

# Marketing to Women

Author  
**Martha  
Barletta**  
on reaching  
the world's  
largest market  
segment



**They're the world's  
largest market.**

**They're the world's  
fastest-growing market.**

**They account for 80% of  
consumer and business spending.**

**They account for 70% of new  
business startups.**

**They control over half the private  
wealth in the U.S.**




**And chances are, your competitors have been ignoring them.**

“The women’s market is Economic Opportunity Number One for the foreseeable future,” says marketing guru Tom Peters, “and there’s no close second.” American women, by themselves, control spending power greater than the national economy of Japan.

But to tap into the buying power of this market, you have to understand it. You have to understand what makes women tick, and what makes them turn away. You have to understand the biological, psychological and cultural differences that make men’s and women’s purchase processes so dissimilar, and how they are relevant to your business. And you have to understand which marketing strategies are going to work, and which have been proven to do more harm than good.

- Marketing Strategy
- Brand Positioning
- Customer Research
- Advertising
- Promotion
- Direct Marketing
- Affiliation/Sponsorship Marketing
- Event Marketing
- Loyalty & Referrals
- Website Marketing
- Sales Training and Communications
- Manufacturers, Retailers & Media

 **The TrendSight Group**  
Chicago, Illinois  
[www.trendsight.com](http://www.trendsight.com)  
888.831.0689



Martha Barletta and The TrendSight Group have over 20 years of multi-channel marketing planning and management experience across every element in the marketing mix. Moreover, unlike other marketing consultancies, TrendSight has created a comprehensive gender

expertise based on recent findings in anthropology, brain research, sociolinguistics and many other fields. The firm’s proprietary GenderTrends™ model captures a wealth of new insights on women, and delivers marketing and sales ideas that attract them to your brand in ways you’ve never thought of before.

Visit the TrendSight Group website for your free **white paper** on *How to Translate Gender Specific Insights into Impactful Tactics.* [www.trendsight.com](http://www.trendsight.com)

Why didn't they think of this before?

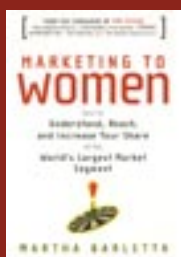
# Marketing to Women

— An Appeal to the Biggest Market Segment



Martha Barletta, author of *Marketing to Women: How to Understand, Reach and Increase Your Share of the World's Largest Market Segment* (Foreword by Tom Peters), offered her

insight for this article. She is the president and CEO of The TrendSight Group and a recognized authority on gender-focused marketing strategies. Her Wharton MBA, a distinguished career at top-flight agencies like McCann-Erickson, TLK, FCB, and Frankel, and work on blue-chip brands such as Kraft, Kodak, and Allstate, helped her hone her marketing and sales talents. Now a popular keynote speaker and marketing consultant, Barletta helps companies build sales and boost share by tapping into the buying power of women. She has been quoted on *CBS Evening News*, *NBC Nightly News*, and *First Business TV* as well as in *Fast Company*, *Business Week*, *U.S. Banker*, *Bank Investment Consultant*, and *ABA Bank Marketing*. The book is in its fifth printing, and is now available in 13 languages, including Japanese, Chinese, Russian and Brazilian Portuguese.



**M**arketing experts were merrily going on their way, touting more horsepower, improved and bigger, and which beer tastes better. When they thought about women in their sales pitches, it likely was a smiling model draped over the shoulders of the man featured in the ad or lots of models wearing bikinis. Otherwise, women were likely depicted as harried housewives fighting with dust, stains, and kids.

But marketers got the equivalent of a blaring wake-up call when a new wave of thinkers in the marketing field, ably represented by Martha Barletta, pointed out the errors of this Cro-Magnon sales approach.

Backed by a full complement of new scientific findings and carefully researched statistics, Barletta shows the marketers what's good, and what's obviously bad, about current advertising. She points out that the real world is a different marketplace and many of their ideas belong in the history books and not in any new marketing textbooks.

