to Adults Age 55 & Older

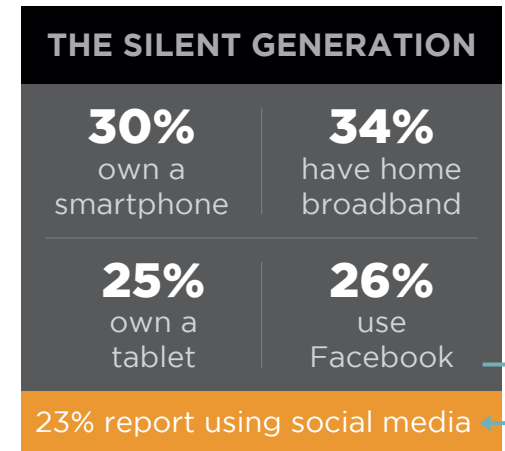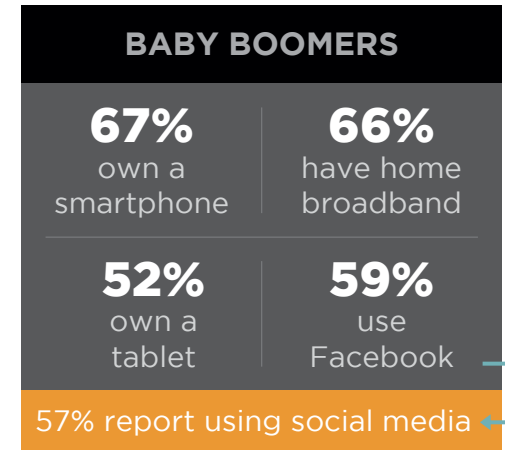AccuData
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Older Americans Actively Embrace Digital Life

In a 2018 Pew Research Center study comparing technology use among Millennials to that of America's older generations, the results clearly show that seniors (and Baby Boomers in particular) are embracing digital life. While not customarily seen as "early adopters," Boomer and Silent Generation cohort members have each shown increasing technology adoption rates in recent years.

Willing to overcome a combination of challenges that once served as barriers to the usage of smart devices and/or new technologies (including socioeconomic status, the physical manipulation of devices, and a lack of confidence in their own ability to learn), Pew reports that once online, these individuals developed a positive outlook about technology and the benefits it can provide. Additionally, many older adults go on to deeply engage with online content and activities.

AARP brings to light an interesting point: Boomers "were in the workforce during the evaluation of computers, email, and the internet, and were the first to understand the value of technology."

In fact, roughly 81% of 50 – 64 year-old internet users say they go online daily and 19% of those report being online almost constantly. Those 65 and older aren't far behind in their online usage — almost 75% reported being online daily. The numbers jump even higher for those 65 and older using a smartphone; they reported being online once a day (14%), several times a day (65%), or almost constantly (12%).

BABY BOOMERS

67% own a smartphone	**66%** have home broadband
52% own a tablet	**59%** use Facebook

57% report using social media

THE SILENT GENERATION

30% own a smartphone	**34%** have home broadband
25% own a tablet	**26%** use Facebook

23% report using social media

Cohort Characteristics and Behaviors

Generational cohorts are groups of individuals that have shared significant cultural, historical, and societal experiences. These experiences tend to distinguish the generations from one another and have been shown to influence the group's overall personality, including their approach to education, political views, what they desire from work, and so much more.

The Silent Generation: 1929 - 1945

Key messaging: "Your Experience is Respected"
Key values: accountability, stability, and tradition

- Ages 75 - 91 in 2020
- 7.47% of the US population in 2018
- Defining moments included the Great Depression, World War II, and the Korean War
- Grew up with traditional nuclear families
- Conservative disciplinarians
- Honor and respect authority
- Motivated by family and community
- An extremely limited presence in the US workforce
- Family comes first
- Dreamed of obtaining formal educations
- Prefer written communications
- View technology as complex and changing
- Value saving money and paying with cash

Baby Boomers: 1946 - 1965

Key messaging: "You are Needed, You are Valued"
Key values: fulfillment, indulgence, equality

- Ages 55-74 in 2020
- 22.18% of the US population in 2018
- Defining moments included the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the civil rights movement, Vietnam, and landing on the moon
- Grew up in disintegrating families
- Idealistic rule breakers
- Challenged authority
- Motivated by success
- Still have a large presence in the US workforce
- Work comes first
- Felt obtaining a formal education was a birthright
- Prefer face-to-face communications and phone calls
- View technology as necessary for progress and achievement
- Value saving money and paying with cash

Using Email Marketing to Engage the Senior Market

Campaign Monitor's 2017 *Consumer Email Habits Report: What Do Your Customers Really Want* showed that consumers clearly prefer email marketing messages (66%) from retail brands. Direct mail (26%), mobile apps (25%), and social media (23%) also ranked favorably. Communications from travel and hospitality brands, entertainment brands, nonprofits, and digital media/ publishing brands all showed similar favorable results for email being "preferred a lot." Of those surveyed, 52.7% stated that they checked their personal email account more than 10 times a day.

