

6 Tips for Reaching Boomers & Seniors with Digital Marketing



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① Reaching Boomers and Seniors with Digital Marketing

If your target market consists of Boomers (age 50-68) and Seniors (age 65+), providing a robust, efficient, multi-media digital marketing campaign can help intersect this economically-powerful audience effectively.

While historically marketers have focused on traditional media to reach this audience, the evolving media landscape and robust growth in Boomers' and Seniors' digital media adoption has provided new opportunities to appeal to this demographic.

Our experience in testing digital media programs to reach this desirable audience with positive results has helped us to develop the six tips outlined below that we firmly believe will help companies acquire new customers and grow their revenue when executed properly.

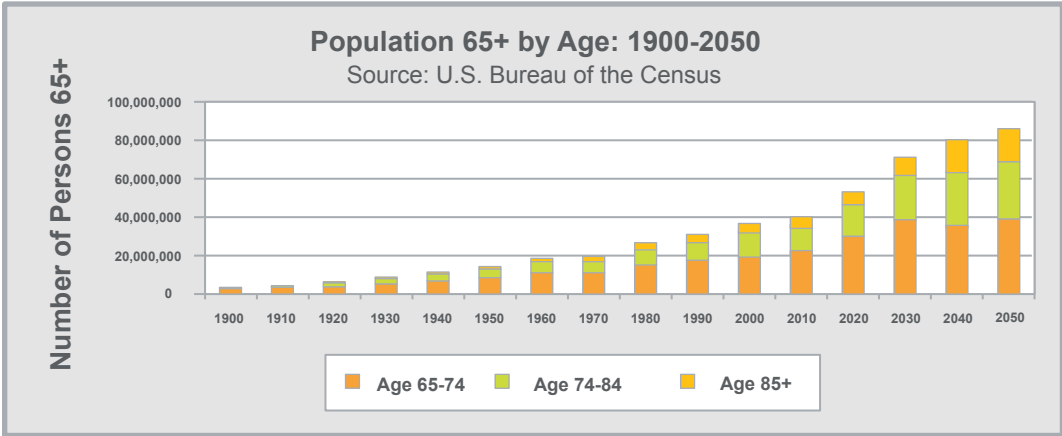
- ① Shift marketing dollars to include digital media.
- ② Appeal to Boomers and Seniors with video content.
- ③ Invest in social media content.
- ④ Employ a SEO and SEM strategy.
- ⑤ Incorporate email into your brand's communications.
- ⑥ Focus on desktop devices until mobile adoption grows.

② The Growing Boomer and Senior Demographic

Increasing evidence suggests that a way in which brands can exponentially grow their business that targets the 50+ market is by tapping into digital channels.

This valuable market, which includes Boomers and Seniors, is comprised of over 116 million Americans, representing an estimated 44% of the U.S. adult population. Of those 50+, 65% – or an estimated 76 million Americans – are considered Boomers while 35% – an estimated 40 million Americans – are considered Seniors.

By 2030, the Senior demographic is expected to grow 74% to reach approximately 70 million Americans.¹ By 2017, Boomers alone will hold an estimated 70% of disposable buying power income in the United States, representing a market share that cannot be ignored.



However, marketers must remain savvy in order to reach this demographic effectively as its media habits undergo a game-changing transformation.

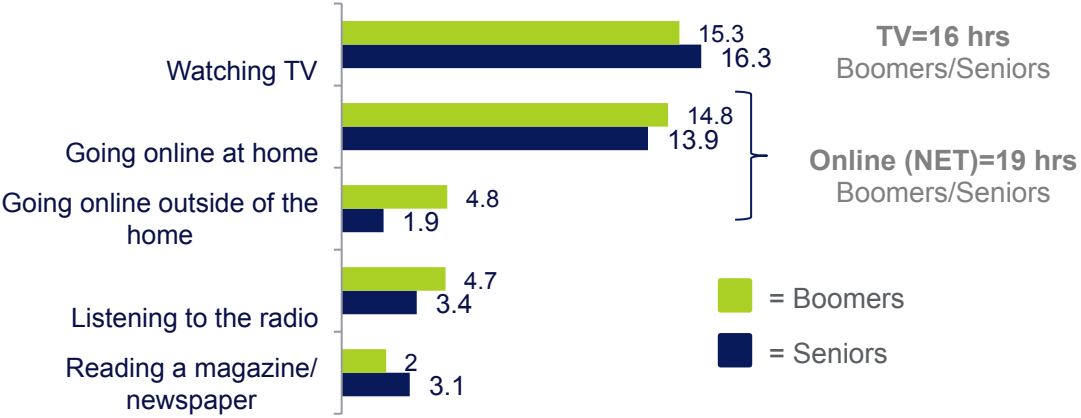
The following statistics provide insight into this audience’s media habits and decision-making influencers, while the corresponding six tips offer strategies for tapping into this growing market through an array of digital channels.

