



Engage:Moms

Home > Engage:Moms

Nothing Artificial

by Kyla Lange Hart, Yesterday, 12:30 PM

As the economic crisis continues, so does the hibernating. We are becoming more of a "hiber-nation" as families hunker down to weather the storm with more time spent at home and less out spending at malls and restaurants. (Movie sales are up but that's an annex of the hibernation cave that helps us to escape for a few hours).

With families spending more time together at home, they are slowing down, bonding differently and discovering joy in spending real time together. Moms are enjoying the experience of a stronger family unit. And, as head of domestic purchasing, Moms are finding strength and are taking pride in *not* buying.

As Americans, we have been weaned on consuming; it's part of our lifeblood. However, the gatekeeper badge of honor has shifted from "I got such a deal" to "I haven't bought anything new in weeks" or "I've switched from buying expensive shoes to a simple lipstick." American mothers are meeting the challenge and expressing the thought that, "this is hard but, ultimately, it's a good thing for my family -- we are pulling together, spending more time together. It's less about accumulating stuff. It feels more real."

There is a sea change afoot, and it is defined by a new set of consumer values. It's actually an old set of Puritanical values that is roaring back with renewed strength. You take stock of what you have, you take very good care of it and you make it last as long as possible. It's a sensibility that embraces the "It's not what you earn, it's what you don't spend" attitude. And when you do buy, you buy only what you know and trust, and you trust it deeply. The culture of responsibility that felt old-fashioned 18 months ago now feels stabile, secure and appealing today.

So what's a marketer to do? If you are in the business of selling things, how do you sell to Mom's new mindset?

New-fangled and novel will always capture a certain amount of attention, especially in categories such as electronics and beauty. But deep roots and time-tested can present key opportunities for great old American brands that frankly, felt 'fuddy-duddy' and past their prime in the 21st century. And, when they were in their prime, they marketed to the quintessential '50s housewife versus the modern, dimensional woman of today.

As Mom watches her family reconnect and recommit itself to spending real time together, great American brands have the opportunity to get real and tap their heritage. Marketers should not only mirror this value shift but truly embrace it. If done with ingenuity and authenticity, a brand's heritage story can become valid and compelling once again.

This new set of consumer values will be responsive to:

- Truth and transparency
- Virtue-based attributes
- Ethically minded culture
- Good foundations
- Good value -- not just a cheap or a good buy

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KYLA LANGE HART

Kyla Lange Hart is co-founder and principal at Toniq, a brand strategy firm. She has focused her 20-year marketing career on developing evocative, visually driven brand programs. She has directed research and positioning studies, image campaigns, name generation and comprehensive design programs to launch new and reinvigorate existing brands for companies such as Nestle Purina, Kraft Foods, Unilever, Colgate-Palmolive, Campbell Soup, Gillette, Kellogg, Kodak, Pepsi, Sears, Godiva, and Ethan Allen.

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And finally, go back to the old recipes -- get back to your good old roots both in product and communications. Too much has been taken away from the winning formulas that made great American brands great in order to maximize profits. Products often don't taste or work as well as they originally did.

Stop making substitutions for the real, good ingredients and materials. Get rid of what's artificial. Moms want real, not a chemistry lab on their breakfast table. The litmus test is, if you can sell it to a New England farmer's wife, then you've got something.

7 Responses to "Nothing Artificial "


 **ATHENA MENOUDAKOS from Bebalee Corporation**
commented on: March 18, 2009 at 9:42 PM

Kayla, I agree 100%, although I don't think every other person agrees with us. As a stay at home mother of 4, & inventor of Bebalee Corp. & Home of the SNACKER CATCHER- I can truly say that I do see mothers/families from all over- wanting that simple, real life again. Why Not? The true meaning of life & family & being rich should NOT be what car one drives, or what designer bag one wears. I think that mothers are realizing that all of those extras don't always fill the spot of real gratification. Spending time on Friday nights, or having extended family meals on Sundays has disappeared in this country. I often find myself feeling embarrassed when asked "Why I don't have help"- raising my children or cleaning my house. Why should I feel embarrassed. Society has made all of these extras the normal. It shouldn't be the normal & I feel that going back to our routes & struggling sometimes puts things back into perspective & makes us realize what is really important in our lives. As an inventor/owner of Bebalee Corp, I have invented baby products to help make their everyday tedious & frustrating jobs a little more easy. My product is one that helps a baby/parent void the job of picking up wasted snacks off the dirty floor. I have made this product fully FDA Compliant/ BPA FREE & most of all MOMS-IN-MIND. I have been reaching out to mothers all over the country who thank me for making their jobs easier. Moms love products that help them, save time & money, and that is exactly what mines does. Avoids wasted snacks, Avoids germs, & Saves money on food. I think your article was very imformative & enjoyable. Thank you


