



Marketing Myths

How well do you know your female customers?

It's time to rethink old marketing strategies if you want to reach the fastest-growing segment of motorcyclists, women. Problem is, the men running the dealerships are sidestepping themselves trying to figure out just what their female customers want so they can create that new strategy.

Here are some common myths about women motorcycle customers with the truth revealed as it relates to your dealership.

Myth 1: Women are not technically minded and therefore do not know a lot about motorcycles. This may be true to some extent, but you should never assume this about any female customer. It's a fact that a woman does much more research than a man before making a major purchase, particularly one she knows little about. The less she knows, the more she's motivated to arm herself with information before walking into a dealership. Start the sale off on the right foot by assuming she knows about the product.

Myth 2: When it comes to gear and apparel, women don't mind their merchandise mixed in with the men's because they want to see the coordinating men's jacket anyway. Plus, a lot of women can only fit in the men's sizes. I actually heard this from the general manager of a dealership I visited just the other day when I asked him why he didn't have a separate women's section in his large showroom. He said his response is what his female customers wanted. Not! There is no

woman I know of who wants to rifle through men's jackets on a rack just to find the one or two women's jackets you carry. Nordstrom and Target have separate sections. Why should a motorcycle dealer be any different? Women expect their own section when they walk into a motorcycle dealership that sells clothing.

Not all women like pink and roses. You'd never catch me wearing that flowery rose stuff on (or off) my bike.

If you've mixed women's clothing in with the men's, I can only guess you don't carry enough women's apparel to warrant a section. My question is, why not? There are plenty of manufacturers making full lines of women's apparel, many with XXL sizes so women no longer have to wear men's clothing.

Myth 3: Women want a motorcycle that's built for a woman. Well, what does that mean? What she really wants is a bike that fits her. I know of no manufacturer making girl bikes. They're making motorcycles that are ergonomically friendly for smaller-framed, shorter and less muscular individuals, and those attributes are often found in women. Be sure to

inform your female customer about all the aftermarket parts she can purchase to modify a new bike to fit her, and offer to install them before she takes delivery so she can get comfortable on a bike that fits her right from the start.

Myth 4: All women like pink and roses. I hope you know this is not true. Let me share a secret with you, something I observe about other women (as a woman myself). There are those gals who don't bat an eyelash at wearing flowery leather vests with rose designs while riding their motorcycles. They're attracted to that. My friends and I, well, we're not like those women. You'd never catch me wearing that flowery rose stuff on (or off) my bike. It's just not me. Same goes with pink.

Myth 5: Women motorcycle buyers need extra hand-holding. They're more discriminating and demanding than men. Well, that may be true, but you know what? If you treat her right and cater to her like she expects (and that may be more than you're used to), she'll tell not one, not two, not three, but five of her friends, maybe more if she's a social butterfly. Again, this will happen only if she was happy with the buying experience and you made her feel extra special. Research shows women-to-women testimonials work. A woman places more stock in what her friend tells her than in any advertisement you could create. **D**

Genevieve Schmitt is the founder of Women Riders Now, a marketing and communications company. E-mail her at gschmitt@womenridersnow.com.