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White Paper: **Missing Males**

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Atlanta, GA

Missing Males White Paper

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Overview

A great focus is directed toward the overall purchasing power of women in the home environment, as the female continues to be considered responsible for some 80 percent of all household-related purchasing decisions. Men, on the other hand, seem to be awarded very little influence in modern-day households as one looks to the media and marketing communities. Even fathers of recent generations who actually spend a *greater* amount of time in the home and with their families have been virtually ignored in product development and marketing. Angry men and women nationwide are taking a stand against the media portrayal of men as indifferent, egocentric and self-indulgent-roles they say inadequately reflect man's influence in modern-day society.

This white paper will discuss the data behind the *missing males* phenomenon including revealing the history of men's roles in the household as portrayed by marketers and the media. We will also introduce the reality of the character men demonstrate throughout the home as well as disclose the progressive companies altering the stereotypical perception of disengaged men. In addition, we will review these companies' sympathetic marketing strategies and product development that reaches this important demographic.

It will further demonstrate the relevance, buying power and purchasing habits of this target market, specifically for housing industry professionals. Most importantly, the white paper will provide evidence to building products' manufacturers that they may wish to use to help increase their bottom lines by marketing accurately and effectively to this widely overlooked group of consumers.

History of Men in the Media

A perennial debate in marketing is whether an advertisement highlights a reflection of society, or whether instead, it helps to shape society. Undoubtedly, advertising is closely related to our economy and culture. As such, it can be considered both a mirror of the current times as well as an iconic art form from which we take our socialization cues. Have men and society changed? Or are the marketers on Madison Avenue and the Hollywood producers not so subtly suggesting the way that society should perceive men?

America's first glimpse at this notion came in the 1950s with the advent of television sitcoms where a "Father Knows Best," mentality was created, popularizing an implied paternalism in households nationwide. In those days, fathers were no laughing matter. Mark Crispin Miller, author of "Dad Through the Decades: Thirty Years of TV Fathers," points out that "father

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restored authority by assertion of his superior ‘dadness’ and his chilling summons to ‘a little talk.’”¹

In early television sitcoms, dad was presumed to be the holder of all that was wise and good. And while the watchdog dad reigned over the entire household, the mother was always well dressed, proper, devoted, “ready to serve,” as even she was under the father’s everlasting scrutiny. Not “allowed” to talk back or disagree, if she disobeyed “orders,” she was not above being taught a lesson by the judicious, telling and patriarch-like father figure who seemingly always knew what was right, suitable and moral. “Today, of course, the old Dad-centered universe has become the biggest and easiest joke on television, with yesterday’s paternalistic vision the standard object of burlesque.”¹

It wasn’t until the mid-1960s that the view of American families and the roles of men and women in the households began to change. As such, the “titanic burgher of the early years was remarkably reduced, to be succeeded by pleasant nullities like the dads of *Patty Duke* and *Dennis the Menace*, or mere straight men, like Samantha’s husband on *Bewitched*.”¹

With the fading authoritative role of the father in the home (as demonstrated by media programming), women began to gain further prominence and influence in the household. This development also coincided with the pivotal women’s rights movement. In this connection, marketers and advertisers capitalized on the ability to share an emotional connection with the female consumer (specifically wives and mothers) who behind the backs of their husbands actually made their “own” purchasing determinations. This marked the start of women gaining clout as decision-makers in the household and the “beginning of TV’s pseudo-feminism, which now pervades prime time.”¹

The ‘80s witnessed the arrival of the film “*Mr. Mom*,” a comedy about the mishaps of a working father forced to stay home with the kids after losing his job while his wife went on to be the family breadwinner. Following this trend in television programming (along with the evolution of American society), fathers were made into “big kids” epitomized by Bill Cosby on the “*The Cosby Show*,” who was surrounded by a family of children who viewed him as a jokester alongside an educated, hard-working, corporate wife who held most of the “real” disciplinary power.

