

New -Age Marketing Strategies for Women and Children in Consumer Goods

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Abstract

The trend of various marketing strategies has seen a shift when it comes to target audience. It has been observed that various marketers have realized that men are not the only important element that drives the total consumer base. Different products have different demand which addresses a variety of needs and wants. So, the marketing efforts are the most effective when it is directly targeted to the end user through the use of appropriate channels of communication.

In today's world, not only men but women and children also play a major role in the process of decision making related to households, apparels, entertainment choices, food preferences, etc. Understanding the changing norms of society, marketers are moving in the same direction and trying to target audience by capturing their sentiments in various advertisements and addressing their needs and wants by making rational, emotional, fear or the relevant appeal and associating them with their products and services. Under this aspect, this paper focuses on the various New-Age Marketing strategies for Women and Children in Consumer Goods.

Key words: Women, Children, Rational, Emotional, Sentiments, Consumer Goods

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I. Review of Literature

One of the fastest growing Market segment of the recent time has been the Child Consumer (*Source: Andersen H and Meyer D-(2000) ,Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*) and these young consumers seem to exert enormous influence on the allocation of spending power across a growing number of product categories.

Hill, H. (*Source: Hill, H, 2002, British Food Journal*), found 'extensive' influence of children on parental purchase although **Bergler R** (*1999) in International Journal Of Advertising*, thinks that the influence was overestimated and it may be that families now adopt a more liberal attitude in which children's views are most likely to be taken into account .

Bearden and Randall (*Source: Bearden, W. & Randall, R. (1990) Journal of Consumer Research*) suggest that as children mature into adolescence, peer group influence increases at the expense of parental influence and **Anderson and Meyer** (*Source: Anderson, H. & Meyer, D. (2000) Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*)take this further, suggesting that greater 'social motivation' results, leading to an increase in consumption and materialism.

Growing up can be a period of great insecurity, and modifying one's purchasing behaviour to fit with that of the peer group is likely to reinforce a sense of 'belonging' and acceptance, as identified by Heitmeyer, Grise and Readick (*Source: Heitmeyer, J.R., Grise, K.S. & Readdick, C.A. (1997) Selection and acquisition of children's clothing in single parent and dual-parent families. Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*).

In 1972, a study by Ward and Wackman showed that mothers were more likely to be influenced by children in the purchase of food than in any other product (*Source: Ward, S. & Wackman, D.B. (1972) Children's purchase attempts and parental yielding. Journal of Marketing Research*)

In 1978 female children were found to be more successful than male children in persuading parents to make purchase decisions.(*Source: Atkin, C.K. (1978) Observation of parent-child interaction in supermarket decision-making. Journal of Marketing*)

In looking at decision-making styles in 'Generation Y' Bakewell and Mitchell (*Source: Bakewell, C. & Mitchell, V.-W. (2003) Generation Y female consumer decision-making styles. International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*), refer to childhood and adolescence as 'crucial periods for acquiring enduring consumption related orientations' and comment that this generation will have been more involved in family decision making than any previous one. This may be partly due to being brought up in dual-career households where children learn to make consumer decisions sooner.

Some researchers investigated the role children play in purchase of children and family products together (Foxman and Tansuhaj, 1988; Geuens et al., 2002; Hall et al., 1995; Mangleburg et al., 1999; McNeal and Yeh, 1997). Jensen (1995) studied three categories of products—those that are primarily for children (e.g., toys, candy), products for family consumption (food, shampoo, toothpaste), and parents' products (gasoline, coffee, rice). Similarly, Johnson (1995) selected products as categorized by Sheth (1974)—products for individual use, those for family use, and finally products for the household.

Rationale behind Targeting Women

Homemaker and primary shopper of household products:

Traditionally, women were the one who handled all the work concerned with the household called as housewives whose main occupation is caring for her family, managing household affairs, and doing housework, while her husband or partner goes out to work. They are the user of daily essential products and are more indulged in purchasing household commodities. Marketers make use of this fact and target women for products which are used for daily chores as they are the primary user of those products. For example, salt for cooking and detergent for laundry. Also by emotionally appealing to the mother and a wife, they market products which helps to take better care of their family. For example, Johnson's baby shampoo, claiming the shampoo won't hurt the eyes of the baby.

