

# M&M marketing

## WHICH GENERATION ARE YOU TARGETING?

In the first of this series on Generational Marketing, **Neil Osborne** explains how, just like individual M&M's, each generation has its distinct differences and shouldn't be marketed to (or eaten) together.

IT'S NOTHING NEW; you've done it for years. You know, separate them into colours, so you can enjoy their similarities? Of course we're talking M&M's, those crunchy-coated chocolates that disappear quicker than your waistline expands. But what do they have to do with branding? Well just like M&M's, each generation has its distinct differences and shouldn't be marketed to (or eaten) together.

You've heard it time and again: target your marketing to connect with your 'right' people. But how exactly do you do that, when there are so many confusing names and niches? One way is what I like to call the M&M method – by segmenting people (aka M&M's) into age cohorts (or colours) for a more specific appeal. In doing that you'll be practicing what's termed 'generational marketing'.

What exactly is this? Generational marketing is what it sounds like: you market to a specific generation of people (those born and living about the same time), based on the unique preferences, attitudes and upbringings that distinguish them from another generation. It also means switching from creating mass products and messages, to tailoring and customising them for specific age groups.

Generational marketing is based on two founding principles: (1) your product must change with life stages, and; (2) promotional messages and products targeting the generational groups should reflect their generational values and drive purchasing behaviour.

However, age is not the only factor influencing behaviour and choice. There can be differences within a generation that are larger than those between them, and the birth-year boundaries are not sharply fixed.

Also, each generation is typically composed of a variety of segments, or sub-groups, (eg, in Gen Y/Millennials there are the Hipsters, Goth and Cyber-geek niches) and as with each generation, sub-groups also have their own distinct features.

There are currently six generations across the world population. Each one has its own mind-set, priorities and preferences, and is motivated by different messages and language. To place them in context, I've given you a quick overview of what makes each generation unique.

### GI Generation (born 1901-1926)

- Conservative, altruistic and less materialistic as they age.
- Place high value on face-to-face contact and through personal services.
- Rarely use the internet, but since their children and grandchildren most certainly do, may be reached 'second-hand' using technology.
- Traditional advertising works well, but as some are no longer able to drive, radio and direct mail are a natural fit.

### Silent Generation (1927-1945)

- Sacrifice and responsibility for the common good appeals to them.
- Patriotism, hard work and responsible behaviour held in high esteem.
- They value morals, social tranquillity and family togetherness, distrust change and generally skew toward financial and social conservatism.
- Are now willing to spend money on themselves, feeling it's now-or-never time to splurge on that big-ticket item.
- Like to trust what they read, so talk to them with 'you deserve it' messages, using respectful and easily-digested written and face-to-face communications.
- Many have been cajoled online by family posting photos on social media and websites. Keep usability in mind (larger text, non-moving menus/navigation, easy scanning, etc.) to successfully use technology with this group.

### Baby Boomers (1946-1964) – the busy generation

- Don't call them old. They are the vitamin-physical fitness-cover-the-grey-hair generation, and many reject the idea of retirement.
- Are often juggling kids, parents, jobs and spouses, so anything that makes their life easier or more convenient is appealing.
- Have no time to read lengthy messages or details.
- Capture their attention in minutes or lose them.
- Are experimental, individualistic, free-spirited, self-believing, into self-fulfilment and self-improvement and have redefined traditional values.
- This generation tends to separate into the Hippies of the 1960-1970 era, and the Yuppies of 1970-1980, depending on when they came of age.
- Talk to their sense of individuality and determination to "do their own thing." Their independent attitudes prompted the do-it-yourself marketplace, so give them service options and ways to customise.

### Generation X (1965-1980) – the market-savvy ones

- The latchkey generation. Don't respond well to advertising, because they grew up with it on television when they got home from school.
- Demand an honest, straight-forward approach without hype and are distrustful of authority.
- They expect you'll deliver on your promise. Burn them once; lose them forever.
- They appreciate good design and entertainment, so focus on high-quality images and truthful copy.

- Are rebellious, independent, entrepreneurial, anti-establishment, sceptical, ecologically-minded, anti-consumerist and have short attention spans
- Are very independent, starting 70 per cent of new businesses.

### Generation Y/Millennials (1981-2000)

- Influenced by brand-conscious boomer parents.
- The children of boomer professionals who opted for late parenthood, and early Gen X parents.
- Are attracted to brands at an early age and remain loyal.
- Are style-conscious, tech-savvy, wealthier at a younger age, independent, civic-minded, socially and environmentally aware, pro-community, multicultural, organically-focused, pro gender equality and often emulate the values of the Hippies.
- Causes prompt them into action but they can be intolerant of things (and brands) that do not support their favoured causes.
- Their activities focus on digital communication, so reach them via the internet and smartphones, but keep messages short, funny and true.

### Generation Z/Gen 1/Net Generation (2001-)

- Value fitting in with their peers
- Overprotected by their 'helicopter' parents in formative years – at school (due to shootings) and in society (because of terrorism)
- Have grown up with educational games on their own computers, phones and video game controllers.
- This digital involvement has resulted in an early disinterest in traditional toys, as well as a general resistance to advertising and cause-oriented messages.
- Will likely tend to be risk-averse and therefore conformists as adults.

- Are internet and technologically savvy, brand conscious, community-minded, multicultural, pro-equality.
- All marketing should recognise their mature and savvy understanding of life.

### What does it mean?

Even a cursory glance shows that what happens in your early years ultimately impacts who you are as an adult — your preferences, personality and general attitudes about the world – and also impacts who you are as a consumer and how you make purchasing decisions. While not prescriptive, generational marketing acknowledges the importance of appealing to the unique characteristics, sub-sets and mindsets of each generation.

And regardless of what they say about M&M's, you savour a different flavour with every colour! ■



Neil Osborne is an elite sales trainer and brand coach who has devoted more than 30 years to the salon industry, dramatically growing brands and businesses. Contact [www.thesalescatalyst.com.au](http://www.thesalescatalyst.com.au)



## Mind Wellness

### Integrate Mind Wellness into your Spa or Salon

*Through Guided Meditation and Hypnotic Metaphors to:*

✓ De-Stress	✓ Sleep Better
✓ Build Confidence	✓ Get Motivated
✓ Quit Bad Habits	✓ Achieve Success
✓ Control Weight	✓ Find Passion
✓ Dissipate Pain	✓ Improve Memory
✓ Eliminate Fears	✓ Socialize More
✓ Become Focused	✓ Be Happy
✓ Abandon Addiction	✓ Manage Hormones

Arrange a Complimentary Consultation and Trial Session with  
 Deborah Mangum-Copelli, BA, MA, DipPsychClinHyp, PracNLP  
 M: 0425 263 477 E: [deborah@mindwellness.com](mailto:deborah@mindwellness.com)  
[www.mindwellness.com](http://www.mindwellness.com)  
 Member: ISPA, AHA, ASCH

## BRANDEE MEIER PHOTOGRAPHY

[WWW.BRANDEEMEIER.COM.AU](http://WWW.BRANDEEMEIER.COM.AU)



Make your business stand out with professional product & beauty photography.  
 Official photographer for "Professional Beauty Magazine".  
 E: [studio@brandeemeier.com.au](mailto:studio@brandeemeier.com.au) T: 1300 702 102