

A woman with dark hair tied back is shown in profile, looking upwards towards a background of lush green trees. The image is framed by geometric shapes: a dark blue triangle in the top left and a teal triangle in the bottom right.

STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0:
GEM®
INDUSTRY
INSIGHTS

2025

SEEHER



Strive For Optimal Impact: Aligning Portrayal, Attention, & Action For Growth

Accurate portrayals of women are a proven growth driver. In part one of Ipsos and SeeHer's [2025 study](#), we found that ads depicting authentic, multidimensional representations of women delivered a **10% lift in incremental media value** and a **31% increase in Creative Effectiveness** (Brand Attention x Brand Choice). These results underscore that when brands portray women as **real and complex**, they unlock stronger consumer connections and measurable business outcomes.

We uncovered and defined the nuanced storytelling dimensions that matter most:



In this next chapter, we bring that foundation into sharper focus by examining portrayals **by industry**—where brands are excelling, where they are underdelivering, and how those choices directly impact brand KPIs. Using **GEM® (Gender Equality Measure) scores and brand metrics as a lens**, we reveal how women's roles and narratives can be leveraged to deliver the **GROWTH TRIFECTA**:



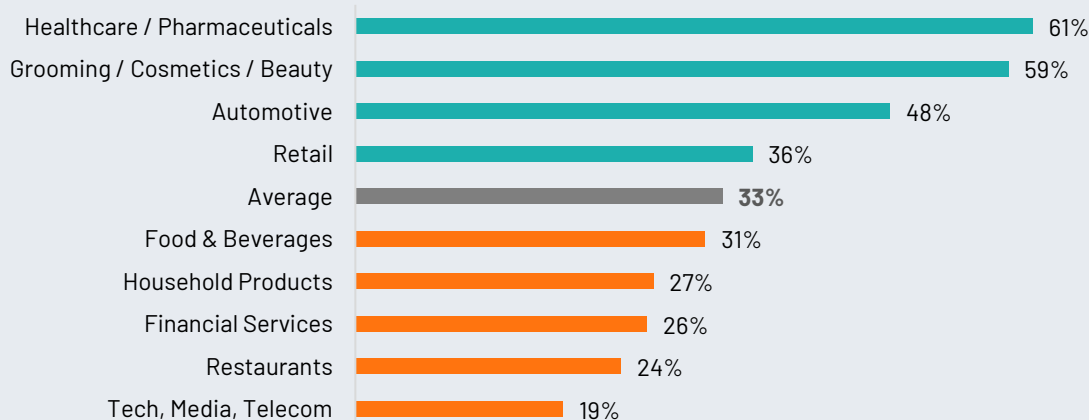
Women's economic power is accelerating, yet many industries fail to recognize how female roles and experiences are shifting in relation to brand behavior, and their advertising often falls short of reflecting this reality. Furthermore, these roles in advertising vary by category and continue to evolve; meanwhile, some brands continue to default to the same outdated, one-dimensional portrayals. **Brands that embrace authentic, resonant storytelling with women as multi-dimensional characters unlock stronger creative effectiveness and deeper loyalty.**

This research was designed to give marketers a category-by-category playbook to course-correct portrayals and maximize outcomes. By aligning women's lived realities with brand narratives, marketers not only do better by women and the brands they support—they become better marketers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The advertising industry still struggles to reflect the real identities of women, with only 15% saying they see themselves authentically portrayed¹. An analysis of GEM® scores—an industry metric that evaluates the authenticity of female portrayals in advertising—highlights the opportunities for categories to drive growth through inclusive representation that leverages women’s substantial economic influence.

Percentage of Cases in Top Third of GEM® Database



Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

While categories like Healthcare/Pharmaceuticals and Grooming/Beauty/Cosmetics lead in delivering more resonant, top-tier GEM® portrayals, most industries lag behind. Some, including Household Products and Restaurants, show signs of improvement, but many remain stagnant or are backsliding. This inconsistency reveals a persistent gap between intention and execution and is a potentially damaging, missed opportunity.

Authenticity Isn't Universal: Categories where women are feeling more seen and where industries are stable or backsliding

INCREASING HIGH GEM® CASES

Household Products
Restaurants
Automotive

LITTLE TO NO CHANGE

Retail
Healthcare/
Pharmaceuticals
Food/Beverage
Tech/Media/Telecom

Grooming/Cosmetics/
Beauty
Financial Services

DECREASING HIGH GEM® CASES

Based on % Top third of ads female character GEM® scores from Strive for More (2018-2022) vs. 2018 -2025 YTD

The opportunity to build trust, relevance, and growth through more accurate portrayals of women is not yet fully realized, especially outside a narrow set of industries.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

1 Categories Default to Traditional Roles, Missing Multi-dimensionality

CATEGORY	MOST COMMON ROLE PORTRAYED
Healthcare / Pharmaceuticals	Mom/Grandmother
Grooming / Cosmetics / Beauty	Mom/Grandmother
Automotive	Wife/Girlfriend
Retail	Wife/Girlfriend
Food & Beverages	Wife/Girlfriend
Household Products	Mom/Grandmother
Financial Services	General Professional
Restaurants	Wife/Girlfriend
Tech, Media, Telecom	Wife/Girlfriend

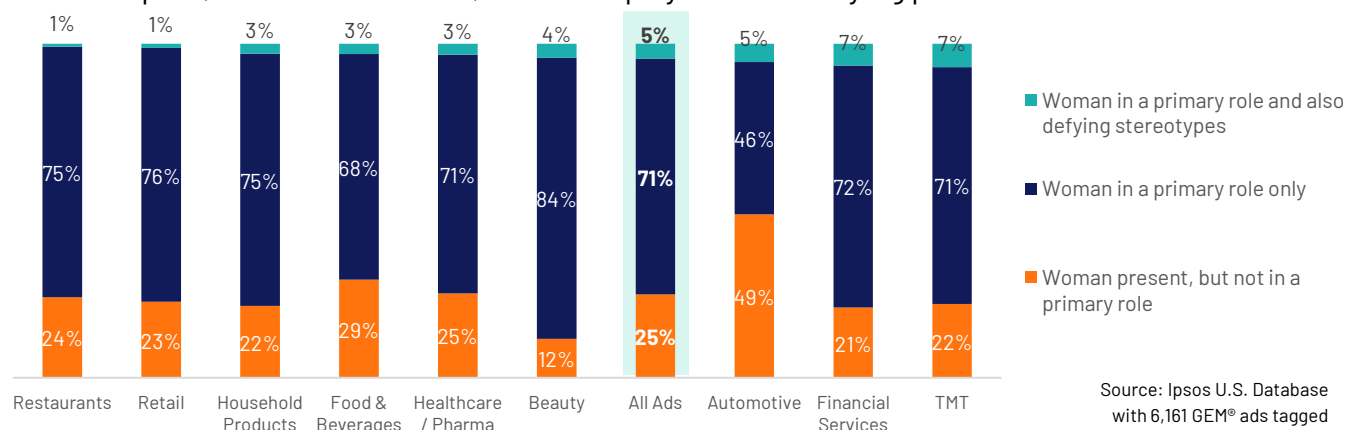
Traditional roles are commonly used across categories, with narratives often defaulting women into maternal or partner positions. While these can be authentic portrayals, women wear so many other hats, and brands have an opportunity to reflect that reality.

Think of all the other things she can be – a doctor, a professional, a store owner, a chef, a developer – why default to a stereotypical role when these lenses exist to tell new, differentiating stories that highlight the female and the brand?

Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

2 Only 5% of Ads Depict Women in a Primary Role and Defying Stereotypes

Featuring women in ads without challenging stereotypes may signal inclusion, but safe portrayals limit emotional impact, market distinction, and underplay women's buying power.



Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 6,161 GEM® ads tagged

3 Authenticity Moves Markets, But Only When Brands Are Remembered

Brand Attention remains a weak spot across most industries. Breaking through the cluttered media landscape is a serious creative challenge. Authentic representation can spark change, but only if audiences remember who delivered the message. Powerful storytelling helps ads stand out. Consider how multi-faceted female portrayals can be the center of the brand story you want to tell. Stay tuned for the final chapter of our Strive For More series about creative storytelling tactics.

