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## COMPETING FOR THE MARKET OF WOMEN-CONSUMERS

**Keywords:** household behaviour, consumer economics, women consumers, purchasing decisions, USA, China.

*There is a fine line between marketing to women and talking down to women  
and people have not yet found what that is.*

*„Advertising that stereotype’s women and marketing  
that’s geared specifically to male audiences  
doesn’t set well in the minds of women today“.*

(Baker, 2002, p.6)

*Women today influence 85% of automobile buying decisions, according to GM.*

*They also purchase 65% of new cars.*

Pink Magazine “Crazy for Cars”, February/March 2007

*Mothers control 80 percent of household spending and are  
the chief decision makers for the brands and products purchased for their children.*

Silver Stork Research, 2007 09 12

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### Introduction

One of the major *contributions* that we all make to the *economy* is through buying things. Even the non-monetary part of consumption is part of the economy (Grundey, 2006a). Shopping for the goods that we need to survive takes time and attention. Buying food and clothes and school supplies and home furnishings often means watching out for sales and dis-

counts. Comparison shopping, searching through coupons, and finding the best deal, is also time-consuming. Shopping is work and is part of the unpaid labour not counted in the formal economy. But whether or not it's recognized as work, shopping is an activity fraught with contradictions and challenges.

Women's role as care givers has meant that women play a prominent role in buying things that provide sustenance for the household and family. As consumers, women live under a good deal of pressure. Many women must find ways to feed their families on a limited budget. They search for a balance between affordability, nutrition, and availability, countered with the personal preferences of their families. Women who are working outside of the home face the added problem of time constraints. Certain purchases may be made to save time and energy when women are squeezed between work and family responsibilities. Stopping for fast food seems easier than rushing home to cook dinner for the family after a long day at work.

National and international studies indicate that women are responsible for buying 80-85% of household goods. Although it is often played down, it is clear that women have a great deal of *influence in the economy as consumers*, in other words, a lot of spending power.

Increasingly, women take responsibility for buying larger items such as houses and cars. And women are also often responsible for buying gifts on behalf of their families. When kids go to birthday parties, it is usually the mother who purchases and wraps the gift. It often works the same way when a couple attends a wedding or anniversary. Women are faced with endless choices and decisions in their lives as consumers.

Therefore, *the aim of the chapter* is to reflect on the changing role of women in the consuming society, including the changes in family purchasing decision making and providing the evidence from various countries, mainly concentrating on research findings in the USA and China. The designated research aim of the paper led to the following research tasks:

- 1) to review women's role as a consumer in the consumption environment, presenting theoretical and practical evidence to support the major arguments,
- 2) to identify separate case studies, related to selected countries, such as the USA and China;
- 3) to reflect on recommendations for businesspeople how to market to women on given evidence and author's contemplations.

In that respect, the chapter also strives to answer the following issues, which become of a paramount importance on the marketing scene:

- Who is the real female consumer?
- How do you discover her real motivation for buying?
- Does a woman process advertising messages differently than a man?
- How do you create a message that gets her attention and compels her to make a purchase?
- How do you market to women without alienating men?
- How do men and women use the Internet differently?
- Which marketing mediums are most effective for reaching women?

The *methods* applied in the research contain general abstraction, desk research methods, systemic approach and generalization of secondary data.

### **Postmodern Family Structure**

As explained by Kennedy and Rogers (1992), Rogers (1990) there are three common approaches to analysing intra-household behaviour, which contribute different useful perspectives to understanding family dynamics. These concepts are equally applicable to non-residential kinship or family structures, to the extent that these groups also share resources and responsibilities.

NHE research on the family began by questioning and rejecting the first of these approaches, which is the neoclassical “*unified household preference function*”, or **black box** as termed in marketing (Becker, 1981; Folbre, 1986; Grundey, 2006c). Theorists using this model tend to make an assumption of altruism in the family, in which all household resources are pooled and then reallocated according to some common rule that benefits all family members (Becker, 1981). Neoclassical analysis uses relatively simple regression equations that calculate the “outcome” only as a function of inputs from outside the household, disregarding decision-making inside the household. These analyses assume that the household maximizes its unified household preferences (Rosenzweig, 1980), given its budget and production constraints. This assumption of altruism-unified preference within the household is in contrast to expectations of naked self-interest in the market (Berk, 1980; Folbre, 1989). Thus, the altruistic household was viewed as “the haven in the heartless world” of market competition (Lasch, 1977).

Research within the past 15 years, however, has demonstrated the existence of separate, different, and often conflicting preference functions of individual members (Jones, 1983). Given the different preferences, household behaviour can be described using a bargaining model (Manser and Brown, 1980; McElroy and Homey, 1981), according to which indi-

vidual members pursue their own interests, given their relative bargaining positions inside the household. Simplistic assumptions that families are in harmonious agreement or consensus regarding the use of household resources (Samuelson, 1956), or that each household has one altruistic member who works things out for the benefit of all (Becker, 1974; 1981), have been shown to be inaccurate.

