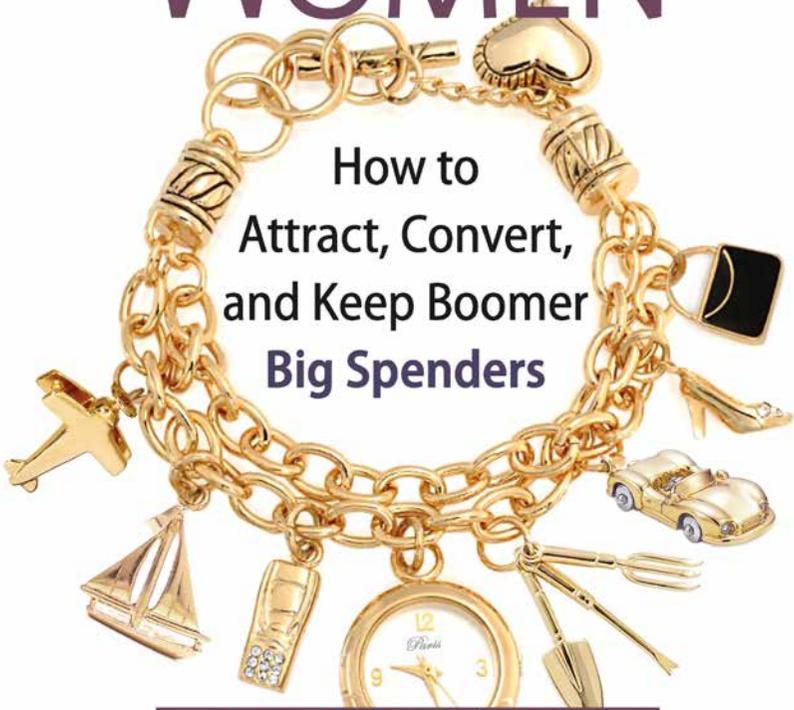


MARKETING TO PRIMETIME WOMEN

How to
Attract, Convert,
and Keep Boomer
Big Spenders



Marti Barletta

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In Depth and Integrated Case Studies— Best Practices in Marketing to PrimeTime Women

People ask me all the time: “Marti, what are some examples of companies that are doing a good job marketing to PrimeTime Women?” Reasonable question . . . but one to which I have very few good answers.

Of course, five years ago, I had the same conundrum when people would ask me who was doing a good job marketing to women in general. “Well,” I would say, “there are a few companies that are doing an interesting initiative here, a progressive program there. . . . But as for companies that have made a *commitment* to marketing to women, and really gotten their organization behind a comprehensive effort? Not so many.”

Today, there are lots. I like to think I helped with that a bit. Once you looked at the numbers, there could be no question of the market opportunity. But people didn’t have any thinking or guidelines about whether or how to market to women differently.

As a marketing opportunity, PrimeTime Women is up against the dual barrier that not only are companies unsure of how to market to them, very few of them even recognize PrimeTime Women as the “golden bull’s-eye” target market that it is.

When I went searching for case studies to illustrate exceptional marketing to PrimeTime Women, I was once again hard pressed to come up with many comprehensive, fully integrated examples, let alone exceptional examples. As you’ve seen throughout this book, there are a number of companies that have dipped a toe into the water—created terrific ads or an excellent event or a strong corporate halo program—but few that have jumped into the big pool with a splash.

That said, there are two companies that stand out as truly exceptional—Curves

fitness franchise and MassMutual financial services. They have taken all of the lessons from Chapter 8 and applied them to their marketing plans with brilliant results. Each of these companies has a strong understanding of the PrimeTime Woman prospect and has created a comprehensive, well-thought-out, well-executed marketing plan.

Notice that I say “plan,” by the way, not “initiative.” The distinction is that each of these companies focuses on women as an integral part of their corporate DNA. Their female-targeted programs and communications are built into the company strategy and growth plan, not this year’s “program du jour.”

As you will see, every element of their marketing programs tie tightly together, so the total effect to the PrimeTime Woman consumer is “one look, one voice.” The consistency of their message and brand personality is as much a part of their success as the strength of the individual elements.

So let’s jump in and learn the best practices of two very smart companies.