READER'S GUIDE

SEEHER / OPEN-SOURCE INDUSTRY MEASURES



GEM® quantifies consumer reaction to the depiction of women in advertising and content, focusing on four key pillars:

PRESENTATION

I think highly of the way women are **presented**

AVERAGE: 44% Top Box

APPROPRIATE

It is **inappropriate** how women are featured*

AVERAGE: 54% Top Box

RESPECT

Women are presented in a **respectful** manner

AVERAGE: 54% Top Box

ROLE MODEL

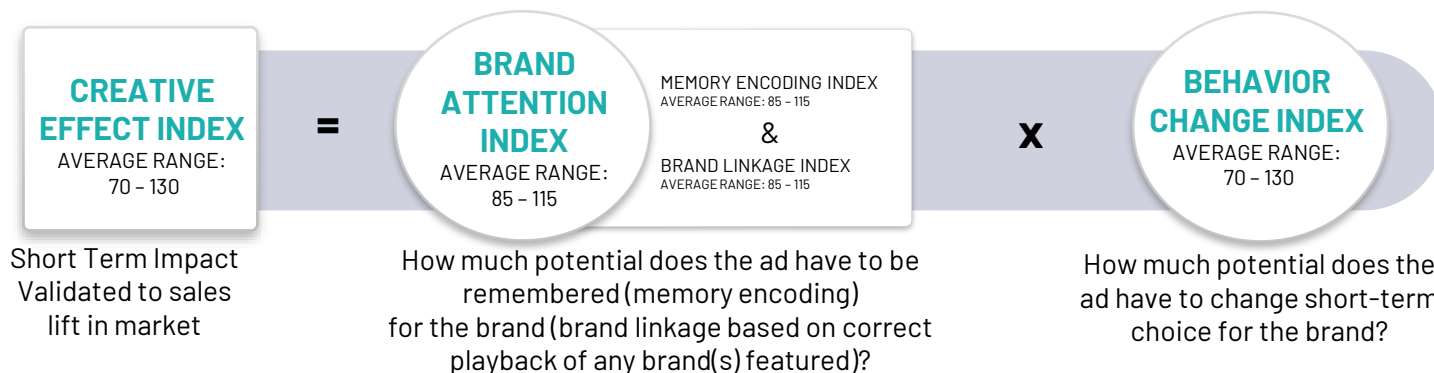
Women are presented in a manner where they can be seen as good **role models** for other women and young girls

AVERAGE: 46% Top Box

IPSOS PROPRIETARY MEASURES

The Ipsos Creative Effect Index (CEI) is a validated metric that correlates with sales lift as measured through Market Mix Modeling. This framework is built to reflect what advertising must do to drive brand growth based on our extensive validation efforts: it must be encoded into the mind of the viewer and associated with the brand to then elicit a response from the audience that nudges behavior or builds a relationship.

These KPI's are collected via survey-based research where the test ad is placed in context and in clutter to understand its ability to gain attention for the brand. The method looks at pre vs. post exposure lift on strength of choice for the brand in order to isolate the creative's potential to change behavior.



THE BOTTOM-LINE BACKING

Our initial "Strive for More" research established a clear link between accurate portrayals of women in advertising and measurable business outcomes through the GEM® index. When we look at the results of high vs. low GEM® scoring advertising, we found that ads with stronger GEM® scores deliver 10% more value for your media investment. High GEM® scores also strongly correlate with both short-term sales lifts and long-term brand equity, resulting in a +31pt increase in the Ipsos Creative Effect Index (CEI). See more on these measures [here](#).

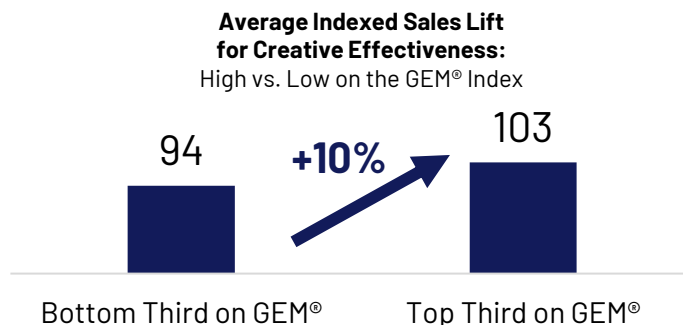


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STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0: CHAPTER 2
GEM® INDUSTRY INSIGHTS
Healthcare Edition

2025

SEEHER



HEALTHCARE LEARNINGS – OVERVIEW

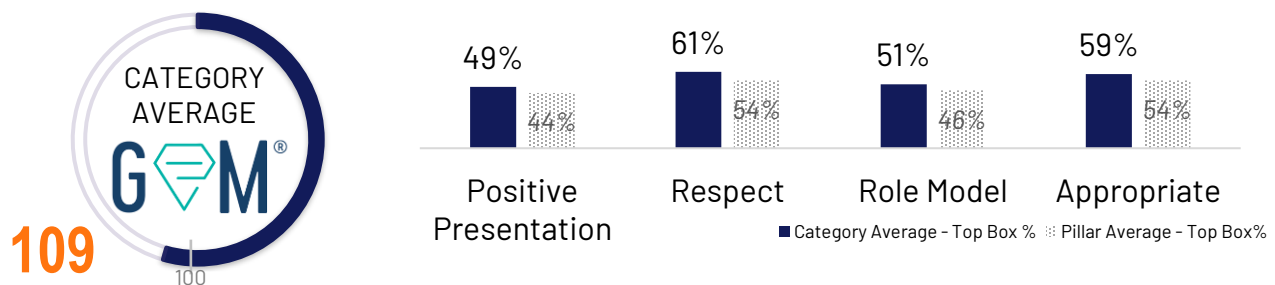
Healthcare leads the charge in GEM®, striking a winning balance between traditional, but real roles, and thriving female scenarios.

61%

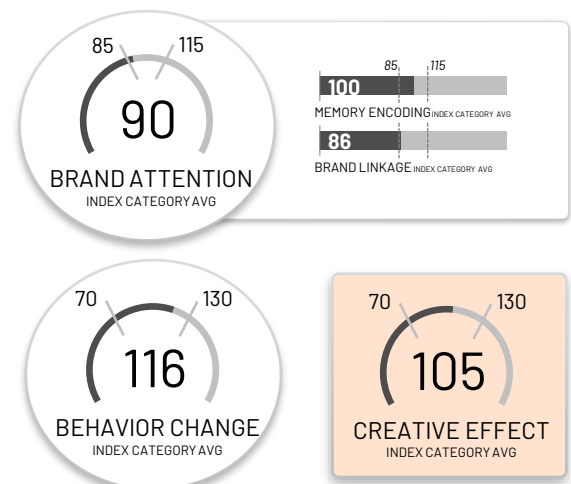
Percentage of Healthcare Cases in Top Third of GEM® Database
#1 in Ipsos Category Ranking

Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

Women account for **80% of consumer purchasing decisions in the healthcare** industry. But women's health is an often-neglected tangent of healthcare, despite their buying power and that they are often caretakers for others, making or guiding health choices for those populations too². In category advertising, brands are doing well to represent women, but communications can go further to continue emphasizing their health and their power. As a category, healthcare stands above others, **exceeding the GEM® average** by elevating women as role models with positive presentation.



Beyond GEM®, the primary advertising challenge for healthcare is Brand Attention, often held back by **tricky medication names and exaggerated problem/solution conventions** that lack creative storytelling. Bringing women into the spotlight in creative new ways can help healthcare brands bust out of the sea of sameness to attract attention to their brand, especially **with the audience holding the most influence over their bottom line.**



Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads 2018-2025 YTD, Healthcare category n=833 ads

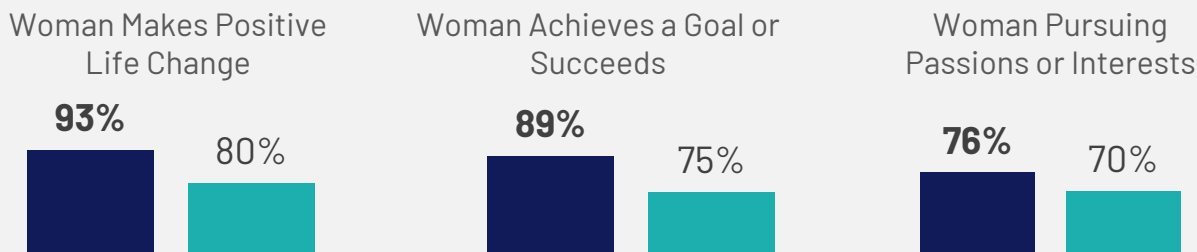
HEALTHCARE LEARNINGS – DRIVERS DEEP DIVE

While there are several drivers for GEM®, three key storytelling themes rise to the top: women making positive life changes, achieving goals, or pursuing passions. These are **especially prevalent and effective in the healthcare** category.

Storytelling Themes in Advertising and their Impact on GEM® Scores

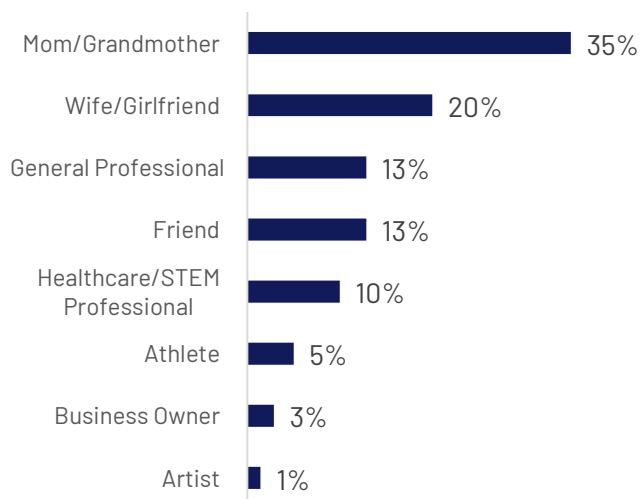
Share of Above Average GEM® Score Case Count

■ Healthcare/Pharma ■ All Category



See more on these themes [here!](#)

Share of Roles in Healthcare/Pharma Ads



Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

Women want authentic representation. Since women often play a maternal role in healthcare decisions, half of the representation being this makes some sense and is accepted by women. When it comes to nurturing depictions of females, 62% of women³ are seeing the right amount of this in advertising.

