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Ginger Consulting explains ‘What Women Want’

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Credit: Beth Perro-Jarvis (l) and Mary Van Note of Ginger Consulting. Photo by Michelle Bruch

The Southwest Minneapolis women behind [Ginger Consulting](#) have released their annual [survey](#) called “What Women Want,” with findings that caught the attention of USA Today.

They found that 64 percent of women think diet trends like Paleo, juicing and gluten-free are fads, and women who follow them without medical reasons are “annoying.”

“There will be a backlash coming,” said co-founder Mary Van Note.

Other findings in the survey:

— 26 percent of women believe a female candidate will have to overachieve to be considered as competent as an average male president.

— 68 percent of women are fine with “Fifty Shades of Grey.” Survey respondents don’t consider the material akin to porn, as 59 percent said they avoid pornography.

— “Acceptable vices” include a daily glass of wine or chocolate, but vices like gossip cross the line.

Van Note lives in Kenwood, and co-founder Beth Perro-Jarvis lives in Linden Hills. They have lots of experience marketing to female consumers, but note that it’s not a niche group.

“If you’re smart, most marketing is done to women,” said Van Note.

That’s because 85 percent of U.S. purchases are done by women, she said, which holds true even for purchases like tires and mobile gaming.

Ginger encourages clients to learn about their female customers more deeply.

“Pink is kind of a bad idea,” Perro-Jarvis said. “Where do Cheerios [for example] fit in that person’s day? What’s sitting on her shoulders when she’s pushing that cart around? ... Just because you’re working on Cheerios all day doesn’t mean everybody cares.”



Van Note and Perro-Jarvis met at Fallon, working with clients like Nordstrom and living the “Don Draper life.” Both are mothers, and the agency became their lives — they worked holidays like Mother’s Day and New Year’s Day, and found key decisions were often made after 5 p.m.

“We didn’t like our choices,” Van Note said.

So they decided to open their own shop in order to have exciting careers on their own terms, initially under the company name RED. They reorganized in 2008 to form Ginger. Current clients include DreamWorks Studios, Target Corporation, Cargill and Merrill Lynch. They work from home, travel to clients and hold lots of coffee shop meetings.

“Even though it’s a tiny little boutique consultancy based in Minneapolis, it’s on a grand scale,” Perro-Jarvis said.