

Excerpt from:

TOO BUSY TO SHOP

Marketing to “Multi-Minding” Women

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Foreword by Geraldine Laybourne

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TOO BUSY TO SHOP: Marketing to Multi-Minding Women by Kelley Murray Skoloda.
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Chapter One

Staggering Stats: Buying Power of the Female Consumer

Forget multi-tasking—women like Varma are “multi-minding,” a newly coined buzz phrase that describes the process of simultaneously thinking about various things.

- Gogoi in BusinessWeek online (2005)

In the future, when multi-minding women are too busy to shop, the parking lots at malls may be nearly empty and the visits to many branded Web sites may slow to a trickle. Sound farfetched?

Well, female consumers who are constantly juggling the many dimensions of their lives, or multi-minding, have less time for purely commercial messages. These women have little time to shop in the traditional sense—browsing and serving as a one-way receiver of marketing messages. However, they still need and want to buy, especially since they are the primary buyers for the majority of goods and services.

In the time it's taken you to read this far, today's busy woman has already achieved what I will initially call “it.” In fact, research indicates that most women do it at least 10 times every five minutes.

What exactly is “it?” It is multi-minding, or simultaneously managing numerous aspects of an increasingly busy lifestyle. I think that is why the BusinessWeek reporter, Pallavi Gogoi, proclaimed that multitasking is passé and multi-minding is the new phrase. As mothers, wives, employees, and chief purchasing officers for families, most women today live and breathe multi-minding.

Multi-tasking has evolved and women are now accustomed to addressing a complex mix of family, career, and self-care decisions at any given moment with little time to shop in the traditional sense. However, these women are still the primary buyers of goods and services in the United States, making it imperative for companies to pay attention to this trend.

According to the seminal research on multi-minding conducted by the global public relations firm Ketchum, 61 percent of women in general, and 62 percent of women ages 25 to 54, say they have little time for commercial messages.¹ That dynamic means we need to find better and different ways to reach these busy and powerful consumers.

Even if today's woman appears to be relaxing in front of a late-night television show, reading a magazine in the pediatrician's office, or tackling a complicated analytical study at work, she is probably also thinking about and preparing for the other dimensions of her life. Perhaps she is weighing the benefits of her 401(k) plan, plotting out her organic vegetable garden, ticking off birthday party logistics, and longing for a neck massage.

Kris, a busy mom with three children and a part-time job, is an ideal example of a woman who represents a marketer's dream, but also a marketer's biggest challenge. I recently sat in yet another conference room in Chicago with a group of smart, experienced marketing executives who are struggling to connect with Kris and female consumers like her who have never wielded as much power in the marketplace as they do now.

When Kris is home, she usually has the television turned on. However, she is barely able to watch whatever program is on and is subconsciously filtering out the commercials. She is too busy preparing three different lunches, making a call about her work schedule for the next day, mentally checking off things that need to be done in preparation for a birthday party, and letting the barking dog back inside. Today's time-challenged women have to engage in constant multi-minding, which means they have little or no time for commercial messages.

Meanwhile, our executives back in Chicago admit their television advertising is not working the way it used to, even though it is still a mainstay in their marketing toolkit. They are unsure about how to connect with women like Kris in a relevant and effective way. I believe companies must find creative ways to reach Kris and millions of other women. If not, the parking lots at malls may be nearly empty and the traffic to many branded Web sites may slow to a trickle in the future.

GET READY FOR A BIG CHANGE

Over the next 10 years, the way women buy their products and services will change dramatically. For example, they will buy brands and patronize businesses that exude credibility, quickly connect with them, communicate to them in a 360-degree fashion where they live (physically and online), and sustain a consistent relationship with them. In-home shopping, both online and offline, will save precious time. Successful brands will engage with women in such a way that they will share the management of the brand with consumers. In short, female

consumers not only will drive the majority of purchases, but also will build and manage the marketing.

Hard to believe, but not surprising, if you know that today's women have emerged as a more powerful consumer force than ever before and they have changing expectations of marketers.

WOMEN ARE NOT A NICHE MARKET

In the United States, women now control \$3.3 trillion in consumer spending, are responsible for more than 80 percent of the household buying, control more than 50 percent of the wealth in the country, make 62 percent of all car purchases, and take more than 50 percent of all business trips.² Yet, many marketers fail to recognize and reach them fully, still treating women as part of a niche demographic, rather than major drivers of purchasing decisions.

In fact, I was just in a meeting the other day when a chief executive officer (CEO) of a fairly progressive company asked me if a focus on women was too “niched.”

“Will we risk ignoring other audiences if we market to women?” the CEO wondered. “What about all of those young guys you read about who are so hard to reach through traditional advertising. Aren't we overlooking them?”