But it's also a fact that 80% of healthcare workers are women⁴. So, why aren't we seeing that ratio reflected in category advertising? 82% of GEM® cases in the top 3rd feature women as STEM Professionals⁵, but only 10% of healthcare ads show women in this role. Advertisers have an opportunity to highlight this authentic, underrepresented role.

Regardless of role, 45% of women want to see more portrayals of females as physically strong³, aligning with her agency to ensure she is seen as physically and mentally healthy. So be sure to reflect females' strength, whether they are playing a patient, parent, or professional.

Category Ad Example



Advil – Real Strength: Mixed Martial Arts

Healthcare doesn't have to center only on ailments—it can spotlight strength. Advil demonstrates this by showcasing physically strong women who take charge of their health with intentional choices, reinforcing both their personal agency and the brand's empowering role in care. Watch [here!](#)

A photograph of two women lying down, likely on a bed or couch, with cucumber slices placed over their eyes. The woman in the foreground is wearing a grey top, and the woman behind her is wearing a yellow top. The background features a patterned rug and a wooden headboard. The image is framed by a dark blue triangle in the top left and a teal triangle in the bottom right.

STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0: CHAPTER 2 **GEM® INDUSTRY INSIGHTS**

Grooming, Cosmetics, and Beauty Edition

2025

SEEHER



BEAUTY LEARNINGS – OVERVIEW

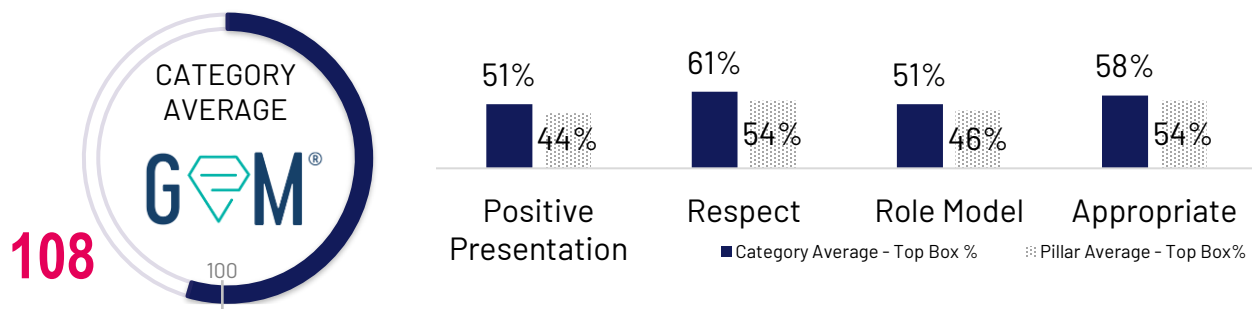
The Grooming, Cosmetics and Beauty industry continues to be a market leader for authentically portraying women in advertising.

59%

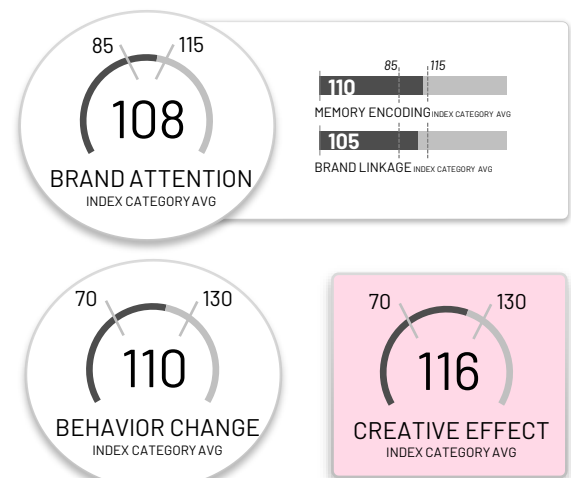
Percentage of Grooming, Cosmetics, and Beauty Cases in Top Third of GEM® Database

Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

The grooming, cosmetics, and beauty category reveals a striking paradox. Once synonymous with narrow beauty ideals, it is now a leader in diverse and inclusive portrayals, showcasing women across identities and expressions. **Historically, the top-performing industry in terms of GEM®, beauty has slipped to second place behind healthcare** as fewer ads earn high GEM® scores. With **54% of beauty executives citing consumer uncertainty and restricted spending as growth risks⁶**, can the industry afford not to continue to evolve with how it reflects consumers, especially as its growth relies on Gen Z and Alpha, the most diverse and socially conscious consumers to date?



Beauty ads deliver a rare combo—accurate portrayals of women and solid Creative Effectiveness. In an era where **hyper personalization is critical to this category**, to sustain this advantage, brands should maintain momentum by closely tracking performance for consistency and **expanding the proven formula across more campaigns**. The category's opportunity lies in **pushing even further on authenticity**, not only celebrating diversity in who is represented, but to **deliver the products and services beyond surface-level inclusion** at deeper, more nuanced levels tailored to women's evolving values and behaviors.



Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads 2018-2025 YTD, Grooming, Cosmetics, and Beauty category n=230 ads

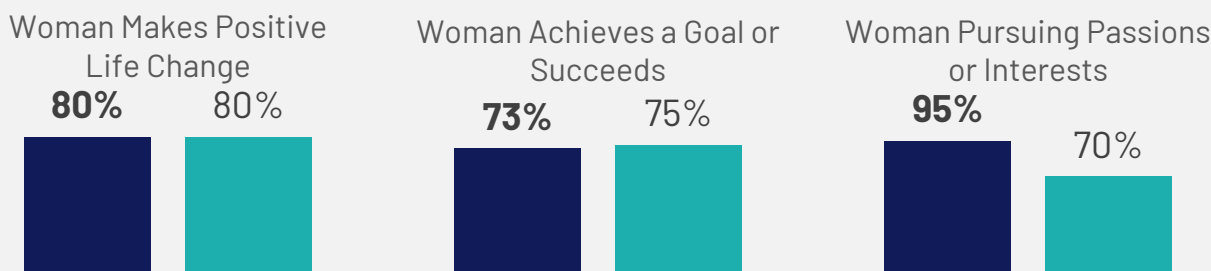
BEAUTY LEARNINGS – DRIVERS DEEP DIVE

Highlighting women in empowering narratives—whether making positive life changes, achieving personal or professional success, or confidently pursuing their passions - are themes well utilized in the category, positioning beauty as a leader in **using authentic representation to connect with women on a deeper, more aspirational level.**

Storytelling Themes in Advertising and their Impact on GEM® Scores

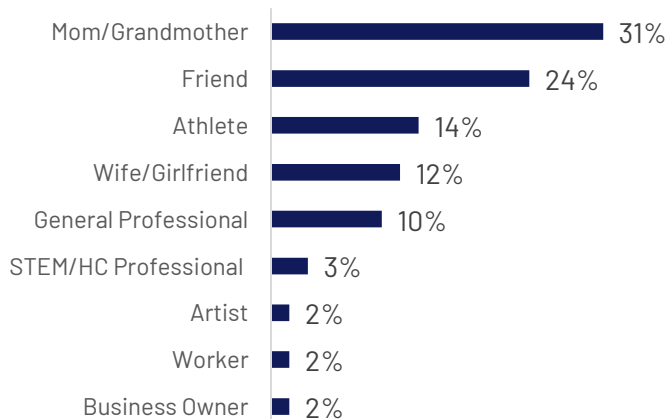
Share of Above Average GEM® Score Case Count

■ Grooming, Cosmetics, and Beauty ■ All Category



See more on these themes [here!](#)

Share of Roles in Beauty Ads



Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

While still relatively modest at 14%, the share of athlete portrayals in grooming, cosmetics, and beauty advertising stands out as comparatively high versus many other categories. This directly caters to consumer demand, with nearly 40% wanting to see more women in athletic roles.⁷

In fact, 63% of ads in the top third of GEM® scores portray women as athletes⁸. Brands have opportunity to capitalize on the surging popularity of women's sports and, more broadly, integrate themes of physical strength and athleticism more deeply into their storytelling, enhancing both cultural relevance and brand growth.

Category Ad Example



Dove – Fans of Confidence

By featuring professional women athletes practicing and competing, Dove goes beyond portraying women solely as spectators. The campaign positions the brand as an active supporter of women in sports—both on and off the field, while inviting consumers to join in that support. Watch [here!](#)

STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0: CHAPTER 2
GEM® INDUSTRY INSIGHTS
Auto Edition

2025

SEEHER



AUTO LEARNINGS – OVERVIEW

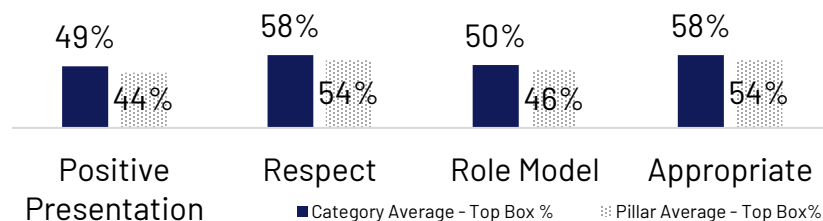
Auto is performing in high gear, with 48% of ads in the top third of our GEM® database.