Some bargaining models apply mathematical game theory to marriage and household decision-making (Manser and Brown, 1980; McElroy and Homey, 1981). They include models of cooperative conflict (Sen, 1990), which address situations in which there are many cooperative outcomes that would be more beneficial to all the parties than non-cooperation, but where the different family members have conflicting interests in the choice among these cooperative arrangements.

Bargaining is supplemented by an “implicit contracts” model (Folbre, 1989) that sees the family as governed by culturally determined expectations about the entitlements and obligations of individuals in different positions within a household unit. This model explains why people who lack bargaining power retain access to some household resources. Individuals pursuing their own selfinterest also are bound by ties of affection as well as implicit contracts. These traditional norms can be viewed as the cultural “fall-back” position for men and women who are unwilling to invest time and energy in bargaining over alternative allocation (Pollak, 1985), or as the upper and lower bounds on acceptable behaviour within which bargaining can be applied (Kennedy and Rogers, 1992). These norms are often held in place by powerful legal and institutional factors that determine the disposition of household assets, such as family laws regarding property rights and social entitlements (Folbre, 1992). Changes in these institutional factors may have greater effects on intra-household bargaining than changes in individual market earnings or assets.

Individual earning power increases bargaining power. An individual’s bargaining power is determined in part by his or her “threat point” - the point at which the person believes he or she would be better off outside the household unit than in it. The greater a person’s income-earning opportunities outside the household, the higher the threat point and thus the greater the bargaining power within the household. Another type of threat-point analysis defines the threat point not as divorce, but as a non-cooperative or asymmetric equilibrium within marriage, which may be reflected in different roles for men and women and different use of resources. Such analyses explain why child allowance schemes that pay the mother may have different effects from those that pay the father (Lundberg and Pollak, 1992). To the extent that interventions alter the first type of threat point, they may create shifts in the family

structure, while alterations in the second may influence intra-household tasks and benefits.

Table 1. Similarities between post-modern and pre-modern families

Modern	Pre- and post-modern
Sharp distinction between home and workplace	Workplace and home are often the same
Romantic love	Contractual/consensual love
Idealization of mother as only legitimate caretaker	Shared parenting, working mother
Protected late-maturing child	Early social maturation in full view of adult activities
Child-centred parent focused on the needs of the child	Parent-centred parent looks to child lifestyle goals, social gratification
Individual identity uniquely defined by personal narrative and value judgments	Identity fluidly defined by social context
Stormy adolescence to establish autonomy and separate identity from parents	More peaceful adolescence with less need to establish separate residence

Source: after Denick, 1989; Grundey, 2006b.

Pollak (1985) applies a less-developed “transaction cost” approach to intra-household transactions. The premise of transaction cost analysis is that organizations (including families and households) seek institutional modes for organizing transactions that minimize transaction costs. Pollak applies theories regarding the boundaries, structure, and internal organization of commercial firms to families, treating the family as a governance structure, with supplier-customer contract relationships. He views family governance in terms of incentives, monitoring, altruism, and loyalty.

Post-modern life appears to reverse, or de-differentiate, many characteristics of the modern family back to pre-modern lifestyles and values, as shown in Table 1, re-creating at the level of electronic images and on a global scale certain aspects of the undifferentiated life of the pre-modern village. Nevertheless, there remain quantum differences between pre- and post-modern lifestyles (Table 2).

Table 2. Differences between post-modern and pre-modern families

Pre-modern	Post-modern
Largest and most dependent on kinship ties	Smallest, least dependent on kin
Most of life enacted on the immediate physical plane	Most of life enacted on the electronically removed, or symbolic plane
<i>As illustrated by:</i>	

Manual labour	Brain work
Direct social encounters	Electronically mediated or symbolic encounters
Physical conflicts	Symbolic conflicts
Small number of stable physical and social contexts	Very large number of shifting physical, symbolic and social contexts
Low requirements for information storage processing skills	Very high requirements for abstract information storage and abstract processing
Compulsory participation in all aspects of communal life, lack of privacy and personal choice	Optional participation in most aspects of communal life, high levels of privacy and choice
Functional identity limited to small number of pre-terminated social roles	Identity shifts with many discontinuous obligatory and optional social roles
Authority figures and set rules determining what is right and wrong; literal, fundamental beliefs	Pluralistic, relativistic values, non-literal symbolic interpretations of most claims to truth

Source: after Stacey, 1990.

### 3. Roles of Family Members in Purchasing Decisions

According to Assael (1998), various studies show that a husband will generally be more influential in the purchase decision than his wife when:

- his level of education is higher.
- his income and occupational status is higher.
- his wife is not employed.
- the couple is at early stage in the family life cycle (young parents).
- the couple has a greater than average number of children.

In fact, it is possible to distinguish husband-dominant and wife-dominant areas (Figure 1), as well as autonomic (when husband and wife make individual and independent decisions) and syncretic (when spouses both make a compromise on buying decisions).

