

**A Book Report on**  
***Marketing to Women***  
(*How to Increase Your Share of the World's Largest Market*)  
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(Book Report by Gary Tomlinson)

## **Introduction:**

Women are the world's most powerful consumers. They are the big spenders, whether you're talking about households, corporate purchasing, or small businesses. Would you believe that until the first edition of this book was published, not a single book addressed the nuts-and-bolts specifics of how to market to persons of the female persuasion? Why is that, when women make up just over half of the population and, more important, control well over half of the spending? It's time for a book that presents the business case, identifies the operating insights, and details specific marketing tactics for the consumer group marketers need most – *women*. This is that book!

What's the first rule of marketing? *Understand your market*. What's the second rule? *Understand your consumer*.

## **What Makes Women a Worthwhile Market?**

Packaged goods companies and retailers have long recognized that women form the core of their market. However, until very recently, the big-ticket industries – automotive, financial services, computers, consumer electronics, home improvements, and travel for example – appear to have overlooked female customers almost entirely. Despite the fact that women represent a significant percentage of the buyers in most of these categories – usually 40 to 60 percent – we still see almost exclusively male-targeted advertising.

Somebody's not watching the "buy-o-meter" carefully enough. By not understanding their markets, these companies are leaving money on the table. What is worse – and makes this missed opportunity a devastating sales drain – is the multiplier effect each female consumer sets into motion. What women buy, women "sell"; when they're pleased with products and services, they talk about them to others – men and women alike. The resulting word of mouth is the most powerful marketing tool you could ask for. Every new woman customer you acquire creates a multiplier effect of sales referrals and extra business.

## **Why Market Differently to Women?**

The answer lies in Rule Two – *understand your consumer*. Up until now, we all assumed that men and women operated pretty much the same way when it came to buying decisions. Women have a very different set of priorities, preferences, and attitudes.

Their purchase decision process is radically different. And they respond differently to marketing media and messages, language, and visuals. Any marketer who wants to capture a substantial share of a woman's wallet has some gender learning to do in order to understand this previously overlooked consumer.

At this point, you may be asking yourself: *So what if men and women are different? A car is still a car, and a computer is a computer – right? Wrong Question!*

### **Never Mind the Product, It's the Prospect that Matters:**

Men and women perceive, believe, and behave in ways unique to their gender. At times, their differing roles in life – different work, different play, different domestic responsibilities – generate differing needs. Smart marketers know it's not the product and its features that should drive the marketing, it's the prospect and her needs. The communication connection – aligning your brand with your target audience's perceptions – is what will propel the success of your marketing programs.

### **Men's Marketing Doesn't Work with Women:**

Gender-based differences in perceptions, attitudes, and communication styles generate gender-differentiated responses in priorities, decision processes, and purchase outcomes. You can address these differences in your marketing to great advantage, or you can ignore them at your peril.

### **Women's Marketing Increases Customer Satisfaction Among Men:**

Some marketers do recognize that men and women are different, but they worry that if they tailor their product or service in ways meaningful to women, it will undermine the product or service appeal to men. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. As you'll see, plenty of companies have made marketing and service improvements in order to increase brand appeal to women – and as a bonus, they've discovered that their male customers are happier too.

### **How This Book Will Boost Your Business:**

There is so much support proving the power and wealth of the female market that it seems downright odd that some companies still resist the opportunity. They look beyond, over, or straight through the female market as if it doesn't exist. This book aims to help you avoid such a costly oversight by answering these three key questions:

1. What makes women a worthwhile market?
2. Why market differently to women?
3. How do we get beyond gender generalities to actionable tactics?

Once those questions are answered convincingly, resistance is futile. Companies that understand their market, understand their consumer, and understand how to translate

insights into action will survive and prosper, as they build their share with the largest consumer market in the world!

## Why Market to Women?

The simple fact is that women are now deeply integrated into the workplace, are more educated on average than men, and often earn as much as or more than men. The result is power – the power of the purse that comes from earning. In short:

- Women earn and own more today than at any previous time in recorded history – and their financial power is accelerating.
- Independent of income or ownership, women control most of the spending in the household. The generally accepted estimate of women's buying power puts it at 80 percent of all household spending.

### The Four Components of the Women's Market:

There are four ways in which the women's market wields a big stick. The first two provide some perspective on how much women earn and own. The second two cast light on how women spend.

1. **Earning Power – What's In Her Wallet?** On average, women are earning a whole lot more money than they used to. Over the next two decades we will see the immense assets of two generations become increasingly concentrated in the hands of baby boomer women. What that means is there's an existing market today and an even larger potential market that spans the next two decades. Let's look at a few reasons for this change:
  - a. *Soaring Income* – Over the past three decades (1970 -2002), men's median income has barely budged (0.6 percent) while women's has soared (63 percent).
  - b. *Narrowing Wage Gap* – While it's true that on average, full-time, year-round working women earn only 78 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts, the wage gap is narrowing rapidly.
  - c. *Earning More* – As of 2002, 31 percent of women out-earned their husbands. Almost half (43 percent) of working wives with graduate degrees earn more than their husbands, as do 60 percent of women with business degrees.
  - d. *Majority of Household Income in Majority of Households* – Women bring in half or more of the household income in the majority of U.S. households. Don't forget that 27 percent of U.S. households are headed by single women.
  - e. *Higher-Paying Occupations* – Although most women still work in the traditionally female occupations of secretary, teacher, and nurse, a substantial and growing percentage work in nontraditional occupations that pay more.

- f. *Financial Acuity* – Between 1985 and 1995, women gained majority status as financial managers, accountants, and auditors, and economists.

**2. High-Net-Worth Women – The Ultimate Asset Holders.** Most people are surprised to learn that affluent women already control the majority of financial assets in this country. For example:

- a. *Bringing Home the Bacon* – Seventy percent of women earning more than \$100,000 earn more than their husbands.
- b. *Accumulating Assets* – Forty-eight percent of estates worth more than \$5 million are controlled by women compared to the 35 percent controlled by men. Women constitute 47 percent of individuals with assets over \$500,000.
- c. *Women of Wealth* – Women control 51.3 percent of the private wealth in the United States.
- d. *Top Dollar* – Among the top wealth holders in 1995, the average net worth for women was \$1.38 million, slightly higher than for the male wealth holders, and the females carried less debt.
- e. *Decision Power Increasing* – Men and women shared major financial decisions in half of the affluent households in 2000 versus 40 percent in 1995.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. The largest wealth transfer in history is about to take place as baby boomers inherit from their parents.

**3. Consumer Spending Power – Household Chief Purchasing Officer.**

Retailers and packaged goods companies have known for a long time that their primary purchaser was female. What marketers haven't caught on to yet is that women's spending power now extends far beyond the "small stuff." In the past, big-ticket items like cars, insurance policies, and major appliances were historically bought by, and therefore marketed, to men. Things have changed! Nowadays, women drive the purchases even in historically male-driven categories. For example:

- a. Women make 53% of all investment decisions.
- b. Women make 55% of all consumer electronic purchases.
- c. Women make 60% of all home improvements buyers; 80% of all home improvement decisions.
- d. Women make 60+% of all new car purchases.
- e. Women make 66% of all new computer purchases.

Single women head 27 percent of households in the United States. In more than one out of four U.S. households, women are the sole decision makers! And they're in the market for cars, computers, homes, financial services, and just about anything else you can think of.

In 85 percent of U.S. families, women are the ones to take care of the checkbook and pay the bills. And when it comes to the big-ticket items, not only is she buying her own products, like the single women above, but she also has a disproportionate say in the shared decisions, such as cars, investment accounts, and family vacations.

Eighty-six percent of women are either the main decision makers (32 percent) or joint decision makers (54 percent) of household financial matters.

#### **4. Women Mean Business – Controlling the Company Checkbook.**

Companies that market business to business also need to pay attention, because when it comes to business buying, women play a significant role as well. 53 percent of all purchasing managers and buyers and 58 percent of wholesale and retail buyers are women.

Most people are unaware that women-owned businesses constitute 40 percent of all companies in this country. They employ almost 10 percent of all Americans and generate \$2.5 trillion in annual sales. Companies targeting the small business market need to focus on the fact that women business owners accounted for a full 70 percent of all new business start-ups over the past decade.

Women business owners also make a big impact in their communities, with a lot of influence beyond their own companies. They are philanthropically active: 70 percent volunteer at least once a month; 31 percent contribute \$5,000 or more to charity annually; 15 percent give \$10,000 or more.

The four factors we've just discussed are powerful enough alone to sound the alert for marketers. However, there's more. Not only do women make up the majority of the market, but they are more profitable. Marketing to women will deliver more profit to your bottom line than putting the same budget against an all-male target.

**More Profitable Customers:** Two dimensions of the women's buying process make them more profitable customers than men in the long run: loyalty and referrals. First, because women are more demanding in making the initial purchase in a category, they recoup their time investment by staying more loyal to the brand they've chosen in subsequent purchase cycles. Second, because word of mouth is more prevalent among women, they are more likely to recommend to others those brands or salespeople that impress them favorably.

Effectively targeting women generates higher customer satisfaction – among both women and men. Accordingly, when you meet the higher expectations of women, you are more than fulfilling the demands for men. In essence, you've got two satisfied customers for the price of one. Marketing to women delivers a better return on your marketing dollar through both higher customer acquisition and greater customer retention.

**The Differences That Make a Difference:** Women and men may be 95 percent the same and only 5 percent different, but boy does that last 5 percent make a big difference! Especially because much of that 5 percent is concentrated right at the heart of marketing: differences in perceptions, preferences, aptitudes, behaviors, communication patterns, and more. So let's get to it – How are women different from men?

When you get right down to it, every gender difference in this book traces straight back to sex and survival – and I'm not being glib. Men and women have two different survival instincts, or evolutionary strategies. The ultimate goal – maximize the number of kids who survive you. Men's strategy – make the maximum number of kids. Women's strategy – help the kids you have survive.

Our male ancestors needed to climb the tribal ladder as fast as they could and, once they reached the penthouse, to enjoy the rewards, which often included more mating privileges. This required competitiveness, backed up by aggressiveness if need be. Hunting required the ability to focus on a target and strong spatial/navigation skills to get back to home base.

Meanwhile, for the females it was more a question of hanging in there through the rigors of raising kids and trying to make sure that the offspring made it to the point of procreation. With less testosterone to push women toward aggressive behavior and with a passel of cave-kids to care for, women needed survival savvy, the ability to collaborate with family members and neighbors in order to share resources, and a selfless drive to nurture the young.

