

The Gamma Factor

WOMEN AND THE NEW SOCIAL CURRENCY

Executive Summary by *Lisa Finn* and *Lisa Johnson*

The *Gamma Factor* identifies a hidden power in the women's market — a dynamic group of women who interact with and influence a wide network of consumers, who generate and disseminate trends and new ideas, and whose social behavior and media habits reflect a new marketplace and marketing model. Gamma women represent 51% of all women in America.* As a majority market that acts in many ways like a psychographic segment, they share a set of attitudes and behaviors that can be marketed to with specific messaging and techniques. Understanding how Gammas connect and interact can also give marketers insight into how information travels in the new media landscape.

CHANGES IN THE MARKETPLACE FAVOR GAMMAS

Changes in the marketing landscape necessitate adjustments not just in strategy and messaging, but in how marketers think about the relationships among consumers, products, and marketing. Gammas value authenticity in advertising and marketing, and they enjoy exchanging ideas and recommendations with their networks of connections. Their democratic style of influence mirrors the collaborative social model of the Internet, often referred to as Web 2.0.

BROAD SOCIAL TRENDS REFLECT GAMMA ATTITUDES

Roper Reports' U.S. 2007 Annual Report identifies broad cultural trends that resonate with Gamma attitudes and priorities.

- > Individuality and independence are the new currency.
- > Consumers' media use has expanded.
- > Consumers value authenticity.
- > Consumers expect to participate.
- > Consumers' social spheres have greater reach.
- > Consumers crave belonging.



Meet the Gamma Woman

The Gamma woman is one of 55 million American women* creating a groundswell in today's new media and marketing landscape. Using multiple media — both online and off — she shares ideas, information, and recommendations with her vast network.

The Gamma woman stands in the center of a web of positive personal connections: she aims to bring out the best in herself and others. Her sense of self is guided by her internal beliefs, passions, and priorities. She is motivated by the desire to interact, rather than to impress. She is her family's strong center, her friends' trusted ally, and she models the change she wants to see in the world.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GAMMA WOMAN:

- > Collaborative and inclusive
- > Feels empowered by information
- > Values relationships of all kinds
- > Defines success for herself
- > Individualistic and self-actualizing
- > Believes work should fit personal and family needs; not the other way around
- > Strives to be healthy and is comfortable in her own skin
- > Enjoys creative pursuits and opportunities for self-expression
- > Environmentally-conscious
- > Faith and spirituality are important
- > Willing to share her time and talents

Gamma vs. Alpha

The Gamma woman is also defined in relation to what she is not: an Alpha woman. Alphas value status and express their high standing on the social ladder through their clothes, their homes, their cars, their careers, and even their families. Gammas, on the other hand, may be equally well-off financially and may shop in the same stores, but their choices are about expressing their creativity and personal style, making their homes comfortable and welcoming, and doing their part to preserve the environment.

GAMMAS' INFLUENCE FLOWS FROM THEIR RELATIONSHIPS

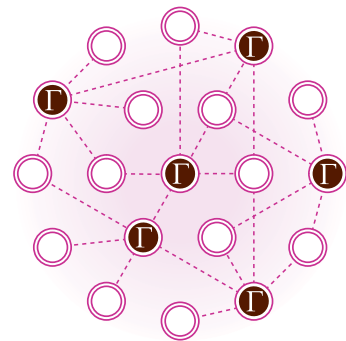
Gammas' influence spreads outward in all directions. They position themselves in the center of a web of equals, and their connections to people are interactive. Each link operates as a give-and-take of information and support. The Gamma woman both influences her friends and is influenced by them. Because of this structure, Gammas tend to have stronger bonds with—and arguably a stronger influence on—each of the people in their networks than Alphas do with those on the middle and bottom rungs of their ladders.

What this means for marketers is that reaching a Gamma also means reaching the large and diverse network of people with whom she shares and exchanges information, opinions, and recommendations.



ALPHA STYLE OF INFLUENCE

- > Top of a stack
- > Influence trickles down and fades
- > Exclusion creates value
- > Thrives in hierarchy



GAMMA STYLE OF INFLUENCE

- > Center of a web
- > Influence radiates out and stays strong
- > Collaboration creates value; sharing is currency
- > Thrives in democracy

Gammas by Generation



GEN Y (Born 1982 - 2000)*

Gen Y women embody the Gamma spirit of cooperation and interaction. They use technology to stay connected, and their web of connections is global.

