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# Marketing to Women: Establishing Trust, Advocacy and Authenticity

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Did you know that women make up 85% of all consumer purchases<sup>1</sup> on everything from health items to technology to food? It's no surprise that marketers of every stripe bombard them with messages intended to make connections and grab their share of the pocketbook.

But, marketers must understand women along many dimensions of their lives to create effective media and content opportunities. Recently, a number of high-profile campaigns have targeted women in new ways, aiming to create connections and foster longstanding, trusted relationships with women through lofty creative messages meant to inspire, unite, increase self-esteem or empower female consumers. While many of these campaigns have succeeded in generating significant awareness and engagement among women, within a short window engagement returns to pre-campaign levels and the brand is not that much further ahead. We measured billions of consumer posts across the social web to understand the effect these campaigns are having. The result: mentions of the brands we measured almost always had a spike and then returned to pre-campaign levels within 4 days<sup>2</sup> of the campaign's completion.

While it's easy enough to measure post volume or share of voice, the real takeaways here have more to do with whether or not the brands were successful in creating connections with their core customers and furthermore, consumers who had potential to be a customer – but who haven't made the connection yet (The two together make up the brand's **Opportunity Audience**). The real key for marketers is to understand their opportunity audience within the "women" segment and to continuously market to this audience based on audience-specific insights.

But, how to approach this mammoth topic? As a first step, think about these three rules of thumb that can be applied in marketing efforts directed towards women:

1. Establish trust for your brand and the reliability/effectiveness of your products.
2. Create and foster brand advocacy.
3. Showcase your relatability and authenticity to your core consumers.

More to come on the rules, but first, consider women's activity with brands on social, where, according to Ad Age<sup>3</sup>, people are increasing their engagement with branded content at a rate of 50+% more year over year -- faster than brands can even pump out the content. To effectively market to women, it's important to understand their use of social channels. And, while we're not looking to stereotype an entire gender, there are two broad use cases of social that we see to be typical among women: **inspiration** and **community**.

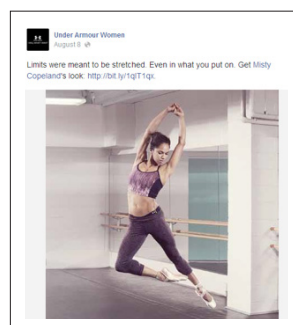
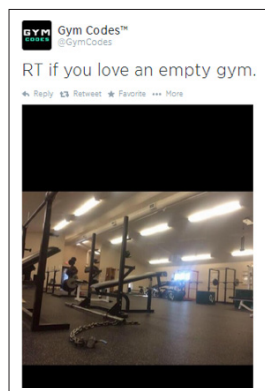
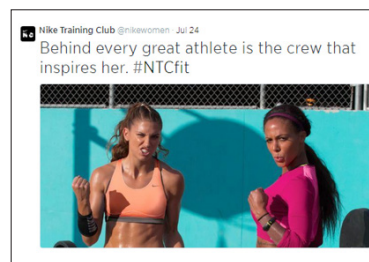
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## Apply these rules of thumb when marketing to women:

- Establish trust for your brand
  - Foster brand advocacy.
  - Showcase your authenticity
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### INSPIRATION

Women often use social channels to curate content that inspires them and relates to their interests and passions, whether that be finding healthy and easy recipes for the family, looking for motivation for their fitness habits, or seeking inspiration for their next travel destination. While working with sports apparel giant, Under Armour, for their acclaimed 2014 women's campaign, *I Will What I Want*, Networked Insights analyzed two target female audiences: 1) high school or college aged female athletes who participate in organized sports and 2) everyday, post-college-aged women who like to work out. Despite many behavioral and life style differences in the audiences, both audiences highly engaged with inspirational, short proverbs, particularly on Instagram, that grounded the campaign. Additionally, about a quarter of the fitness content each audience shared on Twitter was motivational, visual content related to topics such as working out and new workout apparel (here are some examples).



## COMMUNITY

In terms of community, women tend to seek out others with whom they relate on social for the purposes of advice or education, feeling understood and feeling less alone in their endeavors. We see this in the prevalence of specific interest or life-stage focused communities on social. There are blogs, forums, Facebook groups and hashtags for everything from Crossfitters to “Moms of Twins.” In particular, we see a strong need for social communities among stay-at-home moms, as the data shows it can be their connection to the “outside world” and their source of advice from other moms they relate to and trust.

### EXAMPLE: MOMS SURVIVE ON INTERACTIONS WITH FRIENDS, NEWS AND CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER ADULTS.