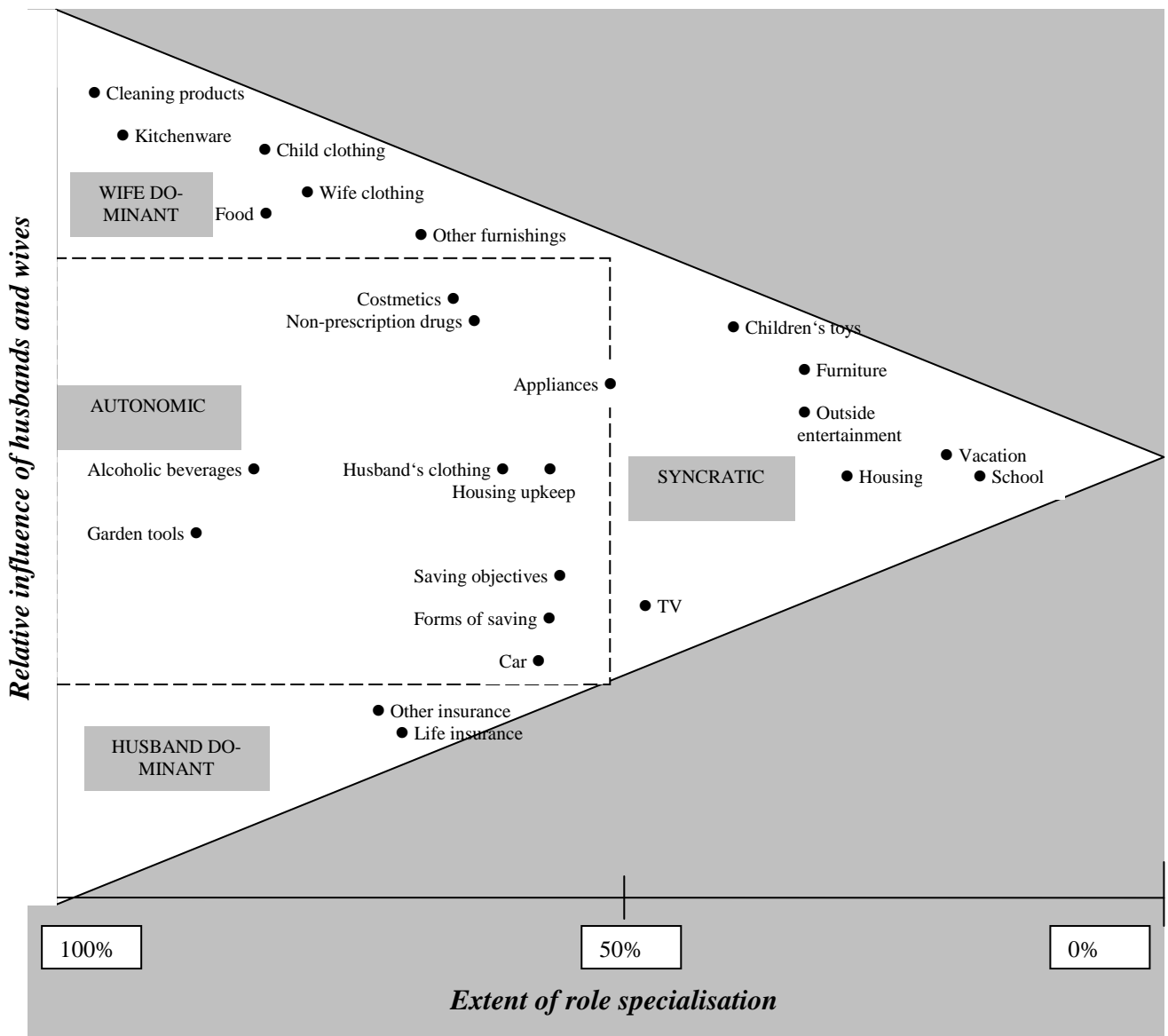


Figure 1. Husband-wife roles in family decisions by product category

Source: composed by the authors after Assael, 1987 & Davis and Rigaux, 1974.

### Women as Purchasing Influencers and Decision-makers

Men and women are different in more ways than can be counted, including how they shop and why (Figure 2). The good news is that effectively marketing to and serving women does not mean a company must do so at the exclusion of men. In fact, a marketing and service strategy that is designed to properly serve the female consumer is one that will raise the bar in satisfaction for both genders.

