



Build Your Business with Women Clients

Vive la difference!

Men and women are different as India and Indiana. Many of those differences relate to what women care about, how they communicate, and how they prefer to make decisions.

Women generally think that people are the most interesting and important element in any situation. The titles of women's magazines are almost entirely about people. Women are oriented towards affiliation and seek commonalities and affinity, an extremely important element for the sales process. Women tend to be ensemble players and trust is a critical element for them.

Women are interested in what money can do for those they are concerned about. Money is a means to an end. They're looking to take care of their family, to move beyond success to significance, to make a difference in the world.

Selling to Women

If you use seminar selling, tailor the seminar to what women are likely to want to learn about: how money affects people, surviving your spouse, estate planning for combined families, raising wealthy kids with healthy money attitudes, and philanthropy. Use lots of stories and examples.

Try "kitchen table selling" in a conference room in a work environment. Begin by having each one introduce themselves and then encourage them to talk about the financial issues that they are concerned about.

The others will jump in to build on each other's points, and start exchanging information. You will learn a great deal on a personal level from the women around the table, giving them a more personal connection with you.

During a sales conversation be ready to listen. Listen a lot more than you talk. Your prospect might open the conversation with a story of her life.

This is not small talk; she's telling you about what is important to her.

Ask questions, as opposed to just waiting for her to get through it and then jumping in with your answer to solving the problem.

Women are very open to doing more than one thing; you can tap into the urge to multi-task through cross selling and up selling.

Be prepared for the decision-making process to take longer.

She's going to ask you questions you think are unrelated to the main point. She's going to want input from other people. She wants to explore more options, especially when she's working for the first time with a particular financial advisor.

Find a gentle way to reach closure.

Don't push for closure in the first meeting.

Instead, follow-up and say, "I've been thinking some more about what we talked about in the last meeting, and I had another idea that we should factor in here."

Instead of asking for referrals, reward them. Send a jar of homemade jam with a handmade label on it that says thank you. You can bet she's going to talk with her friends and tell them how nice you are.

Martha Barletta is president of *The TrendSight Group*, a Chicago-based consultancy that helps companies tap into the buying power of women. Her book, *Marketing to Women: How to Understand, Reach and Increase Your Share of the World's Largest Market Segment* has been published in 11 languages. Her entire 2004 presentation, "Gender-Savvy Selling: How to Build Your Book of Business with Affluent Woman Investors" is available from the MDRT Power Center (www.mdrtpowercenter.org).