

# *The Secrets of Success in Marketing to Men*



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Over the past 50 years, men have taken on a decreasing role in shopping decisions if they have a domestic partner. Once the head of the family and the main breadwinner, the past ten and even twenty years have seen a radical shift in both earning and spending patterns relate to both genders.

Women now serve as the head of household more than men, and they have also made the shift to being the higher wage earner, or only wage earner, in the household.

Even if the man is the highest or sole wage earner, studies show that the woman makes the final decision with regard to purchases around 95% of the time. Even typically "male" purchases like cars are heavily influenced by input from women, especially if the couple has children.

Younger single men with moms and girlfriends might also be influenced by women's thinking when it comes to their purchases. Women tend to love to shop, and will go on "fact-finding" missions online. Women are usually seen as the main grocery, toiletry and fashion buyers, but studies now show that women are responsible for up to 85% of all purchases made in the US. Is it really worth it to chase after 15% of the market by trying to market to men?

The answer is yes, of course, and we'll discuss that more in the next section. You can get a nice, steady income from cars and other high-ticket items that you can market as an affiliate, for example, or information products that will help men with their careers.

In addition, not every man has a female influencer in his life. Same-sex couples need to shop and are now buying goods and services they might not otherwise have done even a few years ago. They are now buying wedding-related items and baby and child-related items as they grow their family. It will still not be in the proportion that women spend on these items, but getting the right messaging for men can mean real money.

In this guide, we will be looking ways to market to men effectively, making sure your marketing message hits the right target in the right way. So, why target your marketing message to men? Let's look at a few reasons in the next section.

## **WHY TARGET YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE TO MEN?**

Marketing is the art and science of promoting and selling products or services to consumers, either individuals (B2C) or businesses (B2B). Marketing includes both research and advertising. It often involves building a brand in order to achieve recognition of what it stands for and how it is different from other brands. Through branding, you can develop customer loyalty, which will increase sales and keep customers coming back for more.

It might even mean them recommending your business to others interested in the same products and services. Think of the men chatting over the back fence and discussing their latest purchase, such as a lawn mower, leaf blower and so on, and you will get an idea of the power of "word of mouth" advertising.

What Do Men Buy?

Well, men buy just about everything women do, with a few exceptions. Toiletries are obviously a matter of personal preference. If they are single, they tend to lean towards meals for one and other kinds of convenience foods, or they eat out often. Men tend to buy more beer and alcohol than women. They also spend a lot of time in home improvement shops. They love to buy tools and gadgets and tend to be the main purchasers of sports-related gear.

They are the main buyers of golf equipment and will spend big money on this hobby, especially in relation to "insider secrets" on how to improve their game. They will also take golfing holidays to top destinations like Las Vegas, Ireland and Scotland, the home of the game.

Men certainly love technology and will often be first in line for the latest release of the iPhone, iPad and so on. Their shopping habits will change as they mature from teen to young adult, dating male, and perhaps father, single parent, soccer dad, or career executive, and eventually (hopefully) a happily retired man with money and time to enjoy his new-found leisure.

Some of male buying habits will be formed early, such as using products that his family did when he was growing up, or finding products he loves and sticking to them. They don't tend to comparison shop or go after bargains in quite the same way as women shoppers, which can mean carelessness in shopping and price versus value comparisons.

Men shop for needs not wants most of the time, and they need it NOW. Women generally shop for fun and entertainment. Most men want to get in and out of the store as fast as they can with something resembling what they went in for. The obvious exception to that rule will be more expensive items, which they will research at reliable sites like Consumer Reports.

Men have started to buy more "feminine" items such as conditioner, hair products, and moisturizer with sunscreen. They will buy shaving gear regularly unless they have a beard or use an electric face razor. They might buy aftershave balm and aftershave. They are also buying hair color for head and facial hair, and items related to loss of hair (including Rogaine) as well as hair pieces and implants.

They go for teeth whitening, breath freshening, deodorant, body spray, and other items designed to keep them fresh-feeling and attractive, especially if they work in white-collar jobs.

