THE ULTIMATE BOOMER MARKETING GUIDE

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Pam Lockard, CEO, founded DMN3 as a direct marketing agency in 1992. Today, DMN3 uses both digital and direct marketing strategies to help B2C and B2B clients with lead generation, lead nurturing and customer revenue growth.

She is one of only a few hundred Certified Professional Direct Marketers in the United States. She has created lead generation, lead nurturing and customer retention results for clients across a variety of industries, including financial, retail, healthcare, energy and industrial.

With her leadership, DMN3 has won marketing awards based on strategy and results from the Ad Federation, International Direct Marketing Association, Business Marketing Association, Web Marketing Association and the American Marketing Association.

Additionally, Pam is a supporter of local charities. Her focus is helping homeless women and children at The Mission of Yahweh. She received the Houston Business Journal Enterprise Champion award for her philanthropy.

Pamela is a native Houstonian and graduate of the University of Houston. She is also a published author who speaks at marketing conferences on the subject of Boomer and Senior marketing.
INTRODUCTION

Baby Boomers are not a homogenous group. While the Baby Boomer population—those born between 1946 and 1964—control 70% of U.S. disposable income (Nielsen), DMN3’s online research found that about 50% live on less than $50,000 a year. A majority of the financially secure plan to spend money on hobbies, travel and recreational interests.

The Baby Boomer population is expected to continue to grow at a phenomenal rate. Each day, 6000 Americans turn 65 years of age.

Marketers see these stats and salivate at the abundance of marketing opportunities. Sadly, many of them stumble when it comes to effectively connecting with and generating business from Boomers.

Where do Boomers hang out online? Where do they spend their time? Which social media sites influence their purchasing decisions? The 2015 DMN3 primary research study, Reaching Today’s Baby Boomers Online, answers these questions and much more. We’re sharing some of the research findings in **The Ultimate Boomer Marketing Guide**. Throughout this guide, we’ll reveal insights on how to generate business from Boomers based on research.

In the pages that follow, you’ll discover:

- Secrets to engaging Baby Boomers the right way.
- Proven strategies for skyrocketing your lead generation programs.
- Tips on how to attract Boomers using search, social media and segmentation.
CHAPTER 1

Baby Boomers and Finance
Where do Baby Boomers spend their money? To understand how best to reach Baby Boomers, it’s important to first understand their spending patterns. This will help you focus your marketing efforts.

The global economic crisis of 2008 hit Boomers hard. Because of harsh economic times, many Boomers grew more conservative with their spending. However, a recent Gallup analysis suggests that Boomers are finally re-opening their wallets. According to Gallup Daily, the average daily spending of Boomers bottomed out in 2009 at $55. As of December 2014, the average daily spending rebounded to $105.

**Boomers Average Daily Spending**

(Source: Gallup)
Overall, Boomers spend more than they did a year ago. Now, are there nuances in Boomer spending patterns? Absolutely. For instance, Leading-Edge Boomers (born between 1946 and 1955) spend 40% more year over year. Trailing-Edge Boomers (born between 1956 and 1964) spend 26% more year over year.

Despite these changes, our online research found that many Boomers don’t have a significant amount of savings. Thus, Boomers are mindful of how and where they spend their money. Which is why, as a marketer, you must focus on delivering a quality experience. We often find that the quality of experience sometimes matters as much products and pricing. Trust is extremely important to all Boomers.

**Key Takeaways**

- Boomers are re-opening their wallets
- Leading-Edge Boomers outspend Trailing-Edge Boomers
- Trust is essential for Boomers to buy from a business

“As of December 2014, the average daily spending rebounded to $105.”
CHAPTER 2

The 3 Most Effective Ways to Attract Boomers
So, what’s the most effective way to woo Baby Boomers? First, remember that Boomers are far from a monolithic group. That said, research tells us that Boomers consistently favor three marketing channels.

The three most effective Boomer marketing channels are:

- Television
- Search
- Email

Now let’s take a closer look at these three channels.

1) Television:

Despite the advent of digital channels, traditional formats still work. The DMN3 primary research study found that television is the most prominent traditional channel in driving online search. In other words, direct response TV is a great way to get Boomers to search for information online. Which leads us to the next channel…

2) Search:

Baby Boomers are more connected today than ever. They’re looking up businesses and information online daily. In fact, the DMN3 study found that search is the most effective online channel for reaching Baby Boomers. When we asked online respondents about actions taken as a result of Internet activities, search led the way. Search dramatically outperformed social media and video marketing. (See the chart on the following page).
3) Email:

Email is one of the top online activities among older Americans. Our online research found that **email is the second-leading activity among Baby Boomers** (94.8%), just behind online search (96.8%). Another side of this story is the growing popularity of smartphones, which is commonly used for email. The DMN3 study found that approximately 70% of Boomers use mobile devices.
Don’t Put All Your Eggs in One Basket (or Three)

While TV, search and email are the three most effective ways to drive online traffic, don’t forget other channels. Don’t restrict your marketing to one tactic. Why limit your profits when you can use all the tools available to you? Use an integrated, multi-touch approach to effectively market to Boomers.

