

"Smart, engaging, and eminently useful, *The She Spot* puts its finger on how to score with the key drivers of social change: women." — Arianna Huffington

THE SHE SPOT



*Why Women Are
the Market for Changing
the World – And How
to Reach Them*

Lisa Witter and Lisa Chen

Foreword by Gary Hirshberg, CEO Stonyfield Farm

an excerpt from

***The She Spot:
Why Women Are the Market for Changing the World – And How to
Reach Them***

by Lisa Witter and Lisa Chen
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Preface

What Is the *She Spot*?

A few years ago during the 2004 election, a coalition of get-out-the-vote organizations asked Lisa Witter to advise them on their “Women’s Voting Day” campaign, including the beta design for the campaign’s Web site.

When she clicked on the URL, the home page was wreathed in pink flowers. The content was focused exclusively on choice and “soft” issues like education and healthcare to the exclusion of issues like the War in Iraq, jobs, and national security—issues that polling showed were, in fact, top-of-mind for the majority of women voters.

The coalition deserved credit for identifying women as an important target audience. But then they hit two blind spots that, as communications consultants for the public sector, we see all too often: One, by relegating their outreach to women to a single “day,” they were missing out on an enormous opportunity to connect with the demographic powerhouse that has shaped presidential elections for the past 20 years. Two, their efforts to appeal to women were off the mark, reflecting a poor understanding of what women actually care about and respond to.

We wrote this book to correct these blind spots and find the She Spot instead. By “She Spot,” we mean taking to heart this central truth: **Women are not a niche audience. They are *the* audience.** Losing these blind spots and finding the She Spot starts with recognizing that

women are the single most important market opportunity for changing the world. This is something that many nonprofit organizations know intuitively, but have yet to fully explore or harness.

By taking a closer look at women as the target market for change, you may discover some new insights. Among them:

- As philanthropists and donors, women take more risks than men. They're more likely to give to a new or less well-known organization they believe is truly making a difference than, say, their alma mater, a museum, or other well-established institution.
- Women are more distrustful of the political process than are men. This is reflected in their giving: they're more likely to donate to nonprofit organizations than to political candidates.
- Women do not use a gender lens when choosing their favorite candidate. They won't favor a female candidate over a male one just because she's a woman.
- When it comes to women's voting preferences, marital status trumps many other factors, including age, education level, and motherhood. In other words, a single woman in her 30s is more likely to vote in sync with an older widow than a married thirty-something mom.
- More women than men are online today, and more women are blogging.
- African American women give more than white women, but get actively solicited for donations less often.

Our own work with women's foundations and donor-advised funds suggests that women are especially invested in addressing the root causes of social ills, such as poverty, childhood obesity, or pollution in our drinking water. This willingness to confront and insist on change at the *structural* level, versus applying short-term Band-Aids to temper the symptoms, should make every nonprofit that lives by the same creed prick up its ears.

We hope the gender differences discussed in this book will provide you with a deeper understanding of the mindset of women so you become

savvier “She Spotters” and more effective at cultivating women’s support to scale the greater good you want to see in the world.

In our work as communications consultants, our initial conversation with new and prospective nonprofit clients invariably comes down to two key questions: *What is your goal?* and *Who is your target audience?*

The goal varies depending on the organization. It can involve preventing a dangerous gas plant from being built near a wetlands sanctuary or raising funds for disaster relief. But there is often one unwavering constant: fundraising and action are critical for success. *Great*, we say. *What does your average donor look like? Who makes up your membership base?*

Whether the organization is an environmental group, a social welfare fund, or a progressive political organization, the answer is *women*.

The She Spot grew out of a combination of our frustration, our hope, and our belief that women are an untapped, unsung yet essential force for transformative social change in our world—a force that is needed today more than ever before.

Frustration, because too many who work in the public sector are not connecting the dots between the change they want to see in the world and the people most likely to realize that change. We want to help make that connection.

Hope, because in the field of international development, it is now a widely accepted fact that investing in women is the single most effective strategy for rebuilding nations torn apart by war and other violent conflicts. In Rwanda, the 1994 genocide that claimed more than 800,000 lives, most of them men and boys, left the nation with a population that was 70 percent female. It was up to the women to rebuild the economy, the government, and the future of the country. Women became breadwinners, taking on jobs traditionally held by men.

Before the genocide, the government was just over five percent female. Today, the Rwandan Lower House of Parliament is nearly half women, the highest percentage of women in any parliament in the world. Girls and young women are attending school and college in record numbers. Many of them are the same women who were gang-raped, who saw their families butchered before their eyes, and who lost entire social networks to mass slaughter. Yet they are rebuilding their communities, taking in one orphan at a time, weaving one basket at a time, passing one piece of legislation at a time. Their resilience and fortitude in the face of

unfathomable tragedy has produced an incredible come-back story of national transformation.

It takes nothing away from these remarkable women in Rwanda to say that this is something women, who are the glue that holds communities together, have done throughout history, and continue to do today in many nations struggling to come back from war. Professionals who work in international development often say that the key to lifting communities is to invest in women. This is not rhetoric for the sake of annual fundraising appeals. It is an on-the-ground reality and pragmatic policy. In our own country, it is women who are often holding families together in communities ruptured by the War on Drugs, or holding down the fort and taking care of business as their husbands fight wars overseas. There is no “over there” versus “back here” split when it comes to jumpstarting social transformation. Women are at the center. The difference lies in how women catalyze, or fail to catalyze, their power.