**Hormones – Gender Chemistry:** The gender culture game is certainly kicked off by chromosomes, but the more we know, the more we realize that hormones play a big part.

**Testosterone – The Male Hormone:** Testosterone drives male-linked personality characteristics like aggressiveness, self-assertiveness, the drive for dominance, competitiveness, risk taking, and thrill seeking. It also is a direct driver of a variety of aptitudes you would normally think of as being more learned or individual than biochemical. Tests on men and women measuring spatial, mechanical, and math abilities show that individuals of both genders get higher scores at times when their testosterone levels are higher.

**Estrogen – The Primary Female Hormone:** Estrogen has two roles. One is high levels of estrogen are associated with strong nesting and nurturing feelings, giving a deep satisfaction from caring for home and family members. Two is the hormone also acts to suppress the effects of the testosterone that women generate. When estrogen levels are lower (and thus testosterone has more of a free reign), women are more competitive, improve in math and spatial skills, and are more prone to aggressive behaviors – just like men. So beginning around their middle 50s, women may be surprised to find their checkbooks easier to balance and an increase confidence in their ability to program the VCR.

**Progesterone**, another female hormone, also promotes parental/care-taking urges and is released when a woman sees a baby – any baby, not just her own.

**Oxytocin**, a hormone that promotes a “sense of partnership and urge to take care for a child,” floods the system during labor and delivery and in one other crucial circumstance – when women are under stress. Years ago, scientists identified adrenaline as the body’s primary response to stress and termed its hyper-energetic effect the “fight or flight” syndrome. New research has revealed that when women are stressed out, they release more Oxytocin than adrenaline, thus triggering an urge for interpersonal interaction. It’s proof of something we women have always known – there’s nothing like a girlfriend to talk to when you’ve had a bad day.

**Serotonin** is a hormone that is inversely correlated with risk-taking behavior. Women have more serotonin than men do and more serotonin receptor sites in the brain, which damp down the thrill-seeking urges and exhibitionist behavior.

**Brain Structure:** Chromosomes and hormones inspire the male brain to reorganize it self differently from the female brain. As a rule, men seem to favor the right hemisphere more efficiently than women. However, women are not left hemisphere oriented, as you might expect. Women use both the right and left hemispheres together. Men’s brains are more localized, specialized, and efficient at focusing; whereas women’s are more distributed, connected, and better at integrating.

**Brain Connectivity:** Women’s brains have more connections than men’s. Scientists believe this may account for women’s inclination to think holistically, preferring to view each element and interaction in context as part of a bigger picture. They also think this brain connectivity may account for the legendary women’s intuition, allowing women to pull together more detail from disparate sources – sight, speech, emotional overtones and emerge with a non-linear conclusion.

**Women’s Ways of Knowing – Senses and Sensitivity:** Would you believe that men and women literally see things differently? Men are better at focused, sharp vision (think “spotlight”), while women have better peripheral vision (think “floodlight”). For all four remaining senses, women’s responses are more acute; they can detect more subtle levels of input.

Women don’t corner the market on strong emotion. Nonetheless, I bet we would find nearly universal agreement that women are the more emotional sex. Three key factors play into this. First, researchers believe that, on average, women actually experience the entire range of emotions with greater intensity and more volatility than men. Second, in female gender culture, it’s accepted, even expected, that women will express their emotions more often. In fact, men pride themselves on their self-control in not showing emotion. And third, because of women’s greater brain connectivity, women can articulate emotions better, because there are more connections between the emotional and verbal centers of the brain.

In study after study, women pick up on details and nuances better than men. It seems that men notice or care about only the big important things, while women notice and care about the big important things and the details. To men, the smaller differentiating details either don't register or don't make as much difference as they do to the women. For example, women are more sensitive to interpersonal nuances – tone of voice, facial expression, and similar details than men are.

Psychologists report that women regularly think more contextually and holistically, placing the elements they see in relation to each other and integrating them into a bigger-picture “whole.” To simplify this point, one could legitimately say that men are the analysts (they take things apart), and women are the synthesizers (they put things together). This turns out to be one of the key points of female gender difference.

Women are more people oriented than men are from the get-go. Women use their verbal skills to build bonds with other people. Whereas men get closer to other people by *doing stuff* together, women get closer by *talking* together. When men want to spend some friendly time with a pal, they play ball, fish, or go to a game. Women on the other hand, see the primary point in getting together as talking.

We've seen that men are evolutionarily less oriented toward all the “people stuff” that women focus on. What men find fascinating and important are “things and theorems.” Psychologists say that when it comes to resolving complex interpersonal situations, women tend to base their thinking on examples and personal experience, while men's thoughts are more likely to concern ideals of right and wrong, justice, fair play, or duty. Men say, “This is what's right. Here are the rules.” Women say, “It depends.”

**Important Key Take-Away:** The critical point to remember is this – before you move forward with a marketing approach or a communication campaign based on something you find hyper-engaging, check it out against the principles of female gender culture to make sure you're aligned with your customer.

We've just talked about a number of the differences that distinguish women from men. Now, we're going to embark on a crash course in female gender culture – a course that will equip you with the understanding you need to capture the attention and win the business of women consumers.

## **The GenderTrends Marketing Model**

Why and How Women Reach Different Brand Purchase Decisions

The ultimate goal of this book and the GenderTrends Marketing Model is to help you motivate more women consumers to buy your product or service. Along the way, we're going to be doing a lot of learning, strategizing, and specific application, but it's all aimed at influencing just one thing – your woman consumer's decision.



There are three components of the GenderTrends marketing model. They are the **Star**, the **Circle**, and the **Spiral Path**.

**The Star:** The value of the star is that it organizes and consolidates these differences into a manageable framework. The four star points of the female gender culture are defined as:

1. Social Values
2. Life/Time Factors
3. Focus Strategies
4. Communication Keys

The core premise of this book is that each of these star points exerts a considerable influence on how a woman makes her purchase decision.

**The Circle:** Whereas the Star captures what the woman brings to the equation, the Circle represents what the company brings. The keystones surrounding the Circle represent the 12 elements of the marketing mix. They are:

- |                        |                                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Customer Care       | 7. Affinity Marketing              |
| 2. Word of Mouth       | 8. Event Marketing                 |
| 3. Product & Packaging | 9. Web Site & Electronic Marketing |
| 4. Advertising         | 10. Direct Response & Database     |
| 5. Publicity & PR      | 11. Retail Environment             |
| 6. Promotion           | 12. Sales Experience               |

Some marketers may not use all the marketing elements – for instance, some may not include event marketing in their plans. However, regardless of which elements you use, the Circle illustrates that women respond differently than men do to every one of these elements. Combined with the Star, the Circle provides a structure for organizing your thinking about these differing reactions, as well as a tool to help you plan your marketing approach.

**The Spiral Path:** The third component of the GenderTrends Marketing Model, the Spiral Path, represents the consumer's decision process. Any consumer's purchase decision process can be simplified into five stages: *Activation, Nomination, Investigation & Decision, Retention, and Recommendation*. I'll define these stages and talk about the gender factors that make a woman's purchasing path different from a man's in chapter 6. For now, you need to note just two things:

1. While men's purchase path is depicted in a linear process, women's is shown as a spiral path.
2. The GenderTrends Compass moves with the consumer through all stages of her purchase path. This means that the insights on how gender culture interacts with your core marketing elements can be applied at each and every stage of the path.

The key to the GenderTrends Marketing Model is that it brings together both gender expertise and marketing experience. To create an effective program, you need both.

**The Star Gender Culture:** Now we'll look at gender differences in the context of daily behavior and decision making – the gender differences most germane to marketing.

If all you were trying to do with a marketing program was deliver straight information, like a journalist, gender culture might not matter too much. But as a marketer, you're trying to do a good deal more than deliver information – you want to persuade and motivate a consumer to take action. Not only that, but there are at least a half-dozen competitors trying to do the same thing you are and you'll need to find a way to do it better.

The key to creating marketing programs that will win women's business is to understand what women value. Often, what they value, which may mean what they cherish, what they enjoy, what they take pride in, or what matters to them, is different from what men value.

A study conducted by the Greenfield Online for Arnold's Women's Insight Team surveyed 1,000 men and women on how the two genders think they are portrayed in advertising. A full 91 percent of the women, almost all of them, said they think advertisers don't understand them. This indicates there is an enormous chasm between the women consumer and the marketers' understanding of that consumer. It also means there is an enormous opportunity for the marketer who crosses that chasm.

**Star Point One: Social Values:** I think it's fair to say that women are more likely than men to think that *people* are the most important and interesting element in life. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to hold the view that people are important, but no more important or interesting than current events or new ideas in computer animation or something more material like cars or cameras.

Women's magazines are full of articles about celebrities, the dynamics of blended families, advice columns about personal problems, self-help topics on how to enjoy life more, motivational stories about cancer survivors, and yes, advice on how to make him happy. Men like to read magazines devoted to news, sports, business, computers, fitness, hunting, fishing, or other activities. But when it comes to reading about people and their internal workings most men find it boring.

In the pages that follow I'm going to expand on this different outlook toward people by addressing three separate but closely interwoven topics on which men and women differ:

1. Whereas men are soloists, women are ensemble players.
2. Whereas men aspire to be "winners," women prefer to be "warmer."
3. Whereas men occupy a pyramid, women occupy a peer group.

Each of these topics is rich with revelation on how women's values vary from men's, and each offers a wealth of marketing implications.

**Men are Soloists, Women are Ensemble Players:** Men look at the world from the perspective of the *individual*. Their core unit is “me”; and it's important that the other “me's” recognize that this “me” is different, special. They take pride in self-reliance and self-determination. The way the world should work is like this – *I earn my own way, I deserve the rewards. I can do it myself, I don't expect help, don't want advice, I mind my own business – and so should the other guy.* At the end of the day, what men want to see on their tombstone is this – *I left my mark on the world.*

Women look at the world from the perspective of the *group*. Their core unit is “we” and the best feeling in the world is being with people with whom you have a lot in common. They take pride in their caring, consideration, and loyalty, and one way they demonstrate that is by looking out for the others in their informal tribe – family, neighbors, friends, and coworkers. One of women's highest values is a feeling of closeness and connection with another person. As far as women are concerned, when two people are really close, they want to know everything about each other. They want to know the other's dreams, doubts, and disappointments; their favorite food, shoe store, and vacation spot; their medications, worrisome moles, manicurist, and macaroni recipes. They even want to know about yesterday's tantrum and tomorrow's meeting with the contractor – nothing is too mundane or too personal. (I can feel the men recoiling.) For women, though, that's the point, you see – getting personal. To women, that's a good thing! The way the world should work is through cooperation and mutual support.

