



## Bending the Male/Female Gender Balance in Your Marketing

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We hear a lot of statistics being promoted currently, talking about how the age of the population is changing segmentation. The balance between males and females has now changed, the search for suitable mating partners with males and females has now got harder, and that we could also add into there the tremendous difference in self worth that is supposedly happening between males and females. Perhaps even getting down to the question, is the domination between the genders changing?

All of these external influences do affect the marketer in the planning of their strategies. It is easy to adopt a slightly broad brush, one-size-fits-all, according to the age and demographic segmentation bias that you use.

If we examine some generalisations, then we would understand that males tend to purchase on :

- what is going to fit within the decision timeframe,
- the practicality of the solution,
- the rationale behind the decision, eg.  $A + B = C$ ,
- its affordability within a budget,
- the political implications of being made to look good,
- previous experience,
- what they can visually see in front of them.

Females tend to purchase on:

- the effect on the people if they make the purchase,
- that they will look good and feel good,
- the emotional aspects of their purchase,
- the long-life of the decision,
- the practicality within the budget,
- the praise they will get for having made a good decision,
- that it delivers better than expectations,
- that it will get the job or the task done faster,
- the friend's referral was genuine,
- the price delivered greater value,
- it won't make them look bad,
- it may even have sex appeal to make that buying decision,
- they have mastered the technology.

As can be seen, these generalisations certainly point out some differences in the thinking process between males and females.

Of course, we must also add into it that sometimes the best decisions that can be made is when they are talked over between a male and a female as to whether it will achieve the task, as we get the best brainstorming possible to achieve the result. Obviously, this is only going to matter to decisions of consequence rather than day-to-day repurchase/replacements.

The sexual stereotype of the good looking male or the good looking female is not totally lost, however we now have the good looking male or the good looking female within the demographic age segments.

People over 50 want to look at the sex appeal of over-50 people, while the young 13-25 year olds want to look at the sex appeal of attracting an older person, while sometimes being very insecure about their own good looks and sex appeal. The middle bracket, of 30s to 50s, tends to be pretty comfortable with their sexuality and want to look good so they can play.

One major change in sexuality has been the portrayal of individuals rather than family groups, or different living partners or life partners, eg. a couple of males or a couple of females, or the single parent household. These are all quite acceptable marketing images.

An interesting strategy development is ,who is more responsive to loyalty reward packages?

Normal stereotyping would have the female being highly responsive to loyalty rewards, eg. the coffee club card, Fly Buys, and probably most females have within their personal effects quite a collection of loyalty cards that have been given out by various suppliers, some of which may be influential in driving the repurchase, some of which are just kept for the sake of "I've got one of those".

Females tend to appreciate loyalty cards from organisations as suppliers that are really great on service, have top quality products, and make the customer feel good about their purchase.

The predominant use of loyalty cards with males is in the travel industry, where Airpoints and hotel reward points tend to dominate, but the male sees the reward as gathering reward results whilst carrying out normal tasks, and probably as compensation for the lifestyle. Males are less inclined to carry the 'coffee club' approach card, but they are very determined to make sure that if there's any rewards going in their main areas of interest that there is something that comes back to them.

A clever use of loyalty rewards is the AA card, which at the end of the subscription year, if you've earned enough loyalty points, it pays for your subscription.

With a blurring of the roles of the male and female sex partner, it is important that marketing doesn't become bland, doesn't fall into the traps of 'one message will fit both male and female because they are just about the same', but rather identifies through intensive research the characteristics and idiosyncrasies of the male or female buyer, and then fine tunes the product or service offerings to meet those expectations to deliver greater perceived value so as to stimulate demand.

In this age of personalisation, it's about understanding more about the male buying decisions, it's about understanding more about the female buying decisions, than ever before, and personalising the messages to trigger the responses to suit the market.

It's not about the use of technology, it's about the understanding of the decision.

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