This book is also a product of our belief—belief that the public sector could borrow a few pages from the business sector’s playbook when it comes to marketing to women. Innovators in the corporate world understand that women are behind more than 80 percent of all consumer purchases and all health care-related decisions for their families, which is why many companies have begun to retool their marketing campaigns to appeal to this critical audience with a level of sophistication that goes well beyond painting their products pink.

These are lessons the nonprofits and political operatives ignore at their own peril. As we’ll reveal in these pages, women’s contributions to philanthropy, to determining elections, and to volunteering make them an essential “get” for those of us committed to making the world a better place.

That said, you don’t have to be a nonprofit professional or a staffer on a political campaign to gain something from reading this book. The ideas and tactics we explore are also meant for individuals who are interested in how social and political change is achieved and what it will take to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing us today, from global warming to stopping nuclear proliferation. This book is also meant for individuals who are engaged in making change at the community level, either by serving on community boards, at church, or with the local PTA. In each of these instances, we’ll show how hitting the She Spot can move the needle and make a difference.

What You'll Find in These Pages

This book is divided into three parts. In Part I, we make the case for *why* centering your marketing efforts around the *She Spot*—women—is an essential strategy for advancing your cause. In Part II, we show you *how* to effectively connect to women so they become your partners in social change, and in Part III, we look at *where* to reach them.

The Introduction explains how the business world has caught on that women are the most important consumer market and what the public sector has to gain from following the same path. In Chapter 1, we discuss why going after the women's market is essential for any social change effort by describing how women can tip the balance for fundraising, activism, changing social behaviors, and winning elections.

Chapter 2 digs deeper into the neurological and psychological research that helps to explain the similarities and differences between how women and men think. We then describe how these differences shape what matters to them in life and their decision-making and how you can use this knowledge to help cultivate women's support for your issues and causes.

What matters to women is the subject of Chapter 3, which takes a look at polling data and other sources that tell us what women's social priorities are and how these priorities are shaped by their roles at home and at work.

In Part II, we put theory into action by showing you how the ideas outlined in Part I can be practically applied based on four core principles: *care*, *connect*, *cultivate*, and *control*. We show you that by keeping these principles top of mind, you will hit the *She Spot* and market to women more effectively.

Chapter 4 discusses women's profound capacity for empathy and how to harness it as a force for change. We offer concrete ideas for how to speak to her heart through dramatic storytelling, humor, and appealing to her sense of group identity.

Women place a high value on relationships. Chapter 5 describes how to actively create community as a catalyst for activism and fundraising. We show how "high touch" campaigns can help recruit women—and men—for your cause and why this approach will yield greater, long-term returns than traditional membership appeals.

Fundraising professionals will tell you that women often require more time and effort to win over. Chapter 6 explains women are worth

it because once they're on board, they are loyal and incredible word-of-mouth foot soldiers. This chapter offers strategies for cultivating women's participation and leadership by speaking directly to their concerns and expectations. We argue that meeting the "higher bar" that women set for everything from consumer products to causes increasingly reflects the same expectations that funders and donors are setting for potential grantees.

Chapter 7 is about control and how putting a woman in the driver's seat will make her your powerful ally for doing good. We describe a woman's day-to-day reality and how her concerns and priorities shape her bottom line. We offer concrete marketing strategies that will help leverage her "can do" confidence and make activism and giving a natural extension of her busy life, instead of something that falls off her long-to-do list.

In Part III, we offer a road map for finding the *She Spot* by reaching women where they are. In Chapter 8, we examine the media sources women rely on for information as well as their behaviors and preferences as consumers of mainstream media and as members of the rapidly evolving online community.

While the central argument of the book requires that we make some pointed generalizations about women and what makes them tick, we acknowledge that no two women are alike. In Chapter 9, we turn a microscope at the women's demographic by segmenting them along important life stages and identifying how milestones in a woman's life can open new opportunities for marketing change. We also examine the growing influence of the emerging majority—African American and Asian American women and Latinas—and offer advice on how to achieve effective, culturally fluent outreach, while avoiding the pitfalls.

Each chapter illustrates key marketing principles, with real-life case studies drawn from both the business and nonprofit sectors to give you concrete ideas that will translate to the world of good causes. In addition, each chapter explains which adjustments you must make to account for the important differences between the two worlds.

In the concluding chapter, we take a speculative look into the future by posing the question: *What if women's "we're all in this together" way of thinking became the driving force behind social transformation?* If we were to replace the dominant social paradigm of "Survival of the Fittest" with another, "Survival of the Connected," what impact would it have in our social evolution, and how would it affect our ability to take on

the biggest challenges facing us today, from global warming to terrorism? We make the argument that marketing and privileging the values most commonly associated with women—cooperation and community among them—has the power to change the way we govern and to transform the very fiber and function of our role as protectors of our planet’s future.