## Women control the wealth

"For the past 15 years," Barletta says, "women have been taking home a substantial majority of college degrees — 57 percent — or one-third more than men."

Their better education has led to better jobs, including many in the boardrooms across America. Of course, better jobs have meant better pay. In the past three decades, women's earnings (adjusted for inflation) have soared 63 percent, while the median income for men has barely moved the meter (just a 0.6 percent increase). Women's earning power has improved so dramatically that today, 48 percent of working wives provide at least half of their household's income, with 30 percent of working wives out-earning their husbands.

So much for earning power. But what about net worth, financial assets, and investment power? Many people have heard that the largest intergenerational transfer of wealth in history is about to

take place as Baby Boomers inherit from their high-saving parents. But few have thought about what happens next: because of women's longer lifespans, combined with their tendency to marry men older than themselves, Boomer women will then inherit from their husbands and go on to outlive them by 15 to 18 years. That means the combined wealth of two generations will be concentrated in Baby Boomer women's wallets for almost two decades — a trend investment firms can hardly afford to ignore.

### It's more than the money

Women's remarkable gains in earning power and wealth ownership are only half the story. Where the rubber really hits the road for marketers is in women's spending power. Although women make up "only" 51 percent of the U.S. population, they account for a striking 81 percent of all consumer and business purchases.

"In the past, big-ticket items like cars, insurance policies, and major appliances were bought by men," Barletta says, "and they were marketed that way. Nowadays, women need their own cars, computers, cell phones, and their own investment accounts. So manufacturers and marketers are facing a whole new marketplace." Barletta points out. "Single women head 27 percent of households. That's more than one out of four U.S. households where women are the sole decision-makers. In married households, women still make most of the spending decisions, only in this case, they have two incomes to manage," she says.

### A world of difference

So women have control of a sizable amount of the nation's spending power, and statistics show they make the financial decisions (see right for statistical proof), but why change the way advertisers present their wares?

"If you're thinking, a car is still a car, and a computer is a computer, so why market differently, you're asking the wrong question," Barletta says.

**In a recent study, 91% of the women said advertisers don't understand them.**

Greenfield Online for Arnold's Women's Insight Team

It's not the product that matters, but the prospect. And studies show that male and female prospects have very different priorities, preferences, and attitudes about a lot of things. The way they move through a decision process is radically different — and often leads to very different brand and product choices.

### Putting people first

Women focus on people, Barletta says. They think people are the most important and interesting element in any situation. Men think people are important, but

# Statistics Show Women Drive the Economy

**Most people are amazed to learn just how much economic clout women have these days. Here are facts to prove it.**



**Women comprise 46% of the workforce and 49% of professional and managerial-level workers.**



**Women own 40% of all U.S. small businesses, and employ more people in the U.S. alone than the Fortune 500 companies employ worldwide.**



**Women account for 53% of corporate purchasing agents and managers, and 58% of wholesale and retail buyers.**



**Women decide on 91% of all houses purchased, buy 94% of all home furnishings, and initiate 80% of all home improvement projects.**

rarely interesting. Men prefer to focus their attention on less personal topics, whether it's concrete things like cars and computers, or theoretical discussions about current events, business issues, or sports teams, Barletta says.

on a road, sometimes showcased in a bare environment — almost never with a driver, let alone passengers in the vehicle. The copy talks about the car's facts and features — how much horsepower, what kind of brakes — instead of human benefits, like how it makes Joan's

## **“If you're thinking, a car is still a car, and a computer is a computer, so why market differently, you're asking the wrong question.”**

Lots of ads and marketing communications that resonate with men simply don't hit the spot with women. Look at car ads, for example. Almost all of them consist of a big picture of the machine, sometimes in motion

busy life easier with its versatility, or lets Tamara feel comfortable and relaxed on her long commute to and from work.

### **Good solution or perfect answer?**

Women like to include the opinions and advice of others. It's part of the information gathering process they go through before making a decision. A woman is looking for the “perfect answer,” Barletta says. That means she'll look at more options and weigh and balance all possible choices before she feels she's done due diligence and becomes ready to act. Men decide up front what kind of product they're looking for and what key features are most important to them, and then follow a fairly linear decision path as they hunt it down.

