



Social, Silver SURFERS

WHERE TO FIND *(and how to win!)*
MATURE CONSUMERS ONLINE

By Erin Read & Kimberly Hulett
Creating Results – Strategic Marketing

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Social, Silver Surfers: Where to find (and how to win!) Mature Consumers Online

By Erin Read and Kimberly Hulett

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INTRODUCTION

Some of the most powerful words in the English language are

Let me tell you a story ...

From bedtime stories to timeless plays, from ancient parables to modern myths, stories can divide or unite.

Stories can tear down an organization or a person, or they can build up a movement. We tell them to ourselves ("I WILL get this job!"), to loved ones ("I remember when") and often to anyone who will listen.

In marketing, there's nothing more powerful than a story.

Stories help marketers go beyond benefits and features and delve into feelings. They create an emotional connection that cuts through advertising clutter, breathing life and staying power into our brand messages.

The story of this national research initiative, **Social, Silver Surfers**, could be told in several ways.

- It's the story of a large and yet largely-invisible group of people (older adults), using digital tools to give themselves more choices and to stay in charge of their lives for as long as they possibly can.
- It's the story of sales and marketing pros in very traditional industries (senior services) trying to stay ahead of their targets with un-traditional digital tools.
- It's the story of modern communications specialists looking past stereotypes to meet prospects where they are while simultaneously trying to meet the expectations of the c-suite.

It's also the story of a research project that has included thousands of Gen Xers, Baby Boomers and Silent Generation members, and generated hundreds of insights over the last seven years.

This is the third edition of **Social, Silver Surfers**. First launched in 2010, this is an ongoing study of the evolving digital marketing preferences and online behaviors of people aged 40 or better.

With a name like Creating Results, our agency is mission-driven to find the right insights to get the right outcomes. While there have been resources documenting internet / social media use by age, that research does not provide the detailed insights our senior-focused clients need to improve their digital marketing results.

Therefore, unlike other studies, **Social Silver Surfers** not only focuses exclusively on older adults, it parses data by age, education levels, gender income, recent move and more.

These narrow market segmentations lead to deeper understanding of the segments of consumers our clients serve: older; wealthier; more educated people who are actively pursuing a higher quality of life; and, in some cases, the adult children who are helping them.

In this e-book you'll find not only new data but also some stories that aim to bring the numbers to life. Storytellers include mature marketing pros and mature consumers.

Again, with a name like Creating Results, our agency is always focused on applying learnings to improve outcomes. This e-book contains not just charts and data points, but dozens of marketing recommendations and tips that flow from the research. (Look for the red exclamation point and text.)

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION

After you turn some of these insights into action, what story will YOU tell?

WHO THIS BOOK IS FOR

- Marketing pros charged with getting bigger results from smaller budgets
- Professionals questioning whether the advice of social media “ninjas,” “gurus” and other self-styled experts holds true when educated, wealthier older adults are the targets

- Builders and developers struggling to keep up with the changing behaviors and preferences of homebuyers / mature movers
- CEOs and CFOs wondering about the potential ROI (return on investment) of digital marketing spend

TL;DR (Internet-speak for “Too Long; Didn’t Read”)

Pressed for time while being pressed for greater results?

Here are seven key findings from this latest study:

1. While older adults are increasingly connecting with the world through digital devices, a significant percentage of educated and affluent consumers are not.

Don't assume all people use the internet and social networks the way you, your colleagues or your children do. Going all digital with your marketing will make you invisible to 1/3 or more of your potential audience.

For more, see “[Waiting in the Wings.](#)”

2. Security and privacy fears are real. They keep older adults from taking the actions that marketers desire (like filling out forms or interacting with a brand on social).

Learn more in “[Simply IrResistible](#)” and in “[The Rise of the non-conFORMists.](#)”

3. If you only have time and money for marketing on one social platform, make it Facebook.

If you have a little more time, use that time to carefully choose additional platforms based on your ideal prospect. As the section on “[Top-of-Charts Social Networks \(Usage\)](#)” illustrates, subsegments of matures such as Long-Distance Caregivers can be found in some networks and not others.

Be sure to use content in ways that capitalize on each platform's strengths and ethos.

4. It's a sad-but-true story: only 7% of older adults actually want to engage with brands at all on social media; fewer than 1/3 say they subscribe to blogs.

That doesn't mean you should give up on either effort completely. Discover some of the indirect benefits of these marketing channels in "[Boo Hoo for Blogs](#)" and "[Is There Hope for a Happy Ending?](#)"

5. 54% of all **social, silver surfers** surveyed are going online via mobile devices much or all of the time. They appreciate mobile-friendly sites and tools for folks on the go, like maps linked to GPS.

Is YOUR website delivering a great user experience regardless of device and viewport? Read more in "[Mature and Mobile.](#)"

6. 40+ers judge websites (and your brand) on their utility. These older consumers typically see the internet as a tool, not entertainment. They're also growing increasingly frustrated by tools that don't do the job they need – websites that make them jump through hoops, that are hard to navigate, or which lack necessary content such as pricing or even contact information.

In "[Making Websites Just Right.](#)" you'll find dozens of action items to help you avoid pet peeves and deliver favorite features that will improve your digital ROI.

7. For nearly half of all matures who have moved in the last two years, the internet is the first place they turn when beginning their purchase journey. And they return to the web at a variety of points before buying and moving into their new home.

Yet many of the websites for age-qualified communities don't answer basic questions about pricing and product. And they're far too pushy with required forms, often pushing interested seniors (and those who are helping them in their move decision) away.

