

## SELLING POINTS

### How to market to boomer women

#### 1. Put people first.

Shift the focus in ads from the product to the prospect. Women are biologically programmed to be more interested in people than men are, and boomer women are especially interested in family ties and community involvement.

#### 2. Convey empathy, not rivalry.

Ads that talk about outranking others and defeating opponents are great for guys, rotten for women. Emphasize collegiality, closeness, helpfulness and consensus — values that resonate particularly well with midlife women.

#### 3. Portray them authentically.

The older woman is more assertive, confident and global in her outlook than marketers have given her credit for. A bonus: These attributes also work for midlife men.

— Fast Company  
senior writer Linda Tischler

## The greatest market opportunity you've never heard of

*Young at heart boomer women are ready, willing and able to spend big*

by Connie Brubaker

Not long ago, I watched an Oprah episode about women wearing unflattering “granny jeans” — jeans with a high waist, relaxed thighs and a narrow hem. Comfortable, sure. But as the panelists showed, not exactly the height of fashion.



### Connie's Comments

Frankly, I was appalled. I have a closet full of just these kind of jeans! As the episode went on, the fashion experts showed how changing the cut of jeans can make you look 10 pounds lighter, and definitely more stylish. That was enough to send me to the mall — I may be a 50-something grandma, but I still want to look my best.

My reward came when a woman stopped me, told me my new jeans looked great and asked for the brand name so she could get a pair!

And don't think I'm the exception here. US women between the ages of 40 and 58 spent \$27.8 billion on clothing between February 2004 and February 2005. That's more than women in any other age group.

Some clothing companies are paying attention to these numbers. Ads for Chico's and Coldwater Creek feature trim, gray-haired beauties wearing



*Forth & Towne's dressing rooms are designed to promote a sense of indulgence, inspiration and community in its women customers.*

trendy clothing in a variety of colors, materials and sizes. Chico's has certainly reaped the benefits of this targeted approach, with a return of 17,600% on their stock between 1996 and 2005.

A major nod to boomers' fashion clout comes from Gap, Inc. Last month, the parent company of Banana Republic and Old Navy announced that its new boomer shopping destination would be named Forth & Towne, evoking the idea of a gathering place for women. Four will be located in Chicago and one in New York.

Women aged 41 to 59 are “the greatest market opportunity today,” according to Mary Brown, founder of Imago Creative, the only marketing firm that specializes in reaching female baby boomers. And, Brown says, it's a market that cares a good deal about

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# Marketing to female baby boomers really pays

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keeping up appearances. "Now that they are confronting the reality of aging, they're hitting the gym and spa to stay healthy and youthful, at least in spirit. As they have with each life stage they've experienced so far, boomers are not going to enter into midlife and beyond quietly."

The 40+ age group is already 45% larger than the 18-39 group and will grow to 60% by 2010. More importantly, boomers have bucks. They control more than half of the nation's discre-

tionary income and three-quarters of the country's financial wealth.

American women also carry 76 million credit cards and influence 80% of all purchases of both consumer and business goods and services. They account for 66% of all home-computer purchases and 80% of all health-care services. And with their kids out of college, boomer women are increasingly ready to spend money on travel, cosmetic surgery, spas and fitness.

Financial service companies have also picked up on the trend of marketing to women. An ad for UBS featured a picture of 2 women, one clearly the mother, the other the daughter. The copy read: "You're psyched about the future. You're full of new ideas. You're looking to start a business. You are the one on the right." The one on the right

was the older women.

A lot of companies, however, are still unsure how to market to boomer women. Martha Barletta, author of *Marketing to Women*, says that businesses often mistakenly use pink logos, flowery ads and cheesy clichés about women warriors — all of which are more likely to repel, rather than attract, female customers.

Instead, capture the feel of this ad for New Balance sneakers, featuring a woman of indeterminate age jogging down a lane: "One more woman chasing a sunset. One more woman going a little farther. One more woman simply feeling alive. One less woman relying on someone else."

Not convinced? New Balance has doubled its sales to \$1.3 billion in the last 5 years. Ponder that for a while.

**WANT TO IMPROVE YOUR SALES TO WOMEN?** Sign up for one of Connie's informative, insightful and fun workshops on *Women's Role in the New World Market*. Choose from:

- *The Difference Between Men & Women and How They Buy*
- *Marketing to Women*
- *Selling to Women*

Connie Brubaker is a certified Integrity Systems® business consultant and professional speaker who focuses on sales, customer service and leadership.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

***"If women didn't exist, all the money in the world would have no meaning."***

— Aristotle Onassis (1906-1975)