Gen Y Gammas are leaders, movers and shakers, organizers, volunteers, and activists. They want to change the world for the better and are confident that they can—by working together.

GEN X (Born 1961 - 1981)*

Gen Xers are individualistic. They want to align their exterior circumstances with their internal vision of themselves, which can take a variety of forms, depending on their passions and priorities.

Gen X Gammas' communication style is direct and down-to-earth; they abhor hype and look for authenticity in marketing messages and in political leaders.

BABY BOOMERS (Born 1943 - 1960)*

Boomers value their relationships with people in all spheres of life. They are more likely to connect through face-to-face interactions than technological means.

Boomers still think of themselves as rebels; they are redefining retirement to include work, and they respond better to peer reviews than to expert recommendations.

Gamma Personality Profiles

CONNECTOR

This Gamma interacts with an extensive network of friends, colleagues, people in her community, people who share her hobbies and interests, and so on. She uses all the tools at her disposal, both online and off, and her network is vast and diverse.

CATALYST

This Gamma's primary motivation is to make a difference in her world, whether that be in her own immediate circle or in the larger world. She puts time and effort into causes, organizations, and projects that matter to her. Whatever her specific interests, she has a talent for inspiring others and getting things done.

CHALLENGE-SEEKER

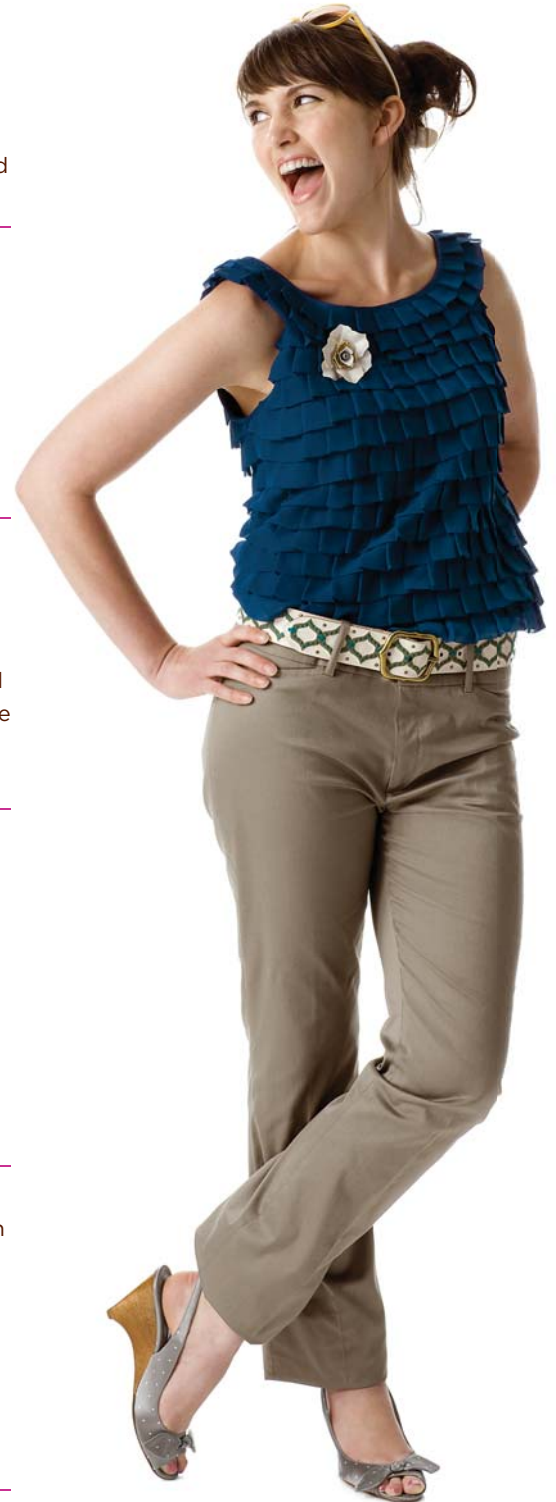
These risk-taking Gammas are adventurous, dynamic, and always ready to push their personal limits. Many have left the corporate world to start their own businesses—some after “retiring” from full careers. Many are athletes, and they derive satisfaction from testing themselves physically as well as mentally.

