

MARKETING TO WOMEN: CONNECTING THROUGH AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIFFERENCES

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When looking at the issue of how to better connect with women regarding health-related issues, we were surprised by what we found. Contrary to popular belief, men and women aren't that different — at least when it comes to how they approach healthcare. Instead, there are actually bigger differences *within* gender groups than *between* them. We discovered that the differences among women are more significant than the expected differences between women and men.

During the process of considering numerous behavioral traits related to health, the primary differences we found between men and women are that:

- Women are slightly more likely to challenge a doctor's recommendation than men
- Men are more likely to take a specific drug recommended by their doctor and to feel they are able to keep their weight under control

However, statistically, men and women are the same on matters like:

- Taking preventative medicine
- Working on eating a well-balanced diet
- Trusting their doctor completely

ONE-SIZE-FITS ALL? NOT HERE.

Understanding how women differ from each other in regard to health-related behavioral traits is essential if you want to speak to them in an authentic, empathetic voice — a key element of any successful campaign. But if your goal is also to change how they *behave*, you've got to do more than communicate well. You need to look closely at the unique needs and drivers of women as individuals, avoiding a gender-driven, one-size-fits-all approach.

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Differences among women become even more multifaceted and challenging when your message attempts to modify long-term, complicated behaviors related to health — like getting people to stay on a medication for a chronic disease or convincing patients to make difficult changes such as losing weight and

modifying their diet and exercise habits. To drive difficult lifestyle changes among women, you have to tap into their individual psychologies to find the motivational approaches that work.

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ACTIVE VS. PASSIVE COPERS: UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE

Even in cases where you would expect women to act rather homogeneously, they don't. For example, women who are demographically similar, all at a certain stage in their breast cancer treatment, and on the same medication regimen, behave quite differently.

The differences in how women approach breast cancer and other conditions are explained by their coping styles, which are determined by their inherent psychologies.



ACTIVE COPERS tend to be information seekers. They:

- Focus on the future
- Ask, "What's next?"
- Tend to be optimistic
- Reach out to help others, despite their personal health concerns



PASSIVE COPERS, by contrast, tend to look backward. They:

- Have a strong need to be cared for
- Defer to their doctors
- Are less actively engaged in their treatment decisions
- Need someone to help and motivate them, whether it's a doctor or a loved one

With these diametrically opposed mindsets, if you orient your communications to one group, it's highly likely that you will not reach the other group. Worse yet—you might alienate them altogether.

Kelly Andrews, MA, Senior Director, Strategic Planning & Insights

Kelly brings more than 13 years of experience in advertising and marketing to her role as strategic planner at MicroMass. An accomplished focus group moderator and ethnographic researcher, Kelly's strategic thinking has helped build our reputation and our award-winning marketing communications programs. Kelly is a classically trained anthropologist, with a BA in cultural anthropology from the University of Virginia and an MA in anthropology from American University.

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About MicroMass Communications, Inc.

Founded in 1994, MicroMass offers unrivaled capabilities in the application of behavioral science to marketing challenges. The company's approach is founded on the belief that understanding the critical factors that influence individual behavior is the best way to create dialogue and build enduring relationships between customers and brands.

Unlike traditional agencies that are structured by discipline, MicroMass brings together under one roof the expertise and services for building sophisticated, multi-channel programs that span the full marketing continuum.

Headquartered in Cary, N.C., MicroMass is one of the fastest growing agencies in its field. With experience in dozens of therapeutic categories, the company has a roster of clients that includes some of the most respected names in the health care industry.

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