Multi-Generational Marketing: Descriptions, Characteristics, Lifestyles, and Attitudes

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Multi-generational marketing is the practice of appealing to the unique needs of individuals within more than one specific generational group, with a generation being a group of individuals born and living about the same time. Multi-generational marketing is based on two founding principles: (1) product needs change with life stages and (2) promotional messages and products targeting these generational groups or cohorts can reflect their generational values which in turn can drive their consumption behavior. As such, an understanding of multi-generational marketing is a very important marketing activity. In fact, creating ageless multi-generational brands is one of the top ten marketing trends over the next 25 years. The purpose of this paper is to describe the various U.S. generations including the times in which they grew up as well as the characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes of the generation. The paper concludes with general and specific tips for improving the practice of multi-generational marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Multi-generational marketing is the practice of appealing to the unique needs of individuals within more than one specific generational group, with a generation being a group of individuals born and living about the same time (Morris, 1982). Multi-generational marketing is based on two founding principles: (1) product needs change with life stages and (2) promotional messages and products targeting these generational groups or cohorts can reflect their generational values which in turn can drive their consumption behavior. As such, an understanding of multi-generational marketing is a very important marketing activity. In fact, creating ageless multi-generational brands is one of the top ten marketing trends over the next 25 years (Wellner, 2003; Walker, 2003).

However, it is important to recognize that generation is only one factor influencing behavior. In some cases, differences within generation can be larger than differences across generations. Additionally, generations do not have sharp boundaries in that individuals near the age breaks between generations often do not belong clearly to either generation. Also, each generation is typically composed of many distinct segments, for example, Cyber, Hipster, and Goth within Generation Y.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the various U.S. generations including the times in which they grew up as well as the characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes of the group. The paper will conclude with general and specific tips for multi-generational marketing.

THE U.S. GENERATIONS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's U.S. Population Clock, the U.S. population is approximately 307 million today, expected to surpass 325 million by 2015. A U.S. generation or age cohort is a group of persons who travel through life together and experience similar events at a similar age. That is, they share a common social, political, historical, and economic environment.

The charts for the U.S. population in 2000, 2025, and 2050 can be seen below (See Figures 1-3). It clearly is noticeable that some generations have more individuals and that large numbers in the population are moving into older age categories. Specifically, Table 1 provides the percent change estimated for 2005-2015 for U.S. population groups.