While we touch on research and the latest brain science that illuminate the differences between men and women, this book is not meant to be a thorough scientific analysis of these gender differences. Similarly, while a portion of the book provides analyses of a few key sub-groups within the female demographic, we acknowledge that our analysis is not exhaustive. For example, we do not segment our analysis along other lines, such as geographic differences, diverse faiths, or sexual orientation. While these segments are important, we have chosen to drill down on key audiences (women of color, single women, and mothers among them) that we believe are the most likely to be useful for the largest swath of nonprofit organizations and political campaigns seeking to absorb and apply to their own work the strategies and tactics described here. In defining these parameters, we fully acknowledge that each of the topics and audiences described above is fully deserving of exploration, but they are, unfortunately, beyond the scope of this book.

Finally, while this book is aimed primarily at helping social change workers market more effectively to women, we hope to illuminate two things in the process: One, when we don’t examine how marketing, advertising, and other communications campaigns work or don’t work along gender lines, this lack of scrutiny can perpetuate business-as-usual assumptions that tend to privilege male preferences and perspectives. Two, marketing to women results in an inclusive, rather than exclusive, strategy for reaching men, too, thanks to ways that women typically make decisions to support and otherwise take action on behalf of the causes they care about.

Why Listen to Us?

Our views and expertise in marketing social causes is shaped by a combined 25 years’ experience in the field of nonprofit communications, including more than 20 years as senior strategists at Fenton Communications. In the 1980s, David Fenton started the company to go head-to-head with public relations campaigns waged by corporate flacks, front

groups, and right-wing spin-meisters, who were molding public opinion on everything from nuclear energy in our neighborhoods to environmental toxins in our food.

A lot has changed in two decades. We've been fortunate to be in either the driver's or passenger's seat as social change advocates used communications to secure legislative, legal, and court-of-public-opinion victories.

One of the things we love about our jobs as consultants is that we're allowed to immerse ourselves in the work of so many different nonprofits, influencing an amazing range of issues that we care about. The constant change-up that comes with the territory gives us a broad and eclectic outlook.

Lisa Witter is the daughter of a union mill worker and a Vietnam veteran diesel mechanic manager, who taught her the ethics of hard work and the value of family, social justice, and community service—values that were reinforced at the church she went to while growing up in Everett, Washington. As a youth, she was active in soccer, volleyball, basketball, and softball—it was on the field and court where she first learned teamwork, strategy, and how to play to win. Since then, she has married her passion for people and competitive spirit with the art of politics, working in the political sector to fight for systemic progressive social change.

Lisa W.'s career encompasses a variety of experiences, from her stint as campaign manager for the first Latina to run for statewide office in her home state of Washington, running a successful national campaign to stop the privatization of Social Security, and as one of 10 candidates on the Showtime reality show, *American Candidate*, to her role as a political and social commentator and speaker at conferences and universities across the country. She is passionate about communications and believes that the social change sector must hone its communications skills to effectively realize concrete victories for people. As chief operating officer of Fenton Communications, she has led and grown the largest public interest communications firm in the country, consulting on a broad range of domestic and international issues including women's and refugee rights, environmental protection, public health, socially responsible business, working family and union issues, civic participation, and more.

Lisa Chen's perspectives and grounding in social change work have been heavily shaped by her family's experience as immigrants from Taiwan. Her mother, who left high school to raise two daughters, went back

to school at the University of California, Berkeley and became a software engineer. Her stepfather, the son of a factory worker in a small town outside Birmingham, Alabama, joined the army during the Vietnam War, where he learned Chinese and developed a passion for Chinese furniture making. Her parents' earlier struggles—and their will to reinvent themselves—fuel her optimism and her drive to do social justice work.

Lisa C.'s love for language and belief in the power of words as tools of truth and persuasion can be attributed in part to having to learn English at the age of five. She worked for many years in public interest communications as a publicist for Communications Works, a San Francisco-based nonprofit public relations organization, where she managed a number of campaigns on immigration and welfare policy reform, environmental justice, affirmative action, breast cancer, and affordable housing. As a senior vice president at Fenton, she is the firm's senior writer and editor, developing campaign messages and strategy on a broad range of issues including international public health, human rights, education, environmental protection, and the arts. Before getting into progressive communications, Lisa C. was a reporter for the *San Jose Mercury News*.

In writing this book, it was our intention to act as both guides and translators between the private and public sectors, offering our perspectives, insights, and analysis on how social change agents can use marketing to promote and advance social causes and to inspire others to do good. It is our hope that by putting women more firmly at the center of communications efforts, we will help nonprofit organizations and political campaigns exponentially raise their effectiveness in creating a better world.

This book represents much more than an accumulation of our own ideas and experiences. We are in debt to the many smart communicators and marketing experts who were generous enough to share their wisdom with us.

Many books have been written about how to harness the potential of women consumers as an *economic* opportunity. This is the first book devoted to springing open the potential and power of women as our greatest opportunity for social change. Social and political trends of the past 15 years have created palpable momentum behind the idea that women's time is *now*. She's setting the pace. It's up to us to keep up—and spot her.

Introduction

A Women-Centered (Marketing) Revolution

The Home Depot of today is a lot different than it was ten years ago. The stores feel less cluttered and more airy. Everything, from light fixtures to carpet samples, is more stylish and varied. Home décor departments have been expanded. The company's ad campaigns and catalogues, which used to simply showcase products, now feature more people. In its first six months, a new store feature, "Do-It-Herself" workshops, drew 40,000 women.

