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Capitalizing on the New Normal

by **SPARKS & HONEY CULTURAL STRATEGISTS** OCTOBER 29, 2012, 1:26 PM



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sparks & honey leverages a proprietary Cultural Listening and Mapping platform, that identifies cultural bursts in real time, scores their energy level, projects their lifespan and analyzes their cultural resonance. We invented Content Networks in order to help brands remain in sync with culture and make more strategically informed business decisions across disciplines including marketing, communications, product development and long term planning. Through a...

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As we detailed in our [New Social Systems Deep Dive report](#), a growing mistrust of institutions is driving a seismic shift in values in the United States. As Americans look beyond traditional values, a new set of ideals, beliefs and systems are starting to emerge.

From the rise of atheism and non-traditional spirituality to the fragmentary nature of the modern workplace, we are seeing new practices and narratives develop around what is considered normal and acceptable.

Perhaps nowhere are these social changes more visible than in the shifting structure of the modern family. Single parent families, same sex parents, and communal “families” are more common than ever. Researchers estimate that only 50% of children will grow up in households with two married adults who are their biological parents. This shift in family life has been clearly reflected in popular culture, as seen in mainstream television shows like *Modern Family* and *The New Normal*. (See our [timeline of Non Traditional Families in TV History](#)). And as family life in America evolves, entrepreneurs are launching businesses that capitalize on serving the needs of the new-look American family.

Relations by Choice

Melanie Notkin is the founder and CEO of [Savvy Auntie](#), a multi-platform media business that serves “cool aunts, great aunts, godmothers and all women who love kids.”

“Young parents are stretched to the limit managing their household income while taking care of their children,” says Notkin. “The rise of the Savvy Auntie, the caring aunt by relation or aunt by choice who generously

with the latest high energy marketing trends shaping business and pop culture.

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offers time, financial support and gifts parents cannot afford, is an important - yet mostly unacknowledged - bright side to the transformation of the millennial American Family.”

With changing demographic and social patterns, the number of women who have not yet become mothers by the time they are 29 has risen dramatically. In 1976, only 31 percent of American women 25-29 were childless; by 2008, that number had risen to 46 percent. And by 2010, nearly half of American women between the ages of 15-44 remained childless.

Seeing opportunity in this untapped market she dubbed PANKs (Professional Aunts, No Kids), Notkin launched SavvyAuntie.com in 2008. In the four years since, the business has expanded to include a bestselling book, a national holiday (Auntie's Day), and a large and engaged social media following.

“The childless Savvy Auntie is helping to support the family in ways reminiscent of the communal village. Never before has the phrase ‘it takes a village’ been so right in the heart of the Zeitgeist of new social structures and the American family,” Notkin told us.

Designing a Family

While dynamics of existing families are changing, new families are also being fostered in unconventional ways.

Launched this month, [Family By Design](#) is an online community where new parenting partnerships can be established between single adults looking for a partner with whom to parent. The site offers guidance and a system for people - irrespective of gender or sexual orientation - to connect with



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each other and explore the possibility of having a baby together. A proprietary “parenting partner matching algorithm” helps to match couples, comparing member responses to sync up goals, values and parenting outlooks.

What’s driving this new paradigm? According to Darren Spedale, the founder of Family By Design, there are 5 million adults in the U.S. in their mid-30s and above who are single, childless, and still want to become parents. In addition, the Pew Foundation found in their 2010 nationwide poll of Millennials that while only 30% think that having a good marriage will be one of the most important things in their life, 52% believe that being a good parent will be one of the most important things - indicating a growing detachment between the concepts of marriage and parenthood.

With evolving values driving opportunities to service potential and existing families in new fashions, we expect to see continued innovation in the marketplace. Do you have a great business idea to capitalize on these new types of family structures? Let us know in the comments below.

sparks & honey is a next generation agency that helps brands synchronize with culture. Download our New Social Systems Report [here](#).

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I went to www.familybydesign.com and it looks like they've done a lot of wo experts", as they call them, on to their site to provide info and answer que they get asked by the public!

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The only family environment that works perfectly is this way. Adult women another, cloistered, neither they nor their children are seen from the outside (more). Male children are sent out to other groups when they reach maturity, and females are accepted from other groups.

Modern social groups, even so-called primitive cultures, are far removed from this.

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As a gay man who recently married my partner now that NYC passed the law through surrogacy. I include all this as part of my marketing efforts and it helps me and others who are now part of this new paradigm. <http://www.inc.com/author/farid-ali-lancheros/>

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