③ Boomers and Seniors Are Online

One of the biggest misperceptions about Boomers and Seniors is that they do not use the internet. However, by looking further into their media habits it quickly becomes evident that this is only a myth. Currently, 78% of Boomers¹ and 59% of Seniors⁵ are online – and while the percent of Seniors who use the internet lags behind that of Boomers, this group is the fastest growing segment of internet adopters.

When compared to other media habits, Boomers and Seniors are spending a large amount of time online. Internet usage among Boomers already outpaces the time spent watching TV by an average of 3 hours per week – 19 hours spent online vs. 16 hours spent watching TV. It also dwarfs time spent listening to the radio and reading print (newspapers and magazines), which both clock in at only 3 hours per week.³

Hours Spent Consuming Media By Boomers and Seniors:



 **Tip #1 | Shift Marketing Dollars to Include Digital Media**

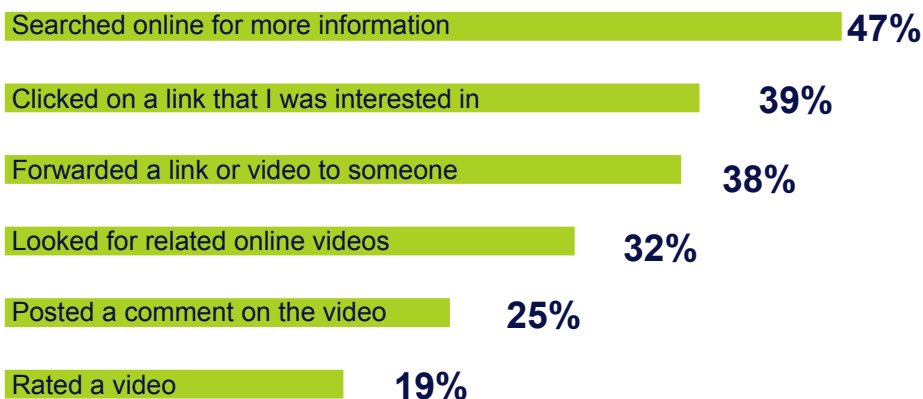
Boomers and Seniors are increasingly focusing their attention online. This requires a shift in marketing dollars to include digital marketing tactics such as display, social media, search engine optimization, search engine marketing and retargeting strategies that reach this demographic when they're consuming media to drive sales and increase visibility online.

④ Online Video Is on the Rise

When isolating the 50+ and 65+ audiences, we can also see that video consumption is on the rise. Plus, 54% of Boomers and Seniors watch online videos with YouTube as the platform of choice³, which continues to prove that Boomers and Seniors are shifting their media consumption habits as they transition to view video content online.

Additionally, 75% of Boomers and 68% of Seniors take action after watching an online video, with “searching online for more information” as the leading action taken by this demographic, proving that online video can be an effective driver of sales.⁴

Online video viewing prompts the following action among Boomers/Seniors:



3 in 4 online video viewers have taken action as a result of an online video



Tip #2 | Appeal to Boomers and Seniors with Video Content

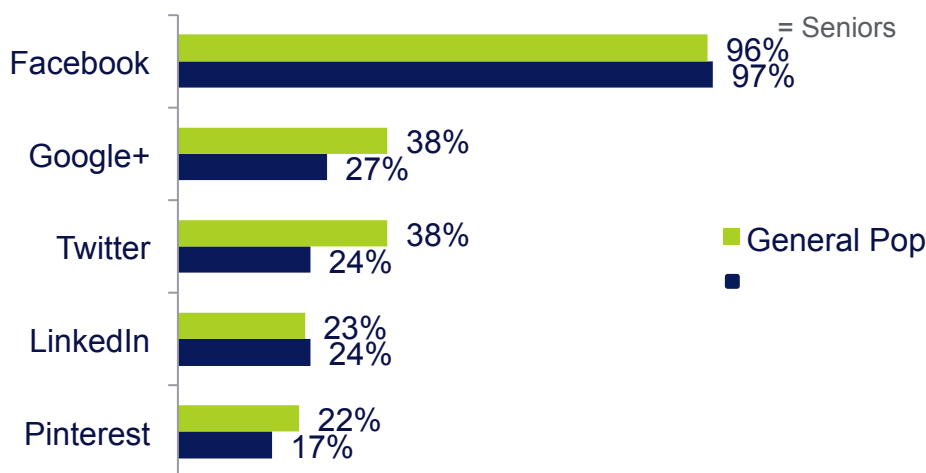
As brands continue to become content producers, video is proving to be very valuable for brands looking to tap into this growing market. Producing high quality, shareable videos is key to increasing awareness. Consider using calls-to-action overlaid on the video content to direct the viewer to a given website to take an appropriate action. This small but minor tip helps focus the user’s journey back towards your ultimate goal of increasing sales and capturing names to add to your database.

