

# Social Media Marketing Guide: Engaging Specific Target Groups



- *Women*
- *LGBT Community*
- *African Americans*
  - *Baby Boomers*

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## How to Excite, Not Alienate, Female Consumers Using Social Media

“What do women want?” is an age-old question. Experts have written entire books and analytical papers on it. You may not be able to decipher the codes to a woman’s mind, but as a marketer, you can easily observe their purchasing habits to create your own marketing strategy aimed at them.



Narrowing down your strategy to target females only is not enough, you will need to divide the female population into age groups in order to target the right audience. Following are some tips and tricks to attract female consumers with the help of social media.

### Females Under Age 25

It is comparatively difficult to engage woman in their early teens and twenties as they already have a lot of other things keeping them busy. According to [research that analyzed the social media behavior patterns of 200 women](#), it turned out women under 25 years of age were more interested in posts with a conversational tone. According to the findings, a post written in a conversational tone had 83% more chances of gaining a young woman’s attention. So, following are few steps that you could take to get productive results:

- Try adding content that is written in an easy, fun and engaging tone without it being too difficult to comprehend.
- Share posts related to the current trends of your business.
- The younger audience is generally more active during early evenings or late at night, so make sure that you share your posts during these times.

### Females Over Age 25

Woman over 25 are likely to be either housewives or working women, which means that they will be following a tight schedule. So make sure that you make the most of the little time they spend on social networking websites.

- The most active hours for working women are during the early hours of the morning and lunchtime.
- If your business is targeted towards housewives or mothers then early hour of the evenings will also be effective.
- The research showed that mothers or mothers-to-be responded better to promotional posts rather than funny ones or posts that were too casual or meaningless.
- Your posts should be goal-oriented if your targeted audience includes working women and/or mothers.



- Post about latest updates, special offers and other informational and helpful content.

Simply posting pictures of shoes, bags or celebrities will not cut it, especially if you mean business. The narrower your targeted audience is, the better you will be able to optimize your postings and social media strategy.

But wait, you'll need to know more if you expect to develop an effective social media strategy that focuses on the female consumer.

According to Amie Marse, [content marketing is one of the best ways to gain the attention and loyalty of the female consumer](#). Amie says “providing education and information [is] the number one way to market to women.” Women tend to do a lot of research online before making a purchase. By creating content that educates women on the benefits of your brand’s product or service, marketers have a better chance of turning the female “looker” into a “buyer.”

A recent Pew Internet report states [women trump men across all social platforms except Twitter](#).

### The Landscape of Social Media Users

	% of internet users who....	The service is especially appealing to ...
Use Any Social Networking Site	67%	Adults ages 18-29, women
Use Facebook	67	Women, adults ages 18-29
Use Twitter	16	Adults ages 18-29, African-Americans, urban residents
Use Pinterest	15	Women, adults under 50, whites, those with some college education
Use Instagram	13	Adults ages 18-29, African-Americans, Latinos, women, urban residents
Use Tumblr	6	Adults ages 18-29

Laura Smith [says](#), “with the exception of Reddit, Google Plus, LinkedIn and marginally Twitter, women dominate the social networks.” This is great information for marketers to have, as they can develop social media strategies targeted women and implement those strategies on the networks where women spend the most time.

Another interesting fact that marketers should know is, according to a 2007 report by MassMutual Financial group, women over the age of 50 control net worth of \$19 trillion spending dollars and own more than three-fourths of the United States’s financial wealth.



Pam Danzinger [says](#), “The more mature luxury consumer places the highest priority in making memories and experiences. They don’t buy things to have more things; they want the experience to go along with it. Luxury consumers expect superior quality and are extremely discerning.”

Creating a pleasant customer experience is crucial if brands want to sell to the female consumer. Developing a social media strategy that keeps that in mind will help any marketer build brand loyalty in the female market.

TheNextWeb has a list of [top 30 stats you need to know when marketing to women](#). Some of those stats were mentioning are:

- Women account for 85% of all consumer purchases including everything from autos to health care
- 75% of women identified themselves as the primary shoppers for their households
- Moms mention brands an average of 73 times per week compared with just 57 times per week among males
- 64% of moms ask other mothers for advice before they purchase a new product and 63% of all mothers surveyed consider other moms the most credible experts when they have questions

If your brand wants to build loyalty among women – and increase sales – it’s important to do your research before you implement your social media strategy. While women are not mystical creatures who speak a language known only to them, they are a unique group of consumers who won’t pay any attention to your brand if you haven’t even tried to learn to speak to directly to them.