While working with Campbell's, we discovered and analyzed an opportunity audience for one of their products that we dubbed the Survival Mode Mom. The Survival Mode Mom audience is predominantly stay-at-home moms with young children and a low to middle household income. She's in “survival mode” because of the physical, mental and financial demands on a parent with young children.

After analyzing the websites the Survival Mode Mom shares and discusses most across social media, we learned that social and news sites allow her to stay connected with other adults and the outside world, offering a mental break from childcare. She interacts with friends and family on social sites such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to share her special moments with her children and her status updates, and she turns to relatable mommy blogs for financial advice, recipe ideas, and household management tips.

TOP SHARED WEBSITES	
Twitter	1
Instagram	2
Facebook	3
Youtube	4
Etsy	5
Pinterest	6
Amazon	7
Vine	8
Tumblr	9
Huffingtonpost.com	10
Couponing4you.com	11

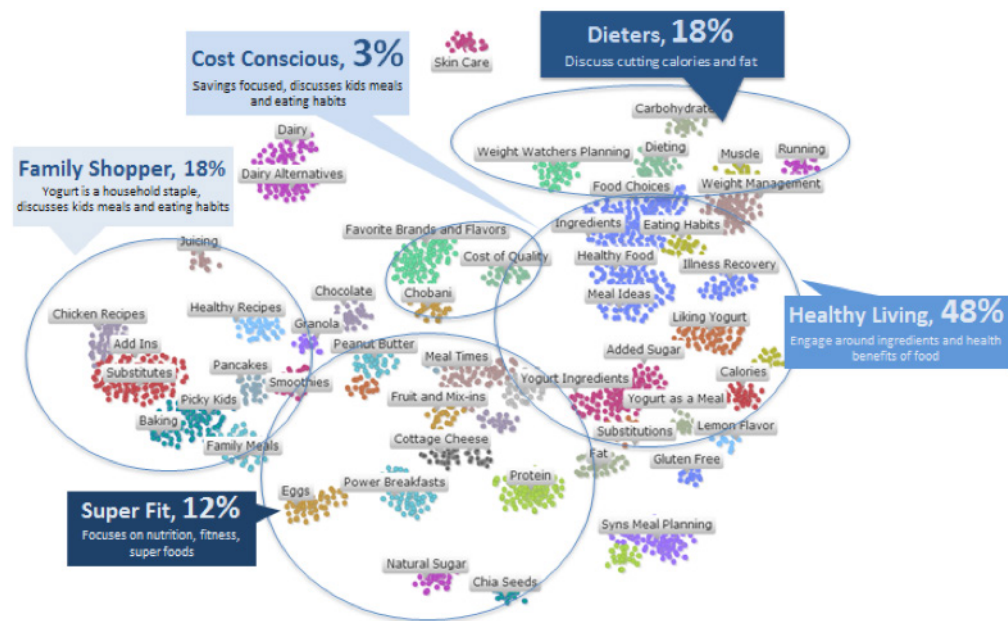
## BEST PRACTICES FOR MARKETING TO WOMEN

Marketing to women as a whole is not typically an effective strategy when it comes to content and targeting. Consumer needs and desires are often affected by things such as their life stage, lifestyle, profession, family situation, health and fitness goals, general interests and hobbies, etc. This is why it is critical that brands looking to attract women conduct the research to identify their targets, or opportunity audiences, among women. This requires mapping out not only what this consumer looks like from a demographic perspective, but more importantly, their attitudinal behaviors and affinities. Without these insights, creating custom content that resonates and spending activation dollars in the right places becomes a guessing game.