Stonyfield Farm grew from being a seven-cow organic farming school in the early 80s into a company with \$250 million in annual sales. Every cup of Stonyfield yogurt bears a personal message from the CEO and founder Gary Hirshberg. Turn the lid over and you'll find tips on how to make the world a better place. Stonyfield was ahead of the curve when it came to products that had special appeal to moms, like Yo-Baby yogurt and calcium-fortified yogurt. All of this has been critical to the company's surge as the fastest-growing yogurt company in the world.

The success of these companies are representative of a sea change in the business world in the past 10 years as business leaders have come to recognize women as much more than an "emerging" or niche market. Today, women represent the largest and most important consumer market there is.

How did this happen? It began with demographic changes among women themselves in their roles at work and at home. Today, women

make 83 percent of all consumer purchases—everything from breakfast cereal to big-ticket items like cars and personal computers—for themselves and for their families. They are also responsible for 80 percent of all health care-related decisions for their households.

Wising up to the power of the purse and its ripple effects in the marketplace, smart companies began putting female customers first by thinking creatively and critically about what they want. They shaped the consumer experience to appeal to women from the minute they walk into the store or click on the company Web site, all the way through the point of purchase.

As marketing gurus Tom Peters and Marti Barletta put it, there is “a widespread recognition among business leaders of the blazingly obvious . . . that women are where the money is.”

Yet the nonprofit and political sectors have been slower to pick up on this demographic revolution. Not only do women have the power to profoundly influence the world of consumer goods, they also have the power to rouse and accelerate our ability to *do* good—provided we know how to unleash that power.

Why Women Are the Key to Moving the Needle on Social Issues

But wait, the skeptic in you is asking, *What does selling kitchen tiles and yogurt have to do with securing universal health care or curbing global warming?*

The answer is *a lot*. Because women as a group affect much more than the consumer marketplace. Research shows they are also the pistons that keep the engine of most nonprofits running successfully and are key in determining the outcome of political elections and campaigns. Consider the following:

- **Women give.** Conventional wisdom suggests that because men as a group earn more money, it follows that they give more to charity. Wrong. Women actually give just as much, but they give differently. Women control over half of the total wealth in America, and all evidence points to their inheriting and managing more wealth in the near future. Women also account for roughly 60 percent of socially conscious investors. The 2008

election has also proven to be a milestone year in women's political giving, with women making donations to candidates in unprecedented numbers.

- **Women volunteer.** Women, particularly mothers and women who work, volunteer at significantly higher rates than men, according to a 2006 federal study. Across the nation, about 32 percent of women volunteer compared with 25 percent of men. These findings have financial consequences as well: studies show that volunteers often make gifts on average two and a half times more than non-volunteers.
- **Women vote.** Since the 1960s, women have turned out in higher numbers at the voting booth. Women made the difference in the 2006 mid-term elections, accounting for the decisive margin in a number of close races that ultimately shifted the balance of power in Congress.
- **Women pay it forward.** Women are inherently community-minded and love to seek advice and share good information when they have it. This makes them ideal “connectors” and foot-soldiers for advocacy or fundraising campaigns. What's more, and as described in more detail later, what “works” for women often clicks with men as well.
- **Women are behind major social movements.** Throughout American history, women have been a major force behind important social movements, from the abolition of slavery and the temperance movement, to the suffragist and civil rights movements. Their roles may not have been written in the history books, but these social reforms could not have occurred without their leadership and support.

Doing a better job of marketing to women does not mean that we neglect or forget men in the process. As we'll discuss in greater detail later, the experience of corporate marketing campaigns has shown that when you market to women's concerns and meet their higher expectations on return, you will sweep up men's support as well. In other words, hit the She Spot and you'll hit the He Spot, too.

Why Gender-Neutral Marketing is Not Enough

Many of us are comfortable with and, indeed, support the idea that campaigns targeting youth or people of color be tuned into nuances, into differences between these populations and the perceptions held by them if they are to succeed. Yet when we talked to people about the concept behind this book—why it’s important to market differently to women than to men—we encountered enthusiasm from some (“It’s about time!”) and resistance from others who expressed concern that calling out gender differences threatens to undermine the hard-won notion that women and men are equal and should be treated equally.

It’s worth noting that these different reactions were more or less split along generational lines, with Generation X and Y women in the positive camp, and some baby boomer women taking a skeptical, even wary position. It’s not difficult to see why: women who came of age in the 1960s have had to fight precedent-setting battles for equality with men; women of younger generations hold social and political perceptions shaped as inheritors of their legacy, including the cultural shifts that grew out of the second-wave feminist movement.

When it comes to improving the lives of women and girls and creating the society we want to live in, we couldn’t agree more that women should be treated on equal footing as men. But we are selling ourselves short if we deny the fact that gender differences exist. These differences are supported by a body of scientific evidence that shows that differences in male and female brain structure, chemistry, and hormones shape our different priorities, preferences, and approach to the choices we make in life. We see these differences in action by watching how little boys and girls behave on the playground. And they affect us as adults as we make decisions about everything from what we buy, to who we vote for, to which causes we choose to champion.

Culture, of course, has an enormous influence as well. At work, at home and at play, and in their relationships with others, men and women take on different roles that shape their priorities, attitudes, and preferences. If we ignore the real differences between how men and women think and perceive the world, we significantly cripple our own efforts to appeal and activate the audiences we need on our side.

