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The Aging Arc

Insights into U.S. Generational Shifts

October 2025

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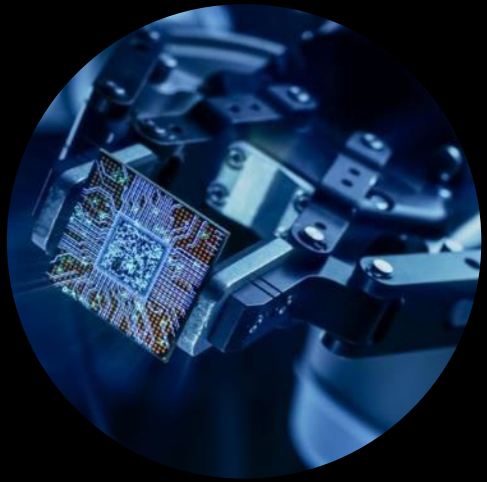
Shifting priorities across the Aging Arc highlight dynamic generational purchasing behaviors

Generation
Size Shift

Life
Stage Shift

Watershed
Moments



Tech / AI
Advancements

Today, Baby Boomers and Gen X are the largest share of spend






	Gen Alpha	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby Boomers	Seniors
	Born 2013-2025 0-12 years old	Born 1997-2012 13-28 years old	Born 1981-1996 29-44 years old	Born 1965-1980 45-60 years old	Born 1946-1964 61-79 years old	Born Before 1946 80+ years old
SHARE OF POPULATION	12%	20%	22%	19%	18%	9%
Share of Total Retail Dollar Spend	NA	5%*	28%	33%	32%	2%

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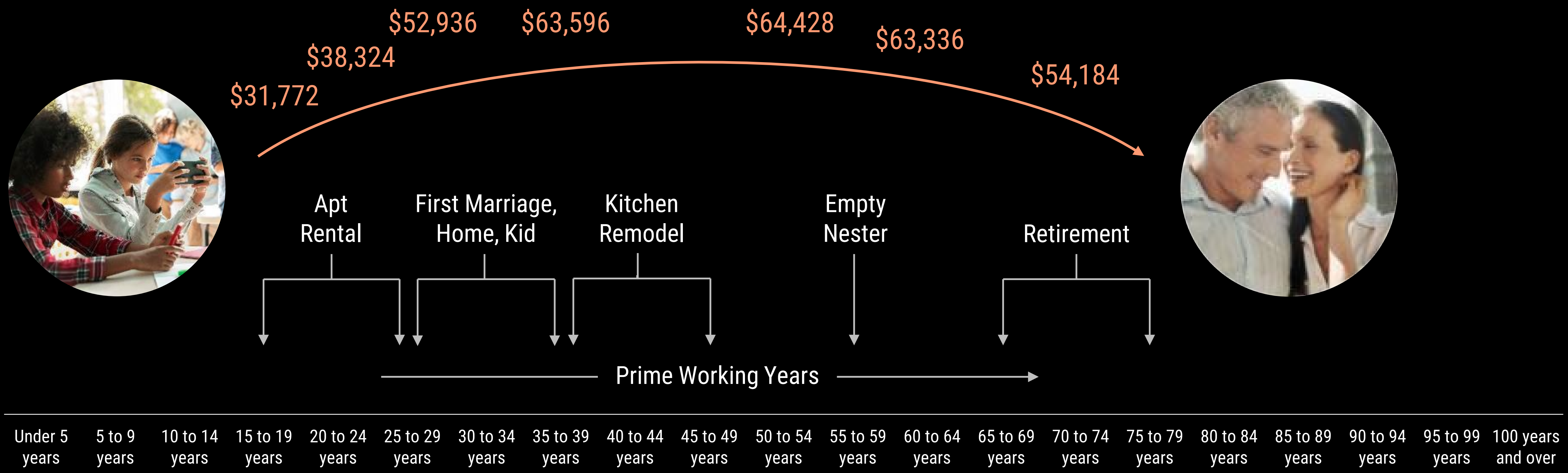
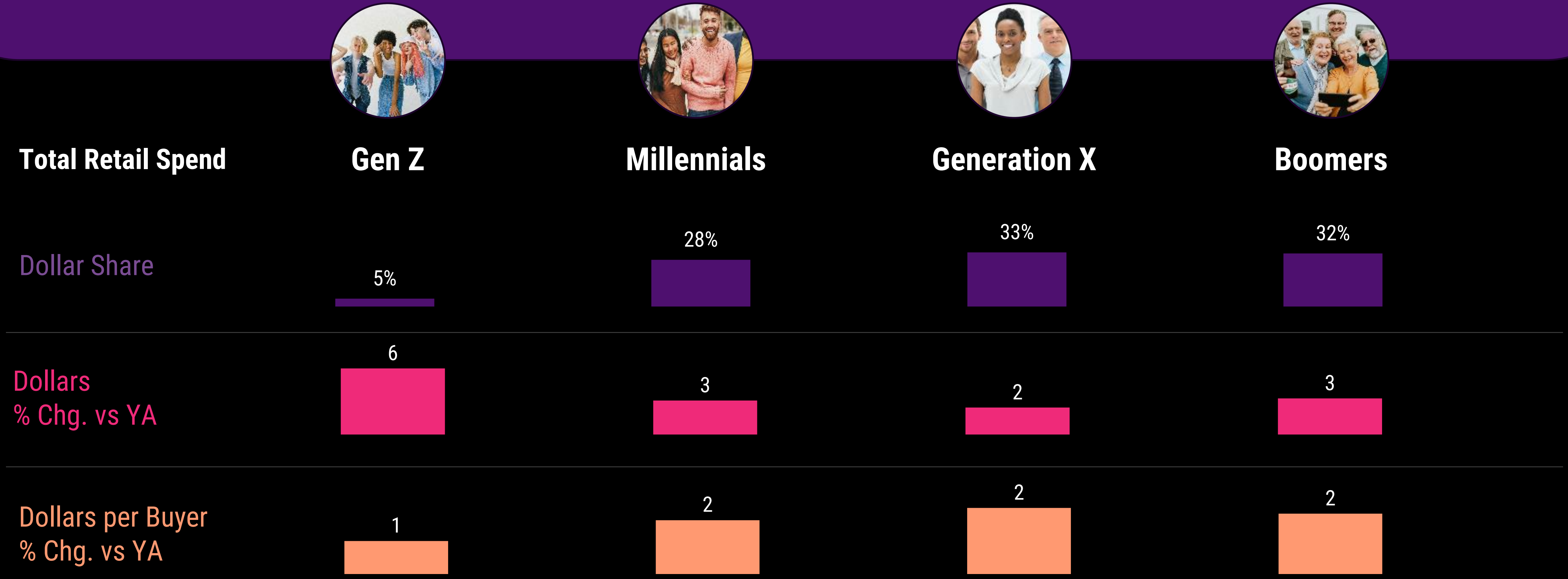
*Source: U.S. population share by generation 2023 | Statista: Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, % of spend controlled by generation, as determined by head of householder age, *Gen Z retail sales is representative of 19-28 years olds*

