

American Women as Consumers

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Introduction

Women are marketers' most powerful consumers. They make up nearly 52 percent of the U.S. population and account for influencing or purchasing 85 percent of all of America's products and services (Quinlan, 2003). Their purchasing dominance on the market will only increase with their future rising wealth, education, independence, and longevity. Women have driven the obvious categories of food, beauty, and household products for decades. Today, they make 80 percent of all health care choices, purchase 65 percent of all new cars, and represent half of the traveling population (Quinlan, 2003).

The following will discuss and prove why marketers have been and continue to focus on the female consumer. Stated first will be demographics of female American consumers, leading into why they buy and how marketers should market to them. Factors involved with marketing to women that will be elaborated on are stress, beauty, and health. Women have traditionally been the main consumers of cosmetic products such as hair coloring, while men have been the main users of products such as tools and home repair items. However, today, sex roles are blurred, and gender is no longer an accurate way to distinguish consumers in some product categories (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). Advertising to women has also changed in the past decades and will be discussed in the following. Technology is also something that is increasing in interest of the female consumer and will be elaborated on. Finally, the female teenager will be analyzed and discussed stating facts and reasons why they are such an important segment of our nation.

Demographics of American Women

Today's female consumers are the smartest and most accomplished they have ever been. Most women believe that their state of living is better than their parents and that their children's state of living will be better than their own (New Strategist Editors, 2000). Fifty-five percent of all Bachelor and Master Degrees are awarded to women (Sehau, 2000). In fact, women have outnumbered men on college campuses since 1979 and on graduate school campuses since 1984 (Ambry, 1991). Over 60 percent of women work, three-fourths of which are full-time (New Strategist Editors, 2000). Sixty-eight percent of females juggle a career and a family (www.ewowfacts.com, 2002). In the last 30 years, women's income has grown 63 percent (New Strategist Editors, 2000). As a result, women make up 47 percent of Americans with assets greater than \$500,000. They also represent 48 percent of stock-market investors (www.ewowfacts.com, 2002). Even beyond that, women are the beneficiaries of more media, more stimuli, and more access to information than ever before. A female consumer lives multiple lives and expects to be respected in each of her roles by marketers (Quinlan, 2003).

The average American woman contributes to half or more of the household income. Fifty-six percent are in charge of handling their families' day-to-day finances (www.ewowfacts.com, 2002). This percentage is higher than ever before and has risen significantly from the 33 percent it was just a decade ago (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004).

With all of these statistics about women rising to power, it is hard to believe that most do not actually *look* for promotions. Some women even turn them down when offered! Many women are reluctant to “toot their own horn” and don’t feel they are ready or capable of powerful jobs. Of course, some women reject the offer of greater power at work because they are not willing to make personal sacrifices (Sellers, 2003). A quote from Hilary Clinton in Fortune magazine says, “Are women willing to pay the price for corporate life? They have to play by the same rules as men do. And right now there are really brutal rules for women who want to have families.” In today’s corporate world, to get to the highest levels of power usually something has to be given up. Unfortunately, in most cases, that something is children. In order to keep life as easy as possible, women see the only other option is having her spouse give up his job (Sellers, 2003).

American young adults are waiting longer to get married than in the past. More are choosing to live together either before or instead of marriage. Studies show that young adults of both sexes *want* to marry but women in their 20s are less optimistic and don’t *expect* to find their “soul mate” (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001). Researches believe that the long period of casual dating for young women is a factor in losing faith in their chances for finding the right partner. The casual and even more serious relationships may have resulted in hurt or betrayal which then leads to distrust in men overall. Women also characterize the dating and casual-sex lifestyle as a preference of men rather than those of women (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001).

Of those that do marry, one-fourth have been married more than once (New Strategist Editors, 2000). As a result, single women are emerging as a significant sector of the general market. Not only is the number of women who choose to remain single rising, but there is also an increase in the number of women living alone. Six in ten single women are homeowners (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001). This area of female consumers represents an important target for marketers of a large number of goods and services, ranging from travel and entertainment to automobiles and real estate. Single women are more likely than married women to participate in activities outside the home, and are a growing market for travel. Many childless single women are also moving to larger cities for easier access to cultural and social resources (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001).