48%

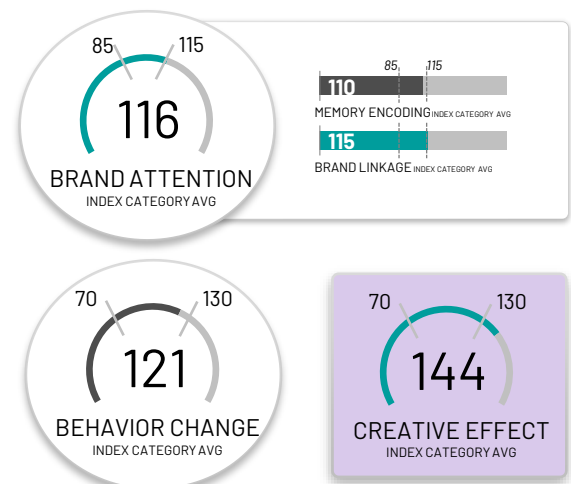
Percentage of **Auto** Cases in Top Third of GEM® Database

Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

Despite women being the main car purchasers⁹, **putting a female in the driver's seat is still breaking a stereotype in media**. As a historically male-dominated category, auto brands must continue to work to raise representation of women, and they are on their way. Auto advertising **surpasses the GEM® average** by elevating women as role models with respectful and positive presentation.



The **auto category is a star player in advertising** with iconic assets cuing brands and manufacturer loyalty driving engagement. The typical auto ad has a flash that tends to garner attention, but we know that **when a woman is in the driver's seat and not just merely in the ad, Memory Encoding**, or the ability to break through the clutter and capture attention, **accelerates above average**¹⁰. Brands can easily capitalize on this tangible tactic to fuel their campaigns, as well as explore other ways to elevate women in the category as the buyers they are.



Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads 2018-2025 YTD, Automotive category n=129 ads

AUTO LEARNINGS – DRIVERS DEEP DIVE

Automotive advertising differs slightly from other categories in what drives higher GEM® scores. The category succeeds through **diverse female representation, celebrity endorsements, and positive character interactions** rather than more complex narratives. Their advertising showcases women across different ages, ethnicities, professions, and life stages beyond traditional stereotypes like soccer moms and leverages accomplished female celebrities who immediately associate brands with empowerment and success.

However, our analysis suggests untapped potential: the few automotive ads that do incorporate the three powerful storytelling themes we identified in our previous research show stronger GEM® scores.



Positive life changes



Achieving goals

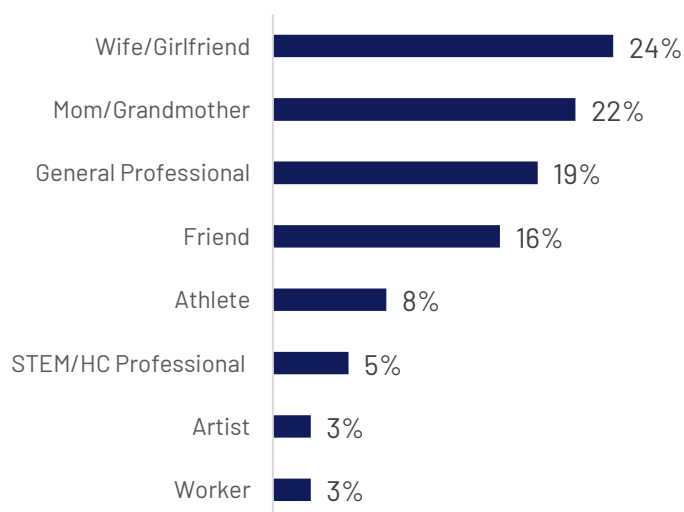


Pursuing passions

This presents an opportunity for automotive brands to combine their current strengths (strong representation and interactions) with more intentional narrative development around the four themes of agency, upward mobility, physical empowerment, and economic influence.

See more on these storytelling themes [here!](#)

Share of Roles in Automotive Ads



Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

Only 32% of ads have a female in the driver's seat, despite its lift on Memory Encoding. Beyond this benefit, when women are integral to the storyline in this primary role, GEM® is raised by 12 points on average¹¹.

So, whatever overarching role they play, making them the engine of the story will help brands break barriers. One way to do this? A car purchase – a unique scenario that signals what women want to see more of; decision-making, financial independence, and upward mobility¹².

Category Ad Example



Ford – Maestro

Ford spotlights women in command—juxtaposing her confident, hands-free control behind the wheel with her hands-on leadership as an orchestra conductor. The ad reinforces the brand's commitment to empowering women in the primary role of leadership and ownership. Watch [here!](#)

STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0: CHAPTER 2
GEM® INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Retail Edition

2025

SEEHER



RETAIL LEARNINGS – OVERVIEW

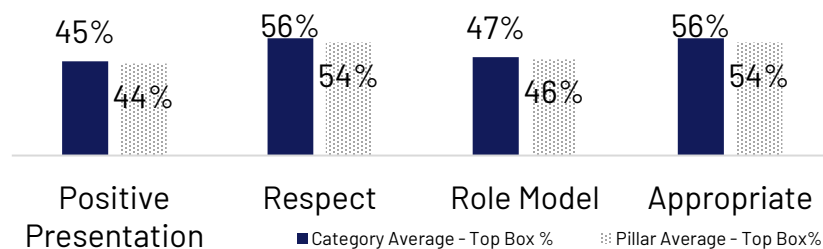
Less than half of Retail ads authentically portray women, despite women being the key target for the category.

36%

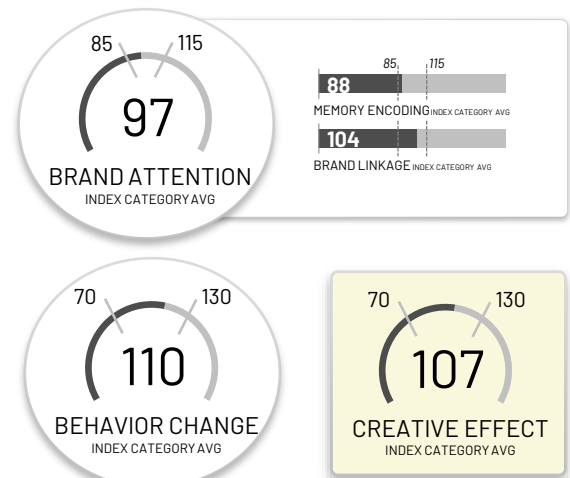
Percentage of Retail Cases in Top Third of GEM® Database

Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

It's not a stereotype, it's a statistic; **when it comes to shopping, women do it best.** Women account for over \$16 trillion in U.S. consumer buying, spend more time shopping on average versus males, and dominate responsibility for daily household shopping¹³. Category advertising **meets the GEM® average, but retailers could go further** to emphasize women as role models with positive presentation.



Beyond GEM®, the primary advertising **challenge for retail is Brand Attention**, often held back by a lack of differentiation against common competitors to hook attention, and misattribution to popular brands the retailer features to draw desire. **Balancing this with positive portrayals** so both women and the brand can shine is particularly tricky. Creating more **synergy and leveraging female characters to elevate the brand** can maintain our authentic portrayals while making sure the brand is woven into the story, not overshadowed.



Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads 2018-2025 YTD, Retail category n=297 ads

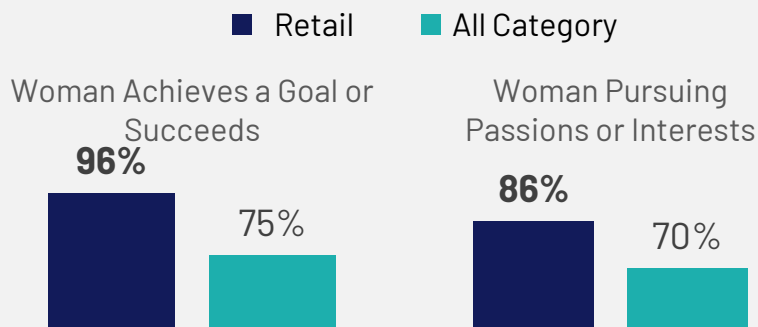
RETAIL LEARNINGS – DRIVERS DEEP DIVE

While there are several drivers for high GEM®, three key storytelling themes rise to the top: women making positive life changes, achieving goals, or pursuing passions. These are **especially present in the retail category**, where **goals and interests** may be serviced by stores.

However, depicting women making positive life changes is an underutilized theme and there were insufficient examples in the retail category for analysis.