Key life moments are similar as we move from one life stage to another, and spending is fueled by the prime earning years



Source: U.S. Census Bureau - Median Earnings by Age in the United States // Forbes Advisor

Growth across all generations, Gen Z slower per buyer growth



Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, % of spend controlled by generation, as determined by head of householder age, Gen Z retail sales is representative of 19-28 years olds

Gen Z and Millennials are allocating more of their spend to food & beverage

Dollar Share of Wallet Change by Consumer Cohort

Consumer Cohort	Retail Food & Beverage	Restaurants Large Chain Restaurants	Retail Non-Food with Tobacco	General Merchandise
All Households	0.3	-0.1	0.1	-0.3
Gen Z	0.8	0.0	-0.1	-0.7
Millennials	0.5	0.3	0.1	-0.9
Gen X	0.1	-0.1	-0.1	0.1
Boomers	0.2	-0.4	0.1	0.0

Retail Non-Food includes CPG consumables in health, home, kitchen, mass beauty, pet care, and tobacco, Gen Merch includes apparel, accessories, footwear, technology, prestige beauty, home décor/textiles, furniture, home improvement, appliances, juvenile, toys, sports equipment, video games, Restaurants represents large restaurants chains only, Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, Ppt Chg. vs. YA, Gen Z retail sales is representative of 19 -28 years olds

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Generation Overview: Buying more than just products

Gen Z
1997–2012
Age 13-28

Millennials
1981–1996
Age 29-44

Gen X
1965–1980
Age 45-60

Boomers
1946–1964
Age 61-79

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers
Environment	• Pandemic-era adolescence • Rising cost of living • Climate and social activism	• Great recession influence • Parenting and career-driven • Social media beginnings	• Dual caregiving roles • Financial pressures and planning • Pre-digital childhood	• Post-war prosperity childhood • Legacy mindset • Retirement or near-retirement
Priorities	• Ethical consumption • Trend-forward, sharable • Wellness as self-expression	• Convenience and flexibility • Transparency and values • Sustainable wellness routines	• Efficiency and convenience • Value and loyalty • Health as fuel for life	• Familiarity and simplicity • Meaningful family moments • Wellness for independence
Spending[1]	Buying into **Identity** *Aesthetic, media, and self-expression*	Buying into **Lifestyle** *Family, tech, and experiences*	Buying into **Functionality** *Appearance, auto, and practicality*	Buying into **Comfort** *Home, pets, and health*

1. *Industries where each generational over-indexes in their spending, Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, Gen Z retail sales is representative of 19 -28 years olds*

Younger Americans are facing a mix of economic, social, and psychological challenges

Unemployment/ Job Market

As of March 2025, 13% of 16- to 19-year-olds were unemployed, and 8% of 20- to 24-year-olds – double the total unemployment rate of 4%.[1] Recent college grads are also more impacted.

Rising Debt/ Delinquency

All age groups continue to see a rise in overall debt – including credit card debt. More younger consumers (18-29) have transitioned into serious credit card delinquency.[2]

High Cost of Living

As of May 2025, the consumer price index remained up 26% compared to 2019, with 30% or more growth on essentials, like shelter and food.[3]

Delayed Milestones

The median age of first-time homebuyers hit 38 last year, up from 35 in 2023 and almost a decade older than in 1980s, when the typical homebuyer was just 29.[4]

Mental Health Crisis

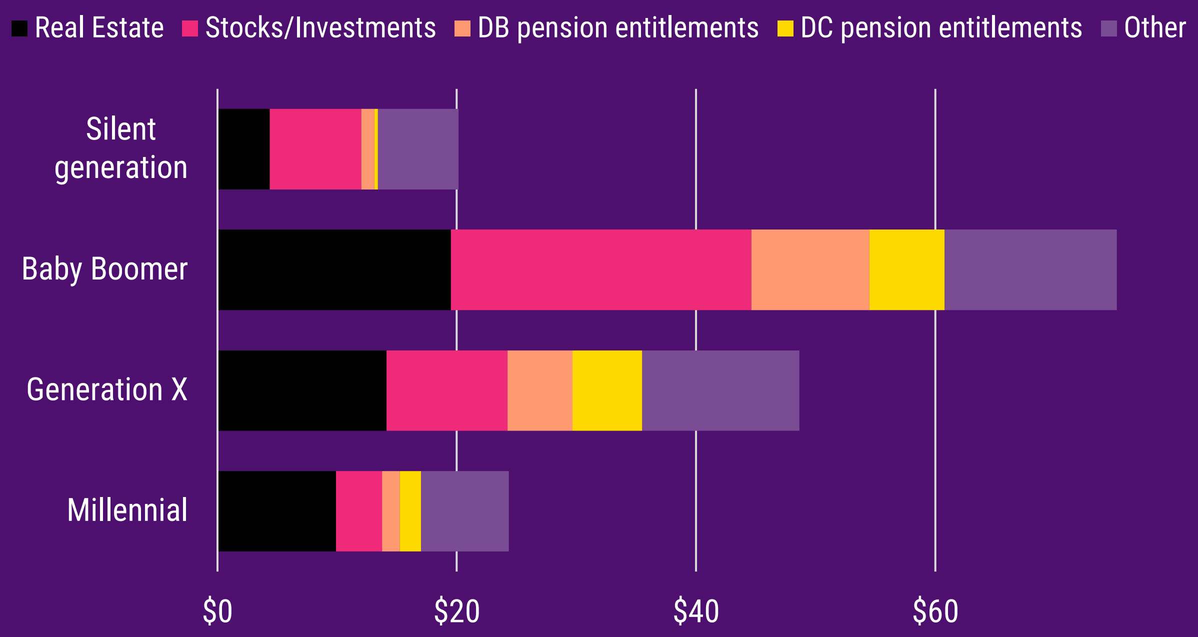
As of 2022, 23% of adults had a mental illness, reaching up to 36% among young adults aged 18 to 25 years old.[5]

Source: 1. Federal Reserve Economic Data, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2. New York Fed Consumer Credit Panel/Equifax, 3. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 4. National Association of Realtors, 5. National Institute of Mental Health

Baby boomers have the greatest net worth

Almost two-thirds of Baby Boomers’ net worth comes from stocks, real estate and pensions. The transfer of this wealth to their heirs will make Millennials the wealthiest generation in history.