Women, on the other hand, see the early stages of a decision process as an exploration,

an opportunity to see what's out there, to discover product options and features they might not have been aware of before. They notice not only the key characteristics of the products, but also the finer details that make one option subtly but significantly different from the others. As they proceed, learning more about what's available, they build a vision of the ideal product, the perfect answer.

Eventually, they come to know exactly what they want and are willing to go the extra mile to find it. After all, why settle for less if it isn't everything you want?

*“This ‘Women's Thing’ is... unmistakably, in my opinion... ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY NO. 1. (And there's no close second.)”*  
— Tom Peters, market expert, consultant



**Women comprise 50% of American business travelers and are responsible for 92% of the money spent on vacations.**



**Women take care of the family finances in 75% of U.S. households, including paying the bills (61%) and handling the checkbook (83%).**



**Women make 66% of all computer purchases and 51% of all consumer electronic purchases.**



**Women control 51.3% of U.S. private wealth and own 47% of investment portfolios worth \$500,000 or more.**



**Women buy 68% of new cars in the U.S., and 65% of new tires.**



**Women purchase 80% of all healthcare services and 75% of OTC medications.**

**These statistics show that women are the driving economic force in the U.S. and constitute the core of almost every business market.**

## I just want it the way I want it

Barletta uses her own experience to illustrate how women seek the perfect answer. She wanted a new cell phone and after examining features and researching details, she decided on the make and model that suited her. She noted the phone came in a choice of colors, one being blue. That one, she knew, was the phone she wanted.

The nearby retail store had the right make and model phone, but not in blue. So Barletta drove 25 miles to another outlet where she could buy the same phone, but in her preferred color.

Her husband didn't quite understand. "I didn't know the color was so important," he told her.

"It isn't," she answered, "but as long as I'm getting the phone I want, why not get it in the color I want?"

For Barletta, the brand and model was a good solution. The blue color, brand, and model were the perfect answer. Most men would have settled for another color at the first store.

## Women customers deliver more bang for your marketing buck — it's that simple.

The challenge for marketers is to understand the customer well enough to help the woman customer meet her needs (which she quite likely perceives differently than a man does), the savvy to communicate in terms that resonate with what she cares about, and the patience of a relationship-oriented outlook rather than one focused on securing the immediate transaction.

Quite an investment in the customer!

But there's a big pay-off. Women customers deliver more bang for your marketing buck — it's that simple, says Barletta. First of all, they're more loyal. Having invested all that time reaching her decision, the woman customer is more committed to sticking with it, rather than defecting to the first competitor that comes along with a tempting-but-temporary offer. We know today that selling product to a current, loyal customer costs only one-fourth to one-fifth as much as trying to start from scratch to win over a new customer.

Second, there's the Word-of-Mouth Marketing Multiplier. Because women's daily conversation consists mostly of exchanging personal experiences and anecdotes, a woman who has found the perfect answer is sure to tell her friends about it.

"Remember that old shampoo ad?" Barletta asks. "And she'll tell two friends, and she'll tell two friends, and so on, and so on, and so on."

Basically, every satisfied woman customer becomes a highly credible ambassador for your brand. Free marketing of the most valuable kind!

# she



**Women like to get together to talk.**

**Women communicate — especially with other women — on personal topics by using compliments, personal anecdotes, and intimate details. So, women's opinions and experiences with products and services reach large numbers of people very rapidly.**

**Women seek advice and information when undertaking a new purchase.**

**Women prefer to be "warmer." Consequently, women don't respond as well to messages based on gloating, boasting, bragging, or getting ahead as men do.**

**Women perceive and recall more elements and nuances in any environment, in the products and services they use, or in communications.**

**Women are synthesizers who search for "the perfect answer." They want all the same things as men, they just want more of them — more facts, more feedback from others, and more time to make their purchase decision.**

**Women are shoppers. They see shopping as a learning experience. They may return to an early step in the process to reevaluate with new information.**



# The

**Men** like to get together and *do* things.

**Men** are more comfortable communicating on impersonal topics, like computers, cars, and current events.

**Men** don't like to appear dependent on others for information. They see asking for advice as compromising.

**Men** want to be “winners,” whether it's joking with friends, the vehicle they drive, the sports teams they follow, or the gadgets and consumables they buy.