Speaking of white collars, men will have a functional wardrobe with items for different purposes. These will include items to wear to the office, at-home relaxing, items specific for working out, and for a particular sport. They will often pay top dollar for name brands of sporting equipment, particular sneakers, even though there is no independent evidence to suggest that one brand is any better than another in terms of support and fit.

Knowing what these men need and care about, their problems and motivations, allows you to tap into a lucrative market eager to fulfill their needs without being too price-sensitive.

One final influencing factor might be to be cool or hip, and to keep up with the Joneses. Men will buy to impress, even if it will really stretch their budget.

Think about cars for a moment. Nissan, Toyota and Lexus cars are all made by the same company, but what is the brand perception and value proposition for each? The Lexus is the most expensive, perceived as a luxury car, but also one that will be reliable and last for years compared to a fun little "runaround" like a Nissan.

Ownership/driving of a Lexus also tends to convey a certain image of the person behind the wheel, their lifestyle, income and so on. The Lexus spells success in a way that the other two models don't.

Men shop more on their smartphones than women and will stop looking as soon as they find a solution to suit them. Getting yourself into a man's line of sight, as it were, when they are shopping online will almost guarantee sales.

For all these reasons, targeting men in your marketing messages is the best way to tap into an active consumer audience who is already shopping on a regular basis for the things they really need.

So, how can you get into their line of vision? The answer is online marketing in all its forms. Let's look at this topic in the next section.

## **TARGETING MEN ONLINE**

Online marketing targeted to men can be like tapping into a gold mine - provided you know where men are and what their consumer behavior is. Online marketing allows you to target your messaging with laser-like precision compared with the "scattershot" approach of offline marketing and mass marketing such as newspaper and magazine ads, and TV.

Digital marketing is reaching a more mature phase and men are driving sales online. If you have not already begun to gear your marketing messages towards men, it's time to start.

### **Factors Affecting Your Marketing Methods**

But before you get too excited, it is important to note that not all marketing methods will work for all men. Their response will vary depending on a number of factors, including:

- Age
- Interests
- Relationship status
- Whether or not they have children
- Career
- ...and more

In their college years, a man will generally be interested in college books (hopefully!), men's magazines, music, and tech gadgets. Once he gets his first job, he will be able to buy some of the better things in life, such as more stylish clothes and shoes and perhaps even a car.

Getting his own place will mean buying the sorts of items most men fill their bachelor pad with, such as practical furniture, a nice stereo system, coffee maker and linens.

They don't tend to purchase for the future, but the here and now. If they get a female partner, she will influence his purchases and perhaps even make them for him.

However, in terms of higher-ticket items, he will do research to find workable solutions. Popular items include tech, gadgets, and high speed internet. Men will "bundle" their services, meaning they will increase in terms of their dollar value. They buy subscriptions and tend to let them run even though they don't use them (such as to the gym).

They will also be more inclined to buy tickets to live events, particularly in relation to sports. They will subscribe to one or more dating sites if single. They will often be interest in investments, insurance, and other finance-related products.

Connecting with men through popular men's websites and men's magazine sites can be amongst the best ways to learn what they really want. In terms of search engine behavior, young men use MSN, all men use Google, while women tend to use Yahoo!.

## Social Media

In terms of social media, men use LinkedIn and Google+ more, and use Twitter about the same as women. In terms of Pinterest, the audience is only about 20% male, but it is a good visual site. Even if men don't see your products and services, the women who love them might. They will also stand out more because there are so few "male" products on the site.

Men tend to spend more time on YouTube, so this might also be a good marketing channel.

If you have a budget, run some Facebook, Twitter and YouTube ads. Facebook in particular is highly targeted compared to Google AdWords ads, and generally a good deal less expensive as well. The ads that work well will give you a clear idea of who you are attracting, so you can target the exact men you want to reach by age group, niche and more.

