

On the Mark

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Targeting Women - How One Credit Union is Getting Their Attention

Women are the most powerful consumer group in America, yet many financial institutions still haven't figured out how to reach this demographic. Fort Worth Community Credit Union has, and it is getting women's attention. In just nine months, the credit union has built a sub-brand for its female population which has captured the attention of consumers and media around the country.

At the center of that attention is Gabby Knows, the digital "spokesgal" for Fort Worth Community Credit Union. She is the kind of girlfriend most women want. She's smart, but not geeky. She has the gift of gab but isn't preachy. In many ways, she's the girl next door.

Gabby likes the same things many women do. She enjoys a trip to Starbucks every once in a while. She shops at Target. She likes to find recipes on the web and is a fan of Crockpot Girls on Facebook. She also enjoys flipping through magazines and likes websites with great tips for cleaning the house, organizing clutter, decorating, crafts and more. Gabby is the typical soccer mom, and she's pretty popular for being the new girl in town. Fort Worth Community Credit Union launched her on February 14, 2011 – Valentine's Day.

"We wanted her to be somebody that could be relatable to all women – single, married, married with children, single moms, soccer moms, etc. Our target demographic is women ages 28-55. Our sweet spot is women ages 30-38," said Kande Hein, account manager with Third Degree Advertising, the agency that partnered with Fort Worth Community to create Gabby.



The concept of Gabby started when the credit union was trying to decide the best way to start their

social media efforts. The marketing team didn't just want to put up a Facebook page and hope members would flock to it. They wanted to engage and interact with members and non-members. They just didn't know who. When they started researching demographics to see which ones used social media and which platform would be most effective, they learned a lot about women:

- They manage 75 percent of family finances
- They manage 89 percent of checking accounts
- They make 80 percent of all consumer purchases

"Women make so many decisions and purchases. This was a target we felt really comfortable going after," said Brandy Scarlett, marketing assistant for Fort Worth Community Credit Union.

Women also use Facebook more than other demographic. Figures from eMarketer indicate that two-thirds of all moms in the U.S. are online. More than 17 percent of all Facebook users are moms in the United States. A recent study by the Direct Marketing Association, in partnership with Mom365, shows that 72 percent of moms will "like" brands on Facebook.

But liking brands doesn't necessarily bring more exposure to the brand. It's the interaction of social media that keeps people coming back. That is one reason Gabby is such a hit with Fort Worth Community members. She interacts with them. On her website – getyourworthon.com – Gabby offers free financial advice and budgeting tools. Her website also contains her reading list, iPhone apps she likes, contests, a daily coupon deal and more. On her Facebook page, she interacts with people on just about any topic. Status updates on Gabby's page include information on removing coffee stains from your favorite mug with an orange peel, tips on what to do with extra hangers in your closet, a link to an article on 10 travel fees to avoid, a post about credit union day and more. Her tweets also run the gamut.

"A lot of the conversation happens on FB. We know budgeting is necessary, but it's not necessarily sexy, so we keep that kind of information on her website and use Facebook and Twitter for the conversations," said Scarlett.

Gabby really transcends social media, though. Gabby held a \$1,000 sweepstakes giveaway during Texas Tax-free Weekend. The online contest was augmented with QR codes at the mall. That campaign accounted for 33 percent of all hits to Gabby's website since it launched. It has registered more than 11,000 unique visits in nine months.

Females want to be taken seriously. They make a lot of purchasing decisions, and they spend a lot of time researching those decisions. A survey conducted by the [Marketing to Moms Coalition](#) revealed that women spend about three hours a day online checking and sending e-mail, paying bills and conducting research. As a result, they are attracted to advertisements and websites that speak to them in plain English. They don't want jargon and they don't want techno-speak. They want brands to discuss what they care about in their own language. Females also are social beings. They like to interact and they like to know someone is there to empathize with them.

These are some of the reasons so many members have gotten on board with Gabby. Behind the scenes, she is about 10 women working together to uphold her voice and her image. To members, she is one person, with one voice that speaks to and interacts with female consumers. Fort Worth

Community Credit Union has differentiated itself with Gabby's sub-brand for women. How will your credit union reach women? If you don't, someone else will.

Blog Updates

Follow Mark's blogs for frequent and timely information on topics like marketing, branding, generations, leadership, Think Huge and more. Blog posts are updated weekly. Here are links and summaries from some recent posts.

What Should Your Credit Union Stop Doing?

Many strategic planning sessions are all about what the organization will be doing in the coming months. That's a necessity, but what about what isn't working? Find out which questions your credit union should be asking to discover what it should stop doing.

Why Are Members Leaving Your Credit Union?

Is the topic of members leaving your credit union something that keeps you up at night? It should. In such a saturated industry, it's hard enough to get new members in the door. So many credit unions have the added problem of members leaving, and they don't even know why. In this blog post, Mark shares five top reasons why members leave credit unions, as well as solutions for ensuring they stay.

How Credit Unions Can Leverage Bank of America's \$5 Debit Fee

The news of BOA's latest round of fees stunned the financial services industry. It will charge its customers \$5 a month to use a debit card. As crazy as it sounds, it doesn't guarantee more business for credit unions. There's a good chance Bank of America did its research on consumer "pain points." Learn how your credit union can overcome consumer inertia and garner more business from customers fed up with bank fees.

What Is Your Legacy?

The world seemed to pause a few weeks ago when Apple founder Steve Jobs died. He was a definite leader in the technology world, and he made contributions that have changed the way the average person lives. Changing lives and making a difference is not reserved for the few. It's a choice anyone can make to Think Huge and affect change with the time given to them. Mark offers this perspective on how to think about the legacy you will leave some day.

Online Buzz

Comments and Ideas from Mark's Blog Readers

10 Questions to Ask at Your Strategic Planning Session

"Great questions above but I think many CUs need to take a further step back prior to asking those questions. My concern is that I still see far too few institutions that can answer the most basic of questions, that of:

Who are we and who are we trying to serve? and everyone within a four-county area...blah blah blah" is not an acceptable answer..Once you have an answer to that question, you can start to address things like:

Is that a sustainable market?
How do we differentiate ourselves TO THAT GROUP?"

It's my opinion that you need to know those answers before you can start in to the questions you've noted above."

-Mike Bartoo

Changing Your Credit Union's Culture

"I don't get why this notion of "culture" is cloaked in mystery. Want to change your credit union's culture? Fire the entire management team, and bring in a new team.

Unless you hired a set of exact clones, the culture will change. Pretty fast, in fact.

Don't want take that drastic a step? Good luck. Reality is that executives with 15 to 30 years of experience have mental models about what works and what doesn't. About the only way they'll change those models -- and thereby enabling a change of culture -- is if there's a burning platform (i.e, the CU is about to go under).."

-Ron Shevlin

**" 'The reality is 80% of your staff HATES sales training. So forget them and focus on the 20% that love it.'
If this is the case, I'd focus on the 80%...by reallocating them to non-member facing positions. Sales is service, and service is sales. Period."**

- Bill Clancy -

We want to hear from you. If you have used an idea or learned something of value from one of Mark's blog posts, be sure to leave a comment on the blog so others can benefit from your experiences, as well.

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