**Men** aren't interested in everyday details. Their idea of the of the big picture is to stick to the broad strokes and keep it simple.

**Men** look for “a good solution.” They strip away the elements until they can focus on essentials. Give them only the most important considerations.

**Men** are buyers. They move sequentially toward a purchase decision.

## Don't paint the brand pink

Some marketers who have tried to market to women have failed, so they think there's no validity to the concept. Typically, they've misinterpreted or incorrectly executed the strategy, what Barletta calls “painting it pink.”

As she said in her presentation to a Volvo marketing staff, “For heaven's sake, don't make a rose-colored auto and call it a woman's car. Anything that says ‘this product is just for women’ alienates women as well as men. It makes women feel singled out and suspicious that the product is some kind of ‘lite’ version that costs more and delivers less.”

Painting the brand pink is sure to backfire. The best marketing to women is transparent — invisible, unobtrusive, but more effective because it keys into what women care about.

## Basically, every satisfied woman customer becomes a highly credible ambassador for your brand.

As Barletta points out in her book and her speeches, in many ways, men and women live in two slightly different societies, with gender cultures as different as India and Indiana. While that sounds counter-intuitive at first (after all, we grow up side-by-side in the same homes, raised by the same parents, right?) as she lays out her findings, and illustrates them with examples from daily life that everyone can relate to, both male and female readers and audience members soon find themselves nodding in agreement and chuckling in self-recognition.

“This stuff is fascinating”, she says, “and as it starts to sink in, you realize how much money companies are leaving on the table because they've overlooked the obvious: Men and women are different, and that means you need to communicate with them differently, in ads, in-store and in person.”

“Marketing to women isn't even particularly hard,” she points out. “It's just different. And when you consider the competitive edge it gives to companies who figure it out faster than their competition, and the business response you can get from the largest buying segment in the world, it's a no-brainer. You'll get five or six times more bang for your marketing buck. Doesn't it just make sense to put your money where your market is?”

**“American women by themselves are, in effect, the largest ‘national’ economy on earth, larger than the entire economy of Japan.”**

— Tom Peters, market expert, consultant

---

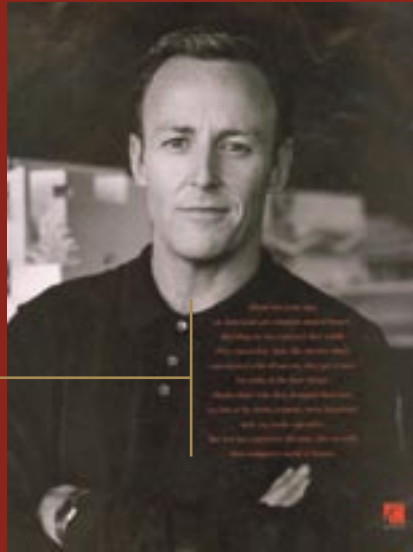
*This article only touches on the many facts and facets of the specialized approach to successfully reaching the women's market. For greater details, read Martha Barletta's book [Marketing To Women](#), available through bookstores everywhere.*

# Can ads really be gender-specific?

Are there really male-female differences in the ads we see?

A picture is worth a thousand words, so here are some actual examples taken from magazines. You'll find similar examples in other media.

...they designed their new car line to be faster, roomier, more luxurious, and yes, more expensive.



## ◀ Male appeal

Based on what we said about men's preferences on the previous pages, how does this ad appeal to men?