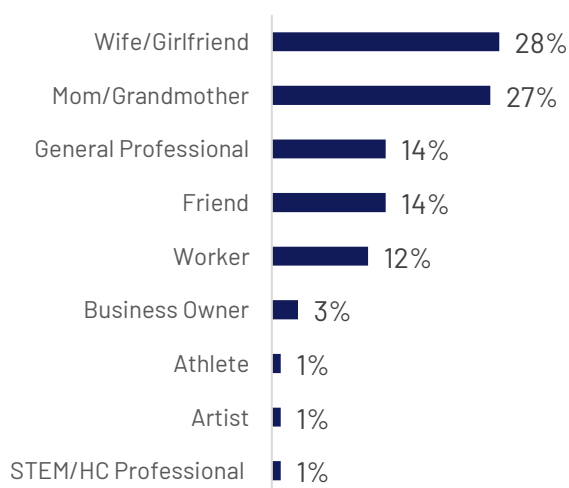
Storytelling Themes in Advertising and their Impact on GEM® Scores

Share of Above Average GEM® Score Case Count



See more on these themes [here!](#)

Share of Roles in Retail Ads

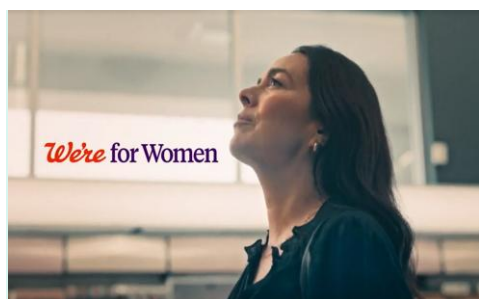


Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

We know from our earlier Strive For More 2.0 issue¹⁴ that women ultimately want to see advertising reflect the powerful economic forces that they are. This force takes shape across the roles a woman plays in her life. So why is retail stuck on the maternal view of this? Women feel they are often shown shopping for a family, but that men are more often shown as decision-makers or business leaders. In addition, 38% of women think that too many ads portray them as only shoppers and it is overdone.¹⁵

When you show women with the product or service "doing good", 55% of ads are in the top 3rd of GEM®, compared to only 41% when women are depicted as only purchasing.¹⁶ This reveals an opportunity for marketers to showcase women as direct economic powerhouses, in roles driving commerce in intentional facets. 45% of consumers say there are not enough portrayals of women being independent¹⁵. Brands can play a role in this by showing how they are supporting women in redefining themselves and making choices to improve their lives through purchase decisions.

Category Ad Example



Walgreens – We're For Women

By supporting her decision to address menopause symptoms with the right product and knowledgeable guidance from a female store professional, the brand positions itself as more than a retailer. It becomes an enabler of independence, confidence, and positive life changes. In doing so, it demonstrates how brands can empower women to exercise their purchasing power and embrace new possibilities at every stage of life. Watch [here!](#)

STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0: CHAPTER 2
GEM® INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

**Food & Beverages
Edition**

2025

SEEHER



FOOD & BEVERAGES LEARNINGS – OVERVIEW

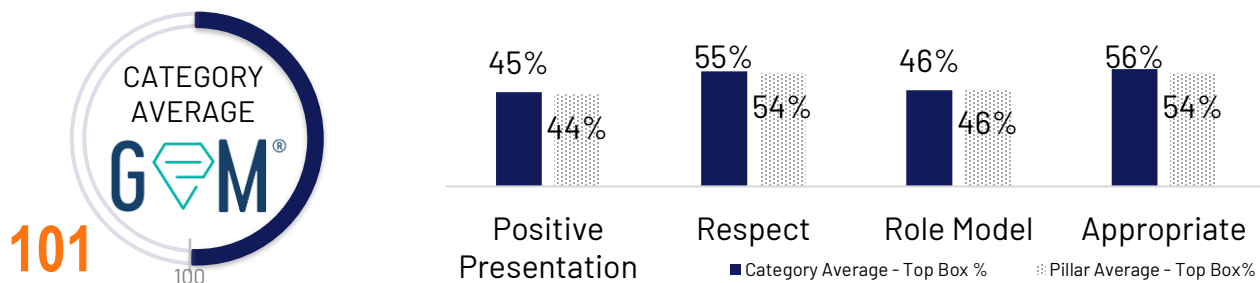
Food & Beverage female portrayals are typical, scoring near the average for all ads.

31%

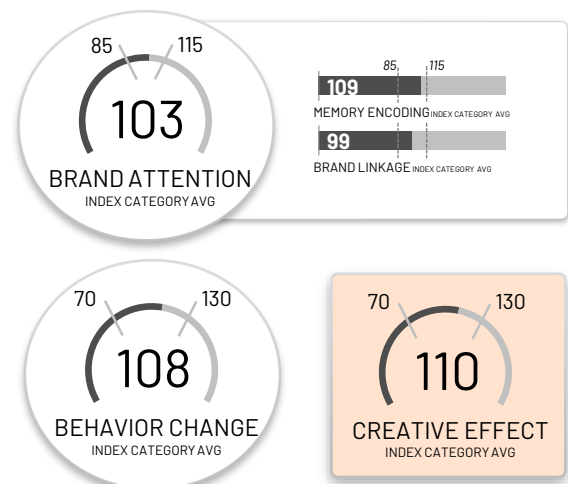
Percentage of **Food & Beverages** Cases in Top Third of GEM® Database

Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

In the food and beverage category, **women are often portrayed as the primary or lead character, and 77% of their roles fall into traditional, familiar depictions. GEM® scores in this space remain stable and average**, suggesting a baseline of adequate representation. While this indicates little cause for concern, it also highlights untapped potential. By moving beyond convention and diversifying the narratives around women, food and beverage brands have an opportunity to elevate authenticity, strengthen emotional connection, and unlock greater impact.



The food and beverage category performs at baseline benchmarks across GEM®, Brand Attention, Behavior Change, and Creative Effect Index. **Reliance on conventional roles limits emotional resonance and memorability—critical as brands face shifting tastes, market fragmentation, inflation, and competition.** To elevate engagement without losing brand relevance, marketers should **expand beyond familiar narratives and integrate GEM® storytelling themes that build stronger attention and connection.**



Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads 2018-2025 YTD, Food & Beverages category n=1,396 ads

FOOD & BEV LEARNINGS – DRIVERS DEEP DIVE

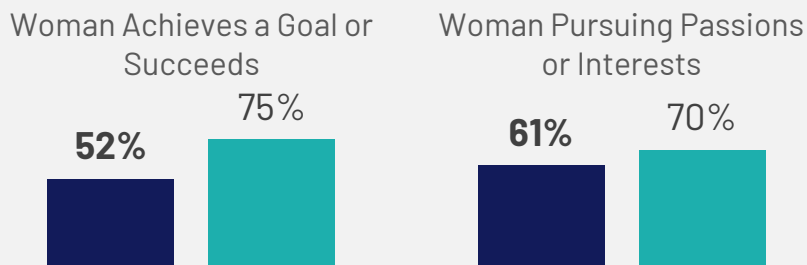
In the Food and Beverage category, there were too few examples of women making positive life changes to allow meaningful analysis. The category also under-indexed on other key storytelling themes, including achieving goals and pursuing passions.

This highlights a clear opportunity for brands to **expand narratives that showcase women's agency, accomplishments, and aspirations, strengthening both authenticity and audience connection.**

Storytelling Themes in Advertising and their Impact on GEM® Scores

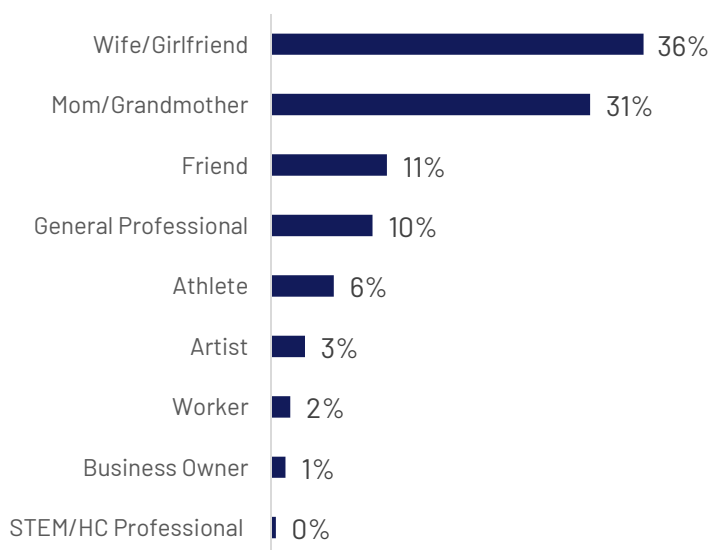
Share of Above Average GEM® Score Case Count

■ Food & Beverages ■ All Category



See more on these themes [here!](#)

Share of Roles in Food & Beverages Ads



Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

The food and beverage category continues to predominantly depict women in typical roles. Notably, however, there is an over-index of women shown as general professionals—an insight that presents an opportunity to portray women more multidimensionally, as both caregivers and breadwinners. Brands could strengthen consumer connection by integrating additional aspects of women's lives into these narratives.

To incorporate GEM® storytelling themes effectively, focus on showing women achieving work/life balance (47% want to see more of this), prioritizing health and wellness (41%), and cooking for pleasure (25%). Additionally, 61% of consumers want to see men actively participating in cooking and household chores¹⁷.

