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GMR EXCLUSIVE

# MARKETERS ARE FROM MARS...

Women are different from men, so they want to be treated differently from men. Get it? Apparently not.

**WOMEN ARE** different from men and they want to be treated differently. A bit of a no brainer you would think, especially when it comes to such an insight-driven sector as marketing. Not so, according to exclusive research for *GMR*, carried out by gender marketing specialist agency – UK-based Aquitude.

Our findings showed that the vast majority – 77 per cent – of women in the region want to be marketed to in different ways from men. The study also highlighted those categories that have been the least receptive to this viewpoint.

In fact, there are quite a few categories – such as personal electronics – where respondents thought that men and women

should share purchasing decisions equally, but were not addressed inclusively.

The tech sector, however, emerges as one of the biggest culprits in failing women; from search engines to mobile phones, women gave brands in this sector a big thumbs down. Financial services, however, were not far behind. And, none of

the professional women who responded to our survey thought that car companies are good at understanding female consumers either.

Globally, 41 per cent say that property companies are bad at marketing to women; in the Gulf, it is 62 per cent.

Online reviews were perceived as the most trusted media source; traditional media, particularly newspapers, was also seen as being trustworthy.

Computers and smartphones are the most trusted devices – being able to communicate in a two-way conversation is critical for women.

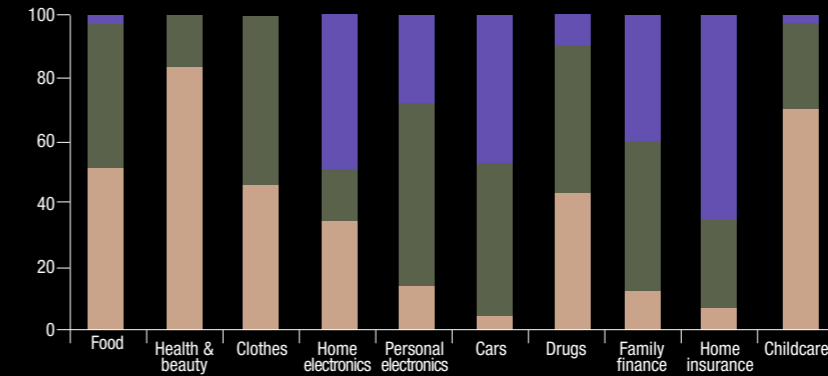
“It is clear from this survey that brands are failing women in the Middle East,”

**GENDER SPECIFIC**

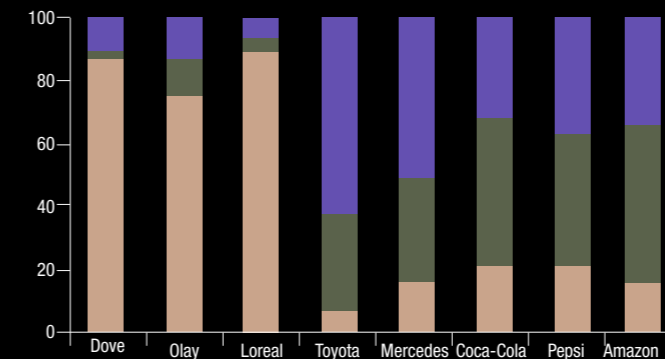


**Underwhelmed:**  
Aquitude's Christina Ioannidis

**WHO IS THE MOST APPROPRIATE DECISION MAKER?** Women Equal Men



**WHICH BRANDS ARE GETTING IT RIGHT?** Good Neutral Bad



Source: aquitude global survey 2012

**GENDER AND MARKETING IN THE UAE**  
 7% agree that gender in marketing is relevant  
 16.3% agree that marketing is gender-agnostic  
 76% agree that men and women are different

says Christina Ioannidis, founder and managing director of aquitude.

“Despite significant marketing investment by brands in the consumer electronics, IT, financial service and automotive sectors, female consumers are underwhelmed by the marketing message.

“Female brand loyalty evades these brands that, in the most significant global recession, should be de-risking their marketing investments to attract the world’s largest growing demographic.”

**Question 1: Should marketing professionals consider gender when developing marketing strategies? Does the market make a difference?**

Overwhelmingly, 76.7 per cent agreed that men and women are different and, therefore, should be marketed to in different ways. Only seven per cent said that gender in marketing is irrelevant; and 16.3 per cent said that marketing is gender-agnostic.

This correlates with our international “Marketing to Women” research, where 73.3 per cent of our panel of influential

**Only seven per cent said gender in marketing is irrelevant...**



*TheAtlantic.com* in the US has unveiled *The Sexes Channel* that will explore how the changing balance of power between the sexes is transforming society. Writers will have space dedicated to gender dynamics in the workplace. The channel will examine how both men and women are responding to these changes, with writings from a range of journalists, analysts, and experts. Sexes will be part of the site’s primary navigation, alongside other topic verticals: Politics, Business, Entertainment, Technology, National, Global, and Health. *The Atlantic* was founded in 1857, and was one of the first politically neutral magazines to launch on the web in the early 1990s.

women from around the world said that there is a gendered approach to marketing: men and women require ‘gender-intelligent’ marketing approaches.

