

My Turn

Packaging For Women Is Different

by [Terri Goldstein](#),



TERRI GOLDSTEIN

[Terri Goldstein](#) is CEO of The Goldstein Group.

What do women want to see, feel and understand about brand packaging? It might pay for marketers to remember that for centuries women have responded to romance, flowers and chocolate. Why? Because women respond when their emotions are activated.

While women's median income has soared 63% over 20 years, those earning over \$100k doubled in a decade; 30% of women now earn more than their husbands. And while women make 80% of all supermarket, drugstore and department store purchases, only 20% of character trademarks in the retail landscape are female. Understandably, corporate America finds itself in a quandary as how to position women on their packages. No longer is it appropriate to have a character trademark wear an apron, or hold a broom so Marie Calander, Mrs. Fields and Swiss Miss are absent while Betty Crocker was replaced by a spoon!

Why the disconnect? Unfortunately, much confusion still exists when it comes to designing packaging to appeal to women, perhaps because "She segments" differ greatly from "He segments." Take pet food/supplies, the fastest growing supermarket category, with its array of natural foods, special treats, teeth whiteners, sauces, gravies, etc., all with photo representation of cuddly pets, which appeals to women who treat Fido as a family member.

Marketers must understand the hierarchy of packaging communications (color, shape, symbol, words), and how they appeal to women. Begin with color, but, it's not enough to simply change the color of a product to pink or purple, Today, to be spoken to in such an expected manner is simply sexist.

Shape is second. Packages can be formed to highlight internal components, such as detergent and water containers with easy grip handles -form+function=benefit. Women understand function by seeing form; the most highly rated purchasing characteristics are convenience, ease of storage and carry handles.

Symbols are third, a glow, a bear, shows how soft this is going to be. Women are hardwired to feel instantaneously, about color, shape, symbols, which impacts their emotional radar (their sixth sense)."

Want women to connect with your brand? A woman's sense of self is defined by her feeling, the quality of her relationships, and her communications with others. Research her core beliefs and values, motivations and purchase drivers before you create your brand's visual vocabulary. It's not enough just to write, "For Her" on your package. You might start with the following steps.

My Turn

Packaging For Women Is Different

by [Terri Goldstein](#),

**TERRI GOLDSTEIN**

[Terri Goldstein](#) is CEO of The Goldstein Group.

Five Tips to Unlock the Power of Her Purse

1. At retail most brands are seen at 1/25 of a second

Learn the shelf-sight sequence- colors, shapes and symbols. Integrate feminine brand shapes (letterforms and brandmarks). Create package structures with intuitive form/function benefits. Research says that if your brand's visual vocabulary resonates with women, she will consider your words for three to five seconds in low-to-mid involvement categories.

2. Be aware that women are crossover shoppers

Understand her total visual world: multiple categories, across all chains of distribution - from Whole Foods to Target, A&P to CVS. Marry her crossover sensibilities to your brand category codes, but reinvent them to exploit her desire for affordable luxury. Strive to embed a sense of cache into your brand, no matter the price point.

3. Go where she goes

Fifty percent of internet users are women seeking information about services and brands. Brands must extrapolate her online shopping sensibilities, and media habits. Consider integrating print ads, promotional campaigns and web sites with the motivational pull and visual recall she may recognize on shelf and share with her community.

4. Understand that "her" visual territories are different from "his."

She purchases products for her, him, and the family. Recognize the alternate colors, textures, cues, triggers and words that she emotionally responds to. Clue her in with a visual language of: transparent hues, ethereal glows, soft blends, prisms of light, soft edges, pure white backgrounds, matte pliable metallics, soft lavenders and dove grays, and inspirational names that signal this brand is for her.

5. Use words on-pack sparingly.

Remove 50% of the words from your marketing deck and transpose the rest with a visual language that she can share, such as, "Get the insoles in the purple package with the flower and the adorable shoes," (Dr. Scholl's Comfort Insoles). Women love to talk, so let her do the talking, not your package.