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In contrast to the growing favorable view of mothers in media programming and advertising, fathers seemingly disappeared altogether as having any prominent role in the household and evolved instead to be perceived as subservient to both their wives and their children.

Heroes of a by-gone era included the masculine types like John Wayne, Steve McQueen and James Dean. Today, comedic male figures reign supreme, such as Steve Carrell and Jim Carrey. It leaves one to wonder—can a happy medium exist between the stern, masculine figures of yesteryear and the nonchalant men so commonly portrayed today?

Misperception of Modern-Day Men

The representation of men in advertisements has shifted. As a result of ill-fitting portrayed roles, today's men are experiencing an identity crisis. Men traditionally have been typecast as strong, in control, confident, successful and autonomous lone warriors. Masculine stereotypes conjure up images of the once famed and often controversial American cowboy, the Marlboro Man. In contrast, recent depictions of men host absent-minded, careless and clueless roles.

In an article featured on Entrepreneur.com, Kim Gordon explains that in a “study by Leo Burnett Worldwide Inc., nearly 80 percent of American men say they can barely recognize themselves in advertisements.”² Moreover, men remain oftentimes not only unmotivated, but also insulted by these depictions.

Rose Cameron, the author of an extensive worldwide study that addresses the issue of missing the mark when it comes to men, analyzed more than 2,000 men whom she divided into four categories: patriarchs, power seekers, metrosexuals and retrosexuals. The study was conducted to initiate new thoughts in the demystification of men. The data suggests that male consumers can be just as unpredictable as their female counterparts.

Much to the researchers' surprise, patriarchs—men identified as good partners and fathers—made up the largest male audience at 37 percent. Despite the media hype glorifying metrosexuals, their numbers fizzled out to a less than anticipated 24 percent of male consumers. Defined by success, power seekers represented 23 percent of the male population. Retro males (who rarely stray from their male pack) represented 16 percent of the group. With this new research in tow, it's no surprise that a whopping “74 percent of men feel that images of their gender in advertising are out of touch with reality.”³

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It seems that men are now experiencing something equal to the misogyny of women, commonly associated with the early part of the 20th century. Despite living in an era of political correctness, the misrepresentation of men seems to be on the rise in popular media. The cultural shift created by the women's rights movement produced measurable improvements in the lives of women nationwide and brought about notable results including the right to vote, equal pay and more. As much as this worthy cause accomplished for women, it could also have been the catalyst for the pendulum swinging unwittingly in the opposite direction.

The evolution of television programming, media portrayal, marketing and advertising to the general American public has pigeonholed the men of current times to portray an outwardly trivial presence in today's households. Men are being cast under their female counterparts' shadows, oftentimes irrationally and under an untrue pretense.

The use of comedy in advertisements is a popular marketing technique that speaks to hordes of consumers, especially men. Interestingly, humor and pseudo-machismo are oftentimes considered traits enjoyed by men in efforts to cloak their vulnerability. Despite the popularity of humorous ads, arguments can be made that marketers have gone too far and are now erring on the side of an irrelevancy.

“Advertising narrows the definition of what it means to be a man,” says Tom Nakayama, author of “Images of Men in Advertising.” “...upon re-viewing them [male stereotypes] I realized anew how much the role of the strong, silent, authoritarian, militaristic and threatening male pervades societal ideas.”⁴

Verizon Wireless debuted a highly controversial advertisement in which a father attempts to help his daughter with her homework and fails. The daughter is annoyed with her father's ignorance, turning to her mother with a look that says, “Obviously males can't do math—get him out of here.” The mother, in an act of female solidarity, instructs the father to go wash the dishes.

Glenn Sacks, columnist, commentator, talk radio host and highly outspoken critic of male stereotyped advertising, was so angered by this offensive depiction of men that he launched a campaign against Verizon's “anti-father” advertisement. On Sacks' website, GlennSacks.com, he explained why he launched the campaign that generated more than

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2,000 letters to Verizon Communications protesting the advertisement “Homework” and its “insulting portrayal of the father.”

