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## Marketing To Young Women: It's Not Just Pink Anymore

[Steve Olenski](#) Contributor  
May 7, 2018, 04:48pm



Marketing to young women adapts to societal changes. Shutterstock

April 26 was Take Your Daughter to Work Day. It is the day when parents all over the country took advantage of the opportunity to take their little girls to the office to show them what they do on a daily basis. My daughter is now a senior in high school and, while she is too old for Take Your Daughter to Work Day (plus, I do most of my work from home these days, so it wouldn't be much of an event), I started reflecting on how things have changed for girls since she was a wee one.

While there were so many thoughts that came to my mind, for the purpose of this article, I will focus on the way toys and programming geared towards girls have changed, along with the ways companies market their products and IP to them. I've noticed how kids' programming and products these days feature more career-minded girls, from Doc McStuffins to the soon-to-be-released Little Miss Inventor, a new extension to Sanrio's Mr. Men and Little Miss line-up.

**Cultural Shift**

"We are in the midst of a huge cultural shift in the ways we are raising girls. The messages girls are hearing are that they are powerful and can do and be anything," said Laurie Schacht, chief toy officer of the Toy Insider, a trusted toy industry go-to resource for parents and gift-givers.

For young girls, there is no glass ceiling, there are only incredible opportunities. The products marketed to girls are very much starting to reflect this shift as companies are responding to these changing times by fueling this empowerment by letting girls try out different roles and open their minds to a broad range of possibilities for the future."

Then, at this year's International Toy Fair in New York, [Make It Real](#) was showcasing products featuring the Juicy Couture brand as well as properties/brands from Nickelodeon and Disney. It comes as no surprise that those companies have licensed their IP to a toy manufacturer (in fact, I wouldn't be exaggerating if I said that hundreds of exhibitors at the show were displaying products featuring SpongeBob, Captain America, Mickey Mouse, and countless other household names from Disney and Nick).



Yet, even though I hadn't heard of Make It Real, their products stood out to me for some reason that would become evident very soon. While the products, DIY activity kits of all types, centered on the fashion-related stuff you would expect in products geared toward girls, the items weren't just "careered up" Barbie dolls. Rather, the company was actually aiming to provide girls with the

tools they need to inspire their passions and show them where their creativity can take them, helping to pave the way to a potential career in the arts.

I spoke with Make It Real CEO Isaac Wolman (who, by the way, is just 31 years old and a father of four), and he told me about the company's Role Model program and how its product offerings are linked to professional women in the creative fields of beauty, fashion, jewelry-making, home décor, and more. The Role Models are featured in magazines included in each product as well as videos on the website, where they provide girls with a window into their careers, letting them in on what and how they do what they do.

### **Worthwhile Goal**

“Empowering young women (and men for that matter!) to achieve meaningful goals in their lives is clearly a worthwhile goal for parents, educators and society in general,” Wolman said. “In the age of eminently-accessible tech and social media, there are many influences and ‘influencers’ competing for children’s attention, and not all of them are positive. The creation and purveyance of content and products that are simultaneously entertaining, educational and empowering helps ensure that the next generation will be prepared to thrive in a competitive workforce and become leaders in their respective fields. Children are becoming ‘older younger’ and we need to recognize that fact and cater to it as best we can.”

As this was something I had not previously seen from Nick and Disney and a fascinating partnership for a company like Juicy, I reached out to them as well to see how they have changed their marketing in this brave, new world where girls are being groomed for careers just like boys.

Nickelodeon, which partnered with Make It Real to launch a new range of creativity kits this fall based on the popular animated Nickelodeon preschool series [Sunny Day](#), was the first to get back to me.

### **Ongoing Legacy**

“We at Nickelodeon have an ongoing legacy of breaking the gender ‘barriers’ and we understand the importance of promoting positive role models for girls,” said Jennifer Caveza, SVP, Toys, at Nickelodeon. “Nickelodeon uses its research insights to create content that is relevant and authentic for kids. We’ve found that kids today are entrepreneurs – the majority (69%) want to grow up to be their own bosses. Sunny is a natural leader, entrepreneur,

problem-solver and a go-to friend. She is a self-starter who never backs down from a challenge."

Make It Real debuted [Juicy Couture](#) Girl products, which are a collection of jewelry-making and activity sets featuring the glamorous and irreverent luxe fashion brand that brings LA style to girls around the world, this spring.

"Our partnership with Make It Real for Juicy Couture Girl created a positive, entertaining product for Juicy's young customers while also encouraging and empowering the younger generation to pursue their goals, whether it be in fashion design, jewelry-making or hair and beauty," said Jarrod Weber, EVP of Brands at Authentic Brands Group, owner of Juicy Couture. "We have also created a fun contest that provides a winner with an opportunity to experience a Juicy Couture campaign photo shoot, go behind the scenes and have access to the brand's creative director to learn more about the Juicy business and our industry."

"Marketing to girls is not about being pink, it's about creating products that encourage and empower them, truly reflecting the dynamic and changing world we live in today," added Schacht. "Toy companies are creating toys that inspire curiosity in areas like science, math, engineering, and the arts, including toys that get girls excited about being junior and future entrepreneurs. They understand that marketing to girls in this day and age requires them to understand trends and to show that their products can make a difference in girls lives."

At the end of the day this is all about understanding your customers, giving them what they want and not insulting their intelligence. It's a lesson for ALL brands.

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