

# **How to Boost Sales through Understanding the Male Psychology**

By Damon Verial, Men's Interest Copywriter

The visibility of the male consumer in the general marketplace is becoming more obvious. Whereas for quite some time, the male consumer has sat backstage, today he is not only more willing to buy but more demanding of the products and services that he uses. Smart marketers are taking this phenomenon seriously, and modifying their marketing strategies to optimize their marketing success.

Today, a type of businesses that could never be profitable in the past has begun to crop up. This business is one exclusively focused on providing to the male consumer. The male market is now a viable, targetable “niche” in the overall market. While the reasons for this number many, and are important, the main matter of discussion is how this market differs from that of women.

Before one can even begin to discuss the “male market,” one must realize that the overall marketplace, the overall idea of a “consumer,” and overall marketing strategies are inherently non-male. Statistics from multiple sources have consistently shown that the vast majority of consumer purchases in not only America—not only the western world—but throughout the whole world are made by women. For example, according to Marti Barletta’s research, women account for 94% of furniture purchases, 92% of holiday gift purchases, and 91%

of house purchases. The implication of this is obvious, but not commonly recognized: Most of today’s successful marketing strategies are successful because they trigger aspects of the female consumer. Yet marketing, as it remains today, relies on sets of hand-me-down tactics that are rarely split-tested via gender. The same goes for copywriting; the standard copywriting course fails to teach how different writing styles produce different amounts of conversions in men and women.

What this means for you, as a marketer, is that there are clear opportunities for the marketer who can differentiate which marketing strategies are **successful because they move the consumer** and which strategies are **successful because they move the female consumer**. A marketer who can employ marketing techniques that effectively trigger the male psychology can overcome his competition, attract new customers, and more effectively retain his customers.



*The standard conclusion is that strategy A works. However, if the women buy more and the men buy less, we would still see more sales. In other words strategies that work “overall” cannot always be applied to the male marketplace.*

While it sounds logical and profitable to employ gender-based marketing strategies, the majority of organizations will not be able to successfully exercise such strategies. **The reason is that the majority of existing gender-based marketing strategies are based on gender stereotypes rather than true science.** Without a scientific understanding of the male-female psyche differences, organizations' gender-based marketing attempts will be futile.

The good news is that psychologists—especially evolutionary psychologists—have begun to produce research that tackles the question of what resides in the male consumer's mind. This whitepaper offers a myriad of scientifically-backed male-based marketing strategies that you can put to use to immediately improve your sales conversions.

### **The Male Psychology**

*The Male Psychology* is the set of differences in the male brain relative to the female brain. In this paper, this term is used mainly in the context of consumption decisions.

### **Everything Is Evolution**

In psychology, much of everything is a theory with little physical basis (at least initially). One exception to that rule is the theory of evolution. One corollary of this theory is that differences between

types of people (e.g., across culture, across race, and across sex) can arise via differing environmental pressures. Nowhere is this truer than for sex differences.

In our evolutionary history, men and women took up different roles. Men hunted in groups; women protected the children. Men traveled and explored the environment; women cared for the sick. In each sex, those individuals that excelled at their roles were more likely to pass on their genes. Over the long term, this led to significant differences in the brains and bodies of each sex. For example, men began to be genetically predisposed to traits that let them excel at speed and power, traits necessary for hunting. Women, on the other hand, were predisposed to the verbal and emotional skills needed in negotiation, which allowed their clan to maintain a sense of togetherness. The vast amount of differences between the brains of men and women is a topic for a textbook—what you to know is that these differences are real, genetic, physical differences. And these differences are at play in consumer decision making.

### **Important Brain Differences**

Before we get to the applications, let's begin with what we know about how the male brain differs from that of women.

- The male brain shrinks at a faster rate (with age), leading to more severe personality changes as men age.
- The male brain produces less serotonin and oxytocin, implying that males are less trusting, more impulsive, and more action-oriented.
- The male brain produces more testosterone and less estrogen and progesterone, leading to lower amounts of overall contentment, a weaker memory, and less sensitivity. At the same time, this makes men more self-oriented, more aggressive, and more sexually-oriented.
- The male brain is more segmented, meaning that there is less overlap in many mechanisms and tasks of the brain (e.g., men tend to use the left side of their brain for verbal skills and the right side for emotions; women, on the other hand, combine the two sides for both).

These brain differences are *the driving basis* for the differences in male and female consumption activity.

### **Six Important Male Attitudes**

The attitudes of men toward marketing attempts can often be the deciding factor as to whether said attempts are successful. By knowing these attitudes, you can adjust your marketing strategy

or sales copy to increase conversions.