According to Sacks, Verizon’s ad message was clear—“dad is dumb, dad is useless, mom is smarter than dad, hell, even an eight-year-old is smarter than dad.”⁵ Sacks goes on to point out that this disturbing advertisement is not only appalling but also an example of “the denigration of males in popular culture and the decline of fatherhood.”⁵

What’s interesting about this campaign condemning Verizon’s ad is not so much the act against Verizon as a company, but the indignation associated with the underlying principles of the inaccuracies with the portrayal of fathers in today’s society. In fact, Sacks fully admits that he’s “sure that Verizon does not mean any harm. Like many, they have developed a moral blind spot toward disparaging males.”⁵ Nakayama further validates this thought by saying (about advertising stereotypes) “they actually represent countless—if often unconscious—decisions by writers, advertisers, producers, programmers and others about what men look like, say and even think.”⁴

Todd Wasserman of *Brandweek* also marvels at the same concept as expressed in his article “The Surviving Dads of Ads” when he questions, “Why [do] marketers—and media in general—like to treat fathers like clowns.”⁵

Like many irritated by the unfair and inaccurate portrayal of men and their roles as fathers in the media, the emphasis lies on the offensive nature of the ads. Men and fathers are not ill-equipped to help their children with their homework (Verizon), nor are they fools who jump up and down after beating their daughters in a ping pong game (Fidelity Investments), nor are they a non-existent influence in the healthy eating habits of their children (McDonald’s “McMom”) or who deem the only way of preparing dinner for the family is ordering out (Pizza Hut).

As Sacks says, “We all agree that it’s harmful to portray women as incapable of doing men’s jobs, or blacks as being unable to achieve what whites can achieve. Why would the same principles not apply to the denigration of fathers?”⁵

Unfortunately, the “*useless dad*” and “*missing males*” perception is a common one on the TV screen. Nevertheless, it’s the *inappropriate* and *inaccurate* advertising that skews the perceptions

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of the public while at the same time narrowing the definition of today's fathers and their roles in the household. Some good news is that this is not *always* the case.

Progressive advertisements are highlighting men interacting with their families, children, wives, as well as other men and women, rather than being cast as the lone ranger. Today savvy companies are starting to take notice of the *actual* involvement of men throughout the home, taking to heart the significance of their upstanding roles as husbands, fathers and men in general.

Ads with Favorable Depictions of Men

Despite all the negative publicity surrounding male stereotyped advertisements and media programming, there *is* hope that more marketers will continue to strike a balance with their male audience. "A few advertisers have begun to concentrate on another view of masculinity by portraying images of men who are gentle, caring, sensitive—even able to hold babies...they affirm the idea that men, like women, experience a broad range of feelings and emotions."⁴

Take for example the recent Ford ad spot revealing the 2008 Ford Taurus that highlights "an upstanding father shown buying the car for the same child that we see him (in flashbacks) teaching how to ride a bike."⁶ Another example is the movie "The Pursuit of Happyness" (2006) starring Will Smith and his real-life son Jaden Smith, which tells the story of a homeless single father with a five-year-old son. In this touching movie based on a true story, the father lovingly raises his son and pulls out of poverty to become a multi-millionaire.

What is so significant to male viewers in this new type of programming is the demonstrated importance of the bond between fathers and their children. Referring back to the Verizon "anti-father" campaign, one of the letters directed to Verizon Communications came from a father who said, "I never knew what love really was until I had a daughter."⁵ And another which stated, "When I look around I see men working 50 hours a week or more to support their families, and still managing to help their children with their homework, read them bedtime stories, and be fine role models. Why can't I see any men like that when I turn on the TV?"⁵

In concert with fathers who live full-time with their wives and children, newly single dads will also remain an emerging consumer group as divorce rates continue at historic levels. According to a study of 46,000 divorce cases published in the *American Law and Economics*