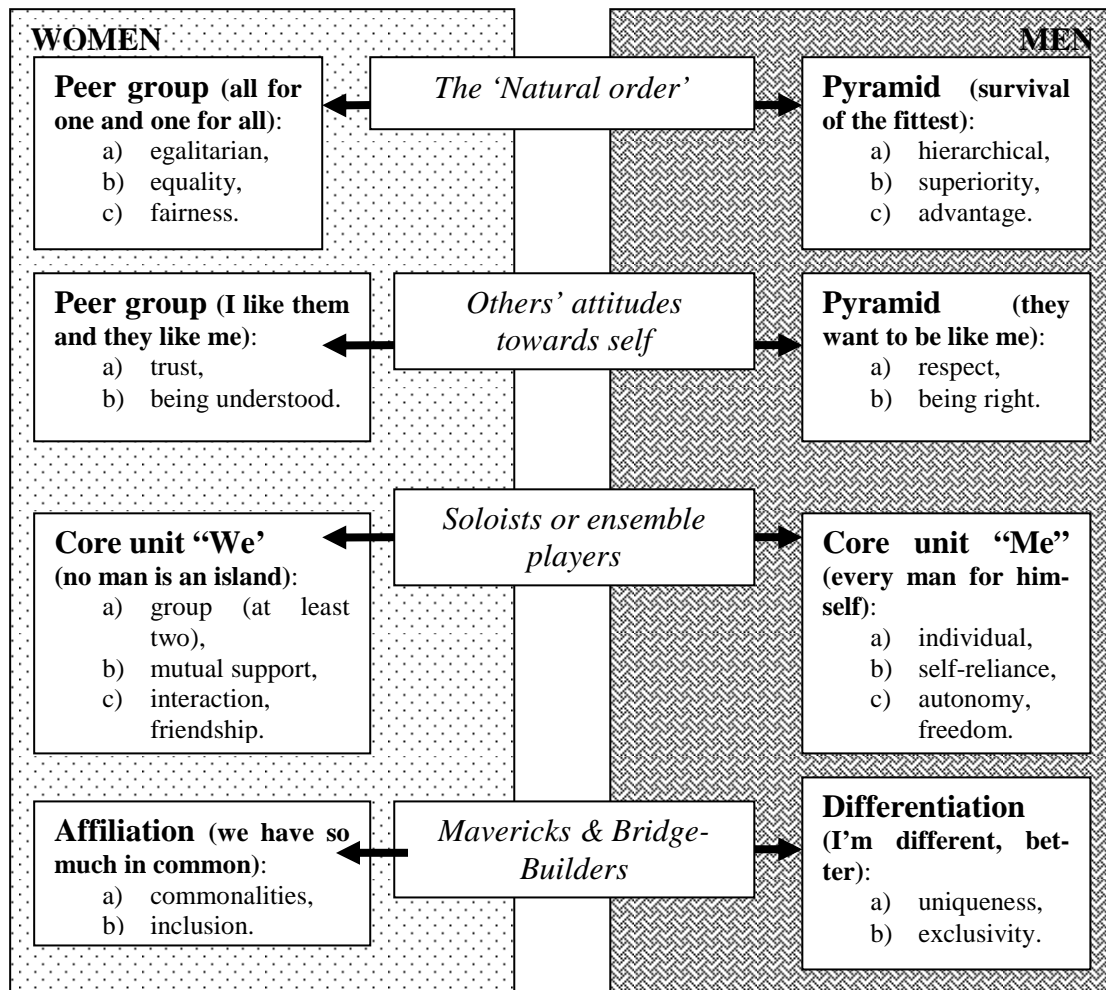


Figure 2. Different perceptions of females and males, which influence on their purchasing and consumption process

Source: created by the author.

In general, buying power is challenging to measure, and this is particularly the case when trying to measure the buying power of women. The US Census data is reported by household unit. Since 50% of women are married householders, their individual spending is lost in the "household" spending, and thus difficult to find. The finding that most women are the "principal shopper" in their household implies that women make the majority of household purchases, but there is no financial data associated with that implication. The US Census findings do imply that spending increases with income, so a case can be made that as women's incomes increase, so does their spending. By combining statistics below, some evidence for both trends are supported.

For example, while men are most often the audience targeted in marketing for con-



sumer electronics purchases, women now account for over 50 percent of the \$55 billion spent last year on CE products in 2003, according to the CEA (Consumer Electronics Association), but in 2005 initiated \$65 billion in CE purchases themselves.

A third of women consider themselves “early adopters” (Grundey and Bąkowska, 2008). Those who have been “in photo” for a period of time understand that the female consumer – often referred to as the “memory ambassador” or “primary picture-printer” – is a coveted client with film photography and this is also the case now that digital cameras outsell their film predecessors.

Can we be upright sure that women in the postmodern could be called the “Chief Purchasing Officers” for the household? Especially in historically male driven categories, such as investment, car purchases, home improvement, ect. According to various sources (Table 3):

- 53% of investment decisions (SIA);
- 55% of consumer electronics (Consumer Electronics Association);
- 60% of home improvement buyers;
- 80% of HI decisions (Lowe’s);
- 66% of computers (Intelliquest);
- 68% of new cars (J.D. Power).

Multiple studies have discovered that wives lead four of the 5 stages in the **buying process**, which is:

1. Initial decision to buy.
2. Fact-finding & narrowing down options.
3. Face-to-face sales conversation.
4. Maintenance (bill-paying, problem resolution).
5. Referrals.