⑤ Use of Social Media is Growing Each Year

Social media lends itself well towards the sharing of valuable content amongst a given audience – and social media’s popularity is growing within this demographic as well.

Consider this – of those who use the internet, 71% of Boomers and 59% of Seniors use social networking sites daily. Facebook, at 97% adoption, is the overwhelmingly preferred social networking site among Boomers and Seniors, followed by Google+ (27%), Twitter (24%), LinkedIn (24%) and Pinterest (17%).

Top behaviors for this demographic include following a group or organization (55%), posting and watching videos (40%), supporting a cause (26%) and joining a group they are interested in (23%).³



Tip #3 | Invest in Social Media Content

As Boomers’ and Seniors’ social media use continues to grow, social media is proving to be an important tactic to reach consumers in this demographic. Not only should your product or service have a presence on these sites, but invest in them from a content creation, audience generation and message amplification strategy. Company descriptions on social media sites should also be optimized for SEO to help boost visibility in search engine rankings.

⑥ Search Engine Usage Remains High

Search Engines are key to research and product discovery. Of those who are online, 82% of Boomers and 75% of Seniors use a search engine to gather information about a given topic or interest.³

Top search queries for the Boomer and Senior market include phrases such as “social security,” “retirement,” “AARP,” “Medicare,” “weather,” “healthcare,” “cruises” and “world news.”³

More importantly, 91% of Boomers and 85% of Seniors take action as the result of an online search.⁶ Using a blend of organic and paid search, coupled with search retargeting will help reinforce awareness and focus brand attention among this target demographic in channels they are used to while maintaining cost efficiencies.

After gathering information, they take action:

Talked to others about what they learned	48%
Shared search results with others	39%
Thought more favorably about something they learned	37%
Visited an online video website	36%
Visited a social networking site	36%
Forwarded a video or link to others	34%
Changed my mind about a topic	31%
Looked for more information offline	31%
Posted a video or link	22%



Tip #4 | Employ a SEO and SEM Strategy

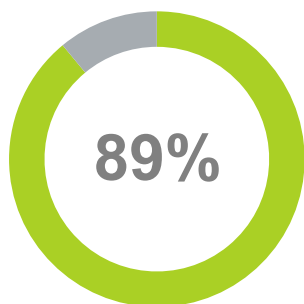
Conducting a robust paid and organic search initiative is imperative to tap into this target market. The top search queries among this audience show a desire to find trustworthy content that is reliable and helps satisfy what this target cares most about. By employing a SEO and SEM strategy, your product or service will see the benefits of increased website traffic and higher organic search engine rankings.

⑦ Emails Still Resonate

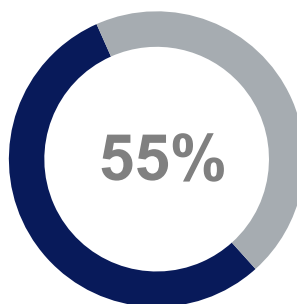
Using email communication to reach the senior market makes sense for marketers to these demographic groups. According to Nielsen, 89% of Seniors that are internet users have personal email and use it regularly. ⁷

Not only are Boomers and Seniors utilizing email as a means of communications and discovering product promotions, but also as a social sharing tool to circulate news, articles and deals with their friends.

