

Some Advice on Reaching Out to Mommy Bloggers

By Susan Getgood
February 13, 2008

The lovely Sarah Wurrey asked if I'd be interested in writing a short article for Media Bullseye about mommy blogs. You know, about 800-1000 words. I was more than happy to do it, but advised her off the bat that I couldn't even begin to describe the richness of the momosphere in so few words. What I could do, however, as both a marketer (<http://getgood.typepad.com/>) and a mom (<http://snapshotchronicles.com/>), is provide some general advice to marketers interested in reaching out to mommy bloggers.

Let's start with who they are.

You remember June Cleaver. Forged in the American dream of the 1950s, she was the first mass-market middle-class mom. Perfectly dressed, spotless home and dinner always on the table on time. And, even though media perceptions of women changed in the crucible of the 60s and 70s - Vietnam, Woodstock, Watergate and Women's Lib — somehow mass market advertising's perception of "Mom" stayed stuck in the 50s.

Apparently, once women become mothers, our interests shift entirely to laundry, lunch and Lestoil. And not just interest, mind you. Love. In the Madison Avenue mindset, women are passionate about clean clothes, nice smelling rooms and Hamburger Helper. More or less modern June Cleavers, regardless of profession, education, employment, race or cultural background.

Now, this is an oversimplification. Not all advertising aimed at women who happen to be mothers is this awful. But enough of it is, especially on television, and many moms of my acquaintance are amused more than offended at this advertising that misses by way more than a mile. Umm, no, we don't squeeze the toilet paper or do absorbency tests with paper towels.

It's a far different story when consumer companies reach out to mommy bloggers with the same mass

market June Cleaver-inspired approach. Offering a year's supply of laundry detergent. Or a lame contest for a cereal product.

Of course, moms care about laundry and lunch, stains and soup, but I have yet to meet a mom blogger who would describe any of these things as her passion (http://getgood.typepad.com/getgood_strategic_marketi/2007/10/passion.html), unless she's also a food blogger. Blogs are about our passions. Not products.

Mommy bloggers come in all sizes, shapes, colors and cultures. They are as diverse a population as moms as they are as women. They have professions and businesses and hobbies and political affiliations and religions and favored charities, and care about all sorts of things. Certainly their families and children. But not JUST their families and children.

For the most part, mommy blogs are also highly personal blogs. She isn't trying to "represent an audience." She's talking about her life, her family, her job, her interests. If you want to reach out to mom bloggers, you absolutely must understand this. You must understand her. Talk to her. Not at her, and heaven forbid, not down to her.

Passionate. Personal. Yeah, I can see how laundry soap fits there.

If you want to reach out to mom bloggers, start by connecting to their passions. If you've taken the time to get to know them, and that's a big IF because most marketers still don't do this terribly well, this isn't that hard. If she's your customer, you ought to be able to connect on something. If you don't know what it is, just ask. I've never met a mommy blogger shy about sharing her opinions.

If you can't find a way to connect with her on a personal level, about something that you are mutually passionate about, then she isn't your customer. No amount of emails informing her that her readers will

“love to know about our new improved furniture polish!!!!” will change that. It does not matter that her readership matches your desired demographic. As the saying goes, she’s just not that into you. She may be happy to sell you an ad on her blog, but she’s not going to waste her precious posts on your product.

To some degree, this is simply Blogger Relations 101: *build a relationship, respect the intelligence of the blogger and be relevant to her interests*. However, it’s a bit more than that when it comes to mommy bloggers, and I repeat this because I don’t want you to miss it. It’s personal. Really personal. If you don’t hit it spot on with a mom’s interests or concerns, all you’re doing is trying to exploit her children for your monetary gain. If you are lucky, she’ll ignore you. But don’t count on being lucky.

So, how should you get started? The best way of course, is to dig in and do the research. Find the moms who will be interested in your products, read their blogs and get to know them. Here are a few places where you can “meet” mom bloggers.

BlogHer (<http://blogher.com/>) is the largest community of women bloggers and has a strong base of mommy bloggers. Start by reading the Mommy & Family (<http://www.blogher.com/topic/mommy-family>) topic. If time is short, the BlogHer ad network is a good alternative to reach your audience, and a much better option than a poorly developed, poorly targeted pitch.

Founded by two mommy bloggers, Julie Marsh and Kristen Chase, Parent Bloggers (<http://www.parentbloggers.com>) Network connects companies with parent bloggers for product reviews. It is an excellent option if you have a product that can be reviewed, but the product still must be relevant to the blogger’s interests. And like any review, you do not have control over the reviewer’s opinion.

Group or network blogs like Silicon Valley Moms (<http://svmoms.com/>), Mile High Mamas (<http://milehighmamas.com/>), New England Mamas (<http://newenglandmamas.typepad.com/>) and DC Metro Moms (http://svmomblog.typepad.com/dc_metro_moms/) generally have a good cross-section of women. If one or more of the bloggers seems to share your interests,

you can “follow” her back to her personal blog and get to know her better.

Shopping Blogs are interested in hearing about products that their readers might find interesting. But be sure your product fits the blog’s profile. Some examples:

- Cool Mom Picks (<http://coolmompicks.com/>) focuses on specialty/boutique products for moms and children, generally from smaller companies. Mass produced, mass market products? Nope, they just aren’t that into you.
- Want Not (<http://wantnot.net/>) is a blog devoted to finding deals. Have a great offer or discount on a super product that will help her readers save money and “have it all with less?” Blogger Mir Kamin wants to hear from you. But that’s not an excuse for sending her a press release on every little thing you or your clients do. That, she wants not.

Finally, just for grins, here are some of my favorite mom blogs. Enjoy!

- A Mommy Story (<http://amommystory.blogspot.com/>)
- I Am Bossy (<http://iambossy.com/>)
- Mom-101 (<http://mom-101.blogspot.com/>)
- Mommy Needs a Cocktail (<http://mommynneedsacocktail.com/>)
- Mother May I (<http://maypapers.blogspot.com/>)
- Slurping Life (<http://slurpinglife.typepad.com/>)
- Surrender Dorothy (<http://surrenderdorothy.typepad.com/>)

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