

TREND WATCHER

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Everyday I am amazed at the changes in the marketplace. What we once thought was gospel is now being tossed out for something new. The biggest mistake you can make is assume the marketing and consumer environment is still the same. Unless it's something you learned yesterday it has probably changed.

Don't make assumptions about gender roles

January 12, 2012, Marketing

While technology enthusiasts and addicts checked out the latest and greatest at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this week, *Ad Age* was trying to figure out where and how women consumers fit into the rapidly changing technology market.

"Tech marketers traditionally focus on 25- to 40-year-old men, which is virtually everyone who comes to CES," said panelist **James McQuivey**, principal analyst at Forrester Research specializing in the digital home.

The discussion put marketing technology to the sexes in two distinct camps: for men, the sell is more focused on product specs and status; while women are looking for the benefit utility gadgets can provide their lives.

"Men's use of technology is much more predictable," said McQuivey. "Women are much more sophisticated," adding that there are, of course, overlaps but usually marked differences in the genders' attitudes toward technology.

However, many technology companies are sticking to one-note, male-oriented marketing. This year, Forrester's McQuivey said there's a huge opportunity for marketers of the hot new devices to target men and women.

Women buy and influence the purchase of two major technology categories, computers and TVs, half the time, according to GfK MRI's Survey of the American Consumer from last spring.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOUR BUSINESS:

The roles of men and women are changing rapidly. Their influence on the market place is therefore also changing. To assume roles continue to be traditional will eventually lead you down the wrong path. It is best to start now on gender-neutral marketing so as not to alienate potential future consumers.

Did you know?

According to StatsCan in 10% of households Dad's are giving up jobs or putting their careers on hold to stay at home with the kids. This is up from 1% in 1976.

Dad's taking their new role seriously

March 13, 2012 Adweek.com

Huggies has pulled ads from its Facebook page after folks got cranky over the Kimberly-Clark brand's "Dad Test" campaign. A rash of complaints slammed the work for depicting fathers as deficient and indifferent caregivers. Surveys show more dads than ever taking on significant child-rearing chores, so it's no surprise the ads generated backlash in the blogosphere, including a high-profile online petition by full-time at-home Pennsylvania dad Chris Routly that garnered more than 1,300 signatures. His mantra: "We're dads, Huggies. Not dummies." Client rep Joey Mooring says the intention was not to poke fun at dads "but only feature real dads, with their own babies in real-life situations, putting our Huggies diapers and baby wipes to the test. We have learned that our intended message did not come through, and we have made changes." After meeting with angry fathers at the Dad Summit 2.0 last week in Austin, Texas, Huggies spiked the most reviled spot—showing dads apparently more engrossed in watching spots on TV than minding their young kids—replacing it with "Easy Chair" (below), which depicts happy babies napping in their fathers' laps. The brand has also nixed an online image of a perplexed-looking dad in a business suit in favor of a can-do type in a T-shirt holding a baby. Huggies says it's considering more alterations, including a new tagline, so it looks like changing time isn't over yet.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOUR BUSINESS:

This is the perfect example of assuming the market is the same as it used to be. Keeping in touch with the evolution of your consumer and what is important to your consumer is critical. Most times these errors go unnoticed and untracked and lead to an erosion of consumers.

With change and innovation, timing is everything

The Globe and Mail, February 8, 2012

After more than three years of selling milk and frozen pizzas alongside power drills and patio sets, Canadian Tire Corp. CTC-T is retreating from its experiment with food.

In the latest and most significant signal yet that it is putting the brakes on expanding into groceries, the retailer has decided against placing pilot food sections in its new prototype stores. Instead, the company is dedicating its focus to pumping up its signature tires and other auto-related products.

Canadian Tire's 2008 foray into food was part of its bid to find new ways to rev up customer traffic. Rivals ranging from Shoppers Drug Mart Corp. to Wal-Mart rapidly added eggs and cheese to their aisles. By next year, Target will arrive here with its own food offerings. The appeal is evident: Customers who buy food shell out three times more over all than those who don't, according to Shoppers' findings.

Even chief executive officer Stephen Wetmore has played down the food strategy. "Obviously, we still have to make a decision on food," he told analysts in November. "Economics versus traffic-driving on a national scale is the issue. So we are continuing to look at all the options, and we'll obviously keep you posted."

With food (beyond snacks and soft drinks) in 17 of its 487 stores, Canadian Tire hasn't added it to outlets since 2010. Early that year, Mike Arnett, one of its executives, said that food was "the most-shopped category" in stores where it was carried, generating a positive customer response.

Still, Canadian Tire's four new prototype stores have no food offerings. "This could be a signal that the [food] experiment is over," said Mark Petrie, an analyst at CIBC World Markets. David Cheesewright, former CEO at Wal-Mart Canada who now heads other regions as well, has acknowledged the tough retail food terrain in this country. "Our ability to get food margins as high as the U.S. is challenged," he told a conference last June.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOUR BUSINESS:

Ensuring that your product offerings connect with your consumer is critical. The best product targeted to the wrong consumer is useless. In this particular case, the market might not have been ready yet for grocery offerings in a Canadian Tire. With 25% of males responsible for grocery shopping and growing rapidly there is a strong likelihood as gender roles continue to change, grocery departments in a store like Canadian Tire may become a very relevant in the not so distant future.

New in Marketing Research

Looking more global for local trends

The world is getting smaller and looking beyond our Canadian borders for a peek into what might be in store for future trends is a crystal ball that is based on fact. A new product by Fresh Intelligence, an innovative, boutique market research company, called *FreshTrends*.

FreshTrends is an innovative and creative way to examine all things cutting edge, or on the verge of becoming mainstream, by analysing global consumer trends across 23 markets worldwide. This tool can be used to unlock all of the answers to the pressing questions that companies demand insights for on a daily basis.

Take the future of coupons, for example, which is one of the thousands of topics tracked in the *FreshTrends* system. Currently, a booming trend in Tokyo is to use a smartphone's GPS functionality to capture virtual butterflies that transform into coupons and can be redeemed in local retail stores - a tactic that should be on every loyalty marketer's radar as digital coupon systems provide a level of interaction, entertainment, and location-sensitivity that physical coupons struggle to obtain.

Currently, there are 61 quantified and established trends that are being tracked. Find out more about this unique tool.

*For more information contact
Marion Chan 416-737-3567
marionchan@trendspotter.ca*

About TrendSpotter Consulting

TrendSpotter Consulting provides everything a business needs to develop, fine tune or review your brand strategy:

- *Creating the plan of action*
- *Designing, executing and analysing the research*
- *Outlining the target and positioning*
- *Working with agencies and suppliers to execute on strategy marketing initiatives*

Contact Us

marionchan@trendspotter.ca

1-416-737-3567 (Toronto)

www.trendspotter.ca