## EXAMPLE: YOGURT COMPANY IDENTIFIES NEW CUSTOMER SEGMENTS

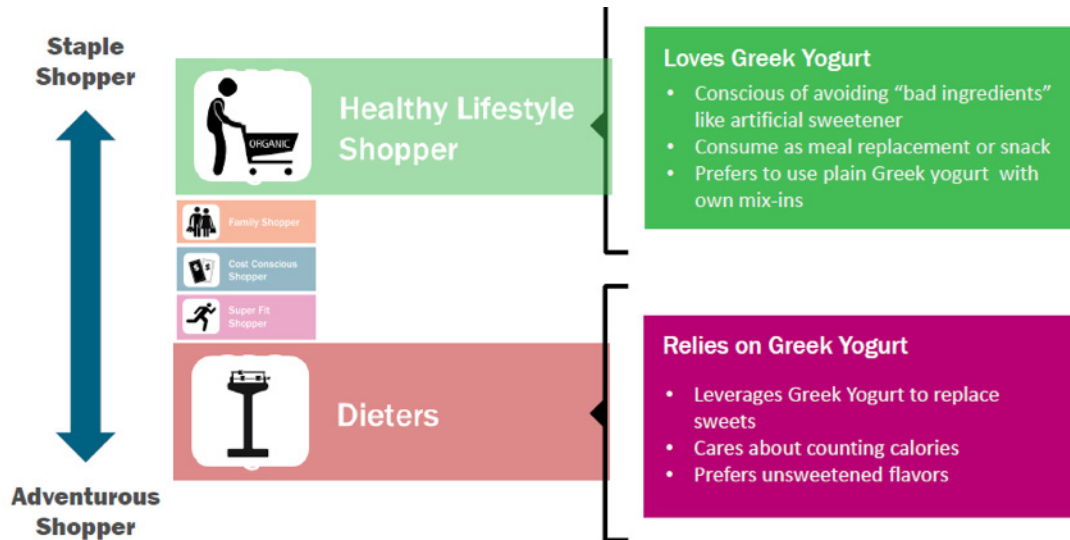
A CPG company was launching a Greek yogurt product and needed to understand the landscape of yogurt buyers and which segment or segments of buyers would be the best fit for their new product. After analyzing nearly 3 million conversations about yogurt, Networked Insights identified 5 primary segments of consumers that purchase yogurt: family shopper, cost-conscious, healthy living, dieters and super fit.

### YOGURT CONVERSATIONS IN GLOBAL BLOGS, BLOG COMMENTS AND FORUMS



Looking at all the millions of conversations about yogurt happening across social media at any given time, the posts are analyzed and categorized into groups representing consumer segments.

In addition to being two of the largest segments, the Healthy Living and Dieters also had the highest share of Greek yogurt discussion within total yogurt discussion, and their preferences and habits associated with Greek yogurt made them a perfect target for the company.



After identifying the two best opportunity audiences, the CPG company was able to analyze these audiences further (using Networked Insights’ marketing analytics platform, Kairos®) to profile their demographics and affinities, allowing them to build a successful marketing strategy for the product launch and campaign.

## MARKETING TO WOMEN: HOW TO BETTER ENGAGE FEMALE CONSUMERS

Now, back to our rules of thumb: Remember, once a brand has identified and analyzed its opportunity audience(s), there are three high-level themes that marketers should employ to better engage female consumers:

1. Establish trust for your brand and the reliability/effectiveness of your products
2. Create and foster brand advocacy
3. Showcase your relatability and authenticity

### TRUST

While product efficacy certainly does not rest in the hands of marketers, trust and reliability can be conveyed to some extent through the appropriate content creation and messaging as well as the use of relatable influencers/advocates for the opportunity audience (more to come on influencers and advocates later in this piece). In order to create trust-building content, a brand must first understand how consumers discuss the brand and its products in terms of their likes, dislikes, purchase drivers, etc., compared to its competitors. How does the brand's opportunity audience behave in this category and what are their purchase drivers and product likes versus pain points? This knowledge will allow the marketing team to build content that highlights the product features and/or product results that consumers praise and showcase the product being used in a matter that is relatable to the opportunity audience.

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### EXAMPLE: FEMININE CARE BRAND LEARNS WOMEN TOUT ITS PRODUCT'S EFFECTIVENESS AND COMFORT

Networked Insights worked with a large CPG company who wanted to understand consumer conversation surrounding one of their feminine care pad products. After analyzing mentions of the product across social channels, there were two primary discussion points that emerged. For one, women were shocked at how absorbent this product was despite it being so thin. The other big theme that women discussed was how comfortable the product was. The absorbency and comfort factors allowed women to go about their day without having concerns that the product would fail them while also allowing them to forget that it was there. The brand now knew that product messaging should speak to both of these elements, letting women know that they did not have to sacrifice comfort for absorbency.

Product effectiveness is particularly important in categories such as CPG where women are so often making the purchasing decisions for the household and want a product that they trust will consistently deliver on its purported benefits. As a result, they often seek out product recommendations from others who they trust or can relate to, and they often advocate for a product when they have found something that they love.

