



And the winner is...Dr. Melissa Read Takes the Cake during M2W

The results are in—**Dr. Melissa Read, Ph.D., vice president of research and innovation for Engauge** has been named the 2009 M2W® *Take the Cake Award* winner. Selected by conference attendees, the award was created to honor the presenter deemed to be the favorite among M2W®-The Marketing To Women Conference participants. Dr. Read received a beautiful handmade Hartland cake plate from the talented glass blowers at Simon Pearce glassware in Vermont.



Patti Minglin recently spoke with Dr. Read about her journey into the world of marketing, what Henry Ford knew about the psychology of consumers and what she would do with just a little extra time in her day.

Patti Minglin: It really didn't surprise me that you were so popular with the M2W® audience—you have such a great presentational style of blending humor with core facts and take-aways. Can you tell us a little about your role with Engauge? Did you always plan to use your Ph.D. to help marketers?

Dr. Melissa Read: Patti, I thought I'd become some small-town college professor out in the middle of nowhere - living a peaceful life with my students and fellow faculty members until a ripe old age... paid in peanuts in exchange for the status that comes with science. That was the plan at least from before I can remember. And I actually achieved that plan for a little while. After I graduated with my doctorate, I became that college professor and I lived that life for some time...I loved teaching my students. I loved making big scientific discoveries. And I loved presenting to fellow scientists in my field....But then one day, life threw me some curve balls. I had to make some sacrifices. And I just kind of fell into the marketing world as a result. Now here, strange thing is I'm still very much that college professor I always imagined I'd be. My job is to make big breakthroughs about the way customers think and act and behave using research. I teach and inspire employees, big brand clients and national audiences about how to apply psychology to marketing. I write about my research in major publications - like an upcoming chapter I have in Stan Rapp's latest book. I even hired some of my best students and daily, I remind them I'm giving them an 'applied education.' And for whatever reason, everyone at the office still calls me 'Dr. Read!' Now I'd be lying if I told you I live that 'peaceful life' I told you about earlier... and I haven't yet lived passed the age of 31, but everything else pretty much checks out as planned. Oh and in marketing, they don't pay you in peanuts. You get peanut butter instead, and I tend to like that much better =)

Minglin: I have to admit that I would have a hard time referring to you as anything but "Dr. Read." As a Doctor of Psychology, you really do bring a unique perspective to the marketing world. While there is a natural correlation between marketing and psychology, what do you think is the greatest advantage for marketers when they truly tune into what drives human behavior?

Read: The best thing about psychology is that it helps me learn things about customers that they don't know about themselves. And I really love that. I can test and measure all day... but sometimes all the focus groups and interviews and product testing in the world isn't going to get me what I need to know about the way people think and act and behave. Psychology is the one thing that helps me go beyond giving customers what they say they want you to give them and what they actually need. As Henry Ford once said, "If I'd built my customers exactly what they'd asked for, I'd of built them a faster horse."

Minglin: I love that Henry Ford quote—it's so true! We know that the emergence of social media has changed the way we connect with our consumers. But, has it affected men and women differently? In other words, how do men and women approach social media differently and why should this matter to brands?

Read: Women enjoy connection, community and consensus. We like to share our perspectives, express our emotions and form deep and lasting relationships with others in a way that is uniquely different than men. As a result, while both sexes are into social media, research shows that women are more active in the space when compared to men. We do more 'friending' and have an overall higher level of social interaction. As our level of activity increases in social media, it decreases in traditional media in turn. So if brands want to reach us, they should really learn where to find us these days. Also, if brands are looking to target specific audiences who have the power to spread campaigns virally, the female target audience should be at the top of their list. Our social activity levels and connections can give campaigns a major push. Of course, brands should also keep in mind that we really like to share our opinions. So if we don't like your campaign, you should know that we can take you down pretty hard and fast too.

Minglin: Just for fun...what books are you currently reading and what—if anything—would you like to do if you had just a little more time?

Read: I've got to be honest with you, Patti. A typical day in my life is totally and completely 100% slammed!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Working for a marketing agency is like riding a rollercoaster. It's a real rush and I wouldn't trade it for anything right now, I learn a TON like this because it's sink or swim when you work with the biggest brands in the world and in an economy where you just can't get it wrong.... but life goes by so fast that I miss a lot too. If I could delegate reading books to my direct reports, I'd be covered. That and a few other things like running to the ladies room would open up some real bandwidth on my calendar..... But if I had just a little more time on my hands, my BIG DREAM would be to write my own book. So many of the women at M2W this year were authors, and they really inspired me. Their accomplishments made me feel like maybe I could do something like that too. I don't know exactly what my book would be about, but I would hope people would think it was funny and smart – preferably in that order =).

Minglin: No doubt it would be filled with both wisdom and wit. You are such an inspiration in your own right, Dr. Read. Congratulations on your recent M2W honor!

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