Curves Gets PrimeTime Women’s Marketing in Shape

Opportunity

PrimeTime Americans are flocking to exercise clubs and activities in droves. More than half of health club members are over 40;¹ 25 percent of members are people over 55, which is a 120 index versus the total population (meaning people over 55 are 20 percent more likely than average to belong to a health club).² People over 55 are the fastest-growing segment of health club members,³ and the number of “frequent participants” over 55 zoomed 33 percent from 1998 to 2004, vs. zero growth in the 18–34 year old group.⁴

PrimeTime Women in particular are seeking out more ways to stay in shape. They are more conscientious when it comes to both nutrition and wellness behaviors and, as discussed in Chapter 4, more likely to exercise regularly than either midlife men or younger women.

According to the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association, the latest numbers for gym membership among women aged 45 to 64 show a 51 percent rise between 2000 and 2004.⁵

Curves is the first fitness and weight-loss facility dedicated to providing affordable, one-stop exercise and nutritional information for women, primarily women over 35. Launched in 1995 by Diane and Gary Heavin (pronounced “haven,” which seems particularly appropriate to the concept they created), today Curves is the largest fitness franchise in the world with over 9,500 locations. A core part

of the company's mission is to “strengthen women,” a memorial to Gary Heavin's mother, who died prematurely of hypertension when he was 13.

While Curves is not focused exclusively on PrimeTime Women, most of their membership falls within this range, and their wonderfully empathetic and “authentic” marketing does a great job of including PrimeTime Women in all aspects of the club.

Strategies

Gary and Diane realized that many women, especially those over 35, didn't feel comfortable working out in any of the health club facilities available at the time, which were either trendy venues filled with sleek young “hardbodies” in unitards or “manly man” gyms where power, sweat, and testosterone ruled. The couple resolved to change the entire exercise category for women, PrimeTime Women included.

Curves Changed the Size, Scope, and Affordability of Fitness Clubs. They made smaller clubs, with less equipment, so they were affordable not only for women to join as members but also for women to buy and run as franchisees.

Curves Changed the Accessibility of Fitness Clubs. They started out offering their unique program in small towns that had no other fitness facilities and have now expanded to bigger cities as well.

Curves Changed the Format. They created a unique 30-minute “round robin” of machines designed specifically for women and requiring no complicated adjustments to move from one piece of equipment to the next. Women spend five minutes at each station and zip through an effective aerobic and strength training workout.

Curves Changed the Atmosphere. Curves is all about building community. The laughter, conversation, and sense of support that is seen at a typical Curves is different from any other health club.

Curves Also Changed the Way Franchises Work. Curves International Inc., the corporate office, provides extensive support to its franchisees around the world. It offers free training, classes in sales and other business strategies, and provides mentors at the start and throughout a franchisee's ownership experience.

Marketing Tactics

Positioning. The very name of this company, “Curves,” speaks to the “craving authenticity” principle—it celebrates the shape of “average women.” Curves has

been built with a truly empathetic positioning, as a place where women of all ages and sizes can feel comfortable working out in a unique, noncompetitive, supportive atmosphere. As the Curves website says, “Only one place can give you the strength of over 4 million women.”

Advertising. Curves’ vivacious and energetic advertising showcases many PrimeTime Women principles in action—people power, girlfriends, warmth, commonality, empathy, and authenticity. Part of the Curves appeal is its use of real women rather than models, including PrimeTime Women. There are no wannabe actresses with perfect skin and 24-inch waists—just real women, which is welcome and reassuring to prospective Curves members. In fact, Curves used size 14 women in its advertising well before Dove did. It’s easy for PrimeTime Women to see themselves joining, fitting in, and having fun at Curves.