 **kathryn rolston from Real Savvy Media Inc**
commented on: March 18, 2009 at 5:48 PM

This reminds me of my humble upbringing as one of 5 children in the UK in the 70s and 80's -and to be honest, the more home and family-centric focus is not a bad thing. We had great fun together as a family and we learned what it means to collaborate and share. We made our own clothes, learned how to cook and we built tree houses and fixed our own bikes! (imagine making your own clothes... but my sister is now a designer in London) We all have recognized how this move to everything 'convenient' has created a generation of overweight, unhealthy couch potatoes... But the question is: how do the new Millennial families spend their time at home? Is it stimulating?- reading, playing games, doing arts and crafts, talking, watching films as a group or is it in separate rooms each one consumed by their hand held devices or laptops and of course burdened with too much homework?

One thing is for certain, the 'new 2009 mom' does NOT want to be sold to. She is savvy and can see through it- she wants what is real. Real information, real results, real value. Not artificial, not over-priced and under performing. She loves her family, and will protect them, and YES she's cutting back because she has to! She is p'ssed off at the bail-outs to big banks (because she and her parents paid for it) and that money does not trickle down to Main Street. She wonders when this country's education system will get the bail out it so deserves so that her kids will be able to compete in the new global economy. She worries about her parents having to come out of retirement and what happens if they get sick? She wants to be heard and understood and thought of as a woman, not as a 'consumer'. After all she is a Real Savvy Mom.

 **bruce christensen from PartyWeDo**
commented on: March 18, 2009 at 2:07 PM

I agree that we are moving closer to our roots and values. But don't forget the older moms and what this downturn is doing in their life. As baby boomers we are finding the economy has hurt our opportunities to travel and spend time with our dispersed children. Marketers need to find solution so that boomer moms can stay close to scattered family members without leaving home. Brands that make the family connection continue without travel should find a willing customer in these older moms.

 **Bruce Kaechele from Fathom**
commented on: March 18, 2009 at 1:54 PM

Kyla, while I understand the logic of what you are saying, I'm curious as to whether you have seen any research that supports it.


Does spending more time at home really translate to spending more time together or is everyone off checking email, updating profiles and downloading new apps?

Are moms finding strength and taking pride in not buying or are they not buying because they can't - two very different attitudes and therefore two different purchase drivers.

Again, I understand the logic of what you are asserting, I just question whether we can so quickly make the leap to a "new mindset" and to the results you propose.

 **Dorian Dickinson from PrivilegedAccess TV**
commented on: March 18, 2009 at 1:48 PM


Outstanding. As the father of a newborn and bred in New England I understand the value of good old honest marketing. I've shared your post with www.greenparentsnetwork.com as well.

 **debra fine from fine line llc**
commented on: March 18, 2009 at 1:12 PM

It does come to some simple reminders: What is your brand promise and are you keeping it? Is there an emotional connection with your consumer? You establish your brand by building trust and reinforcing brand promise.

Example: Disney: It stands for making dreams come true Apple: It stands for thinking differently

Don't create a need, fill a need, keep it simple. I ran strategy for Kraft and Quaker and was an executive at Disney, then became CEO of media and product companies. If you have questions about your product or start-up, please ask. I was also a Venture Capitalist.

 **Andy Page from Carlcoinc**
commented on: March 18, 2009 at 1:02 PM

I truly agree with this assessment.

I see that the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, is doing just that.

It has just introduced a full line of 100 percent natural, nothing artificial food products called America's Choice Kids.

Now Moms (and Dads) can pack their child's lunches knowing that the ingredients such as jams, jellies, peanut butter, etc are all natural ingredients and really healthy for their children.

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