Well, there are certain product and service categories, such as video gaming systems, flat-screen televisions, and pizza delivery, where men, indeed, are the primary purchasers. In those cases, a clear focus on men or a sub segment of men makes perfect sense. Women, however, are the purchase decision makers for 85 percent of the household spending. Therefore, if we are talking about food, toys, durable goods, consumer-packaged goods, health care, baby products, clothing, books, cars, consumer electronics, homes, and many other categories, women currently are or are fast becoming the primary purchasers.

With those statistics, I think the CEO is asking the wrong questions. It is not the first time I have been asked that very same question and I am sure it will not be the last. The “niche” focus that he and other executives are concerned about is, in fact, the primary consumer for many brands and businesses. Clearly, there is a need to understand the enormous and growing buying power that women have today.

According to a *BusinessWeek* magazine special report on female consumer buying power, women pack a one-two punch of purchasing power and decision-making authority. Although women typically earn only 78 cents for every dollar men make, they are responsible for more than 80 percent of the buying decisions.³

There is a massive disconnect between this compelling information and the questions asked by the CEO. Therefore, it is not surprising that one of the questions I am often asked when I speak at conferences is “How do I sell

this to my senior management?” Many senior managers somehow think marketing to women will take the focus away from another target group.

Take a look at these revealing stats, provided by the M2W Conference, the largest marketing-to-women event in the country.⁴ Women account for the following:

- 85 percent of all consumer purchases, ranging from cars to computers
- 91 percent of new homes
- 66 percent of personal computers
- 92 percent of vacations
- 80 percent of health care decisions
- 65 percent of new cars
- 89 percent of bank accounts
- 93 percent of food purchases
- 93 percent of over-the-counter pharmaceuticals

Indeed, marketing to women does change what is done in the marketing mix because women process information and make purchasing decisions differently than men. Unfortunately, the current marketing in many product categories is missing the mark. Consider these statistics:⁵

- 59 percent of women feel misunderstood by food marketers.
- 66 percent of women feel misunderstood by health care marketers.
- 74 percent of women feel misunderstood by automotive marketers.
- 84 percent of women feel misunderstood by investment marketers.
- 70 percent of new businesses are started by women.

WOMEN BUY SOAP AND SERVERS

More businesses are being started by women and more households are being headed by women than ever before—27 percent, a fourfold increase since 1950—which is partially responsible for the growth in the influence and purchasing power of women. In fact, today’s American moms are the first to live in a time in which more women, (51 percent) are living without a spouse than with one. At the same time, women’s median income has increased 63 percent compared with men’s, which is essentially flat in that time period with growth of just 0.6 percent.⁶

Because women tend to take care of others’ needs as well as their own, they typically buy for the members of their family, too. In addition, more women are also buying for their businesses. According to the Center for Women’s Business Research, women-owned businesses have grown over the past two decades at twice the rate of all

businesses, bringing the number of women-owned firms to more than 10 million, which represents massive buying power.⁷ Don't forget that every woman business owner is also a consumer and many female consumers are, or will be, business owners.

According to PINK Magazine,

It's no secret that women spend more than three trillion dollars a year on goods and services. What is relatively new is that women are now making key purchasing decisions for large B2B contracts. Translated, we may be choosing laundry detergent at night, but during the day we are deciding between a \$30-million server farm from Dell or IBM.⁸

Tom Peters' book, *Re-Imagine! Business Excellence in a Disruptive Age* (2006), outlines the strong influence women have when purchasing products. In the book *Trends* (2005), co-authored by Peters and Marti Barletta, the first chapter stresses,

But we must wake up and smell the truth: women are the primary purchasers of ... damn near everything. We must, therefore, strive on every front to achieve nothing less than total enterprise realignment around this awesome, burgeoning, astoundingly untapped market.⁹

Peters notes, "Women are where it's at" when it comes to the tremendous, current purchasing power of female consumers. That trend is anticipated to grow. By 2010, women are expected to control \$1 trillion, or 60 percent, of the country's wealth, according to research conducted by BusinessWeek and Gallup.

Barletta, a noted consultant and author of *Marketing to Women: How to Understand, Reach and Increase Your Share of the World's Largest Market Segment* (2003), believes women buy most of almost everything. "Just a few years ago, I always had to start my presentations with a fairly extensive overview of women's earning and buying power. These days, I don't. The research is clear; the numbers are huge," Barletta concludes. More CEOs need a visit from Barletta.

I have seen compelling examples of marketing that seem to be succeeding with multi-minding women of varying ages. As women's tremendous buying power is growing in both traditionally female areas, like consumer-packaged goods, and in traditionally male-dominated areas, like do-it-yourself products, financial services, and motorcycles, it is informative to review examples in each category. While dolls and motorcycles are very different categories, smart companies in both markets are successfully turning the heads of multi-minding women.

