get more of them to choose YOURS – your brand instead of your competitors'. The key is connection, yes, but more than that: alignment. Alignment with the way women live, shop and choose brands – all quite different from men, and from the abstract "average consumer".

Face it – all your direct competitors offer the same primary features as you do. Otherwise, by definition, they wouldn't be your competitor. What makes your brand different are the secondary features, farther down the list. While men will often stop shopping with the first option that meets their primary needs, women will take the time to compile a short list of several options that qualify, then dig deeper to find the best option based on secondary considerations. That means women actually care about the features that differentiate your brand. In other words, with women, your marketing quite literally makes all the difference.

Because they have a longer list, when you meet the expectations of women, you generally exceed the expectations of men. According to research conducted by companies as diverse as Ford, Merrill Lynch, BMW, Ikea, Best Buy and Jiffy Lube, marketing driven by women's preferences increases customer satisfaction scores among men as well. So how's that for focus: one smart solution; two happy customers!

Women don't want "a league of their own". In fact, painting your brand pink is a good way to give your business the blues. Unless there's some particular functionality involved, they don't want "special products for women, or a special bank, or even special websites. (Just ask American Express or Dell)

For a Woman, "status" purchases, e.g., luxury items, are less about exclusivity and, in a surprise twist, more about inclusivity. When she buys a Prada purse, she's not so much saying "I'm better than everyone who can't afford one" as "I belong here with others of my tribe, who can."

Women have a great sense of humor, but in one respect, it's a bit different from men's. Instead of "laughing at..." they like "laughing with..." Women get male humor, and it sometimes makes them laugh, but it doesn't usually make them like you, and that's pretty much the point, isn't it?

Once a woman has bought once from you, she wants to buy from you again. Women are more loyal than men. Why? First, her decision process is much more painstaking than a man's. She chooses to invest up front because she doesn't want to have to "re-shop" all over again next time. Second, in situations involving a personal sales interaction, women weigh the salesperson's "deservingness" of another sale more than men do. When you work hard for her business, she wants to reward that effort with more business.