FIGURE 1
U.S. POPULATION IN 2000

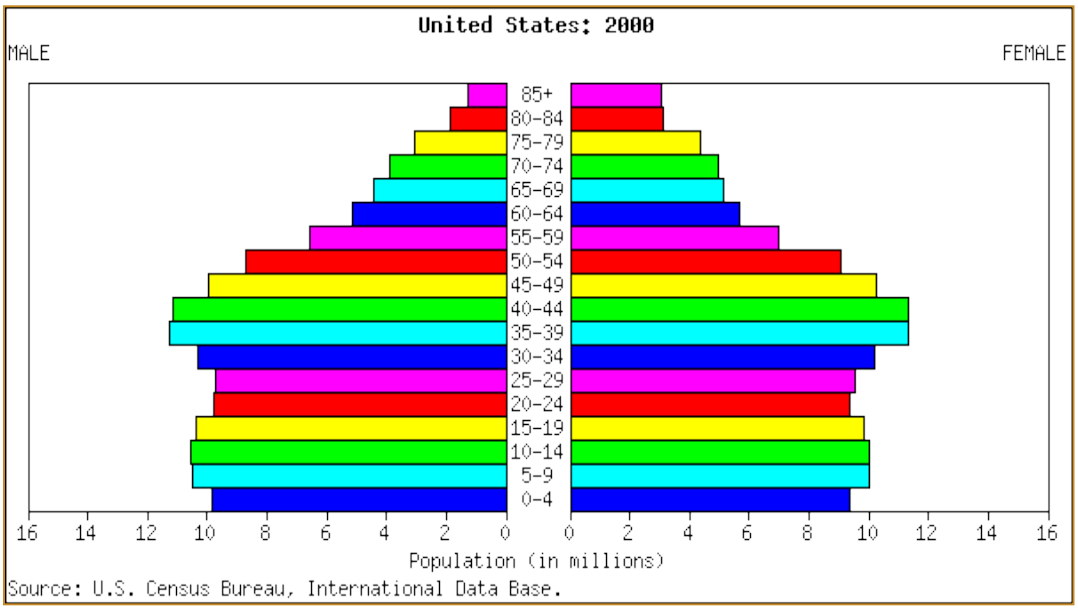


FIGURE 2
U.S. POPULATION 2025

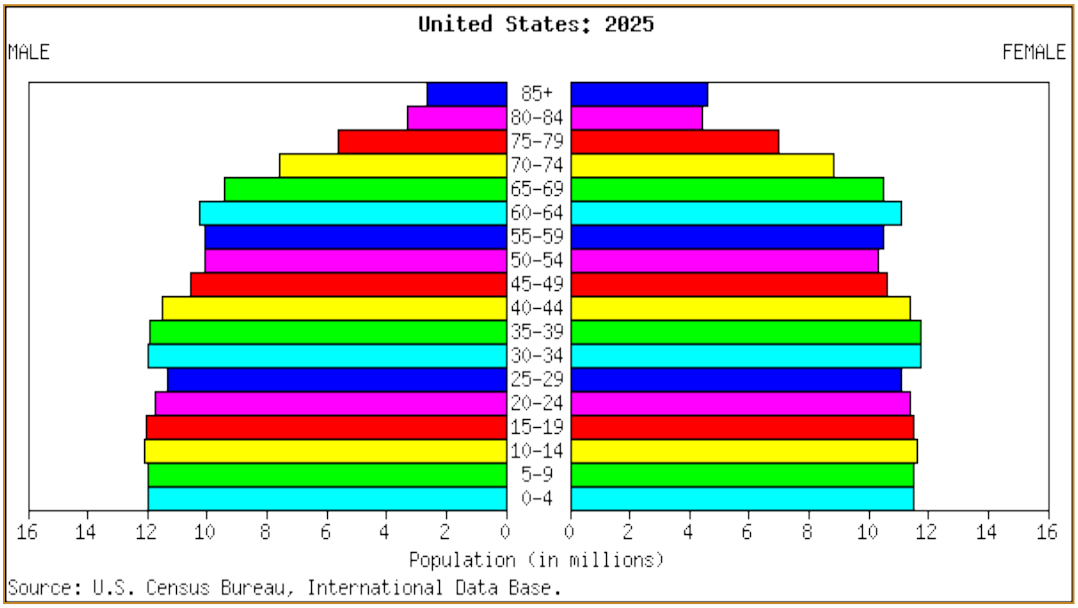
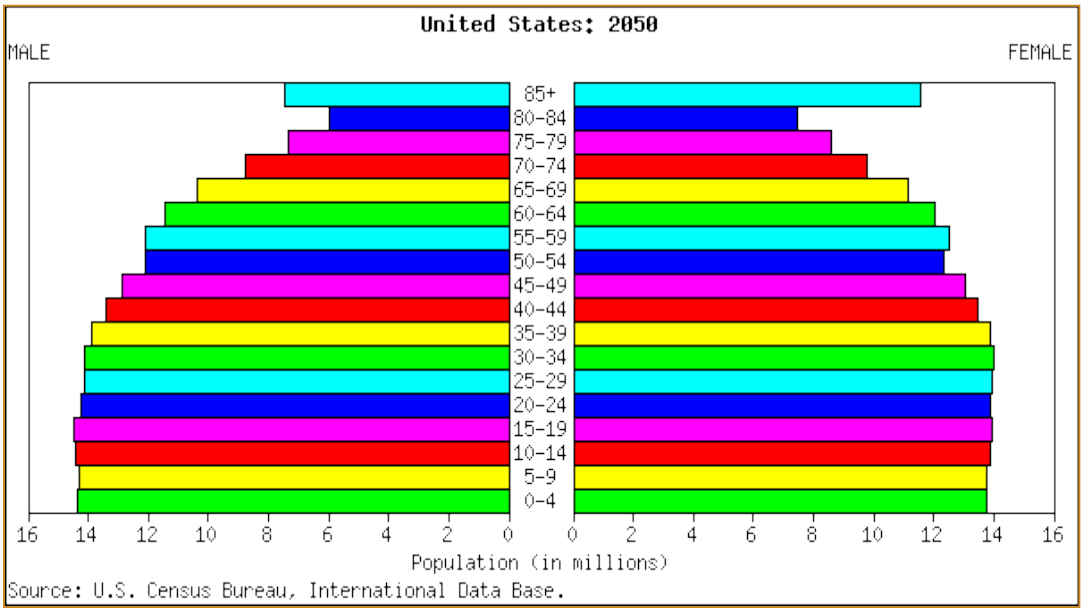


FIGURE 3
U.S. POPULATION IN 2050



According to a composite of many sources, there are six American generations: Pre-Depression, Depression, Baby Boom, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z. (Hawkins, et al., 2010; Eisner, 2005; Dietz, 2003; Fishman, 2004; and Smith and Clurman, 1997) Table 2 lists information specific to each of these generations, i.e., date of birth, number of individuals,

and age as of 2009. Further into the paper, each of these generations will be described in detail with regard to the times in which they grew up and to their characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes.