In short, women *are* from Venus and men *are* from Mars. But for too long, traditional marketing and outreach approaches have placed men’s worldviews and preferences front and center, marooning women on Mars

and crippling their ability to recognize women as a critical audience requiring sophisticated communications strategies if we are to reach them.

It's About Her

Those of us in the public sector got into this line of work because we care passionately about righting wrongs, protecting the environment, and helping people. But it's a mistake to think that simply getting the word out about "the issues" will convert people into taking up worthy causes.

In the early days of marketing and advertising, it was enough for a business to sing the praises of a product's attributes, whether shampoo or headache medicine. But in today's competitive marketplace, where store shelves carry five or more brands of essentially the same product, a straight description of attributes is no longer a persuasive selling strategy. That's why modern-day marketing campaigns focus much less on the product, and much more on the *prospect*—the needs of the customer.

Marketing in the nonprofit sector must make a similar conversion. Today there are 1.4 million nonprofits in the U.S. competing for a limited pool of dollars. Public sector organizations must combat "compassion fatigue" and a thickening fog of information overload. Meanwhile, political candidates and statewide ballot initiative campaigns are challenged to drum up support and voters, many of whom are cynical and disengaged from the political process.

In light of these challenges, it's more important than ever that public sector professionals rigorously re-examine *how* they're communicating to their target audiences—and *who* that target audience is. It's our argument, of course, that the audience is women, and that the first step in marketing to them effectively is to rid ourselves of the notion that women are a niche audience. In other words, ditch the niche. The steps after that make up the meat of this book, where we describe the elements involved in creating marketing efforts that appeal to the things women care about and respond to.

We're sympathetic to nonprofit staff for whom the idea of reformulating their organization's marketing and outreach efforts to be female-friendly can sound overwhelming. But don't panic. Keep these things in mind:

- Marketing to women is not about adding another layer to your communications as you would add an extension on your house.

Remember, women are not a niche. They are *the* audience. Once you take this to heart, you'll see that what you're doing is pouring cement in your communications foundation, building in this approach rather than adding on. As we'll get into later in the book, women have built-in attributes of their own that make them a sure return on your marketing investment.

- You won't have to start from scratch. Chances are you're already applying a few (or more than a few) of the marketing tactics that women respond to. Our hope is that, in the future, you'll do so more intentionally, and become even more sophisticated and effective in your application.
- The bottom line is this: Just as the rules of the game have changed in the consumer marketplace, they've changed in the social change marketplace as well. Busy lives, shortening attention spans, data overload, competing demands—these are factors that define modern life and have conspired to make it tougher to break through. To do more than survive and actually thrive in this environment, the public sector must do a better job of marketing by looking through a prospect-focused rather than a product- or issue-focused lens. Because when we successfully connect with our target audiences in deep and personal ways, we build loyal and longer-lasting relationships with donors and members that strengthen our organizations and bolster our ability to make change on the scale necessary to truly make a difference in people's lives.

The Four Cs: Care, Connect, Cultivate, and Control

Based on our own field experience as communications consultants for nonprofit clients and our research into corporate marketing practices, we've identified four key principles to effectively marketing to women. They are:

- **Care.** Most people choose to do good not because they've reasoned it's the logical thing to do, but because their sense of caring and empathy has been triggered and it becomes the right thing to do. When we strike directly at the "heart" of our issues, we unleash an emotional response, the necessary first step to engagement.

- **Connect.** Women place a premium value on creating community in their lives. They understand that the ties between people are the force that make the world go round—and forward. When we tap into this powerful force, we honor people’s deep-felt desire to connect with others, and help build a movement for progressive change.
- **Cultivate.** Women are tough customers who take decision-making seriously. If they’ve signed up to support your organization, it’s because you’ve successfully addressed their check-list of concerns. Once they’re on board, however, they more than pay it back by being true believers and loyal supporters who turn around and cultivate new donors and members on your behalf.
- **Control.** Remember our prospect versus product argument? This marketing principle is about working within, not against, women’s busy, multi-tasking lifestyles and leveraging their hopeful, take-control approach to life to creating a better future for all of us.

These marketing principles are especially effective at reaching women, but, as we’ll show, they work for men as well—and this is no accident. Our goal is to help sharpen your marketing senses and help you cast aside misguided assumptions regarding gendered marketing that may be inadvertently tuning out or turning off women and preventing you from identifying opportunities that can help you actively appeal to them.

The smarter and more effective we are at reaching women, the better our chances of deepening their commitment, of moving them from the transactional (cutting one check or signing up for a one-time volunteer gig) to a deeper sense of responsibility that inspires more meaningful and, ultimately, more seismic change at the social and cultural level.

Marketing—for Social Change

Some of us may be unaccustomed to the idea of “marketing” as an approach for reaching target audiences to achieve social change goals. Still others may be skeptical about using lessons borrowed from the business sector, considering that corporations have been responsible for many social ills that nonprofit groups are working to fix, from environmental pollution to economic disenfranchisement. Beyond these concerns,

there may be others still who are wary that marketing directly to women adds another troubling dimension—that of manipulating this critical demographic to serve specific interests.

But remember, marketing strategies and tactics don't hurt people; people hurt people. If you're reading this book, chances are you aren't in the business of selling tobacco or expanding your oil drilling ventures. You're in the social change business, and your goals make all the difference. So does the level of respect, sensitivity, and insight you bring to your marketing efforts as you seek to reach women and bring them on board.