Product. The 30-minute round robin “circle” system is built around easy-to-learn hydraulic resistance machines, so there are no cumbersome weight stacks to change or manage. This system is truly unique and leverages many PrimeTime Women insights:

- **Saves Time:** Women are busy, and this half-hour program is certainly a welcome change from the intensive hour-long (or more) classes many gyms offer. Curves has figured out how to save women time.
- **Community:** Women can stop by anytime, but most have a routine—they come in after taking the kids to school, at their lunch hour, or after work—so they tend to see the same women there each time they go. This builds a sense of community.
- **Empathy:** The circle is key. As it says on Curves’ website: “One of the reasons Curves works is that we are women in a circle. For centuries women have sat in circles and shared their wisdom and support. Here we exercise in a circle and, whether we talk to each other or not, we are face to face supporting each other by our energy and our presence. In this circle as with circles of yore, we are not alone.”
- **Girlfriends:** All of this results in close friendships. Often, Curves members get together socially outside of the facility. In addition, Curves members make it a point to visit Curves locations in other cities and even in other countries, to share the sisterhood. One woman on a “round the world” trip visited 27 Curves locations on her travels!

Promotion.

- ***Partnerships:*** In 2005 and 2006, Curves joined forces with the “Got Milk?” marketers to promote the Great American Weight Loss Challenge. The promotion employs the principles of storytelling, girlfriends, empathy, and female-friendly prizes to make Curves’ marketing more compelling to women everywhere.

The campaign promoted drinking “24 ounces in 24 hours,” a clever way to update the way you say “three 8-ounce glasses of water a day”—and featured a promotion to win one of 24 shopping sprees worth \$2,400 and a 24-month Curves membership.

A promotional brochure alongside the milk display in grocery stores featured three women’s “journals” of their weight loss journey. Part of the weight loss plan was focused on exercise, and Curves was featured in their storytelling “journals” along with a coupon for one free week at Curves.

- ***Merchandise Incentives:*** Curves has a tiered system of Curves-branded merchandise rewards as incentives for members to persist in striving for their goals—items such as clothing, lotion, candles, water bottles, T-shirts, socks, and sweat bands. These products are available only to members who have reached certain goals, so they are exclusive, very sought after, and publicly worn with pride.
- ***Team Contests:*** Throughout the year, Curves has different challenge periods during which members form teams that compete for prizes. Sometimes teams win by losing pounds, sometimes by losing inches, collecting labels, or other tactics. This brilliantly leverages women’s sense of community (whereas for men it would be leveraging their sense of competition), because any woman who might be tempted to let herself slip on her own goals for a few days is going to think a lot more seriously about letting her team down.

Word of Mouth. Members become Curves’ best advocates when they invite friends to join them. The Buddy Referral program offers members “Bring a Friend” coupons for one week of free workouts so members can invite friends to give the club a try. Curves’ phenomenal conversion rate of 80 percent—8 out of 10 referrals sign up to join as members—reflects the appeal of the concept and the persuasiveness of the “member ambassadors.”

Website. Curves’ public website exemplifies how to leverage social values to communicate with PrimeTime Women, as it taps into people power, storytelling, warmth, authenticity, empathy, and inspiration. The video testimonials on the website feature PrimeTime and younger members describing warmly and naturally

how wonderful their Curves experience has been. In addition, the website features images of women who are real Curves members and recounts the stories of not only their achievements but also the hardships they faced en route to their goals. These stories and their credibility are what makes the Curves experience so tangible and believable.

MyCurves.com. Curves just launched this new private, members-only website that extends all that is good about the Curves experience to the online environment. It provides success stories, articles, and recipes, and offers interactive tools to help members reach their goals—such as a calorie bum calculator and shopping lists. MyCurves.com will help members find the support they need when they're not at Curves, from other members across the country, and on the other side of the world.

Product Extensions. Curves has been so successful that it has been proud to launch several product extensions that carry its name and values.

- **“diane” Magazine:** An award-winning quarterly magazine just for members, *diane* features people power, storytelling in the form of real success stories, and helpful articles on everything from caregiving to friendships, from depression to making a difference after Hurricane Katrina.
- **Curvestravel.com:** It's a new company to provide travel services and special deals and discounts to Curves members. With free access to www.curvestravel.com, members can take advantage of special offers and hot deals on vacation packages, cruises, hotels, and rental cars online, as well as group trips.
- **Apparel for Sale:** High-quality Curves branded apparel items are available for purchase by Curves members. These attractive, well-made clothing articles are visible signs of membership. They tap members' sense of community by allowing them to recognize each other outside of the facilities, and they serve as “signage” and invite inquiries about the club from nonmembers.