Women define themselves most by their independence. Six in ten consider their independence very important in distinguishing who they are. Independence characterizes today's women more than religion, having children, and having a good relationship with one's spouse/partner (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001). Women want and need to make their own decisions and enjoy having control over what happens in their lives. About 25 percent of females choose to smoke cigarettes and 64 percent drink alcohol at least occasionally. More women are childless today than every before. Sixty-eight percent of women say that they believe in God without a doubt, with 57 percent being Protestant (New Strategist Editors, 2000).

Marketing to Women and Factors Involved

Successful marketers are usually good listeners, but today's competitive environment calls for more refined listening skills, especially when the primary customers are women. However, staying current with women's needs can be a challenge because of their continuously increasing levels of education, income, independence, and networking. In addition, there are so many different segments of women, each complex and evolving. This makes the listening job of marketers that much more demanding (Quinlan, 2003). Unsuccessful marketers fail to realize that changes and revisions that would appeal to women could earn them an exponential boost in profits and sales. They feel that it would require too much change (Chura, 2002).

Women expect to be marketed differently than other consumers. They think that they already give marketers all the right signals to what they want. This means that if companies aren't marketing their product directly toward them, women do not feel that the company is talking to them, and as a result, won't pay attention to the product (Quinlan, 2003). However, if a woman wants or needs a product and the product is not marketed towards her gender, she will conduct her own information search. For example, today women are buying more cars than men are; however, it is not because the companies and dealerships are advancing to understand the female consumer. It is because women have figured out how to research and investigate their purchases before visiting the showroom. Women do not need the help of men to buy something that is stereotypically "a man's purchase" anymore.

Other industries are focusing more on advertising to women also. There isn't a business today that does not rely on women to make or break its brand. For instance, pharmaceutical companies rely on women as the caregivers. Similarly financial services companies are finally recognizing their power, as well as the technology, home improvement, travel, and entertainment industries. As in the past, women continue to be focused on in the female bastions of beauty, food, children, and family products (Quinlan, 2003). Experts say that to truly connect with women, marketers must understand the benefits that generally appeal to them. Today's clothing manufacturers, for example, should cut clothes to fit but still flatter an older woman's body, and retailers must work hours that women don't (Chura, 2002).

Women also expect to be marketed differently because of their changing role in society. Compared to just a few decades ago, an enormous increase of women are seen as the bread-winners in the household. One consequence of this change for marketers is that women are not as readily accessible through traditional media as they once were. Since working women do not have much time to watch television or listen to the radio, many advertisers now place their media into magazines and journals, especially those aimed at working women (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004).

Today, women expect that the marketers who earn her dollars will also give some of those dollars to causes or research that she cares about. This affects brand loyalty. In general, women do not easily grant brand loyalty. The Center for Women's Business Research found that 41 percent of women will

switch to brands that are better for the environment, and one in five women claim that they choose companies that demonstrate social responsibility (Quester and Lin Lim, 2003). This may increase marketers' chances of gaining brand loyalty. Consequently, many marketers take advantage of this and support important issues such as breast cancer. However, popular issues like breast cancer are difficult for any one brand to own (Quinlan, 2003). When sponsoring or contributing to a cause that appeals to women, marketers need to alert the media of their charitable efforts with press releases (Leeming and Tripp, 1999). In order for a brand to be differentiated, marketers need to connect to causes that their brand truly fits and have the company execute events or promotions that are distinctive and reflective of their brand.

Three important factors relating to marketing to the female consumer that will be discussed in the following are stress, beauty and health. They are tied together because women have a complex relationship with food and food can be relief for stress. Eating when stressed can be guilt-ridden for those concerned with health and weight, which links to the war that she has with the mirror and her self-image.

Stress

The number one issue that influences all other compelling matters with women is stress (Quinlan, 2003). Stress is one of the greatest lessons marketers can learn about women consumers. Women's feelings about stress in their lives are intertwined through almost every conversation. It is possible that

women's stress could affect a brand's success because it may drive the way she decides, shops, and behaves. Women live multiple lives as employees, daughters, wives, mom, and friends, making them feel incredibly overwhelmed. Women are typically the caregiver of her loved ones, giving them much more responsibility and decisions in each day. They feel stress in their careers, their relationships, their finances, and their daily lives (Quinlan, 2003). Along with stress comes emotion, leaving a lot of women incredibly emotional at times. Typically, women show more emotion than men. Marketing research suggests that emotion can stimulate buying interest, guide choices, arouse buying intentions, and influence future buying decisions (O'Shaughnessy, 2003). Thoughts about buying are not listless mental acts. Emotions intensify wants and desires and enhance motivation.