## How to Engage African American Consumers Using Social Media



According to Huffington Post blogger, Biana Bosker, [50% of African Americans use Twitter as compared to white Americans](#). And with the [purchasing power of African Americans reaching over \\$1.1 trillion in 2015](#), it is only understandable that companies like Atlas, Honda, State Farm and Ford along with many others have launched marketing strategies particularly targeted at African Americans. However, it isn’t just big guns like Ford that can target African Americans with a few simple tips and tricks you can also make sure that your content and marketing



strategies hit the mark.

### **Research – Then Research Again**

The first thing you need to do is to research your targeted audience. What age groups are you targeting? What are their habits? Likes and dislikes? Did you know African American women tend to spend three times more of their disposable income on beauty products than white woman? If you're in the beauty supply business, it makes sense that your product or service offers solutions for different skin tones, preferences, lifestyles or whatever else is applicable. If you're in the automotive business, have you done the research necessary to understand specific features and options that appeal to African Americans? Did you know that African Americans tend to remain loyal to dealerships that treat them well more than any other group of people? If you're a car dealership, you'll want to use your social network channels as a customer service pipeline. This tactic will help you deliver the best customer experience possible.

### **Celebrate Events and Culture**

A good way to engage African Americans is by posting about African American culture and special events related to African Americans. Be careful though; you'll want to make sure you've done your research before you start haphazardly posting what you think is something related to African American culture. By doing your research, you can avoid posting offensive information on your social network page. You can also offer special discounts or packages based on particular events. Some of the most celebrated African American festivals are:

- Kwanzaa
- National Freedom Day
- African-American Day Parade
- African-American History Month

### **Look Beyond the Obvious**

Every culture has a lot more to offer than exotic cuisines, traditional dances and pop culture. So, rather than sticking to the most obvious traits and habits of African Americans, look a little beneath the surface to research for things that African Americans are talking about and are currently interested in. You can visit African American forums and blogs to see what community members are discussing. This will help you learn more about the interests and habits of the African American community. Once you have done this type of research, you'll have a deeper understanding of the types of content that will resonate with the African American community.

### **Develop Content with the African American Consumer in Mind**



One of the things that annoys me personally is the lack of African American representation in the marketing material developed by ad agencies and marketing firms. White women are not the only ones who buy cleaning products, so why do most of the commercials developed for cleaning supplies feature white women? As a marketer, you'll want to make sure that the images you develop to post on your Facebook page accurately reflects your target market. If your target market is only white women, then all your marketing materials that lack diverse representation will work wonders for you. If you're trying to appeal to all groups of people, I would suggest that you make that obvious by being more racially-inclusive when you develop videos and photos.

### **Be Mindful of Your Tone**

Your social media manager, or the person assigned to manage the day-to-day task of dealing with customers on your social network pages, should be mindful of their own internal prejudices. Most social network users upload a photo of themselves to their profile. That means social media managers have some idea of the ethnic background of the person they are responding to. Too many social media managers stereotype upset African American female customers as the "angry Black woman" and don't provide the level of customer service they would provide if the angry customer was not African American. I can promise you, African Americans notice that kind of thing. Be mindful of the tone you use when responding to angry customers, even your angry African American customers.

It is very easy to fall prey to stereotypes based on general assumptions or their portrayal by the media. It is imperative that you don't stereotype but rather connect to your audience by offering things that are interesting and engaging. Doing your research will help you avoid the pitfalls lots of brands make when reaching into the African American market for the first time. If you need to, hire a consultant who can help you successfully navigate through the process.

## **How to Engage Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Consumers Using Social Media**

Social media is not only used for marketing purposes by large corporations and small businesses, but individuals use social media to socialize and express themselves. Brands that create a one-size-fits-all social media strategy miss out on opportunities to engage consumers



on a personal level. When developing a social media strategy, brands need to consider gender, ethnicity, age, culture and, yes, even the sexual orientation, of the brand's target market. An individual's identity greatly affects his likes and dislikes, community obligations and purchasing habits. There are a few things that brands need to keep in mind when planning a social media marketing



strategy aimed at engaging lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender consumers (LGBT) consumers.

### **Learn More About the LGBT Community**

All Americans are not the same. Not enough emphasis can be put on researching. You will need to do thorough research of the LGBT community. Learn proper terminology used in the LGBT community. You'll also want to learn more about the income level and spending habit of lesbians and gay men. Experian's [2012 LGBT Demographic Report](#) states that gay men live in households that spend \$6,256 per capita annually on discretionary spending, nearly \$1,000 more than what the households of heterosexual men spend per person. This report also states:

Specifically, the typical adult lesbian woman personally earns \$43,100 per year compared with \$37,600 claimed by the average heterosexual woman. Furthermore, the typical household income of a married or partnered lesbian woman is \$7,200 higher than that of a married or partnered heterosexual woman.

