

AdAge.com™

The Economist has a higher proportion of college graduates than any other publication.

News

welcome, James Tenser
(if this is not you, [click here](#))

Search /
QwikFIND

Go

> [Master Search](#)

Feb. 24, 2006

Home
[News]
MediaWorks
Hispanic Marketing
Interactive News
Account Action
American
Demographics
Data Center

Career Center
Marketplace

My AdAge
Print Edition
Customer Services
Contact Us
Media Kit
Privacy Statement

AdCritic.com
Madison+Vine
Point
Encyclopedia
AdAgeChina
Small Agency Diary

CUSTOM PROGRAMS ▶



E-mail to a friend



Print this Page

Subscribe to the MediaWorks E-Mail

Edited by: [Ann Marie Kerwin](#)

NEW OLD WON'T GO QUIETLY

January 02, 2006

QwikFIND ID:

By [JAMES TENSER](#)

In the good old days, life began at 40.

Today's older baby boomers are challenging that cliché as they pass through their mid-50s and begin to visualize a "retirement" characterized by youthful vigor, prosperity and personal fulfillment.

"This group is now looking at 30 years at the end of life between 50 and 80, or 15 fabulous years between 50 and 65," says Landon Y. Jones, author of the influential 1980 book "Great Expectations: America & the Baby Boom Generation." "They are looking for wholly a different retirement than their parents had."

Boomers-born from 1946-64-define themselves in terms of attitudes and values, in contrast to the generation that preceded them, says Maddy Dychtwald, co-founder and senior VP of the Age Wave think tank and author in 2004 of "Cycles: How We Will Live, Work & Buy." "They do not want to age the way their parents or grandparents did."

Is 55 the new 40? Julia Huber of the U.K. research organization Demos seems to think so. In an essay on AARP's Web site titled "The New Old-How Baby Boomers Are Redefining Retirement," she articulates three core themes: Leading-edge boomers anticipate a "windfall" of wealth, good health and quality time; they continue to express personal fulfillment in ways that "dominate popular culture"; and they're confronting their fears of "infirmary and death."

MARKETER OPPORTUNITIES

This combination suggests areas of opportunity for marketers of financial, hospitality and wellness products and services. It also offers some strategic direction for food, beverage and personal-care manufacturers.

Information Resources Inc., which tracks product sales, is detecting signs that older boomers' behavior reflects two key trends, says Sheila McCusker, editor of Times & Trends, an IRI monthly publication that recently described a sharp change in consumption patterns and priorities as adults pass the age of 50.

"We identified two themes ... we call 'Aging Process' and 'Transition to Empty Nest,'" she says, adding that the findings were based on differences in purchase behavior.

Among the new old, the aging-process trend manifests in purchases of foods identified as "healthier" and in personal-care products such as skin creams that promise preservation of youthful appearance, Ms. McCusker says. "We



ROLL OVER TO
DISCOVER HOW
YAHOO! HELPS THE
TRAVEL INDUSTRY
PUT HEADS IN BEDS.

Get it all
delivered to you
every weekday
morning

OPA
2006
LONDON
FORUM
THE FUTURE

JOIN US
IN LONDON FOR
AN INNOVATIVE
CONFERENCE
EXPLORING
THE FUTURE OF
GLOBAL MEDIA
MARCH 1-3, 2006

TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF EARLY RATES!
REGISTER NOW>>

MARCH 1-3, 2006

have already seen growth for anti-aging products among older boomers. ... There is room for real innovation. Even among some routine care products, manufacturers are positioning more effectively."

PRESERVING YOUTH

Julie Danis, senior VP-director of mind and mood at Interpublic Group of Cos.' Foote Cone & Belding, Chicago, concurs that older boomers are especially interested in products and services that will preserve youth and health. She cites data from the World Health Organization. "Fifty percent of boomers in North America, Europe and other industrialized nations have tried complementary [alternative] medicine and therapies," she says.

Suggests futurist Ryan Mathews, CEO of Black Monk Consulting: "It's about hanging onto the original promise. Here are all the props you need-Rogaine, Viagra, Lipitor, surgery, Nexium. It's all about keeping going."

As for the empty-nest transition, IRI's Ms. McCusker says, "We're already seeing more higher-end meals positioned specifically for empty nesters. ... At the same time, we see some declining demand across family-oriented convenience meals [like] items aimed at younger children, such as aseptic juice boxes."

Mr. Jones, a former managing editor at People, is widely credited with coining the "pig in the python" metaphor to describe baby boomers' advancing demographic bulge. While it's in some ways convenient to characterize boomers as a single demographic cohort, the common experience of the head-of-the-bulge boomers differs in some significant ways from that of younger boomers.