"[Actions Speak Louder Than Words](#)" details steps a 55+ housing developer or continuing care retirement community should take to captivate and capture prospects online.

While neither of the authors would ever read the last page of a book first, both Kimberly and Erin have been known to want to cut to the action scenes. If you feel the same sense of urgency, consider using our Online Assessment tools to find out how your organization is scoring, digitally speaking, with older adults.

The Online Assessment tools help you measure your website and social marketing program vs. the expectations and preferences defined by **social, silver surfers**. Find out if you're positioned for Social, Silver Success at www.CreatingResults.com/Social-Silver-Surfers#Tools.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the nearly 1,000 participants in this survey, helping us tell the story of how mature consumers relate to websites and social media.

To find these *social, silver surfers*, we were fortunate to rely on partners across the country, including:

- **HumanGood (formerly ABHOW and be.group)**
- **Acts Retirement-Life Communities** and the residents of Cokesbury Village and Normandy Farms Estates
- **E.L.D.E.R.** (Experiential Learning for Disability and Eldercare Resources)
- **Goodwin House**
- **Providence Performing Arts Center**
- **Roland Park Place**
- **Sage Senior Living**
- **Springpoint Senior Living**
- **Traditions of America**

A very special thank you to the Creating Results team for their energy, enthusiasm and support.

CONNECTING & SHARING

Marketing is not a profession where people go it alone.

Sharing insights and best practices, working together to advance and elevate the profession
...

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Connecting and collaborating are hallmarks of our calling.

If you feel this research has earned the description of “useful resource,” we hope you’ll become part of the story.

- Share what you learn on the social networks YOU use.
 - ✦ **Hashtag #SocialSilver** and please include attribution; we’ll promptly thank you!
- Share your thoughts and stories about digital marketing on the social networks we use.
 - ✦ **Blog:** www.MatureMarketingMatters.com
 - ✦ **Twitter:** www.twitter.com/creatingresults
 - ✦ **LinkedIn:** www.linkedin.com/company/creating-results
 - ✦ **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/CreatingResultsMarketing
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SETTING THE SCENE

WHO ARE THE SOCIAL, SILVER SURFERS?

Seniors. Elderly. Boomers. Pre-Boomers. Silver Foxes. Golden Agers. Pensioner. Active Adults. Matures.

All of these names have been used to describe older adults, the focus of our agency's marketing programs and the population surveyed for this initiative.

(Many of these labels have been roundly rejected, as well. "Silver Fox" – REALLY?)

For this e-book, Creating Results will try to sidestep the "what do you call them?" controversies and focus on the "who did we poll?"

Mature Consumers Segmented by Age and Generational Cohort

The only qualifications required for this survey were

- 1. the respondent must be an internet user, and**
- 2. the respondent must be 40 years old or older.**

The resulting data was segmented in various ways including by age band and by generational cohort.



Copyright ©2017 Creating Results, Inc. | Birth years defined by US Census for Baby Boom and Gen X, by Howe / Strauss for the Silent Generation.

Segmenting by both age and generational cohort offers a greater depth of understanding. It also allows us to compare data to the 2010 and 2013 editions and note trends.

Affluent, Accomplished and Active

Creating Results has the privilege of working with some of the nation's leading senior living providers, along with top developers of new 55+ housing, travel destinations and wealth management companies.

For this reason, we are most interested in learning about the mature consumers who fit our clients' ideal customer profile: older, more affluent and more educated.

OLDER: 9% of all Americans are between the ages of 65 and 84. Because we only surveyed people over the age of 40, more than 46% of our respondents are aged 65-84. As we partnered with some of those senior living leaders to recruit participants, our segment of recent Movers is even older: 61% of those polled who had moved within the previous two years are between 65 and 84.

MORE AFFLUENT: While only 5% of Americans over the age of 40 have annual household incomes of \$151K-\$200K, more than 10% of *social, silver surfers* do.

MORE EDUCATED: while 9% of Americans aged 35+ have a Masters degree, more than 32% of *social, silver surfers* do.

Please see the methodology section to learn more about the demographics of those surveyed.

A Rose by Any Other Name

You won't meet any Silver Foxes in this book.

You will see the accepted generational cohort labels noted above: Gen X, Baby Boomer, Silent Generation and Greatest Generation.

We'll also use the label "mature consumer." Like most generational marketing pros, Creating Results applies this to anyone 40+.

SETTING THE SCENE

We'll most frequently say "older adults" – but typically that label is reserved for internet users who are over the age of 55. When we say "seniors," we are typically referring to *surfers* who are 65+.

A word of caution, though. As the famous storyteller F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote:

**"Begin with an individual, and before you know it you have created a type;
begin with a type, and you find you have created – nothing."**

We encourage you to look beyond the types and stereotypes, beyond the labels as you apply these digital marketing insights to better connect with your individual prospects and customers. Our blog, www.MatureMarketingMatters.com, has several posts exploring what's in a (generational marketing) name. Search for "labels" and you'll see a few of the related discussions.