Changing Role of Women:

Women are assuming multiple roles and are not just occupied in taking care of the household. There are women who play the dual role of a housewife as well as a working woman. This has resulted into increased decision-making power into the hands of women as they make decision regarding household as well as other finances as well. Also, it has increased the disposable income of the family as there are dual earners in the family and it is supported by the changing norm of nuclear family from joint family. Marketers see this as an opportunity and target women addressing their changing need. As seen in the ad of Horlicks Woman, addressing the need of daily strength for women or Forest Essential targeting women for their luxurious skin care products.

Word of Mouth and Eye for Details:

It has been observed that women are more engaged in communication of products and services to their friends, family and peer group as compared to men. Also, one survey found 51% of women relied upon Word of Mouth from family and friends, in contrast to 40% of men. So, women are better from the perspective of increasing sales through higher number of recommendations.

Also, it has been observed that women have a better eye for details when it comes to shopping and using product. They are more affected by the minute details which can be related to packaging or the product itself. Thus, it helps marketers to create product differentiation for similar products. This is supported by a report which says novelty or difference in a product appeals more to women more than men, with women being "49% more likely than men to discuss products or services they perceive as 'different' from the norm".

Rationale behind Targeting Children

Children are considered as the future of the society and from the marketing perspective they are the future consumer of the society. Inducing the preference of a particular brand in the buying habits of a child will go long way as they will prefer the same brand in future over any competitor brand.

Malleable Will

Children are innocent and are considered malleable. They aren't aware that the advertisements are meant to sell things to them. If they like a product or like the way it is presented, they demand it without any other reasonable thought process. They don't have any barriers which make them resistant to these marketing strategies. Marketers take advantage of these facts and attract the children by creating a fantasy like experience revolving around the product or by giving them the incentives of free collectibles and this serves as a bait for children to convince them into buying the product. For example, Sunfeast's Dream Cream biscuits ad used a child's fantasy to promote its product.

Increased Autonomy

There has been a considerable increase in the decision-making power of children as they have gained increased autonomy in day to day decisions as compared to previous generations. Children to a large extent influence purchases related to food, clothing, entertainment and more. In order to fulfill the wants and desires of their children, the parents give in to the will of the children and try to provide the best of the product and services.

Pester Power

It is the ability of children to pressurize their parents into buying them products, especially items advertised in the media. The nag factor or pester power is said to be of two types persistent nagging and importance nagging. In persistent nagging the child engages in a bad behavior and keeps on whining until his/her demand is fulfilled. In case of importance nagging, which is contradictory to persistence nagging, the child rationally demands the goods by giving a proper explanation regarding why is that product important to him/her. For instance, that one toy will complete the set. This ability is very effective and marketers take advantage of this ability by targeting children in their marketing efforts.

How Marketers are Targeting Women

Safety Concerns - Today, Safety is a major concern for Women. Women are forced to retrain themselves from stepping out of the house especially in the late evening because of the unsafe environment outside. Marketers are taking efforts to inject confidence in women by conveying that they do not have to worry. One such marketing company is Vodafone “Sakhi” services was launched for women. The ad agency who created this ad was Ogilvy India. Due to safety concerns, Indian women in small towns often make compromises when it comes to career or social life - be it studying in a far-away college or taking up a job that demands late working hours or staying back late for a friend’s wedding ceremony. Sakhi is the reassurance of a friend always by their side. The service was launched by PV Sindhu through ‘Ab Rukein Kyun?’, a thematic film celebrating the overcoming of inhibitions by a young girl.

Hygiene Concerns – When it comes to hygiene, Marketers have shifted their focus from just clean clothes to bright and new looking clothing which in-builds confidence and enhances one’s personality. One such advertisement was by RIN, ad agency being J. Walter Thompson, wherein the boss gets a positive perception as soon as he looks at the woman because of the bright shirt she wore on her first day. Her personality impresses him so much that he asks her why she came by Auto, not realising that the auto actually belonged to her dad. This is how RIN targeted women and said “Apki Chamak He Apki Pehchaan hai”

Beauty & Skin Care Concerns - Nykaa, being a makeup brand itself, has tried to redefine beauty by breaking the stereotype that Women with makeup and good skin is beautiful. For doing this, they used Lakshmi Agarwal – the Acid attack survivor. Nykaa started the campaign #WhatMakesYouBeautiful, through the agency Hyper Connect, and encouraged many women to join the campaign. They said that, every woman is beautiful. You are what you are from within, and that external appearance does not define your beauty. It is important that a woman loves herself and considers herself beautiful.