**Guardians of civilization:** Somewhere along the way, women were handed the “guardian of civilization” cloak. It's generally agreed that when it comes to the altruistic stuff, women are in charge of everything: the earth, the arts, and the unfortunate; morality, spirituality, culture, and civilization. Women are more philanthropic, giving more time and proportionately more money than men. Whereas men are twice as likely to think the nation's most pressing issues are budget and cutting spending, women, across age, income, race, and social class, are more inclined to favor social programs and issues, such as education, health care, child care, poverty, joblessness, environment, world hunger, etc.

Women care and they vote with their wallets. Women are overwhelmingly more supportive than men of cause-related shopping. I coined the term *corporate halo* as the marketing implication that stems from this principle. Corporate halo is a bigger idea than *cause marketing*. Cause marketing is a marketing partnership between a business and nonprofit entity for mutual benefit. But corporate halo is more than just a business partnership – it's the sum of a company's acts of social responsibility and community citizenship for the benefit of the whole community.

The Grey Advertising study puts women's commitment to altruistic aims in this dramatic perspective – *women want to help make the world a better place.* Compare “I helped make the world a better place” to “I made my mark on the world.” From a distance, they

seem to be saying almost the same thing; but up close, they capture a world of difference in men's and women's outlooks on life.

Listed below are the results from a Grey Advertising research project on women's aspirations:

Make the world a better place.....	85%
See kids become really successful.....	83%
Have enough time to do what I want.....	82%
Travel more.....	72%
Accumulate wealth.....	62%
Be more attractive.....	53%
Be really successful in my career.....	48%
Be younger.....	27%
Be famous.....	7%
Live like a movie star.....	5%

Look at the above list carefully and think about whether the majority of women-targeted ads you see actually reflect women's true values. Most advertising targeted to women keys in on getting ahead, fun, and excitement, looking smashing (which, of course, means looking younger, right?), and taking care of household duties. This isn't to say that such advertising isn't at all relevant; only that it's missing the really meaningful messages. This goes a long way toward explaining the survey results we saw earlier that says most women feel that advertisers don't understand them and, worse, that advertising portrays their gender in a way that's actually annoying rather than appealing.

**Men Aspire to Be “Winners,” Women Prefer to Be “Warmer:”** Men think competition is fun. It's built into how they work, how they play, and how they communicate. When it comes to personal interactions, experts agree that for a man, every encounter in his professional and personal life is a contest; and every contest a zero-sum game. As he sees it, either he wins or he loses. Not surprisingly, this has implications for the types of personal relationships men form. Because even their friendships are grounded in competition, and their interactions take place in the language of challenges and aggressiveness, they have to be on guard against these same qualities in others. Any imperfection could be construed as a sign of weakness, so it's better to keep as much as you can to yourself. If you're wrong or don't know something, don't let others find out. Men's mentality is rooted in concealing, whereas as we saw earlier, women's is rooted in revealing.

Rules are very important in male gender culture. First, rules give boundaries to the competitive behavior. Second, rules tell you when the game is over and, most important, who has won. Men need clarity on this so that they can get back to business and move on. This role of rules in male society probably accounts directly for psychologists' observation that men are often more concerned with “matters of principle” and tend to be more inflexible when applying them, whereas woman tend to feel “it depends” and adjust for the context and people involved.

Women make a distinction between the two core elements of competition: *interaction* is fun, *conflict* is not. Playing is fun, but losing isn't – somebody's feelings are going to get hurt. Whereas a man might say, "I like the game – I play to win – what's the score?" a woman would probably say, "I like the players – I play to play – whose turn is it?" Compared to men, women test equally high on internal competitiveness or the drive to achieve her personal best, but the drive to conquer someone else is not nearly as strong.

**Men Occupy a Pyramid, Women Occupy a Peer Group:** In a man's worldview, his relation to other people is organized in comparative terms: higher/lower, faster/slower, first/second, bigger/smaller, more/less, and so on. A woman's outlook is relational without being comparative – similar to/different from, know her/don't know her, far/near, and so on. You could say that men stack people vertically, and women arrange them next to each other.

Men are always conscious of where they stand in comparison to others, measuring and evaluating everything – their territory, their house size, their company prestige, and their success relative to other men.

Women believe that all people are created equal. Combined with the perspective that people are the most important and interesting element in life, that caring and consideration are high-priority values, that interacting with others in a win-win way ought to be anyone's idea of a good time, a place at the top of a pyramid is going to look pretty unappealing. It's lonely at the top. In the world of women, the ideal position is side by side.

In advertising, it has been taken as a given for years that aspiration, the drive to be like someone higher up the ladder, was a fundamental motivating factor for everyone. The point to remember is that the benefits of the side-by-side arrangement are just as self-evident to women as pyramid power is to men.

Another important manifestation of these different mindsets, in terms of implications for marketing and sales, is how men and women feel about asking for or accepting help. Men don't like it. They prefer to see themselves as masters of a situation, whereas women are more likely to see themselves as students. With no barriers to admitting they don't know something, women are more likely to seek and welcome assistance from other people, and to relate to communications that characterize their view of themselves as "lifetime learners."

**Degrees of Difference:** A cross-cultural survey of six modern societies asked men and women to describe their ideal self – "the kind of person I would like to be." Men in all of these cultures overwhelmingly described themselves as bold, competitive, capable, dominant, assertive, admired, critical, and self-controlled. Women overwhelmingly chose a very different set of descriptors: warm, loving, impulsive, generous, sympathetic, and affectionate.

The thing to keep in mind is that not only does each gender identify itself with a given set of characteristics, but depending on the context, each may be indifferent to, or sometimes even repelled by, the other gender traits. For example, women may see what men call self-sufficiency as just a nicer name for selfishness. Men are often horrified by the way women inquire about intimate personal details, seeing it as intrusive and none of their business. On the other hand, women are appalled when men don't inquire, because in female gender culture, that's a silent snub that clearly says "I don't care."

Understanding the underlying principles of gender culture will help you flag what's likely to work, what's not, and what sensitive areas need a little direct consumer feedback.

**Star Point Two: Life/Time Factors:** Women allocate their time differently than men do – partly because they have different roles in daily life, partly because they have a different style of getting things done, and partly because, thanks to their longer life spans, they simply have more time in their mature years. Each of these aspects holds important opportunities for marketers who recognize the underlying motivations and resulting needs that affect women in their purchase decisions.

**Women and the Double Day** – Few would dispute that women's roles have changed substantially in the last 30 years. Today, the majority of women work outside the home – and the majority of work *inside* the home is still done by women.

One thing all women agree on is that there just isn't enough time in the day to get everything done. Women are not just busy, they are time starved. In fact, time is the single most important resource that people have nowadays.

**Multitasking:** Men tend to be single-minded and focused, whereas women tend to be multi-minded and integrated. Men like to structure their life linearly: first things first, finish one thing before going on to the next, get the most important things done before tackling anything lower on the list. Women pursue several tasks simultaneously. To women, this is the most efficient way to work within their "many hats" lifestyle. As they move across their roles at work, at home, and at leisure, it allows them to accomplish more. In fact, if women aren't doing more than one thing at a time, most feel a vague sense of unease and start looking around for something to add into the mix. Just cooking dinner isn't enough, but if she can return a phone call, get the mail opened, and sort the laundry at the same time, now that's getting something done!

**Live Long and Prosper:** These days, 55 is very alive; it's Prime Time, not the darkest hour before dawn. As the baby boomer population moves into prime time – and becomes progressively more female – we're going to see some major shifts in both popular culture and marketing opportunities. Between the years 2000 and 2010, the 55 to 64 population will grow an astounding 48 percent; by contrast, the 25-54 age population will grow a mere 2 percent.

**Star Point Three: Focus Strategies:** One of the most pervasive differences between women and men is this: Men are single-minded and focused, while women are multi-minded and integrated. Relative to men, women see more details, care more about them, and via those bilateral brains and multi-zone processing, prefer to integrate them into a comprehensive whole rather than strip them away as extraneous. In other words, men analyze (take apart) and women synthesize (put together).

Women pick up on things that men don't even register. If you can touch it, taste it, hear it, see it, or smell it, she's probably noticing it at some level, and it's figuring into her assessment of your product, service, and communications. Even beyond the five senses, women possess a more hidden sensory ability. They can read subtle variances in tone of voice, facial expression, gestures, and body language.

Although it's true that men only care about "the important stuff," the corollary is not that women care only about the details. Women want all the same things as men – and then some. They have a longer list. In the film *When Harry Met Sally*, the two friends are in a diner ordering diner. Harry places his order, quickly requesting an item on the menu. Sally names her item, and then launches into the specifics: "I'd like the pie heated, and I don't want the ice cream on top, I want it on the side. And I'd like strawberry instead of vanilla, if you have it. If not, then no ice cream, just whipped cream, but only if it's real. If it's out of a can, then nothing." Harry thinks she's crazy, obsessed, demented, but as Sally says, "I just want it the way I want it." *That's what your women customers want, too.* Details matter.

**Integrate versus Extricate:** When it comes to absorbing a problem, sizing up a situation, or making a big-ticket purchase decision, men and women couldn't be more different. Both believe in getting "the big picture," but they approach it from opposite points of view.

Men believe in peeling away the "extraneous detail." If it's not one of the top three to five factors, forget about it. Clarity comes from simplification, stripping away the small distinctions, discarding the data that clutter up the main points.

With women, it's an entirely different story. In their view, details not only add richness and depth but are necessary to an understanding of the situation. How can you possibly grasp the big picture without a detailed understanding of the specifics? Women look to add information, not cut it away. While men see this as complicating the situation, women see it as integrating all the material necessary for a comprehensive perspective. Anything less would be superficial and meaningless.

**The Perfect Answer:** The "longer-list" factor (wanting all the same things as men and then some) and the drive for a complete, integrated solution combine to create what I call the "Perfect Answer" syndrome. The Perfect Answer syndrome is a fundamental premise of the GenderTrends Marketing Model and an important key to understanding how women buy. Basically, women set the bar higher than men do; and if that means it takes longer to get over the bar, so be it. Women don't settle for "good enough."

Companies today generally focus their research and their marketing messages on whatever has been identified as the “most important” factor(s). That works for a male buyer. The first option he encounters that checks off all the “Top Box” criteria – problem solved. Buy it. Proceed to the next priority.