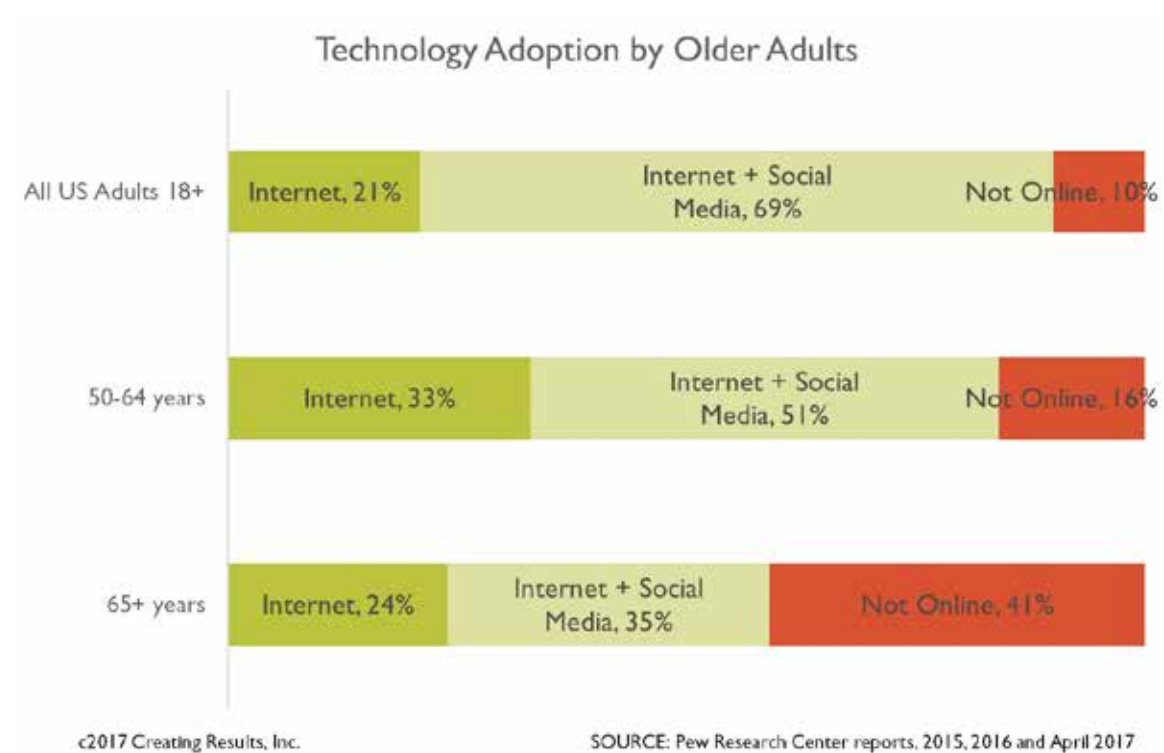
WAITING IN THE WINGS

WHO IS ONLINE, AND WHO ISN'T

When Creating Results began studying digital marketing to older adults, 24% of all American adults did not use the internet at all. While the age of the online population was rising in 2010, seniors still made up the bulk of the “un-wired.”

Now all but 10%-13% of Americans use the internet.

However, seniors are still the most likely group to say they never go online, with about 41% of those over the age of 65 remaining waiting in the wings offstage, to put it in theater terms.



As the Pew Research Center's Monica Anderson and Andrew Perrin wrote in 2016, other demographic variables influence internet adoption. Household income, educational attainment and geography play a part – rural Americans are about 2x as likely as urban Americans to never use the internet. Per the US Census, the median age for a rural citizen is 51 years old, vs. 45 years for someone who dwells in an urban area.

Social media use by seniors has significantly risen since Creating Results first launched **Social, Silver Surfers**. In 2016, the Pew Research Center calculated social media use as 34% of all 65+ers and 51% of all internet-using 65+ers. Similar to internet use in general, use of social media is more likely if the older adult is more educated and more affluent.

We share these statistics because we feel it is important for organizations marketing to matures to remember the realities of their audiences.

- Yes, digital marketing is more important than ever.
- Yes, being active online will now help your brand reach more older adults than ever.
- No, digital marketing won't reach them all. It's important to know your specific target and to include comprehensive (offline) marketing techniques in your plan.

PART I: SOCIAL SURFERS

ONCE UPON A TIME ...

Once upon a time, some of the brightest marketers believed:

- That men and women who powered companies during their working years were incapable of powering up computers during their retirement
- That older adults could not, would not use the internet
- That shiny new social networks were only for “new” consumers

Sadly, too many still believe these fairy tales.

The reality is that in 2016, a majority of older adults were online. A minority of older internet users also were actively participating in social networks. Per the Pew Research Center,

- 84% of individuals between the ages of 50 and 65 use the internet
 - ✚ 51% of all 50-65 year old Americans use any online social network
- 59% of Americans ages 65+ use the internet
 - ✚ 35% of all seniors use any online social network

Social networking is increasingly popular. That said, activities such as using a search engine or email each day are more popular with people of all ages.

As the Pew Research Center reported in 2015,

“While [social network] usage among young adults started to level off as early as 2010, since then there has been a surge in usership among those 65 and older. In 2005, 2% of seniors used social media, compared with 35% today.”