TRADITIONAL PRODUCT CATEGORIES CAN STILL RESONATE WITH MULTI-MINDING WOMEN

Let's start with a product that has been marketed to generations of women for more than 40 years, the Barbie doll. From princess to president, Barbie has a multitude of jobs and corresponding marketing campaigns. Remember the Barbie and Ken breakup? It made headlines worldwide. Barbie was the world's doll, a celebrity in her own right.

No matter what your personal opinion of Barbie may be, you have to admit she has captured her fair share of attention over the years. She seemed to have a place in almost every girl's home until she was upstaged by a number of doll lines that were marketed as much trendier versions of the ubiquitous doll.

While Barbie and Bratz dolls both sport cosmetics, a dizzying array of fashions, and as many friends as a social networking site, there was a distinct difference. Barbie clearly maintained a "good girl" image, full of girly aspirations, fairies, and good, clean fun. The others proudly displayed the opposite, a rebellious "bad girl," complete with all of the trappings of the darker side of celebrity. Think Jennifer Aniston versus Britney Spears. You get the picture.

Girls were drawn to the glittery make-up, au courant fashions, and trendy hairstyles of the "new dolls on the street." Mothers bought them and let their daughters buy them. Barbie was losing her throne.

The marketers at Mattel, makers of Barbie, must have racked their brains wondering how to make Barbie more relevant to girls and the audience who most often purchases the dolls, their moms. Their inventive and smart solution, the We Believe in Girls initiative, combines authenticity in a way that is really resonating with multi-minding women.

Clothes, hairstyle, footwear, and popular activities are all subject to current trends. The underlying personality of the dolls, though, was a constant. That is where Barbie succeeded in creating an idea that could appeal to women that, while on trend, was timeless in its appeal -- Barbie's belief in girls and the importance of preserving girlhood.

The We Believe in Girls Web site says it best:

We believe in girls. In their dreams. And in their very natural, built-in desire to change the world.

We believe in playtime (and more of it).

We believe, in fact, that the magic of a happy, playful, inspired girlhood is the same secret ingredient that creates happy, inspired and powerful women.

And the world could use as many of those as possible, right?¹⁰

The mission goes on to talk about the pressures resident in our culture, like those associated with cosmetics and clothing, that force girls

to grow up too soon. The marketers at Mattel know that girls today are growing up faster than ever before. Girls face a barrage of messages, mainly from the media, about their outward appearance and sexuality. Mothers, fathers, and anyone who cares about girls would like to preserve a safe and healthy girlhood, and tapping into this psyche is a smart way to make the brand relevant and to supersede the clutter of commercial product messages, especially with multi-minding women.

The Web site continues, “Our goal is to invite and facilitate the conversation. Everyone is invited to participate, from moms and dads to teachers, academics, and behaviorists—anyone who cares about girls’ well-being.”¹¹

Striking up a “conversation” is a smart and effective way to engage multi-minding women. These women have little time for commercial messages, but this conversation on a topic they care deeply about transcends commercial messages. The message affects them, their families, and their daily lives. In short, it is a message that quickly connects.

The We Believe initiative succeeds in other areas that are important to multi-minding women, as well. The messages are delivered by messengers that female consumers consider to be credible—women and mothers. A revolving advisory panel of experts was established to provide guidance and direction for the We Believe mission. It will “provide an internationally diverse point of view, focused on what’s happening now and what’s next for girls and girlhood around the world. Long term, the advisory council will serve as a sounding board for philanthropic and nonprofit initiatives—including scholarships and endowments.”¹²

For instance, Leslie Morgan Steiner, author of *Mommy Wars* (2006), served as an initial expert to help launch the program. Other advisors include doctors, psychologists, authors, and parenting experts.

There is “heft” to the initiative in terms of looking at this issue globally. A 2007 research report prepared by MME Research, *Global Media Coverage of Tween Girls*, determined how local media around the world covered the subject of girls, including their maturity and self-esteem, and analyzed how the treatment of the subjects differed from region to region. What was the key finding? Overall, they found that regardless of the region, girls are under enormous pressure, whether it is simply to survive amid great poverty or to live up to conflicting societal standards.¹³

The research did not stop there. The *Worldwide Mom & Daughter Survey* (2007) was commissioned in partnership with Cheryl Dellasega, Ph.D., author of numerous books on issues affecting women. This survey of 2,000 moms with daughters between the ages of 6 and 12 explores regional similarities and differences in how mothers provide for their daughters. The research will explore what contributes to a happy and healthy girlhood.

Wow. Here is credibility in the form of messages that quickly connect and a commitment to ongoing activities, all connected to something that really matters to the consumer. Now that is a success in the making with multi-minding women. I predict these women will make time to shop for Barbie.

