

## **Mother Knows Best**

By: Janette Morrison, O2 Media, Inc.

Over the past decade, American's have seen the Baby Boomers move into retirement, Gen Xers grow up into responsible adults, Gen Y take on parenthood and most recently Gen Next's impact on American culture.

The generations of women who are predominantly giving birth fall into the Gen X and Gen Y group. Although each generation is unique in characteristics, as mothers they blend these characteristics together formulating a unique Hybrid Mom.

- Today, women who have a baby are most likely to return to work in less than 6 months. The Boomer Generation Mom built this bridge to working motherhood.
- The Gen X Mom who struggled(s) is constantly seeking the right work-life balance and is paving the way for the Gen Y Moms, who tend to tackle life holistically.
- The Gen Y Mom is strongly independent, self-confident and appreciates mothers of the past. They are more open to new, different products and services for their children... brand heritage is just not that important.

As the Hybrid Mom gains more experience, her perspective changes and shifts toward more practical choices. However, she does keep some of her foundational attitudes and integrates new perspectives, as she adds the priority of children:

- Hybrid Moms tend to be more conservative when enjoying life, rather than 'living on the edge' or making spontaneous choices.
- She tends to worry about the future more than women without children.
- She's on a constant quest to get the biggest bang for her buck and refuses to sacrifice value for price.
- Moms account for 85 percent of all household spending.

### **What does the Hybrid Mom want from brands?**

According to eMarketer, a research and analysis digital marketing and media firm, more than 40% of all women who go online in the US – approximately 35 million of them- are mothers who have children under 18 at home. These women, known as 'mommy bloggers' utilize the internet as a way to network with other women, sharing parenting tips, news, favorite shopping spots and more.

"The Balancing Act" is the national TV show that I am a producer for and we have a blogging community of 35+ mommy bloggers. This is a key element in our Brandutainment™ model; Brands that are on our TV show also have opportunities to engage our bloggers and for our bloggers to engage their followers with that brand information. This type of information sharing and spreading of ideas has created a shift in the way moms make decisions. Mom Blogs have paved the path to recommendations based on personal experience. Women trust women, not brands tooting their own horns.

An active conversation between women about a specific brand - this word-of-mouth type sharing - has become a way for brands to engage women. Alternatively, brands are able to gather information from the

sources themselves – altering the way in which advertising messages are created and implemented. Brand spending and mommy blogger influence is directly related:

- According to eMarketer, advertising on blogs will top \$746 million by 2012, more than twice the figure for 2007.
- A 2009 study by BlogHer, iVillage and Compass Partners that found that 23 million women read, write or comment on blogs weekly.
- According to Mom Central Consulting, 96 percent of moms value the recommendations they find on mom blogs.

All things considered, it's evident that the Hybrid Mom is more dynamic than ever. She no longer aspires to be of the likes of Joan Cleaver; she's a multi-tasking, multi-dimensional woman balancing her career, family, finances and everything in between. Today's mom isn't just buying diapers and cleaning supplies - she's responsible for the majority of her households buying decisions. These decisions aren't solely based on brand loyalty, emotional purchasing or persuasive advertising. They're based on conversations between women with whom she trusts.