

## SheSpeaks, Moms Listen



**AN INTERVIEW WITH:**

**Aliza Freud**  
**Founder and CEO, SheSpeaks**  
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SheSpeaks is a marketing and social media platform that creates and operates consumer influencer communities for insights and brand advocacy. It has 125,000 members across the US, and clients include Heinz, Food Network, Philips and AOL.

Aliza Freud, founder and CEO of SheSpeaks, was inspired to create her company in 2007 based on the principle that women would thrive in a dedicated online community where they could connect with others and see the power of their voices in action.

Prior to SheSpeaks, Ms. Freud was an executive at American Express Co.'s Global Advertising and Brand Management group.

Ms. Freud spoke with eMarketer senior analyst Jeffrey Grau about how women use the Internet to make purchase decisions. She also discussed how marketers succeed at engaging moms as well as some of the marketing mistakes they make.

**eMarketer:** How does becoming a mother change a woman's shopping behavior?

**Aliza Freud:** One thing we uncovered in our social media study is that moms are doing a lot more research online and looking for recommendations on products online in their social network. So they might be on Facebook and see somebody talking about a particular product. And they're probably doing a lot more research based on conversations.

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**right one to buy is very much based on the recommendations of her friends, because she feels that they have a lot stronger say in what is going to resonate with her.”**

The way a mom assesses which product is the right one to buy is very much based on the recommendations of her friends, because she feels that they have a lot stronger say in what is going to resonate with her.

For example, we did some work for an automobile company and found that when moms talked about purchasing a particular car, they would say they or their husbands looked at the review in Consumer Reports. But when a mom talked to her friends about this particular car, they might say, “Don’t make the same mistake we did because you have three children, we have three children and it’s really hard to get that third child into the back seat.”

So that real-life experience very much dictates how they thought about their car purchase. In the end, the moms were much more likely to make decisions based on what other people who were like them said about the car versus, let’s say, what they read in Consumer Reports.

**eMarketer:** Does it matter whether a recommendation comes from a stranger?

**Ms. Freud:** They have to feel that the other person is similar to them on that particular element. So in the car example, somebody else who had three children was much more powerful for the mom than whether they knew the person or not. So it doesn’t have to be a friend. It has to be somebody who shares the same life stage or has had a common experience. That’s the most important element.

**eMarketer:** Does becoming a mother change the criteria a woman uses to evaluate products and brands?

**Ms. Freud:** Yes, it does change things. Whether you’re buying products that are for your children or not specifically for them, you’re looking at them with a different eye. You’re asking, “Are these products healthy for my children? Is this a safe product to have in my home now that I have a baby or a child?”

**“As children get older, not only are you thinking about what [is] healthy for the child, but their wants and preferences are also weighing more heavily in that purchase decision.”**

What also happens is as children get older, not only are you thinking about what [is] healthy for the child, but their wants and preferences are also weighing more heavily in that purchase decision.

**eMarketer:** What kind of relationship do moms want to have with brands on the Internet?

**Ms. Freud:** The reason somebody uses a social network like Facebook, for

example, is to connect and engage with their friends. Will they see messaging from a brand or somebody mentioning a brand and take notice? Sure. But I don't think that that is what is driving them to participate in that activity.

**“If I were a brand, I would want to have people engage with me directly and not really leave it up to a Facebook to be the intermediary.”**

However, there's a huge opportunity for brands to create a more direct relationship. If I were a brand, I would want to have people engage with me directly and not really leave it up to a Facebook to be the intermediary. A brand loses a lot of control over the experience, a lot of opportunity to know who that consumer really is and to use it as an opportunity for customer relationship management. Brands should be facilitating and owning an engagement with consumers.

**eMarketer:** What are some of the common mistakes brands make in marketing to moms online?

**Ms. Freud:** The mistakes really happen in how a brand approaches moms and how they try to engage with them. It has to be authentic and it has to be organic. It can't be that because I create some sort of content and put it in front of you, you're going to run off and tell all your friends about it and share it.

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There has to be a reason to share. There has to be a reason to engage. Sometimes brands get very excited by content they've created and completely overlook the consumer's desire to be a part of that content generation, as well as the authenticity. Frequently brands come across as very inauthentic and that's a big mistake.

**eMarketer:** How much influence do mommy bloggers have on moms' purchase decisions?

**Ms. Freud:** Bloggers can definitely have an impact. But now with a lot of the FTC guidelines, bloggers are much more cautious about how they review products. It has to come across as authentic in how they approach women. It's really important that brands develop a strong relationship with bloggers and not just send products, hoping that they give them a good review.

**eMarketer:** What trends do you see related to how moms shop online?

**Ms. Freud:** Women are looking for the best products online and doing their research, but they're also looking for the best price. Given today's economy, that is definitely a heightened need women keep in mind when they're shopping.

