

Do advertisers know what women want?

By [Tshepiso Seopa](#)

7 May 2008

Do advertisers ever wonder if their advertising messages, especially those targeted at women, explain their brand the very same way that their brand is portrayed when wanting to reach women? On the first day of The Women's Show, held at Sandton Convention Centre 25 - 27 April 2008, Bizcommunity.com hosted a forum and the topic which was discussed was: do advertisers know what women want?

In giving his viewpoint on the topic, David Wolstenholme, CEO of SE Shows and Events who was also the host on the day, said, "Marketers have no clue as to what it is women want. Women need specialised methods when communicating with them. They do not want to be seen as a group but as individuals.

"New media networks have given marketers a platform to integrate and create powerful content while still interacting with the consumer. Money has to be spent in making sure that a dialogue is created. In getting this right, marketers should not just copy what is being done overseas but get the right skills needed to drive the process forward.

"Have to start rethinking"

"Marketers have to start rethinking the role of women in families, in their careers and stimulate conversations with them because they are the majority decision makers of lifestyle purchases," he added.

The view that most speakers seemed to agree on is that, yes, women have buying power, but as consumers they consume brands differently and are individuals, even though they might have similarities.

"Yes, 92% of all purchasing decisions are made by women, but this is not new. And this is not rocket science. Women aren't some mysterious beings that are impossible to understand. Women are people. Just like men. Yes, they play a number of different roles. But they certainly don't think alike. Some are mothers and daughters. Some are successful business women. Some are committed wives. Some are bored secretaries. Some are traditional community members. Some are all of these. Some are none of these, said Angel Jones, the creative director of MorrisJones Productions.

Stop the blanket approach

According to Jones, marketing to women isn't some blanket approach that one can get right by memorising a few insights: "Look around you. People are everywhere. Women are everywhere.

"I see that my mother is very good at laughing at herself. Our family doctor loves handbags but hates makeup. My friend

monopolises every speech, including all the ones at her Zulu wedding. My sister constantly goes through this love-hate relationship with her career. My housekeeper wants to be a priest but she swears like a trooper. My lawyer is a corporate hotshot and a facebook addict. But I know lots of men like this too. The important thing is to fit the brand to the person. Not to the entire 50% of the damn population,” says Jones.

“Indeed women have buying power and I truly believe that by marketing effectively to women is significant and a profitable opportunity. Communications to women needs to improve because it is vital,” said Molebogeng, one of the guests at the Women Show.

The Women Show made its debut in Johannesburg this year, aiming to celebrate the powerful role women of all ages, interest and cultural orientation play in the marketplace. It showcased opportunities for women personal and professional development. The show was designed as a highly experiential and sensory platform which showcases authentic products and services by companies that recognise the value of women.

ABOUT TSHEPISO SEOPA

Tshepiso Seopa was a junior journalist at Bizcommunity.com

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