**Education** is a factor in income and spending – higher degrees lead to higher median salaries as well as increased expenditures (Grundey and Sarvutyte, 2007).

- The median weekly earnings in 2005 was \$1,421 for people with doctorate degrees, \$1,370 for people with professional degrees, \$1,129 for people with master’s degrees, and \$937 for people with bachelor’s degrees, compared to \$699 for those with associate’s degrees, \$583 for people with high school degrees, and \$409 for those with no high school diploma.
- College graduates’ average annual expenditures in 2005 were \$65,542, compared to \$38,162 for high school graduates. They also spent \$7,610 on food, \$21,676 on hous-

ing, and \$2,768 on household furnishings and equipment compared to \$5,150 spent by high school graduates for food, \$12,380 for housing, and \$1,303 on furnishings and equipment.

- Women currently earn more bachelor's (57.2%) and master's degrees (58.9%) than men, and by 2013-14, are projected to continue to grow their share to earn more degrees than men in bachelor's (60%), master's (60.3%), doctorate (50.3%), and first professional (54.2%).

CFA's findings suggest that although there are more women homebuyers than ever before, many of them are borrowing higher-cost, subprime mortgages – especially relative to male borrowers. Over the life of the mortgage, subprime borrowers can pay between \$85,000 thousand to \$186,000 more in interest than average borrowers. The prevalence of subprime loans among women borrowers diminishes their ability to fully utilize homeownership as a pathway to build wealth. CFA's key findings include:

- **Women are more likely to receive subprime and higher-cost mortgages:** About a third (32.0 percent) of women borrowers receive subprime mortgage loans of all types compared to about a quarter (24.2 percent) of male borrowers – making women 32 percent more likely to receive subprime mortgages than men. More than one in ten (10.9 percent) women received high-cost subprime mortgages compared to about one in thirteen (7.7 percent) men – making women 41 percent more likely to receive higher-cost subprime loans with interest rates more than 5 percentage points higher than comparable Treasury notes.<sup>1</sup>
- **Women are significantly over-represented in the pool of subprime mortgages.** Although women make up 30.0 percent of borrowers for mortgages of all types, they make up 38.8 percent of subprime borrowers – a 29.1 percent over-representation. This over-representation of women in the subprime mortgage pool exists for all types of mortgages but is especially true of refinance and home improvement loans which are more likely to be subprime and predatory mortgages.
- **Women are more likely to receive subprime mortgages of all types regardless of income, and disparity between men and women increases as incomes rise.** For purchase mortgages, women earning double the median income are 46.4 percent more likely to receive subprime mortgages than men with similar incomes. In contrast,

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<sup>1</sup> The Federal Reserve Board requires lenders to report the pricing of loans with interest rates 3 percentage points higher than comparable Treasury notes. These loans are generally referred to as subprime loans. Further, CFA also coded loans that were made more than 5 percentage points above comparable Treasury notes and refer to

women earning below the area median income are 3.3 percent more likely to receive subprime mortgages. Women earning between the median and twice the median income are 28.1 percent more likely to receive subprime purchase mortgages than men.

Table 3. Selected Sources of How Women Influence Purchasing Decision-Making

Source No 1	Source No 2	Source No 3	Source No 4	Source No 5
<i>http://askpatty.typepad.com/ask_patty_/2007/03/the_51_minority.html (2007)</i>	<i>National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics (2005)</i>	<i>Blaker (2002)</i>	<i>Evans (2005)</i>	<i>Center of Women's Business Research (2002)</i>
<p><b>Here are some facts on the purchasing power of women.</b></p> <p>Women account for 85% of all consumer purchases including everything from autos to health care:</p> <p>91% of New Homes 66% PCs. 92% Vacations. 80% Healthcare. 65% New Cars. 89% Bank Accounts. 93% Food. 93 % OTC Pharmaceuticals.</p>	<p><b>Annual spending power - \$2.1 Trillion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•All consumer purchases – 83%.</li> <li>•Home furnishings – 94%.</li> <li>•Houses – 91%.</li> <li>•Consumer electronics – 51%.</li> <li>•Vacations – 92%.</li> <li>•Cars – 60% (influence 90%).</li> <li>•Choice of banks – 89%.</li> <li>•Health care – 80% of decisions (2/3 spending).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Boomers poised to inherit largest wealth transfer!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Control 51.3% of private wealth in America.</li> <li>•More educated (on average) than men.</li> <li>•Earn &amp; own more than ever.</li> <li>•Control most of household spending (80%).</li> <li>•More profitable customers.</li> <li>•Earning more – 1999 – 30% of women out-earned their husbands.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Women make or influence over: 82%</b> of purchase decisions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 51% of consumer electronics.</li> <li>• 75% over the counter drugs.</li> <li>• 51% of all travel.</li> <li>• 65% of herbal remedies.</li> <li>• 80% of healthcare.</li> <li>• 51% of auto purchases (influence 85%).</li> <li>• 50% of computers.</li> <li>• 48% of stocks.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Women are responsible for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 83% of all consumer purchases;</li> <li>• 94% of home furnishings,</li> <li>• 92% of vacations,</li> <li>• 91% of houses,</li> <li>• 51% of consumer electronics, and</li> <li>• 60% of automobiles.</li> </ul>

Source: compiled by the author.