Facebook will require a small, high-quality image for your ad. What you choose as the image will obviously affect your click-through rates. Fluffy kittens will probably not work as well as bulls or reptiles in appealing to men, for example.

Again, a lot of these are stereotypes about masculinity versus femininity. They are not true all the time. But if they are true a large percentage of the time, you are on the right path for your marketing to men.

One of the best tactics for marketing effectively to any niche audience is to create a marketing persona. Let's look at how to do this in the next section.

## **CREATING A MARKETING PERSONA FOR YOUR IDEAL MAN**

Women are told they should always look for "Mr. Right." What if you could do that in your marketing as well?

Creating the right marketing persona for your male audience is all about pinpointing as much information as possible about your prospective audience based on studies, research and of course, observable behavior. What do they do when they're on your site? Other niche-related sites?

Think of your personas as mini biographies for the ideal customer in your niche, to try to predict what they want and will buy based on the data you gather. Go to the sites they spend time at and see what they discuss. Find their "pain points" and offer real solutions.

Offer free downloadable reports and ecourses that will enable you to build a relationship with them over time through your email marketing. Drive male traffic to that list through social media ads.

Once they are on your list, you can survey them. Ask one easy question at a time through a free service like Survey Monkey. Create a little handout you can give them as a thank you for participating. On all your giveaways, be sure to put your business name and URL on the PDF. They will not only get their copy; they will also be likely to pass it around if it is very useful to others also interested in the same niche.

Once you have developed marketing personas for the primary and secondary customers in your niche, you can better understand their motivations. Why two personas? Because not all customers are created equal. You can have two young men with exactly the same profile (21, white, urban, earning \$50k per year, for example), who have completely different motivations. One might wish to be stylish, while the other might opt for the grunge look. They listen to different music, have different hobbies, and so on.

If you don't already have detailed marketing personas for your target customer, take the time to dig deeper and see what a difference it can make to the success of your marketing messages.

### Driving Traffic to Your Website

Motivations and needs contribute to the sales process and should be included as part of the persona. Men make purchasing decisions in a certain way, which means a certain buying cycle. They are exposed to lots of brands on and offline, but in these days of mobile, they can look them up right away on a search engine.

If you haven't recently searched for your brand name, your best-selling product, or your URL, now is the time to do it. What do you see? Is the information accurate, enticing, interesting? Do you even appear in the top listings for your company name and main keywords? Or is someone else stealing your number one spot?

Their fact finding will cause them to continue ahead, or turn away. Any negativity they encounter when they run their first search for your product or brand will most likely make them steer clear. There are lots of other choices right at their fingertips, after all, so why risk doing business with a company that is conveying a sketchy online image?

In terms of the buyer cycle, the search terms men use will give you a good idea of where they are in the process of making an actual sale. "Hybrid car" is a complete different search from "2015 Subaru XV Crosstrek Hybrid." The latter signals that the prospective customer is getting closer and closer to a purchasing decision.

You may not think you can do much about the search engine results pages, but the truth is that you can if you plan ahead. Having a professional-looking website with fresh, interesting content can drive traffic and influence people. It should also be mobile friendly because so many people are shopping on smartphones and tablets these days - especially men.

Your site should have high-quality images that support the written content at the site. The image file names should include the name of the product and an important keyword. In this way, you can also be located on Google Images, not just the usual search engine.



Your social media presence should try to take control of the conversation so that positive comments will outweigh negative ones. Reviews, endorsements and testimonials can all help drive you to the top of the search engine page results and convey the image of a popular, successful, and honest brand.

## The Buying Cycle

Men are somewhat influenced by what they discover on social media in terms of feedback from real users. Think word of mouth from the neighbor over the wall. They do some research, though not as much as women. Sometimes celebrity endorsements will influence their shopping.

They want a product that will do what it promises and good customer service if anything does go wrong. They will also be influenced by women or the partner they want to make happy, who might have already done a lot of the research and is looking to them for confirmation of the choices they are leaning toward.