The problem is, in most categories all the main competitors offer all the same “most important” features. So which brand a man buys is based almost as much on proximity as anything else – whichever qualified option he encounters first. But a woman has a longer list, and her decision is based on the whole package including the “nonessential but nice to have.” That’s great for the share-seeking marketer because she actually cares about the things that make you different from your competitors.

To coin a phrase...*the diva’s in the details*. Women are constantly scanning, integrating, and acting on the details. And these are often details that guys don’t say anything about. Does that make women “demanding” customers? You bet. But it also makes them more discerning customers, and you can apply that to your advantage. Here’s an interesting finding – many companies have found that paying attention to what women want has helped them increase customer satisfaction among their male customers.

**Star Point Four: Communication Keys:** The Communication Keys of male and female gender culture evolve from the values and principles of the other three Star Points. Here are five keys that are at the core of male-female gender differences.

1. **Headline versus Body Copy:** Consistent with men’s inclination to simplify and strip away extraneous detail, they believe in starting with the main point and supplying specific detail only if the listener asks for it. Conversely, women will often start with a lengthy background and build up to the summary conclusion – an approach consistent with their belief in context and richness of detail. To women, the details are the good part. The guys are patient up to a point. But a woman wants the full story and “making a long story short” is not usually the best way to get and keep her attention. To engage her with your message in the first place, she needs some specifics to work with. And to serve her in her search for the Perfect Answer, she’ll require a lot of product and service information to compare against her longer list.
2. **“Report Talk” versus “Rapport Talk:”** Sociolinguist Dr. Deborah Tannen characterizes men’s conversation as “report talk,” whose role is to transmit information, solve problems, and establish or defend individual status. She calls women’s conversation “rapport talk,” whose purpose is to transmit information, solve problems, and create connections among individuals. If you want to have a good conversation with a woman customer, either face-to-face or via your marketing materials, you need to build in some rapport.



**3.4.5. Making the Connection:** I've come to think of the ways men and women connect within genders as games – games as different as football and figure skating. Men have three games:

- a. *One-up* – Men who don't know each other usually play One-up. You know how it goes. The goal is to establish who's "higher" – any criterion will do. The topic can be money, sports, music, etc.
- b. *One-down* – The game of One-down works much the same way, but it's for guys who know each other a little better, so the competition is a little more overt.
- c. *Put-down* – The endgame in male bonding is the Put-down, and it's reserved for family and longtime friends as a sign of affection – and for all coworkers, as a good-natured bid for dominance. (To women, this style of humor is a foreign as camel's milk)

Women games are about as opposite from the men's as they could be. The insight here is that instead of connecting through competition, women connect through affinity; instead of seeking to establish rank, they strive to establish links. The key word is *empathy* – and the force is strong. Women's three games are:

- a. *Same-same* – One of the settings of women's scan mode is "things in common with someone else." Almost without thinking about it, a woman will seize the opportunity to reinforce virtually any similarity between herself and the speaker.
- b. *Scoop* – This game is the opposite of put-down. It's women's instinctive show of support when someone else might be feeling bad about something.
- c. *Gift exchange* – This is a big game for women. Women exchange compliments, and although to men it might look like a random little ritual, it's actually rooted in two ways of establishing links. First, it's a way to show affinity. When a woman tells a friend or a new acquaintance she likes her bracelet or her shoes or her dress, it's an indirect way of saying she likes her. Second, it opens the door to the way women exchange social currency, which is through stories, personal details, and confidences.

Both genders have their own "social currency." For men – it's facts and figures. For women – it's stories and personal details.

**Women's Values:** To motivate and persuade people, you have to talk to them about things they care about, in terms that matter to them – what they cherish, what they're proud of, what they enjoy, what they're hoping to accomplish in life, and so on. So as marketers, it's our job to go to the next step – translate the concepts of gender culture into an understanding of women's lives and values.

**What Women Cherish:** I'm closing this chapter with a summary of some of the key values women bring to their decision making process, with emphasis on the ones that most differentiate them from men.

- a. *Warm, close relationships* – The closer the better. To women, personal ties are a good thing – in fact the best thing. Freedom is not nearly as important as friendship.
- b. *Girlfriends* – Women's relationships with their close women friends are some of the most cherished elements in their life. Yet most marketers have barely begun to explore the possibilities of tapping into this insight for advertising and other marketing elements.
- c. *Men who are thoughtful, caring, and considerate* – No, not men who are women – rather men who are men and then some.
- d. *Children's accomplishment* – This is under the 'cherish' heading instead of "takes pride in," because the emotion women experience goes far beyond parental pride. As one of women's highest values, helping their children succeed and be happy engenders a feeling of love powerful enough to warm a village.

#### **What Women Take Pride In:**

- a. *A warm, comfortable, and orderly home* – Yes, women take pride in this. The key is to keep in mind that it's not the only thing they take pride in.
- b. *Appearance: figure, clothes, jewelry, hairstyles, grooming, and the like* – Women take pride in this but it's not the all-consuming obsession marketers seem to think it is.
- c. *Their own efforts to be caring, considerate, thoughtful, generous, and loyal* – The survey we saw in the beginning of the chapter high-lighted women's identification of these traits with their "ideal self."
- d. *Multitasking* – As we said, men see no sense in multitasking as a way of getting things done. Because it doesn't focus on "first things first," men see it as an inefficient way to run their life. But, women feel they get more done than men and are proud of being able to juggle a lot of balls at once – especially when they can manage to make it look easy.
- e. *Being needed* – As opposed to men who feel a sense of power when they attain the autonomy to do whatever they want unfettered by others, women feel powerful when others come to them for help.
- f. *Making the world a better place* – As we saw in the survey earlier, this is women's number one dream for themselves.
- g. *Corporate halo* – Altruistic elements play a major role in women's purchase contemplations. Beyond any product quality or sales or service considerations, a company's corporate halo – its acts of social responsibility and community citizenship – mean a lot to women.
- h. *Recognition* – Just because women don't boast and push themselves forward doesn't mean they don't like to be recognized and admired – for the right reasons, in the right way. Marketing messages that acknowledge women's

accomplishments are appreciated not only by the honoree but also by the female audience, which feels deserving women often get passed over for these kinds of recognition.

### **What Women Enjoy or Care about More than Men Do:**

- a. *Being around other people* – Women feel good about being in a group. Whereas men are often inclined to think of other people as a drain on their energy, women see others as a source of energy and to other people whenever their reserves are low.
- b. *Collaborative interaction* – Add to the pleasure of being around others the fun and satisfaction of collaborating on common goals for a project that is important to all of us, and you'll show women a day in the life they'd like to live.
- c. *She wants it the way she wants it* – Just because you don't notice a given detail or don't think it's important, doesn't mean she doesn't. Just because you think it's obvious that people prefer minimalist communication doesn't mean that's for her.

### **Things Women Enjoy the Same as Men – but Are Sometimes Overlooked:**

- a. *Challenge and achievement* – Women are as motivated as men by the challenge of achieving excellence. However, unlike men who care deeply about being a winner and defeating a loser, women frame their ambitions in terms of achieving their personal best.
- b. *Working* – Just like most men, the majority of women like their jobs.

### **Things Women Don't Want / Don't Do / Don't Care About:**

- a. *Isolation, loneliness* – Nobody wants isolation and loneliness, however, women don't like it more than men. Remember, for women, freedom almost always takes a back seat to friendship. Many marketers who think they're expressing independence and self-sufficiency need to check their communications explicitly to make sure they're not casting shadows of solitude and distance.
- a. *Getting ahead of the Joneses* – Many ad executions are platformed on the assumption that everyone wants to get ahead of everyone else. However, female gender culture is grounded in the idea of empathy, not envy. Women would rather be hanging out with the Joneses than scrambling to get ahead of them.
- b. *Gloating* – Women may be resigned to men's self-reinforcing statements and careflessness to claim credit where credit is due, but they are quite uncomfortable with this behavior from themselves or from another woman. They may feel boastful inside, but strutting around shouting their virtues to the world is definitely not their style.

- c. *Facts and Features* – Women’s people-first orientation causes them to see life problems and purchasing solutions in terms of how they impact people; facts and features are strictly secondary. They don’t care nearly as much about your fund’s one-, three-, five-year performance or its Morningstar rating as they do about whether this investment is going to be enough to send Jack or Emily off to the colleges of their choice.
- d. *How the thing works* – You can give women all the wonderful mechanical drawings and blueprints you want; just don’t get your hopes up that they will ever look at them. Their interest is in what benefits the products deliver, not how they work.

### **What Women Expect or Are Open To That Men Don’t Want:**

- a. *Help, advice, and others’ opinions* – Women don’t share men’s barriers to offers of assistance and instead see advice as valuable, both for its immediate content and for the learning it provides for future reference.
- b. *Emotions* –If there’s one key takeaway from this chapter, it’s this: Women and men are not the same, and using the same marketing strategies to reach them means at best a near miss. And a near miss is like almost making the sale. Because the concept of different male and female gender cultures is relatively new, as is thinking about how to apply gender culture insights to marketing, men don’t generally know women well enough to portray them the way women want to see themselves or the way they would like to be seen. As a default, women are portrayed as having the same drives and aspirations as men – to be perfect, slim, and youthful, self-involved and self-sufficient, seeking status and excitement, in control at every minute. And that’s not what women want – not most women, in any case. Ironically, one of the things women want most is a sense of belonging, a feeling of being understood. And that message is missing from most marketing communications. And as far as women are concerned, until now that intent has seemed to be missing from most marketers.

**The Circle and the Compass – Response to Marketing Contacts:** Even in its simplest form, the 4 Star Points multiplied by the 12 marketing elements would yield 48 discussion topics. To streamline the process, I’m going to select three areas – *advertising, product/packaging, and Web site/electronic marketing* – as sample applications to demonstrate how the Star Points insights interact with marketing elements.

**1. Advertising:** Advertising is probably the easiest element to work with, because there are so many ways to apply gender culture principles. Here are a representative few:

#### **Social Values:**

- a. *People first.* Step away from the conventional “product as hero” perspective and focus on people as the axis in your advertising. The people may be the

product users, as in Apple's iPod TV ads, or company representatives, such as Bill Ford for the Ford Motor Company or the late Dave Thomas for Wendy's.

