



## TREND IMPACT ZONE

### Audiences

This trend is effecting all audiences, with women most impacted. Generations may experience the trend differently:

- Boomer
- Gen X
- Millennial
- Gen Z

### Industries

Sectors significantly shaped by and finding opportunities in this trend include:

- Financial Services
- Healthcare
- Transportation
- Travel/Hospitality
- Education

### Related Trends

Sub-trends related to "The Rise of Women" include:

- Inclusive Entrepreneurship
  - Since 2007, the number of women-owned firms in the US has increased by 45 percent
- Freelance/Gig Economy
  - 53 percent of fulltime freelancers are female

# TREND: the rise of women

## The Fourth Wave of Feminism

While the gender revolution is far from over, women are finally being recognized as a powerful force to be reckoned with. Their growing influence in the marketplace and society-at-large can no longer be ignored. Brands that engage women as the people that they are – athletes, investors, activists, coders, gamers, business owners – versus antiquated stereotypes of women, will ultimately endear themselves to this powerful segment.

## Trend Drivers

### female-led empowerment & organization

Inspired by the [Women's March](#) in January 2017, and the feminist groundswell building ever since, women are organizing for real action and social impact. Gender inequality and reproductive rights remain a critical issue, but women are also rallying behind immigration rights, healthcare reform and broad civil liberties.

### spotlight on gender inequality

From Hollywood [films](#) to [tell-alls](#) coming out of Silicon Valley, 2016 brought some acknowledgement for women's contributions that were previously downplayed, but also unearthed examples of the ongoing inequities and harassment faced by females in the workplace.

### proven success of feminine values

Amid global political unrest, there is a notable [feminine zeitgeist](#) which counters the negative, isolationist populism of the Trump administration or Brexit. While the US narrowly missed electing a female president, [across the globe](#), male and female leaders are deploying feminine capabilities and values for innovative and successful results.

### growing awareness of female financial power

The ability to reach the female market in traditionally predominantly male markets represent significant growth opportunities for most brands. Not to mention women are highly aware of the "[power of the purse](#)." Women make up an estimated 85 percent of consumer purchases in the US, and hold 39 percent of [investable assets](#).

## Evidence of this Trend in the Wild

### women-only social platforms & apps

- [SocialJane.com](#), [Girlfriend Social](#), [GirlFriendCircle](#)s and [Landit](#): Social and professional networking sites facilitating stronger connections among women
- [iFundWomen](#): Caters to female entrepreneurs looking to crowdfund their ventures, and includes coaching, video production support, and a “pay it forward” model in which 20% of fees are directly reinvested into other campaigns on the site
- [Safr](#), [SheTaxis](#) and [Shebah](#): Ridesharing apps that aim to provide safe transportation and job opportunities via all-female networks of drivers and passengers

### tools to evaluate gender equality

- [Buy Up Index](#): App that helps consumers make purchasing decisions based on a company's demonstrated commitment to gender equality
- [Doxa](#) and [Fairy God Boss](#): Crowdsourced websites evaluating the female-friendliness of company cultures and their policies from the perspective of potential employees
- [SPDR Gender Diversity Index ETF](#) (Ticker: SHE): Measures the performance of US large cap companies that are “gender diverse,” defined as companies that exhibit gender diversity in their senior leadership positions

### investment & financial services exclusive to women

- [Female Founders Fund](#), [Plum Alley Investments](#), [Pipeline Angels](#) and [Golden Seeds](#): Investment firms committed to creating capital for and investing in female-led companies, particularly those with a social angle
- [Ellevest](#) and [WorthFM](#): Digital advisors that take women's unique lifetime salary curve and “[MoneyType](#)” personality into account and target their messaging, content and user experience to the female market, particularly millennials
- [Girls Who Invest](#): Nonprofit dedicated to increasing the number of women in portfolio management, with ultimate goal of 30 percent of the world's investable capital managed by women by 2030

#### Brands Getting It Right

*always*



An excellent example of a brand approaching the empowerment trend the right way, Always' “[Like a Girl](#)” campaign turned a phrase that was an insult to females into a message of strength.

**3M**



3M's employee focused “[I'm In](#)” initiative aims to accelerate gender equality and inclusion in the management pipeline and across the company.

  
adidas



Adidas “[I'm Here to Create](#)” is part of the athletic brand's effort to win over women, which also includes the addition of female-specific footwear and athleisure apparel.

---

## Opportunities & Recommendations

---

“**the rise of women**” trend reinforces the notion that the growing clout of women is changing how brands do business and engage with consumers. This trend also reflects the fact that we live in a world that’s increasingly social, interdependent and transparent. In this world, feminine values are ascendant. The most successful and innovative brands are breaking away from traditional structures to be more flexible, collaborative and nurturing. Still, women feel misunderstood by marketing efforts targeting their gender. Suggestions for brands to address this gap and realize the promise of this trend include:

- **defy labels and stereotypes.** Companies must get past talking to women as an object or [stereotype](#). Across industries, brands are realizing that “[shrinking and pinking](#)” is not an effective model. Brands who truly listen to women and avoid a “telling” approach to messaging are more likely to appeal to them
- **embrace subtlety.** Not [everything](#) has to have a gender in mind. Women only want female-specific products and services when they make sense. [Chocolate bars](#) and [pens](#), for example, can appeal to both genders. Suggesting otherwise comes across as offensive and perpetuates the notion that men and women are not equal, particularly when there is a [pink tax](#) involved
- **cultivate connection and conversation.** Women like to share stories and connect on a personal level, but also value facts and numbers to understand the bigger picture. Highly active on social media, they are also willing to buy based [on influencer recommendations](#). Effective outreach can utilize social platforms to facilitate conversations that are personal, empowering and informative
- **tie outreach to social impact.** Women prefer to reinvest their income back into their communities, creating a virtuous cycle. Brands that proactively communicate their values and draw a clear connection to community and social impact will be more likely to attract female interest
- **reflect the stronger view of the feminine.** A new style of leadership is emerging, one that utilizes what are traditionally considered “feminine capabilities” – like empathy, collaboration, candor, flexibility and patience – to [competitive advantage](#). Moreover, brands that embrace [gender diversity](#) in leadership are some of the most innovative and highest earning companies in the game
- **assume nothing and stay connected.** Generalizations and assumptions will almost always backfire and create perceptions of a “[tone deaf](#)” brand. Furthermore, companies that create strategies based on direct consumer involvement versus demographic profiling are better positioned to authentically connect with women based on their attitudes, beliefs and values