TABLE 1
U.S. POPULATION AGE - PERCENT CHANGE ESTIMATED FOR 2005-2015

Age Category	Percent Change Estimated for 2005-2015
< 10	8.3
10-19	-1.2
20-29	10.4
30-39	3.3
40-49	-12.2
50-59	18.7
60-69	47.9
> 69	16.2

TABLE 2
AMERICAN GENERATIONS

Generation	Date of Birth	Number	Age (2009)
Pre-Depression	Before 1930	12 MM	80 and above
Depression	1930-1945	28 MM	64-79
Baby Boom	1946-1964	80 MM	45-63
Generation X	1965-1976	45 MM	33-44
Generation Y	1977-1994	71 MM	15-32
Generation Z	After 1994	29 MM	Less than 15

Pre-Depression Generation

The Pre-Depression Generation also is referred to as the G.I. Generation, Veteran Generation, and WWI Generation. They were born before 1930 and are 80 and above as of 2009. Most were children during the Depression. Many experienced traumatic times, economic strife, and elevated unemployment rates. They took menial jobs to survive. As young adults during WWII, their lives

began with high expectations, which were shattered eventually by WWI and WWII. War started an out-of-proportion ratio of men to women in this generation. However, war enabled more men to get a better education and to greatly improve the average standard of living. War enabled a relatively comfortable family lifestyle that was much less mobile and less stressed than what most U.S. citizens have experienced. Women who worked during the war were glad to step into supportive roles when their husbands and husbands-to-be returned from the war. The financial and professional dominance of the men in this generation influenced the men to be the most "macho" and the women to be the most dependent of any living generation in the U.S. The Pre-Depression Generation witnessed radical social and technological changes including glistening new schools, miracle medicines, and launched rockets. This generation also experienced the Great Society and Model Cities. (Bailor, 2006; Dietz, 2003; Fishman, 2004; Hawkins, et al. 2010)

In terms of their characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes, the Pre-Depression Generation has long been a major power in the U.S. and seems to have no intention of relinquishing their influence quietly. They are conservative, altruistic, and become less materialistic as they age. They are concerned about health and aging with important concerns being nursing or retirement homes and assisted-living services. While the average life expectancy is 79 for men and 83 for women, half of those over 80 suffer from a long-term illness. Also, information processing, memory, and cognitive performance generally decline with age. In addition, this generation has reduced mobility, e.g., it is more difficult to shop including bargain shopping. Single-serving size prepared food is important to them. Additionally, they are concerned with financial and personal security as well as the disposition of valued belongings. (Bailor, 2006; Gorrell, 2008; McKay, 2008)

Many in this segment are feeling, thinking, and buying younger than previous generations. Many have adopted "young again" lifestyles and attitudes. In general, they are somewhat sedentary and watch a lot of TV. Walking is their main source of exercise. If able, they are very involved in their homes, spending a great deal of their time cooking, doing housework, and just caring for themselves. The use of discretionary time, vacations, and engagement in society are very important to them. (Bailor, 2006; Fishman, 2004; Morton, 2004; Simms, 2008)

Depression Generation

The Depression Generation is referred to also as the Silent Generation, Traditionalists, and the Swing Generation. They were born during 1930-1945 and are in the 64-79 age range as of 2009. The individuals of this generation were small children during the Depression or WWII. They valued rationing, saving, morals, and ethics. They united against common enemies, e.g., they experienced the Korean War. They were very patriotic and witnessed America's emergence as a superpower. These individuals matured during the prosperous 50s and 60s which saw the rise of the middle class, industrialization, the suburbs, and Social Security became mandatory. Social tranquility and family togetherness are important to the Depression Generation. These individuals had a parent at home to raise the children. They grew up with music and TV as important parts of their lives. They invented rock and roll, but had both Sinatra and Presley. Conformity seemed to be the ticket to success. (Bailor, 2006; Eisner, 2005; Dietz, 2003; Gorrell, 2008; Hawkins, et al., 2010)

In terms of their characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes, they rely on tried, true, and tested ways of doing things. They are not likely to break the rules or disrespect authority. They distrust change and are slow to embrace anything new. They like consistency. Many are still in excellent

health and quite active. Often, they are active grandparents who are focused on family. They are dealing with the physical effects of aging. Eyesight, hearing, mobility, and strength affect their choices. However, they remain community-minded. Active adult, age-restricted communities like Sun City are major growth areas for this generation. Overall, they have a fear of being dependent on others. Nursing home stays and in-home care are important to them. Comfort is important, but so is style. (Bailor, 2006; Cobo, 2007; Fishman, 2004; McKay, 2008)