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Review, “Two-thirds of all divorces involving couples with children are initiated by mothers, not fathers, and in only six percent of cases did the women claim to be divorcing cruel or abusive husbands. Divorcing women instead cite emotional reasons, such as a perceived lack of closeness or not feeling loved and appreciated. Most of these men didn’t fail as fathers—they instead only failed at the often difficult task of keeping their marriages together.”⁷

Ford’s “Bold Moves” commercial spot addresses this evolving consumer group of divorced dads. The ad begins with a stereotypically happy family taking a trip to the beach in a Ford Freestyle SUV. At the end of the ad spot, the car pulls out into a housing complex where the dad gets out, hugs his kids and tells them he’ll see them next week, and thanks his ex-wife for “inviting me this weekend.”

Unfair and biased ads that negatively portray fathers dramatically contrast with the emphasis and value many fathers place on their relationships with their families and children. One prime example is the surprising success of recently deceased Tim Russert’s Wisdom of Our Fathers: Lessons and Letters from Daughters and Sons, which reached number one status on the *New York Times* bestseller list and stemmed from his 2004 book Big Russ and Me written about his father. After the release of Big Russ and Me, Russert received over 60,000 letters from readers wanting to tell their stories about their fathers, which inspired the creation of Russert’s Wisdom of Our Fathers.

This is a key illustration of a much-needed truth required when portraying the role of men in the household. Even children are anxious to change the perception of their fathers by getting their “real stories” out there.

Some manufacturers of home-related products, along with residential designers are responding to the trend of more male-oriented areas of the home (supplementing the mainstream “man caves” of garages and basements). The kitchen is an ideal example. Stereotyped as the “woman’s domain,” forward-thinking companies are providing enhanced style features and amenities that reflect the growing presence of men in this new arena.

According to a new study commissioned by food company PurAsia called *Emergence of the Gastrosexual*, there is a broad demographic trend of men not only spending more time in the kitchen, but also using cooking and gastronomy to define themselves—both as men and consumers.

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According to the study's authors, gastrosexuals, in addition to usually being male, are aged 25 to 44 and upwardly mobile. Contrary to the popular belief that the extent of men's interest in cooking is limited to the backyard barbecue, the facts reveal that 53 percent of men report cooking with separate ingredients nearly every day. Cooking is a hobby (as opposed to a chore) for 52 percent of men, and the amount of time men have spent at the cooktop has risen fivefold since 1961. Perhaps most surprising, much of the increasing time that men spend at the stove seems to involve impressing women. In the 18 to 34 age group, 23 percent of men said they cook to impress a partner.⁸

This emerging group of males is creating huge branding opportunities for many companies. Porsche understands the prominence of this group in the home environment. The company's design group, Luxist, has teamed up with Poggenpohl, the award-winning luxury kitchen cabinet brand to create the "man kitchen,"⁹ which specifically addresses this target audience. Although geared toward the higher-end male consumers, at least Porsche understands that men can actually boil water.

In fact, according to a recent study by The NPD Group, a retail and marketing data company, not only is the number of men involved in cooking and cuisine at a historical high,¹⁰ but today's "men covet mixers, toasters and gourmet appliances just as much as navigation systems, mobile phones and audio components."¹¹

Even more telling, some of today's revolutionary manufacturers and designers are incorporating gender variations into products and designs that embody the entire family. For example, "His" and "Her" prep sinks as well as multi-functional kitchen designs that incorporate "homework" areas and dual home offices flowing into the overall kitchen design that allow both men and women to prepare dinner while helping the kids with their homework.

Furthermore, fresh websites geared specifically towards fathers are speaking directly to a man's desire to become more than just a figurehead in the home. Odadeo.com has given fathers an online source to be social with other fathers, talk about their children, ask parenting advice and discuss problems. Sites like these are becoming "ok" for men to be a part of as the male culture grows more accepting of men's involvement in the daily life of the home.

