

Five Generations at a Glance

(Quick Reference Guide for Marketers)



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SILENT GENERATION APPROX. 50 MILLION (born 1925–1942)

Between the GI Generation and Baby Boomers, they never produced a US president, but started the Civil Rights and women's movements. Many now feel as if life has passed them by, and they want a taste of it before they pass on. Overlooked by marketers, they're willing to spend on trips and jewelry because they want to feel as though they are living their lives.

- Traditionalists
- Demand quality
- Prefer hard copy information
- Fond of family imagery in marketing
- Enjoy face-to-face interaction over phone or email
- Least likely to make impulsive buys
- Target this generation with traditional print marketing
- Use single images rather than collages, make emotional connections

BABY BOOMERS APPROX. 76 MILLION (born 1943–1960)

A huge generation formed when soldiers came home from World War II, they had schools built for them and huge competition in the job market. As a result, they are the first American generation that puts its focus on the good of the individual over the group. Appeal to their historically driven sense of self by using the word "you."

- Question authority
- Historically driven focus on self
- Rely on their social circles for information
- Respond to the word "you" in marketing
- Willing to try new things
- Will search for product information online
- Prefer face-to-face communication when possible
- Discounts and bargain deals appeal to this generation

GENERATION X APPROX. 65 MILLION (born 1961–1981)

A generation that responds to an individualistic marketing approach because many had to look after themselves when growing up. They are children of the women's movement and experienced divorce in great numbers. They're a somewhat cynical lot who want to know what is practical about your product.

- Individualistic and self-reliant
- Interested in all things healthy
- Love authenticity and sincerity in companies
- Seek product information
- Don't respond to a "one-size-fits-all" approach
- Avoid hard-core sales tactics
- Convince and influence using research and customer testimonials

GEN Y/MILLENNIALS APPROX. 80 MILLION (born 1981–9/11/2001)

A generation that works and thinks in groups because they were team taught, were team graded, and received trophies for showing up for a team sport. They will do your marketing for you, telling their friends about their experience. They love giving companies feedback, gravitate to group discounts, and respond to a quick delivery.

- Empowered and spontaneous
- Want to know you're marketing to their needs
- Like brands that add value/rewards for interaction
- Optimistic about the future
- Love sharing brand experiences with others
- Have a strong online presence
- Use latest technology trends to market to this generation
- Ensure emails are compatible for mobile viewing

GENERATION Z/BOOMLETS APPROX. 23 MILLION (AND GROWING RAPIDLY) (born post 9/11/2001)

This is the overprotected generation—at home because of kidnappings, at school because of tragedies like Columbine, and in the real world because of the advance of terrorism. Their parents and grandparents are often part of the decision-making process, so aim to win them over, too.

- Ambitious and collaborative
- Technologically savvy
- Expect bite-size, real-time messaging
- Gravitate to visual, shareable messaging
- Expect social, mobile, and local marketing