- b. *"Warmer" instead of "Winner."* Avoid premises founded on command and control, going solo, status, defeating opponents, outranking others, making others jealous, being the top dog, and other qualities or values that don't connect for women. Instead seek positioning platforms that emphasize bringing people together; creating a sense of belonging and closeness; offering the opportunity to help other people; values like excellence through teamwork; consensus, and mentoring; and making the world a better place.
- c. *Similarity instead of superiority.* Feature people your target audience can identify with and relate to, attractive "normal" women rather than perfect "aspirational" women. Recognize that women are not driven by an operative emotion of envy. They don't think, *When I get that product, she's going to be so jealous of me!* Instead, they operate from empathy, thinking, *I have that same problem, maybe I'll look into doing what she's doing.*
- d. *Corporate halo.* Let your consumer know about your good corporate citizenship, the good works done by your foundation, your donations to those in need, your support of the arts or environmental causes. Today, many products are viewed as interchangeable commodities, so if a brand can't be differentiated via quality, selection, and price, an impactful way to break away from the crowd is by using the "corporate halo."

#### **Life/Time Factors:**

- a. *The double day.* Acknowledge women's multiple roles in a positive way. Don't portray women as harried, frenzied, and at the end of their rope; instead create advertising that shows them realistically as busy, yet handling the chaos with confidence and a sense of humor.
- b. *Milestones.* Tap into her mindset at a time when you know what's uppermost on her mind. Use milestone-specific media, such as wedding Web Sites to reach engaged women. Epson recently ran an ad for its printers at back-to-school time showing an excited grade school student getting on the bus with the headline "He'll never forget his first day of school, and now neither will you." Milestones can be large or small, but women mark them all.

#### **Focus Strategies:**

- a. *Details, details.* Provide plenty of specific information in various long-format media. Although credit card companies like MasterCard and American Express focus their TV ads on a single benefit, they always back them up with detailed newspaper ads and fairly lengthy direct mail contacts.
- b. *Integrate versus extricate: the big picture.* To make a decision, she'll want more than the bare bones that a man would call the big picture; she'll want a comprehensive grasp of the product, with options and contingencies, within the context of its intended usage.

- c. *Integrate versus extricate: immersion.* Instead of assuming that super-clean, streamlined copy and visuals are by definition the best way to engage and motivate her, consider and test richer, more involving executions.
- d. *Integrate versus extricate: details as differentiators.* She has a longer list, and the top benefits are a given – the price of entry. Make sure you dig out the differentiating factors and get them across. While ads for other cell phone companies were still duking it out with each other over who had the better technology and features, Nokia, taking its point-of-difference insight a step further, extended the line of colors for its face plates and started running whimsical ads showing its phone as a fashion accessory. It worked!

### **Communication Keys:**

- a. *Personalize the communications.* Use anecdotes and personal details to introduce a person or convey a situation or highlight a set of values your female audience can identify with. Use everyday language; stay away from corporate-speak and abstractions. Instead, use a lot of first-person and second-person language.
- b. *Focus on human benefits, not facts and features.* Even the most high-tech, rational product translates into human situations with human benefits. Facts and features may be important to the final sale, but that won't be relevant to your brand unless you capture a woman's attention favorably first.
- c. *Show some emotion.* Showing that somebody cares one way or another is always going to be more powerful – and memorable – to women than a sterile, high-tech presentation.

**2. Web Site / Electronic Marketing:** Web site and electronic marketing derive many of the same implications from gender culture as advertising – and then some. The medium warrants special consideration when marketing to women, because a number of its benefits are directly aligned with the tenets of female lifestyle and culture.

### **The Five Cs Connecting Women and the Internet:**

1. **Communication** – E-mail makes it easier than letters or even the phone to keep those connections alive.
2. **Content** – As voracious information seekers, women see the Net as a godsend. Count on them spending lots of time online researching questions or the myriad of topics that matter to them – including seeking out product information.
3. **Commerce** – The most likely scenario is that women's share of online spending will rise fairly quickly to approximate their share of offline spending, currently 80 percent.
4. **Convenience** – Communication, content, and shopping are all available to her in her pajamas after the kids have gone to bed.

5. **Community** – In some ways, chat groups are even better than an “old-fashioned” neighborhood – everyone in a chat room is fascinated with exactly the same thing you’re passionate about.

Women are crossing the threshold of cyberspace at a rapid pace. If the online construction crews don’t understand which site features women value and which ones frustrate them, now would be a good time to get them up to speed on gender culture, because they are just about to experience a huge surge of increased female access and buying.

#### **Life/Time Factors:**

- a. *Milestones.* Sponsor the sites women go to for help at the time of a major milestone. Or get her permission to send her an e-mail. If you can relate your product to a solution she’s looking for, she’ll be happy to link directly to your site for more information.

#### **Focus Strategies:**

- a. *Details, details.* Women buy most of the stuff, and women notice details. Who could be better qualified to serve as your R&D advisory board? Deliver surveys on your Web site or via e-mails asking women in your target audience for input on your product and/or service.
- b. *Context.* For those who sell directly off the Net, leverage its interactive capabilities to suggest related products while she’s shopping – cross-selling and up-selling via the “buy an outfit instead of an item” theory of shopping.
- c. *The Perfect Answer.* Another potential use of your Web site’s interactive capabilities is to help shortcut her search for the Perfect Answer. By providing plenty of information and supporting it with links to third-party sources commenting favorably on your product, you can help accelerate the due diligence phase and keep her within your brand’s framework while she’s doing it.

#### **Communication Keys:**

- a. *Personalize the communications.* For women, the Internet is about connecting, and if there are no people on your Web site, then how are they going to connect to your brand? Show people on the home page (preferably women). Personalize your site with an “Ask the Expert” column using real people with real questions and answers.

**3. Product and Packaging:** I chose product and packaging as my last “sample” category because, in addition to gender culture factors, there are a few other considerations you should look at that didn’t make it onto the Star, because they affect only one or two of the marketing elements.

## **Social Values:**

- a. *People first.* In this day and age, differentiating your products at the shelf is one of the most difficult tasks for any manufacturer. And at the shelf is where the vast majority of purchase decisions are made. One way to do this is by featuring people on the packaging.
- b. *Displaying status.* Status displays are not encouraged in female gender culture, where peer-to-peer links are preferred to pyramid rankings. So when you're tailoring your products for women – a cell phone, for example – think “tool” not “cool.” Save money on the fancy features and put it into warranties, guarantees, and hotlines.
- c. *Corporate halo.* Women are more likely than men to change brands based on environmental concerns. Make certain your product and your packaging are as environmentally friendly as you can make them – and be sure to communicate that on the package itself.

**Life/Time Factors:** A question for all busy women reading this: How many times have you gone through the day and just forgotten to have lunch? Campbell's developed a clever product and advertising campaign to solve this midday problem – Soup at Hand. Made in four yummy flavors in an insulated cup contoured to fit your hand and with a convenient “sippable” lid, Soup at Hand has been one of the Campbell Soup Company's most successful new product introductions ever.

- a. *Milestones.* These life event transitions are often momentous enough that consumers want to commemorate them in the products they choose. What about a financial services “wedding package” that includes joint checking and savings account and a CD that sets aside all the cash gifts from the happy day to grow in value and mature on the couple's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary?

## **Focus Strategies:**

- a. *Integration.* Seek opportunities to create “suites” or “collections” of related products that can be sold together: a collection of family room consumer electronics components designed by Michael Graves, for example; or a home office desk set of coordinated computer, peripherals, phone, and re-charger stands for a PDA and cell phone.
- b. *The Perfect Answer.* Whenever practical, present the answers to as many of the consumer's due diligence concerns as possible on the package: perhaps a comparison of your product and the category's two leading competitors – highlighting your product's advantages, of course.

**Other Factors:** In addition to the gender culture factors that make up the Star, the product and packaging element should take a number of additional points into consideration.



- a. *Physical size and strength.* A woman may choose a Jeep Cherokee over the competitive brands because it was the only one whose hatch she can easily flip open.
- b. *Sensory sensitivities.* Women are going to be more put off than men by anything overly rough, sharp, smelly, or loud. They'll be more attracted, meanwhile, to pleasing styling, textures, sounds, smells, and so on. Seek opportunities for sensory enhancement of your product, even if it's only secondary to the product's prime function.
- c. *Storage.* As manager of the household, decisions and responsibility for product storage usually fall on women. Make sure you check your package dimensions and bulk for easy lifting and "fit."
- d. *Instruction sheets and manuals.* Women find the inner workings of various technical/mechanical products neither fascinating nor particularly understandable. As far as women can tell, there's hardly a manufacturer on the planet who has put one moment's thought into reducing women's frustrations in this area.
- e. *Guarantees, warranties, and support hot lines.* Studies have found that the two most important qualities in women's purchasing decisions were warranties and the manufacturer's support and service reputation. By overcoming most women's risk reluctance, offering 100 percent guarantees is likely to win you much more in sales than it will ever cost you in redemptions.

### **The Spiral Path – How Women Make Purchase Decisions:**

Gender culture affects a woman during every moment of her life. The final component of the GenderTrends Marketing Model, the Spiral Path, captures the way in which her purchase decision process differs from that of the boy next door. To start with, let's simplify the consumer's purchase path by illustrating it in five stages:

1. *Activation.* The consumer enters the market for the kind of product or service you sell.
2. *Nomination.* She forms an idea of the brands she plans to check out during her search.
3. *Investigation and Decision.* She checks out the brands by scanning ads, reading articles, visiting Web sites, going to the store or showroom, handling the merchandise, kicking the tires, talking to the salespeople, and more.
4. *Retention.* Now a happy customer, she returns to your brand for subsequent purchases.
5. *Recommendation.* In the meantime, she recommends your product or service to everyone she knows.

From start to finish, women and men seek, search, and research differently. There are four key disparities in how women and men advance through their purchase path:

1. Women start the process differently – asking around.

2. Women pursue a different outcome – the Perfect Answer.
3. Women seek more information and investigate more options – the Spiral Path.
4. Women’s influence on your sales success doesn’t end with their purchase – the Retention and Recommendation stages.

**Asking Around: Women start the purchase decision process differently:** When women start up a search for a big-ticket product or service, instead of arming themselves as men do with plenty of knowledge (ads, ratings, Web site reading, etc.) before talking to anyone else about the issue, they ask a lot of people for input instead. Not only do they get the benefit of others’ experience and opinions by doing so, but they also see the inquiry as a relationship-building gesture.

Women are often more interested in getting their information from people, whereas men prefer to get it from impersonal sources such as written material, instructional videos, computer screens, and the like.

**The Perfect Answer: Women Pursue a Different Outcome:** When embarking on a new purchase, men go looking for a good solution, whereas women set out to find the Perfect Answer. In shorthand: men are buyers, whereas women are shoppers.

