

the transaction to take place. She's interested in creating a relationship. Every place women go they make connections ... 91 per cent of women say 'advertisers don't understand us.'

The gender realities

So, what are the gender-specific differences? They come down to evolution, biology, and brains.

1. Evolutionary survival instincts

Men's survival strategy is to make the maximum number of kids. For women, it's helping the kids she has, to survive. Men focus on targets (tracking and hunting), have strong spatial skills (sizing up and killing) and navigation (getting home) abilities. That's translated into men still enjoying challenge, rewards and competition. Meanwhile, females needed survival savvy – the ability to collaborate with neighbours, share resources and a selfless drive to nurture the young to maturity. Those habits have embedded patience, relationship building and gatekeeping skills in today's women.

2. Biological differences

The male hormone, testosterone, is the main driver of personality characteristics like aggressiveness, self-assertiveness, dominance, competitiveness, risk-taking and thrill-seeking. It also drives a number of male-linked aptitudes normally thought to be learned – spatial, mechanical and maths abilities. The key female hormone, estrogen, encourages nesting and nurturing, while it suppresses the dominant effects of testosterone. That's why mature women are more assertive as customers, once their estrogen levels drop.

“WOMEN ARE PEOPLE-FOCUSED, THAT'S WELL KNOWN. BUT WHY? IT SEEMS THEIR BRAINS RECOGNISE THEM MORE STRONGLY. IN STUDIES WHERE MALE AND FEMALE PARTICIPANTS WERE SIMULTANEOUSLY SHOWN AN OBJECT (ONE EYE) AND A PERSON (OTHER EYE), THE FEMALES MORE FREQUENTLY REPORTED SEEING THE 'PERSON,' WHILE MALES SAW THE 'OBJECT.'”



3. Brain wiring

Now we're down to the nitty-gritty. Male brain usage is more localised to the right side and they're highly efficient at focussing, whereas female usage is distributed across both sides, with better connections and integration. This accounts for a women's ability to multitask and think holistically, preferring to view each interaction in context, as part of a bigger picture. It may also account for their legendary intuition, by being able to pull together details from separate and disparate sources – sight, speech and emotions – and emerge with a conclusion. Both the emotional bonding and memory centres are bigger in females, accounting for their relationship skills and uncanny ability to remember every word of an argument or special event.

Minutiae of a woman

It's these tiny biological, evolutionary and brain differences that play out when each of us interacts, talks, listens, thinks and responds. First, we both see things differently. Literally. In the words of Marti Barletta, "Men are better at focused, sharp vision (think spotlight), while women have better peripheral vision (think floodlight)." Of the four remaining senses, women's responses are more acute and detect subtleties missed by most men. They're more sensitive to odour and fragrance, and prefer sounds about half as loud as men.

Next, there's the emotional stuff. Women experience the entire range of emotions with greater intensity and more volatility than men, and they express them more often. They also have tighter connections between their emotional and verbal centres, so women articulate their emotions better and empathise more strongly with others.

This one is no surprise. Generally speaking, women are better at 'social perception' than men. Study after study highlights that men only notice and care about the big important things, while women notice and care about the both the big things and the small details. Because they have greater brain

usage, women pick up and absorb nuances missed by men and they're more sensitive to interpersonal details such as tone of voice, facial expressions and body language.

In short, women are into details. They notice, care about, and act on all the same things as men... amplified, times ten.

Holistic people-focused responses

Women are people-focused, that's well known. But why? It seems their brains recognise them more strongly. In studies where male and female participants were simultaneously shown an object (one eye) and a person (other eye), the females more frequently reported seeing the 'person,' while males saw the 'object.'

And how do women make decisions? Psychologists found that women think more contextually and holistically, placing things in relation to one another (as they do with people) and integrating them into a bigger picture – a whole.

That said, women have difficulty separating things from their context or background, and can take extra time in decision making when buying – in order to find the 'perfect answer.' A woman's spiralling buying pattern, (unlike a man's linear one that searches for a 'good solution') has her adding options into the buying selection criteria along the way – not discarding them, as men do. These additions cause her to return to the initial stages of the pattern to further sort, refine and progress. This can happen multiple times...all in the search for 'perfect.' It's frustrating for men to witness, but it makes perfect sense to every woman.

Marti Barletta simplified this trait by saying that, "men are the analysts (they take things apart), and women are the synthesisers (they put things together)."

Where to start?

As you can see, it's the small details that make the difference when you're maximising the Female Economy opportunity. But with so much to cover, it can be overwhelming, even for women. Faith Popcorn codified her "EVEvolution" ideas into the Eight Truths of Marketing to Women:

1. Connecting female consumers to each other connects them to your brand.
2. If you're marketing to one of her lives, you're missing all the others.
3. If she has to ask, it's too late.
4. Market to her peripheral visions, and she will see you in a whole new light.
5. Walk, run, go to her; secure her loyalty forever.
6. This generation of women consumers will lead you to the next.
7. Co-parenting is the best way to raise a brand.
8. Everything matters – you can't hide behind your logo.

Women we see you

Some may think that gender-specific marketing is sexist. It's not. It's smart.

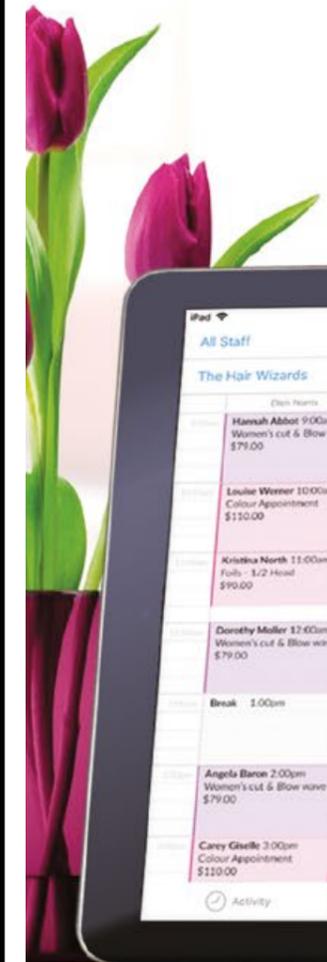
In his book, "Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping," retail expert Paco Underhill makes this point with a simple story. A man and woman go shopping in a hardware store. They need a hammer. While the man is buying a hammer, the woman is buying a living-room wall, covered in memories.

What's the story mean? It's a wake-up call to reconsider what you're doing to talk to, delight, and keep your female customers. ■



Neil Osborne is an elite sales trainer and brand coach who has devoted more than 30 years of his working life to the salon industry. He has been responsible for dramatically growing brands and businesses by helping them launch, develop and change their sales results with his salon-specific, results driven methods. Contact him at The SALES CATALYST, 1300 302 859 or go to www.thesalescatalyst.com.au

New Year.
New Salon
Software.



Reinvent your front counter.
Learn more: gettimely.com