Alliance—Fitness-Functional Products from Avon. Avon has created exclusive Curves-branded products for women that are meant to be fun as well as functional: a heart rate monitor watch, fitness pedometer, flexibility mat, and thermal waist trimmer, as well as apparel and footwear. The social network of both companies help women embrace and support each other on the journey to “real” wellness.

Corporate Halo Sponsorships. Curves is proud of its corporate donations to worthy causes and takes its community passion down to the franchise level. Every

March, when food supplies are lowest in food banks across the country, Curves franchisees do their own food drive and in 2006 gathered more than 11 million pounds of food. Moreover, Curves founders Gary and Diane Heavin announced shortly after Hurricane Katrina hit that they would match donations up to \$1,000 per club from their Curves franchisees. More than 2,700 Curves franchises from eight different countries responded by collecting and donating \$1.5 million.

Results

Before I tell you about the business results, let me tell you a story of Curves' success in achieving two elements of Gary and Diane's vision to "strengthen women."

First, 90 percent of Curves franchisees are women, and the company has created a profitable and rewarding business opportunity for over 5,000 women business owners.

Second, Curves has provided a women's health opportunity that simply isn't available anywhere else. Here is the story of one remarkable member. Rosa Mustelier was admitted to the ER in early 2004 after suffering continual cold symptoms for years. She could hardly breathe, and at 5 feet and 411 pounds, it wasn't really all that surprising. Doctors told her that her lungs were filled with fluid and that what she needed most was to lose weight. She went home, looked in the Yellow Pages, and found Curves. At first, Rosa was very shy and self-conscious; she'd put her purse right by the front door, and if anyone so much as looked at her she'd grab it and run. She had a hard time with the workout and started slowly on the circuit in order to build up her endurance. Soon she was able to complete the entire circuit. But she still wasn't losing weight; in fact, she was gaining. Julie Preston, the club owner, asked Rosa what she was eating and found out that her diet consisted of one boiled chicken breast for breakfast, one for lunch, and one for dinner. Julie helped Rosa combine the exercise circuit and the Curves weight management program, and she lost 100 pounds in her first five months! But Rosa didn't stop there. She recently got married, and her seamstress told her to stop losing weight because she couldn't size her wedding dress down any more. Rosa is a busy woman who works three jobs—taking care of the elderly, running them to their doctor's appointments and performing other errands for them—but she still finds time to squeeze in her Curves workouts three times a week. Rosa has now lost 231 pounds, 167 inches, and 12 dress sizes! This is a company that changes women's lives.

It took McDonald's 25 years and Subway 26 years to open 6,000 franchises; Curves did it in only seven. Curves is the largest fitness franchise in the world,

the 8th largest of any kind in the United States, and the 10th largest in the world. There are more than 4 million members, representing 50 states and 42 foreign countries. In January 2006, Curves received the following accolades in Entrepreneur magazine's 27th annual elite Franchise 500 rankings: the No. 1 Fitness Franchise, the No. 1 Low Cost Franchise, the No. 5 Fastest Growing Franchise, the No. 3 Top Global Franchise and the No. 3 Best Franchise overall. The Curves 2004 marketing campaign, "The Power to Amaze," received an EFFIE award and was so successful that it exceeded all measurement metric goals by at least 200 percent, according to Curves' president Mike Raymond.

MassMutual Helps PrimeTime Women Secure Their Futures

Opportunity

The premise of this book is that PrimeTime Women are perched atop the intersection of the two most powerful consumer opportunities in the world: 50+ households that have most of the money, and women heads of household who spend, save, and invest it. It should come as no surprise that the financial services industry was among the first to wake up, sit up, and get busy.

Households where the head of household is over 50 own up to 79 percent of all financial assets in America.⁶ They control 80 percent of all of the money in savings accounts,⁷ and 66 percent of all dollars invested in the stock market.⁸ Their enormous economic clout will continue to escalate based on increasing income, high net worth, and inheritance of even more assets.