Value of Assets by Generation[1] ($T)



The Great Wealth Transfer[2]

$124T Boomers and their parents will pass down over $124T to their heirs **by 2048**[2].

Of that $124 trillion, $54 trillion is expected to first be passed through inter-spousal transfers, of which over 95% will go to women[2].

Could lead to:

- **Changes to the job market**
- **Elevated consumer spending**
- **Increased investment in the stock market**

Source: [1]Federal Reserve, distribution of wealth, as of Q1 2025
[2]Cerulli and Associates analysis
**Assumption that probate laws stay the same*

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What makes Gen Alpha different

They are the second “digitally-native” generation, which is going to make them more aware and empowered.

Digitally forward	Privacy savvy	Most diverse	Influential	Socially conscious	Still emerging
36.2M Gen Alphas are active internet users, exceeding teens by 11.6M[1]	**Online safety** protections and digital literacy are **trending up**[2]	The most diverse generation - **52% of Gen Alpha identify as non-white**[3]	**56%** of parents say **Gen Alpha kids watch online shopping content** for new ideas[4]	**46%** of Gen Alpha parents report **discussing mental health with kids**[4]	**Gen Alphas are 0-12**; connecting with parents is important

Sources: 1. E-marketer, 2024 forecast, internet usage by generation; 3. U.S. Census, 2023; 4. Morning Consult, Growing Up Alpha, 2024; 2. Washington Post, Cellphone Bans Spread in Schools, August 2024

The (early) economic impact of Gen Alpha

2.1B	The number of Gen Alphas in the world today, the largest global generation ever
$1T	Gen Alpha's spending impact was already estimated to be 1.5% of the global consumer economy in 2024
$5.4T	Gen Alpha's expected global economic footprint by 2029, as its oldest members enter adulthood

At age 15, Gen Alpha member and online influencer Salish Matter just launched skincare brand **Sincerely Yours** with her dad at Sephora. The launch drew 87K fans to an in-person event in NJ. As the first algorithmically native generation, members of Gen Alpha are expected to be sophisticated and also highly entrepreneurial creator/consumers.

Sources: UN Population Prospectus via OurWorldinData.org | McCrindle Gen-Alpha Economic Projections, 2025 | Fashionista, Sephora Targets Teen Skin-Care Shoppers With New Brand Sincerely Yours, September 2025.

What makes Gen Z different

They are the first “digitally-native” generation, and have reversed some social trends from Millennials and Gen X.

Highly educated	Social issue awareness	Single for longer	Values flexibility	Discerning	Love to travel
33% of Gen Z have a bachelor’s degree, up from 25% for their Gen X parents[1]	Gen Z develops informed opinions on **global social issues** earlier than previous generations[2]	**Gen Z will wait three years longer to marry** than their parents[3]	Gen Z is used to flexibility and seeks balance across work and life[4]	**Gen Z are financially pragmatic,** and value research to make informed decisions[2]	**This generation values experiences,** travel, and unique cultural activities[5]

Sources: 1. Educational attainment: CPS Basic Monthly Sample, June 2024 | 2. Annie E. Casey, Gen Z Characteristics: Who They Are & What Defines Gen Z, Social Issues that Matter to Gen Z, 2024 | 3. Age of Marriage: U.S. Census | 4. The Stanford Report, Gen Z, Explained: The Art of Living in a Digital Age 2024 | 5. GWI, 12 characteristics of Gen Z in 2025, 2024

Gen Z is buying into identity through media, self-expression, and aesthetic

Priorities

- Ethical consumption
- Trend-forward, sharable
- Wellness as self-expression

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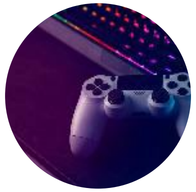

01 Video Games


02 Juvenile


03 Beauty


04 Foodservice


05 Apparel


06 Accessories


07 Footwear


08 Technology


09 Furniture


10 Automotive

Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, Based on Higher Index = Higher Spending from that generation vs. the average HH. Gen Z retail sales is representative of 19 -28 years olds

What makes Millennials different

Millennials are adaptive, resilient, and digital-forward, having come of age during the Great Recession.

Tech confidence

46% say they're comfortable using new tech tools -- more than Gen Z (42%)[1]

Avid savers

70% say they'd prefer to save up and wait to buy, rather than hitting "buy now"[2]

Prefer online

80% make most purchases digitally, with 56% doing it via mobile[2]

Socially influenced

61% of Millennials place their trust in influencers when it comes to product recommendations[1]

Health conscious

Millennials are more interested in healthy food & nutrition than any other generation[1]

Selective

Over a quarter of Millennials want **brands to feel exclusive**[1]

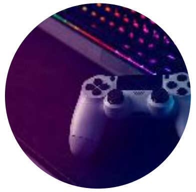
Sources: 1. GWI, Report: 12 millennial characteristics to know in 2025, (2024); 2. Camphouse, Report: Millennials Trends 2025: Shaping the Future of a Generation (2024)

Millennials are buying into lifestyle focusing on family, tech, and experiences

Priorities

- Convenience and flexibility
- Transparency and values
- Sustainable wellness routines