Older boomers are more likely to have benefited from the expanding opportunities in education, careers and even real-estate investing that coincided with America's rise to economic pre-eminence after World War II, futurist Mr. Mathews says. They were taught to anticipate that their lifestyle would exceed that of their "Greatest Generation" parents, and their expectations largely have been fulfilled.

By comparison, many younger boomers (see "Ageless Aging," P. 18) find themselves relatively disadvantaged in these areas.

But older boomers aren't without worries. Mr. Mathews says: "There's a growing sense guaranteed prosperity is no longer there, that it's not turning out to be true."

Age Wave's Ms. Dychtwald says she detects a similar theme. This is still very much the "sandwich" generation who face the possibility of caring for their children and elderly parents. "For the most part, older boomers' parents are still alive," she says. "They hope to inherit something, but it is not a certainty."

What many fiftysomethings are inheriting is care-giving duties for parents. This was underscored in "The Future of Retirement," a 2004 study commissioned by HSBC and conducted by Age Wave and Harris Interactive. It indicates many of the new old intend to keep working, out of preference or necessity.

"When we asked people, 'What represents the ideal plan for how you will live in the next stage of your life?' 42% said they planned to cycle between work and leisure, 56% said they would try a whole new profession," Ms. Dychtwald says.

Another area that marketers should be watching is gender roles, says boomer expert Mr. Jones. "A big wild card is the women in the group. We may expect a dramatic increase in women who worked throughout their lives who are more educated, who have not had children, who have been divorced. We'll be seeing more economically independent women over the age of 50."

'Catching the happiness'

Ms. Danis says she detects more of a focus among the older boomers on "catching the happiness while I can. ... I want things that are going to make me happy on a daily basis."

While the purchase patterns of the new old are changing in sometimes predictable and at other times surprising ways, it's clear that consumption isn't going out of style.

"Baby boomers always buy solutions to the problems caused by their existence," says Mr. Jones. "In the 1950s, it was polio vaccine. Now they are working on Alzheimer's and erectile dysfunction. This is not a coincidence. Solutions will come about. Infrastructures will be created to supply the demand that they create."

Born Up to 1951

Lifecycle population: 68.8 million

As share of U.S. Population: 23.0%

Male: 44.7%

Female: 55.3%

Race

Asian 3.4%

Black 9.3%

White (Hispanic) 6.6%

White (non-Hispanic) 79.2%

Other races 1.5%

Hispanic origin (Includes non-white hispanics) 7.1%

Top Male Name1: James

Top Female Name1: Mary

1. 1940

More info: census.gov; ssa.gov

Sources: Census Bureau population projections for 2006; Social Security Administration (names)

Your article purchase will be accessible to you on AdAge.com for 14 days from date of purchase by visiting your [AdAge locker](#).

Source: **AdvertisingAge** PRINT EDITION

The leading source of advertising marketing and media news providing today's most comprehensive coverage of a vast and ever-changing marketing landscape.

[Subscribe to Advertising Age Print Edition today.](#)

More Relevant News from Advertising Age Print Edition

The Player: Sortito brings adroit touch with film tie-ins to Spyglass

by **WAYNE FRIEDMAN**

Hollywood theatrical and TV production companies have rarely kept an in-house marketing executive on staff. But increasingly, producers are looking for someone to

June 23, 2003

PayPoints: 3
Word Count: 484

monitor, question and steer film studio and TV network marketing efforts. The growing five-year-old ...

SPECIAL ADVERTISING

June 23, 2003

see printed publication for the following: Three Big Days ...

PayPoints: 3
Word Count: 9

100 Leading National Advertisers

June 23, 2003

by **R. Craig Endicott**

Advertising by the nation's top 100 advertisers returned to some semblance of normalcy in 2002, rising 4.8% to \$83 billion to put behind them a numbing 2001 in which their total ad spending dropped 1.3%, the first decline in 10 years. The rise in large part ...

PayPoints: 3
Word Count: 733

Unilever expands Slim-Fast to create a diet megabrand

June 23, 2003

by **STEPHANIE THOMPSON and JACK NEFF**

Increased competition in the booming diet arena has sent Unilever scrambling to extend its Slim-Fast brand into convenient-meal segments, including soups and pastas. Later this month, Slim-Fast Foods will launch a total of 15 products, from sippable soup cups ...

PayPoints: 3
Word Count: 455

Spots: Land Rover

June 23, 2003

Land Rover North America wants more exposure for its top-of-the-line Range Rover sport utility vehicle, which gets its first TV spot in more than five years. WPP Group's Y&R Cos., Irvine, went to Thailand and used local talent for the Ford Motor unit's 30-second ...

PayPoints: 3
Word Count: 63

Copyright © 2006, [Crain Communications Inc.](#) - [Privacy Statement](#)
[Chaffee Interactive, Inc.](#): Programming, Technology & Hosting Services

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Search](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Marketplace](#) | [RSS](#)