The "power of the purse" also means the power of the credit card, the stock market, the checkbook, and all other financial instruments. In 85 percent of U.S. families, women handle the checking account.⁹ Women manage 75 percent of family finances¹⁰ and control or influence 53 percent of family investment decisions.¹¹

PrimeTime Women have increasing control over all financial decisions, including long-term asset accumulation like retirement accounts and trusts. Among Boomer women, 80–90 percent have sole or joint responsibility for managing finances in savings accounts, investment accounts, IRAs, 401(k)s, annuities, life insurance, and so on.¹² It's a complicated undertaking and a big responsibility, but unlike previous generations of women, they are equipped with the education, earning power, and work experience to handle it.

Looking ahead to their 70s and 80s, PrimeTime Women will be outliving their husbands by an average of 15 to 18 years, during which time they will have sole control over the jointly accumulated assets of their PrimeTime years.

Strategies

MassMutual Financial Group, a global financial services organization, recognized the PrimeTime Women's market as ripe for potential, and for the moment, poorly served. I say "for the moment" because a good number of their competitors have already initiated programs targeted to "women" in general. It seems likely it won't take them long to locate the low-hanging fruit: PrimeTime Women.

MassMutual's objectives in developing a women's financial program have been

- to break through competitive clutter,
- to establish MassMutual as a trustworthy, useful, and accessible source of financial advice, and
- to motivate women to take action on their financial needs.

MassMutual has made its women's financial program more than just a "niche" initiative. It named its department "Women's Markets" as opposed to "The Women's Initiative" to position their efforts as a long-term commitment, not a short-term program. The department's strategy is summed up on their website: *"We understand that, while women share the same goal as men of achieving financial security, they have unique wants, needs and concerns, which shape the way they approach developing a financial strategy, insurance and investing."* MassMutual's efforts center on providing financial education, tools, and support in an understanding environment.

While MassMutual does not focus on PrimeTime Women exclusively, they understand the power of the PrimeTime purse and have concentrated much of their communications and visual materials on the realities of PrimeTime Women.

Marketing Tactics

Positioning. MassMutual's promise statement is captured in their tagline: "You Can't Predict. You Can Prepare." This sentiment is well aligned with PrimeTime Women's experience coping with the unexpected bumps, bounces—and bonuses—of life and creates a bond-building moment of affinity: "Boy, ain't that the truth."

Events/Educational Seminars. One of MassMutual's key tactics is its series of educational financial seminars. The umbrella theme for the seminars has been the memorable imagery from its popular and successful advertising campaign entitled "Never Kissed a Frog. Never Had To." In contrast to other companies' financial seminars, MassMutual set out to differentiate itself through its attitude and format. From the invitations to the advertising, from the refreshments to the

giveaways, from the location to the way the information is presented, MassMutual transformed its seminars to be more appealing to women and tapped into their values of people power, authenticity, girlfriends, empathy, emotions, and milestone marketing.

The latest event is called “Pearls of Wisdom:”

- **Invitations:** To differentiate itself from the conventional presentations of competitors’ seminars, whose invitations all look like formal, engraved wedding invitations, and to ensure the invitation got opened, MassMutual’s envelope featured an illustration of the famous frog—wearing pearls. Inside, the invitations feature visuals of women, including PrimeTime Women. The language used is warm and empathetic and not “sales” focused at all.
- **Format and Positioning:** Inside the invitation it says that Pearls of Wisdom is an “entertaining, educational seminar for you” and invites women to join “a circle of like-minded women to share ideas and financial strategies for taking care of the people who matter most in your lives.”
 - The circle is a point of differentiation and interest to women: it’s not going to be a “seminar” where everyone sits classroom style facing a presenter—it’s going to be a discussion among a group of women who share common interests.
 - The “take care of people who matter most in your life” appeal is focused not on “me,” but on “we,” as often you can get women to take action faster when the need is not for themselves, but for the people they are responsible for.
- **Bring a Friend:** The invitations also invite women to bring their mothers, sisters, or friends.
- **Personalize the Presenter:** And included in the invitation is a photo and short bio of the female financial advisor who will be leading the discussion—not the usual list of financial degrees and accomplishments but personal information about her interests and how she likes to spend her time, a little about her kids, if she has any, and perhaps a note about her philosophies on money, saving, and investing.
- **Storytelling:** The seminar is delivered by the presenter and illustrated by an interactive DVD or CD from which the presenter can choose short videos of 19 women telling their stories, the challenges they are facing, and how these issues impact them financially. The women in the presentation come from all walks of life and include PrimeTime Women.