Top Index


01 Video Games


02 Juvenile


03 Toys


04 Team Sports


05 Footwear


06 Furniture


07 Beauty


08 Apparel

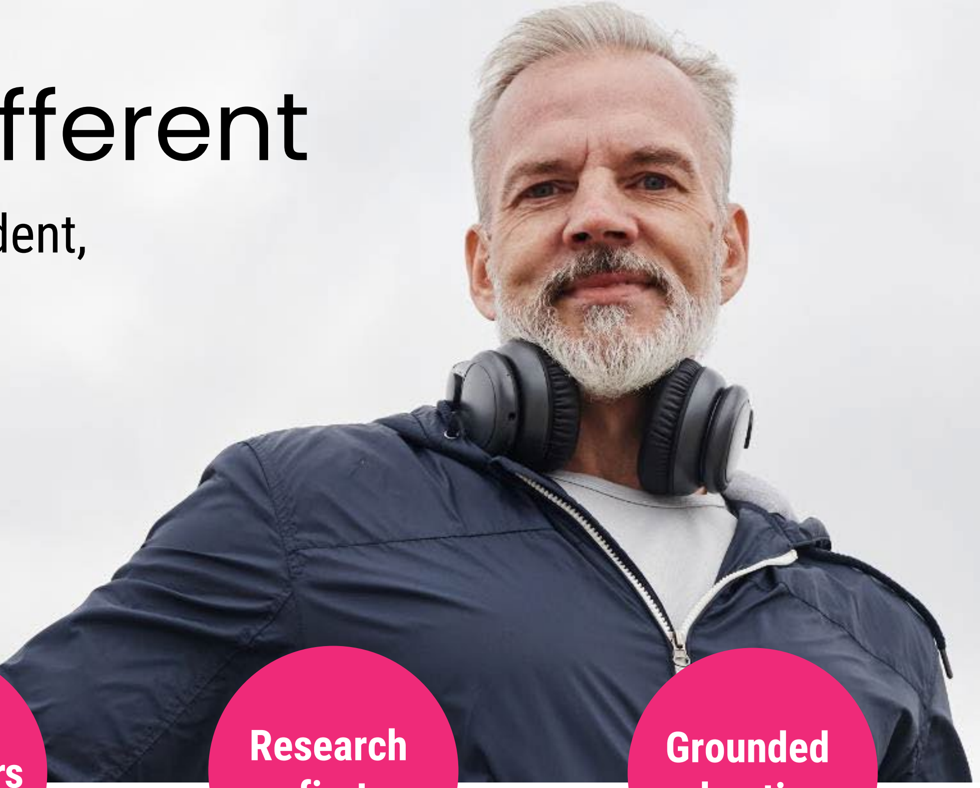

09 Technology


10 Accessories

Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, Based on Higher Index = Higher Spending from that generation vs. the average HH

What makes Gen X different

Gen X has earned a reputation for being independent, pragmatic, and often underestimated.



High earning	Financially stressed	Self-starters	Research first	Grounded skeptics	Loyal
Gen X have hit peak earning years, and now own more property than Boomers[2]	**62% of Gen X workers are still recovering** from the pandemic financially[1]	**55% of startup founders are Gen Xers** — the highest generational percentage	**55% of Gen Xers research products** before buying, more than younger shoppers[2]	**Gen X prioritizes price and practicality** over flashy trends or influencers[3]	**Over half say they'd rather pay more for a brand they know** than risk a cheaper product[2]

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Sources: 1. Transamerica Institute, Report: The Multigenerational Workforce: Life, Work, & Retirement, 2024; 2. GWI, Report: 8 characteristics of Gen X in 2025, 2024; 3. MediaCulture, Report: Values and Beliefs: What Drives Gen X Decision-Making, 2024

Gen X is buying into functionality through appearance, auto, and practicality

Priorities

- Efficiency and convenience
- Value and loyalty
- Health as fuel for life

Top Index

01 Automotive

02 Pet Care

03 Beauty

04 Sports Equipment

05 Accessories

06 Apparel

07 Footwear

08 Foodservice

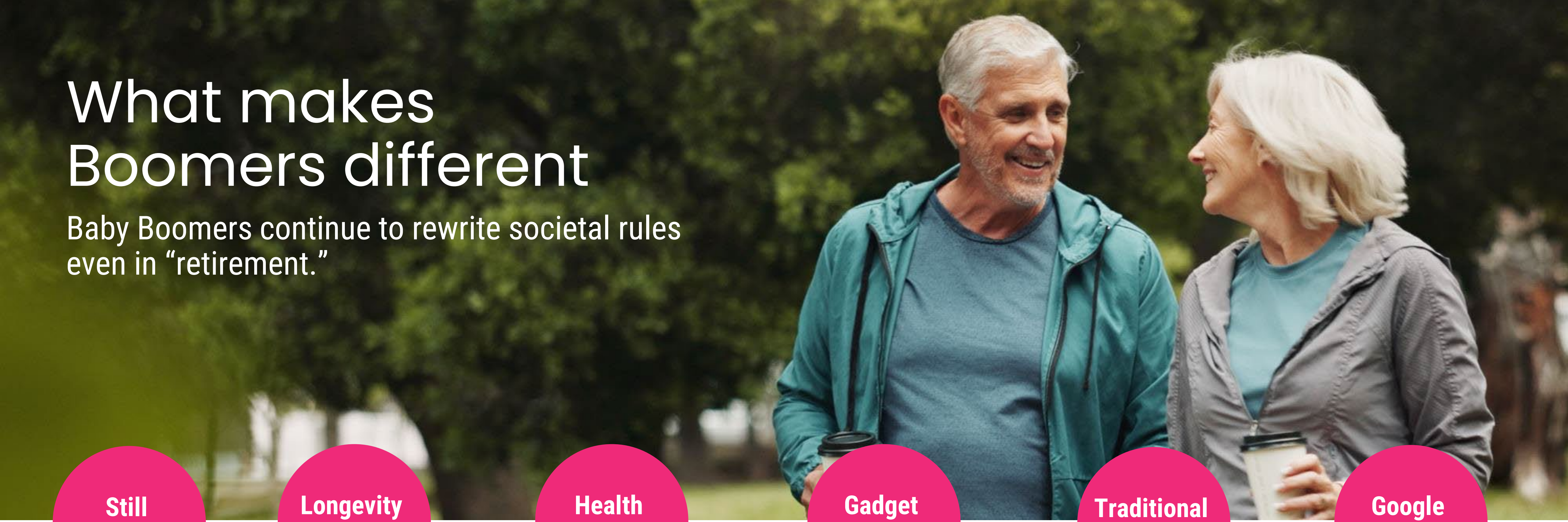
09 Technology

10 Home Decor

Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, Based on Higher Index = Higher Spending from that generation vs. the average HH

What makes Boomers different

Baby Boomers continue to rewrite societal rules even in “retirement.”



Still working

56% of Boomers say they expect to work past 70, or not retire at all[1]

Longevity focused

When asked why, 78% say they want to **keep working for “healthy aging”**[1]

Health investers

Baby Boomers are willing to **buy products as investments in their health**[2]

Gadget lovers

Boomers own **more smart TVs and other tech** than younger generations[2]

Traditional discovery

Boomers are 39% more likely to discover a product through TV than average consumers[2]

Google rules

94% of boomers use Google for brand-name searches, not social search[3]

Sources: 1. Transamerica Institute, Report: The Multigenerational Workforce: Life, Work, & Retirement, 2024: 2. GWI, Report: Baby boomers’ spending habits in 2025, 2024;. 3. Forbes, Report: Is Social Media The New Google? Gen Z Turn To Google 25% Less Than Gen X When Searching, 2024.