Marketers can use these factors to their advantage in advertising. Smart marketers who accept the powerful effects of stress on young women can start to tap their product's role as a stress reliever. An example of a brand that has recognized this is Calgon bath products. Calgon had a campaign with the theme "take me away" that was aimed at relieving stress to young women. The company tied their stress-reducing bath granules to social stress relief for real life. This type of marketing thinking connected with women in a very positive way (Leeming and Tripp, 1999).

One industry that has developed and prospered due to stress in women's lives is the spa industry. Consumers spend between \$4 and \$6 billion on visits to massage therapists each year and the number is growing (Quinlan, 2003).

According to the American Massage Therapy Association, 17 percent of American adults had a massage in 2001. That is double the amount in 1997 (Quinlan, 2003). This is believed to be the result of increasing stress in women's lives. It also could deal with the fact that consumers are able to get a massage anywhere from a spa to a booth in the mall. A spa is not just about the treatments. It is about the environment, the personal attention, the unrushed time, and the focus on her and only her (Quinlan, 2003). All of these are things that attract women when used effectively in advertising.

The spa industry also can be connected to a woman's desire to have time alone. Although they can find comfort in others, they also enjoy being alone since they have little time for themselves after they have given it away to everyone else (Sehau, 2000). Whether it is spending time with family or friends, improving the comfort of their nests, or seeking relief outside the home in spas or retreats, women still need some self-elected solitary confinement. For marketers, it is important to remember this unspoken wish for privacy and quiet time (Quinlan, 2003).

Beauty

Inside every woman is a finely calibrated mirror that is a woman's internal critic of all the factors of looking good, which in turn, affect feeling good: youthful looks, fit bodies, fashion sense, and reaction from others (Quinlan, 2003). The tug-of-war with the mirror does not deal with only unattractive or insecure women. No matter how beautiful she is perceived, most women doubt their

looks. The challenge that marketers are faced with is how to untangle the truths behind this internal mirror.

Advertising and communication programs reflect a brand's view of women. A woman's judgment of the spokeswoman associated with a brand drives the way she responds to the product (Quinlan, 2003). Since women are judging the women in ads, marketers need to think the same way she does and decipher her reactions to those casting choices, this is where the challenge lies.

When marketing beauty and fashion, there are four general demands that women have for the two industries. The first is that she wants to feel that she is already beautiful. An example of this is a plus-size woman preferring to shop at a store that she knows carries her size rather than going into an unknown or unfamiliar store and where she might end up being embarrassed of her body when the store does not have her size. The second is that women want to be acknowledged. Health and beauty products are expensive. If a woman is going to spend several hours and several hundred dollars in such a personal venue, she expects and appreciates a follow-up of some sort. A third demand is that she wants to be treated like a loyal customer, even when she cannot always be one. For example, when a woman is going through tough time such as a divorce, some stores/companies might stop a credit card if it is in her husband's name. Women appreciate it when stores are understanding and don't press personal matters. The final demand of a women consumer is that they want to be accepted at a face value. Women don't want to be judged depending on if they *look* like they have a lot of money. They feel that some salespeople think or

act as if they are better than the shoppers are and that they aren't going to bother helping her if they don't appear to have money (Quinlan, 2003).

Health

Nearly eight in ten women are growing increasingly concerned about their health, and seven in ten are committed to spending more time taking care of themselves both physically and mentally (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001). This makes females the primary audience for health claims in the marketing of food products. They are more likely than males to watch what they eat, even though men and women are equally likely to be overweight. Approximately 61 percent of the U.S. population is overweight or obese (www.ewowfacts.com, 2002). In fact, 51 percent of all Americans eat away from home on an average day (New Strategist Editors, 2000). Sixty-nine percent of women skip meals during the day due to being too busy, and 37 percent have been diagnosed with anemia/iron deficiency (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001). The success of dietary supplements is due to marketers realizing this about today's females and aiming their product at women. In fact, fifty-six percent of females over twenty take some sort of vitamin or mineral supplement (New Strategist Editors, 2000).

