

Marketing to the Generations

Silent Generation



Members of the Silent Generation comprise those folks who were born between the years of 1928 and 1945 and are the smallest generation on the planet. Let's face it: fewer people were having babies during this generally depressed era so it only stands to reason that this would be a smaller group than others.

But even if there aren't a lot of them, they were busy. Because of the war, they had a lot of time to devote to making contributions to our society, which included scores of technological advancements. And today, these advancements are still very near and dear to them. Newspapers, magazines and television are all mediums they either invented or advanced and consequently, they are very loyal to them and the advertisements they wield.

Silent Generation folks are also voracious readers. In a recent poll, it was revealed that 81% of those between 65-74 and 86% of those 75-plus said they'd read a book, magazine or newspaper within the past 24 hours. So, take note: printed, more formal means of communication bodes well for this group.

That said, however, this is not an Internet illiterate group. Nearly 50% of the Silent Generation conducts online searches, but they do so primarily for health and government information, news, retail purchases and travel arrangements. And those numbers are going up as Internet usage among the Silent Generation rose 4% over the past five years. So while this means that these people are available for online marketing, it is not the preferred means of learning about your products or services.

Additional things you should know about members of the Silent Generation:

- They are very frugal (ala the Depression) and don't like to waste money
- They like one-to-one communication like letters, personal notes and newsletters
- They prefer advertising messages delivered in respectful tones

- They like a “features and benefits” approach to advertising
- They don’t like being rushed or pressed
- They respond well to testimonial advertising
- They love the fact that they are grandparents
- They respond well to lifestyle images over that of product photos
- They don’t like collages in print ads. They’re too confusing
- They shy away from bright colors used in advertising such as red, yellow and orange
- Simpler, less-complicated fonts are better for this group

Baby Boomers



If you can remember the Kennedy administration, the Beatles’ appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show or Neil Armstrong walking on the moon, chances are you are a Baby Boomer.

The Baby Boomer Generation is the largest generation on earth and it’s 80 million strong. While they currently comprise 45% of the population, by 2015, nearly 50% of the population will be Boomers. And boy, are they rich (though perhaps not as rich as they once were) controlling 67% of the wealth and with a median net worth of \$777,517. Each and every year, they account for \$2 trillion a year worth of spending.

To say that Boomers are innovators is an understatement. New products and new technology defines this generation. Some of their technological advancements include:

Electric blankets, razors and toothbrushes, microwave ovens, safer automobiles and airplanes, personal computers, cell phones, smart phones, e-mail, voicemail, the Internet and well, you get the idea.

They are the hardest working generation and retirement is a four-letter word to most. Many don't expect to retire by the age of 65. As a matter of fact, one in four boomers say they'll never retire. Recent reports state that Boomers are taking over the workforce and edging out younger recent college graduates. So all you active adult communities out there might want to take a good hard look at your business model.

Baby Boomers are also very egotistical. "It's all about me, baby." For this generation, the question most asked is: "What can you do for me?" You can't sell Boomers, nor can you tell them how they're going to benefit from what you have to sell.

First impressions are mightily important to this group. Therefore, you need to come across in your advertising as honest, approachable and caring. Connect with them on an emotional level then back up that connection with facts and figures that justify the decision to buy.

Some additional tidbits about Boomers:

- 78.2% are online representing 60 million potential customers
- 50% of those between the ages of 50-64 use social networking
- 25% of those over the age of 60 use social networking
- Don't use the words: aging, old, seniors, infirmity, decline, etc.
- Do use the following words: energy, independence, vitality, youthful, fun, etc.
- This generation has the highest divorce rate of all. So make sure your ads include single people, groups of friends and not strictly hetero couples
- Despite the recent turn of events in the economy, they react well to messaging that relates to enjoying the good things in life
- Shows, ads, music and messaging that reminds them of their youth is perceived very positively
- They are resistant to hard sell
- Don't overlook guerilla advertising (or the more unconventional means of attracting attention to your product or service) for this group

Generation X

Generation X is comprised of adults born between 1965-1981. They are the best-educated generation in United States' history as evidenced by college and university enrollments and are also the most ethnically diverse.

Gen Xers are savvy entrepreneurs with little-to-no patience. They are a generation of immediate gratification as they were the first to grow up with VCRs, video games and home computers and as such, are very technologically in-tune.

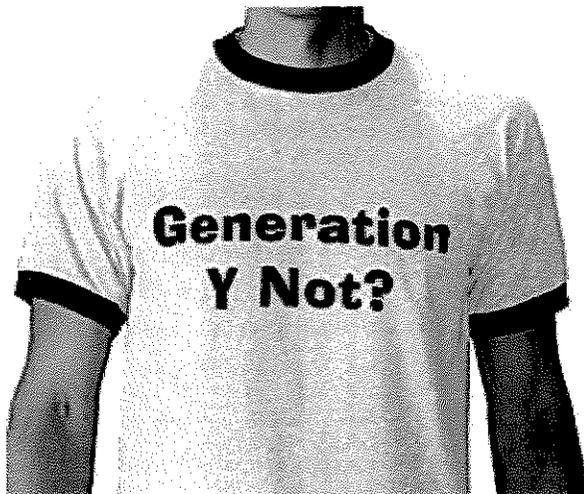
This generation is extremely loyal to brands. As a matter of fact, they'll even pay more for a trusted brand name. Research has shown that 42% of Gen Xers will stick to a brand once they find one they like and of those people ages 30 to 49, 50% are more likely to share their opinions of brands or products with their peers.

Little known facts about Gen Xers:

- As an ethnically diverse group, they welcome and expect interracial interaction in advertising
- Don't talk down to this group. They are smart and have little time for condescending messages
- Word of mouth advertising has been replaced by word-of-mouth marketing thanks to Facebook and other social media sites. Use them or risk failure with Generation X
- Engage Gen Xers in conversation via social media. Don't push your message
- TV is their No. 2 pastime behind computers. Television advertising works with this group

And despite proclamations of the death of newspaper advertising, Gen Xers still read. A recent success story in Fort Lauderdale developed by CC Devco Homes, a Codina-Carr project, is Monterra. Developers there have spent the bulk of their advertising and marketing dollars on newspaper advertising and have over 300 homes to show for it in just 18 months.

Generation Y



Anyone out there with children born between 1982 and 1998 will attest to the following: Generation Y is one of the most positive generations on earth and at times, also the most frustrating.

This is the "Be Anything. Do Anything," generation. We raised Gen Y to believe that they can do anything and be anything they want. We made their lives so easy that they now believe they deserve to live first and work second.

Generation Y is a very authentic generation. They don't waste time on people or companies that are not being real with them. They've seen it all. From televised wars and 9-11 to the hanging of Hussein and the assassination of Osama Bin Laden. They know real when they see it, and it takes them all of

three seconds to pass judgment. So what does this mean to you? It means that you cannot directly market to them until you buy into them and until you value their perspective on life.

What you need to know about Generation Y:

- Very selective about whom they listen to. They get their information from one another, not from us and not from the media
- They don't email. They text ... 2,273 times a month on average
- At 75 million strong, they form 27% of the population
- They have 11% more buying power than Boomers did when they were young
- 39.6% of this group is enrolled in college
- TV is the first place they learn about new products
- They use Google and Yahoo daily. They love Facebook and Twitter
- Lifestyle is far more important than the cost of something. So don't lead with price in your advertising.



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