Most have or will soon retire. Those that work, dominate the top positions in both business and government. When they retire, they may want to be rehired as part-timers, educators, project leaders, or mentors. Many have substantial wealth in the form of home equity and savings. Asset management and wealth transfer are important to them. Downsizing homes and possessions is a main interest. They worry whether they will outlive their savings. For example, the median family income of the 65-plus population is less than half that of those aged 50-64, reflecting the loss of wage income after retirement. They typically depend on Social Security to cover half of their budgetary expenses. As grandparents, they have sufficient incomes to indulge their grandchildren. They are increasingly becoming more tech savvy, using eBay to downsize, and taking computer classes in nursing homes and recreation centers. (Bailor, 2006; Eisner, 2005; Himmel, 2008; Simms, 2008)

Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomers also are referred to as Boomers, Me Generation, Baboo, and Love Generation. They were born during 1946-1964 and are in the 45-63 age range as of 2009. The Baby Boomers were born during the dramatic increase of births between the end of WWII and 1964. That is, they are children of WWII veterans and infused with postwar optimism. They grew up as indulged youth during an era of community spirited progress. Their parents wanted them to have the best as they grew up during the prosperous 50s and 60s. They were heavily influenced by the Kennedy assassination, civil rights movement, Vietnam War, Nixon, protests, hippies, recreational drugs, Woodstock, sexual revolution, birth control, women's lib, TV, space exploration, energy crisis, rapid growth of divorce, Cold War, rock 'n' roll, the Beatles, and the first computers. As young adults, they appointed themselves as arbiters of the nation's values. They turned against the secular blueprints of their parents and demanded inner vision over outer vision. They valued self-perfection over teamwork, and rebelled against conformity and challenged institutions. The Boomers valued individualization, self-expression, and "Be Here Now." (Lee and Kiley, 2005; Eisner, 2005; Hawkins, et al., 2010; Coleman, et al., 2006; Dietz, 2003; Gorrell, 2008)

In terms of their characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes, Boomers were the most populous and influential generation of all. They have defined themselves by their careers and many are workaholics. Their work is seen as a form of self-fulfillment, status, and proving themselves, i.e., job titles matter. They have crowded into cultural careers such as teaching, religion, journalism, marketing, and the arts. Team orientation is valued. They are anticipated to work longer than previous generations. While some have retired, many plan to continue working and expand into "active retirement." They want to learn new skills and set new goals, i.e., re-engineer life. They want to work for pay and volunteer. They are increasingly environmentally conscious and supportive of the green movement. (Eisner, 2005; Koco, 2006)

Boomers have increased discretionary income and time. They are well known for their predilection for excess and have had a see-how-fast-I-can-get-rich materialism. They have experienced high incomes, dual-career households, time poverty, and managing two careers and

family responsibilities. However, one in four people over 50 does not believe they will be financially secure when they get older. They are busy people who are overloaded, overworked, and filled with high expectations. (Coleman, et al., 2006; Musico, 2008)

Family responsibilities are important to Boomers. Many are becoming Empty Nesters in that children are leaving home, marrying, and having grandchildren. Many are caregivers of their aging parents and children, and are caught in the sandwich generation. (Dietz, 2003)

This generation is more tech savvy than previous generations. They like the convenience and customization of the Internet, especially for health information. In fact, Internet usage by Boomers is over 70%. They are tapping into online job sites and joining social networking sites to create user profiles. Also, they are buying things like GPS systems and video games. (Chang, 2007a)

Health, energy, and wellness are major goals for them. This group may be aging but does not want to be reminded, i.e., anti-aging market and breaking the mold of what "50" looks and feels like. There are seven dirty words for Boomers: senior citizen, retiree, aging, Golden Years, Silver Years, mature, and prime time of life (Wright, 2008). They are looking for the fountain of youth. Weight gain is an increasing issue. Natural and organic foods are important to them. (Beasty, 2006; Court, et al., 2007)

The focus is on "Me" and they feel entitled to a "good life." They have high education levels. They have carved a perfectionist lifestyle based on personal values and spiritual growth. Baby Boomers want to rebel, do it by themselves, and forge their own path. They are filled with optimism and value personal gratification. As their sense of entitlement has been ripped apart, they now long to stabilize their careers. They have increased interest in entrepreneurialism, the self-help movement, and New Age Spiritualism. As a generation, they are considered more self-centered, individualistic, economically optimistic, skeptical, suspicious of authority, and focused on the present than other generations. (Lee and Kiley, 2005; Eisner, 2005; Coleman, et al., 2006; Himmel, 2008)