Because the food industry has always focused on women as mothers, a number of manufacturers started developing food products made especially for women. Products from juices to cereal are being designed with nutrients that are considered important for women's health (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001). In the past three years, some recent female-specific product launches include

PepsiCo's Aquafina Essentials, PepsiCo's Nutrition for Women cereal line, and Procter & Gamble Co.'s Crest Rejuvenating Effects Toothpaste. Each product features flavoring and packaging to appeal to the "softer sex" (Chura, 2002). Another example is The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), which developed a line of precooked beef entrée aimed at female shoppers focusing on both convenience and nutrition. This strategy is exactly what women are looking for because they do not want to sacrifice nutrition for convenience (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001).

Women make a lot of farfetched promises to themselves to get in shape and take care of their bodies. They tend to link their diet plans to their lives, such as, "I'll get back in shape when I get through the divorce, get back from vacation, etc.", rather than to specific pledges such as, "I'll lose ten pounds in the next three months". Smart marketers in the nutrition and weight-loss categories recognize the running start that women want or need to make plans to get healthier. Food and diet marketers could also help a woman achieve her body goals if they think like she thinks. She needs motivation to jump-start her health plan and then be allowed to take things one step at a time rather than having to begin and go through a continually strict plan (Quinlan, 2003). To maintain good health, 49 percent of women say they exercise regularly, 54 percent get enough sleep, and 86 percent eat vegetables (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001).

For many women, feeling beautiful goes hand-in-hand with feeling confident. This carries over to being confident in the workplace, having respect from other women, and appealing to men. However, truly regaining unlined

faces and tight bodies is a tougher and more expensive challenge (Quinlan, 2003).

Women are not only significant consumers of nutrition related health products; they are also the dominant healthcare consumers. They account for purchasing almost six in ten prescriptions and make up two thirds of all consumer dollars spent on healthcare. Women place a greater emphasis on prescription benefits than men do when selecting health care. Eight in ten women say that being healthy is their number-one concern (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001). Fifty-nine percent say cost is not an object when it comes to their health (Editors of New Strategist Publications, 2003). Almost two thirds of women say that not enough attention is being focused on women's health issues by the government. Women rate Medicare as their top health priority, followed by managed care companies (HMOs) required to provide access to ob/gyns without referrals from physicians (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001).

Advertising to Women

It is often heard that females do not want to see stick thin, unrealistically gorgeous women advertising beauty products. However, women equally don't want to see an unattractive or even average-looking woman on the cover of beauty magazines either. Women are not going to spend money on a product that is supposed to make them look like a woman that they don't find attractive. Surprisingly, it is possible that even though women know that beauty marketers

are misleading them with perfect models that do not even need makeup, they would rather participate in the illusion (Quinlan, 2003).

There is also the chance that some women who compare themselves with the attractive models may experience negative feelings about the product advertised (Bower, 2001). In this case, the reaction to the ad depends completely on the consumer herself. Advertisers need to decide which route to take. Most opt for the attractive, ideal model because research shows that of women viewing clothing, personal care, and cosmetic ads, only one third felt the ads made them feel dissatisfied with their appearance (Bower, 2001).

Women do want to see what they are paying for, though. They are practical and they expect high performance from the products they buy. If a company is selling skin care products, they expect to see flawless skin in the ads. One successful advertising tactic for health and beauty products deals with makeovers. Women's interest in watching other women is why makeover segments are so popular on television shows. They love seeing the before and after of it all. This is reflected in advertising. When a woman sees an ad for a beauty product, she does her own mental makeover. Billboards, TV spots, and magazine ads offer her hundreds of opportunities to silently conduct the "is this or isn't this product for me" test. Marketers need to know that women will measure themselves against the image in the advertisement (Quinlan, 2003).

Since the 1990's, women's magazines have been responding to women's need of individuality. Instead of addressing women's numerous roles or defining women according to those roles, there is now a focus on the woman herself.