- **Commonality:** The presenters don't use all 19 stories, of course; to make it easier for them to present the ones most appropriate to a particular audience, the stories are grouped by audience segment. For example, there are three or four stories each for women business owners, for retiring PrimeTime Women, and for professional women. The women in the audience can relate to the Pearls of Wisdom stories and storytellers because they are real. Then, the financial advisors can discuss the financial issues and solutions revealed in the stories in context. This then allows women in the audience to open up with "me too" stories and questions.
- **Female-Friendly Customization:** "Pearls of Wisdom" has been customized so that it can be given in front of any size audience in any location. Some innovative financial advisors have further enhanced the female-friendly atmosphere.
 - For example, one financial advisor had the first "Never Kissed a Frog, Never Had To" seminar in conjunction with a local wine shop and invited women to come for the seminar and for a tasting of Frog's Leap wine.
 - Another financial advisor created a "Fiscal and Physical Fitness" seminar and partnered with a local health club for some fitness and nutrition tips. The seminar was given in the advisor's home, where her chef/husband prepared a gourmet meal for all of the women attendees.
 - At the Danskin Women's Triathlon, which MassMutual sponsors, the company puts on a breakfast seminar right before the popular expo on the day before the race. At the seminar, the women triathletes not only get some financial education, they also get a free breakfast, some fun giveaways, an extra \$10 donation to the Breast Cancer Research Fund, and their race packet, which means they don't have to wait in line with thousands of other women to get their race information.

Needless to say, MassMutual's unique seminar settings and approach translate into a significantly higher conversion rate than the conventional methods. Inside the company, the top financial advisors—now including men as well as women—are eager to receive and apply the Pearls of Wisdom seminar kits. At the beginning of 2006, MassMutual's corporate headquarters had 1,500 kits to give its financial advisors; by summer they were down to 50.

Online Audio Seminar. The online audio seminar is perfectly formatted with women in mind, as women prefer to get their information from people rather than static pages. So, it is a delight to find that the “Ten Questions” seminar is hosted by Susan Sweetser, a MassMutual second vice president and head of women’s markets. Consumers can see her face and her bio right on screen and can connect with her immediately: “I know her.” This is much more powerful and motivating than having an anonymous actress present the information. Susan cares about her customers, and it shows.

Website. MassMutual’s website does a wonderful job of warming up PrimeTime Women with its use of many PrimeTime Women principles and insights.

- **Visuals:** Images of women, couples, and PrimeTime Women are all used on the website, which taps into women’s people-orientation and is a strong point of differentiation from the many facesites out there. These people are “authentic” and look like they are real customers of MassMutual rather than models.
- **Focus on the Prospect, Not the Product:** Unlike many financial institutions, MassMutual focuses on the prospect, not the product, as evidenced by the use of customer images, the innovative “Ten Questions” audio seminar, and the use of life events as guide-posts to help women decide where to go on the site.
- **Milestone Marketing:** MassMutual has recognized that very often it’s a major milestone that triggers a woman’s need or decision to act on a financial matter. The website lists 16 different events (such as starting a business, needing elder care, and becoming empty nesters), any of which PrimeTime Women might encounter, then goes into detail about which products or services might be beneficial for each milestone. This marketing is very targeted to PrimeTime Women’s specific and critical needs.

Sales Process. MassMutual learned through research with women on their advisory boards that selling to women is a completely different process than selling to men. The company took its learnings and developed training programs for their financial advisors to help them succeed with women customers, PrimeTime Women included. For example, women want to learn from a partner, a teacher, someone who can help them make informed decisions. Women don’t make decisions in a vacuum—they want context, contingencies, and lots of information; and they will use their hearts and intuitions as well as their minds. They also won’t give

referrals right away, because women need to make sure the relationship is working before they give access to people they care about. Advisors had to learn how to understand the emotional side of the decision process and earn women's trust.

Women also are not likely to want to meet right after one of MassMutual's financial seminars, so MassMutual gave its financial advisors different follow-up strategies to use. MassMutual trained its advisors that the focus should not be on how to close the sale but on how to open and develop a long-term client relationship—it's a beginning, not an ending.