Family Concerns – Health of the family is a priority for Women. Women prefer home cooked healthy food. Therefore, they are quite particular about the quality of the ingredients used. Fortune oils came up with a marketing effort through the Ad agency Ogilvy Bangalore, and acknowledged the thought process of women which is “Ghar ka Khana, Ghar ka khana hota hai”. The ad tries to convey that the quality of the Fortune oil is so trustable that the mother constantly tried to convince the nurse at the hospital to serve the dal cooked with that oil to her son.

Health Concerns – Not only family, but women are concerned about their own eating habits to maintain a healthy lifestyle as well. Brands come up with healthy alternative which not only contains all healthy nutrients, but also does not compromise on the taste. Through the ad agency Mccann Mumbai, Saffola marketed Masala oats, which is made of whole wheat and is rich in fiber. In the ad, Saffola portrayed that seeing unhealthy food during the day increases our temptation to take a bite or two just to satisfy our cravings. But at the end of the day we realize that those small bites add up to a lot of unhealthy consumption throughout the day. Saffola Oats can be a healthy yet a tasty alternative and women can maintain their health while satisfying their taste buds.

Additional Health Supplements: Revital and Horlicks realized that Indian women would loose on important nutrients while running around the whole day. To overcome this, they came up with products that would act as supplements to the health of the women. This is a health supplement which is designed to provide daily recommended need of iron, calcium and vitamins. It helps maintain not only good health but also improves stamina and energy. It also provides adequate amount of calcium and Vitamin D3 which improves the body immunity to fight infections.

Household Commodities: When Pillsbury was launched, it had the option of coming in with the blockbuster global ready to eat products or launch a new product in the Indian food market. So, Pillsbury launched Pillsbury Chakki fresh atta (wheat flour) in the Indian market. It was a bold move because the atta market is a commodity market and the branded atta market is only 3% of the total atta market in India. It was a tough task for Pillsbury to enter into Indian kitchens since the households followed traditional way of buying wheat and giving them to flour mills. And hence it was difficult for women to adapt to packet flour. Therefore, Pillsbury Chakki fresh atta was launched in India on the platform of softness. Since ordinary Roti’s lost their softness after some time, Pillsbury claimed that its Roti’s retained the softness for over 6 hours. This appealed to the modern homemakers since Roti’s can be kept in tiffin boxes without worrying about softness.

First Time Mothers: When a baby is born in India usually elders of the family come together to take care of a baby and come up with advice and tips for baby care. Over a period of time the family structure has changed and we no longer stay in a joint family due to which couples with first time parenting face many issues related to parenting. To resolve these issues, they go online. But due to the lack of content in the Indian context, they rely and depend on international context content. To address this concern of first-time parenting couples, Johnson & Johnson(J&J) come up with Indian context content which reminded them of home and help them to take care of their newborn baby in the best way. They create a space which will help new parents to know and identify what is ‘Best for (their) Baby’. Johnson & Johnson analyzed the type of queries which come up related to parenting and partnered with Google to answer these questions.

For eg: On Google Search, if the user typed in ‘bathing a baby’, Google would redirect the search to the product page of J&J and if the user typed in ‘how to bathe a baby’, they redirect to a demo video of how to bathe a baby on the Baby Center Page.

Safe Transportation: Ola came up with an initiative know as Pink Ola. It was a two-way scheme where Ola aimed to create not only micro entrepreneurs but also provide security to women passengers. The key focus is to mobilize women mainly from the underprivileged sections of the society. Ola provides training that includes basic mechanic skills, map reading, communication skills and to speak basic English. Pink Ola helped women by giving access to infrastructure and financing options.

How Children are Targeted by Marketers

Marketing to children went from a severely frowned upon practice to an integral part of growing up as companies came to realize that investing in marketing to children and adolescents provides excellent immediate and future dividends. Each year, enormous sums of money are spent to reach this valuable audience because children and adolescents spend billions on their own purchases, influence family decisions about what to buy, and promise a potential lifetime of brand loyalty.