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Boomers are buying into comfort via homes, pets, and health

Priorities

- Familiarity and simplicity
- Meaningful moments
- Wellness for independence

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Top Index


01 Home Improvement


02 Home Textiles


03 Non-Food Consumables


04 Pet Care


05 Total Appliances


06 Office Supplies


07 Housewares


08 CPG Food & Beverage


09 Home Decor


10 Sports Equipment

Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, Based on Higher Index = Higher Spending from that generation vs. the average HH, Non-Food Consumables excludes Tobacco

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The intersection of life stage and generation is influencing channel choice

Spending Index vs. the average household | Less Spending | More Spending

Channel		Channel Share All Households	Channel Share Index			
			Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers
Food-centric	Grocery	19%				
	Quick Service Restaurants*	11%				
	Dining (Casual, Midscale, Fine)*	2%				
Value	Mass	17%				
	Club	8%				
General Merch-focused	Specialty	13%				
	Off-Price	2%				
	Department	2%				
	Pure Play eCommerce	14%				
Small Format	Convenience	7%				
	Dollar	3%				
	Drug	2%				

Channel Choice **Themes**

Gen Z seeks **value** and **trend-forward** channels that fit their **flexible** but **limited budget** lifestyles

Millennials prioritize **convenience** and **value,** driven by their **time-constrained and digital** lives

Gen X balances **familiarity** with **practicality** in channel choices

Boomers gravitate toward **established shopping habits,** often enabled by their greater **financial stability**

**Large chains only, Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, Channel Share of Total Market, Total Retail $ Spend, Higher Index = Higher Spending from that generation vs. the average HH, Gen Z retail sales is representative of 19 -28 years olds*

All generations gravitate toward pure play ecommerce and club

Spending Index vs. the average household | Less Spending | More Spending

Channel		Channel Share All Households	Channel Share Change vs. Year Ago			
			Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers
Food-centric	Grocery	19%				
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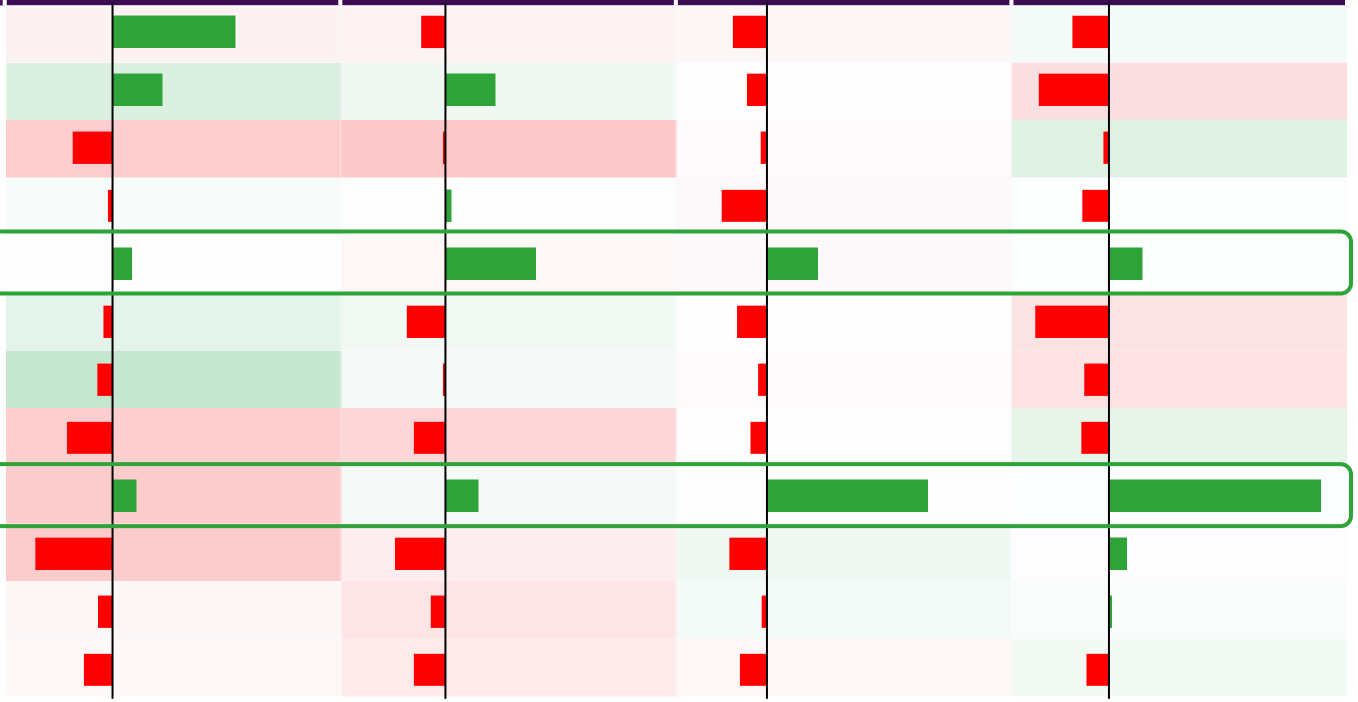
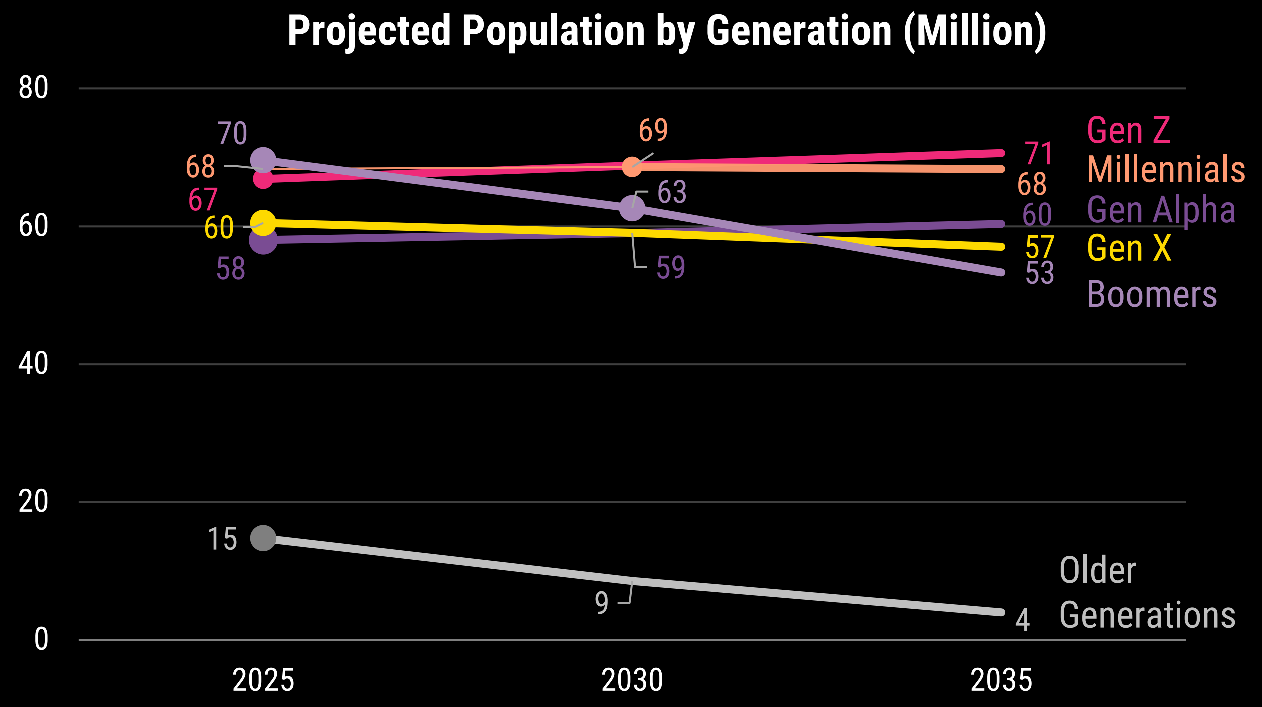