Generation X

Generation X is referred to also as the Baby Bust, Slackers, Why Me Generation, and the Latchkey Generation. They were born during 1965-1977 and are in the 33-44 age range as of 2009. Generation X reached adulthood during difficult economic times. They were raised in dual-career households. They experienced the high divorce rate of their parents, e.g., 40% spent at least some time in a single-family household before age 16. These latch-key children grew up quickly, experiencing rising divorce rates and violence. More Xers were raised in single-parent and working-parent homes than any other generation. (Dietz, 2003; Hawkins, et al., 2010; Himmel, 2008)

Because of this, they took greater responsibility for raising themselves and tended to be less traditional than any other generation. They entered the job market in the wake of the Boomers and were hit hard by downsizing as the economy plunged into recession. Many watched their parents suffer devastating job losses and became wary about their own future. They were the first generation to seriously confront the possibility of reduced expectations. Many wage and job opportunities for young workers were limited until the economic boom of mid-1990s. (Eisner, 2005; Lager, 2006)

To the X Generation, nothing is permanent. They are shell-shocked products of changes that are ripping apart the fibers of society, the family, and the workplace. These changes include the first man on the moon, Challenger explosion, the end of the Cold War, strong political

leadership, regional conflicts, terrorism, and deteriorating environment. They maneuvered through a sexual battlefield that included the AIDS epidemic. They pioneered video games, the grunge look, and snowboarding. With Generation X, multiculturalism became the norm. Gen X has experienced the increasing impact of personal computers and produced the 1990's dot-com stars. (Cranston, 2008)

The characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes of Generation X include valuing family first. Xers have a broad view of family including parents, siblings, stepparents, half siblings, close friends, live-in lovers, etc. They tend to leave home later and return home to live with their parents. Xers want to balance family, life, and work. In addition, they date and marry cautiously and tend to delay marriage. Approximately 63% of Xer households are now families with children under 18. They are experiencing the time crunch typical of child-rearing years. (Lager, 2006)

They are skeptical and disillusioned with almost everything, feeling that they are reaping the sins of their forefathers. They blame the "Me Generation" and materialism of Baby Boomers for their difficult times. They are skeptical of authority and cautious in their commitments. Even their splintery culture with music ranging from grunge to hip-hop has a hardened edge. They lean toward political pragmatism and non-affiliation. They would rather volunteer than vote and want to have some fun. (Gorrell, 2008)

Success has been less certain for this generation. They do not believe in sacrificing time, energy, and relationships for advancement like the Boomers did. They have an economic and psychological "survivor" mentality wherein hard work is considered a necessity. They are materialistic and impatient. Gen X is highly educated with more college attendance and graduation. Xer females are more highly educated than males to gain leverage in the workforce. (Eisner, 2005)

Xers are free agents, not team players. Self-reliance has led them to embrace free agency over company loyalty in unprecedented numbers. They are more entrepreneurial and less prone to devote their lives to large public corporations. They will not rely on institutions for long-term security. They want leadership roles if possible and do not like to feel they are being controlled. In fact, they are more likely to be self-employed professionals, e.g., they start about 70% of the new businesses in the U.S. Gen X is a savvy generation, ready to take on new challenges. (Eisner, 2005)

Information and technology are important to them. They see technology changing their world and highly value techno literacy. They are a more visual generation, read less, and visit art museums and galleries more than other generations. Diversity and thinking globally are core values of Gen Xers. (Cranston, 2008; Francese, 2004; Ritson, 2007)

Generation Y

Generation Y also is referred to as the Millenials, Echo Boomers, Why Generation, Net Generation, Gen Wired, Next Generation, and Nexters. They were born during 1977-1994 and are in the 15-32 age range as of 2009. They are children of the original Baby Boomers and their numbers rival that of the Baby Boomers. They grew up in a time of immense and fast-paced change including virtually full-employment opportunities for women, dual-income households as the standard, wide array of family types seen as normal, significant respect for ethnic and cultural diversity, and computers in the home and schools. They grew up in a time when the fabric of society seemed to be unraveling. That is, they grew up with divorce as the norm, AIDS, visible homelessness, drug abuse, gang violence, economic uncertainty, and genetic engineering. Some of the collective experiences of Generation Y include: Clinton-Lewinsky scandal,

Columbine shootings, Oklahoma City bombing, O.J. Simpson trial, collapse of Soviet Union, fall of the Berlin Wall, Kosovo, Islamic radicalism, Iraq, Gulf War on TV, and corporate greed. They were born into a technological, electronic, and wireless society, e.g., the Internet, Google, eBay, cell phones, PDAs, GPS, etc. As a result, global boundaries are becoming more transparent via travel, migration, and the Internet. For example, there is more attention on globalization, global warming, and the advent of the "global citizen" networking beyond physical boundaries. (Hawkins, et al., 2010; Cranston, 2008; Eisner, 2005; Dietz, 2003; Gerritsen, 2008)

The characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes of Gen Y include older teens and young adults. That is, they are still young and are aware that they do not know everything. As they marry and have kids, it should fuel growth in housing and child-related products. They believe that they can make the future better. (Eisner, 2005)

They are self-absorbed and self-reliant with a strong sense of independence and autonomy. They are assertive, emotionally and intellectually expressive, and question everything. They are skeptical, e.g., it seems that more major media figures are scamming, cheating, lying, and exploiting than ever before. Also, Gen Y is blunt and expressive, self expression and making their point is most important. They are very adaptable and comfortable in various situations. They know no limits, "no fear," and "it's all about me." They are notoriously selfish, live for today, and spend big. (Eisner, 2005; Novak, et al., 2006)

Gen Yers are image-driven and make personal statements with their image. The age category 18-34 spends more than all other age categories on apparel. Urban African American teenagers and Hispanic teenagers are frequently the style leaders of this generation. The most important decorations are electronic, e.g., iPods, BlackBerrys, laptops – they are like extra limbs. These individuals can be pierced and tattooed as well. (Himmel, 2008)

They have a greater need for peer acceptance with their peers often guiding their product and brand choice. Interestingly, unknown peers often are trusted more than experts. Teens like the social aspects of shopping with friends. They are more likely to switch brands quicker than other segments. Some key words for Gen Y are collaborate, connect, co-create, and control…mostly with their peers. Because they value fitting in and connecting with their peers, social networking is prominent. (Gerritsen, 2008)

Gen Y is the first generation to know that technology is a given, not a right. The Internet is their unbounded playground. They are Internet savvy and use e-mail, cell phones, and text messaging to communicate. Over 90% of the 18-29 year old group is online. They lead in every cell phone data service from text messaging to web browsing. With blogging, YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter anyone can become a reporter, producer, or social advisor. Social networking is a key distinction for this generation. (Dickey and Sullivan, 2007; Donnelly, 2008)

Gen Yers are efficient multi-taskers. They will do it faster and better than their competition. While they are needy and feel entitled, they are not slackers. They are impatient as they were raised in a world of technology and instant gratification. (Gorrell, 2008)

They are able to grasp new concepts and are learning-oriented. Change is normal and visual to them. Education is considered to be critical and they respect teachers. Many are in college or have entered the work force, expected to be the highest-educated generation to date, with incomes that should follow. However, they do not believe that educational institutions are doing an adequate job. Most are innovative, curious, and planning for lifelong learning experiences. They ask questions because it is time saving. (Eisner, 2005)

Generation Yers are well grounded and wise for their age. They feel that previous generations have made huge mistakes. They recognize problems in our world and want to correct them. These attitudes result from a backlash against hands-off parenting and a resurgence of values. Their beliefs resemble those of the generation of 1900-1920. They are civic-minded and believe in civic duty. Gen Y favors the truth and what is real. (Gerritsen, 2008)

This generation is goal oriented, highly motivated toward their perceptions of success, and already planning for marriage and a family. They were told since they were toddlers that they can be anything they can imagine. As such, they are ambitious, demanding, and have core values of optimism, confidence, and achievement. They are determined to live their best lives now, i.e., happy, predictable, and healthy as tomorrow may not happen. They want a work-life blend. (Koco, 2006)

They are accustomed to a diverse universe where anything seems possible. Girls watch sports and play videogames and boys admit to loving "The Real World." Most are color-blind when they relate to other people and accept each other as individuals little different from themselves. Many feel that positive race relations are hampered by government intervention and the biases of certain minority groups, and they expect to change this. They crave new challenges and options. (Stone, et al., 2001)

They like to be encouraged to break the rules. However, Gen Y individuals are evenly dispersed across the political spectrum and are not bound to any political party. They are pessimistic about the performance of government leaders, lawmakers, and the media. They are idealistic and social-cause oriented, and they want a purpose greater than the bottom line. They want to see organizations as instruments of change. They respond well to "green" living and energy-efficient features. They are an immense untapped market for nonprofit organizations and social causes. That is, if these organizations can connect with Gen Y, they will reap tremendous benefits. (Cranston, 2008; Eisner, 2005; Gerritsen, 2008; Wells, 2008; Rugimbana, 2007)