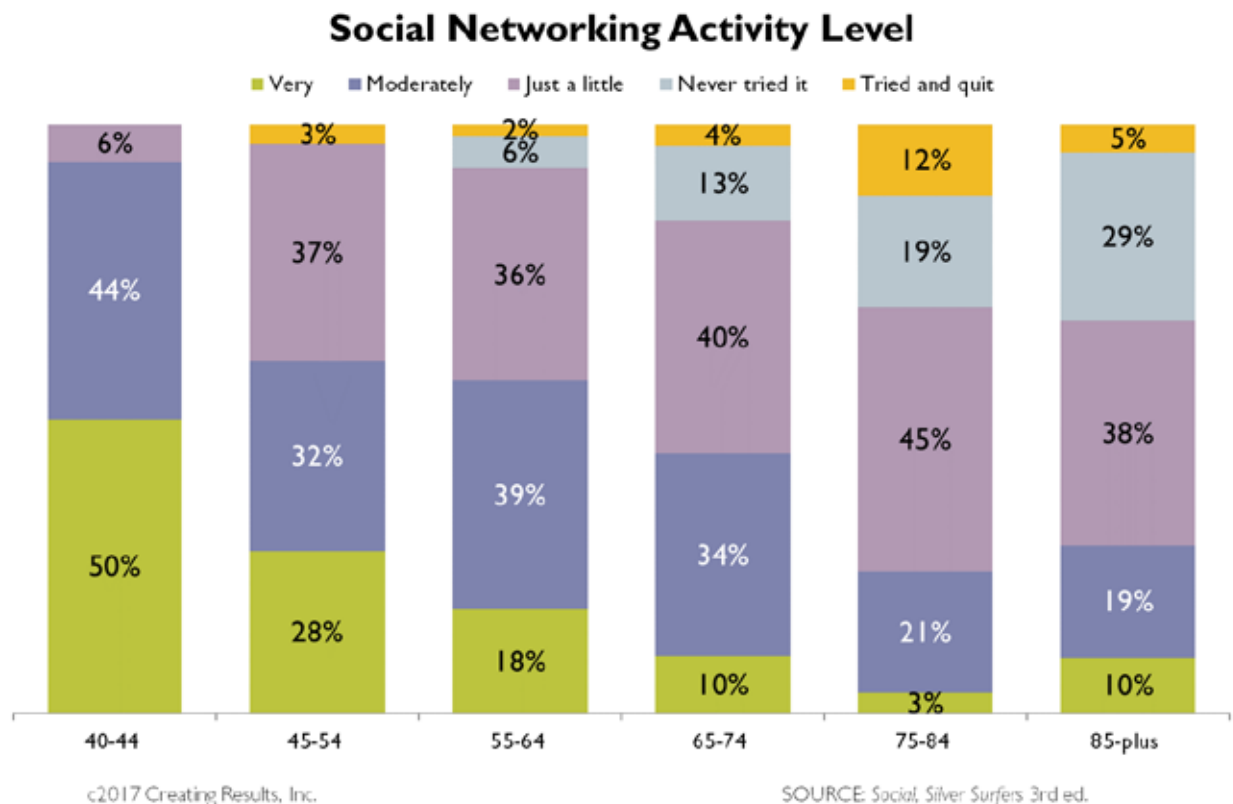
A 1,650% increase is certainly newsworthy. “More Seniors Then Ever!” or “Seniors – Fastest Growing Segment on Social Networks” make great headlines. However, perspective is critical. According to Pew Research Center, 65% of 65+ seniors were NOT using social networks. Yes, social networks are increasingly popular but not the be-all-end-all, especially for mature consumers.

The Social, Silver Surfers research team found that 86% of all respondents (40+, internet-using Americans) currently use social networks to some extent.

The younger the respondent, the more active they report being on social media. Or, conversely, the older the respondent, the more likely they are to say they do not use social media at all.

0% of GenXers between the ages of 40 and 44 say they have Never Tried social media, or they have Tried It and Quit.

29% of Greatest Generation members polled, 85 years or older, have Never Tried social networking. Another 5% have Tried It and Quit. The results for participants aged 75-84 aren't much better. Approximately 1/3 of your potential Silent Generation audience won't see anything you do on social networks.



LET ME TELL YOU A STORY...



Eunice & Richard: Super Researchers, Social Resisters

Eunice and Richard are residents of a continuing care retirement community (CCRC) in Delaware.

Eunice is so adept with technology her fellow computer club members have nicknamed her “Google.” She runs the family’s schedules from her tablet.

Eunice and her husband use the internet in a variety of ways: to research and buy products, to organize and book travel, to manage Richard’s baseball fantasy pool, even to settle arguments. (“We used to use the encyclopedia,” he says,” but now we just Google it.”)

There’s one thing they don’t use the internet for: Social Networking.

As Richard says,

“We don’t use social media, much to my niece’s and godchild’s great chagrin. She’s been on my case for 15 years ...

“I think it’s an age thing. It seems too revealing. I know there are things that you can put constraints on what you share with other people, but sometimes you get careless and maybe don’t use the constraints. I don’t know. So I just haven’t used it.”

Eunice could “potentially be persuaded,” she says. However she resists because she has concerns about online privacy. “I’m really, really careful about my own personal information.”

[CLICK TO WATCH FULL VIDEO](#)

SIMPLY IRRESISTIBLE

There are currently 1.8 billion members of Facebook who are active on a monthly basis.

That’s a larger population than the country of China.

Yet our research indicates a full third of internet-using 85-plussers have never applied for a visa to the land of social networking. Or they touched down on the tarmac and got back onto the plane for a return trip home.

Why?

Today’s *social, silver surfers* explain.

- I. **Security / Privacy Worries:** This includes concerns about cyber security, identity theft, personal and physical security.

Says one Baby Boomer “Too many people are sharing their opinions and I think that’s dangerous. I think that if you have an opinion and people disagree with it, you’re putting yourself into a bad spot.”

Another says “They worry about their kids, but then they put the kids’ pictures out for everyone to see. So now people can get the kids’ names, match them with phone numbers and find them.”

27% of respondents who have quit social media cite Security / Privacy as the reason.



2. **Discomfort with Intrusions:** Unsolicited invitations to connect are often seen as unwanted, as well. “I don’t want to socialize with anybody other than my family and I’d rather do that by telephone.”