Key Takeaways

• The three most effective ways to prompt Baby Boomers to look up information online are TV, search and email.

• Use an integrated, multi-pronged approach to effectively engage Boomers.

• Older adults are using mobile devices and checking email daily. Use responsive design to accommodate all devices.
CHAPTER 3

How to Grow Your Business through Boomer Segmentation
We mentioned earlier that Boomers are not a monolithic group. Despite age-related stereotypes, it is a massive and diverse market. Mass marketing strategies don’t work. The key to really getting Boomers to buy from you or sign up for your services is segmentation. We’ve found that when we use a segmented approach, our clients typically see twice the marketing ROI.

Segmentation is about targeting the right message to the right group. Segmentation means identifying the subgroups within a group. In some cases, there are subgroups within subgroups. This is the hard, grunt work that your competitors often don’t do. Yet, it is this sophisticated aspect of Boomer marketing that ultimately sets you apart from the competition.

Segmentation starts with database marketing. Using data, you can profile and model Boomer segments based on a number of factors.
Identify Boomer subgroups based on:

- Age
- Behaviors
- Life stages
- Psychographic data
- Geography
- Health attitudes
- And much more

The trick with segmentation is to identify the segments most likely to produce the best ROI. This is especially useful if you’re working with a limited budget. Go further by understanding the needs and decision drivers of each group.

We use a three-headed approach to segmentation. If done correctly and supported with data, this multi-faceted strategy can help you attract qualified prospects.

1) Profiling and Data Modeling

Identify loyal customers/members—those who stayed through price increases and other changes. These customers joined years ago. Come rain or shine, they’ve stuck it out with you. Profile them and identify prospects that best match this group. As an aside, it’s also useful to identify price-sensitive prospects.

2) Research

Use primary research or third-party research to understand decision triggers. Conduct interviews with various segments. You might find that loyal members, for instance, have similar drivers. Or that price-sensitive members share other motivators. Then, massage your message and tailor it to each group. This sounds like complex work, but the benefits far outweigh the investment.
3) Boomer Personas

Data modeling and research help you understand customers who are already interested in your company. But what about those who haven’t even heard of your services? The best way to reach this group is to develop personas. Buyer personas are fictional representations of your ideal customers or members. Personas are based on research and a bit of creativity to fill in the gaps. Use data, research and interviews to construct realistic Boomer personas. Simply having this in place gives you an unfair advantage over your competitors who see all Boomers as the same.

Key Takeaways:

• Segmentation can double your marketing ROI
• Use data to identify subgroups within the Boomer demographic
• Identify market segments with high affinity for your product or service
• Use data modeling to develop more effective user profiles
• Use research and data to create Boomer personas
CHAPTER 4

How to Reach Baby Boomers Online
Digital marketers see Millennials as low-hanging fruit because of their extensive use of mobile, social media, and other digital channels. While that’s true, Boomers have more money and they spend more of it online. An estimated 78% of Baby Boomers are online, according to Google.

Understanding how Boomers interact with the Internet helps marketers in a variety of ways.

- It helps you separate yourself from the competition
- It helps you develop more effective, targeted messages and campaigns
- It helps you position your products and services better than your competitors

**Use an Integrated Strategy**

Marketers tend to use traditional media tactics with Boomers. In contrast, DMN3 online respondents are actively researching information on the web. Keeping this in mind, marketers should use direct mail and print tactics as a portion of a holistic strategy. Use direct mail to drive traffic online and move Boomers down the sales funnel.

**Enhance the Evolving Customer Experience**

Digital marketers should be constantly asking questions about evolving customer patterns. What touch points should you use? How can you better engage and serve Baby Boomers online?
Use Social Media—but Not Every Social Platform

There are two ways to reach an audience: go where they are or make them come to you. In this case, it’s easier to go to the audience. For instance, knowing which social media sites are most effective will save you marketing dollars.

Other than email, Boomers spend more time on social media than anywhere else online. They spend a majority of that time on Facebook. In 2013, iStrategyLabs reported that the Facebook usage rate among those 55+ had risen to 80.4% growth. This was a big uptick from the 2011 report showing only a 10.5% growth.

Our own research supports this claim. Out of 1,000 Boomers surveyed, we found that 84.9% of respondents use or belong to Facebook. Pinterest came in second at 40.8%, followed by LinkedIn at 38.2%. Instagram performed poorly at 15.9%. MySpace ranked at the bottom with 8.1%.

Key Takeaways

- Understand that Boomers do not adhere strictly to one marketing channel
- Use offline tactics to drive online traffic and vice-versa
- Email, search and social are the top three online activities among Boomers
CHAPTER 5

5 Keys to Generating Business from Boomers on Social Media
Boomers are actively engaged on social media. They’re using social networks to research companies and stay in touch with family and friends. The style of messaging, images and content on your social page could go a long way toward establishing trust within the brand. Given the size and wealth of Boomers and seniors, it’s worth figuring out just how to do this effectively.