Kids represent an important demographic to marketers because in addition to their own purchasing power (which is considerable) they influence their parents’ buying decisions and are the adult consumers of the future.

Parents today are willing to buy more for their kids because trends such as

- ✓ Smaller family size,
- ✓ Dual incomes
- ✓ Postponing having children
- ✓ More disposable income.

Why marketers are interested on children?

Children are a prime target for marketers. Besides the fact that they have disposable income at an early age, they have a significant influence on purchases made by the family. Children, like family members, take part in lately, more than ever, to decision-making in its bosom, especially purchasing decisions. They also have the role of prescribers and are considered as vectors of innovation at home. Many products such as computers, game consoles or cereals were introduced in many families by the children. There is a regular increase in "pocket money" that children receive in the last years. In addition, they also receive money for Festivals, for their birthday, or when they are rewarded for educational achievements or small services made for parents. This money provides children with some purchasing power as well.

A report from YTV found that around 90 percent of the time, children influence purchases related to food, clothing, entertainment and more.

According to the 2008 *YTV Kids and Tweens Report*, kids influence:

- Breakfast choices (97% of the time) and lunch choices (95% of the time).
- Where to go for casual family meals (98% of the time) (with 34% of kids always having a say on the choice of casual restaurant).
- Clothing purchases (95% of the time).
- Software purchases (76% of the time) and computer purchases (60% of the time).
- Family entertainment choices (98% of the time) and family trips and excursions (94% of the time).

Building brand name loyalty

“Brand marketing must begin with children. Even if a child does not buy the product and will not for many years...the marketing must begin in childhood”. The task for the marketer is to understand the role of children as consumers, in order to develop a long-term, profitable relationship in the future. The relationship between branding and customer loyalty has generated increased attention by marketers over recent years.

Marketers plant the seeds of brand recognition in very young children, in the hopes that the seeds will grow into lifetime relationships. Brand loyalties can be established as early as age two, and by the time children head off to school, most can recognize hundreds of brand logos.

Commercialization in education

School used to be a place where children were protected from the advertising and consumer messages that permeated their world—but not anymore. Budget shortfalls are forcing school boards to allow corporations' access to students in exchange for badly needed cash, computers and educational materials. Corporations realize the power of the school environment for promoting their name and products. A school setting delivers a captive youth audience and implies the endorsement of teachers and the educational system.

Pizza hut brought with a campaign saying BOOK IT! In this campaign, children aging from 5-12 we're given a reading goal. Once they achieve the reading goal, pizza Hut reward the children with certificates and the children can redeem their certificates from any branch of Pizza Hut in return of Free pan pizza. This campaign was brought by Arthur Gunther, then pizza hut president, in the year 1984, and he was inspired by his son Michael. Michael was not able to read because of his reading disability, hence Arthur thought that other children should not suffer the same as his child and hence he started inspiring children to read more through this campaign.

Whitehat jr brought with an advertisement where the marketers are targeting children to use their Application. They firstly featured 'Deepa Malik', who is an athlete and has won number of medals representing the country. But, she says she is a paraplegic. But, even Paralysis could not stop her from achieving so much for the country. Similarly, even the children are of small age, it doesn't matter. She insists children to learn Coding from Whitehat jr because Coding is going to be the future of the world and hence children should learn Coding. Also whitehat jr is also a 'Shudh Desi Product' which also indicates the 'Vocal for Local' Campaign brought by our honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi. At the end, they concludes by saying that learning from Whitehat Jr will not only educate the Children but will also take us one step ahead towards 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat'

The Internet

The Internet is an extremely desirable medium for marketers wanting to target children:

- It is part of youth culture. This generation of young people is growing up with the Internet as a daily and routine part of their lives.
- Parents generally do not understand the extent to which kids are being marketed to online.
- Kids are often online alone, without parental supervision.
- Unlike broadcasting media, which have codes regarding advertising to kids, the Internet is unregulated.
- Sophisticated technologies make it easy to collect information from young people for marketing research, and to target individual children with personalized advertising.
- By creating engaging, interactive environments based on products and brand names, companies can build brand loyalties from an early age.

Kids are a difficult demographic to market to, largely because public opinion and major media so often focus on advertising and marketing's negative effects on children.