20% of **social, silver surfers** who quit social networking describe it as “Too Intrusive.”



3. **Concerns over Oversharing / Overexposure:** “I just don’t have information that I want to splash all over the world.” “When I was a kid a diary was something you kept a lock on.”

Even respondents who ARE actively social seem to agree that Oversharing is a problem.

51% of 40+ers who are active on social networks say they don’t like the Overexposure that seems to have become a hallmark of social media.

4. **Time Consumption:** “The only social media I use is email. I am resistant to Facebook. Because I know how much time I would waste. I would go trolling around looking at my grandchildren and all sorts of other people and seeing if I could find somebody from some time. And I know where my grandchildren are; if I want to talk to them I can text them and they will call me back. And they are also very kind and will email and send me pictures.”



10% of all survey respondents say they have Never Tried social networking, a percentage that grows with age (as the chart above illustrates).

40% of all resisters say that “nothing could make me try it,” not greater Privacy, pressure or persuasion from Friends or Family, not more Time. Nothing.

For these otherwise active and engaged adults, the internet is useful but social media is resistible.

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



1. When incorporating social techniques into your website, reassure visitors of their security and privacy.
 - Make it clear if/when their names will be kept anonymous in comment threads.
 - Confirm that email addresses will never be shared, rented or sold.
 - Appoint a highly-visible moderator whose focus is creating a safe and fun space for older adults to engage with you and each other.
2. Work social media content into non-social marketing efforts.
 - Embed a feed from Facebook into your website so that older adults can see what's being shared and said without needing to log in or even to have an account.
 - Take User Generated Content (UGC) out of the social networks and use throughout your marketing. That photo of the Color Run posted by your 55+ community homeowner with glowing praise for your lifestyle director? It can be the perfect sidebar in your next printed newsletter. (Just remember to check with the homeowner first, to be sure they're comfortable with being spotlighted in this new space. Flattery and clear attribution can motivate other residents to begin sharing more.)
 - Give social media reviews and praise a greater reach. Pull quotes, star ratings and testimonials and feature on your website or a postcard.
3. Educate to motivate.
 - Help those who aren't at all active learn what the fuss is all about so they can make an informed decision about continued resistance. Offer classes (led by similarly-aged instructors or even neighbors) on social networking.
 - If you introduce a new, social feature into your website, invest time in explaining its use and benefits. Make it easy to find "how to" documents and/or videos showing the tool in action.

ALL IN THE FAMILY

If there are so many reasons to resist online social platforms, why do any mature consumers begin social networking at all?

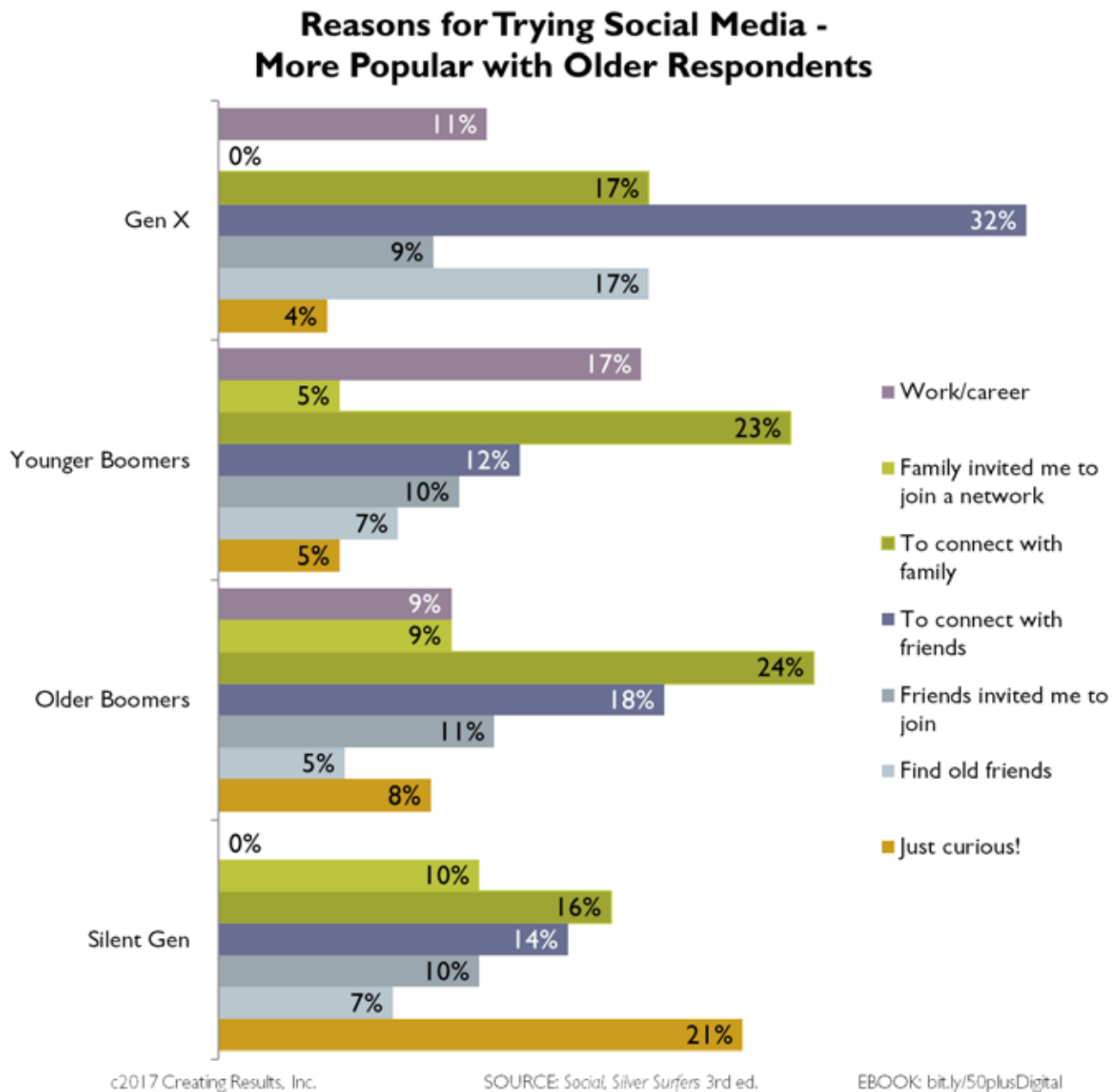
Offline connections continue to motivate online behavior.