Indeed, as Katya Andersen points out in her book, *Robin Hood Marketing: Stealing Corporate Savvy to Sell Just Causes*, "There is no nobility in preaching to an audience of one." As change agents, we have an ethical responsibility to ourselves, to our work, and to the people who support us—financially and as activists—to fully harness tools that time and experience have shown make us more effective as communicators and bring us closer to transforming the world for the better.

We must also remind ourselves that social change sector audiences are often the same people who corporations target to buy cars or switch to their brand of fabric softener. They are the same people who are receiving direct mail appeals from groups working in opposition to your goals. And these same people must filter an unprecedented *tsunami* of information—from billboards and magazines to the Internet and TV advertisements—from the minute they wake up to when their heads hit the pillow.

The organizations and companies that break through the data smog are the ones that use smart, sophisticated strategies that appeal—and connect—directly with their target audiences. This is the power of effective marketing.

We must also remember that if we do not take a more sophisticated approach to marketing, with an eye for how particular messages or tactics may or may not appeal to women, we may, at best, be unintentionally sidelining this important audience, and, at worst, unintentionally applying a male-centric approach to our outreach. This would not only do women a disservice, it undermines our best efforts to create a groundswell of support for the causes we believe in.

In the next chapter, we take a closer look at why women are the key market for the public and political sectors by examining the power they wield in pulling the levers of change: service, giving, voting, and taking action.

Part I

Understanding the She Spot

Why Women Matter

Women: A Nonprofit's Best Friend

A few years ago our colleagues at Fenton were working to rebrand Infact, a venerable nonprofit organization that burst on the scene more than three decades ago with a successful worldwide boycott of Nestlé. The food giant was aggressively marketing its brand of baby formula to mothers in developing countries. The only problem was, the formula for making the formula—add water and stir—was hurting and, in some cases, killing infants because some local water supplies were too polluted for their young stomachs.

The organization had since developed a formidable track record of forcing major corporations, including Big Tobacco, to the table to reform their abusive business practices. As part of the rebranding process, we asked them who their target audience was. They replied, “women.” Specifically women in their 40s to 60s, because they made up the group's core funding base and were also their most loyal and active members.

This isn't true for all nonprofits, of course, but it is for a surprising number of them, including ones that work on issues that are not considered traditional “women's issues.” The progressive online group, MoveOn.org, for example, has more than three million members; the average donor profile is a woman in her mid-40s. Women give, and what they give can help make the backbone of an organization.

So as Infact was rethinking their name (they are known today as

Corporate Accountability International), our colleagues made sure their new and improved identity system spoke to their base. Part of this involved shaping their message and their mission—fighting bad-guy corporations—so neither strayed too far from the “why” driving their work. Their organization tagline today is, “Challenging Abuse. Protecting People.”

Transforming Society As We Know It

Women’s growing economic and political clout in the private and public sectors can be traced at its origin to the 1940s when, for the first time, women left the home for the workplace in unprecedented numbers in response to the labor shortage created when many men went off to war. In many ways, women have never looked back.

Following this group of pioneering women were the baby boomers, many of whom would become radicalized during the 1960s and give rise to the feminist movement. For the first time in our history, instead of following traditional female roles, a significant number of women were calling their own shots when it came to making money, taking a political stand, and deciding for themselves what they wanted out of life.

Times, they’re still changing. In 2007 the latest census figures showed that, for the first time in history, single women outnumber married ones in the U.S.

This shift has been shaped by a confluence of social factors: more women are postponing marriage while others are living unmarried with partners. Women are also outliving their husbands and, compared to divorced men, divorced women are delaying another trip down the aisle. William H. Frey, a demographer with the Brookings Institute, described the shift to the *New York Times* as “clearly a tipping point, reflecting the culmination of post-1960 trends associated with greater independence and more flexible lifestyles for women.”

Taken as a whole, all these trends have produced seismic changes in the home as well as in the labor force. They are transforming philanthropy and the nonprofit sector as well. Today, women are arguably the most important audience (and a driving force) for those of us who do social change work. Here are six reasons why:

1. Women's economic clout is growing.

On one level, it boils down to money: who's got it and who's giving it. Given that women continue to earn 78 cents for every man's dollar, you'd be inclined to think men control the majority of the wealth in this country.

But a recent survey of data from the Federal Reserve Board reveals that this isn't so. Women actually control slightly more than half (51.3 percent) of all personal wealth in the United States. They make 83 percent of all household purchasing decisions, including big ticket items that are typically associated with men: cars, home development wares, and home electronics. Women even buy more riding lawn mowers than men do.

There are several reasons for this slight income edge. One is that women outlive men, and widows are inheriting their husbands' wealth. But that's just one sliver of the pie. Women are also generating their own income as never before, to the point that one out of four married women out-earn their spouses.

Women-owned businesses today are the fastest-growing sector of the U.S. economy, representing \$3.3 trillion in purchasing power. What's more, firms owned by women of color are growing at six times the rate of all U.S. firms.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. There are strong indications that women will continue to level the playing field with men as their income as a group continues to rise.

One of these indicators is education. Today, more women than ever are getting a college education, the biggest stepping stone to higher-paying jobs. What's more, once women start attending college, they are significantly more likely than men to graduate (63 percent compared to 55 percent), according to recent studies.