Food and beverage brands are uniquely positioned to weave these themes into advertising, highlighting how their products play an integral role in women's daily lives and aspirations.

Category Ad Example



KIND – Morning Schedule

KIND highlights a woman successfully balancing her career and family, with her responsibilities made more manageable thanks to the energy boost of a KIND bar. By portraying a relatable moment of self-care that fuels productivity and presence, the brand taps into consumer desire to see women improving work/life balance, positioning KIND as a powerful supporter. Watch [here!](#)



STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0: CHAPTER 2

GEM® INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Household Products

Edition

2025

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HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS LEARNINGS – OVERVIEW

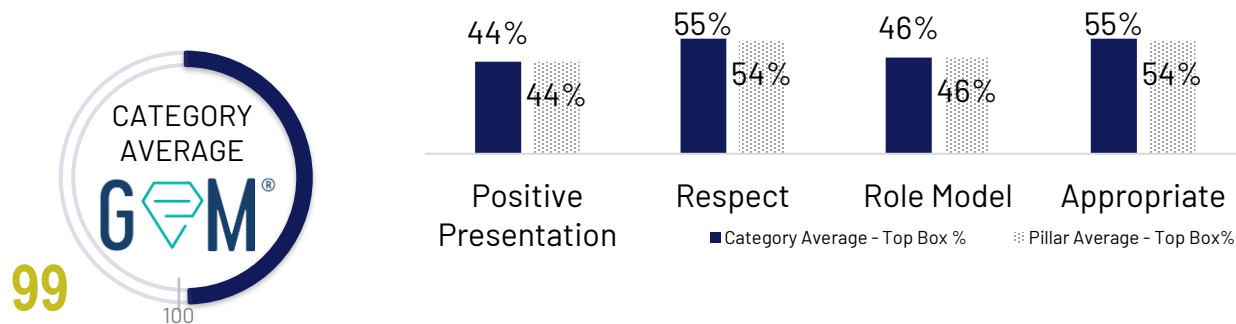
Fewer than one-third of household product ads accurately portray women, though a rise in high GEM® scoring cases suggests improvements are in progress.

27%

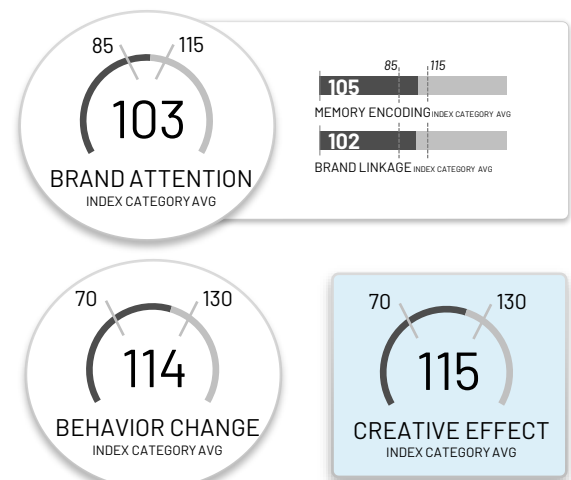
Percentage of Household Products Cases in Top Third of GEM® Database

Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

Like food and beverage, the **household products category predominantly portrays women in traditional roles (85% of roles), leaving room to modernize their representation.** By showing women as multidimensional – balancing professional, personal, and caregiving responsibilities – brands could create more authentic and relatable narratives. **Modernizing these portrayals would strengthen consumer connection and unlock greater impact for campaigns.**



In household products, GEM® and **Brand Attention** sit near the baseline, while **Sales Impact** and, therefore, **creative effectiveness** are slightly stronger but still within normative range. By refreshing campaigns to portray women in authentic, contemporary ways, brands can both improve representation and capture greater attention. Even as spending in this semi-discretionary category stays relatively stable¹⁸, this **dual lift of stronger portrayals and heightened brand visibility not only deepens consumer engagement but may also help safeguard against future volatility, trade-offs, and brand switching, ensuring more resiliency, growth, and loyalty.**



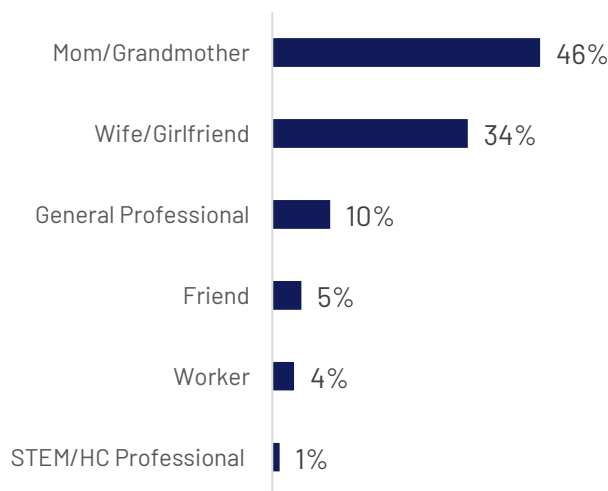
Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads 2018-2025 YTD, Household Products category n=224 ads

HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS – DRIVERS DEEP DIVE

Our analysis indicates that the household products category lacks compelling narratives centered on women. Few ads depict women making positive life changes or pursuing passions, with most storylines focusing on goal achievement—likely tied to product performance.

To improve portrayals, the category should expand storytelling to highlight women's agency, aspirations, and multidimensional experiences beyond product use.

Share of Roles in Household Products Ads



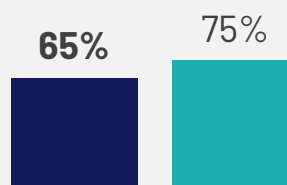
Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

Storytelling Themes in Advertising and their Impact on GEM® Scores

Share of Above Average GEM® Score Case Count

■ Household Products ■ All Category

Woman Achieves a Goal or Succeeds



See more on these themes [here!](#)

In the household products category, women are overwhelmingly cast in conventional roles—85% of portrayals, second only to restaurants. Missing are depictions of women as business owners, artists, or athletes, even though unconventional roles are what drive stronger outcomes.

There are also nuanced opportunities to weave brands in more organically. Women make 85% of household purchase decisions¹⁹, but you rarely see them in ads purchasing the products. Meanwhile, 41% of top GEM® cases show women transacting²⁰.

Expanding beyond traditional household scenarios to reflect women's broader interests and buying power can elevate portrayals.

Category Ad Example



Quilted Northern – We Quilt This City

Quilted Northern breaks convention by portraying women of diverse ages, races/ethnicities, and body types in bold, fun, rock star fashion. By showing them outside the home, highlighting a passion/interest through musical expression, and empowering them to confidently make brand choices, the ad reinforces the brand's role in celebrating individuality and women's agency as consumers. Watch [here!](#)



STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0: CHAPTER 2

GEM® INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Financial Services

Edition

2025

SEEHER



FINANCIAL SERVICES LEARNINGS – OVERVIEW

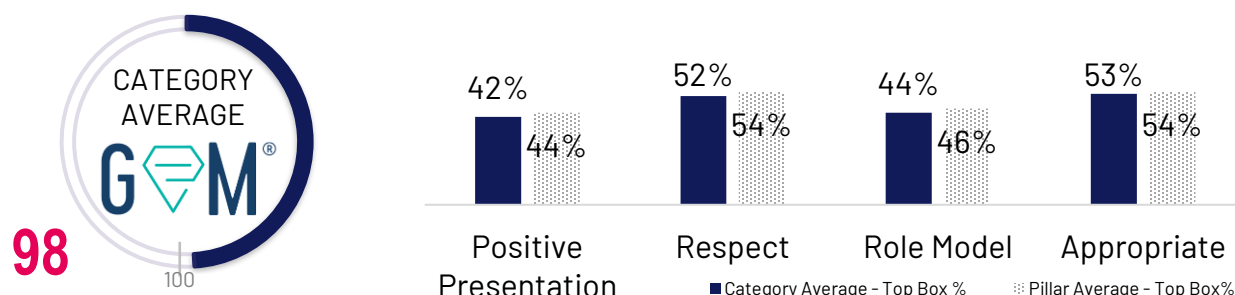
Despite the dollars and cents behind them, only a quarter of financial services ads rank in the top third for GEM®, limiting the industry's bang for its buck.

26%

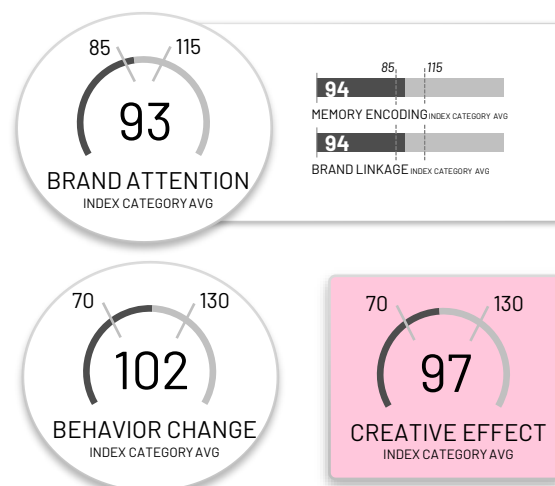
Percentage of **Financial Services** Cases in Top Third of GEM® Database

Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

What if we told you there is **\$700 billion of untapped assets**, all held back by financial institutions underserving female investors? According to the World Economic Forum, there is evidence that women overall make better investors²¹. And yet, the financial services category often neglects to uplift them – or even portray them at all. As a category, financial services **approaches the GEM® average**, overall and across pillars, with an opportunity to elevate representation, **starting with the table stakes** elements of respect and appropriate portrayal, which have declined in recent years.



