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Missing Males

Get to know the home's misrepresented men

By Steven Kleber  
January 21, 2009

Over the past decade, much emphasis has been placed on the purchasing power of women in the home environment, while men have been awarded very little influence. In reality, today's *missing males* have significant relevance, control and buying power in the 21st-century home, signifying an underrepresented segment of well-positioned purchasers in desperate need of attention from k & b professionals seeking increased market share.

TODAY'S MEN

The Internet and other technological advances have brought men closer to home in unexpected ways. Increasing numbers are now telecommuting, allowing them to play a more intricate role in daily home life, be it child-rearing, grocery shopping or cooking. In fact, a recent study, "Emergence of the Gastrosexual," found that some men use cooking and gastronomy to define themselves both as men and consumers. Similarly, market research firm NPD Group reports that "men covet mixers, toasters and gourmet appliances just as much as navigation systems, mobile phones and audio components."

This yields an opportunity to reach a virtually untapped market segment in nontraditional categories like the kitchen, which offers a fertile playing field. Here, when it comes to purchasing habits, men are often less cost-conscious about appliances than are women and more concerned with the best quality and features. As such, they're more willing to budget accordingly.

Poggenpohl has capitalized on this trend by teaming up with Porsche to create a kitchen that specifically addresses male customers. Other manufacturers and designers are also incorporating gender variations into their products and designs with his and her prep sinks and residential kitchens designed for two.

MALE PERSONAS

So, how can you effectively sell to men in our current cost-conscious marketplace? Consider the values and habits of today's male consumers identified by the following personalities and marketing needs.

- **Solo Pilot.** He doesn't want to be called a metrosexual, but this guy certainly dresses himself, cooks his own dinner and buys beauty products. As the chief purchasing officer in his domain, he enjoys shopping and making buying decisions. Typically an upwardly mobile power-seeker, he browses the Internet and utilizes social media when researching and buying products.
- **21st-Century Bachelor.** This man is increasingly concerned with the number of rooms and amenities in his home as he considers both his personal life and his children's needs. Look to customizable, highly personalized open floor plans. Appeal to his paternal emotions and provide the opportunity to connect with his children.
- **Domestic Techie.** Trends such as molecular gastronomy are spiking this man's interest in cooking and leveling the playing field in formerly female domains. Speak to him in the scientific language he prefers. This will maximize opportunities for promoting the high-tech products and methods he craves.
- **Practical Papa.** Involved in his home and cognizant of his importance as a father and husband, this man is the reality between stereotypical extremes of authoritarian and jokester husbands. To capture this market share, remember that he has feelings and emotions, especially concerning his children. Address his interests and values, especially the emphasis he places on family.
- **Mr. Gender Neutrality.** This man's quest for equality extends beyond the workplace to the home. He has a hand in purchasing decisions and shares control of the family and its budget. Like many working moms, this man is interested in work/life balance and thrives on function, familiarity and practicality.

MARKET FOR SUCCESS

Because men respond well to interactive media and marketing, it's imperative to reach them through the Internet and such features as discussion forums, blogs, podcasts, social networks, online video and search engines. Also, implement banner ads, e-communications and consider website pressrooms, online events, chat rooms and viral marketing.

Today's men have transformed into marketing-friendly consumers. Getting to know them and their evolving roles is essential for k & b professionals strategizing for success now and in the future. Missed opportunities mean missed revenue potential and the missing males of the world are begging to be noticed.

—Steven Kleber is president and founder of Kleber & Associates. To download a free copy of the company's *Missing Males White Paper*, click [here](#).

To learn more about the emergence of the gastrosexual, go to [www.kbbonline.com/gastrosexual](http://www.kbbonline.com/gastrosexual).

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