Generation Z

Generation Z also is referred to as Tweens, Baby Bloomers, and Generation 9/11. They were born after 1994 and are less than 15 years old as of 2009. Generation Z is the newest generation and these individuals are in their early formative years. That is, the generation is yet to be fully defined. The oldest of this group is in their tween years (8-14), i.e., they are mostly late adolescents and early teens. They face global terrorism, the aftermath of 9/11, school violence, economic uncertainty, recession, and the mortgage crisis. Parents marry later and are less likely to get divorced with divorce rates having been on the decline since around 1990. They continue to experience the spread of "tweendom" including commercial exploitation of young girls (and to a lesser extent boys), initiation into shop-until-you-drop mini-citizens, and premature sexualization. Technology almost makes it possible to have a "global tween." (Chang, 2007b, Cohen, 2007; Hawkins, et al., 2010; Dietz, 2003; Hamm, 2007)

In terms of characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes, Generation Z individuals are the new conservatives. They have returned to old-school values such as respect, trust, and restraint. They are planned, structured, and self-controlled children. They save the cash they receive for Christmas and birthdays. These individuals are more conforming, less likely to take risks and engage in violence. They are a little more aware of consequences. They are more responsible and increasingly internalize their behavior rather than expecting someone else to look out for them. Many Gen Zs embrace traditional beliefs and value the family unit. (Labi, 2008a)

They are accustomed to high-tech and multiple information sources, with messages bombarding them from all sides. They will likely continue trends in increased technology use. In addition, they are influenced by new media, virtual friends, and the power that comes with technology. Interestingly, 8-18 year olds in the U.S. spend one quarter of their media time using multiple media. For example, 24% of 12-18 year olds use another media most of the time while watching TV. They are the first generation to use Chatspeak in real life, e.g., u r gr8. He is the one who spends hours researching on-line for a family vacation but is too cool to be seen with his family at Yellowstone. This instant access to the world through the Web has bolstered a respect for knowledge - 83 percent of 8- to 12-year-olds say: "It's cool to be smart." Technology may provide more access to customized educational materials. The accelerated pace of cyber-speak has shortened the attention span of Tweens and heightened their awareness of visuals. (Cohen, 2007; Gorrell, 2008; Labi, 2008b)

They are newly independent thinkers seeking answers in all areas of life. Although parents may complain about their self-centered tunnel vision, 8- to 12-year-olds begin to develop almost-adult levels of thinking. Today's Tweens represent the first generation to practice adolescent independence on the Internet, that is, Tweens do not need parents or teachers to help them gather information. They can visualize changing places with someone else and project possible behaviors. Gen Z is ready to be on mission, they believe they can impact the world. They are confident and have developed an amazing optimism. (Langford, 2008; Simon, 2009; Benjamin, 2008)

Gen Z values authenticity in that realness is a core value of the current generation. Tweens have always reality-tested their virtues like honesty and obedience. Their understanding of right and wrong may not be clear-cut though because they essentially have grown up in the middle of a national moral meltdown. They are street-smart and have considerable marketing savvy. (Labi, 2008a)

Peer acceptance is very important to Generation Z. The key trait is the need to belong. Their self-concept is partially determined by the group to which the Tween belongs. They value fitting in. Music, fashion, cosmetics, and video games are important in terms of peer acceptance and fitting in. Influence is common in areas of style, including haircuts and wardrobe choices. Astonishingly, children are able to recognize brands from the age of about 18 months. Kids love to hear or see other kids doing things. For Tweens, the next *generation* of social networking sites makes it possible to build online communities that are more like someone's closest group of friends. (Labi, 2008b; Soltan, 2004)

They are a global and diverse generation who come from a wider mix of backgrounds with different experiences and ideas. Trends in diversity are likely to continue as 40% of Tweens belong to ethnic subcultures. They feel that it is a close knit world and have taken global warming, as well as global shopping, to heart. (Labi, 2008a; Labi, 2008b)

Generation Z knows that serving others feels good. She intentionally tosses dirty clothes to miss the hamper but goes out of her way to help an elderly neighbor up icy stairs. They have a sense of civic service. For example, Generation Cures is *a groundbreaking online movement for Tweens (ages 8-12) and their parents. The* Generation Cures *website helps kids learn about the power of compassion and giving through original online games, animated webisodes, and kid-directed videos. (Labi, 2008a; Labi, 2008b)*

Puberty is beginning earlier than ever for this generation. She is the 10-year-old who dresses like she just celebrated her sixteenth birthday. He is a fearless and untouchable teen-wannabe but is afraid to enter the basement after dark. Potential problems with drugs, alcohol, sex, and eating

disorders begin to appear in puberty. Better nutrition is one of the major reasons puberty begins earlier than ever. As a result, 8- and 9-year-olds may experience the mood swings previously associated with teens. Tweens are experiencing "age compression," i.e., the cramming of experience into ever younger human vessels, creating an eerie disconnect between the outer child and the inner sophisticate. (Labi, 2008a; Labi, 2008b)