Informed purchases are the name of the game these days. No one wants to throw away money. Men move further and further along in the buying cycle as they gather all the facts they feel they need to finally make a decision. Their shopping cycle is also shorter than women's, which means more of an "impulse" decision and less hunting based on price, coupons or sales.

Men want the right solution at the right price and need to feel fairly confident that they have made the correct decision in choosing your company. One way you can help this process along is by offering a 100% money-back guarantee with no questions asked.

When selling to men, be clear about the features and benefits of the item. Be as accurate as possible, without hype. Accurate, honest, factual, and truthful marketing material will win in the end. Help them picture what their life will be like if they buy this item, and you are likely to make a sale.

In the online world, the companies and individuals that are successful marketing to men online are the ones that understand how to communicate interactively with men. The most important factor in understanding the mind of men is watching what they DO online, how they behave, and above all, how they arrive at buying decisions.

Once you have formed some conclusions about this, you can dig deeper into your marketing personas to understand better what men want, and be able to offer it to them. However, it is important to realize that what men want may not always be what you think. Let's look at this topic in the next section.

## WHAT MEN REALLY WANT

Now that we've covered the general pattern of a man's buying cycle, the other important factor to consider is what men want. It may not always be what you think it. Any marketer who stereotypes in an effort to appeal to men is not going to be as successful as one who pays attention when constructing personas.

As part of your marketing personas for your male customers, the following questions can help:

- What does he need/want?
- What is his life like on a daily basis?
- What makes him buy?
- What are his main issues that drive him buying decisions?
- What makes a product or offer irresistible to him?
- What keeps him coming back to buy more?
- How can your product improve or enhance his life?

Generally speaking, men are very busy people, juggling to keep a lot of balls in the air all the time. They want to do it all and "have it all." Men usually work long hours as single men and still want to have fun with friends, and possibly have one or more of what we will term a romantic relationship. They will buy necessities as and when they need to. They will have several different wardrobes - work, casual, dating, winter and summer. They will usually buy some personal care products, and are starting to buy more.

Partnered men are constantly balancing work, a home and family, carpooling, and all of the responsibilities that they have on a daily basis. They will not usually have the same extensive wardrobe needs as a single man dating.

They like facts. The Consumer Reports website offers an increasing number of helpful free articles that can help people make the most of their money. Since the reviews are unbiased, they are worth paying attention to. They are also based on extensive testing, so can give prospective customers a good idea of performance and therefore the confidence that they are buying a product that will really work and make their life better.

The higher the purchase price and technical aspect of it, such as the latest flat screen TV or wireless headphones, the more likely they will be to read reviews.

Online Research Patterns

When researching products online, men want to:

- Save time
- Find information fast
- Improve their lives
- Find real solutions
- Research products easily
- Shop hassle-free
- Get good advice from men like themselves/those who know what they are talking about in relation to the products they are interested in
- Get more detailed information such as size, color or other specifications that can help them decide if the product is right for them

### What Men Are Looking For

Men might sometimes buy for the women in their lives. These gifts can be roughly labeled romantic, and will usually involve flowers, jewelry, candy, lingerie, fine dining, and events such as tickets to a show. It may include romantic getaways and vacations as a couple. If they have children, they will be part of the decision-making process, but usually toward the end of the selling cycle once their wife has done the fact finding and comparison shopping.

In terms of gadgets, there are a lot of different models to choose from. A chart with a side-by-side comparison of the features and benefits of each of the top models you sell (or are selling as an affiliate marketer in exchange for a commission) is just the kind of information a man wants and needs to speed him toward a smart purchasing decision. Remember, most men will not keep digging the way a woman will once he spots something that will do the job.

Consumers about to spend their money are always going to ask the all-important question: What's In It For Me? (WIIFM) Even if it is for their spouse or partner, the question is still relevant. The value proposition would in that case be an overall happier spouse who would be wowed by his gift or impressed by how romantic or thoughtful it was. It might also be a very happy spouse who got exactly what she needed to make her life easier.