According to the *Pink Magazine*, women make 75% of all healthcare decisions, whether for themselves or their families, according to a recent report from the Pew Internet & American Life Project. They also make up more than half of all health consumers. Yet 35.8% of the world's top 500 healthcare and pharmaceutical companies have no women on their corporate boards according to a 2006 report from Corporate Women Directors International.

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these loans as high-cost subprime loans.

Even worse, nearly half of the 92 companies covered in the report have no senior women executive officers on their management teams. Still U.S. health sector firms have a higher average percentage of women directors (16.4%) than the top 500 American companies (14.7%). Women directors make up only 9.9% of the boards in European healthcare companies, and among 22 Japanese health companies there is not a single woman director (Pink Magazine „*Healthcare: The Good, the Bad and the Ridiculous*“, February/March 2007).

Therefore, women make 80 percent of all buying decisions. They control \$7 trillion in purchasing power. By 2010 they will control more than \$13 trillion in private wealth. And that's just in America. Globally, women's soaring economic power is changing business forever. Some remarkable companies are on the leading edge of this revolution.

### **Women Come Stronger in Consumer Electronics in the USA**

From politics to technology, women have played a vital role in shaping today's society. Some of these achievements and other various tidbits are being highlighted during International Women's Day on March 8. In regards to the technology spectrum, the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA, 2007) reports that women are the primary consumers when it comes to wireless gadgets and gizmos (Figure 3). According to CEA officials, women are outspending men in electronics purchases US\$55 billion to US\$41 billion. The trade organization also reports that women influence 90 percent of consumer electronics purchases which amounts to a lot of money when factory-to-dealer sales of consumer electronics are projected to exceed US\$155 billion in 2007.

“The consumer electronics (CE) industry has outdone itself once again, with revenues totalling US\$145 billion in 2006, and we are on track for another year of healthy growth”, said CEA President and CEO Gary Shapiro. “We surpassed original projections for the second year in a row, and the industry outlook is proof positive that Americans can't do without their beloved consumer electronics”.

CEA projects that display technologies will continue to be the star category in the industry and account for US\$22 billion in revenues for 2007. All television sets manufactured today with an analog tuner must also contain a digital tuner, which is largely responsible for the vast increase in digital television sales. Unprecedented price declines in plasma and LCD displays are also contributing to growth. For 2007, these flat panel displays are expected to ship a combined 19 million units.

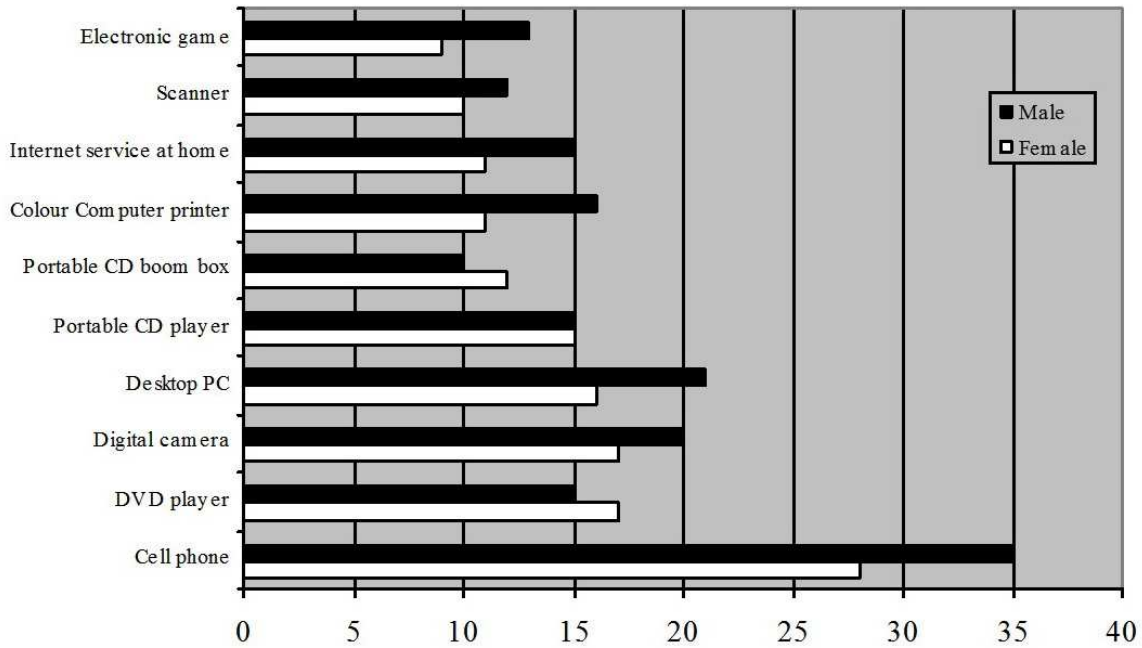


Figure 3. Percentage of people who intend to buy within next 12 months in the USA, 2007  
 Source: compiled by the author from Consumer electronics association, 2007

Next-generation consoles will make the video game market one to watch in 2007. An analysis of year-end game console sales reports for 2006 indicates that holiday sales will lift revenues in 2007 to US\$16 billion, a 23 percent increase.