On average, women are still earning less than men. But when they complete their college degrees, they're making greater leaps than men in raising their standard of living. This trend makes college education a profound predictor for women's greater income potential in the near future. Between 1990 and 2000, the standard-of-living gain for women with a bachelor's degree under their belt compared to those with a high school diploma was 13 percent larger than for men.

We're already seeing these trends play out. The number of women who earn \$100,000 or more has tripled in the past decade, making them the fastest-growing segment of wealthy individuals, according to the Employment Policy Foundation. Over the past 30 years, women's income has jumped more than 60 percent, while men's median income has stayed (more or less) the same (up just 6 percent). This phenomenon shows no sign of letting up. Women from the baby boom generation are at their earning peak. And as Americans live longer and healthier lives than their parents, many are planning to forego the retirement community in Florida in favor of working well into their so-called "golden years." By 2010 women are expected to control 60 percent of the country's wealth, which makes them a prime target for fundraising by non-profit organizations and political campaigns.

2. Women care—and give.

But how much you make isn't necessarily a reflection of how much, or whether, you give to good causes.

For decades, the traditional face of philanthropy has been the Fords and Rockefellers of the world, titans of industry who established large foundations in their names to organize their giving. Bill Gates and Warren Buffet are modern-day exemplars of that model.

Yet by focusing our attention too narrowly on the giant checks, we risk losing sight of how philanthropy is changing, and how women are driving this change. Women make contributions to twice as many charitable organizations as men do, and they are more likely to take greater risks in organizations with a strong vision for change. There are also strong indications that women are closing the giving gap, driven in part by the earning trends alluded to earlier and the greater control they are exerting over their personal wealth.

Also, many women who have it, give it—and they give it big. A survey of nearly 400 prominent American businesswomen found that more than half donate \$25,000 or more a year to charity; 19 percent give \$100,000 or more a year. Even more striking, high-net worth women business owners with assets of more than \$1 million are even more likely than their male counterparts to contribute at least \$10,000 a year to charity (50 percent for women compared to 40 percent for men).

On the political front, women are giving in unprecedented numbers to presidential candidates in the 2008 election. As we write this,

women account for more than half the contributions to Hillary Clinton's and Barack Obama's campaigns. The boom in female political donors has been attributed to mounting frustration with the situation in Iraq, support for Hillary as the first female candidate with a real shot at the White House, and to a general push by women for a sea change in political leadership and the direction of the country.

While these trends are promising, they are just a hint of what's to come. It is a core contention of this book that women's financial might has yet to be tapped to its fullest potential, and a lot of that has to do with how good a job we're doing at marketing to them. If we were to apply marketing strategies that truly spoke to women's hearts as well as their bottom lines, they would respond in even greater numbers.

What motivates women to give is the subject of a later chapter, but it is worth noting up front that women's giving is not necessarily limited to issues traditionally associated with women and children, although education does tend to top the list of priorities. It's also important to know that, while men tend to donate out of organizational loyalty or to support the status quo (like their alma maters), women are more committed to giving money to organizations and causes they believe will bring about social change.

Women are putting their money where their mouths are in more ways than giving. Their commitment is also reflected in their numbers in traditionally caring professions, from nursing, teaching, and social work to the public sector, where women head more than half the foundations in the country and 70 percent of program officer positions.

3. Women pay it forward.

Money, of course, is not the only important force for change. Many nonprofits rely on a strong membership base to achieve their advocacy goals. This is one area where women can, and have been, phenomenally influential.

Lisa C.'s friend Kim recently bought a pair of Danskos when she saw a colleague at Smith College, where they both teach, wearing a pair. "Those are cute," she said. "Are they comfortable?" The friend enthusiastically sang her shoes' praises: "I wear them all the time!" On that strong endorsement, Kim bought a pair for herself, but experienced a fleeting pang of buyer's remorse when they hurt the first time she wore them. But within a few days, the clogs were comfortably broken

in. When Kim's fiancé's sister saw her wearing her Danskos, she asked about them. Kim gave the clogs her own positive review, along with the tip that they take a few days to wear in. Now the sister owns a pair, too.

Kim did what many women do every day—pass good information forward. In other words, when you market well to women, you also benefit from the world's most powerful marketing tool: word of mouth. Word of mouth is more prevalent among women than men. Not only are women less shy about asking outright for tips on what to buy and how to save, but they're also more likely to volunteer such information. Clairol capitalized on this power to great effect in a memorable advertising campaign that showed a woman telling two friends about the remarkable shampoo, and her friends each telling two friends, "and so on, and so on."

For nonprofits seeking to build their visibility or political candidates seeking to gain support, women who are true believers can help make believers of others by spreading the good word to friends and family or by simply giving their honest appraisal of why they're voting for a candidate or supporting an issue.

Women's word of mouth can be credited for wildly successful fundraising campaigns like "Race for a Cure," the Susan B. Komen Foundation's annual fundraising marathon for breast cancer. As well, nonprofit groups like MoveOn.org are increasingly using social networking tactics such as word of mouth to build communities of activists—a topic we'll explore in greater depth later in this book.

4. Women can tip the election.

Maybe it's because women didn't get the right to vote until the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, but more women than men have voted in every election since Lyndon B. Johnson was in the White House.

