

A collection of
management articles for
the aspiring managers

e-Management Digest

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MARKETING

Marketing to Women

The 2006 by-census results published by the Census and Statistics Department on February 22 showed that gender imbalance has worsened in Hong Kong. For every 1000 females there are only 961 males. To some single women, this is bad news.

The Challenges

On the other hand, for marketers, this is not only an opportunity but also a challenge to take their marketing strategies to new levels. In the UK, a recent research reveals that marketers are failing to appeal to women. One in two British women 'does not think manufacturers understand the real world', according to 'YouGov.com'. 50% of women surveyed say that manufacturers try to sell things by 'making women feel bad about themselves', and 68% of women say the women portrayed in advertisements are unrealistic and in gross exaggeration. Skincare adverts, for example, often feature unrealistically beautiful and slim women, giving potential customers an awkward feeling of their own unattractiveness and overweight.

The Opportunities

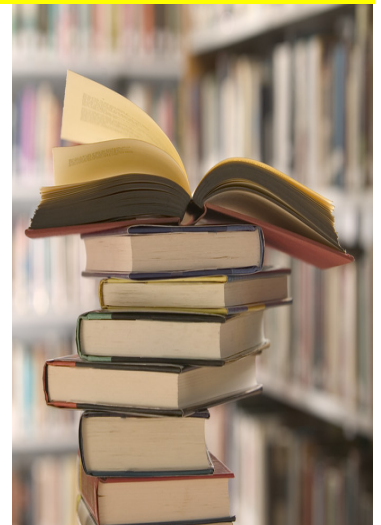
Meanwhile, a survey of 3000 companies in Asia-Pacific, researchers found a growing trend of SMEs to engaging more women in senior jobs.

High income women executives have the propensity to spend, especially on health, beauty and self-actualisation products. Women today are well-educated, well-travelled and discerning.

Tami Anderson and Elizabeth Howland from the 'How Marketing' magazine, offer marketers some powerful insights for marketing to women:

A distinctive women story

While the sport shoes market had been dominated by products for men, Nike has done a very good job in getting women's attention. Their recent campaign, featuring a series of young, famous and sporty artists in Asia created phenomenal feedbacks among the female community. By making women feel good about themselves, the campaign promotes a healthy life that all women should aspire for.



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'Brand Lite' isn't the answer

Many marketers misconceived about creating a separate, softer brand to reach women. They are concerned about alienating the guys and weaken an established market if they simply feminise the core brand. This is not true. One of the best examples of a great company that got it right with both women and men is Apple. Terrific design, easy-to-use technology and a passionate lifestyle promoted a strong appeal for both sexes.

Product values, not features

It has been a tradition for the car or hi-tech industries to list out every single technical specification to impress potential buyers. While some women may not be interested in what these features are, they want to know the benefits offered. In the late 1980's, Volvo made women's needs a key part of its development process. Rather than loading its marketing messages with endless lists of technical specifications, the 'Volvo for Life' slogan conveys the two umbrella messages that are especially important to women – 'Safety' and 'Dependability'.

Respect her

Before, McDonald's had used women in its adverts mainly as a conduit to kids. With 'mom's marketing' no longer an effective tool, McDonald's in the US was looking to 'find the woman inside the mom' and this led them to the highly successful PlayPlaces (a small indoor play area for kids) featuring comfortable seating and wireless internet access so moms can look after their children and stay in touch with the world.

To embrace higher standards

Women always look for good quality products and services and are often willing to pay for them. ThreeSixty supermarket in



Hong Kong has been able to fulfil women's health conscious desire and brought in all kinds of imported and organic food. With high quality, hard-to-find products, a pleasant atmosphere and a team of knowledgeable, courteous sales people, ThreeSixty has transformed the mundane grocery shopping routine into a premium experience.

Marketers need to understand the difference between men and women. Applying a masculine way of thinking to solve female marketing puzzles ignores the difference and similarity of men and women. Marketers are well advised to explore new opportunities by planning gender messages appropriately.

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DATA MANAGEMENT

The Information Lifecycle

Information and data are one of the greatest assets of a business and their retention has always been an important aspect of business management. Today, as governance and compliance laws are making mandatory for certain information to be kept and published, data retention has become an even more pressing issue. These requirements, if not taken in the

right perspective, could distract companies from realising the full business value that can be derived from their data, forcing them instead to tackle the issues of auditing and protecting data, rather than how to use it to their business advantage.