Men as an Overlooked Opportunity

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Despite common belief, many men actually enjoy shopping and making household purchasing decisions. In fact, according to the National Association of Realtors' "Profile of Home Buyers and Sellers 2007," first-time homebuyers make 39 percent of home purchases and account for 43 percent of all home sales. This yields an opportunity to reach an untapped market segment in categories other than that of cars, beer and electronics. Although women hold a wealth of considerable influence and buying power in the home environment, men are not to be forgotten.

The overwhelming focus on women is "short-sighted,"¹² according to Vincent DiCaro, director of public affairs for the National Fatherhood Initiative. The imperative role of men in today's households and throughout their children's lives solidifies them as a primary domestic influence that *does* make purchasing decisions and controls the family wallet.

In fact, in 1997, dads living at home invested 65 percent as much time in the company of their children during the week as their mothers did, and 87 percent as much time on the weekends, according to a University of Michigan study.⁶ Furthermore, based on 2006 U.S. Census Bureau statistics, 143,000 fathers are at home and run the household.

What's more, "the model where mom stays at home and the guy goes to work and makes the money is substantially outdated."¹³ Mark Penn, author of Microtrends who has a section in his book titled *Neglected Dads*, demands that this male demographic be appropriately targeted by marketers, advertisers and the media, citing back-to-school clothing ads and daddy-and-me books as prime examples.⁶

Although there is a heavy emphasis on women's roles as "managers" of the home, men are still apt and able in their decision-making ability. In fact, of the 1,260 individuals surveyed in summer 2008 by the Pew Research Center— either married or living together—31 percent said they shared decision-making among the four categories surveyed: planning weekend activities, household finances, major home purchases and TV watching. Older couples ranked the highest in terms of shared decision-making. More than a third of those 65 or older said they shared decision-making in three of the four categories, while 42 percent of couples under 30 said they didn't share any decisions.¹³

It's important to note that today's couples are navigating and negotiating equality far more than ever before. In today's time-starved, fast paced culture, it is not about what *gender* is making the decision for the couple, it is more about who has the *time* to do it. The

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“traditional” idea of men as breadwinners and head-of-households, or the pseudo-feminism conviction that women control all decision making in the home, both fail to successfully define the modern-day home environment. Today’s household culture is more of a democracy than it is a dictatorship.

As men become increasingly involved in their home lives, companies should play a greater part in tapping into the vast market and its corresponding dollars. Men, whether single, married or fathers, represent significant sources of disposable income throughout all areas of the home.

Male Personas, Defined

Now that you know who the modern man is and who he is not, the next step is determining the most effective ways to sell to them. Consider the values and habits of today’s male consumers, as identified by the following personalities and marketing needs:

Solo Pilot

He’s doesn’t want to be called a metrosexual, but this guy dresses himself, cooks his own dinner and buys beauty products—or at least shower gel and cologne anyway. As the chief purchasing officer in his domain, he enjoys shopping and making buying decisions. Typically an upwardly mobile power-seeker, he prefers browsing the Internet when researching and buying products.

21st Century Bachelor

As a growing number of males play dual roles as single men and fathers, the bachelor pad is getting a makeover. This man is increasingly concerned with the number of rooms and amenities in his home as he considers both his personal life and the needs of his children. Appealing to his paternal emotions and providing the opportunity to connect with his children are important marketing strategies.

Domestic Techie

The “Man Cave” may become endangered territory, as this man comfortably migrates to other parts of the home. Trends such as molecular gastronomy are spiking his interest in cooking and turning other formerly female domains into level playing fields. Speaking to him in the scientific language he prefers will maximize opportunities for promoting the high-tech products and methods he craves.

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Practical Papa

By being more involved in his home and recognizing his important position as a father and husband, this man is the reality between stereotypical extremes of authoritarian and jokester husbands. He has feelings and emotions, especially concerning his children. He needs authentic role models in advertising that speak to his interests and values rather than those that contrast the emphasis he places on family.

Mr. Gender Neutrality

He isn't just sharing the workplace; his quest for equality has stretched throughout the home too. He has a hand in purchasing decisions and extends equal household influence, sharing control of the family and its wallet. The question isn't male versus female it's who has the time. Like many working moms, this man is interested in work-life balance and craves function, familiarity and practicality.