**The Spiral Path: Women Seek More Information and Investigate More Options:** The search for the Perfect Answer is the main reason the woman’s purchase path is shown as a spiral instead of a linear progression like a man’s. To arrive at a decision, women have to be sure they have gathered enough information to know everything that’s out there.

**Retention and Recommendation: Women’s Influence on Your Sales Success Doesn’t End with Their Purchases:** Marketers’ consideration of a woman’s purchase path should not stop at the purchase. Because women do so much more due diligence up front, several “side effects” occur as a result. Two post-purchase considerations, loyalty over the long haul and sharing the wealth, have a tremendous impact on a woman’s customer value to the marketer.

A woman has more personal loyalty once she has established rapport with a salesperson. Compared to men, who tend to weigh the product a little higher and the personal connection a little lower, women are more loyal and less likely to defect.

For the initial decision, women will often invest more time and undertake a more comprehensive process than men as they seek to qualify both the product or service and the seller. For subsequent decisions, the emphasis is often reversed, with women relying more on personal trust, whereas men continue to do more of the product/service assessment on a case-by-case basis.

Because they’ve done more homework up front, women feel more confident recommending their choices to friends and others. When you convert a male prospect into a male customer, you get a new male customer. When you convert a female

prospect, you get more – not only her own greater purchasing role but also a lifelong string of referrals.

## Practical Applications – Strategies & Tactics

In order to assess your market and strategize about how best to reach that market, there are three primary areas you need to consider:

- *Find your market.* Define the business case and locate the holes in the competition.
- *Understand your consumer.* Conduct the research that will give you the insights you need to create and articulate your brand’s most powerful positioning.
- *Measure your impact.* Find out for a fact what’s working and what isn’t.

**Finding Your Market – Defining the Business Case:** The two fundamental questions you’ll need to address in preparing your business case for marketing to women are: “Why women?” and “Which Women?”

**Why Women?** With so few companies doing serious marketing to women, any company that exerts itself enough to make a determined effort can expect to capture a disproportionate share of the women’s market. You’d be surprised how many of your sales are to women customers; and neither you nor your competition has been speaking to them in their language. You’d be surprised, because it’s just never occurred to most companies to look at their market opportunity by gender.

Historically, it has been men who bought the big-ticket items. Cars, computers, and hi-fi components have always seemed to hold more fascination for men than women. But, just because women don’t make a hobby of these products doesn’t mean they don’t buy them. In fact, women are the majority buyers for new cars and computers – two of men’s biggest enthusiasms. But here’s the important take away: For men, a purchase in one of these categories is *fun*; for women, it’s *functional*. Two completely different mindsets, two completely different marketing appeals.

**Which Women?** I can’t tell you whom to target, obviously; that depends on your product and your marketing objectives. However, there are two segmentation variables, which may not be on your radar screen – *marriage* and *kids*. Each time a new person enters a woman’s household, it expands the “tribe” in her head, her day-to-day workload, and the people she assumes planning responsibility for – all of which affect her buying decisions.

On the other hand, there is another variable I frequently see used to segment the women’s market that I think may **not** be particularly productive – working/nonworking. The new

nomenclature for “nonworking” is “women who don’t work outside the home.” The point being to clarify that all women are working women, just at different locations.

Throw out the age bias and keep your eye on the baby boomers. The U.S. Census Bureau predicts a 72 percent increase in adults 50-plus between 2000 and 2020 and a slight decrease in adults under 50. Adults 50 and older control 77 percent of the country’s assets and there per capita spending is 2.5 times the national average.

Mark my words – popular culture will soon transition from a youth-driven mode characterized by more male-oriented values like strength, speed, and success to an “older and wiser” mode more aligned with female values like understanding, harmony, and giving back to the community. The marketing money will follow the baby boomers, and the savviest marketing money will lead the trend.

**The Situation Scan: Finding Holes in the Competition:** Smart companies know that to be effective, they have to put together a strategic effort that delivers their message to women in a comprehensive way. The foundation to a strong marketing-to-women program is to know where your brand stands in the marketplace relative to your competition and to be clear about what you’ve got to work with. Below is a simple “Situation Scan” to use in evaluating where your brand stands:

- How do the operations elements of your brand compare to your competitors’?
- How do your marketing communications compare when assessed against the four key criteria of female gender culture (Social Values, Life/Time Factors, Focus Strategies, and Communication Keys)?

**Understanding Your Customer: Research – Believe It or Not:** Once you’ve defined your market, your next step is to *understand your customer*. As is now clear, the “same old, same old” just doesn’t cut it when it comes to really “getting it” with the female purchasing population. So let’s look at new way of using research to find out what women want:

- Get women talking with each other instead of at the moderator and get them laughing and building on each other’s thoughts. What you’re looking for are the mutual moments of “Ohmygosh, that’s exactly what I do!” Then you won’t be able to get them to stop giving you observations, opinions, and insights, all of which will help you improve your product and sharpen your marketing.
- Even for gender-neutral products, conduct your focus groups for “women only.” Why? Because male and female communication styles are considerably different. And research has shown that women become more reserved and less participatory when in a mixed gender group. And remember, while men can give you the big picture, women can give you more details and nuances.
- Another excellent and innovative way to learn the language and priorities that women bring to your brand is to turn the tables for a change. Find a group of

women who love your product and put them in a room with people who either haven't heard of it or are predisposed against it. The insight will help develop communications content and approaches that are compelling and on point with the reality of women's interaction with your brand.

- Women love surveys and quizzes, which is why all of the women's magazines run them so often, even using them as part of their audience draw. Keep it fairly short; remember the time crunch! You're better off separating your topics into six surveys of 10 minutes each instead of three surveys of 20 minutes each.
- Run a chat group as a mega-focus group. The information will be fast and furious with customer input coming in from all over at once. But if you capture the questions and read the transcripts later, I guarantee you'll have snared new perspectives and valuable thought-starters to run with.
- Make your questions specific, not generic.
- Capture all the criteria on women's longer lists, not just the "most important" benefits.

**Get Set – Strategy and Tactical Planning:** In this chapter, you'll learn how to:

- Connect with a consumer who is in the market for the products you sell.
- Ensure that your brand is on the short list of purchase candidates.
- Give your consumer what she needs to decide in your brand's favor.
- Generate a higher return from every woman customer by using specific marketing tactics employed in the right way at the right time.

First, however, we need to spend a little time on a topic that spans all five phases of the consumer's purchase process – **positioning**.

**Defining Your Platform – Beyond Positioning to Persuasion:**

- A. Creating a Brand Identity** – The word positioning describes how target consumers view a certain brand, relative to other brands in the market. The positioning statement is made up of three elements:
  - a. *Your target consumer* – for example "soccer moms"
  - b. *The competitive set in which your brand competes* – for example "luxury cars"
  - c. *The differentiating point that sets your brand apart from the competitive set you've chosen* – The differentiating points are created through communications platforms. These platforms describe how you would like consumers to think of your brand.
- B. Defining the Product** – Properly done, positioning is a brand-defining process that aligns consumer needs/wants, product design, and marketing communications in terms that are relevant and appealing to your target audience. The two dimensions to explore in making your product and packaging more appealing to women are utility and styling.

- a. *Utility* – I think it’s safe to say that in most categories, women are more pragmatic than men. With less interest in the one-upmanship of novelty, less interest in the inner workings of tech-mech products, and more time pressures than men, women just want products to work easily and reliably.
- b. *Styling* – As companies recognize that women have different style preferences and are more responsive to styling enhancements in general, there is a growing awareness of the opportunity this creates to expand their consumer base and pull in additional share. For example, Nokia cleverly took a cue from Swatch and began offering interchangeable faceplates for their cell phones. By taking “styling” in a completely different direction than anyone else in the category, they were the first to move a serious “business” product (cell phones) toward fun and transform a utilitarian device into something that lets the consumer express her own personality.

**C. Positioning: What Resonates with Women** – In this abbreviated format, I’ll focus on the top four topics on which most marketers are likely to need “corrective” perspective when directing their positioning communications to women – relevance, emotion, corporate halo, and getting clear.

- a. *Relevance – speaking to today’s woman* – The 1980s are so over. Marketers need to align with contemporary female gender culture, not the self-delusional supermom who is frazzled and stressed out from trying to have it all. Today’s woman is improvisational – she copes with chaos more or less cheerfully, recognizing that something’s got to give. She picks up what’s important and doesn’t worry about the dust bunnies under the beds until they’re scaring the children. She’s been coping for 20 years now and has gotten pretty confident about her abilities. So instead of positioning your product to bail her out of a bad day, show how it helps her make a pretty good day even better by delivering benefits like free time, extra ease of use, relaxation, fun, or family time.
- b. *Emotion – making her care for your brand* – While it’s true that women are generally more pragmatic than men, they are also more emotional and therefore likely to tune in to emotional benefits over functional ones. It’s not that utility doesn’t count; she has to know it’s functional first. However, what can set apart one car that starts over another car that starts isn’t always more cargo space. Sometimes, it’s just a warm and fuzzy feeling. For example, Michelin tires tuned in to an emotional appeal when they switched from advertising their tread depth to advertising with babies. Their sales skyrocketed, and it’s a pretty sure bet it had a lot to do with a consumer gut response to what driving safety is really all about. Remember that women’s gender culture is geared toward *empathy* rather than *aspiration* and that women emphasize *warmer* over *winner*.

- c. *Corporate halo – letting your light shine* – If you’ve got an obvious superiority over, or point of difference from, the competition, highlight the heck out of it! But these days, with more competitors and more heavily saturated markets, many products, services, and companies are seen as almost interchangeable. In a situation like this, sometimes the “soft stuff” like good deeds is the only thing that differentiates your brand.
- d. *Getting clear – painting the brand pink is sure to give your business the blues* – The best initiatives targeted to women are not pink but transparent. In virtually every category, overtly characterizing a marketing program as “for women only” will backfire with both genders.

Now that we’ve explored ways to enhance your brand’s appeal to women through positioning, let’s start through the five stages of the consumer’s purchase path – Activation, Nomination, Investigation & Decision, Retention, and Recommendation.