This concept is perfect for women that had “juggling lifestyles”, whose lives include others such as children, partners, families, and work colleagues, and allow them to focus on themselves and their emotions (Stevens, Maclaran, & Brown, 2003).

Not only do advertisers need to focus on the woman herself, but today it is also important to advertise to women in all industries, not just cosmetics and beauty products. For example, marketers are now acknowledging the buying power of female football fans by creating advertising directed specifically at women. Companies such as Southwest Airlines and Visa are targeting the approximately 45 million female NFL fans with their ads. While some companies see female-focused ads during football games as an unconventional way to reach their target audience, smart advertisers regard it as a method of getting the edge on advertising (Kane, 1999). It also allows them to take advantage of the increase in female viewers. A division of Harley Davidson, Buell Motorcycles, has even created a motorcycle designed to appeal particularly to female riders. It includes female-friendly features such as an adjustable seat, a shorter reach lever for the clutch, and is lightweight for easy steering (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001). With women today being consumers in every industry that men are in, advertising and marketing has been dramatically changing and smart marketers have been those directing their advertising to both genders in America.

Women Consumers and Technology

Almost 63 million women are online, making up 51 percent of the online population (www.ewowfacts.com, 2002). Even with its frustrations, most women welcome technology into their lives. Fifty-two percent of urban women have Internet access at home, which is up from only 35 percent in 2000 (www.ewowfacts.com, 2002). Forty percent use the Internet for research and homework related projects, 29 percent to play games online, and 29 percent to download music (Kau, Tang, and Ghose, 2003). Mothers and their children are also watching less television and using the Internet more (www.nua.com, 2001).

Contrary to what is usually thought, the reason for women enjoying technology is not the amazing inventions, the new gadgets, or the more easily available communication benefit. The reason is directly related to technology's ability to simplify, control, and distress their overly agenda-filled lives (Quinlan, 2003). When asked to rank the top life-improving benefits of technological advances, 91 percent cited timesaving household devices. Seventy-nine percent cited the ability to work from home along with 79 percent who enjoyed being able to shop from home. In fact, online sales altogether are growing 30 to 40 percent each year, whereas traditional offline retail has only been growing at about four percent annually (www.ewowfacts.com, 2002). Technology also takes a woman's looks out of the equation. She can be sitting at the computer with curlers in her hair and no makeup on, and no one will know it. She can be invisible in a chat room or an anonymous commenter on a product. She can

easily comparison shop without the business knowing, and if she is dissatisfied, she can leave with the click of her mouse (Kau, Tang, and Ghose, 2003).

Women are masters of receiving communication from others. They interpret eye contact, facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice. Although technology cheats these stimuli, it still makes women better able to do a variety of tasks simultaneously, which is extremely beneficial because 82 percent of women describe themselves as constantly multitasking. That is why connections are the real benefit of technology for them (Quinlan, 2003). It is no surprise that e-mail and instant messaging are favorite internet features among females. Women are more likely than men to credit the Internet for improving relationships with friends and family or reaching long-lost friends and colleagues (www.ewowfacts.com, 2002). Even an astonishing 87 percent of women over 55 are keeping in touch online (www.jupiterresearch.com, 2002). Seen through a woman's stress filter, e-mail is the substitute for the phone call and the quick way to write a letter, saving her time and allowing her to stay in closer touch with those she cares about.

However, Marketers should know that the efficiency of replacing human contact with digital contact does not always satisfy a woman, even if it will save time and money. As stated before, technology cheats the stimuli women enjoy and interpret most. Everything is black and white on the internet (Kau, Tang, and Ghose, 2003). Communicating via e-mail or online chatting takes away from two people talking and understanding each other. Women are personal and feel they aren't able to relate or feel conversations on the internet (Quinlan, 2003).

Successful marketers work to instill their brands with a personality so that women have both a rational and an emotional reason to choose them over competitors.

Recent research has shown that men and women differ in terms of the way they look at their Internet usage. Men tend to click on web sites because they are information hungry, whereas women enter sites because they expect to be entertained and educated (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2004). Material that women are specifically interested in on the Internet includes cooking tips, medical facts, government information, books, and personal web pages.

