

## The Generation Gap

Recently, I attended a seminar on generational marketing and was fascinated by what I learned. It really puts an interesting perspective on how to relate to family and the new work force. Not to mention sorting out all these crazy new phenomena's like blogging and reality television.

According to research; there are currently five generations today.

- ◆ The G.I.'s- 1901-1926-Age 80+
- ◆ Silents- 1927-1945-Age-61-79
- ◆ Boomers-1946-1964-Age 42-60
- ◆ Gen X-1965-1981-Age 25-41
- ◆ Millennials- 1982-present 0-24

Generational differences in age, circumstance and core values guide each group's decisions for absolutely everything from buying habits to taking a job and raising a family.

The **GI's** are commonly know as the "Greatest Generation"! This is the group of war hero's and Great Depression survivors we heard so much about in Tom Brokaw's book. This patriotic group of men and women forged many trials for the rest of us. Their lives were marked by struggles, war and sacrifice and the impact is evident on our freedom and culture today.

The **Silent's** came along next, right in the middle of the cold war threat and McCarthyism. This generation is marked by being cautious and is known as the wealthiest group ever; many will work through retirement just to stay connected. They are an extremely thoughtful generation who are involved in politics, news and are considered to be plugged into new products and services. They have worked hard in their careers and have a great deal of money but have never spent it recklessly. Later in life, they spend freely on a long list of categories including; grandchildren, travel,

automobiles, and housing. Throughout their formative years, this generation was taught to conform, conversely, later in life they were met with a pent-up desire to “Live”. This group thinks and acts young in many ways and your products and services should recognize that and be respectful of their values. Don’t be surprised if you see them on an extravagant vacation later in life.

The **Boomers** came on the scene in droves and the population swelled (over 80-million born) during the 50s, and 60s. This idealistic generation learned parenting from Dr. Spock, saw feminism blossom along with the sexual revolution. They are career driven, believe in living life to the fullest and are not afraid to take on a cause. Boomer have a strong “forever young” mentality. They saw Vietnam, Watergate and the divorce rate soar. Because of the size of the generation, they learned early that competition was fierce in the work place and tended to be career focused if not workaholics. You never want to refer to them as aging or mature. They relate to classic music from their time, which is why a lot of the 60’s rock bands, such as The Rolling Stones, are still touring with sell out crowds. They love information and news and are passionate about their parents and family ties. They are always up for new adventures and want to reinvent themselves. They have enormous purchasing power but little loyalty and have not been the best generation to prepare for retirement. Their instant-gratification mentality may have hurt them financially in the long run and many will work well into their late 60’s and 70’s to maintain their lifestyle.

The **X’ers** are a small generation and came of age during the computer revolution of the 70s and 80s. Their government leaders, big business owners and major sports celebrities were caught lying and cheating. Mom ran the household and many in this generation were the first “Latch Key” kids. Those events taught the Gen X’ers to be skeptical and even cynical at times. This generation spent less time with adults than prior generations and are more self-focused, they are known as the “Me” generation. This was a turning point for girls with the passage of Title 9, in the school system. The result is an extremely strong female generation with their male counterparts suffering from a lack of identity. They love

products with attitude that are edgy and won't buy from companies that don't have good values. They don't read newspapers regularly and mistrust the media, but love the internet. They are individuals and like jobs that will let them discover the process on their own. Don't try to tell them what to do they will lose interest.

**Millennials** are the newest generation and are large in number. They respect authority, education, and enjoy a great relationship with their parents. They are team players and want to get involved in the community. They are the "We" generation. They are one of the most heavily adult supervised generations so far, sometimes the parent are know as "Helicopter" parents because of the hovering. They are overscheduled and face grade pressures and competition to succeed. Millennial's are having a spiritual rising and have a passion for community service. There major coming of age events include Columbine and 9/11. They one of the most connected generations; with cell phones, email, chat rooms and instant messages. These kids are confident and smart but realize the work force holds uncertainty. They are also seeing people live longer and the message that resonates is why hurry? So you won't be getting them out of the house any time soon.

Understanding generational difference is so important in keeping current and connected to you loved ones and work associates.