**Question 2: Who makes the best purchasing decisions in your family?**

We asked which person in the family would be best placed to make a decision about purchasing different products and services. The choices ranged from food to childcare, from cars to OTC medicines.

Unsurprisingly, categories such as health & beauty and childcare are seen as sectors where women should make the purchasing decision.

Men score highly in sectors such as insurance, and there are many categories – such as personal electronics – where our respondents thought that men and women should share purchasing decisions equally.



© Getty Images

**...being able to communicate in a two-way conversation is critical for women.**

No one, however, thought that men should have a say on clothing.

**Question 3: Which brands are getting it right?**

We gave our respondents a list of brands and asked them to rank each one on a scale of one to five on how well they market to women. Skincare brands fared well. In the Middle East Dove, L’Oreal and Olay score above 75 per cent, which is higher than the same brands that scored in aquitude’s global survey.

It is a different story with auto brands. In this sector more than 50 per cent of women said brands such as Toyota are simply not getting it right. Mercedes does better, but less than 20 per cent say its marketing to women is ‘good’.

In the battle of the colas, Coke edges out Pepsi, according to our survey, although most women are neutral about Coca-Cola’s marketing when it comes to

women. Most are neutral when it comes to Amazon too.

In Figure 4, we take a closer look at the tech sector to see if this large and wide-ranging category, which sells to women in business as well as at home, is making the right noises.

Given that women tend to trust personal recommendations (see Question 5), it makes sense that Facebook is seen as the ‘tech’ brand that does the best job of marketing to women, however, it has more women who think that it is not as good as Apple. BlackBerry is seen as doing a better job than Nokia. At the bottom of the list of tech brands are Google and Microsoft. Google’s position may be harmed by search engine advertising, which, according to answers in Question 5, is not trusted by women in the UAE/Gulf region.

In the battle of the banks, no one is winning. Financial services brands are

failing to communicate with women and, out of the brands we tested, none managed to score well.

Citi and Barclays were the worst of all, with just 2.3 per cent thinking they do a good job at marketing to women; in fact, 60.5 per cent think that they do a bad job

**Question 4: Sector perceptions – Who is good at marketing to women?**

Some brands are representative of their sectors, but others can skew the results one way or another.

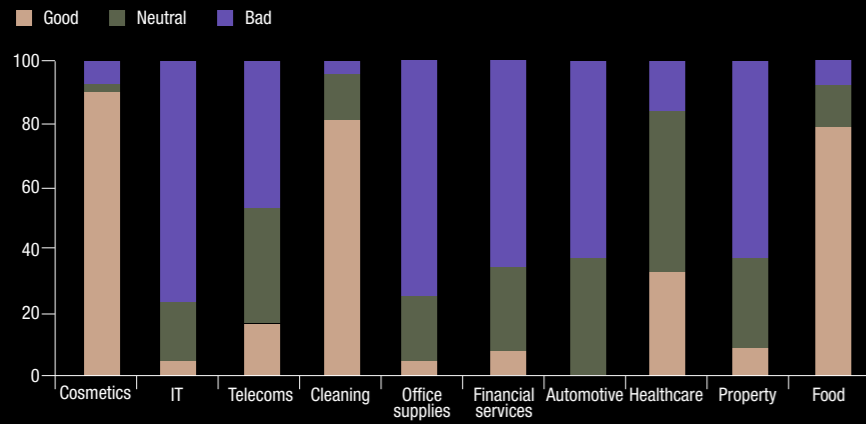
Our sector perceptions question and looks at some of the biggest markets for female consumers to see how they are perceived as effective when it comes to marketing to women.

The results show that there are some real opportunities for companies to stand out in sectors where women think there is a lot of work to be done.

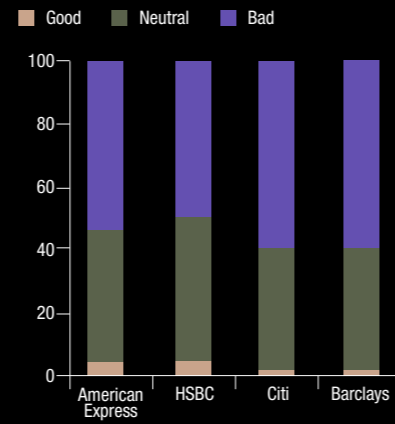
The women in our Middle East survey are only positive about cosmetics, household cleaning products and food brands.

