

Are You Relevant... To Women?

by Ross Shafer

If you aren't meeting your sales projections...or losing your market share, chances are you aren't relevant to the most important sex.

Women. Women. Women.

So much has been written about the powerful female consumer you would think the "men folk" in your company would realize that women are the root of all profits. Yet, still so many men live in denial that women account for over 80% of all consumer purchases. How can anyone ignore that their \$5 trillion in annual spending is staged to gobble up new homes, healthcare, consumer electronics, investment advice, automobiles, vacations, bank accounts, and do-it-yourself projects. In fact, their financial heft is so significant any business would see an instant spike in revenue if they adopted a "no-more-marketing-to-men" attitude.

Women Complain For A Reason.

In the research for our book, *The Customer Shouts Back*, we dissected 1,000 random complaints we found on web sites and blogs worldwide. The not-so-alarming discovery was that over 80% of the complaints were written and registered by women. When the transaction goes badly they get mad and stay mad. Their complaints registered words like "embarrassed," "helpless," "out of control," "hurt," "crushed," and "rejected." Those are the same words you would typically describe in a love relationship. You see, women don't differentiate a personal interaction from a business event. It's always personal and emotional to them.

Women Started Viral Marketing.

Not only do they complain about the perpetrator they tell everyone else about you. Faith Popcorn, author of, *EVEolution – Understanding Women*, says that the average satisfied female customer will recommend a service, shop, or client to twenty one other people. Since women speak an average of 20,000 words a day (vs. a man's 6,000 words) women were indeed the first "viral marketing" machine. Therefore, having a good feeling about your company can create a vast army of female unpaid spokespeople for you. Can you do better than that with traditional marketing?

Women Are More Loyal Than Male Customers.

If you make an effort to understand the emotionality of her purchase, she will start to form a relationship with you. That's critical because an emotional bond is the *only* factor that breeds true loyalty; not "favored customer cards" not reward

points or discounts, not even repeating their name in a friendly manner. Our own research verified the depth of relationships and money when we discovered that women don't want "service" from you. They want empathy. They want to be understood by you. When women feel like you have made them feel understood and appreciated, that's when you not only have a loyal customer, a woman's referral engine kicks in.

Offend Women And Die

When you scorn or offend women, look out. Consider what happened to the Tom Cruise movie, *Mission Impossible III*. It was largely thought to be the best film of the trilogy yet when Cruise blathered in the press about his, then girlfriend Katie Holmes insisting she have a "silent birth" as prescribed by Scientology, his immense female fan base stayed home. Opening weekend ticket sales dipped over 30%. Don't mess with women or their sisterhood.

Women Get Stronger With Age.

The largest purchasing body is baby boomer women. They are rich and powerfully influential. Ken Dychtwald, author of *The Power Years*, says that by 2015, at least \$15 Trillion dollars will land in the hands of baby boomer women. Wouldn't you like them to be spending some of that money with you?

How Do You Get Into A Woman's Wallet?

- 1. Think like a woman. Behave like a woman.**
Understand that women crave being appreciated for their immense buying power and influence. Know that they want you to succeed because they love to introduce amazing new discoveries to their friends. Behave in ways that are caring and honest. Showing her attention and empathy will cause her to become your advocate; an unpaid spokesperson for your company.
- 2. Be emotional.**
If you sell a product, write emotional content that speaks to her heart and reasons for her to own what you sell. If you sell a service get personal and sell yourself. She wants to buy from people who won't make her feel helpless, anxious, embarrassed, or vulnerable. The Nordstrom clothing chain has been wildly successful because the salespeople are warm, friendly, and personal. There is also no risk buying from them. Nordstrom will let you return your purchase for any reason, at any time. Nordstrom breeds trust and confidence.
- 3. Don't try to suck up to women.**
Don't pander to women or try to exploit the obvious media stereotypes. Not all women are shoe fiends and show biz tabloid readers. If you take

that tact, you'll offend the Mensa moms, as well as the shoe fiends and tabloid readers. Women want authenticity from you. They don't want hype or false promises. They would also like you to be socially conscious – which may mean that you donate some portion of the sale to famine relief, the environment, spousal abuse, or some other heartfelt concern. They respond to empathy; both to her and her causes.

4. Rethink your current strategies.

Visit the blog www.marketingtowomenonline.typepad.com.

This organization has a robust web site to answer your questions. They also hold an annual conference complete with big name speakers and workshops to help you navigate these tricky waters. You may not be a member of this group yet but you should be. Join this organization as an associate member and you'll be able to cross-pollinate ideas that could shatter your old sales records.

Ross Shafer is the author of [The Customer Shouts Back](#), [Nobody Moved Your Cheese](#), and is writing a book titled, [Remaining Relevant: How Great Organizations Avoid Extinction](#). Shafer is also one of the nation's most popular convention keynote speakers on these subjects.

To learn more visit www.RossShafer.com