

10 Ways To Get Your Share of the Mature Market

By Joanne Fritz

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Every 7.7 seconds someone in the United States turns 50.

The 50+ population controls more than \$7 trillion in wealth and is responsible for 50% of all discretionary spending. It purchases 41% of all new cars, buys 80% of all luxury travel, and is 30% more likely to purchase products online than younger users.

Yet, internet marketers often miss this rich potential market.

Perhaps they don't think older people are on the web.

However, older adults are often more "wired" than we think. Many seniors are coaxed into going online by their children or grandchildren. But, once they have logged on, many become eager Internet users. Plus, internet use is high among those over 50 who work and have college degrees.

Indeed, this group is more likely than younger Americans to be online on a typical day. Wired seniors say it has helped them connect better to loved ones and makes it easier to get information.

So, how do you reach them? First, recognize that the over 50 crowd are not all alike. They are more diverse than any other market segment, spanning those at the peak of their careers, to active, independent seniors, to the elderly in need of care.

Here are some clues to communicating with and ultimately selling to the new mature market.

1. Do not talk down to, or treat them as children, or remind them of their age. Most do not consider themselves "old."
2. Although there is disagreement about using words like "senior citizen," reserve such terms for World War II veterans, but not for the leading edge of the baby boomers who started turning 55 in 2001.
3. Use realistic but positive images of mature people. Show people with wrinkles but have them doing something active.
4. Stick to the facts about your product or service. Mature people make more independent

judgments and base their decisions on information rather than peer pressure.

5. Design your communications so that older people will stick around and read what you have to say.

6. Avoid overly busy website design; small type sizes; garish colors; and gratuitous design elements such as flash or slow-loading graphics.

7. Avoid "hype" at all costs. The older consumer has "seen it all" and is naturally skeptical.

8. Win mature people over gradually. You will have to gain their trust before they will buy from you.

9. Give them content. Older people are avid readers and will appreciate the information you provide.

10. Sell what appeals to the mature audience such as health products and information; tips on managing their retirement assets; ideas for low-cost travel; help with buying gifts for their grandchildren; the low-down on the best places to retire; products that make it easier for them to stay in their own homes; ways to earn extra income; and opportunities to save money.

Get with the "age wave" now, and find ways to profit from this incredible, growing group of consumers.

Joanne Fritz, Ph.D., publishes

<http://www.notyretired.com> etretired which provides information about working and earning during retirement; and <http://www.second50years.com>, which brings demographic and marketing information about the mature market to businesses. Joanne can be contacted at <mailto:joannef@notyetretired.com>

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