We asked **social, silver surfers** who are using social networks, “what was the reason you joined in the first place?”

- **FAMILY:** Connecting with Family was the primary reason for 22% of all respondents. Another 7% joined because a Family Member Invited them to.
- **FRIENDS:** This motivation has held steady as the #2 reason matures give for trying social media – 18% joined to Connect with Friends, another 9% because Friends Invited them to participate.
- **WORK/CAREER:** The #1 reason in 2010 and 2013, this motivator dropped to third place in 2016.

Consistent with life stage, Connect with Friends and Work/Career are more popular reasons among GenX and Younger Boomer respondents.

Silent Generation members surveyed are strongly motivated by invitations from friends or family, and even more motivated by Curiosity. 21% of those between the ages of 75 and 91 say they were “just curious” when they first tried an online social network.



We were pleasantly surprised to see (slight) increases in the (small) percentage of older adults who begin using social media for the purpose of Researching and Making Purchases. This rose from 0% in 2010 to 2% in 2013 to 4% last year.

Not a huge amount but a trend that holds promise for those selling products and services to older adults. If you join a social network with purchasing in mind, you're more likely to welcome social marketing and convert in social channels.

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY...



A Joyful Romanian Reunion

Cecilia, a younger Boomer, represents the 7% of respondents who join social networks to Find Old Friends.

"I went on Facebook for only one reason – to find a friend I had met in Romania when I was an exchange student at 17 years old.

"Gibby and I had been in contact for about 20 years and then through life's happenstances we lost touch. I thought Facebook might help. But no matter how I searched I couldn't find her.

"Three years later we had a Romanian reunion and another classmate encouraged me to use Google to find my friend Gibby. I also tried Facebook again, to see if I could find her through her son. Instead I saw SHE had a Facebook page! Then I found a way to message her directly!

"Ironically, in March of that year Gibby had come to the United States and had been trying to find me. Thanks to Facebook, after 40 years we were able to get together in real life.

"I love the people who use Facebook the way I think it should be used, for joyful reasons."

GOLIATH, FACEBOOK AND OTHER GIANTS

The Hindu epic the Ramayana features a giant demon with a giant appetite named Kumbhakarna. Gogmagog was the very last giant in the British Isles. Atlas held up the sky for all eternity. The giant lumberjack Paul Bunyan cleaved America's Grand Canyon simply by dragging his axe behind him.

What do all of these oversized characters have in common?

None of them casts as large a shadow as Facebook.

This most recent edition of ***Social, Silver Surfers*** confirms the real giant in the story of social networking is Facebook.

Which social networks are you familiar with?

88% of all respondents name Facebook. (Even those who are not at all active with social media know where all the action is.)

74% of all respondents name Facebook first.

The closest "runner-up" is Twitter, named by 43% of respondents.

Which social networks do you participate in?

92% say Facebook.

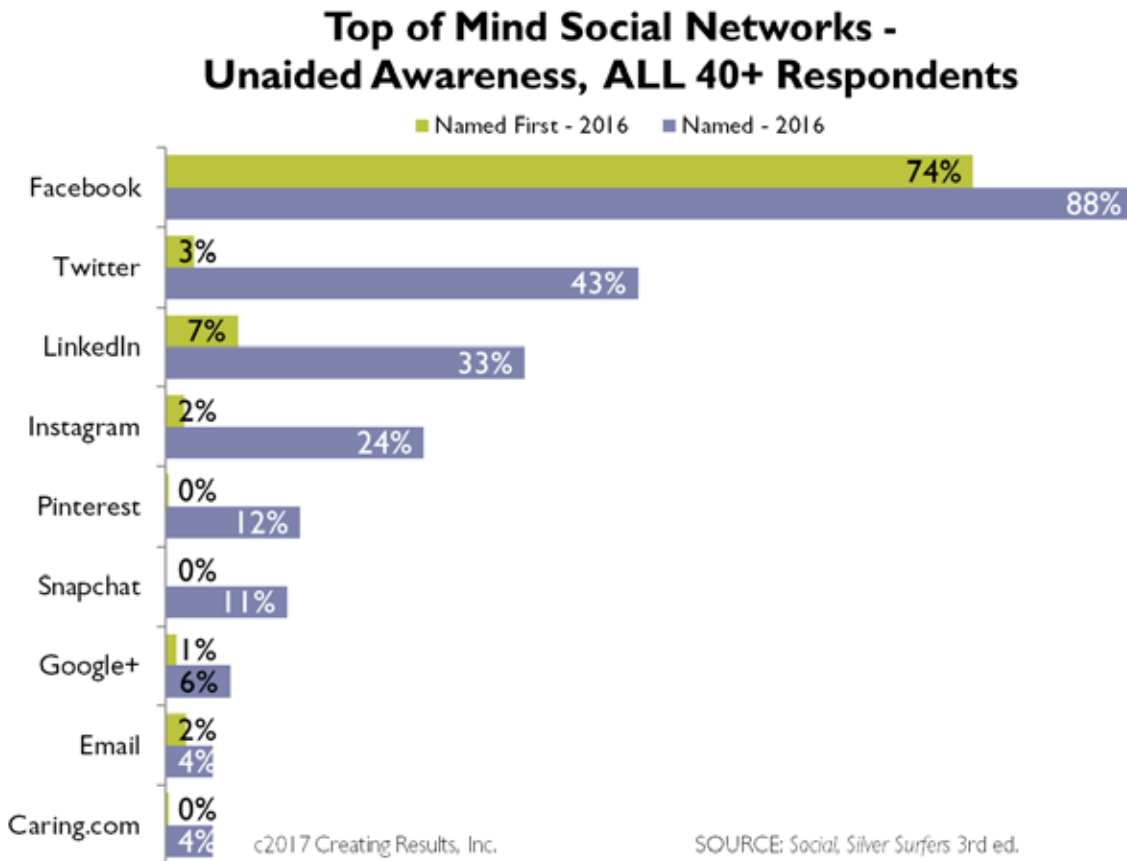
The closest "runner-up" is LinkedIn, used by 61% of our respondents.