Whether marketing to women on or offline, it is increasingly important to establish credibility and trust with female consumers. While women have a high comfort level with technology, they continue to demand strict standards for online privacy and security, as well as consistent customer service. Web marketers have discovered the importance of gaining women's permission before using their email address or other personal information (Kau, Tang, and Ghose, 2003). It is also important for marketers to avoid stereotypes of women's interests. Most want to feel they are respected for their individuality. They also wish for more diversity in media and advertising images directed to the American woman (Editors of Marketing to Women, 2001).

As far as other technology non-internet related, women are the decision makers on the hardware itself, spending over \$20 billion on home electronics. A *Parenting Magazine* survey in 2000 confirmed that 89 percent of consumer electronics purchases were made or influenced by women (Sehau, 2000). In general, when men are shopping for electronics, they are mostly concerned

about what it does of finding out about the next, coolest thing. Women on the other hand want to know how it will fit in their lives and their homes and not only how it can serve their needs, but also those of the rest of their families. For example, a study commissioned by Verizon Wireless showed that women have embraced text messaging on cell phones. Eighty-seven percent of 30-40 year old women felt text messaging helped them improve their business and personal communications (www.ewowfacts.com, 2002). A woman is also more interested in checking out the handheld device that her best friend uses than being the first on her block to own something (Quinlan, 2003). She is more likely to listen to the woman with whom she carools with, for example, than to the stranger at the counter of the electronic store. Women are also more likely to shop the electronics aisle with a purpose, rather than for pleasure (Sehau, 2000). This means that marketers should support in-store selling that gets to the point of how technology can help connect her life. Whether hardware or software, women want to know how it fits functionally and aesthetically into their lives (Quinlan, 2003).

Female Teens

Teenagers in general are a powerful consumer group that generated \$170 billion just last year, so it is extremely important for companies to market to them (Miller, 2003). Teens are spending more because they're earning more. Thirty-three percent of teens work at a regular paying job, and 42 percent still receive an allowance (Angrisani, 2000). More of the young consumers are using credit

cards to make purchases. A study of college students done in 2000 by PBS found that 22 percent had owned a credit card in high school, compared to 11 percent in 1994 (Miller, 2003). Teens also influence their parents' spending habits. Often they have a say in where the family eats or where they go on vacation. They are becoming increasingly powerful consumers and are being trusted more and more to make family purchase decisions. (Angrisani, 2000).

Teen girls spend slightly more than teen boys do each week spending most of their money on clothing, and the rest on food and entertainment. They are also far greater impulse buyers than young men are. They visit stores more often, are more socially involved, have less customer resistance and possess a high fashion consciousness (Angrisani, 2000). Teen girls also dislike messy and unorganized atmospheres. They have enough trouble making decisions, so they prefer clean, neat stores, such as Target and Wal-Mart (Facenda, 2003).

Despite what many marketers assume, teens are not foolish about spending. If they buy things with their own money, they are going to look for the best deal. They also love bonuses. They appreciate getting something extra for making a purchase (Facenda, 2003). Yet teens are not usually brand loyal. They enjoy trying new and different brands and products when something catches their eye. Part of the need for newness comes from simply enjoyment of trying new products, particularly teenage girls in regards to cosmetics. They will shop at whichever store has what they are looking for, when they are looking for it (Facenda, 2003). However, there are cases when teens are faithful to certain brands. If a company's brand seems to server them well, they will continue

buying it, but the same goes for visa-versa (Quester and Lin Lim, 2003). One way to build loyalty is to develop a one-to-one relationship with teens, which is usually done through the Internet.

Marketing

Known as the Baby Boomlet or Generation Y, today's teens are the children of the immense Baby Boom population. While they account for only eleven percent of the U.S. population, their numbers are growing. It is estimated that by 2010, the U.S. will have 34 million teens and by 2025, there will be nearly 36 million (Angrisani, 2000). This alone gives marketers every reason to target teenagers.

Teens are an elusive group. There is no point in trying to label or classify them. Not one marketer is positive what interests teens or motivates them to buy. This is because they have short attention spans and what they like from one week to the next is rarely the same, making the picture of marketing to them incredibly fuzzy (Facenda, 2003). Marketers however, do agree that teens are a very impressionable group that has money to burn. They have no expenses or bills, to pay for. They know what they want and are willing to spend the money for the perfect products (Facenda, 2003).