#### *1. Men look for ration, reason, and linearity.*

Many marketers and copywriters focus on creating original, creative advertisements to stand out from the crowd. These days, companies even employ “creative copywriters,” as opposed to “conventional copywriters,” to write sales copy with the purpose of grabbing prospects with novel ideas. Here’s the short of all this: Men typically do not like this. Creative copy and creative advertisements tend to be less successful with males for a number of reasons (in fact, why this is true is one area of my personal research). Not only do men prefer to reinforce their evaluations, decisions, and purchases with ration and logic, but many men have difficulty understanding overly creative advertisements. A creative advertisement aimed at the male market is likely to confuse your consumer base, leading to *fewer* sales.

#### *2. Men are more independent.*

Marketers and copywriters today use social proof and testimonials as major tools to persuade consumers to positively evaluate a product. They have found that these tools tend to increase conversion rates and product opinions. However,

such tools are less likely to work on males, who are more competitive in nature and often wish to stand out from the crowd. In addition, research from NTU's Emotion and Language Research Team, of which I am a member, has shown a clear and strong male preference for the subject "I," whereas the female preference is for the term "we." One implication of this is that the storytelling of an individual is more likely to persuade males (e.g., someone who has *individually* benefitted from a product or service is more impactful than someone who helped their group of family with the same product or service).

3. *Men prioritize salient features.*

Understanding this is especially important for writing copy. One of the standard "rules" for writing sales copy is that the more benefits and features you can squeeze into your sales copy, the better. While this is almost certainly true for women, it does not hold true for men, who tend to focus on the two or three more important aspects and evaluate a product in this way. This is not to say copywriters should not add more benefits and features to their sales copy—but that the copywriter should first predict which features are the most salient to men, and then focus on those features in greater detail.

4. *Men prefer large groups to small groups.*

Men's preferred activities tend to be those that require many people. This preference likely stems from an evolutionary partiality for group hunting and competition. Many advertisers have already recognized this preference and begun to put it in action. Beer commercials, for example, often depict men in large groups, either engaging in competitive activities or displaying the confidence and achievement of a particular male in that group.

5. *Men are risk-seeking.*

Most sales attempts, whether through direct mailing or cold calling, include "objection management" by design. That is, marketers are taught to do away with the prospect's objections before the call to action is made. This includes bringing up the objection before the prospect can think of it or state it, followed by an assertion that the prospect need not worry about the objection. While this is certainly an effective strategy when used on a female prospect, as they tend to consider the risks of a product or service more carefully than men, it may not always be necessary for every obvious objection. This is because many objections are risk-related. For example, purchasing stock leads to

the natural concern: What if the price goes down after I buy? To address this objection, a salesperson might show the prospect statistics that show the stock exhibiting a slow, natural upward curve for the past two decades. However, such an appeal is not necessary for males, who tend to be risk-seeking. In this case, simply giving the prospect hope for a large gain is likely enough. Some younger men may even be turned off by the prospect of a risk-free stock. In general, risk is an inspiring aspect for males.

6. *Men are object-oriented.*

When designing an image-rich advertisement, marketers have many viable choices for the subjects of that advertisement. A natural selection is people: Individuals, faces, drawings. But studies have reliably shown that images of objects are more likely to catch the male eye (the exception is a physically attractive woman). While to many marketers an image of a person using the advertised product or service seems more interesting than the product alone or a diagram of the service, this is an error in practice. If you want the attention of more male consumers, focus on the object.

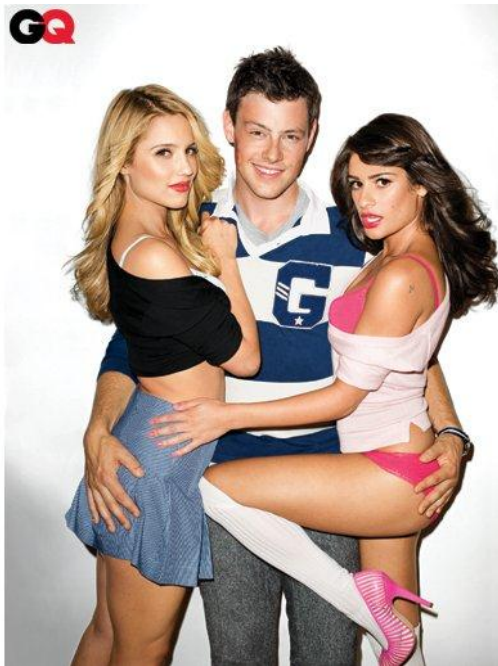
**Five Male-Oriented Marketing Techniques**

Today there are few “new” marketing techniques (online marketing is becoming the exception). For marketers to make the best of what they have, they must know when to use what. When targeting a male market, there are a number of techniques that are preferable.