- a. **Activation: Getting in the Game** – Before a consumer will start paying serious attention to any marketing communication, she has to consider herself in the market. The trick for marketers is to find and reach that prospect right at the opportunity point when she puts her purchase decision into play. There are three ways to make sure you’re in just the right place at the right time:
  1. *Hook her with news* – One way to reel her into the category is to offer her something extra or new – a new usage no one has thought too much about before or a new product never before seen in the category. When doing so, make a loud noise (publicity) and present the human interest side.
  2. *The power of suggestion – highlight the need* – A more sophisticated version of “Would you like fries with that?” approach, this principle takes note of the fact that many of us don’t really even know we need or want something until someone prompts us to consider it. Consumer education marketing tactics tap into women’s greater lust for information. When undertaking a consumer education tactic, keep these points in mind:
    1. Know your market
    2. Tailor your communications
    3. Be sure to tell her to “bring a friend” – the social aspect will increase the appeal to her and double the audience for you.
    4. Don’t sell. Don’t!
  3. *Intercept Marketing: Arouse the Want* – Intercept marketing is about placing the product in your consumer’s daily life and

letting her generate her own impulse to acquire it. Sometimes, “what you see is what you want.”

4. *Taking action on the activation* – Once you’ve activated the consumer’s buying process, make sure you provide a way for her to act on her impulse.

b. **Nomination: Surviving the First Cut** – Influencing this stage of the purchase path deserves particular consideration when marketing to women because it’s usually women that do the preliminary round of research. She starts her shopping process by looking around for options that offer what she’s interested in. In other words, she nominates some candidates to the short list. The three deciding factors that determine whether a brand will make it on that short list are:

1. *Top-of-mind awareness* – She can’t consider your brand if she’s never heard of it.
2. *Relevant differentiation* – Your brand has to stand out from the other similar brands in some way that’s relevant to her needs or preferences.
3. *Brand likeability* – She has to like your brand or at the very least, she’s got nothing against it.

You can address all of these deciding objectives together through programs delivered via word of mouth, milestone marketing, and/or brand/image communications.

- *Word of Mouth: Worth a Mention* – Women are much more likely than men to start their purchase search by asking around. And they’re more likely to put credibility in women’s recommendations than men’s recommendations. So, the marketer looking to maximize the credibility of his referrals will make sure his women customers are happy first.
- *Milestone Marketing: Finding the Receptive Mindset* – Finding the receptive mindset means knowing when she is most likely to be looking. Two of the most obvious life events are marriage and children, both of which affect a household’s purchasing patterns very noticeably – and both of which affect female purchasing behavior much more dramatically than males. There are plenty of other major life events that trigger consumer needs as well. They include buying a new house; starting, buying, or selling a business; or sending a son or daughter off to college. Similarly, a divorce, an inheritance, retirement, the death of a spouse – all prompt women to spend money.
- *Brand/Image advertising* – This kind of advertising should put its power behind one of three objectives, all of which overlap to some extent. They are:
  - *Establishing what “class/type” of product it is.*
  - *Communicating who the user is.*



- *Creating a distinctive brand personality*

If you can get out the good news about your company's commitment to customers, commitment to employees, community support programs, and other good deeds, this all contributes to building a brand or company personality that matters to women. The good news is that women do take the good news seriously, but the bad news is that they take the bad news like a ton of bricks.

- c. **Investigation & Decision! Crossing the Finish Line** – Interestingly enough, the marketing mantras for this stage of the consumer motivation process are completely different from those for the previous one.

**Perceived Product Advantage:** The subtitle says perceived because perception can be influenced as much by skillful communications about the product as by the product itself. Given two identical products, the marketer who can best illustrate how the brand delivers the benefits the collective “she” wants, and do so in language she can relate to, will win the sale. Included within the idea of perceived product advantage is the concept of *value*. The price she's willing to pay is a function of whether she feels the item is “worth it.”

**Product/Information Communications – A Voracious Need to Know:** Nobody really knows why, but everybody pretty much agrees – women want more. They want more facts, more answers, and more access. Men prefer their communications streamlined. The point to take away here is this – if you design your informative communication for men's minds, women will find them lacking.

**Personal Interaction:** Sales are not made by product alone. Because of her predisposition toward people and relationships, a woman will find herself inclined to buy from the salesperson who is most successful at creating rapport. The desire to award the business to “the better person” will weigh more strongly in her considerations than in a man's.

Women appreciate being told, but they hate being sold. What's the difference? Mostly it's in the point of view of the salesperson. Women want to feel they are partnering with an advocate, not resisting an adversary.

**Sensory reception:** Women are more receptive on all five sensory channels, meaning they are more appreciative of the nice touches and more repelled by the not-so-nice.

- d. **Retention and Recommendation: Making the Most of Current Customers:** Once the customer has bought a brand, she converts from being a “prospect” to being a “customer.” Given women's greater loyalty

after the initial purchase, they're basically yours to lose from thereon out. For this stage, the marketer has two objectives.

1. Build the customer relationship and enhance her sense of brand commitment, so she returns to the brand for any subsequent or related purchases.
2. Motivate her to become an enthusiastic brand ambassador and recommend the brand to her family, friends, and acquaintances.

Unfortunately, at this point most marketers drop the ball and turn their attention to the next prospect. When you ignore your current women customers, you're leaving a lot of money on the table – more than you realize. We're talking not only about her own future purchases but also those of her neighbors, her friends, her family, and so on.

- e. **Maximizing Your Impact – Leverage a Strategy, Not a Tactic:** When marketing to women, some marketers seem to think that they can put a picture of a woman in one of their print ads and call it a day. That's not strategy; that's just plain ineffective. You might as well know this up front – if you're not ready to make a commitment to this market, don't expect it to come running into your arms. One delightful date is not enough to make a marriage.

**Go! Communications That Connect:** You know whom you're targeting and have a strong understanding of how she thinks about your product and your brand. You've chosen your tactics and know what kinds of communication you need to develop. In this chapter you'll learn how to:

- Get the most out of your media budget when targeting women.
- Frame your brand's message within the context of female gender culture.
- Watch for execution-type details that can make or break your communication materials.

Below are some considerations that should be factored in when developing media plans to motivate women:

**Word of Mouth** – We've talked about the prevalence of power in women's word of mouth, but consider this interesting idea: *woman as a human medium*. Take advantage of this uniquely female phenomenon to stretch your marketing dollars.

**Circle of Influence** – When choosing among plans that deliver equally well against the primary target definition, men or women, take a minute to compare how each delivers against women overall. The more female spillover you have, the more aunts and mothers and neighbors and coworkers you have on your communications team.

**Dual Audience – Tip Toward Woman:** Some media plans are developed against a dual audience demographic, like “Adults, 25-49.” When comparing options in this case, don’t overlook an internal check of the female/male ratio in the plan – The higher the ratio, the farther your message goes.

**Image and Information – Split the Message:** An ongoing tension in advertising is the dual need to create a strong brand identity, while at the same time communicating enough specific product information to sway an immediate buying decision. Women’s greater response to both the image and the informational components could be viewed as a stalemate – or as a strategic opportunity. The solution – split the job, do both.

**“Connecting” versus “Reaching:”** Although editorial context is not a new concept in media planning, women’s greater sensitivity to context and emotion has been undervalued relative to more easily grasped quantitative considerations. It’s more important to connect with your prospect than it is to just reach them.

**Media Units – Optimize for “Effective Impact” instead of “Effective Reach:”** Women respond better to more of an immersion approach to advertising rather than to the traditional single-minded “topline” approach. Women respond proportionately more to larger media units that permit more richness and flexibility in the communication: for instance, two-page spreads instead of half-page ads, TV: 60 seconds instead of 30 seconds, and so on. The goal is not exposure frequency but dramatic impact and engagement with the message.

**Messaging – What Works and What Backfires:** The four compass points of gender culture in the Star (Social Values, Life/Time Factors, Focus Strategies, Communication Keys) will direct you to executional approaches that women find engaging, meaningful, and motivating. This section is organized into two perspectives:

- *What you say.* These are in the realm of ideas and communication premises you can use to catch her eye, engage her imagination, make her smile, and win her heart.
- *How you say it.* These are specific points on visuals and language that you need to be aware of – some to use, some to refuse.

Before you start creative development, use these checklists to suggest ideas as you’re deciding on creative approaches to explore your advertising campaigns and secondary communications materials. Then once the creative is finished, be sure to review the “how you say it” list to scan for pitfalls and opportunities as you’re signing off on recommended copy and visuals.

### **What You Say – Meaning and Motivation that Break Through:**

- *People First* – Tap into women’s orientation toward people as the most important and interesting element in life. Show people in the visuals and let

us hear their stories in their own words. Talk about how your brand benefits people by making life easier, lovelier, or more fun.

- *User focus trumps product focus* – While men may be interested in the widgets and gadgets of cars and high-tech, a woman’s eyes glaze over and she starts looking around for someone to talk to. What the product means to the person who uses it is far more likely to seize her attention and hold her interest. Play your cards right – just as in poker, the cards with people on them will beat the numbers cards every time.
- *Personalize the brand* – Find ways to bring human interest to your communications. For example, you can use an engaging spokesperson or even an engaging spokesperson.
- *Warmer Wins over Winner* – Remember that autonomy and winning don’t have the same pull for women as for men. Not that she doesn’t like her “flexibility” and sense of personal achievement, but the warmth and interaction of “belonging” are more important to her than to a man, and to her ear, “solo” can have kind of a sad sound to it.
- *Others matter* – Not only that, but helping someone else, which isn’t mission critical for most men, is a plus for women. Appeals on how the purchase can help her help others fit well into her female frame of reference.
- *Make the world a better place* – The mirror corollary of the principle above is that she thinks you should help others, too.
- *She prefers a Peer Group to a Pyramid* – Use characters, spokespersons, environments, and situations that emphasize affinity instead of status. Brand images should reinforce “so much in common” and “she’s like me” rather than “I wish I were like her.”

### **How You Say It – Context, Stories, Language, Humor, and Other Essential Elements:**

- *How You Portray Women: Beyond “respect” to “understanding* – Women feel marketers and salespeople don’t often view them or treat them with respect. What women mean by “respect” is not about being put on a pedestal. It’s simply about being listened to and being accorded as much response as if the communication were coming from men.
- *Better real than ideal* – For the last 20 years, in survey after survey, women have told advertisers that advertising offers little for them to identify with. Female culture is all about commonality and empathy, not differentiation and aspiration. She’s looking for that flash of recognition that sparks a connection between her and the real people, real situations, real product usage, and real reactions that tell her you get who she is.
- *Coping with chaos* – Today’s woman copes cheerfully with chaos (usually). She has to. She normally has a full-time job, primary responsibility for managing her household, and plenty of church, school, and community activities to amuse her in her “spare time.” The part a lot of advertisers haven’t caught up with is that women no longer feel torn with guilt at not being supermom. Their houses aren’t spotless, their kids are sometimes

mouthy, and more often than they'd like they have a bad hair day. And that's okay' they're fine with it. It's advertisers who apparently live on Planet Perfect, and when women visit there, they don't recognize a soul.