Why should marketers care?

Marketing budgets and resources are limited. Knowing where older adult targets spend their time helps us decide where to spend ours. Younger people may be more excited about Instagram, Pinterest, WhatsApp and other networks. For mature consumers, Facebook matters most.

Top-of-Mind Social Networks (Awareness)

Facebook is named first and most frequently when older adults are asked “What social networking or social media sites are you familiar with?”



Email – yes, EMAIL – continues to be cited as a social network by our oldest targets.

Instagram and Caring.com were most likely to be cited by the youngest respondents, Gen Xers. Why? We believe the twin forces of caring for teenagers and caring for/worrying for aging parents are reflected in these social choices.

The average age of a respondent naming Instagram as a social network they are aware of is 49; the average age of one naming Caring.com as a familiar social network is 46.

The average age of a respondent naming Email as a social network they are familiar with is 78.

In the three years since this research was last conducted, there have been a plethora of one-to-one chat and messaging tools introduced, many as add-ons to one-to-many social platforms.

At the same time, there has been increased smartphone and tablet adoption by older adults.

The combination of these two trends led to an increase in the number of **social, silver surfers** who named messaging/video chat applications as “social networks” of which they were aware.

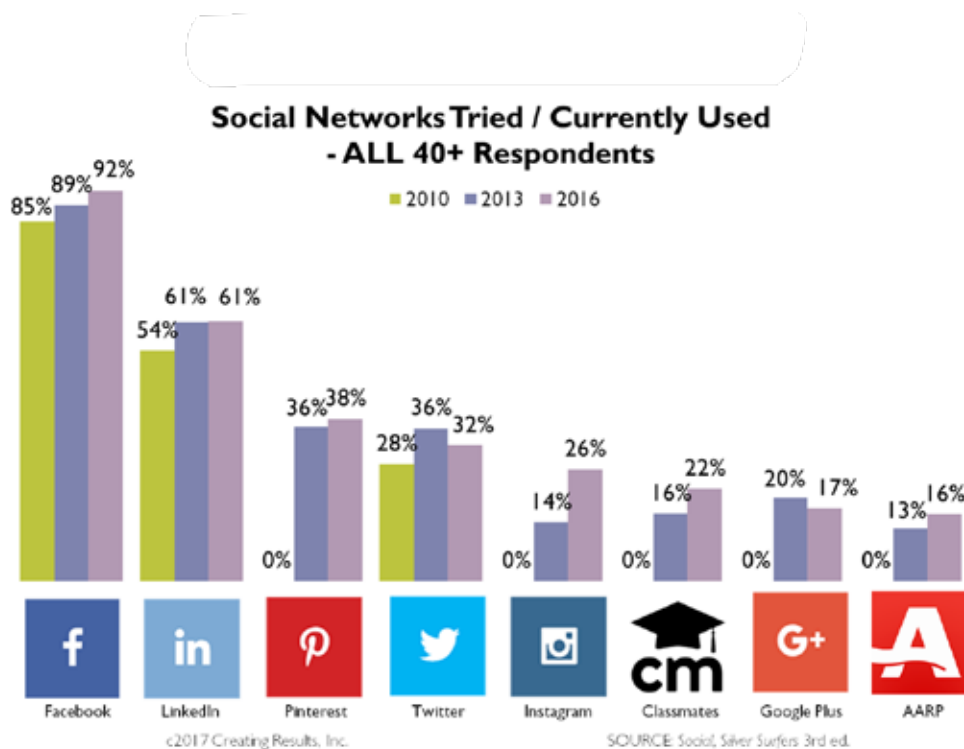
The average age of someone who named Facetime as a familiar social network is 82; the average age of one who named “messaging” is 79.

Top-of-Charts Social Networks (Usage)

When looking at trends over time, it appears more mature consumers are using more social networks.

In 2010, when we first surveyed **social, silver surfers** across the United States, only three social networks were reported used by at least 20% of respondents: Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter:

Now six different platforms can boast that they are used by (or have been used by) one in five older adults surveyed.