1. *Make social status salient.*

Men, being the more competitive sex, place a higher value on social respect, defined roles, and hierarchical structures. A typical rule of writing sales copy is to turn the features of a product or service into benefits for the consumer. The benefits evoked usually come from the creativity of the copywriter, and can range from invoking positive emotions to becoming part of a community. For men, one particularly important benefit that copywriters should draw upon *more* is that of climbing a social ladder. State how the purchase of the product or service can lead to a promotion, to gaining the attention of women, or to becoming well-known in one’s community. Too often do I see calls to action for male products and services that border on giving up social status and independence, statements like “Everybody’s joining our community; you should too” or “Become part of the XXX team.” Stay away from statements that make the male

consumer interdependent as opposed to socially above others.



*This GQ ad calls upon the male desire for one aspect of social status: the affection of attractive women. Yet it simultaneously hints to you that “any dude out there” can get these girls; after all, the guy in the center is now George Clooney. You would have to read the magazine to find out this kid’s secret.*

2. *Keep the number of features low.*

The standard rule taught in more modern copywriting books and courses is “the more features, the better.” This may be true when targeting a female market, but is certainly not true when dealing with males. The fact is, men want to know about the main, salient features of your product or service and why they are better than the products and services of other companies. Thus, when marketing to men it is of utmost importance to

have one or two USPs on which you will focus the advertisement.

Understanding your product’s USP is vastly more important than knowing all the different ways your product can help an individual.

3. *Badmouth your competition.*

At present, this is not a common strategy in marketing. The reason is simple: Women don’t like it. However, men do. Making relevant comparisons between your product and that of others is instinctively appealing to men for reasons outlined above. Again, knowing your product’s USP is helpful here, as in this way you can compare your product to virtually all of your competitors’.



*Without specifically mentioning the company’s competitors, this ad makes clear references to big-name products in the shaving industry. There is no confusion here as to what the USP is.*

4. *Design like a man (or hire a male designer).*

Most marketing campaigns today include advertisements with images. Most products today are still physical. Designers still play a large role in the marketing process. Yet not all designers plan with the male consumer in mind. Studies show that men prefer designs created by men (in these studies, the participants did not know whether the designer was male or female; they simply choose the design they preferred, and the experimenters collected the data). What is it about male-conceived designs that are appealing to men? A list of some of these characteristics follows. Try to include these aspects in your own campaigns:

- Conservation of color (not too colorful); focus on blues, silvers, grays, and black
- Standard text style
- Simplicity
- When including a person, the person is male (or a physically attractive female, but not a “generic” woman)
- Display of traditional roles (e.g., Men as bosses, women as secretaries; Blacks as athletes, Asians as doctors)
- Rigid, 3D shapes (as opposed to smooth 2D shapes)



*Pocky, traditionally marketed to women in Japan, has recently begun to focus on the male market. This design is a simple one, and was likely created by a man: simple text, plain colors, and a “male” choice of blue (the preferred female blue tends to have a reddish tint).*

#### 5. Introduce and Use Jargon

Some studies have found that men tend to use jargon at up to 4 times the rate of women. The general conclusion from these studies is that men have a preference for the use of jargon. The technique of using jargon can be coupled with your USP. You can define your USP by creating some jargon for describing it—after all, if your product is truly unique, then you have a rational reason for defining such a term. The use of this jargon will not only appeal to the



male psychology, but will also make your product more memorable and visible in the marketplace.

## About the Author



*Damon Verial* is the first Men's Interest Copywriter. Holding a graduate degree in psychology, Damon's copywriting and marketing methods apply the heavy use of scientific findings in psychology. Damon's M.S. thesis investigated the sex differences and preferences in regard to mate selection and personality judgments.

Damon is a well-known digital copywriter for the Internet marketing industry. Providing his services to individual entrepreneurs, he assists Internet startups in both making their first sales and increasing their current conversions. In addition, he also runs a number of websites and joint ventures.

In many ways, Damon is at least a "competent man" and at most a polymath. Damon is fluent in Chinese, an author of both English and Chinese books, a textbook provider to universities and high schools on subjects ranging from statistics to social psychology. He edits academic manuscripts and teaches English as well

as mathematics in his off-time.

Damon makes these whitepapers available free-of-charge to businesses that could benefit from gender-based marketing. His objective is to bring to light the importance of sex-based psychologies in marketing.

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