

THE WAY TO A WOMAN'S HEART

Ignoring her as chief purchase decision-maker limits sales—even in 'masculine' products. Foremost, make a difference in her life. BY LEE SUCHARDA JR.

If women aren't at the forefront of your thinking in marketing and package design, you're missing opportunities for sales.

Far more often than you may think, women make the purchase decision. Even in "manly" categories such as hardware.

Consider the scope of women's influence on product purchases as you plan your packaging:

- Women control more than 51 percent of the U.S. private wealth. By 2010, this figure will grow to 60 percent.

- Women are majority owners in 6.2 million privately held U.S. companies.

- An estimated 86 percent of women entrepreneurs use the same product and services in their homes as they do at the office.

- Single women head 27 percent of households.

You don't understand us

But women as a group have a message for brand marketers. You don't understand them, and this is why many of you fall short.

Procter & Gamble is one marketer that "gets it." It stays true to its umbrella theme of "Touching lives, improving life" in its products across a swath of categories.

Its Olay brand is particularly adept in this strategy. The brand team understands that women have to make hard choices every day about

the HBA products they purchase.

P&G helps women through that dilemma by striking a balance between "scale" and intimacy.

Consider Olay Total Effects. P&G's goal was to reach the summit of the anti-aging products segment. It revolves all communications for the product line around a single, powerful statement: "Love the skin you're in."

It's not just about how a woman looks. This tagline on newly designed Olay Total Effects packaging creates a mind-set. Your skin is uniquely you, and Olay embraces that special you.



Olay Total Effects creates a mind-set by celebrating a woman's skin, "as is." This "uniquely you" approach to marketing has grown Olay into one of Procter & Gamble's billion-dollar brands.

When P&G purchased the Olay umbrella of products, sales were about \$200 million. Consumers perceived them as "grandma's brand." Today, Olay is among P&G's stable of billion-dollar brands.

What brought about this success? Women of all ages now perceive that this brand makes a difference in their lives.

Olay and other brands that succeed in attracting women share other principles in their approach. They satisfy her core beliefs and values—and reflect it with both a solid product and compelling package design.

They carry the brand through the different stages of a woman's life rather than just focusing on a brief time span.

All these virtues create a very strong motivational pull.

Women have the means, the motives and the opportunities to purchase goods—especially those that meet important emotional needs.

In order to create packaging that appeals to women, you have to understand what they value and enjoy, and what makes them proud. Know these key motivators and you create an enormous opportunity that could give you a big advantage over competitors.

Foremost, women expect great service in and out of the store. But the deciding factors that compel a woman

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

to put a product in her shopping cart go beyond service.

Women want you to pay attention to detail in product design. They want the selection process made easier—fewer yet better choices. Finally, they crave a relationship with a retailer.

If you give them what they want, women will reward you with a greater share of their pocketbook. They will consolidate more business with you. Their loyalty will remain strong as long as you perform to expectations. As a bonus, your brand receives a higher rate of referrals—word-of-mouth advertising.

It's not just what you say, but how you say it, that creates the perceived point of difference in a woman's mind.

Motivational drivers

What motivates a woman to pick up a product in the store? A good package can do lots of things to invite closer inspection as she considers your category. It's very simple if you get back to basics.

Remember the first rule of branding: Understand your market. Second, understand your consumer. If you want your packaging to work, you've got to get these two elements right.

In their book "Trading Up: The New American Luxury", Michael Silverstein and Neil Fiske report findings that suggest female consumers are highly attuned to subtle messages contained in brands and colors. They are also keenly aware—from a very young age—of the minutest details of design, manufacturing and packaging.

Women want to hear about product benefits rather than the features. They want packaging that clearly communicates a product's benefits in a tone and manner that makes them feel good about using the product.

Method Home Care markets a line of non-toxic cleaning products in elegantly designed bottles that also provide a touch of home décor.

Tell them how your brand benefits them by making life easier, healthier, lovelier and more fun.

One way packaging can be lovelier is doubling as a home décor item. Method Home Care reflects this thinking in structural design for home cleaning products it markets under the Method brand.

Company co-founders Eric Ryan and Adam Lowry saw an opportunity for a line of non-toxic cleaning products that women would want to display rather than hide in the utility closet in their homes.

The company hired a top industrial designer, Karim Rashid, to develop a distinctive clear, teardrop-shaped PET bottle for a line of hand wash products. Embossing and silk-screen printing bring sophistication and elegance to the bottle, which resembles fragrance packaging.

After succeeding regionally, the brand has gained national distribution through a retailer that understands how women shop—Target.

Message tone matters

Store research shows that women are constantly picking up products for comparison. The brand that delivers the benefits they desire, in language they can relate to, will end up in their shopping cart. The brand that delivers a perceived advantage over the competition will win their favor.

Describe benefits in a friendly tone. It's not just what you say, but how you say it in both text and graphics, that creates the perceived point of difference in a woman's mind.

Let's look at what benefits you can consider to make your product more appealing. We'll use food products as an example.



- Good value
- A product that meets or over-delivers on its promise
- Food with nutritional benefits
- Convenience of use, i.e., shorter preparation time and grab 'n go products
- Extended-use occasions resulting in less waste

If you were designing packaging in a food category, you could consider these general benefits:

- Unique point-of-difference
- Designed for ease-of-use
- Packages and structures that appeal to both hand and eye
- Environmentally friendly materials
- Appropriate materials and package surfaces for the category
- Resealable and functional packaging

Women are telling researchers that the attribute “designed for ease-of-use” is the overriding difference between high-satisfaction and low-satisfaction-packaging.

With impact, a unique point-of-difference and an intriguing mes-

FOUR TAKEAWAYS FOR EFFECTIVE DESIGN

Here is a four-step approach that can help you increase your chances for success in courting the female consumer.

1. Retain consultants that truly understand gender-specific packaging design.
 2. Use research to learn what motivates and drives women to purchase.
- Follow an outside-in approach instead of

the typical inside-out approach to new product development.

3. Create an intense connection to your brand with a compelling point-of-difference.
4. Make her experience special at every “touchpoint.” She will spread the “good news;” referrals are a powerful tool in generating new-product trial.

sage, chances are your brand will get noticed. But you have just a few seconds to invite closer inspection—or fall into the abyss of nearly half of all products in a category that go unnoticed as the consumer scans the shelves.

Packaging that preempts and motivates makes the difference.

So what packaging innovations can become winners? Invigorate your thinking by looking to other categories for ideas. Consider four examples of

packaging innovation that are driving growth in various categories:

1. Distinctive shapes in beverage bottles.
2. Cheese and other perishables in easy-to-reseal, flexible-film bags.
3. Detergent bottles with measuring caps and easy-to-grip handles.
4. Ketchup in mess-free squeeze bottles. **BP**

The author, Lee Sucharda Jr., is Chairman of Design North Inc. in Racine, Wis. Contact him at 800.247.8494 or lee@designnorth.com