IT is seen as the worst performing sector. We also asked this question in our

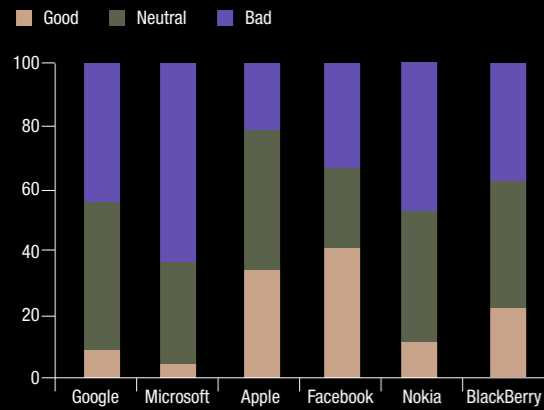
### WHO IS GOOD AT MARKETING TO WOMEN?



### HOW ARE FINANCE SECTOR BRANDS DOING?



### HOW IS THE TECH SECTOR DOING?



global survey. In some cases, there was no difference in the answers. Unsurprisingly, women around the world, as well as the Gulf region, perceive that cosmetics companies are good at understanding female consumers.

Financial services companies are seen as being equally bad in the UAE and globally, with 60 per cent of women, both regionally and globally, saying that such brands are bad at marketing and catering to women's needs.

Healthcare and food had similar percentages in the UAE questionnaire, as well as in the global survey.

The same percentage of women – 62 per cent – agree that automotive brands are not good at marketing to female consumers. But there are some – 12 per cent – respondents worldwide who say that auto companies are doing a good job. In the regional survey this was zero per cent. None of the professional women who responded to our survey thought that car companies are good at understanding their female consumers.

The property sector is getting it wrong around the world, but has a worse per-

### AFFILIATED TO SCIENCE



According to *Accelerating growth: Women in science and technology in the Arab Middle East*, a report by Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU), young Arab women are increasingly participating in science and technology programmes at schools and universities. Women scientists and technologists are key to the region's economic transformation.

Young women are achieving better grades than their male counterparts in science and technology at school. More Arab women than men are enrolling for science degrees at universities, and successfully completing them.

A disconnect remains between scientific education and the labour market for women. After completing tertiary scientific education, women are less likely than men to pursue a career in science and technology.

Various initiatives – such as lifting barriers to greater participation of women in science, introducing policies such as parental leave and flexible shifts in firms – can motivate women, says EIU. Collaboration between industry and academia, mentoring initiatives, and conferences and workshops can also help women.

ception in the Middle East. Globally, 41 per cent say that property companies are bad at marketing to women, while in the UAE and the Gulf region, 62 per cent think these companies are not speaking to them.

### Question 5: Which media do you trust?

Marketing professionals have a wide range of tools to engage with consumers today, including traditional and digital media. Our Middle East survey found that women use online media and trust parts of the online media landscape – particularly reviews and recommendations.

Online reviews were seen as the most trusted media by our panel, however, the integrity of traditional media, particularly newspapers, was also seen as trustworthy.

Women do not like their personal space being used by advertisers. Ads on mobile phones were seen as the least trusted form of media; our panel was also wary of advertising on search engine results.

### Top three trusted media.

1. Online reviews
2. Editorial content in newspapers
3. Other consumer opinions online



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**Marketing to women:** Females in the region trust online media and respond better to gender-savvy products

## One hundred per cent of our sample said they recommend products and services...

### Three least trusted media.

1. Text ads on mobile phones
2. Ads on search engine results
3. Ads on mobile devices

### Question 6: How Important are different digital devices?

New technology is changing the way we live our lives. Devices that are connected to the internet are essential for our panel. Being able to communicate in a two-way conversation is also key, which explains why computers and smartphones are at the top of the list of devices that are important to our panel.

Traditional media devices, which send one-way information and have little or no 'on-demand' capability are down the list. Radio and TV are not as important in the lives of our panel – which is something that marketers need

to consider while keeping in mind the results from question 5 about advertising on phones.

### Question 7: Do you recommend products and services?

It is more important than ever for brands to get other women to recommend their products, rather than tell them how good they are. One hundred per cent of our sample said they recommend products and services, and 77.5 per cent said they do it often. Social media has made the process of recommendation simpler and trusts a huge part of how consumers make purchasing decisions.

"Marketing professionals need to ensure they are being consistently gender-savvy in their marketing to engage with their female consumers, starting from authentic campaign messages, targeted

and sophisticated implementation through offline and online media," says Ioannidis.

"One size no longer fits all for the savvy female consumers." ■

### ABOUT THE STUDY

Aquitude's Purl Influencer Panel helps bridge the gap between companies and influential, discerning female consumers. The panel shares the opinions of successful, influential women to help companies create gender-savvy products and services.

The survey was completed by professional women in sectors such as consumer goods (ten per cent), retail (9.5 per cent) and energy (two per cent). Some 30 per cent of respondents work for advertising or marketing agencies. None of the respondents identify themselves as working in financial services, IT or telcos. The vast majority – 85 per cent – of respondents are based in the UAE; 10 per cent comprised women in Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait and Bahrain and five per cent are from Saudi Arabia.