



Getting to Know the Wellness Consumer: and meeting her needs with recreational music making

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As the music products industry begins to prepare for what has great potential to evolve into the most remarkable paradigm shift in its history, no doubt exists that markets will continue to be defined by active consumers. Fortunately, a great deal of research has already been performed to characterize the typical wellness consumer. Becoming familiar with these key findings will certainly better prepare members of the music products industry at all levels to anticipate growth opportunities and the needs of the recreational music maker.

Perhaps it's best to begin with a general definition. Let's envision the wellness consumer as an individual who is actively engaged in—and committed to—preserving, enhancing or re-establishing personal or family health and well-being. The critical foundational construct within this definition reflects an important shift from self-care to the health and well-being of one's family.

According to the Hartman Group, a respected market research firm, "From nearly any angle, and as found in both our quantitative and qualitative research, women drive not only the majority of purchase and use in nearly every wellness sector and behavior, but they also drive those around them to purchase and use health and wellness products and services."

The firm's 2000 Wellness Lifestyle Shopper Study added, "Women are out in the retail world seeing what products are available, trial-purchasing and leading their families into wellness. As key participants at the core of wellness, women are fundamentally behind the 'live, shop and buy' of the current wellness market."

The study also summarized the leading reasons that drive wellness purchases. Not surprisingly, first and foremost is an interest in staying healthy. The second reason predictably follows and clearly expresses the ongoing challenge of the quest to feel better. These reasons are strongly supported by an emphasis on mental and emotional balance as well as one's physical condition. In fact, 87 percent of the study's survey respondents agreed with the statement "Mental and emotional balance is every bit as important as physical health." As we further refine our focus on the wellness consumer by honing in on the baby boomer generation, the image of this mature consumer begins to clearly emerge. She is perhaps best categorized as 40+ years of age (born between 1946 and 1964), and is among 76 million boomers in the United States—the number of which is growing at a phenomenal rate (every 8 seconds another person turns 50).

According to the June 2003 edition of Euromonitor International, "By 2010, the 50+ segment in the U.S. will grow by 21 million while the 18–34 age segment will grow by just 5 million. The number of baby boomers and seniors on the Internet grew by 18.4 percent in 2001. The spending habits of older Americans make them one of the most desired markets on the Internet today."

Packaged Facts, a syndicated market research firm, noted in November 2002 that "the current aggregate income of baby boomers is \$4.1 trillion, and as boomers are in their prime earning years, this much-targeted demographic is even more important to, and poses a greater challenge for marketers than it has been in the past."



From our perspective, it's clear that the myriad of non-musical benefits extensively described in prior Recreational Music Making articles precisely meets the needs of this bright, discerning and sophisticated consumer who has already shaped an existing wellness market of considerable size. In the United States alone, more than \$66 billion a year is currently spent on health and wellness products—excluding prescription and over-the-counter drugs. These extraordinary numbers continue to grow as individuals become more committed to, and actively involved in, shaping their personal and family's health and well-being.

Yet realizing the enormous potential impact this well-defined consumer has on the future of the music products industry is only the beginning. Recognizing and anticipating her needs as a driving force for product and program development serves as a logical, preparatory step for attracting wellness consumers by emphasizing the quality of life and health/wellness benefits of participating in a Recreational Music Making program.

A determined commitment to becoming more attuned to this unique wellness consumer must be made on manufacturing, distribution and retail levels. Members of the music products industry who are interested in serving this large and vastly underserved market should carefully review the essential components of well-structured Recreational Music Making programs prior to developing and offering them to wellness consumers.

In conclusion, extending the music products industry's mission with key Recreational Music Making initiatives, training programs and marketing strategies emphasizing non-musical outcomes is a formidable task that stands before us as a unique challenge. We also consider it an unparalleled opportunity to create unprecedented growth and future success. There's never been a better time to discover precisely what women want!