In addition to GEM®, the advertising **challenge for Financial Services is Brand Attention**. Often perceived as complex or uninteresting with little immediate benefit, tune out is high, compounded by a category sea of sameness, drowning the hook for attention. **Telling new and exciting stories that simultaneously paint women as role models, or in multidimensional facets**, could correct the category challenge with both Brand Attention as well as GEM®.



Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads 2018-2025 YTD, Financial Services category n=942 ads

FINANCIAL SERVICES LEARNINGS – DRIVERS DEEP DIVE

While there are several drivers for high GEM®, three key storytelling themes rise to the top: women making positive life changes, achieving goals, or following their passions. While goal success is common in the financial services category, the themes of **positive life changes** and the **pursuit of passions** could be leveraged more effectively. The multidimensionality of women in financial services, as not all business but also pursuing pleasure in passions and goals, is an underutilized way to address these themes.

Storytelling Themes in Advertising and their Impact on GEM® Scores

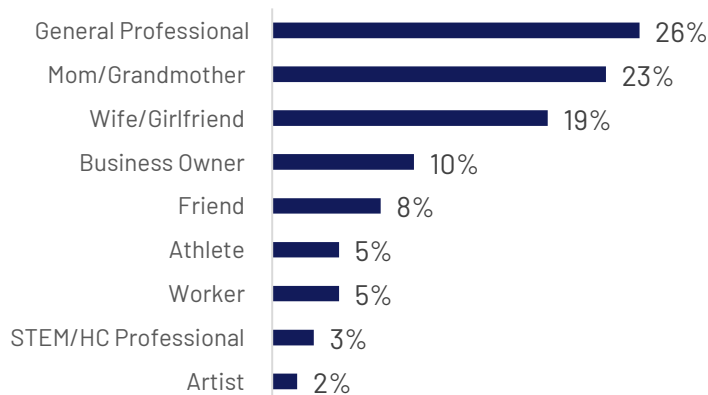
Share of Above Average GEM® Score Case Count

■ Financial Services ■ All Category



See more on these themes [here!](#)

Share of Roles in Financial Services Ads



Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

A key finding from our earlier Strive For More 2.0 issue²² was all about women having agency, particularly financial independence, as the main indicator of this status. However, this is not seen enough in advertising. Over half of women want to see more advertising with women as financially independent (53%) or financially savvy (52%)²³.

Remember that \$700 billion of untapped assets? Beyond this, women are set to acquire \$124 trillion due to the Great Wealth transfer, further underscoring female force in this field. Whatever role they are playing, financial service advertisers need to depict women as independent and skilled, balanced with their stories of personal growth, hobbies and interests to create more well-rounded portrayals.

Category Ad Example



American Express – Born To Run

AMEX showcases financially savvy women who channel their passions for food, travel, adventure, and friendship into the journey of a lifetime—trekking abroad to run a marathon with the brand powerfully backing their ambitions every step of the way. Watch [here!](#)

STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0: CHAPTER 2
GEM® INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Restaurant Edition

2025

SEEHER



RESTAURANT LEARNINGS – OVERVIEW

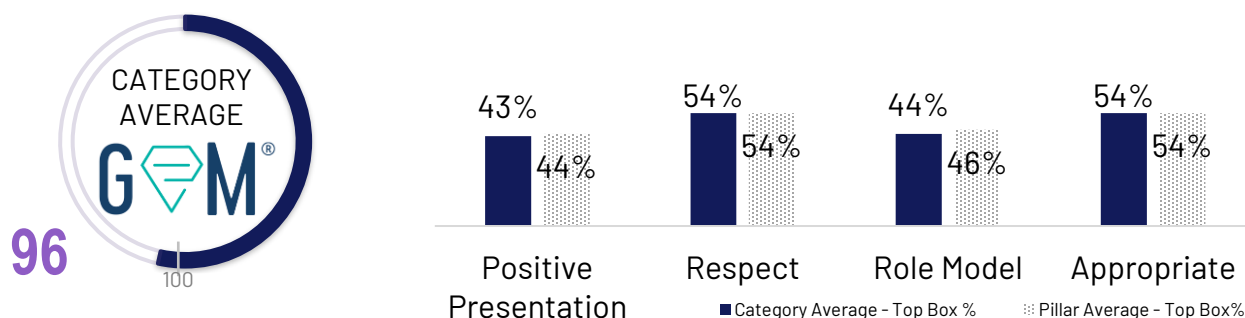
Top-tier GEM® scoring female portrayals for Restaurants comprise only a quarter of ads in the category.

24%

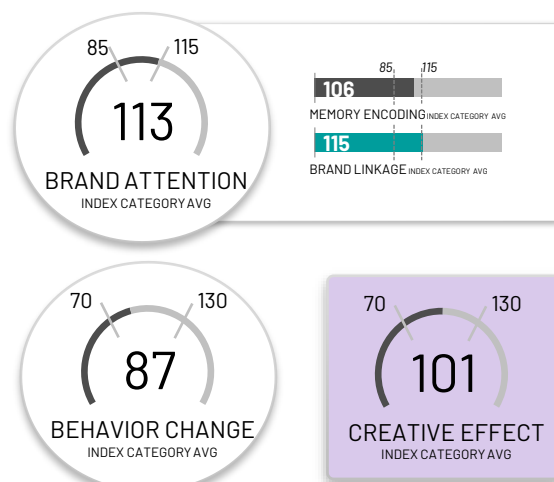
Percentage of **Restaurant** Cases in Top Third of GEM® Database

Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

In 2023, men outspent women on dining by 19%, but by 2024, the roles reversed—women outspent men by 33% per month²⁴. This shift signals women's growing influence as key drivers in the restaurant category. Yet **brands underperform in their portrayals, falling below the GEM® average**. To sustain momentum, restaurants must **move beyond minimal, positive, respectful, and appropriate depictions** and showcase women as authentic role models who reflect their impact and spending power.



The restaurant category faces dual challenges: underwhelming portrayals of women and limited success in driving Brand Choice. Rising costs, shifting food preferences, competing offers, subscriptions, delivery services, and tech disruption only add pressure. To capture women's growing spending power, brands must move beyond conventional, maternal roles and depict women as decision-makers and experience creators. **Ads that highlight restaurants as spaces for connection, wellness, and celebration for women** will resonate more deeply, while loyalty programs, personalized offers, and seamless digital tools can help translate stronger portrayals into measurable behavior change.



Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads 2018-2025 YTD, Restaurant category n=423 ads

RESTAURANT LEARNINGS – DRIVERS DEEP DIVE

Several factors support strong GEM® performance, but three storytelling themes stand out: women making positive life changes, achieving goals, and following their passions.

In the restaurant category, portrayals of women pursuing passions and interests are common—an area where the industry exceeds the norm. However, the themes of **positive life changes and goal achievement remain underutilized and represent clear opportunities for stronger connection and growth.**

Storytelling Themes in Advertising and their Impact on GEM® Scores

Share of Above Average GEM® Score Case Count

■ Restaurant ■ All Category

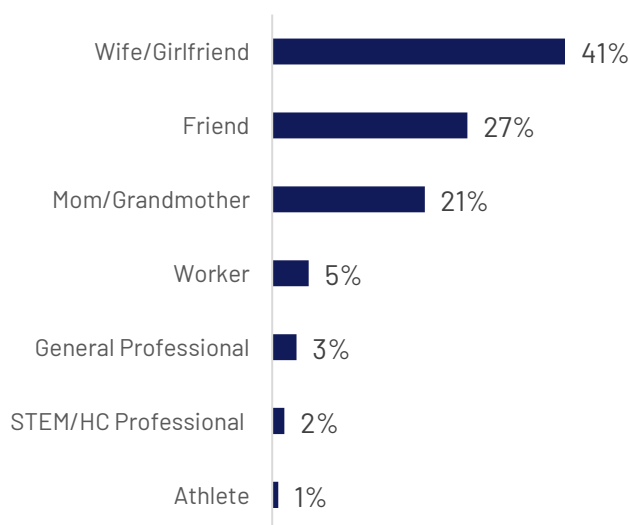
Woman Pursuing Passions or Interests

88%

70%

See more on these themes [here!](#)

Share of Roles in Restaurant Ads



Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

Traditional female roles comprise 89% of female character roles in the category, making restaurants the top industry for conventional portrayals of women. And unfortunately, these portrayals, coupled with the lack of relevant thematic storytelling, are not resonating with consumers to the extent they could.

