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## Multi-Generational Marketing For Non-profits

by George Williams, Communications Specialist, PlannedLegacy

### **The G.I. Generation** (born 1901-24)

Smart marketers treat this age group as having a badge of distinction and honor, and do not play to the "age infirmities" that come with elderhood. Respecting this generation because they overcame daunting odds to achieve their successes gives this group "permission" to spend their money. Face-to-face or written communication using formal language is received best.

**Key Communication Methods:** Face-to-Face Conversation, Children, Professional Advisors, Formal Social Events, Recognition and Tribute Events

### **The Silent Generation** (born 1925-1942)

The Silent Generation wants their information presented to them in summary form and feel as a group no compelling need to be part of the information age, however, members of this generation who are "cybercitizens" embrace computer technology and the Internet and seek out novel experiences and opportunities for personal creativity... **Younger members of the Silent Generation form a portion of the fastest growing group of Internet users.**

Tempered by war and tough times, a command and control approach works well with this generation. Their core values are what we think of today as traditional values -- discipline, self-denial, hard work, obedience to authority, conformity, commitment, responsibility, celebration of victory, financial and social conservatism. Distinction and honor are key marketing factors.

**Key Communication Methods:** Face-to-Face Conversation, Formal Social Events, Recognition and Tribute Events, Professional Advisors, Direct mail, Telephone, Internet

**The Baby Boomers** (born 1943-60) tend to seek the advice of someone who already has the knowledge they need, or someone who has participated in the program they are considering. Word-of-mouth communications from trusted advisors and friends can sell this generation on a program, thus, social gatherings and professional seminars can be used to create effective word-of-mouth advertising. **Older Boomers form a portion of the largest growing group of Internet users...** Boomers want to share their perceptions of "good" with others... They like to view themselves as nonconformists and marketing

approaches to this group should cater to their need to rebel and forge their own path.

**Key Communication Methods:** Social and Recognition Events, Professional Advisors, Direct Mail, Face-to-Face Conversation, Internet, E-Mail

**Generation "X"** (born 1961-81) could be dubbed the "Why Me?" generation. They were born in the wake of the dominant Baby Boomers and have been pounded by tumultuous political and economic conditions. They are the shell-shocked products of changes that are ripping apart the fibers of society, the family and the workplace. Often denounced as "Slackers" by the popular media, they are actually a savvy generation, enthusiastically ready, willing and able to take on new challenges. Xers are reactive, yet introverted... Xers value access to information and love plenty of it. They need to be asked for their feedback and they enjoy having information shared with them on a regular basis. They like to be "kept in the loop." Organizations should share information of interest to Xers immediately and often, as this generation is still somewhat unsure of themselves.

**Key Communication Methods:** E-Mail, Internet, Multi-Media, Word-of-Mouth, Social Events, Peer Gatherings

**The Millennials** (born 1982-2000) have developed an amazing optimism and a conviction that the future will indeed be better for all. They are well grounded and wise for their age and they feel that preceding generations have made huge mistakes. They recognize problems in our world, and they want to correct perceived wrongs in society... (They) share many of the values and interests of their parents and they have a very optimistic outlook on life. Being team players, motivational messages that will be most successful with Millennials will be along the lines of: "You'll be working with other bright, creative people," or "You and your team can make this initiative a success."

One third of all Millennials are from a minority group and greater diversity in advertisements will be attractive to this generation. Popular clothing chains such as The Gap and Ralph Lauren have already benefited by embracing racial and ethnic diversity in their advertising.

**Key Communication Methods:** E-Mail, Voice-Mail, Internet, Multi-Media, Grandparents, Parents