*Large chains only, Source: Circana Complete Consumer, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, Channel Share of Total Market, Total Retail $ Spend, Higher Index = Higher Spending from that generation vs. the average HH, Gen Z retail sales is representative of 19 -28 years olds

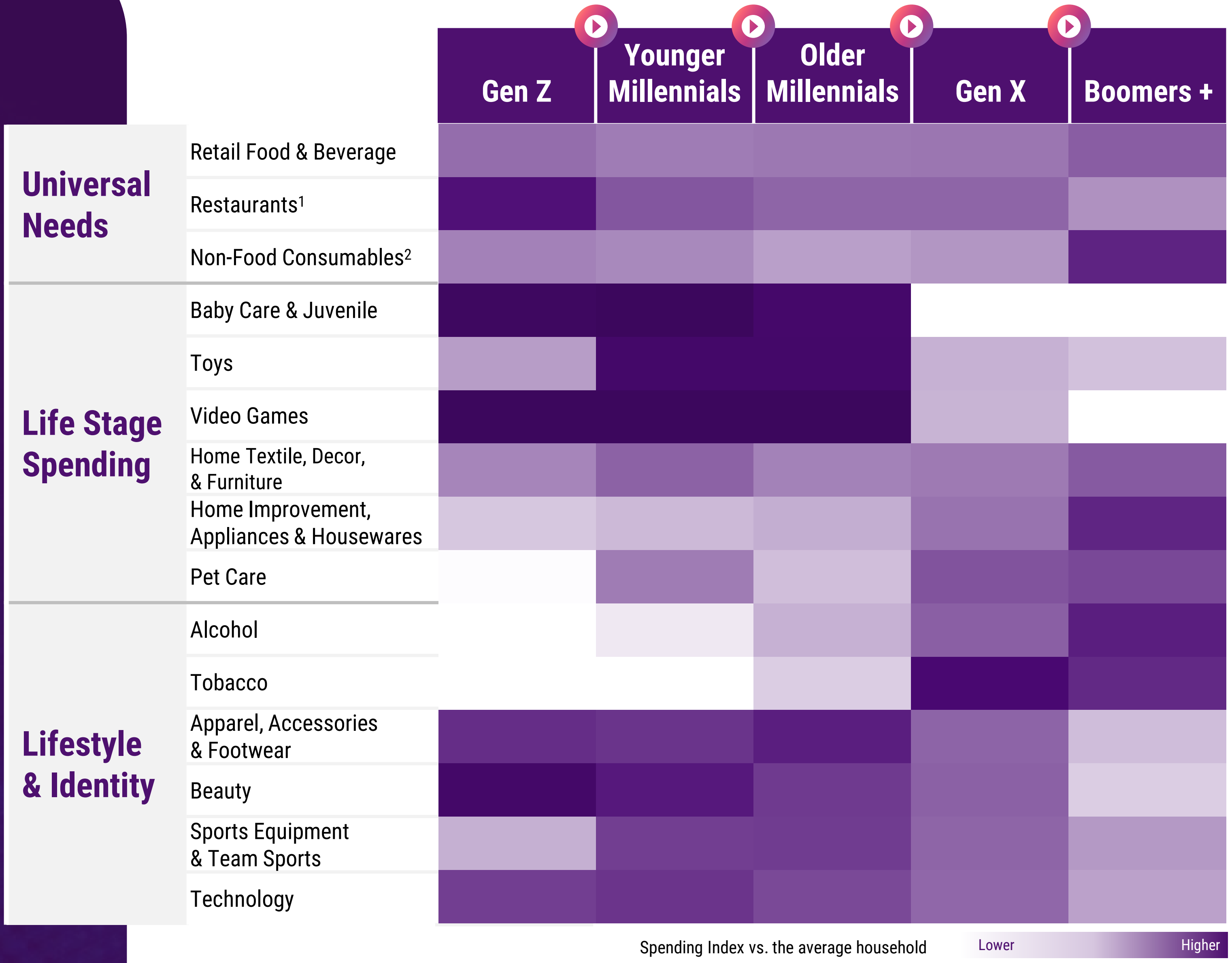
As we move forward, Gen Z and Millennials will dominate population by 2030

A profound shift in consumer influence is already underway



Source: The U.S. Census Department: Projected Population by Five-Year Age Group and Sex, 2022–2100. Retrieved from: https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2023/demo/popproj/2023-summary-tables.html.
NOTE: Generational age breaks slightly adjusted (+/- 1 yr) to fit the 5-year framework. Today's ages = 2024.

Understanding purchasing skews influenced by life stage and generation distinctiveness' can help inform strategies for the Aging Arc



Note: 1. Restaurants includes large restaurant chains only, 2. Non-Food Consumables excludes baby care and tobacco Source: Circana Complete Consumer Receipt Panel, Dollar Sales Indexes, Latest 52 Weeks Ending August 10, 2025, Gen Z retail sales is representative of 19 -28 years olds