Of Seniors (65+) that are online:



read email



read email every day



Tip #5 | Incorporate Email into Your Brand's Communications

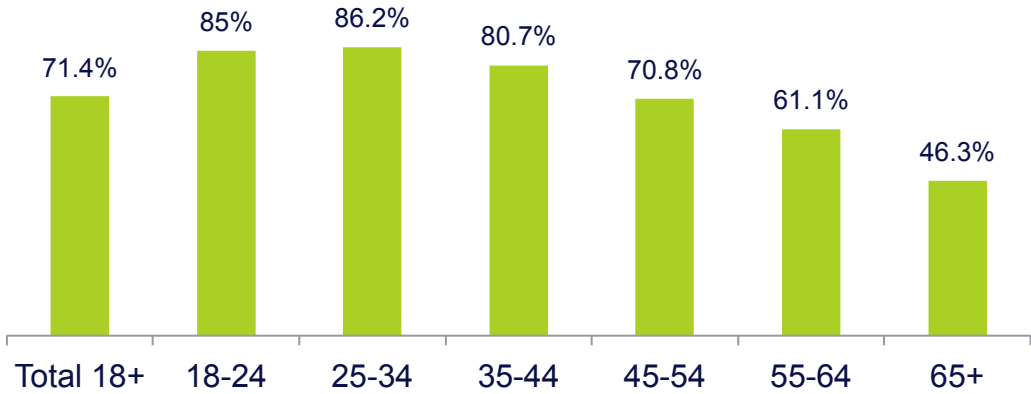
Create an email deployment calendar as part of your brand's outgoing communication strategy. Ideally, piggyback your brand messaging utilizing the email content with additional support via paid search. Paid search can help capture the increased search demand created by the email content and align messaging from the email to PPC efforts for a seamless end user experience.

⑧ Smartphone and Tablet Usage Is Increasing

While Boomers' and Seniors' smartphone use still lags behind other age groups in terms of adoption, this group is catching up fast – penetration among this audience has nearly doubled over the past year and continues to show evidence of increasing with each passing year.

In fact, 61% of Boomers and 43% of Seniors use smartphones and 28% of Boomers and 18% of Seniors own a tablet.⁵ As the Generation X demographic ages, this segment will continue to adopt mobile devices more frequently.

US Smartphone Penetration by Age Group:



 **Tip #6 | Focus on Desktop Devices Until Mobile Adoption Grows**

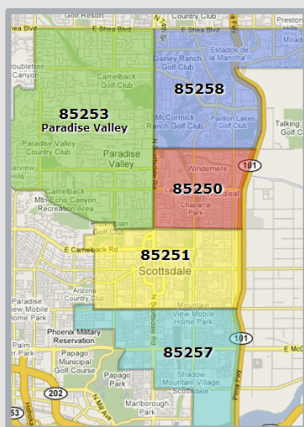
While the increase in mobile behavior should not be ignored, a concerted effort to target Boomers and Seniors on desktop devices provides more immediate growth opportunities. However, as Boomers' and Seniors' mobile habits continue to grow, a transition of marketing dollars may be in order.

⑨ Digital Channels Cannot Be Ignored

As digital media adoption continues to evolve among Boomers and Seniors, as the above mentioned evidence suggests, this transformation in media habits can provide a massive growth opportunity for brands looking to target this demographic, as well as those investing in content development and promoting it through online media channels.

By employing these 6 tips and techniques – overlaid with highly effective geo-targeting that many of the digital media channels offer to greatly improve response rates, sales and marketing effectiveness – your brand can successfully expand its marketing tactics to reach Boomers and Seniors where they prefer to interact.

Case Study | Geo-Targeting Intelligence Boosts Senior Focused Campaign



Media Horizons executed a senior targeted campaign for a client utilizing geo-targeting intelligence to zero in on the zip codes that indexed highest for the senior market.

Once those zip codes were identified, the program utilized a blend of multi-device search marketing, YouTube video promotion, social seeding on Facebook and the deployment of emails to drive sales volume.

This combination of the right tactics, the right location and the right message resulted in an influx in sales volume that outperformed forecasted figures.

As Boomers' and Seniors' internet and technology use continues to grow, the ability to target this segment online presents opportunities for marketers seeking additional ways to reach this large and affluent audience. By creating content including videos, promoting it on social and search, and applying display targeting and re-targeting tactics, brands can expand their customer base and tap into a segment of the population that has some serious buying power. By positioning your brand as a digital leader and content creator, you can grow your customer base and resulting revenue.






About Media Horizons

Media Horizons is an award-winning digital and direct marketing agency located in Norwalk, CT with over 25 years of experience in successfully reaching the Boomer and Senior markets.

Media Horizons has repeatedly launched effective digital marketing campaigns targeting this demographic, spanning a wide variety of products and services, successfully helping brands generate new customers and maximize their lifetime value throughout digital channels.

Full-service capabilities include Strategic Planning, Creative Development, Media Planning & Buying, Data & Analytics and Customer Database Marketing, Project Management and Process Mapping.

Media Horizons

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