According to [Witeck Communications](#), the total buying power of the adult U.S. lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender population was projected at \$790 billion in 2012. Business.com [states](#) "approximately 89 percent of gays and lesbians are brand-affiliated and are highly likely to seek out brands that advertise to them." It's not enough to know that the LGBT community is loyal to brands that advertise directly to them; you'll need to learn how to do so without promoting offensive stereotypes.

### **Reach Out to the LGBT Community**

Once you have a better understanding of the LGBT community's spending habits and the community's culture, it will be easier for you to connect with LGBT consumers without making huge mistakes. Avoid stereotyping the entire community by associating particular colors, habits or language. Share information that is likely to inspire confidence in your brand's products or services within the LGBT community. Too many brands desperately reach out to the LGBT community (and other minority groups) only when the brand has fallen on some hard times. Remain consistent with your outreach to the LGBT community, even when your brand isn't lifting every rock to make a sale. Once you have earned the loyalty of the LGBT community, do not abandon them when you feel you no longer need them. If you do that, the next time your brand falls on hard times, you'll have an extremely difficult time winning the LGBT community's respect and loyalty again.



## Develop Content with the LGBT Consumer in Mind

As a marketer, you'll want to make sure that any videos or images you post to your social network pages accurately reflect the LGBT community. One of the complaints often heard from the LGBT community is that marketers, in a desperate attempt to engage them, will resort to posting sexualized images of gays and lesbians although they wouldn't do the same if they were trying to appeal to heterosexual consumers. Ask yourself this question before you post any images or videos to your social network pages: *Is this image appropriate for the product or service I'm trying to promote, or does it exploit stereotypes about the LGBT community?* If you're posting blog posts, articles or news items, make sure those items do not contain any material the LGBT community would consider offensive.

### Stay Alert

After posting content designed to engage the LGBT consumer, monitor how the community responds to that content. If people start complaining about the content, address those concerns immediately. If an apology is necessary, be genuine when you apologize. If you notice that your content gets the community excited and engaged in a positive way, rinse and repeat.

## How to Engage Baby Boomers Using Social Media



Baby boomers are generally ignored when it comes to social media marketing, but statistics show this generation is a promising demographic that requires its own unique marketing strategy. There are over 77 million baby boomers in the United States. Contrary to the misconception that baby boomers haven't really adapted to the digital age, around 74% use social media for buying decisions, according to [Unity Marketing](#).

And if that statistic is not convincing enough, it might interest you to know that baby boomers contribute to 80% of all leisure travels and make up 50% of consumer spending. Following are some of the ways you can engage baby boomers using social media:

### Connect

Age, experience and environment play a pivotal role in defining our thought process and purchasing habits. In order to connect with baby boomers you will need to speak in a language that they identify and relate to. Following are a few things you should keep in mind when posting or sharing links targeting baby boomers:



- Post items that promote functionality, well being and health.
- Post content that encourages skill development and knowledge.
- Post content that motivates behavior for organizational, social and spiritual connection.
- Always post content that is relevant, to the point, authentic and simple.

### **Keep it Simple**

As much as you'd like to offer a procedure where an individual needs to follow a link, fill out a survey and then get a 5% discount on their third purchase, the chances of it being a success are bleak, particularly in the case of baby boomers. Be sure to keep the posts and procedures simple and easy to follow. Remove unnecessary steps in a procedure so the process can be completed in just a few minutes. Unlike millennials, baby boomers don't spend nearly as much time playing with the latest tech tools. What would seem simple to an 18 year-old could be considered a daunting task for a 60 year-old.

### **Deliver a Great Customer Experience**

Social media is great tool to use to connect with your audience. Avoid using techie language to address baby boomers. Ask them for suggestions to help you determine the best way to present information. Baby boomers are more likely to form loyal connections with a brand if they feel their input is appreciated and respected. If you provide excellent customer service, this will almost always make up for a flawed product or service.

### **Stick to the Big Guys**

It has taken time for baby boomers to get used to the internet – and particularly social networking sites. Most baby boomers use Facebook and Twitter. If you're developing a social media strategy targeting baby boomers, your strategy should focus primarily on those two social networking websites. Even though most baby boomers spend their time on Facebook and Twitter, it does not mean that you can't utilize Instagram or Pinterest. Just keep in mind that any cross-promoting you do should adhere to the "simple is better" philosophy. If you post links to other social networks on your Twitter or Facebook page, click on those links to make sure your baby boomer audience won't have trouble with navigation.



## **About This Guide:**

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Genia Stevens is the President of [Genia Stevens & Associates](#). Genia is a social media trainer/consultant, mobile marketing practitioner and a skilled marketing strategist who has 14 years experience using the internet for marketing and sales purposes. She's also a veteran blogger and podcast producer.

Genia's skills include: integrated marketing, social media strategic planning, social media strategy implementation, mobile marketing, content development, content marketing, online community building, blogging, podcasting, video marketing, email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), Twitter marketing and Facebook marketing.

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