The restaurant category heavily promotes offers and might benefit from diversifying and modernizing the roles of female characters in their advertising by adding more dimensions to them and leveraging these portrayals to convey the benefits of these promotions.

What they may find is that depictions of an improved work/life balance benefit may pair well with restaurant offers cost benefit for some women, for example. And by depicting more upwardly mobile women, and reflecting communal dining beyond only familial contexts, might expand the relevancy of the restaurant category to more women, who are looking for more depictions of successful (47%), career-oriented (45%) women²⁵.

Category Ad Example



McDonald's – More Than You Expect (Breakfast)

McDonald's spotlights a female medical professional working a double shift, showcasing how the brand goes beyond expectations to fuel her busy day. By offering a 2-for-1 meal that aligns value with her real needs, McDonald's positions itself as a supportive partner for hardworking women balancing demanding careers and everyday life. Watch [here!](#)

STRIVE FOR MORE 2.0: CHAPTER 2
GEM® INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

**Technology, Media
& Telecom Edition**

2025

SEEHER



TECH, MEDIA, TELECOM LEARNINGS – OVERVIEW

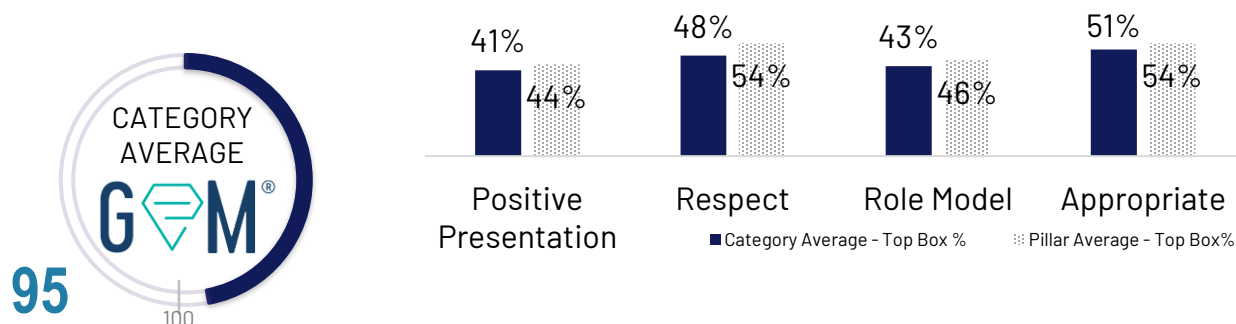
Technology, Media, and Telecom require the most advancement of all categories in authentically portraying women.

19%

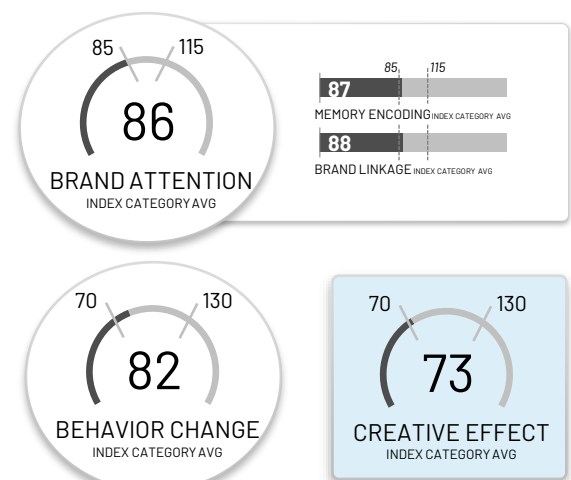
Percentage of **Media & Tech** Cases in
Top Third of GEM® Database

Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads with GEM® scores 2018-2025 YTD

Women remain **underrepresented in leadership** for both media and technology sectors²⁶. And category advertising isn't helping on that front. Unmotivating representation combined with less than table stakes respectful and appropriate depictions leaves the category falling **below the GEM® average, with all pillars declining**. Advertisers have the opportunity to chip away at this by **rewriting the algorithm and elevating female portrayal**.



Both GEM® and Creative Effectiveness are weak for Tech, Media, and Telecom ads. As the expectation for tailored, on-demand media and devices rises, capturing wandering eyeballs and getting credit is a rising challenge for the category. Tech, Media, and Telecom ads are typically acquisition-focused, which can overshadow creative storytelling and attention-driving, emotionally motivating portrayals. Spotlighting women as **role models with savviness and decision-making power** in the category can help address the bigger GEM® issue, as well as optimize attention to power brand impact.



Source: Ipsos Database n=7,037 ads 2018-2025 YTD,
Tech, Media, and Telecom category n=1,463 ads

TECH, MEDIA, TELECOM LEARNINGS – DRIVERS DEEP DIVE

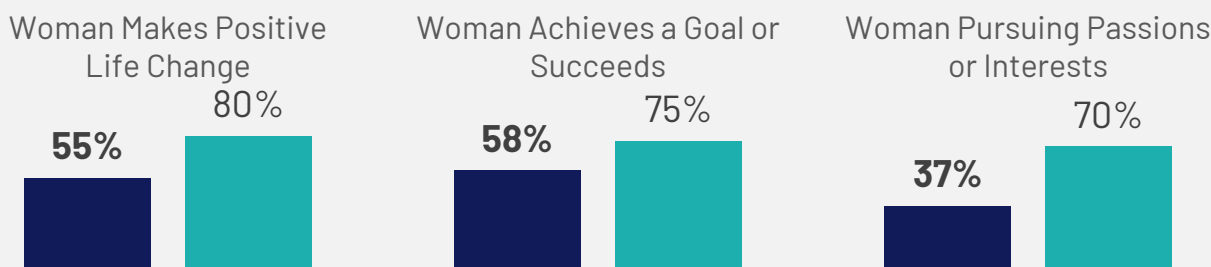
While there are several drivers for high GEM®, three key storytelling themes rise to the top: women making positive life changes, achieving goals, or pursuing passions. However, **these themes are underutilized in the tech, media, and telecom space**, particularly women pursuing category-related passions or interests.

Storytelling Themes in Advertising and their Impact on GEM® Scores

Share of Above Average GEM® Score Case Count

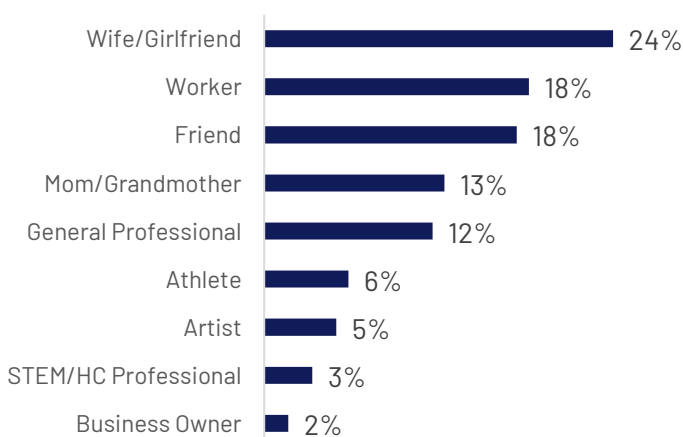
■ Tech, Media, Telecom

■ All Category



See more on these themes [here!](#)

Share of Roles in TMT Ads



Source: Ipsos U.S. Database with 1,359 GEM® ads tagged

More fundamental than the lack of higher pillar representation is the fact that women are not being portrayed as technology professionals in tech, media, and telecom ads. While 82% of the top 3rd GEM® cases feature women in STEM careers,²⁷ the percentage of STEM roles in this category is merely 3%.

With women fighting for leadership roles in the industry, why have tech, media, and telecom advertisers fallen in line with the presentation issue instead of supporting the growth goal? No matter the role, women are craving more stories where they are shown as technologically skilled (51%)²⁸, opening multiple tactics for category advertisers to shape depiction.

Category Ad Example



AT&T – Orientation

AT&T showcases a tech-savvy young woman who confidently guides her peers on how to get the most out of their phones to enhance their collegiate experience. By portraying her as both authoritative and relatable, the brand highlights women's expertise and influence while keeping AT&T and Samsung at the center of the story. Watch [here!](#)

A woman with dark hair tied in a bun is shown in profile, looking upwards. The background is a soft-focus green bokeh. The image is framed by a dark blue triangle in the top-left and a teal triangle in the bottom-right.

THANK YOU

2025

SEEHER



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[SeeHer](https://www.seeher.com) was launched in 2016 by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA). SeeHer's coalition of leaders is committed to improving the accurate representation and portrayal of women and girls to drive business growth. To help its members benchmark success and become catalysts for change, SeeHer spearheaded the development of the Gender Equality Measure (GEM®), the first research methodology that quantifies gender bias in ads and programming. A winner of the prestigious ESOMAR Research Effectiveness Award, GEM® is the global measurement standard, proving that content accurately portraying women and girls dramatically increases purchase intent and brand reputation. SeeHer's suite of training and resources, including GEM®, enables marketers to prioritize best practices as part of an always-on approach to driving growth. The movement includes the following vertical expertise: SeeHer in Sports, SeeHer Entertainment, and SeeHer Health.

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