Logiscalis, a company in the information storage and communication service in the UK, offers a four-point plan to clients to manage their information storage needs to meet their business and legal requirements.



The plan is a holistic approach to managing the Information Lifecycle. By taking time to identify the data that is important to an organisation, and understanding how to manage, share and protect it, forward thinking companies can manage data from its point of creation right through to its archiving and retrieval.

Identifying Data

All data is not equal. The first, and perhaps the most daunting step to achieving an effective information management strategy, is to assess which data is important to an organisation. This is determined by its usefulness to the business and its associated risk. Similarly, taking time to understand the priorities different parts of the business place on different data, and

understanding the process and reporting capabilities that help them use this data effectively, is essential.

Managing Data

Consideration on how information should be stored should come only after data has been categorised in relation to its business value and risk, how it needs to be accessed, and by whom.

The new Basel II Accord requires financial services companies to store a vast amount of customer data and then reduce the amount of capital set aside to cover risks. Access to this information after the transaction is completed will be required seldom, if ever, but compliance dictates that companies manage and protect this information in an appropriate way. In contrast, timely access to customer correspondence, audio recordings of customer complaints and access to a company's transactional database can improve both the quality and speed of customer service, and even reduce customer service costs.

Sharing Data

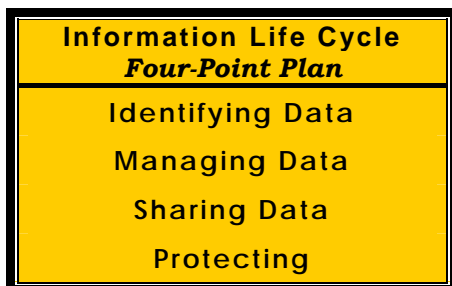
As storage becomes more sophisticated it is possible to architect a consolidated physical or virtualised storage network, which combines existing storage infrastructure with best-fit technology. So, while it may make sense to store primary high value data on disk, it can be up to fifty times cheaper to store tertiary data on tape. Architecting a storage infrastructure in this way ensures data storage costs grow in proportion to the relevant 'active' data in a company's disk drives, and not because of

the total volume of data that needs to be stored.

Cleaning and de-duplicating a company's existing storage can also yield significant re-use of space and further reduce the overall cost of a holistic information management strategy. Optimisation of this nature ensures that a company increases its Return on Investment (ROI) on its assets. It also guarantees a reduction in the cost of storage compliance, while enabling timely access to essential information.

Protecting Data

Keeping data is one thing. Keeping it securely is another. An information audit in the early stages of an information management project, as well as helping to assess the best types of storage to implement, will also ensure safeguards are put in place to protect the data that falls under the corporate governance banner. Corporate governance laws (Sarbanes Oxley Act, for example) require companies to file annual statements and reports to confirm the existence of an effective internal control structure and procedures. Identifying this data in the early stages of the project and establishing reporting and auditing capabilities to demonstrate storage management policies and processes are compliant, will ensure that systems and procedures are reliable, and that data is protected.



Building Blocks

The four-point plan is, of course, only the starting point. Carried out thoroughly it will provide a solid foundation from which a holistic storage environment can grow - one that is better able to respond to users because the data is understood, better able to provide competitive business edge, and better placed to adhere to compliance regulations.

Addressing the fundamental issues of business efficiency and competitiveness as it does, it is little wonder that storage has become the boardroom topic of the day. The only question is, "Why hasn't this happened sooner?"

*Adapted from an article by Ian Cook
in Manager (February/ March 2007)
journal of the Institute of Administrative
Management*

ENGLISH

Words Worth

WRONG	RIGHT
X The boy is proud of being the highest in the class	✓ The boy is proud of being the tallest in the class
▪ 'High' describes distance about ground (e.g. a high ceiling), but 'tall' describes the height of people, trees and things which are narrow (e.g. a tall man, a tall chimney, a tall building)	
X Let me know immediately she will arrive.	✓ Let me know immediately she arrives.
▪ After immediately use the present simple tense to indicate the future, not shall/will + a verb. Note also in North America, 'as soon as' is used instead of 'immediately'	
X He often helps her to do the houseworks.	✓ He often helps her to do the housework.
▪ Housework (or work) is an uncountable noun. 'Works' is a piece of art, engineering work, or a factory	
X She comes to here every afternoon	✓ She comes here every afternoon
▪ 'There' and 'here' cannot follow to unless the speaker is indicating or pointing to something (e.g. when the tide comes in the water reaches up to here)	