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MAGAZINE ARTICLE

ADWEEK

New Brand Scale: Women at NBCU Launches a Female-Focused Measure of the Brands That Matter Most

By Cooper, Jim

Women consumers have become a significant force shaping how billions of marketing dollars are spent annually. But getting a layered view of their market influence, especially in a digital and social age, has been hard to do.

Women at NBCU, NBCU's female-targeted ad sales and marketing initiative, hopes to change that with a new monthly brand index that's designed to be a comprehensive measure of the 25 brands most important to women. Launched today, the index, called Women at NBCU Brand Power Index, compiles online search data from comScore, social media buzz data from New Media Strategies and online chatter charted by The Keller Fay Group, a word-of-mouth research firm.

"Women are the biggest brand ambassadors," said Lauren Zalaznick, president of NBCU's Women & Lifestyle Entertainment Networks, including Bravo and Oxygen as well as the iVillage Web hub. "Women will recommend a product to a friend if Privacy - Terms

she likes it. There is no better type of endorsement."

Zalaznick said the index was born out of the fact that 20,000 brand recommendations are offered every month on iVillage. That, plus the fact that women drive 85 percent of all consumer purchases, as well as the rise of search and social media, made the initiative take form.

The index for August showed seven different product categories represented in the top 25 brands when all three areas are counted (see chart above for the top 10). They include the traditionally male-skewing segments of automotive (Ford and Toyota) and finance (Bank of America and Wells Fargo). Additionally, seven of the top 25 brands were tech and telecom oriented, including Verizon (3), AT&T (5), Sprint (12), Dell (13), HP (14), iPhone (22) and Microsoft (24).

"We're producing a list of brands that are tracked in multiple ways to show which are taking up the most head space with women," said Tony Cardinale, svp of strategic insights at NBCU's Women & Lifestyle Entertainment Networks. "We've never seen anything that rolled up search, social and person to person. I think it will be very illuminating for our clients." Cardinale added that the index can be parsed in a variety of ways that will allow marketing partners to "look under the hood" of the brands that land on the list. ...

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Article details

PUBLICATION:

[ADWEEK \(/library/p15/adweek\)](/library/p15/adweek)

VOLUME/ISSUE:

[Vol. 51, No. 34 \(/library/p15/adweek/i4433541/vol-51-no-34-september-27\)](/library/p15/adweek/i4433541/vol-51-no-34-september-27)

PUBLICATION DATE:

September 27, 2010

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SUBJECTS:

Zalaznick, Lauren--Beliefs, opinions and attitudes

NBCUniversal Inc.--Target marketing

Women consumers--Target marketing

Television broadcasting industry--Target marketing

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