MP3 players continue to drive the audio market. CEA projects that MP3 players will account for 90 percent of the US\$6 billion in revenues for the portable entertainment market. Thirty-four million MP3 players shipped in 2006 and an additional 41 million are expected to ship in 2007.

“One of the biggest drivers of both the audio and portable entertainment markets is the MP3 player. It continues to ship at large volumes and 2007 will be no different as the market shifts into a replacement mode. For example, many consumers will be replacing their first generation players with new players offering video playback capability”, said Thibodeaux.

Driving the mobile electronics market are portable navigation and GPS devices, evidence that consumers are continually looking for products that will keep them safe and make their automotive travel easier. Two million units shipped in 2006, a 66 percent increase over 2005, and 2007 shipment volumes will continue to propel the market with three million units projected to be shipped, generating US\$1 billion in revenues.

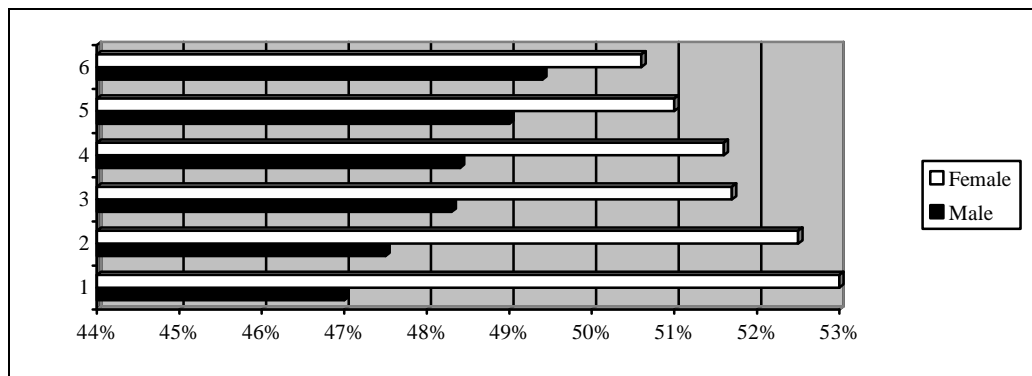


Figure 4. US Internet users by gender, 2006 (% of total Internet users)

Source: compiled by the author using (1) Arbitron/Edison Media Research, January 2006; (2) Mediamark Research Inc., Fall 2006; (3) Nielsen/NetRatings, december 2006; (4) eMarketer, March 2007; (5) Harris Interactive, February-April 2006; (6) comScore Media Metrix, December 2006.

Other product categories that will see substantial growth in 2007 are PCs, accessories and digital imaging devices. In 2006, shipment volumes of laptops eclipsed their desktop counterparts. CE accessory sales also will grow in 2007, to the tune of US\$11 billion, in large part due to an overall consumer emphasis on portability. Total digital imaging shipments are expected to exceed 32 million units, with revenues projected to reach \$8 billion, making 2006 and 2007 the best revenue years for this category.

“U.S. Consumer Electronics Sales and Forecasts 2002-2007” (January 2007) is published twice per year, in January and July. It was designed and formulated by CEA Market Research, the most comprehensive source of sales data, forecasts, consumer research.

Six different independent research organizations presented their research findings on the gender segmentation of US Internet users for 2006, as indicated in Figure 4.

### Women consumers in China

China’s recent history has seen huge changes in the rights, lifestyles and fortunes of its women. Mao Zedong described women as “Holding up half the sky” in his ‘little red book’, acknowledging the global contribution of women, and realising that the economy and society of China relied upon its women being fully integrated in all aspects of society. Women have seen their lot improve a great deal since the Communist government came to power in China, and have seen dramatic changes in their lifestyles and aspirations since the opening up of the

economy. Women have indeed become an integral part of the Chinese economy, manning the factories that churn out the huge volume of exports that China has grown increasingly wealthy one.

However, inequalities remain for women. Rural women continue to live in situations of poverty, where healthcare and education are sporadic, at best, and where patriarchal tradition still stands in the way of many women breaking out of such poverty. The wide diversity in Chinese society, and in the lifestyles of its women, is marked by that between the rural poor (living in near Mediaeval conditions) and the urban rich, who count themselves as citizens of a technology-linked global village.

So vast and rapid has change been in China, since it opened up its economy, that while the young now take all the comforts and luxuries they have for granted, the older generations remember the hardships and deprivations of failed political movements, and have to cope with their homes, neighbourhoods and cities having been demolished and rebuilt from scratch – leaving them with little that is familiar from their youth.