How to Best Reach This Audience

With so many nuances attributed to men, it may initially appear be difficult to determine the most appealing and relevant marketing tactics.

In addition to those fathers who live full-time with their wives and children, divorced dads are also reflecting their children's needs in their home environment. Armed with the knowledge that more than two-thirds of adult children of divorce realize that dads are important and that after divorce, "living equal amounts of time with each parent is the best arrangement of children,"¹⁴ modern-day dads are making an effort to create a home environment that adequately serves the needs of their children.

Instead of the stereotypical "bachelor pads," home designers, developers and designers should look to customizable, highly personalized open floor plans to cater to both the needs and demands of men and their children. Furthermore, with the emergence of gastrosexuals, those in the housing market have a heightened opportunity to attract the male demographic to their kitchen designs, products and amenities.

Similar to moms, fathers' main motivating factors in the home environment are aspiring to meet their children's needs and demands. Consequently, men can symbolize a crucial marketing opportunity for home industry professionals. Well-informed marketers continue to recognize that children hold the keys to their parents' wallets. In fact, the 41 million

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children in the U.S. between the ages of five and 14 have a direct buying power of more than \$40 billion and *influence* \$146 billion worth of expenditures every year. So, when marketing to men, remember to also market to their children.

When selling and marketing directly to fathers, consider the role their children play in their lives. Instead of always speaking to the mother in terms of her children, be careful in labeling unmarried men homebuyers as merely “single.” Inquire about their personal lives, what their children are interested in, and what they are looking for in terms of space, number of rooms, amenities and product attributes, especially in kitchen appliances.

Similar to a strategy employed regularly when marketing to moms, appealing to men’s emotional sides and their connection with their children is best accomplished through caring, understanding advertising and marketing campaigns. These campaigns must resonate with the true reality of men’s lives to be effective. Speak to men with familiarity and compassion regarding all they are currently juggling in their lives. Today’s fathers, husbands and single men are like everyone else, multi-tasking—trying to balance their work and personal lives.

So, what really makes men tick as consumers? Start by reaching them with the basics of your product or service’s functionality, familiarity and practicality. Borrow from the language of sports and science and choose authentic male role models that do not narrow the definition of men by labeling them as “narcissistic metrosexuals” or “old-school traditionalists.” In addition, market and sell to them through mixed media including the Internet.

With that said, there are still potential differences to take into account when marketing and selling to men and women. Following is a chart that will aid you in your quest to best address and distinguish modern-day men.

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Potential Differences between Men and Women	
Women	Men
Better at language and verbal tasks	Better at spatial tasks
Better people skills	Greater mechanical aptitude
More networked and contextual thinking	More linear, focused thinking
More acute senses	More in line with abstract principles and rules
Are people powered	Pay less attention to people
Are ensemble players – “we”	Are soloists – “me”
Occupy a peer group - outlook is relational without being comparative	Occupy a pyramid - relates to others in comparative terms
Driven by empathy - want to belong and be understood	Driven by envy - motivated by operating principle of aspiration
Like to keep it “real” - looking for those “that’s me” moments	Respond to idealized scenarios - want to stand out from the crowd and be the best
Can't live without talking to their girlfriends	Like buddies to do stuff with
Welcome advice	Can be offended by advice
Laugh at themselves	Laugh at the other guy
Like to ask	Like to read
Maximize	Prioritize
Care about “the details”	Care about the “important stuff”
Integrate - comprehensive grasp of all information	Extricate - clarity comes from simplification and processing the most important factors
Seek the perfect answer - the answer that's going to benefit all available	Find a good solution - shoot from the hip
Want the full report	Want the executive summary
"Rapport" talk - transmit information, solve problems and connections among individuals	"Report" talk - transmit information and solve problems
Seek emotions	Hide from emotions
Connect through story	Connect through status

Sources: *PrimeTime Women*¹⁵
*Don't Think Pink*¹⁶

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News You Can Use

Today's men have transformed into marketing-friendly consumerists, buying not only beer, cars and electronics, but even more of the "traditional" female-driven products like household items, clothes, moisturizers and hair gels. Today's society doesn't allow for clear-cut men's roles like the family breadwinner or head-of-household. Deter from marginalizing this group of consumers. After all, men can actually be vulnerable and fragile, and they can surely dress themselves, cook a meal and do their own laundry.

