

Online Communities Are A Winner For Women

Contributed by eMarketer
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Females find niche communities more valuable than sites like Facebook

Women are well known for their high usage of social media sites, where they make an attractive target. They like to socialize with friends and family, share information and give advice.

But social media is about more than just traditional social networking sites, and according to research from women's community site iVillage in conjunction with Burke Research, Facebook may not be the best place for marketers to find women.

Asked about their attitudes toward online communities designed for women, like iVillage itself (which has a vested interest in such research), CafeMom or BabyCenter, vs. web portals and social networking sites, female internet users preferred online communities for a variety of reasons.

They trusted the sites most, especially for information on brands and products, and they felt the people on women's sites were most qualified to understand their needs.

Social networks like Facebook, by contrast, were seen as less useful, less trustworthy and more of a waste of time.

Women appear to be compartmentalizing their social media habits on different types of sites. Earlier research from iVillage and BlogHer found that women thought social networks were best for keeping up with friends and family, as well as entertainment.

Online communities did not serve these functions as well.

But they did help respondents find out about new products and make purchase decisions.

A March 2010 survey from Yahoo! found a similar pattern: Women were more likely to find and share brand information on women's lifestyle or online community sites than social networks, and believed communities were more likely to provide them with good information on this front.

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