

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PARTNERS

## Sex, Word of Mouth and Target?



Target is about to explore the conventional wisdom that “sex sells” by running an ad with the teasing headline, "I just had a 20-minute conversation with a stranger about nipples" and the illustration to the left. The ad is scheduled to begin running in early 2011. Target says their objective is to be more *relevant* and even *more irreverent* and to that end they have chosen to capitalize on what they refer to as “the chaos, humor and absurdness that are hallmarks of parenting”. Further, in responding to the changing marketplace they want to speak to not only the moms, but also to dads, grandparents, and even siblings.

Target recognizes that parents experiment with different products and retailers, especially in the first few months after a baby’s birth, to find products and practices they’ll use to raise their new family member. They know that it’s “important to catch parents’ attention and get the marketing message right”. Lots of good thinking there, but if that is leading them to focus all their energy on mass media advertising then they are missing the most important point – and it’s right there in their headline!

### Personal Conversations

It’s during those “first few critical months” that the greatest influence will actually be coming from those “20-minute conversations” with trusted friends, relatives, neighbors, co-workers and yes, even strangers. The majority of influence won’t be coming from TV and print ads, so Target should *reread their headline*. It’s all about the personal media: face-to-face interactions, phone conversations, blog posts, and text and email messages. It’s these “conversations” that will have the greatest influence. New moms and dads have lots of questions and they trust those who they know.

Marketers have traditionally dismissed word of mouth communication as being out of their control. Nothing could be further from the truth! At **Customer Experience Partners** we’ve shown time and again that the *everyday influencers* that lead those *conversations* can be identified, and can be “armed” (with facts and information) making them more effective and more vocal communicators on behalf of a brand or company. Professing “lack of control” is a cop out!

To learn more, visit our website: [www.customerexperiencepartners.com](http://www.customerexperiencepartners.com) or call us to discuss.

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