Boomers have reported that the number one activity for which they use their smartphones is checking email. And according to research from ThirdAge/JWT Boom, they also read and click on the emails they receive!

Leading digital marketing experts tout email marketing as having the highest return on advertising investment of any other channel — between $38 and $44 per dollar spent. Older adults have their phones in hand. Email marketing is the ideal channel to reach this often under targeted audience ripe with the discretionary income to spend. According to the Deloitte Center for Financial Services, Boomers will continue to be the wealthiest generation in the United States until at least 2030. Their share of net household wealth will peak at 50.2% by 2020.

Additionally, both Boomers and the Silent Generation have adopted mobile commerce; in fact one in four mobile shoppers in the United States is over the age of 55.

96%
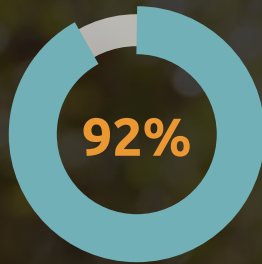of Boomers use email

92%
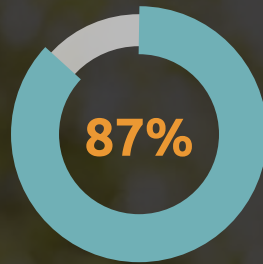of those that receive promotional emails about products and services click through to the website being promoted

55%
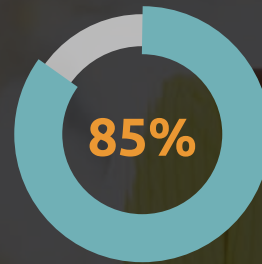have purchased a product or service through an email marketing message

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Of the smartphone users aged 50 and older that were surveyed:

92%
use text messaging

87%
use email capabilities
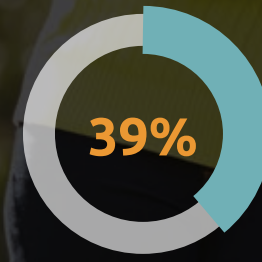
85%
consume news

80%
use internet search

55%
access social media

55%
use their phone's features for entertainment

39%
use their phones to access medical information about a health condition

34%
use their phone for online banking

The Reasoning Behind Design Considerations for Senior Marketing Initiatives

According to Nielsen Norman Group's *Senior Citizens (Ages 65 and older) on the Web* report, usability studies have found that websites are 43% more difficult for seniors to use then they are for younger users. One example that the research identified was related to a decrease in motor skills, which made clicking links more difficult.

As we age, our sensory, cognitive, and motor abilities begin to decline. Some of the earliest changes known to occur between the ages of 40 and 50 are related to vision. There are three key losses of visual acuity that arise: loss of light, loss of focus, and vision field loss.

To best accommodate the changing needs of your senior audience, changes in the design and content of your marketing messages are recommended.

Loss of Light

Loss of light occurs as advancing age causes the pupils to shrink. In this scenario, less light enters the eye, which can cause vision issues in low-light environments.

Loss of Focus

Also an impact of advancing age, presbyopia causes the eye's lenses to lose their elasticity, which makes focusing during reading and computer work a more challenging endeavor.

Vision Field Loss

The visual field is the portion of a subject's surroundings that can be seen at any one time. With vision field loss, age-related diseases of the eye impact how individuals process and perceive information. Some examples include macular degeneration, which is a loss of sharp central vision; glaucoma, which affects side or peripheral vision; cataracts, which cause cloudy or blurry vision, faded colors, and significant glare; and diabetic retinopathy, in which damaged retinal blood vessels cause blurred vision, severe vision loss, and may lead to blindness.