Birthday and wedding anniversary presents can vary widely in terms of what each man finds suitable for his spouse. You do get men who gift lawn mowers and new vacuum cleaners, after all. But generally speaking, the aim is to please. Just look at the Pandora charm bracelet ads. They are aimed at men, not women.

Similarly, Kay Jewelers ads are aimed at men as well. Every Kiss Begins With Kay is their marketing slogan and all the ads feature a woman being thrilled at the piece of jewelry that a

man has just given them, and kissing him. Ads that picture "success" resonate with men the most.

## Amazon

The other key question to consider in the minds of most customers is: Who are you, exactly? All the people around him influence his buying habits, but who you are as a business will influence a male shopper as well. Amazon is so successful as a business because they have made themselves a destination where you can buy practically anything.

Amazon has transformed itself over the last two decades, from a small bookstore with a funny name not related to books to the 10-ton gorilla online in terms of shopping. They reward loyal customers and give them a range of options, and it pays off big time. There are more than 244 million registered accounts with a one-click payment option, which makes it easy to buy. More than 54 million are members of Amazon Prime, mainly for the free shipping. But more than 34% of those take advantage of the streaming of Amazon's range of original shows.

Prime members spend an average of \$1500 per year, compared with \$625 for non-Prime users. Such is the success of it as an online purchasing hub that an estimated 1 in every 4 dollars spent online is being spent at Amazon. More than 70% of their shoppers buy on mobile devices.

Even if you are only a small company with one employee (you), you can still leverage the power of Amazon in a number of ways. The first is to become an Amazon Associate and receive a commission for every item sold through the specially coded links you create as an affiliate.

The second way is to list your products in the Amazon Marketplace. As long as the item has a product identifier code already in their system, you can sell on Amazon. More than two billion Marketplace products were purchased in 2014, and that number is growing. Your customers will have a chance to review you as a seller, so you need to be honest and professional, but the rewards can be huge.

The most important reason to be on Amazon if you can is that it has become one of the largest search engines in the world. Around 44% of web users go straight to Amazon to start researching products, skipping search engines like Google and Yahoo! completely.

Social search is also eroding traditional search engine usage. While a person is in their social media account, they will type queries into their search box. They will then see a range of choices, such as Facebook pages, groups and more. They will also get search engine results from Microsoft Bing.

All of the "signals" they get through finding your products on Amazon and Facebook can lead to confidence in who you are, and whether or not you are worth doing business with. Putting an email sign-up coupon for a great free offer on your site can then further the relationship and build closer connections as they get to know you through the helpful and informative, not pushy, emails you will be sending to them.

Also note that men buy a lot more digital content and event tickets online than women do. So if you are a digital marketer, this is a great opportunity for you.

Finally, men are not as likely to reward themselves as women when it comes to shopping, but when they do, it will be something big - an item they have always dreamed of.

What men really want can be pretty varied depending on age, relationship status, hobbies and interests. Creating detailed personas will help you present them with the right offers at the right time and create a perception of need rather than just want that will resonate with male shoppers.

More than 95% of purchasing decisions in the US are being influenced by women, but 97% of top marketing executives are men. If you are a woman marketing to men, you might not be getting just how logical they are when it comes to making a purchase. If you are a man, you might be spending so much time chasing after women shoppers that you forget that there are many "male- related" products that are "low hanging fruit" because men will be guaranteed to buy them.

Marketing to men online can be one of the easiest ways to tap into this lucrative path to profits if you understand the minds of male consumers and their behavior in relation to the niche you are working in.

Write clear, honest marketing copy that saves them time and gives them the information they need up front to make an informed decision. Remember that they buy for themselves based on urgent need most of the time, not long-term forward planning.

Leverage the power of social networks, especially ones with a high rate of male users, such as Facebook, Google+ and LinkedIn. Offer real solutions with real value at the right price, and watch male browsers become buyers and loyal customers.

#### Resources

[Men versus women shopping habits](#)

[Online Shopping Habits Infographic](#)

[Diversities in shopping – men versus women](#)