Newsletter/Publications

- MassMutual has a quarterly newsletter called *Intuition*, which focuses on women's financial issues. It covers topics such as savings plans and long-term care insurance and uses compelling storytelling to get the key points across. For instance, with the savings plan subject, MassMutual used a story about two friends, Grace and Kate, and their different savings strategies.
- MassMutual distributes on its website the easy-to-read *A Women's Guide to Investing*, which covers both "Planning for the Expected" (such as paying for college, buying a home, investing for retirement) and "Coping with the Unexpected" (taking care of others, widowhood, second or late-in-life marriages).
- With both publications as well as other educational materials, MassMutual offers the ability to "share it with a friend," which is a great girlfriends and word of mouth tactic.

Women's Advisory Boards. With the support and assistance of MassMutual's corporate office, a number of their local agencies across the country have developed Women's Advisory Boards (WABs) in their communities. These local boards provide some of the top women in each city with an outlet for their desire to contribute in a meaningful way. A substantial side benefit of this initiative is that, because the board members are so engaged with and committed to their efforts, they tend to talk about them and seek to enlist others in their programs. So in effect, MassMutual has a cadre of some of the most influential women in the city spreading the word of MassMutual's good works, essentially acting as brand ambassadors. Most influential women tend to be in the PrimeTime Women age group, and so are their friends.

Corporate Halo. MassMutual supports an extensive portfolio of philanthropic efforts tied into their mission to empower and educate women financially. Moreover, they also communicate their support of these programs right on the first page of the women's section of the website, a smart way to alert PrimeTime Women to the company's strong commitment to corporate citizenship.

- MassMutual created “LifeBridge” to provide completely free life insurance for lower-income parents to help protect their children's education. Its goal is to give away one *billion* dollars of free life insurance, in the form of 20,000 10-year term policies, each with a death benefit of \$50,000—no strings attached. By the end of 2005, MassMutual issued more than 4,600 policies—more than \$230 million in free coverage—and sadly paid out two death benefits. Thanks to LifeBridge, the children of the mothers who died will have funds available to help pay for their education.
- MassMutual also supports the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, Girl Scouts USA, the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, the Danskin Women's Triathlon Series, the Executive Women's Golf Association, the Office Depot Success Strategies for Business Women Conference and many other programs aligned with PrimeTime Women's values and priorities.

By supporting efforts that have the potential to make a local impact, MassMutual is accomplishing two key things. First, the programs provide a community rallying point—a sense of immediacy and personal connection. Second, it gives its local agents a relevant business-building platform to use in engaging attention and interest on a grass-roots level.

Workplace Environment. Not only does MassMutual talk the talk of “doing well by doing good,” they walk the walk. In 2005, *Working Mother* magazine named MassMutual one of the best 100 companies for working women. MassMutual provides a number of options to help employees achieve a strong work-life balance, including flexible schedules, near-site childcare facilities, an on-site credit union, convenience store, dry cleaner, tailor, jewelry and shoe repair, a barbershop, and a hair salon. MassMutual also has a strong commitment to employee health, offering state-of-the-art fitness centers, medical clinics for employee visits, and an employee assistance program.

Results

“MassMutual strives to be the best provider of financial services for women, whether they are launching a new business, running an existing one, or organizing their own personal finances,” says Susan Sweetser. Her Women’s Markets division has the unbridled support of upper management at MassMutual because “It’s not just that it’s the right thing to do. They see the business case.”

2005 was a strong year for MassMutual; it produced a double-digit increase in assets under management and strong performance in businesses throughout the organization. In addition to improving efficiencies, reducing costs, and maintaining a prudent investment approach, MassMutual’s management credits expanded product offerings and a top tier and dedicated sales force and employee base, along with innovative market approaches, like the Women’s Markets program, for helping to produce the strong annual results.

MassMutual is attracting more long-term PrimeTime Women customers by understanding their needs, anticipating their changing demands, and providing products and services to meet them. MassMutual is also doing it in a way that is different from any other financial services company out there. As Sweetser says, “We have a heart. We really are a different company.”