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## ADVOCACY

This brings us to the theme of advocacy. Brand advocates are people or customers who talk favorably about a brand or product and then pass on the positive word-of-mouth to others. The ripple effect can be huge for brands as advocates can be prolific content creators and they highly influence the opinions and purchase decisions their friends make. Our analysis of advocacy discussion across social channels in the context of brands shows that these conversations are almost 3x more likely come from a female than male.<sup>4</sup> This includes direct advocacy for a brand (recommending it, expressing love for it, suggesting people try it, etc.), as well as seeking product recommendations from others.

When leveraging social channels to drive or share advocacy, it's important to answer the following questions.

1. Who advocates for your brand already, and how, where and why do they do it? (This may or may not be your opportunity audience if you're launching a new product or looking to expand beyond a small, but loyal consumer base. If you don't know, engage in a Discovery phase to find out).
2. What online communities or media properties do your opportunity audience follow or where do they participate?
3. Who or what influences your opportunity audience?

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## EXAMPLE: FEMININE CARE PRODUCT FINDS AN UNEXPECTED NEW SEGMENT ENDORSING AND RECOMMENDING ITS BRAND

After understanding what consumers were saying about its product, the next step for the feminine care brand discussed above was to determine who was advocating for the product. The brand assumed that their biggest advocates would be teenagers or women in their 20s, but it turned out that a large percentage of advocacy discussion for the brand was coming from post-partum mothers. They were extremely vocal about the product efficacy and the fact that it was reliable and could be trusted to work every time, ultimately gaining their trust as their go-to product. These discussions primarily took place on mom sites and blogs and forums like babycenter.com, forums.thebump.com and cafemom.com, where post-partum mothers were seeking and providing relevant recommendations. Rather than trust a commercial or an ad to tell them which product would work, these mothers sought advice from women who they knew were going through the exact same situation and understood their needs. Armed with this information, the brand could now create steps to expand this advocacy by featuring post-partum mothers in their social efforts, sharing testimonials, and selecting influencers who were new moms.

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## AUTHENTICITY/RELATABILITY

It's important for brands to have an authentic voice in terms of an underlying brand message and benefit that is reflected consistently across marketing efforts and social channels. Consumers want to know what a brand stands for and expect a two-way conversation as opposed to the brand pushing its agenda down to consumers. If a brand has a genuine mission and purpose, this will naturally result in commonalities and consistencies in marketing. In order to make the marketing efforts even more relatable to consumers, the brand must get to know its opportunity audience and consistently analyze its unique interests and behaviors. Otherwise, the language or visual content used will not resonate.

As an example, during Under Armour's 2014 women's campaign, a major focus of *I Will What I Want* was on empowerment. While the overall campaign was very successful, not all the imagery used drew strong engagement. In particular, there were still images of the female athlete ambassadors professionally photographed and staged. When Under Armour shared these pictures on Instagram, the engagement levels were typically below that of other posts. This is not surprising given that their two opportunity audiences, high school and college aged female athletes and post-college aged women who like to work out, engaged more heavily with visuals and content that made an athlete more relatable and appeared in a more natural setting. For example, they enjoyed #tbt posts and posts where athletes or other women shared stories of how they got their start and some of the challenges they had to overcome, as well as images of them in their everyday gym or practice routine.

Another important aspect of authenticity is choosing the right brand ambassador(s). If a brand pays millions of dollars for a celebrity that does not resonate with their opportunity audience, they're not only looking at a poor investment, but they could actually tarnish their brand image in the eyes of the consumers they care most about.

## SUMMARY

In summary, it is important to focus efforts on the brand's opportunity audience(s) as opposed to women as a whole. Once this segment has been identified, marketers must learn their interests and behaviors. This is not a one-time market research effort, but an ongoing process. Understanding a brand's target segment will allow the brand to more effectively establish trust, foster advocacy and demonstrate authenticity. For marketing efforts via social channels, determining how the opportunity audience uses social for inspiration and to build a community will help the brand participate in these channels more effectively and generate content that resonates.

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**Contact us to learn more.**

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## ABOUT NETWORKED INSIGHTS

Networked Insights enables brands to connect with and expand their opportunity audiences™. Our marketing platform, Kairos®, analyzes and organizes real-time consumer data from the social web to uncover strategic, actionable insights. Kairos helps brands deeply understand their opportunity audiences, create content that connects with them, choose the right media investments, and track the connectedness of those audiences. Learn more at [networkedinsights.com](http://networkedinsights.com) and follow [@netinsights](https://twitter.com/netinsights).

**NOTES:** 1. Bloomberg, 2015 2. Kairos® Marketing Analytics 3. Ad Age, Engagement with Brand Content Soared 52% Last Quarter, 2015 4. Kairos® Marketing Platform, 2016