

# The generation gap - Who is who?

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I often get asked "Who is Gen X?" and "What is the difference between a millennial and a Gen X?" I find that there is a lot of confusion as to which generation is called what. Let's try and make this as simple as possible...



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## What is the definition of a generation?

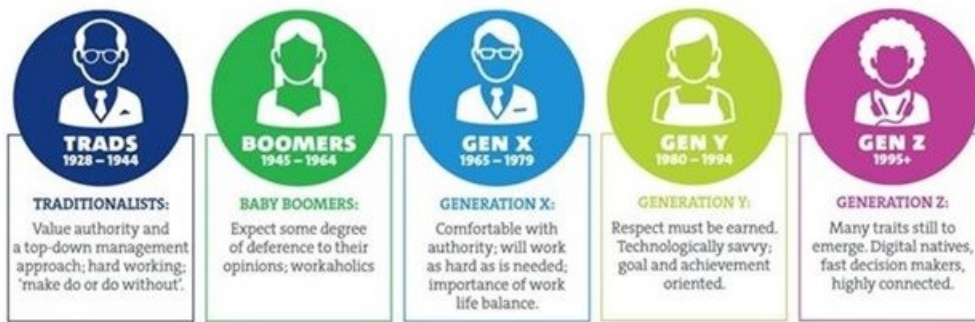
- A generation is a group of people born around the same time and raised around the same place.
- People in this "birth cohort" exhibit similar characteristics, preferences and values over their lifetime.
- Generations are not a box – instead, they are powerful clues showing where to begin connecting with and influencing people of different ages.
- There are big differences between the generations.

## What makes generations consistent at a high level?

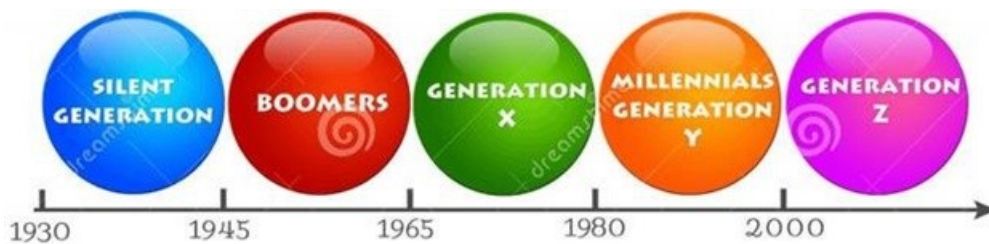
- Generations exhibit similar characteristics – such as communication, shopping and motivational preferences.
- This is because they experienced similar trends at approximately the same life stage and through similar channels (TV, radio, online etc.).
- Generation-shaping trends are most influential as people come of age, which means that members of a particular generation will develop and share similar values, beliefs and expectations.
- It is important to remember that at an individual level, everyone is different. But looking at people through a generational lens offers useful predictability for those trying to reach, inform, or persuade a large cross-section of a population.
- Who are the different generations?

## SO WHO ARE THE DIFFERENT GENERATIONS?

Here is how they are often grouped:



These are the primary generations today:



## What are the key trends that shape generations?

- The 3 key trends that shape generations are:

- Parenting
- Technology
- Economics

## Who are baby boomers?

- Baby boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 and grew up during the American-dream, white-picket-fence era of post-WWII.
- As their younger counterparts have taught boomers how to use technology, this generation is slowly embracing it.
- According to Pew Research, by 2014, 65% of adults aged 50-64 used social networking sites, with the vast majority engaging with Facebook to revive “dormant” relationships.
- The boomers are the most likely to misunderstand Facebook remarketing ads clogging up their newsfeeds, but still be receptive to direct marketing/sales tactics; they like to talk to real people.
- Boomers have the highest value as consumers in the market today!
- They spend the most money on each shopping trip, and as they are hitting retirement, they are more likely to splurge on items that aren't on the grocery list. Surprisingly, this generation even spends the most on technology—everything from premium cable to the latest smartphone. (Silver Surfers).

## Who are Generation Xers?

- The neglected middle child.
- Gen X is the smallest generation, born between 1965 and 1980 and often referred to as the bridge between millennials and baby boomers.
- Gen Xers are now juggling childcare, homeownership, and reaching the peak of their careers.
- Think of the 40-year-old who went to high school in the 80's and hated the first Bush era, and is now working in green energy and has little kids to contend with.
- This generation remembers how video killed the radio star and are more pessimistic about having enough money to

retire.

- Gen Xers are busy! They're dealing with children, paying mortgages and tuition, and working a LOT.
- They're also on online—more than 80% of this generation reports that they are on Facebook, MySpace (what?!) and Twitter.
- They are more on par with technology adoption and use with millennials, and are more likely to be politically loyal throughout their lives than either of the other generations.
- Gen Xers claim to be the most dedicated to lists while shopping, but also fessed up to making the most unplanned purchases on their shopping excursions. This generation is our true hybrid when it comes to marketing. They grew up without the online shopping experience, so they still enjoy a trip in-store, but have fully embraced online shopping as well.

## Who are millennials?

- The generation that is slowly taking over the workforce and out-numbering baby boomers.
- Millennials were born between 1980 and 1995 and came of age during the early 2000's.
- This generation is most widely talked to and about on social media and in pop culture.
- Millennials began entering the workforce as the economy crashed, and as a result, are the largest generation of entrepreneurs. They are notoriously soft-hearted and soft-shelled, valuing social issues far ahead of economics.
- That said, millennials are an economic force! With \$200bn in annual buying power, smart marketers are turning to new channels to hook this generation.
- They are the least frequent in-store shoppers (USA data).
- This generation is the most responsive to online shopping opportunities, recommendations from friends and family, and are motivated by shopping ease.
- Millennials are reshaping the way that goods and services are being marketed by staying unresponsive to traditional marketing tactics.
- This generation decides where to eat based on Instagram pictures, chooses hair stylists from Facebook and has their groceries delivered to their door.

Category	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation Xers	Millennials
<b>Birth Year</b>	<b>1922-1943</b>	<b>1943-1960</b>	<b>1960-1980</b>	<b>1980-2000</b>
<b>Education is</b>	... a dream	... a birthright	... a way to get there	... an incredible expense
<b>Attitude toward authority</b>	Honor and respect	Replace them, challenge them	Ignore leaders	Leaders must respect you
<b>Schedules</b>	Mellow	Frantic	Aimless	Volatile
<b>Career</b>	Means for living	General focus	Irritant	Always changing
<b>Technology</b>	Hope to out-live it	Master it	Enjoy it	Employ it
<b>Interactive Style</b>	Team player	Self-absorbed	Entrepreneur	Team player
<b>Work is</b>	... an obligation	... an exciting adventure	... a difficult challenge	... a means to an end
<b>Characteristics</b>	Veterans, structured, loyal, follows rules, individual	Question authority, driven, optimistic, efficient, team player	Latch-key kids, do it my way, survivors, self-reliant, independent	Asks why, structured, supportive, creative, team participant
<b>Message That Motivates</b>	"Your experience is respected."	"You're important to our success."	"Do it your way."	"You and your coworkers can turn this place around."

## ABOUT BELINDA KAYTON

Belinda Kayton is a Media Strategist and Dashboard Enthusiast at The MediaShop Johannesburg. She is both a knitting and boxing enthusiast and works on the LegalWise, Incredible Connection, Marketing2theVax and Bonitas accounts.

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