

# Female, male consumers are thinking more alike

Current demographic trends can help us understand "who" today's woman is. But we still need to analyze what additional factors influence her decisions to buy particular goods and services.

This can be done by identifying the attitude and lifestyle characteristics that affect where today's woman shops and when, what she shops for and how she shops for it . . . and most important — the reasons why.

Probably the most important characteristic among today's female consumers is that many women and men are thinking more alike. This is seen through their equally strong commitment to work, marriage and

family as well as similar buying behaviors for certain consumer goods and services.

The increased role of women in the labor force and the higher value placed on work and careers are not a substitution of work commitment for family commitment. This convergence of attitudes has occurred more so on the part of women as compared to men.

As women have become more "like" men in their relationships to the family and the economy, they have also become more like men in their attitudes toward their roles involving these two social institutions. **THE MOST important implication**



## focus: small business

**Mary DiPaolo**

here is the lessening importance of trading female consumers as a separate market for many products and services. In many cases, women are buying for many of the same reasons men do.

Decisions relating to child care and education, food preparation, transportation, and clothing and per-

sonal care are just some of the areas where customer needs are becoming increasingly alike among both men and women.

In terms of the female lifestyle, the Cosmopolitan Magazine study, "The Changing Life Course of American Women,"

indicated that today's female con-

sumer spends a larger part of her life as a student, a smaller part as a wife and mother, and a much larger part employed outside of the home.

The key in understanding her individual buying behaviors is directly linked to the various roles she will take on during her lifetime.

Equally important is when she will assume those roles, how long she will be in any given role, and how many she will juggle simultaneously. Just as products can be classified into their appropriate life-cycle stages, so can the women's market in terms of the individuals' life course phases.

With this information, business

owners and managers can then match relevant demographic, attitude and life course trends to purchasing and consumption patterns for various goods and services.

Next week we will discuss some of the differences that exist between buying habits and consumption patterns among today's female consumer.

Mary DiPaolo is the owner of MarkeTrends, a Farmington Hills-based business consulting firm. She is also producer and host of the cable television series, "Focus: The Small Business Environment."

## datebook

### OPEN HOUSE

Thursday, June 23 — Midwest Business Systems open house 1-7 p.m. at 24650 Lahser, Southfield. Information: 358-0890.

### PROPERTY IMAGE

Friday, June 24 — Property image seminar offered noon to 4:30 p.m. in Southfield. Fee: \$75 (includes lunch). Information: 737-4477. Sponsor: Apartment Association of Michigan.

### RAISING MONEY

Monday, June 27 — "Raising Money" for the small business offered 7-9 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$50. Information: 649-8646. Sponsor: Start A Business Store.

### MARKETING PLANS

Mondays, June 27 through Aug. 8 — "Writing Your Marketing Plan" offered in Detroit. Fee: \$162. Information: 862-8000. Ext. 230. Sponsor: Maygrove College.

### WOMEN ACCOUNTANTS

Tuesday, June 28 — "Attaining Your Goals" presented at monthly meeting of American Society of Women Accountants at 5:30 p.m. in Birmingham. Fee: \$17. Information: Flora La Douceur, 268-3288.

### ADCRRAFT PM

Wednesday, June 29 — Adcraft PM event held in Detroit. Topic: Business expansion in Detroit. Fee: \$7 at door. Information: Adcraft Club, 962-7225.

### SIEMATIC PRESENTATION

Thursday, June 30 — "The Inherent Quality of Siematic" by Siematic Corp. begins at 4 p.m. in Troy. Sponsor: Michigan Design Center.

### WORD PROCESSING

Tuesdays, July 5-26 — "Word Per-

fect Word Processing on the IBM PC" offered 7-9 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Fee: \$75. Information: 645-3635. Sponsor: Cranbrook P.M.

### HOME-BASED BUSINESS

Wednesday, July 6 — Topic: What businesses are available 7-9 p.m. in Troy. Fee: \$50. Information: Start A Business Store, 649-8646.

### BEGINNING COMPUTER

Wednesdays, July 6-27 — "Beginning Computer . . . Hands-on class in 'Surviving the Computer Age' offered 7-9 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Fee: \$65. Information: 645-3635. Sponsor: Cranbrook P.M.

## marketplace

MARS Advertising received two Telly Awards for a 3M Magnetic Media Division commercial and a 12-minute sales film for Pepsi Cola Bottling Group of Michigan.

Birmingham Camera has introduced a new service called The Image Center Express Club, which will offer members a pickup and delivery service to their home or business.

Gail & Rice Production's two service ALERT programs produced for Oldsmobile dealership technical training captured both the Silver and Bronze Awards at the Houston International Film Festival in the "Docu-

mentary — Industrial, Technical" category.

The Hayman Co. of Michigan and Gould Investors L.P. of Great Neck, N.Y., have completed a \$20 million purchase of three apartment properties in northwest San Antonio from Alamo Savings and Loan.

Rabbit Software Corp. has established a sales and support office in Troy from which the company will market its data communications and networking products to companies in Michigan and Ohio.

Simons Michelson Zieve Inc., Advertising has been appointed the full-

service advertising agency for the newly formed Cadillac Dealer Marketing Association for all of Ohio and West Virginia.

Buckheim and Rowland Inc. and Woodward and Hamilton Inc. completed a merger. Woodward and Hamilton Inc., a Birmingham based company, moved to the Ann Arbor and Renaissance Center offices of Buckheim and Rowland in early April.

Rockwell International Corp. Automotive Operations of Troy selected Ray D. Elsbrenner & Co. for a special public relations project.

R.J. Baker Advertising Inc. of Troy was appointed advertising and public relations agency for Sandret-Plastics Machinery Inc. of Farmington Hills.

WDIV-TV Channel 4 of Detroit was chosen the best Associated Press television news station in a major Michigan market for the second consecutive year.

Saddle Creek Apartments of Farmington Hills received the 1987 Residential Building Design Award from the Novi Chamber of Commerce.

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