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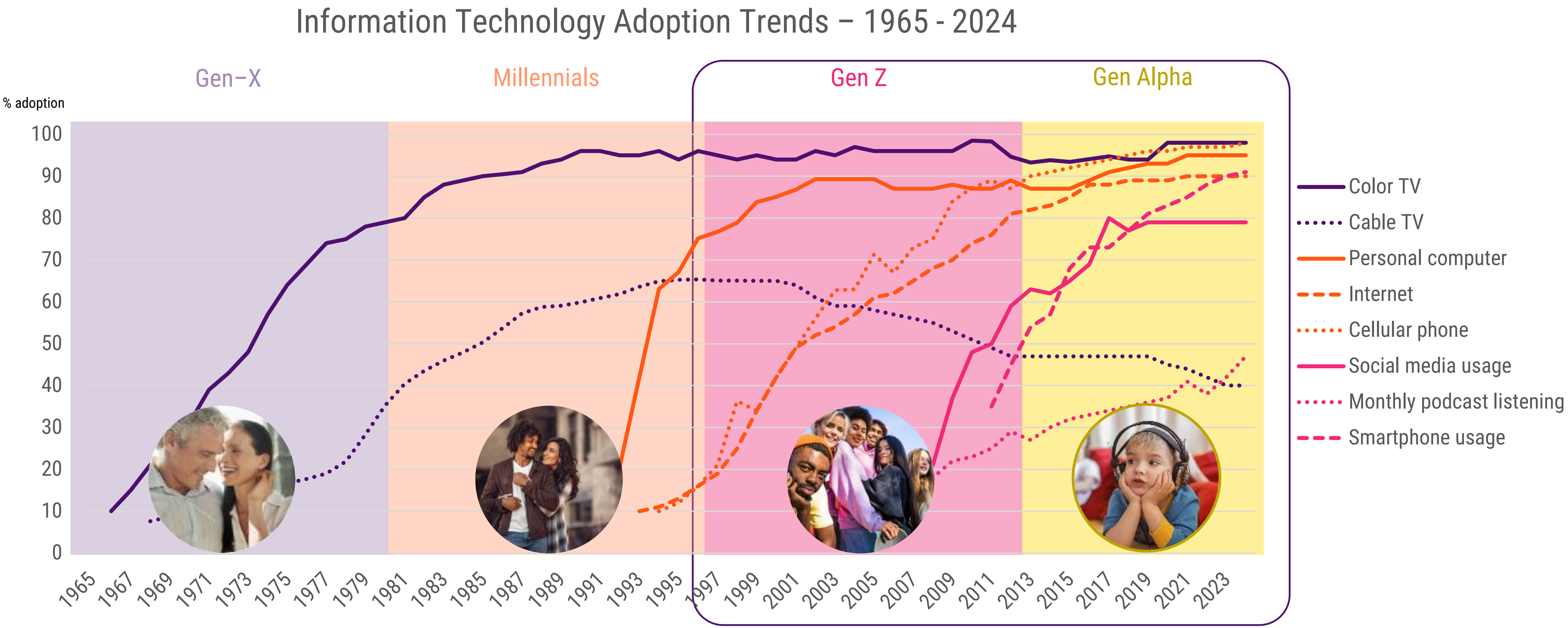
Younger generations will leverage more technology to inform and direct decisions



Source: The U.S. Census - ACS Survey, The Pew Research Center, Our World in Data, Edison Research

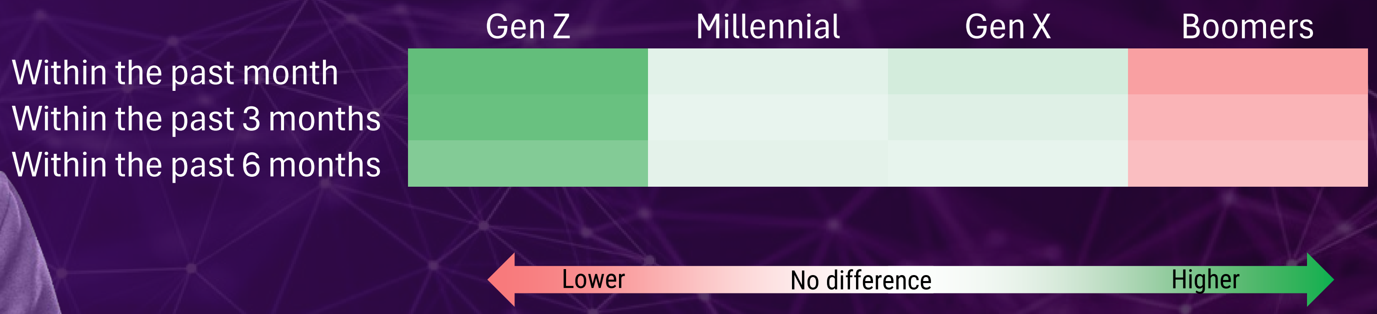
Younger consumer decisions will be influenced by social media more so than other generations

54%

of consumers **made a purchase** of something because of seeing it on **social media** within the last six months - higher among younger consumers (63% of Gen Z)

Have you ever bought something after seeing it on a social media platform? If so, when is the last time you recall purchasing a product you saw featured on social media?

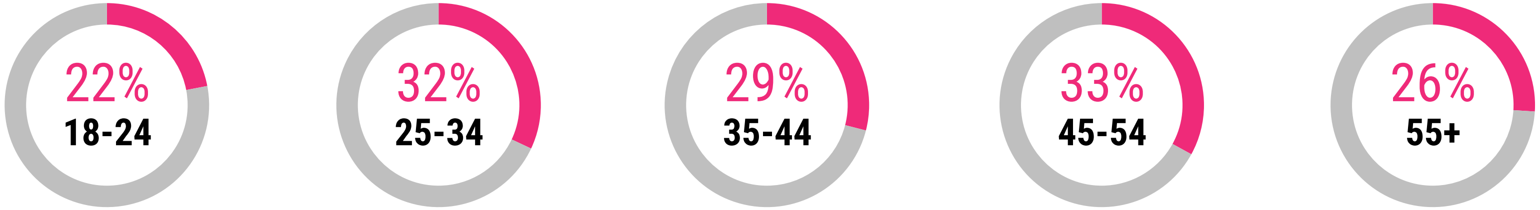
Cumulative Percentages: Generation Index vs. Total



Source: Circana Receipt Panel Survey 9/22/2025 - 9/29/2025

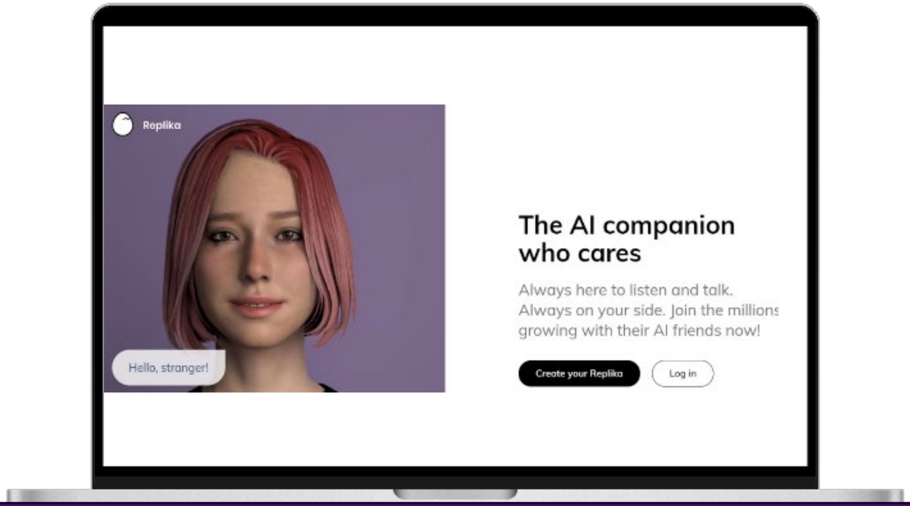
Loyalty programs will also have clout with consumers

Influence of Loyalty Programs



Source: Circana Beauty Consumer Study, US OMNIBUS MARCH 2025, When considering a beauty product purchase (i.e., makeup, skincare, fragrance, hair care), what impacts which retailer you buy it from?