Parents today are willing to buy more for their kids because trends such as smaller family size, dual incomes and postponing having children until later in life mean that families have more disposable income. As well, guilt can play a role in spending decisions as time-stressed parents substitute material goods for time spent with their kids

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Pester power- Marketers rely on the kid to pester his mom to buy the product, rather than going straight to the mom. "Pester power" refers to children's ability to nag their parents into purchasing items they may not otherwise buy. Marketing to children is all about creating pester power, because advertisers know what a powerful force it can be. Today's kids have more autonomy and decision-making power within the family than in previous generations, so it follows that kids are vocal about what they want their parents to buy.

Planograms- Planograms are models of product placement that use marketing science to increase sales. Marketers use planograms to attract children in supermarkets by placing kid-targeted products at approximately around 3 feet level from the ground so that the product comes at the eye level with the child. This is the reason why in supermarkets like Big Bazaar, D-Mart, Malls the candies, chips, etc are placed at lower shelves level to target children.

Building brand name loyalty- Marketers plant the seeds of brand recognition in very young children, in the hopes that the seeds will grow into lifetime relationships. According to the Center for a New American Dream, babies as young as six months of age can form mental images of logos and mascots. Brand loyalties can be established as early as age two, and by the time children head off to school most can recognize hundreds of

brand logos. This is exactly what Disney land has been doing since long. Disney is one of the most effective brand storytellers of the modern era and this is the reason why Disney land is popularly called as the “Happiest place on Earth” which is among the top most-favorite destinations of children. Disney land markets experiences for children where they get to meet their favorite characters in real life and do fun activities with them.

Cereal Box Psychology- Marketers know that kids are more likely to want the brands that they can easily see. It is believed that -what one sees is what one buys. Hence the Cartoon characters on kid’s cereal products are designed in such a way that they look downward at an angle of approximately 9.6 degrees so that they are more likely to meet the gaze of children. This is known as the Cereal Box Psychology which is applied in many kid-targeted products like Kellogg’s Chocos, Eye contacts have been found to increase the trust of the brand by 18% and feeling a more intense connection with the brand.

Product packages

Marketeers use bright colors, fun fonts, colorful graphics, and unusual, unique shapes in designing the product packaging to attract children. This can be seen in the unusual and unique product packaging of Kinder Joy where the product has been designed in the shape of an egg which makes it stand out from rest of the products. Another example will be Cadbury Bubbly where the chocolate has a unique shape. Marketers also target children with bright, portable, easy-to-use and durable package designs and give incentives to target children like free toys, prizes etc. This can be seen in McDonald’s Happy Meal where miniature toys are given for free along with the meal.

Marketers also use a jingle in their advertisements to attract children for example in the advertisement of Action School Shoes a jingle is used, “Oh ho ho ho.. school time Action ka school time”. This is very useful as a punchy jingle, can create memory and increase recall to attract kids to imitate so that it’s easier and faster for kids to remember Action Shoes.

Future Aspect:

Marketers can give children a better future by Marketing ethically. Vandana Krishnia, Vice President-Marketing at HT Media, said, “It is imperative for brands to be innovative and sustainable. The behavioral cues that we pass on to our children leave a lasting impression on them.” Thus, marketers are responsible for creating a brighter future for children.

In the future marketers will target on 4Es rather than 4Ps. This generation of children are growing up with the Internet as a daily and routine part of their lives. Therefore, the new approach to targeting children is a strategy which focuses on Engagement, Experience, Exclusivity and Emotion. Price, Place, product and promotion will no longer lead the methodology of marketers. People don’t buy products anymore. They buy experiences and emotions instead. Emotional branding is what makes a business stand out and what the marketeers will target in their future customers.

Even today a lot of marketers try to in build excitement for their products in the minds of children. Marketers can try to educate or transfer some sort of learning in the kids through their marketing efforts, which not only exposes children about the product but also helps them differentiate between good and bad, doable and non-doable things etc., which would not only help them to grow but the positive intention of the advertisements will also attract their parents towards the brand. Over the years, marketers have shifted their marketing strategies from only men to women and children who are now considered a major influence in decision-making. Some stereotypes regarding gender roles, products related to female hygiene and many such cliché are yet to be broken. Therefore, the next step should be to break the general stereotype that the country is living in. Example: Targeting Women for cooking and household goods, Men for sports and business opportunities etc.

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