I see those empty parking lots at the mall with a few more cars in them now ... or will there be more motorcycles in those lots?

MULTI-MINDING WOMEN DRIVING FUTURE MOTORCYCLE SALES

American women are the fastest-growing part of the motorcycle business, buying more than 100,000 bikes a year. A recent New YorkTimes article on the topic of marketing motorcycles to women notes, "Even though aging baby-boomer men, with money to spend and time on their hands, have played a big role in expanding the market in recent years, motorcycle companies are trying hard to woo women buyers."¹⁴

Harley-Davidson, like other companies that have not traditionally marketed their products to women, is now recognizing the powerful buying potential of women. According to the company's data, women represent 1 in 10 U.S. motorcycle riders and account for nearly 12 percent of new Harley-Davidson motorcycle purchases.¹⁵

What is happening here? Marketing motorcycles, and not just any motorcycle, but marketing Harleys to women?

Interestingly, it seems that Harley is doing more than any other motorcycle company in terms of product development. On the product front, Harley is producing more motorcycles with narrow seats that are lower to the ground than traditional models to make them more comfortable for women. The company is also "selling more clothes in bright colors and with rhinestones, rather than the standard-issue black-and-orange leather jackets. Even the skull motif that appears on some clothing sold at Harley outlets has undergone a friendly makeover to include wings and flowers," according to the New York Times.¹⁶

Undoubtedly, clothes capture the attention of many women, but it takes more than fashion flair to reach multi-minding women. That is where Harley and other motorcycle companies are at a distinct disadvantage. They need to sell a relatively new and expensive category to women, in addition to building a brand preference. They will have to build a network of interested women, not just tap into one that exists for categories that have already built relationships with women.

Harley is ramping up its efforts on the very-important-to-women communications front. Car dealers take note: Harley dealers have sought the advice of experts in selling to female consumers so that the showroom experience is more female friendly. Also at the retail level, dealers hold garage parties to educate women about bikes. This party idea

Questions Every Marketer or Business Owner Should Ask

- Who is currently buying most of my products or services? Who will present the biggest buying opportunities in the future?
 - What local or national cause or issue might be a good match for my company or brand? Have I asked the opinions of those who buy my products or services?
 - How can I engage or more actively engage consumers in a way that helps them and transcends commercialism?
 - How am I letting my consumers know that I hear them and I am changing based on their input?
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should work well with multi-minding women who can learn about something new (motorcycles) and get together with their girlfriends at the same time.

Another must-do when trying to reach multi-minding women is providing detailed information online so they can conduct an Internet search when it is convenient for them. The company smartly added a “Women & Motorcycling” section on its Web site for female bikers with tips on appropriate gear and how to ride safely. Though not readily apparent when you enter the main Harley-Davidson site, the section also profiles female riders and promotes the garage parties.

In 2007, for the first time, Harley-Davidson marketed to women at the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, one of the most important motorcycle events in the country. The company launched a series of events specifically for women, including a kiosk for women-centric activities, as well as a women’s day, which featured women-only demonstrations, seminars, and special guests.

Women at the event, most of whom attended with a spouse or boyfriend, saw for the first time that Harley was paying attention to them as female riders. Harley may not have a robust network of female riders, but the company gave credibility to its women’s marketing efforts by addressing them at the Sturgis event, instead of at a separate women’s event.

Harley-Davidson clearly has more work to do if the company truly wants to succeed in attracting female consumers to the category and the brand. However, if the efforts so far are any indication, the company should succeed over time in claiming a leadership position in marketing motorcycles to women.

MULTI-MINDING IS HERE TO STAY

Whether your brand has been marketed to women for decades or you are just starting to market less traditional products to women, you will have to deal with the dynamic of

multi-minding in women's lives today. This book will explore multi-minding and its major implications for marketers. Through expert opinions and case studies, you will more fully understand the multi-minding phenomenon and how to engage women for your brand or business.

Please remember, there is no silver bullet or a one-stop-shop answer about how to more effectively engage women. It is an ongoing process, a journey. Think of it as you would if you were building an important relationship. It is something you live, day in and day out, not something you check off your to-do list.

The effort is well worth it. Without women buying your product or service, chances are good that you will not have a product or service to sell in the future.

M² Must-Dos

- √ Realize the purchasing power of the female consumer today and change your marketing to reflect that focus.
 - √ Use compelling statistics about the marketplace to sell-in marketing to-women to senior management.
 - √ Connect an iconic brand to a relevant social issue that will enable product messages to transcend commercialism.
 - √ Engage consumers in your social issue marketing, make changes based on their input, commit to financial and nonfinancial support, and consistently communicate about your activities.
 - √ Create an advisory panel of experts and real women to react to marketing campaigns, test products, and serve as a sounding board—giving them a vested interest in your business.
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Notes

CHAPTER ONE

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