In the 2006 midterm election that ushered in the first Democratic Congress in 12 years, 51 percent of the electorate was women compared to 49 percent men. According to a nationwide survey by *Ms. Magazine* and the Women Donors Network, 55 percent of women voted for Democratic candidates compared to 50 percent of men. This five-point gender gap was enough to make the difference in a number of close races. The African American women's vote was credited for being the determining factor in Democratic Senator Jim Webb's victory in Virginia.

The gender gap was also alive and well in the 2004 presidential election, with women seven points less likely than men to vote for George W. Bush. Back in 2000, the split was even more pronounced, with women 10 percentage points less likely than men to vote for Bush. In both elections, the majority of women favored the Democratic candidate.

If the pollsters and pundits are to be believed, the outcome of the upcoming 2008 presidential election may well be determined by the single woman. Single women—a group 47 million strong that includes the Carrie “Sex in the City” Bradshaws of the world as well as widows, twenty-something college grads, and divorced single moms—has been something of a sleeping giant in politics, mostly because neither the Republican nor Democratic Parties have really invested the time to listen or speak to their concerns. The candidate who builds the bridge stands to reap enormous gains on election day.

5. Women volunteer more of their time.

About 65.4 million or 28.8 percent of American adults volunteered in 2004–2005, according to a recent study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This represented a 30-year high in volunteering. And women are leading the way. About 32.4 percent of women volunteer compared to 25 percent of men, and more women than men are volunteering across every state and across all age groups, education levels, and other demographic measures. When you average all the data, it’s possible to paint a profile of the typical American volunteer: a female who gives 50 hours of her time per year.

What’s more, women with children under the age of 18 and women who work have higher volunteer rates than other women. The fact that working mothers, the very individuals you’d think would have the least amount of “free” time, are holding up the high end of the service spectrum may strike some as counterintuitive. It’s not. As we’ll explore in later chapters, for many women, being a mom and being part of the workforce means deeper connections in the community, and a deeper commitment to making things better for the future as well as the here and now. Volunteering is one way to act on those connections and commitments.

The fact that mothers volunteer in significant numbers has a ripple effect because young people from families where their parents and/or siblings volunteered are more likely to volunteer themselves. This is

great news for the estimated three in four charities that use volunteers, the majority of which say volunteers are critical for the success of their overall operation.

After all, time is money, and the value of volunteer time adds up. Using Independent Sector's estimate of the dollar value of a volunteer's time (\$18.77 per hour), the value of the three billion hours of volunteer service in 2005–2006 add up to an estimated \$56.3 billion. Women can claim responsibility for providing the bulk of that pot.

6. When you “sell” to women, you reach men, too.

When Sheryl Hilliard Tucker, the executive editor of Time Inc., was an editor with *Money* magazine, *Money* conducted focus groups of men, who represented the majority of their readership, to get a better sense of what they wanted out of the magazine. Tucker and her colleagues discovered that they didn't necessarily just want to be smarter about the issues, but they want to know how to make smart choices. In other words, men said they wanted the same thing from their business magazine that has been a defining feature of women's magazines for decades: practical, real-life advice. Today, the banner headlines on men's and women's magazines are remarkably similar. *Cosmopolitan* promises to give you the low-down on how to get a flat stomach in 10 days, while *Men's Health* claims to have the secret to achieving killer abs in, yes, 10 days.

“Women like service, whether they feel confident or not confident. *Men's Health* has been successful by basing itself on a women's magazine formula, but for men's topics. Men don't like to admit they like service, but they do,” according to Lynn Povich, co-chair of the International Women's Media Foundation and a former senior editor with *Newsweek*.

Women's hunger for, and openness to information is what makes them, in many ways, tougher customers than men. They demand more information before they make decisions, whether it's buying a stereo system or donating to a nonprofit. For this reason, many corporations have figured out that when they meet women's higher expectations, they also increase customer satisfaction among men. In *Marketing to Women*, Marti Barletta describes how the Wyndham Hotel chain took their female customers' suggestion to install magnifying mirrors in the bathroom so they wouldn't have to lean over the sink to apply their make-up. Turns out men use them, too—for shaving.

In the case of charitable contributions, more women than men tend to want to know how exactly their money will be spent. By being more transparent in connecting the dots between donations and the services your organization provides, you'd be providing value to men and women alike.

Will appealing to women ensure that you'll appeal to men, too? Not always. Men and women have their differences, as we'll explore in the next chapter. But the general principle still stands: when you appeal to the toughest customer, you'll have covered the bases on many of the factors that can turn a "maybe" into a "yes"—whether your target audience is a man or woman.

Women are at the forefront of all the primary drivers of change: money, volunteer service, and the power of the vote. This is why they are *the* primary target audience for nonprofits and political campaigns. A closer examination of their standing in these arenas helps crack open some chestnuts of conventional, but misguided, wisdom. Among them: that women's income (and giving potential) lags behind men; and, by appealing to women, you'll drive men away. In fact, just the opposite is true in both cases.

Conclusion

So if women hold the keys to the king- or queen-dom, what does it take to unlock their potential? "Potential" is the operative word here because, while we've demonstrated why women matter, making them count is a whole other story and the driving force behind this book. Because women have been perceived as a niche audience for so long from both the public and political sectors, we are light years behind where we should be in marketing to them to unleash their power as partners in social change. But before we dive into tactics, we'll spend the next two chapters getting a better grasp on how women think and what they want, both of which are essential primers for the marketing principles that follow.

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