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Choose Type Styles and Type Sizes for Older Eyes

- Utilize fonts at 12-16 points in size, taking into consideration that certain fonts are inherently smaller and may need to be adjusted
- Add extra leading (the white space around each character) and line spacing to increase readability
- Flush copy left and don't apply justification to the right to make following lines of copy easier
- Consider regular (sans serif) fonts that have bolder lines with consistent strokes; decorative fonts with flourishes and thin lines are more difficult to read
- Limit the use of italic and bold typeface as well as the amount of text placed over photographs

## Select Color Schemes that are High Contrast

- Use higher contrast color schemes and consider avoiding yellows, blues, and greens as those colors become increasingly difficult to differentiate from one another
- Don't layer similar shades of the same color or clashing colors in text boxes
- Using dark type on a white background works best for easy reading; in fact, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) recommends 70% contrast between the type and background colors
- Avoid patterned backgrounds

Use Imagery and Photography to Make an Emotional Connection

- Use visual storytelling to make a connection with your audience; personal testimonials are more relatable than statistics and numbers and help toward establishing trust

- Consider adding videos as part of your visual storytelling plan — 54% of seniors report watching videos online and 3 out of 4 of those individuals have taken action as a result of watching an online video

- Consider using pictures of people 10-15 years younger than your target audience

- Select images of active, engaged, and vibrant individuals in order to make a connection with your audience — your reader should imagine themselves in the images you select

- Avoid using images that allude to the stereotypical negative perceptions of aging
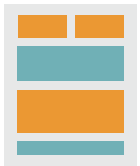
Apply Layout Considerations that Promote Readability and Simplified Navigation

- Allow for additional padding around word links and CTA buttons so that they are easy to target and click/tap

- Include a space between paragraphs

- Utilize subheads, bullet points, and numbered lists to organize content and break up pages

- Test for responsiveness on a variety of devices, including mobile

- Provide multiple forms of contact, including your phone number. While seniors are actively embracing digital, 72% of those surveyed wanted to know that a telephone-based contact was available

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Leverage Data-Driven Intelligence to Aid in Personalization and Segmentation

• Recognize that the needs of trailing seniors will be quite different than those of leading-edge seniors

• Utilize data points on demographics, lifestyle variables, and transactional data to create customized, relevant messaging

• Deliver that messaging with the use of segmentation (groups of older Americans that look and act similarly)

• Consider segmenting by age and then performing a data analysis to highlight additional segments

    - The Silent Generation, 1945 - 1929

    - Leading-Edge Boomers, 1946 - 1955

    - Trailing-Edge Boomers, 1956 - 1964

• Apply that information to enhance the design of your email creative

Copywriting Tips for an Older Audience:

1
When writing to reach this specific audience, take full advantage of the fact that older Americans enjoy reading

2
Dedicate the time needed to craft detailed copy that strives to answer the questions that your recipients may have

3
Also be sure to include multiple options for how additional information/ materials can be accessed

4
Avoid the use of highly technical terms and industry jargon

5
Avoid acronyms and abbreviations to prevent confusion

6
Write with a professional, yet friendly tone and work to incorporate testimonials into your communications — these go a long way in helping to build trust, which is essential when developing relationships with older individuals
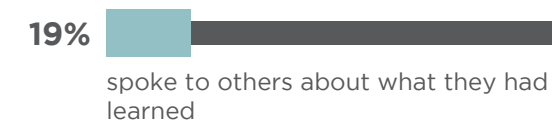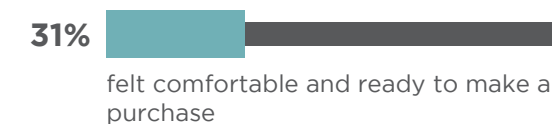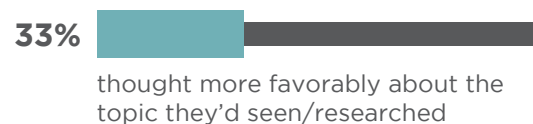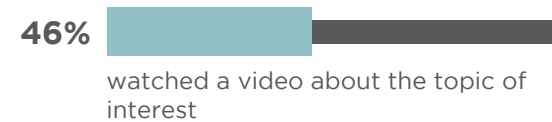
7
Ensure that offers are simple and straightforward and that any associated terms and conditions are clearly written and easy to understand

Continue the Conversation with Facebook

Looking for ways to extend the conversation beyond email marketing? Consider incorporating Facebook advertising into your multichannel mix. As they've embraced smartphones and new technologies, older Americans have also embraced social media! DMN3's study, Reaching Today's Leading-Edge Boomers Online, identified that 82.3% of Baby Boomers belong to at least one social site. Facebook, the most well-known and traditional social media platform, was the most popular site among those surveyed.

Most importantly, the older adults that are using social media are taking action!

57% visited a company website

48% liked, shared or commented on a status update

41% visited a retailer or store

33% thought more favorably about the topic they'd seen/researched

20% called or contacted the business

57% continued search on a search engine

46% watched a video about the topic of interest

34% made a purchase

31% felt comfortable and ready to make a purchase

19% spoke to others about what they had learned

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