The stark changes in economy, lifestyle and politics, as well as the stark gulf between rich and poor, are all creating new priorities and aspirations among China's women. This has a direct effect on what they buy, and why. Saving rates are high, as women (who tend to hold the household purse strings) plan for future healthcare or education needs, or build deposits on a new apartment or car. Health scares breed fear of faulty goods and poisoned foods, and create wary consumers, who lay the burden of proof on the manufacturers, and the brands.

But, as well as reacting to the changes, women are creating many of them. With their spending habits, health concerns, access to legal representation amid new civilian rights consumer protection laws and rise up the corporate and political ladders, much of what China will become in the future, is now being shaped by its women. This is why understanding Chinese women as consumers is fundamental for anyone actively marketing in China.

This new report covers:

- An assessment of how the various rapid changes in China's economy and society is having an influence on Chinese women, both within the society and the economy.
- The report sections focus on: Chinese women's demographics; women and the family; women in society; women in the workforce; women as goods and services consumers; women as leisure consumers.
- Includes key demographic and market data on sectors with direct relevance to women, with data up to 2006.

- Analysis of various demographics within China's female population, and how different income groups have different aspirations and spending levels.
- An examination of women's changing place in Chinese society, their influence on and in the media, whether traditional Chinese values are really changing or not, and how far Chinese women are pushing the boundaries of traditional taboos and conservative preconceptions.
- Analysis of changing relationships between women, men, families and society, and how new economic opportunities are changing women's place in these relationships, and what that means for changes in consumer spending habits.
- Coverage of how there remain inequalities in terms of job opportunities, salaries, prejudices in the Chinese media and society, inequalities in familial roles, and how even more entrenched these traditional ways are in the countryside.
- Health issues, including rising levels of obesity and generally bigger physiques are changing how people have to market to Chinese women.
- Women's leisure time and involvement in sport (or lack of it), their growing interest in gyms and social exercise and what new opportunities this is creating.

## Conclusions & Recommendations for Marketing to Women

EPM Communications Inc. (2007) and others come to the conclusions and certain tactics have to be adopted in order to market goods and services to women, which could be rephrased as follows:

1. ***Harness organic word-of-mouth and you gain access to women's all-powerful family and friends networks.*** Home in on the most powerful marketing tool at your disposal so you become ingrained in women's social networking process.

2. ***Provide women with relevant information*** and they'll be your most *loyal* repeat *customers*. Extensive research data and scores of case studies focus you on customer service.

3. ***Give women the gift of time and watch your cache climb.*** Discover the importance of girls nights out, girlfriend and mother/daughter vacations, and do-it-yourself projects so you can meet women's urgent need for "me-time."

4. ***Use real women in your advertising and marketing to build credibility*** – and sales. Recognize boomer women (age of 40+) as healthy, active, and vibrant – and portray teens with a variety of un-model-like body types and features to win their confidence and spending power.



**5. Identify the women who aspire to a luxury lifestyle, and have the discretionary income** to enjoy it. Women own majority stakes in half of the privately held businesses in the U.S. and become millionaires younger than men. Find out how to pinpoint these aspirational consumers so you can target your messages to them early, as their tastes develop.

Women process information and make purchasing decisions differently than men (*The 51% Minority: Women's Buying Power*, 2007, March 02;

[http://askpatty.typepad.com/ask\\_patty\\_/2007/03/the\\_51\\_minority.html](http://askpatty.typepad.com/ask_patty_/2007/03/the_51_minority.html)):

- 59% of women feel misunderstood by food marketers;
- 66% misunderstood by health care marketers;
- 74% misunderstood by automotive marketers;
- 84% misunderstood by investment marketers;
- 91% of women in one survey said that advertisers don't understand them;
- 70% of new businesses are started by women.

There is a great potential for marketers to take notice of this survey, if they strive to compete for female consumers, especially in the advertising field and a number of specific product/ service spheres (e.g. investment, automotive, health-care, etc.).

Therefore, what women want and build on expectations as customers and consumers (Grundey, 2007):

- 1) Attention to detail in product design and service (e.g. Mac, Schick Intuition, iPod).
- 2) The right choices, not endless choices, e.g. customized and personalized vs. menu ('one size' fits all) items.
- 3) Flexibility (e.g. VOD, TiVO; improved return policies).
- 4) Longer selling process that respects their desire to understand and research what they are buying before they take it home.
- 5) Better, more-friendly customer service (e.g. small talk!).
- 6) Larger change rooms.
- 7) More in-store service features for kids.

### **Comprehension check**

- Define the features of family in modern and post-modern period.
- What are the roles of males and females in family purchasing process?
- What are the major perceptual differences between males and females?
- What are the female-consumer trends in the USA? Please, refer to your country and present some evidence.

- What guidelines could be given to the marketing specialists when referring to women-consumers? Is it different from other consumer segments and why?

### Recommended reading

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