AI agents will navigate choices for consumers going forward



AI Wearables:
An AI Friend on Your Body

AI Apps:
AI Friend to Your Health

AI Bots:
AI Friend Who Cares

Source: Nutrition AI Chatbot: Innovate Health Services with AI Solutions; Home; Chatbot for Dietitian/Nutritionist - Personalized Diet

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By 2030, Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X will drive retail sales growth; Boomers will have the largest share in the U.S.

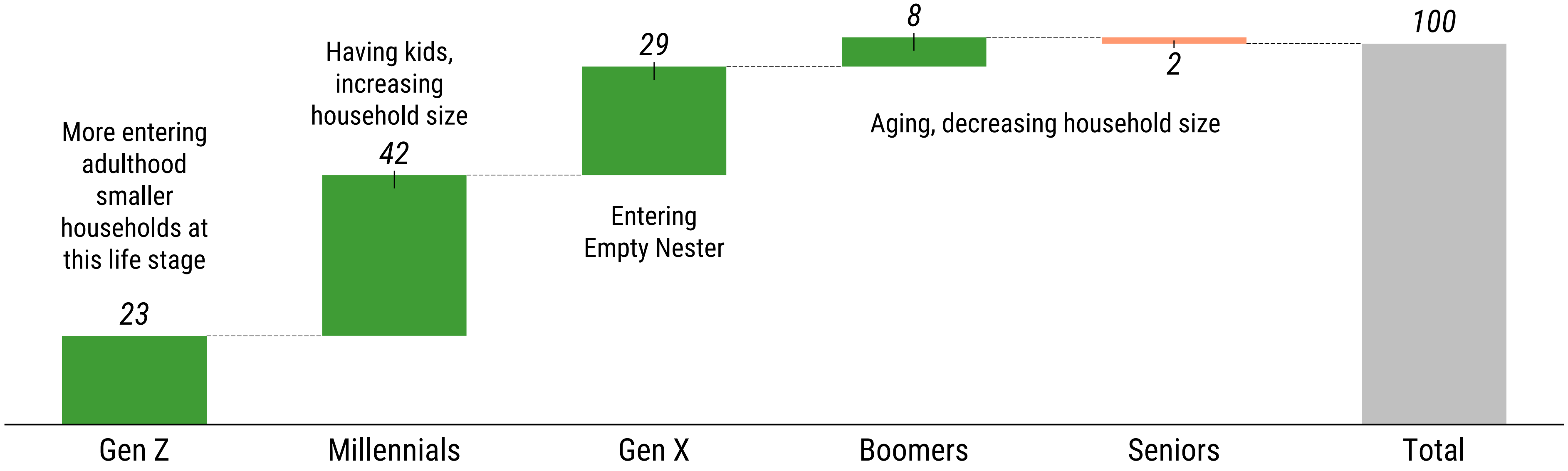
Gen Z and Millennials will account for

60%+

of retail sales growth, and Boomers will have the largest share of spend over the next 5 years

Contribution to Total US Retail Sales Growth

By Head of Household Generation 2025-2030



% of spend		Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers	Seniors
	2025	5%	28%	33%	32%	2%
	2030	9%	28%	30%	31%	2%

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Source: Circana Complete Consumer, 52 weeks ending 8/10/25.

Given the generational shifts, there are opportunities for cross-generation connections

Mobile-First Design

All generations are mobile-centric

AI & Personalization

Tailor experiences and messaging that align with each generation's values, needs, and life stage

Community Building

Foster brand communities

Omnichannel Strategy

Seamless digital and physical experiences

There are additional opportunities specific for each generation along the Aging Arc

GEN ALPHA

Buying into **Belonging**

Gen Alpha desires to feel connected and seen. They're drawn to products that offer immersive and creative spaces where friend and family connections can grow.

- Appeal to parents and kids with family-centric messaging
- Virtual worlds and gamified brand experiences
- Combine education with entertainment
- Be visible on kid-friendly channels (e.g., Roblox, YouTube Kids, etc.)

GEN Z

Buying into **Identity**

Gen Z shops to express who they are. They seek brands that reflect their values, offer authentic experiences, and connect through digital-first, community-driven channels.

- Interest-based community engagement
- Short-form video to drive discovery and engagement
- Authentic micro-influencer partnerships
- Personalized, value-driven offerings

MILLENNIALS

Buying into **Lifestyle**

Millennials prioritize products that align with their lifestyle and values. They respond to storytelling, convenience, and omnichannel experiences that support wellness, family, and purpose.

- Highlight purpose and impact
- Offer timing-saving digital and in-store experiences
- Share transparency (sourcing, sustainability)
- Personalize offers and loyalty rewards
- Promote family and home solutions

GEN X

Buying into **Functionality**

Gen X values practicality, reliability, and long-term value. They respond to clear benefits, authentic messaging, and seamless shopping across digital and traditional channels.

- Offer trusted brands with clear value propositions
- Emphasize practicality, reliability, and quality
- Highlight multi-generational household solutions
- Focus on home improvement and downsizing

BOOMERS

Buying into **Comfort**

Boomers seek comfort, familiarity, and ease. They favor trusted solutions, clear communication, and products that simplify life, especially in home and personal care.

- Ensure value-driven offerings with clear pricing and deals
- Highlight meaningful family and legacy moments
- Engage with TV, Facebook, and long-form video and content
- Deliver comfort and longevity

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Winning with key consumer cohorts

An integrated approach to engage and activate with consumers.

1 MEASURE

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- **Understand Cohort & Competition**
- **Identify Brand Strengths & Weaknesses**

CIRCANA ASSETS

- Future of Aging
- MULO+ and EPOS
- Receipt/Scan Panel
- Shopper Sights
- National Eating Trends
- CREST
- Survey

2 ACCELERATE

Improve Reach & Physical Availability	**Improve Distinctiveness & Mental Availability**
Drive Incremental Sales Through Advertising	**Innovate to Strengthen Relevancy**

- Market Structure
- Assortment & Price/Promo Analytics
- Concept Testing (new ideas, messaging) & Forecasting
- Audiences
- Marketing Mix & In-Flight Optimization

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