We’ve already learned how much time Boomers spend on social media and which site(s) they love visiting (hint: it’s Facebook). Here are five tips to help you improve social engagement and generate more Boomer leads.

1) Don’t be overly promotional: Avoid the hype machine. Boomers have seen it all when it comes to marketing hype. Avoid the hard-sell or outright marketing content. Instead, focus on delivering content that addresses issues that truly concern them.

2) Use positive characterizations: Depict older adults who are knowledgeable, successful and active. Most mature consumers see themselves 10 years younger than they are. Always show them the respect they deserve.
3) Give them “meaty” content: Boomers have more time and linger on a fan page more than younger generations. Pages intended for older adults should have detailed content that thoroughly addresses issues. These types of content also take time to absorb. More time on page translates to a higher level of awareness.

4) Engage them with storytelling and customer testimonials: Use a personal style to entwine your marketing message into a story. Case studies can lend themselves into such a story approach.

5) Focus on customer service: Use social media as a way for consumers to interact with you. For example, encourage the use of Facebook as a way for customers to reach out to you with questions and concerns.

Key Takeaways

- Social media is a viable marketing strategy for reaching Baby Boomers
- Use in-depth content to increase engagement
- Focus on positive imagery to appeal to older Americans
CHAPTER 6

The Simple Truth about Boomers and Direct Marketing
Okay, enough about online channels. Let’s switch gears and talk about tried-and-true direct marketing principles. You’ve probably heard all the usual advice on direct marketing techniques. You’ve heard about using an integrated approach that combines online and offline. You’re probably aware of the power of postcards, reminder emails, direct response TV and the like.

You need all those tactics in your marketing repertoire, but it’s not enough. There’s one critical aspect of direct marketing that sometimes gets swept by the wayside. And this is one thing that can be the huge difference maker in your business.

When marketing to Boomers, remember this simple truth: “Boomer” is a generation designation, not a marketing strategy.

To effectively get Boomers to buy from your business, you have to do something your competitors aren’t willing to do. You must avoid broad generational traits and attitudes.

One way to avoid the segmentation trap is to separate Leading-Edge Boomers (between 1946 and 1955) from Trailing-Edge Boomers (between 1956 and 1964). This gives you audience clarity.
For instance, consider the following differences between Leading-Edge Boomers and Trailing-Edge Booms, according to the 2015 DMN3 Boomer study:

• More Trailing-Edge Boomers “watch videos (76%)” and “listen to music (55%)” than Leading-Edge Boomers (65% and 43% respectively).

• More Leading-Edge Boomers say they are unlikely to work part-time in retirement compared to Trailing-Edge Boomers.

• Trailing-Edge Boomers are more influenced by social media to search online for information than their older Leading-Edge Boomer peers.

Equipped with this level of insight, can you think of a few ways you might employ different tactics for different Boomer subgroups? Can you think of a few differences between an affluent, married 55-year-old and a single, 65-year-old empty nester?

“Boomer is a generation designation, not a marketing strategy.”
Start with Existing Customers

You can always find segmented Boomer data from a third-party, but this a limited approach. The best strategy is to begin by understanding your existing Boomer customers or members.

What’s the common thread weaving through your current customer base? Aside from age, consider a host of other criteria: demographic, psychographic, behavioral and life stage information. You can then use predictive analytics to create look-alike prospects with similar features.

Boomers are comprised of different consumer segments. If you want to outperform your competitors, try combining direct marketing with predictive data and micro-targeting platforms. Don’t wait until you have everything lined up, beautified and ready to go. Start now.

Key Takeaways

• Do not segment Boomers by age alone

• Use a combination of demographics, lifestyle and psychographics to segment effectively

• One simple way to segment is to separate Leading-Edge Boomers from Trailing-Edge Boomers
CONCLUSION

So, let’s recap what we’ve learned about marketing to Baby Boomers. Simply put, Baby Boomers still present great marketing opportunities.

Baby Boomers may have been slow to adopt new technology, but they’re becoming more tech-savvy. They’re integrating digital media into their daily activities. When it comes to social media, Facebook is the dominant platform for Americans over the age of 55.

Boomers have distinct online behaviors that marketers need to consider. Boomers are empowered more than ever. They are researching companies and services using search. They’re also checking email regularly on their mobile devices.

Remember that targeting strictly based on age is not an effective use of resources. The Boomer market is diverse. So the best strategy is to use segmentation with multiple demographic and behavioral factors.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that Boomers change as they move into new stages in life. So marketers should be constantly asking themselves questions about how best to reach understand where the Boomer is in their life change. You should constantly test different touch points to find ways to better engage and serve Baby Boomers.

You don’t have to know all the answers immediately. Implementing the tactics highlighted in this guide will put you ahead of your competitors.

If you’d like to talk about how DMN3 could help you generate more revenue from your marketing, please contact Pam Lockard at pam.lockard@dmn3.com or 832-844-2645.