It's all about success and the finer things. Saturn builds its cars "to be faster" and other features that appeal to men's egos. If your vehicle is "more expensive," that's a status symbol showing your achievement. Your neighbors and colleagues will know you're successful enough to afford it, plus you have bragging rights because of the vehicle's power and luxury.

Portrayed alone, arms folded, filling the ad, this man is the picture of success and he knows it.

## ◀ Female appeal

Talk about opposites. This Saturn ad begins with copy that almost contradicts the male version. Rather than touting "more expensive" as a benefit, here it's called "obscenely expensive." What is held up as a positive for males is now "silly."

Women focus on others, just as the woman in this ad is connected with her daughters. She cares about her family, as shown by the three with their arms around each other. It's a charming garden setting. These are not idealized models. They look like "real" people. Here's a woman who is connected, not alone.

There is a point where luxury becomes somewhat silly. It becomes overdone. Absurd. And obscenely expensive.



**Male appeal** ▶

This two-page spread for Merrill Lynch shows a comfortably rich couple who only want “the best of everything” for themselves. They’re on top, ahead of everyone. It’s an appeal to ego and the idea of being superior. These traits appeal to the man’s perspective of the good life. There is nothing warm or comfortable about the stark décor of their home. They are carefully posed among their possessions.

The second page refers to “top money managers” like the stern man pictured who “major corporations rely on for investment expertise.” He’s top dog in his profession. The young woman shown with the manager is perceived in a supporting role.



Dan and Patricia are always searching for the best of everything.

Their money behaves in a similar fashion.

**A Merrill Lynch Financial Advisor can give you access to the money managers in the U.S.** With the help of Richard Miller, the O'Donnells choose among highly rated money managers — the same talent that major corporations rely on for investment expertise — to carry out their strategy with style consistency, discipline and quality control.

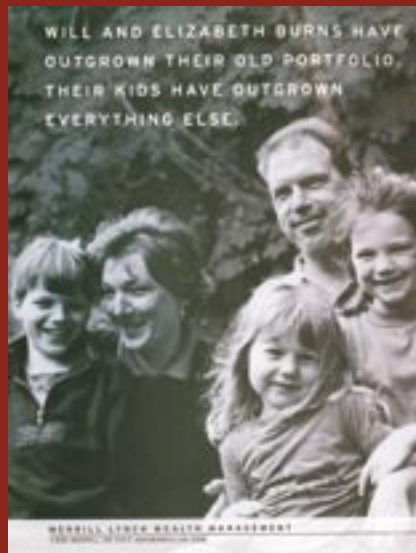
**Contact a Merrill Lynch Financial Advisor: 1800MERRILL or ASAMERRILL.ML.COM**

With the help of Richard Miller, the O'Donnells choose among highly rated money managers — the same talent that major corporations rely on for investment expertise — to carry out their strategy with style consistency, discipline and quality control.

**Female appeal** ▶

This second Merrill Lynch ad focuses on people, not things. As much as Dan and Patricia in the other ad were aloof, these are people who look warm, friendly, and easy to know. They look “genuine.” They’re slightly windblown, not perfect. This family is comfortable with each other, as shown by their relaxed, unstructured family photo.

The second page is as dramatically different as its counterpart. Here’s a smiling woman who is leaning forward to welcome readers and share a “secret” with them. The copy talks about family goals. It doesn’t matter if this advisor works with top corporations. She looks like someone who would happily work with everyday people.



Like a lot of people, Will and Elizabeth were pretty aggressive with their stock-heavy portfolio a few years ago. But now, with a volatile market and their kids reaching school age, we talked about ways to better balance risk and growth.

**WILLIE BROWN BURNS, MERRILL LYNCH FINANCIAL ADVISOR, IS SHOWING A PORTFOLIO WHILE MANAGING RISK.**

**THE MERRILL LYNCH FINANCIAL ADVISOR CAN GIVE YOU ACCESS TO THE MONEY MANAGERS IN THE U.S.** With the help of Willie Burns, the Browns choose among highly rated money managers — the same talent that major corporations rely on for investment expertise — to carry out their strategy with style consistency, discipline and quality control.

