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ADVERTISING

Pitching to Real Moms, the Ones Who Aren't Perfect

By STUART ELLIOTT

REMEMBER the corny song about mothers that begins "M' is for the million things she gave me?" Now when it comes to mothers, "M" also stands for Madison Avenue, which is striving to figure out how to best reach mothers on behalf of advertisers.

The Martin Agency in Richmond, Va., which is owned by the Interpublic Group of Companies, has started a unit devoted to marketing to mothers around the world. About 10 employees are involved with the unit, named the Mom Complex, which is also making use of freelancers in other countries.

The Mom Complex was the brainchild of Katherine Wintsch, who has worked at Martin for 10 years and is vice president and group planning director there. She is also leading the new unit with the title of founder. Asked if she wears two hats, Ms. Wintsch, who is 34, replied, "Two hats at work, and a hat at home," where she is mother to a daughter, Layla, age 4, and a son, Alex, 2.

"A year ago, when my daughter was around 3, I realized how bad marketing to moms was," Ms. Wintsch said, adding: "I was crying myself to sleep dealing with a toddler and an infant, but the mothers in advertising looked so perfect. It was off-base; they were too idealized, too glamorized."

"I was complaining about it," Ms. Wintsch said, when "Mike and John said, 'You should be the one to change it.'" She was referring to Mike Hughes, president of Martin, and John B. Adams Jr., chairman and chief executive.

"Traditionally in our business, men get the most entertaining and interesting advertising," said Mr. Hughes, citing examples like commercials that appear during football games.

"Katherine's group is giving us the insights to make our advertising to the world's most important consumers much more powerful," he added.

Mothers are a crucial market for advertisers because of all the money they spend on goods and services. Although industry figures vary, the Mom Complex estimates that mothers account for \$2.3 trillion a year in spending in the United States.

Another reason they are so alluring is that "women have been the gatekeepers for what comes into the house and are responsible for the household budgets," said Susan Credle, chief creative officer at Leo Burnett USA in Chicago, part of the Leo Burnett Worldwide division of the Publicis Groupe. When Burnett opened LeoShe in 1997, it became one of the first agencies to start a unit devoted to marketing to female consumers.

"And today, women are bringing the money in, too," by working outside the home, Ms. Credle said, "which empowers them further to decide which brands they want to engage with."

She said the advantage of units dedicated to women or mothers was "not necessarily that they are saying this is a new way of marketing," but rather "that they



PATRICK ANTOKOWIAK

Leslie Griles, Katherine Wintsch and Anne Marie Hite are principals in the Mom Complex. The children are, from left, Campe Griles, Alex Wintsch, Layla Wintsch, Oliver Hite and Lucas Hite.



JON TINGEN

The Mom Complex hosts Opinion Parties, at which guests are encouraged to speak freely about what motherhood means to them.

are saying this group is important and deserves to be understood."

Ms. Credle is moderating a panel next Thursday, on marketing to women, at Advertising Week 2011 in New York. Ms. Wintsch is on a conference panel, scheduled for Monday, on marketing to mothers.

Among other signs of the increasing attention being paid to mothers is the proliferation of Web sites and blogs aimed at them. For instance, BlogHer operates blogher.com as well as the BlogHer Publishing Network of 2,500 blogs.

By KIM SEVERSON

ATLANTA — Drink up, America. The government needs the money.

With cities across the country facing their fifth straight year of declining revenues and states cutting services and laying off workers, raising money from people who enjoy a cocktail is becoming an increasingly attractive

In addition, online media directed at mothers are becoming more specialized. For example, Mamiverse, a Web site that was introduced in July, is intended for Hispanic mothers who speak English.

Martin lists among its clients blue-chip marketers like Expedia, Geico, Hanes, Johnson & Johnson, Kraft Foods, LivingSocial, Pizza Hut and Wal-Mart Stores. The initial clients of the Mom Complex include the Cool Whip brand of dessert topping sold by Kraft and the Asda and Wal-Mart units of Wal-Mart Stores.

"Katherine and her team have helped

as a way to build up their budgets.

Twelve states have raised taxes on alcohol or changed alcohol laws to increase revenue, including Maryland, which in July pushed the sales tax on alcohol to 9 percent, from 6 percent — the first such increase in 38 years and one that is expected to bring in \$85 million a year.

People touring the Jack Daniel's distillery in Lynchburg, Tenn., may finally be able to have a sip now that the state has loosened laws to allow tastings as part of a package of changes intended to attract more alcohol-related business to the state.

Even universities are hoping alcohol will raise revenue. Fans of the Louisiana State University

us stay close to what really matters to our customers," said Tony Rogers, senior vice president for marketing at Wal-Mart in Bentonville, Ark.

"We know our customers take a lot of pride in their ability to not just get by on tight budgets, but to help their families thrive," he added. "And we try to make that come to life in our advertising."

One way that the Mom Complex seeks to obtain insights from mothers is to host gatherings, called Opinion Parties, at which guests are encouraged to speak freely about what motherhood means to them and how marketers could improve their lives.

No employees of Mom Complex sit in, Ms. Wintsch said. Instead, the parties are filmed to be reviewed later.

The gatherings are not intended to be focus groups, which, Ms. Wintsch said, "are part of the problem because the moms who attend those want to look like good moms in front of other moms." The result, she said, is banal insights like "Moms are busy" or "Moms want their kids to be healthy."

A primary goal is to help eliminate the clichés of ads aimed at mothers. Among them, Ms. Wintsch listed these: "Moms are always happy, even when cleaning. Their children are obedient angels. Moms always seem to wear sweater sets and Capri pants. And it's common for their wardrobes to match the colors of the brands they're promoting."

ment, it puts money into the university coffers with every swig.

The beer will be sold on tap and in gold-and-purple cans at bars, restaurants and stores around Louisiana. The university will get royalties of between 6 and 8 percent, said Charles D'Agostino, executive director of the university's Louisiana Business and Technology Center.