

## **What Makes Women Click? Appealing To Women Customers**

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There's no doubt about it - the face of the Internet is changing. A few years ago, the demographics of Web users were pretty homogeneous - males with a technical background comprised the majority. But that's not so anymore.

Droves of women now use the Internet for a wide variety of purposes from getting advice to gathering information to purchasing products. The Internet audience measurement group Nielsen/NetRatings reports that the number of female Internet users at home is growing at a faster rate than the overall Internet population. In January, the company said that December 2001 marked nine percent growth compared to December 2000. Meanwhile, the total Internet population grew at a rate of six percent.

Of a total active user population of 104.8 million in U.S. homes, women accounted for 55 million users, the survey firm said. That's a lot of clicks.

The potential to sell to this audience is broad. In 2000, the Economic Policy Institute reported that 48 percent of working wives provided 50 percent or more of their family's income. But because of today's hectic lifestyles, they don't have the time to spend it. Traditional retail hours limit when one can shop or bank. The pronounced lack of time experienced by working, affluent, educated women is driving them to use the Internet as a time-saver.

How businesses use the Web to reach women differs from their traditional marketing methods. Because the Web is more immediate, more interactive and can be closely targeted, advertising and marketing can be focused to appeal to female users. Businesses who acknowledge that women lead busy lives and offer tools to make life easier will be successful with the woman consumer.

IVillage.com is one example of a Web site that gears all its information, ads and forums to busy women. Marthastewart.com uses e-mail newsletters that are tied to lifestyle events - planning for vacation or sending the children back-to-school - to drive traffic back to its informational and shopping site.

A study released in July 2002 found that while women react to e-mail marketing better than men, businesses need to tread carefully when conducting e-mail campaigns. Both men and women say they receive too many e-mail offers and promotions, according to Forrester Research, which reviewed three years of data. The firm found women were 30 percent more likely to think e-mail is a good way to find out about products and promotions. They also are 46 percent more likely to share these e-mails with friend. At the time, women are quicker to unsubscribe from e-mail lists that they deem irrelevant. So, again, the lesson may be: Approach women with information they can use in their daily lives.

**Gender Breakdown of Internet Population, Dec. 2001, U.S. Home**

	<b>Dec. 2000</b>	<b>Dec. 2001</b>	<b>Percent Growth</b>
Female	50.4 million	55.0 million	9 percent
Male	48.2 million	49.8 million	3 percent
Active Internet Users	98.6 million	104.8 million	6 percent

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