**Contact a Merrill Lynch Financial Advisor: 1800MERRILL or ASAMERRILL.ML.COM**

# New Approach For Bank Marketing

— And It Works!

Martha Barletta, author of *Marketing to Women* and a leader in the movement to integrate female-friendly style and techniques into advertising, inspired one marketing firm to put her advice to paper. ACTON Marketing, a company that creates direct marketing packages, promotional materials, and acts as a consulting firm to banks, has found its clients are not only open to the new ideas, but are finding success using them.

From ACTON's perspective, the exploration into marketing to women techniques began as a way to solve a problem.

"Bank direct mail all looked alike," says Lynn Leffert, ACTON's CEO. "We know because ACTON set the standard when we introduced the Free Checking and a Free Gift strategy in the early '80s."

Over the years it has been copied by other marketing companies and even by banks themselves.

"We were searching for a way to distinguish our banking clients' mail in the box among all the look-alike clutter," Leffert says. "When we discovered Marti Barletta's marketing to women ideas, we not only found our new look, we also found a new way of looking at the market."

**"We don't compromise any proven direct marketing techniques."**

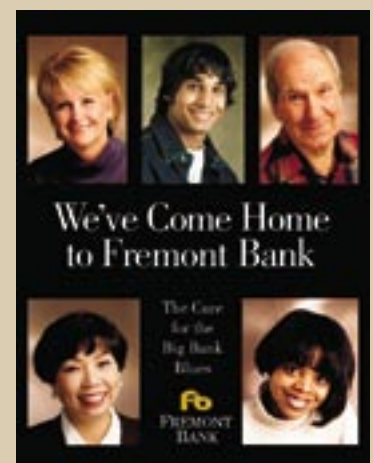
Barletta worked closely with the design and sales teams at ACTON while they developed a marketing to women approach for financial organizations. With Barletta as the keynote speaker and discussion moderator at an ACTON symposium for its bank clients, the new designs were unveiled.

## Ideas in practice.

The marketing company that introduced the first free checking accounts to prospective customers back in 1982 is leading the way with marketing to women strategies for its clients. Shown here are some examples of how ACTON Marketing, headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, is adjusting its marketing appeal.



▲ This magazine-format mailer focuses on people to engage women's interest and tell them stories to deliver the product messages. Instead of looking like a typical hard-sell promotion, the offer is integrated with informational copy.



▲ This magazine-style mailer shows people on the cover — an invitation to look inside. There is extensive copy inside the mailer devoted to the bank as a member of the community and the good works it does for the community.

▼ Here's an example of a "corporate halo" message overlay. Women expect companies they do business with to be good community citizens.



"We heard some wonderful comments from the bank marketers during and after the symposium. Our approach was enthusiastically received," Leffert says.

**"Through ACTON's new marketing strategy, banks of all sizes have access to the insights and techniques used by Madison Avenue agencies for powerful clients like Chrysler, General Foods, State Farm, and AT&T."**

But the real test of the marketing program was: Does it improve response?

"Our first mail project using the new creative approach for one of our bank clients surprised even us," Leffert says. "The marketing vice president told us they opened twelve percent more accounts during that mail cycle than they did during the same time the previous year."

"We don't compromise any proven direct marketing techniques," Leffert emphasizes about his company's new approach. "When executed correctly, marketing to women promotions will be better received by the female market, but, just as important, the message won't alienate men. Women want more information than men, presented so they can make a decision in the way that suits them. What men want from the message is still there, and the men take only what they need to make their decisions."

Through ACTON's new marketing strategy, banks of all sizes have access to the insights and techniques used by Madison Avenue agencies for powerful clients like Chrysler, General Foods, State Farm, and AT&T.

Leffert summarized the program by saying, "This gives banks of all sizes the ability to get their message to the biggest and best audience using the best possible communications and measurement methods. After all, that's what marketing is all about."