- *Cast more women who aren't 20-year-old glamour goddesses* – Grey Advertising's study showed that 82 percent of women wish advertisers would recognize that they don't want to look 18 forever.
- *Choose your spokeswoman wisely* – When choosing a spokesperson for your brand, keep in mind for women's role models, the key dynamic is empathy, not envy. In fact, women seem to like a role model better if she (or he) isn't perfect. In other words, less Miss America, more Miss and Mrs. Real.
- *Reflect the new definition of beauty* – While advertisers have become very conscientious about including ethnic diversity in their communications materials, only a pioneer few are even beginning to show the age diversity and size diversity women are looking for. One of the cornerstones of female gender culture is inclusion, and women resent the rigidity of one standard of attractiveness.
- *Tap into the "girlfriend factor"* – Until recently, most advertisers neglected one context that is very important to women – their relationships with their women friends. Togetherness is a fundamental premise of female gender culture – it is a society of "constellations," not "stars." According to the Grey Advertising study, 74 percent of women would like to see advertising show more women doing things together with their girlfriends, sisters, and moms. Yet based on what I see in the media, this is almost uncharted territory for advertisers.
- *Context* – Women better absorb information when it's presented in context (e.g., as used in a typical situation). So if you are accustomed to delivering your message via a bulleted list of key facts and product features – which may be an ideal format for men – you need to think about adding a complementary treatment for women, one that places the product within its environment, lifestyle, and feelings.
- *Show some emotion* – Emotion-based advertising has a powerful pull for women. There are always people involved. It's generally based on a shared moment and shared feelings – whether it's inspiration, exhilaration, or just wacky happiness. And it has a way of sticking with you.
- *The more it's tellable, the more indelible* – To make it easy for women to transmit your message, build your case in sound bites, strong visuals, and, again, stories. It's much easier for women to recall and recount an ad with one or more of these elements to anchor it.
- *Cast not aspirations* – Comparative scenarios with one party at a disadvantage or portrayed as inferior make women uncomfortable, and they react surprisingly strongly. No people put-downs are allowed – and that means men, competitors, other women, anyone.
- *Deep-six any bragging and swaggering* – These just aren't women's styles.
- *Beware of talking about "women's unique needs"* – Many advertisers' first inclination when undertaking a marketing-to-women initiative is to showcase their understanding that women are different and to make it clear that they are

prepared to treat them differently. The only problem with that is this – women don't want to feel different. They just want to feel taken seriously.

- *Check word meanings* – To create communications that women will respond to, you have to be in close touch with women's meanings and word choices. You can't strain them through male perception and assume you'll emerge with the right meaning. It's not realistic to assume what "makes sense" to men is going to resonate with women in the same way.

Well, as far as marketing goes, that's a wrap – we've finished up our discussion of strategies, tactics, and mass-delivered messages. Now, let's turn our attention to selling – the face-to-face encounters that will make or break the sale.

**Face-to-Face – Sales and Service:** You can have the best marketing program in the world and deliver thousands of customers into the store, but without face-to-face follow through, you won't get the sale. This chapter is for sales professionals. You'll learn how to:

- Identify top women prospects and bring yourself to their attention.
- Introduce yourself and follow through with relationship-building activities.
- Discover what she's looking for in a product and persuade her to consider yours.
- Overcome "decision reluctance" and close the sale.
- Keep your investment in this customer paying off for you over and over again.

**Prospecting:** Sophisticated salespeople take the initiative to actively cultivate prospects on their own. Women actually control the majority of the financial assets in this country. But who are these women? And how do you meet them?

- *Affluent Women – they're not who you think they are* – Most beginners think "wealthy women" are synonymous with "wealthy widows." Certainly, there are wealthy widows, but they're not the only females with funds. As you'll see, there are actually a number of submarkets of affluent women.
- *The Executive Suite* – The second place people look when they're seeking affluent women is here. This is a good place to look – but it's not the only place.
- *Professional Practice* – You probably already know most of the high-paying positions, but it may surprise you to learn how many of these professions have women-specific associations.
- *Woman Business Owners (WBO)* – As stated earlier, women-owned businesses constitute 40 percent of all companies in this country. And women business owners account for 70 percent of all new business start-ups over the past decade.

There are lots of prospects out there, and you know what the kicker is? Affluent women are almost never prospected!

**Choose and Schmooze – Networking:** The day-to-day reality of making contacts and building relationships is that people tend to network with others like themselves. Men network with men, women with women – sometimes it’s just easier to talk to someone else who has the same language and customs as you do. But the upshot is something that has important implications for male networkers.

- *Women in a world of men are invisible* – In networking events that are mostly male attended, men often don’t see the women attendees.
- *Men in a world of women are apprehensive* – As a man, when you’re trying to network with women, apprehensions are understandable – but unnecessary. Because female gender culture is inclusive and egalitarian, women are inclusive and welcoming to men in their midst.
- *Join the party* – At any networking event, a lot of us find it hard to approach a group of people we don’t know and introduce ourselves. Women are “groups” people and “people” people. If the guy wants to be part of the group, he’ll be welcomed in.
- *Seminar Selling* – Like networking, seminar selling is an often-used tactic when you’re building up business. With women, it’s better and more productive to have smaller seminars. Instead of getting 50 into a classroom, go for 10 around a conference table. This approach gives you and the participants several chances to get to know each other and further boosts the likelihood of turning a prospect into a customer.
- *Cultivate the Relationship* – Personal trust is one of the keystones of any relationship. Getting to know each other is an important part of getting in the game.
- *Meet women in groups versus one-on-one* – Join and participate in organizations where you can interact with women, such as community and volunteer organizations, which are often made up predominantly of women, the PTA for example.
- *Make your own groups* – Create networking events. Women love to network with each other, and they’ll love you for picking up the tab.
- *Personal visibility* – Women are more likely than men to volunteer, so one way to create personal visibility is by volunteering in community services organizations, serving on boards of directors, etc. You can also make yourself visible through the media – write articles and provide information that’s relevant.
- *Community visibility* – Offer information to groups of women – approach existing organizations or groups and offer to speak on your area of expertise.

**The Sales Consultation – Presenting Your Case:** What every customer looks for in a successful sales relationship is a combination of knowledge and trust. Men and women develop trust in somewhat different ways. Let’s talk about how to build trust with women. The first and most important thing I can tell you is this – *Talking to women involves a good deal more listening than most men are used to.* Listen more than you talk!

- *No need to strut your stuff* – One way men earn each other’s trust is to communicate their track record. They talk about their achievements, drop names, and let you know where they stand in the company hierarchy. I call these “credibility displays” because they remind me a little of a peacock who’s very proud of his tail feathers. Don’t get me wrong – this is the right thing to do in male gender culture. If you don’t, men assume you don’t have anything to brag about. But women don’t brag. They’ll tolerate it quietly, but they won’t be impressed. As a matter of fact, rather than building respect, credibility displays are much more likely to ruin rapport.
- *Listen to her “life story”* – Women think and communicate in both contextual and people terms. A lot of men are puzzled by this “life story” thing. Why can’t women be more like a man and just stay focused on the key points? Well she could, but she’s trying to help you, believe it or not. By giving you all this personal information, she is giving you lots of great stuff to work with to build rapport with her.
- *Your turn to talk* – In presenting her story she’s given you the selling cues you need to persuade her that your product is what she wants. Don’t use a canned pitch; personalize your pitch based on what she’s telling you. Not only does this tell her you were listening carefully, but it puts all your persuasive points in a context that is much more likely to motivate her to buy.
- *Pay attention to nonverbal feedback/language* – When talking to each other, women generally face each other directly and watch facial expressions and gestures for the extra meaning behind the words. Guys tend to stand at an oblique angle to each other, both looking out in front of them and checking in with each other over their shoulders once in a while. When women listen to another person, male or female, they use furthering phrases (“I see...”), make acknowledgment noises (umhum), and do a lot of “face work” – smiles and empathetic expressions – to show they’re tracking with the conversation and to encourage the speaker to continue.
- *Answer every question thoroughly* – Remember, women have a longer list and are voracious information seekers. So no matter how trivial or irrelevant her question may seem to you, answer it.
- *Don’t put down the competition* – Because of their egalitarian culture, women see any kind of put-down as inappropriate. The key is to keep it neutral, not negative.
- *Small courtesies make big points* – Small examples – but not small to women – include offering to get her a chair if it seems as if she’s had a long day, or getting her kids a couple of sodas from the vending machine because it’s such a hot day. However, if you can’t do these small courtesies with genuine sincerity, don’t do it at all. Women will see right through you, and instead of having gained her appreciation, you’ll have lost her trust.
- *A sensitized population* – Women are a “sensitized population.” When you consider the dramatic differences in men’s and women’s interaction styles – credibility displays, rapport-building games based on “one-up” instead of “same-same” and exchange of personal details, different listening behaviors, and so on – and combine that with men’s underlying view that small



courtesies are expressions of subservience rather than consideration for others, you can see that the situation is rife with opportunities for misunderstanding. And even innocuous, unintended oversights can easily be perceived by “sensitized populations” to be just one more example of deliberate discourtesy.

**Closing the Sale – The Perfect Answer – A Longer Road:** We’ve discussed it before, but it’s critical to closing the sale, so let’s talk about it once again and more specifically. Whereas men are looking to *make a good decision*, women are *looking for the Perfect Answer*. As a result:

- Expect a lot more questions from women.
- Expect a longer decision process.

Women want to consider, compare, and talk it over with trusted advisors. It’s not enough for the product or service to meet her needs; it must be the best way to meet her needs. Don’t push to hard. You need to follow up with women – don’t just be prepared for a subsequent conversation; expect and plan for one. Call her and say, “I was thinking about your concerns, and here’s another reason that you should consider in making this decision. To women, this signals a level of connectivity that fits right in with female gender culture – and she’ll be responsive to it.

Now you’ve seen how the principles of the GenderTrends Marketing Model can enhance the performance, not only of marketing executives, but also of your company’s sales professionals.

### **Message from Gary Tomlinson:**

This book report should not take the place of you reading *Marketing to Women*. It’s an incredible book that will not only enhance your business life but your personal life as well. In her book, Marti has numerous stories, pictures, illustrations, as well as specific examples that have not been included in this book report. There is also a chapter on segments within the women’s market that has not been included. For example, Marti gives her marketing insights on PrimeTime women (50 years and older), African American women, and Hispanic women. Also not included in this book report is her final chapter – “Notes to the CEO.” This is the book’s executive summary and explains to the CEO why they should care and what they should do about it.

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