Written by Cheryl Pearson McNeil
Wednesday, 20 March 2013 00:00

As I write, Chaka Khan's empowering "I'm Every Woman" loops in my head – like a soundtrack. (By the way, have you *seen* her lately? All slim, trim and more fabulous than ever). It's Women's History Month and the lyrics to that iconic anthem should be resonating with all women, and those who love us, as we celebrate ourselves and the countless contributions we make everyday – both large and small - that keep the world turning.

No matter how small or far-reaching the radius of your world is every choice you make is important. Nielsen shines the light on women's choices and our dynamic impact as consumers with two new global reports: *Does Gender Matter* and *10 Things to Know About Today's Female Consumer.*

I've said it before, and I'll say it again – "Vive la différence." Yes, we know that girls are just as smart as boys and women can do pretty much everything a man can – but, like it or not – our brains are wired differently. And, that's ok. Women are master multitaskers and there's a scientific reason for that. *Who knew, right?* Nielsen's NeuroFocus research shows that "ability" is driven by what happens to developing brains in the womb. Traits like big-picture thinking and multitasking are hard-wired in women's brains, along with "gut" reasoning, social and verbal skills and the worry/empathy tendency. We balance work (either outside or in the home), take care of our families – nurture, budget, shop, schedule, run hither and yon – and keep it tight with ourselves as best we can. Men's brains, on the other hand, are pre-conditioned for concrete thinking, goal-oriented tasks, logical solutions and competition/defense. (Cheryl's translation: give them one thing to do at a time if you really want something to get done).

How we think and respond influences the way companies and advertisers design their messages to us to achieve their economic bottom line. *See how much power we have?* These types of insights tell them that women respond to concepts that are authentic. Touch our hearts and you might earn our dollars. Even those of us who may be tomboys at heart, messages that focus on conflict simply aren't going to resonate.

And, you know how we love a bargain and will hunt high and low to find the best price? That's something American women have in common with our sisters around the world. A Nielsen survey of more than 29,000 people with internet access in 58 countries shows that we women are browsers, no matter where we live – going for the best deal (in the store or online) while men are more likely to pay a higher price. That's because men are typically on a mission to just win (uh, get the item no matter what).

Here and across the globe, women are responsible for id="mce_marker"2 trillion of the id="mce_marker"8 trillion of global buying power. So, if marketers want our business, they need to offer products and services that reflect our needs. Consider these facts:

- Women worldwide are optimistic about their roles, with 90% reporting they believe their role is changing for the better.
- Worldwide, 70% of women surveyed have cut household spending over the past year in clothes, gas, electricity and entertainment outside the home.
- Women in theU.S.spend significantly more time on social media sites than men. We're online users of social media 44% more than men; and visit social media sites on our mobile devices 39% more than men.
- African-American women between 18-35 are 72% more likely to publish a blog or express our preferences online via links or "likes" than the average adult in this country.
- In the United States, African-American households are 127% more likely to include a single parent – usually a woman. (These are my people as I am one of them and I live by the mantra, 'If Mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy').
- Women in theU.S.talk 28% more and text 14% more than men every month.
- Globally, women are 25% more likely than men to rely on friends or family for personal finance advice.

There's so much more wonderful information on www.nielsenwire.com that affirms women's power and influence as consumers. Take time to visit the site during March, and feel free to belt out a couple of lines along with Chaka, "I'm every woman. It's all in me . . ."

Cheryl Pearson-McNeil is senior vice president of public affairs and government relations for Nielsen. For more information and studies go to www.nielsenwire.com .