

## Wonder Women

Women buy most everything – for themselves and for their families. Being in the business of selling merchandise, you probably knew that, but knowing a fact and acting upon it are two very different things.

How has knowing that women are either the purchasers of products you sell, or the primary influencers of those purchases, changed the way you operate your store? Has that knowledge altered the way you display your merchandise... the cleanliness of your store... the training of your employees... the sex of your employees?

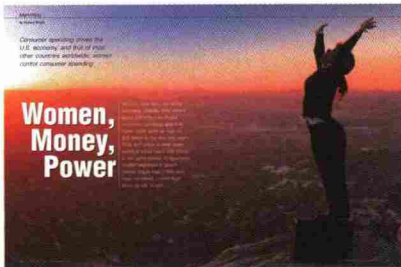
“If your store... doesn’t acknowledge the female factor, if it doesn’t invite women in and make them feel at home, at ease, safe, hygienic, respected and in control, if it doesn’t take into account what women want and expect (which is a whole lot different from what men want and expect), well, then, it’s bad business.”

Those words are from “What Women Want,” a new book by Paco Underhill, founder and CEO of Envirosell, a New York-based research and consulting firm specializing in the study of retail and service environments. Its clients include Target, McDonald’s, Trader Joe’s, Starbucks, Microsoft, Adidas and Estee Lauder.

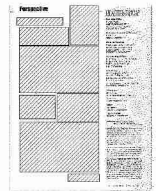
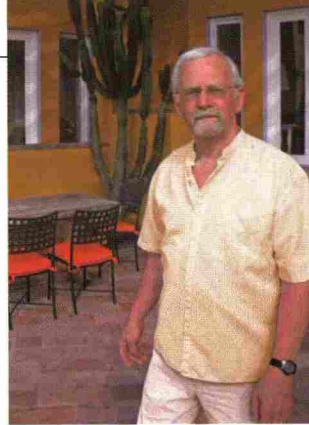
Seldom do we recommend a book, but here we’ll make an exception.

Buy it. Read it. Act on it.

Underhill, and many others, points out that women now control a staggering amount of money, “not just a percentage of active income in the world – i.e., money they take home from their own jobs – but a large percentage of passive income, meaning family money, or money they’ve inherited.”



In case you haven’t noticed, they also have crashed through that infamous glass ceiling and now occupy seats at the highest level in business and government. Sixty percent of college and university students in the U.S. and Canada are women, and the percentage of jobs held by women in medicine, law, science and architecture – as well as in many other professional jobs previously held only by men – is growing by leaps and bounds.



According to Underhill, soft goods such as clothing, sheets, blankets (or fabrics and furniture) traditionally have been marketed to women, while hard goods such as televisions, computers, cars (or fireplaces and barbecues) have been marketed to men.

In today's world, that's hardly an intelligent approach.

In order to appeal to women, says Underhill, first recognize that men want to know, "What is this technology? Is it cool? Is it powerful?"

Women, however, are much more interested in, "What and where does this get me/us?"

"Women buy technology not as men do, but as tools and applications that facilitate relationships and enhance their lives."

In this issue we discuss the importance of marketing to women, based on a recent article in the *Harvard Business Review* by Michael J. Silverstein and Kate Sayre, and including *Hearth & Home's* own results from three separate studies of the hearth, barbecue and patio industries (see "Women, Money, Power," page 16).

Don't forget the Casual Market in Chicago from September 21-24, and be sure to attend the seminar on marketing to women presented by *Hearth & Home* and Lisa LaPorta, well-known hostess of HGTV's "Designed to Sell." It's on Thursday, September 23 at 1pm in suite 1520 on the 15th floor of the Merchandise Mart.

*Richard C. Wright*