

## The Stereotypes to Avoid When Marketing to Women

By Kristen Luke  
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Many financial advisors don't have marketing materials that appropriately address today's affluent female market. To make a genuine connection with women, choose images for your marketing materials that show you understand who they really are.

Marketing to women is an appealing prospect. Women typically live longer than men do, so much of the wealth controlled by boomers will be transferred over the next 20 years to women. Younger women also have high prospects for future wealth. Women account for 60% of U.S. four-year-college degree-earners and have been starting businesses at a higher rate than men for the last 20 years.<sup>1</sup>

### Choose images that resonate

Let's look at an example. Let's say you market to female business owners. You go to [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com) and search for "[business woman](#)" to find images to use on your website. You find hundreds of images with women in business suits, wearing stiletto heels and crossing their arms. You may not think anything is wrong with these images. But consider that most female-owned businesses are run out of home offices and employ fewer than five people. Can you see how your marketing would be off the mark? A picture of a woman working on her online business from her home office, dressed in stylish yet casual clothes, will likely resonate more powerfully with your target market.

There are dozens, if not hundreds, of female stereotypes that both men and women perpetuate through marketing without even realizing it. When choosing pictures of women for your marketing, evaluate whether the image you select is an accurate reflection of your ideal clients. If it is merely a stereotype, choose an alternate image that can communicate the same concept. Even if you don't think you are stereotyping, brainstorming alternate images may unveil the clichés you are unintentionally incorporating into your marketing. The table below provides some examples for this exercise.

Once you have chosen the appropriate themes for the concepts you want to communicate, the next step is to ensure that the images you are choosing represent real women, not idealized or overly sexualized women. This mistake will show women that you really don't understand who they are.

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<sup>1</sup> See [here](#) and [here](#)

**Appropriate stock photo of an outdoor adventurer**



**Inappropriate stock photo of an outdoor adventurer**



**The Lean-In collection**

While finding stock images that portray today's women can be challenging, a new line of images through Getty Images makes it a bit easier. Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg partnered with Getty Images to offer the [Lean In Collection](#), which provides 2,500 images that address the work and lives of today's contemporary women. While you may still find it challenging to find accurate images representing the women you work with, this site is a good place to start your search.

Finding the right images is just one part of developing appropriate marketing communication materials for female clients and prospects. Aligning your services and message to meet the needs of your ideal female clients will be another crucial task.



*Kristen Luke is the CEO and President of Wealth Management Marketing, Inc., a firm specializing in outsourced marketing department services to Registered Investment Advisors and fee-only financial planning firms. For more information, visit [www.wealthmanagementmarketing.net](http://www.wealthmanagementmarketing.net).*

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