Gen Z values security more than ever. While growing up in the paranoid openness of the Information Age, they have been raised to keep safe and to be especially cautious of strangers. Also, the disconnect from “age compression” has Generation Z valuing security more than ever. For example, the reality-based fears of Tweens are shaped by their experiences, e.g., what they hear on the news. Increased education is valued as a means of gaining security. (Wellner, 2000; Jayson, 2009)

GENERAL TIPS FOR MULTI-GENERATIONAL MARKETING

The following general tips are offered for bringing about more effective and efficient multi-generational marketing (Higgins, 1998; De Paula, 2003).

1. Understand the backgrounds, morals, values, characteristics, institutions, lifestyle preferences, and priorities of each generation. As appropriate, adjust fundraising, communication, and marketing strategies accordingly. (Ford, 2006; Rosenburg, 2008; Williams, 2005)
2. Recognize the different behavior of generations and use unique and targeted marketing approaches based on this uniqueness. (Stone, et al., 2001; Gorrell, 2008)
3. Generation-shaping social and economic events influence how each group reacts. As such, marketers must be aware of how their target generations view the world and shape their marketing messages accordingly. (Higgins, 1998)
4. Companies will have to rely more heavily on in-depth market research techniques, such as ethnographic research or new qualitative methods that rely on cognitive science. These methods show promise for helping marketers understand their consumers’ cultures. (Business Editors, 2002)
5. Market to the consistent characteristics among generations. That is, find ways in which the generations are similar and add these elements into your ads, products, marketing strategy, etc. For example, online games, satellite radio, and smart phones have elevated mobility, community, and choice in any campaign’s list of key considerations. Marketers must understand and embrace this permanent change. (Gorrell, 2008; Business Editors, 2002; Kumar and Lim, 2008)
6. Create the image of an ageless society wherein people define themselves more by the activities they are involved in than by their age. Remember grandparents could be 45, 65, or 85 and college students could be 20, 30, or 60. (Simms, 2008)
7. People cycle in and out of different life-stage events based on their interests rather than their age. (Ford, 2006; Posnock, 2004)
8. Avoid generational myopia, i.e., the shortsighted application of the values and attitudes of your own generation to the development of strategies for marketing to another generation. (Smith and Clurman, 1997)

SPECIFIC TIPS FOR MULTI-GENERATIONAL MARKETING

Marketers also need to build relationships with each specific generation represented in their targeted audience or community. For example, each generation has preferred methods of communication and trusted sources of information that the marketer should understand and be using. It is the marketers' responsibility to know and understand their specific markets. As such, the following specific tips are offered for improving multi-generational marketing. (Ford, 2006; Rosenburg, 2008; Higgins, 1998; Langford, 2008; Koco, 2006; Read, 2007)

1. Increasingly seek customers outside the 18-34 demographic. (Koco, 2006)
2. Market to 18 and under to establish their adult buying habits. (Koco, 2006)
3. Learn to establish brands that attract older consumers without alienating younger ones. (Gorrell, 2008)
4. With regard to mobile service perceptions and loyalty decisions, appeal to the emotional value for Gen Y but emphasize economic value for Baby Boomers. (Kumar and Lim, 2008)
5. Web sites should avoid appealing to seniors or other terms that imply "old people" and focus instead on stage of life topics like retirement and estate planning. (Bailor, 2006)
6. Conduct research about how to better serve and accommodate older consumers. (Coleman, et al., 2006)
7. Empathize with the needs of aging baby boomers. (Coleman, et al., 2006)
8. Meet the challenge of improving existing products, services, and workplace environments to be more comfortable and accessible for older people without crossing the line to making them feel old. (Coleman, et al., 2006)
9. Study the older boomers who are already acting, buying, and living in ways that can give insight into future behavior of the younger boomers as they mature. (Coleman, et al., 2006)
10. Conduct focus groups with the younger boomers, test the market, and continually analyze the results. (Holstein, 2003; Coleman, et al., 2006)

SUMMARY

Multi-generational marketing is appealing to the unique needs of individuals within more than one specific generational group. Marketers will need to respond to the trend of multi-generational marketing and branding by adjusting their marketing mixes and strategies accordingly. This means that marketers must understand the six U.S. generations: Pre-Depression Generation, Depression Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z. Each of these generations was defined and described in terms of the times in which the generation grew up and the characteristics, lifestyles, and attitudes of each generation. Then, general as well as specific tips were offered for improving the implementation of multi-generational marketing.

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