*For information about ACTON Marketing's bank promotion strategies and services, contact Lynn Leffert at (402) 470-2909 or [leffert@acton.com](mailto:leffert@acton.com).*

► The outside of this checking account promotion shows woman-appealing photos. Women appreciate services that save them time. Some are illustrated on the border of the blue-green mailer. When the short-fold panel is lifted, copy that describes the services is revealed.



▲ The headline and photo on this Tell-A-Friend gift certificate promotes the attitude women believe in, sharing with others.

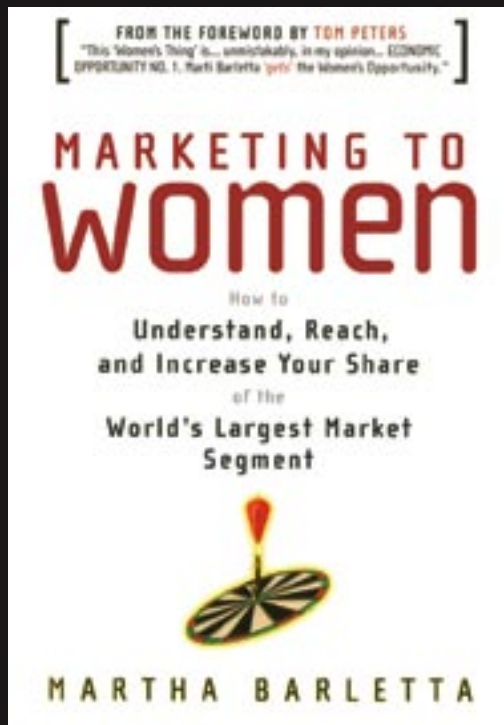
These examples only touch on some of the techniques ACTON uses to address the way women choose products. They appeal to the way women think and emphasize benefits that are important to women.

“... solid advice on how to market products that both appeal to women and increase company profitability.”

—Harvard Business School,  
Working Knowledge newsletter

“... the kind of information that resonates with marketers, regardless of gender.”

—Wharton’s Knowledge@Work newsletter



“... a SUPER book, one that every marketer should own, study and refer to often. I cannot say enough about this book’s potential to impact your business!”

—AdGenius

**Dearborn**  
Trade Publishing  
A Kaplan Professional Company

# People Are Talking... *about* Marketing to Women

***Are you getting your fair share of the largest and most lucrative market in the world today?*** American women are not only breadwinners and educated, informed consumers, but also corporate buyers and managers. They make 85% of consumer purchasing decisions. Savvy marketers and salespeople are finding the fast track to the competitive edge is to target women.

In her book, *Marketing to Women: How to Understand, Reach, and Increase Your Share of the World’s Largest Market Segment*, gender-focused marketing guru Martha Barletta explains how marketing to women is different than marketing to men. She also explains the sales, share and profit benefits companies can reap by sharpening their communications to women.

Barletta has been quoted on *CBS Evening News*, *NBC Nightly News*, and *First Business TV* as well as in *Fast Company*, *Business Week*, *U.S. Banker*, *Bank Investment Consultant*, and *ABA Bank Marketing*. The book is in its fifth printing and is now available in 13 languages, including Japanese, Chinese, Russian and Brazilian Portuguese. Visit [www.1800CEORead.com](http://www.1800CEORead.com).

## Want to hear the message in person?

Martha Barletta’s dynamic style, command of her subject and passion for her topic—*Marketing to Women*—come across as well in person as on the printed page. A top-rated professional speaker, she presents keynotes and workshops for audiences seeking to boost marketing, sales and recruiting results by *improving their communications to women*.

Combining gender expertise, marketing experience and a lively sense of humor, Martha delivers eye-opening insights and practical “how to” pointers that audiences find enlightening, entertaining and easy to apply.

To inquire about speaking engagements, please call 888-831-0689 or email [Speaking@TrendSight.com](mailto:Speaking@TrendSight.com).

**Martha Barletta**  
CEO, The TrendSight Group  
Helping companies boost sales  
and share by tapping into the  
buying power of women.