FAMILY-FOCUSED

Gamma moms put their families first; work exists to serve family needs, not the reverse. They feel free to define family for themselves, and while they put their families' needs front and center, they also want to be recognized as individuals. It's also important to note that Gammas' families may not look like the traditional nuclear “two parents plus biological kids” household.

DIY CREATOR

These are the artists and innovators of the Gammas. Many have started their own businesses to allow them to pursue their deepest interests; others find alternate ways to bring creativity into their daily lives. Their do-it-yourself spirit also extends to their homes; many combine a love of creating things with a desire to be environmentally conscious.



About the Authors

Lisa Finn is a writer, analyst and consultant with more than a decade of experience writing about marketing and research, with significant expertise in the field of marketing to women. During her eight-year tenure as Editor of the *Marketing to Women Newsletter*, she developed groundbreaking studies on the portrayal of women in print and television advertising.

Lisa Johnson is the coauthor of *Don't Think Pink*, author of *Mind Your X's and Y's*, and CEO of the *Reach Group*. A leading corporate trainer, researcher, and brand consultant, Johnson has worked with top companies internationally.

About Meredith

Meredith Corporation is the leading media and marketing company reaching 75 million women through brands such as *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Family Circle*, *Parents*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *More*, *Fitness* and many other magazines, broadcast stations, websites and consumer events.

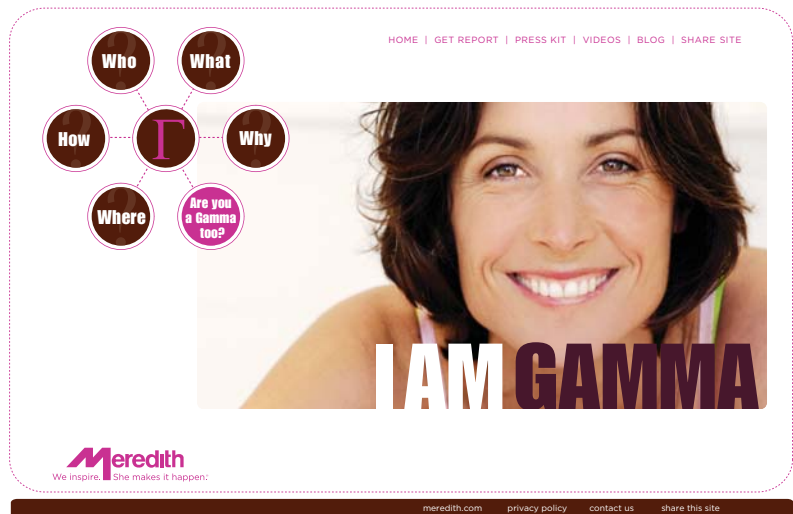
CONCLUSION

As the social and technological environment in which they live becomes more and more suited to their communication and interaction styles, Gammas' influence in the marketplace will expand. As more Gen Y girls grow into adulthood, Gammas' numbers will also increase.

Because many marketers are still concentrating their efforts on reaching the Alpha mentality, those who go after Gammas have an early-to-market advantage. To tap into the power of this consumer, speak her language—understand what's important to her, how she uses media and finds information, and which messages resonate most strongly with her.

For marketers, the value of reaching Gammas lies not only in harnessing the power of their word-of-mouth but also in learning their language of influence: the voice of authenticity, of trust, and of shared passions.

To request a copy of the full **Gamma Report**, visit www.GammaWomen.com or contact **Nancy Weber**, Chief Marketing Officer, at Nancy@Meredith.com.



GammaWomen.com provides marketers with insight into the lives of real Gamma women, as well as strategies and tools for inspiring and interacting with them on their terms. Tools for marketers include video interviews with real Gamma women, profiles of each personality type, a master class podcast with report co-author Lisa Johnson, and a Gamma blog: an online network of Gammas that allows marketers to “listen in” on interactions among Gamma women.