For those in the housing market, this means that targeting men is a lucrative opportunity for businesses operating within this channel. Overall, men signify an underrepresented segment that is well positioned and in desperate need of attention. As the housing environment evolves, men will maintain and likely continue to augment their roles in purchasing decisions for the home. In divorced families, children will be sharing their time between two households, which means there are growing opportunities to capitalize on the increasing number of single head-of-households and the products, design and amenities geared toward the needs and demands of their children.

Furthermore, with the emergent force of gastrosexuals spending an increased amount of time in the kitchen, today's home channel professionals have significant branding opportunities right within the home environment.

However, it's important to consider the gender-neutral society of our modern era. Both men and women are making household-purchasing decisions together, so remember this dynamic when trying to reach either audience.

With that said, marketing and selling strategies targeting men should place special emphasis on their evolving roles in the household. Men should not be discounted or overlooked as an important consumer force in the home industry. To increase your bottom line, focus on men as the steady and emerging demographic they are, have proved to be in the past and will continue to be in the future.

Men are spending more time with their children and in areas of the home that were typically thought of as the women's arena. They are shopping and making key home purchasing decisions by themselves and with their female counterparts, now more than ever. Capable, responsible men have been underrepresented for too long. It's time for marketers to wake up and think of male audiences as more than a mere afterthought.

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The Reality of Today's Men

So, what are modern-day men looking for in advertising? How do you grab *his* attention in an aggressive marketplace?

Like many of today's consumers, men respond to interactive media and marketing. The advent of the internet has created a new way to communicate, thereby forming a fresh platform where consumers can reach information easily, quickly and on their own time schedule.

In fact, one of the largest consumer groups persuaded by online advertising is men. A recent poll conducted by Hall and Partners found that of the 500 men between the ages of 18-34 surveyed, nearly 70 percent use the internet daily for entertainment and purchasing products. What's more, men are more likely to purchase products seen online rather than from a television or print advertisement. With the increasingly availability of "smart phones" like BlackBerrys and iPhones, the majority of the men also noted that they use their mobile phones to access the internet. Generally speaking, men surf the Web for four distinct reasons: networking, information (for both news and products), career building ideas and shopping.

The internet has brought men closer to the home in a way no one expected. An increasing amount of men are now telecommuting, allowing them to play an intricate role in daily family life. Like their female counterparts, modern-day men have taken on domesticated roles within the household including cooking, child rearing, grocery shopping and involvement in their children's school activities.

Yet in only a few cases do you see ads targeting men for groceries, kitchen appliances or cleaning products. And why not? Do these items not appeal to men? Whoever said that today's men do not like to be social, talk about their feelings or shop for the home was incorrect, or at least misinformed.

A poll conducted by Harris Interactive asked 1,000 men about their shopping habits and were surprised to find that 62 percent purchase new clothing to replace the old and shop for clothing at least once a month. Sixty-five percent of them said they do at least half of the grocery shopping for the home, while a majority of the men said they make their own meals or cook for their families regularly.¹⁷

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Why have marketers not at least made more of a marked attempt to target men or become gender neutral in their advertising for the home? The answer is simple, women are still perceived to dominant the home product market and a majority of the advertising campaigns are built by women for women.

It could be said that men need to fall in line or fall behind and the same can be expressed about the home products market. Getting to know the new modern-day man is essential for marketers strategizing for success. Missed opportunities mean missed revenue potential. And the missing men of the world are begging to be noticed.

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