One industry that has taken advantage of the female teenage market segment is home decorating businesses. "The cool thing about this group is their creative self-expression, particularly when it comes to their rooms," says Maria Klimas, senior buyer of lifestyle at Delia's, a trendy specialty retailer. "Their room reflects their personality. They're striving to find their own uniqueness." Many of

the products in Delia's catalog are approved or even created by teenagers themselves (HFN, 2003).

There are many general mistakes that marketers make when targeting teens. They don't always understand how smart teens are. Teens know marketing lingo and are fully aware that companies want to make money from them. This makes them value authenticity (Thompson, 2001). While some companies are trying too hard to be cool, others don't even think that teens want to be targeted. Most teens find advertising to be useful and fun. They appreciate being told about certain brands and where they can find them.

The Baby Boomer generation was easy prey for marketers. However, they had the desire to buy, but no money. Marketing to today's teens is tougher. Marketers need to realize not only that Generation Y might be the most affluent generation ever, but also that getting their dollars will be the toughest sale they can expect (Angrisani, 2000).

Advertising

The current generation of teenagers is a surprisingly sophisticated group of consumers. Connecting and capturing their attention can be very difficult. Companies that do not understand them or that try too hard to win their loyalty can easily alienate some of their best customers (Angrisani, 2000).

Abercrombie & Fitch, for example, attracts teens by featuring images of college students in its store. They are one step ahead of other retailers because teens can't wait to get to that next level. Teenagers love to look into the future

and imagine what it would be like to have certain material possessions. They focus on luxury items, setting lofty goals for themselves. Teenagers are aware of status symbols and marketers need to recognize these desires and market them accordingly (Thompson, 2001).

Beauty

Most teen girls spend less than \$20 on cosmetics each month. However, girls ages 14 to 18 are willing to spend up to \$75 per moth. Four in ten say the most they would spend on one single item is \$10-20 but 18 percent would spend anywhere from \$40-75. Teen girls say that perfume is the most expensive beauty product that they have purchased, followed by lipstick. Most of female teens' cosmetics are purchased at drugstores. Mass merchants and specialty stores are close behind, but department stores and retailers own only a small market share for this group. Forty-four percent of teenaged girls say they do not care if they receive sales help or not. In fact, 32 percent say that they dislike it (Look-Look Poll, 2002).

Teenage girls respond to health and beauty products that are innovative, on trend, and offer a distinct benefit and/or image. Marketers who are successful in tapping into this group appreciate the need to stay contemporary and creative (Facenda, 2003).

Using celebrities to promote products has been particularly effective among teen girls, specifically in the cosmetics industry (Facenda, 2003). Maybelline uses Sarah Michelle Gellar, Revlon has Halle Berry, Faith Hill and Queen Latifah

promote Cover Girl, and L'Oreal enjoin Beyonce Knowles among many other celebrities in their campaigns. Female teen customers say that they are more likely to buy from a company who has actresses and other celebrities using their products (Facenda, 2003). Teenagers are searching for who they are and what they want out of their futures. Actresses, Musicians, and Models are role models that female teens want to look, act, and feel like.

Conclusion

Making up half of the U.S. population and influencing or purchasing 85 percent of all products and services, it can be concluded that women have become the most power consumers in the United States. Learning the right tactics and tools for marketing to women will only make businesses and corporations more successful.

Advertising and marketing to women is no longer limited to certain industries. Today, the female population consumes products in every industry from automobiles to lipstick and skin care products to household repair tools.

These changes and growths within the female population are reflected in advertising. Today, consumers can see men and women in their traditional roles, as well as reverse roles. Men are starting to become stay-home parents more, while women are becoming the breadwinners. Many of these changes are due to the rise of women in the corporate world and dual income households.

Not only are women an enormous target market, teenage girls are also increasingly becoming a major focus of marketers in the clothing, cosmetics, and home decorating industries. Teenagers today have more money of their own to spend than any other generation before them.

Whether middle age or teenaged, married or single, women drive well over half of consumer's purchasing decisions. Marketers that have learned how to successfully listen to the needs and wants of the female consumer, and apply their marketing respectively, should have no problem keeping their businesses and corporations successful.

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