As years have passed, Facebook's dominance among the 40+ Internet user base has steadily grown. Facebook gets 1.5x the share of users as LinkedIn, nearly triple the share of mature users as Twitter and more than 3x as many mature users as Instagram (a Facebook property).

Pinterest was just a prototype in 2010. It's grown into a full-fledged network used by nearly four in ten survey participants. (It's used by six in 10 of the respondents who say they were both active on social and they primarily use mobile devices to access the internet.)

The number of **social, silver surfers** using multiple social platforms also has increased. Facebook appears to be what the Pew Research Center has called the "starting platform" for older social networkers.

- Creating Results found that while 62% of Facebook users also use LinkedIn, 93% of LinkedIn users also use Facebook.
- 40% of Facebook users we surveyed also use Pinterest. But 97% of mature self-identified Pinterest users also use Facebook.
- And while 34% of Facebook-using respondents say they also use Twitter, 99% of tweeting respondents also use Facebook.

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



1. For all social marketing programs, *Focus on Facebook First*. It is especially popular with Younger Boomers and is #1 with social networkers from every generational cohort.
2. As you look to expand your social efforts consider the following when allocating investments of time and money.

Is your organization looking for ...

- a. **Women?** Pinterest and Facebook have higher concentrations of women in their 40s, per our survey.

- b. Caregivers?** 42% of *silver surfers* who are Caregivers say they use Pinterest.
 - c. More affluent?** 26% of Twitter-using respondents report annual household incomes of \$151K or higher.
 - d. More educated?** Once again, it's Twitter – 87% of this segment say they hold a bachelors, masters or doctorate degree. This helps explain why mature Twitter users also are most likely to subscribe to blogs.
 - e. People looking to better balance the responsibilities (and joys) of work and life?** LinkedIn is used by 78% of older adults working full time, 67% of those working part time. It's also used by 84% of Long-Distance Caregivers.
 - f. Most likely to buy?** 66% of mature Twitter users we surveyed say social media has influenced them to purchase a service or product. 59% of Pinterest users polled, 53% of LinkedIn users and 47% of mature Facebook users who participated in this survey say social has nudged them to buy. (More on social media's influence on purchase to follow.)
- 3.** Vary the way you deliver your messages across channels. As 86% of the mature Facebookers we polled also use at least one other social network, organizations need to mix up their content. Saying the same thing in the exact same way across platforms will come across as tone deaf.



How well does your social marketing sit with silver surfers? [Click here for an interactive, online assessment, with tips for improving ROI.](#)

BOO HOO FOR BLOGS? *(Or, Why We Shouldn't Depend Solely on Our Guts)*

Erin loves blogs.

She subscribes to dozens.

Entertainment and pop culture to her personal accounts. Marketing industry, senior living, demographics and statistics digests, real estate, travel industry and travel destinations to her business account. And, of course, blogs published by clients, influencers and friends.

(This may help explain why her email inboxes are typically overloaded with unread messages.)

If Creating Results advised our clients based solely on Erin's gut, we'd say "produce three posts a day, sit back and wait for the traffic to roll in."

Which is why we rely on research instead of me-search.

Per this latest survey, 38% of **social, silver surfers** say they read or post blogs. And only 28% subscribe to blogs.

Now, many of them may not realize when they're reading a blog. Some blogs look just like news websites. Others are considered "newsletters" or "messages" by older adults because their subscriptions are delivered by email.

For example, Erin suggested her mother sign up to receive Erin's favorite blog. Time Goes By is a fantastically well-written, intelligent, thoughtful and, at times, emotional study of aging in America by journalist Ronni Bennett. With permission, Erin entered mom's email address at timegoesby.net and subscribed her.

It's a rare day that Erin's mom doesn't start a conversation with "You'll never guess what Ronni said in her email today" or "Ronni's note to me this morning had the most amazing thing ..."

As if they're having a personal, one-to-one email conversation, mom and Ronni.

(Erin actually does have one-to-one conversations with Ronni and she tattled on her mom. Ronni's response? "Oh, I love that I'm writing just for her. Perfect." Which is exactly why so many older adults believe this warm and intelligent writer is sending them personal emails.)

This is a good-news/bad-news finding, we feel.

BAD NEWS:

- 86% of respondents "subscribe" to some sort of social network vs. 28% who subscribe to blogs.
- Of the blog subscribers, 29% say their subscriptions include health or medical blogs. That means less than a third of less than a third of all those surveyed. This is disappointing for those of us marketing health-related services or products.

Interest in health/medical content grows as we age. 35% of the Older Boomers who say they are blog subscribers report opting in to health/medical streams, along with 36% of Silent Generation blog users.

GOOD NEWS:

- The percentage of **social, silver surfers** saying they use blogs has increased 9% since 2010.
- When mature consumers do subscribe to a blog, it has greater impact. They trust the content coming into their inboxes. They read it and feel personally touched.
- Positioned correctly, a blog can be gateway content that opens up an older adult's email inbox to other marketing messages as well.

MORE NEWS TO COME:

- Blogs impact digital marketing success in other ways, including and especially search engine optimization (SEO). You'll find thoughts and related recommendations on social marketing and SEO in the last section of this chapter ("Is There Hope for a Happy Ending?").

SHARE AND SHARE ALIKE

Online social behavior isn't limited to social networks such as Facebook.

For this reason, each time Creating Results surveys **social, silver surfers** we ask them about the social sharing tools they use. We ask this question of ALL respondents, even those who are not at all active on social networks.

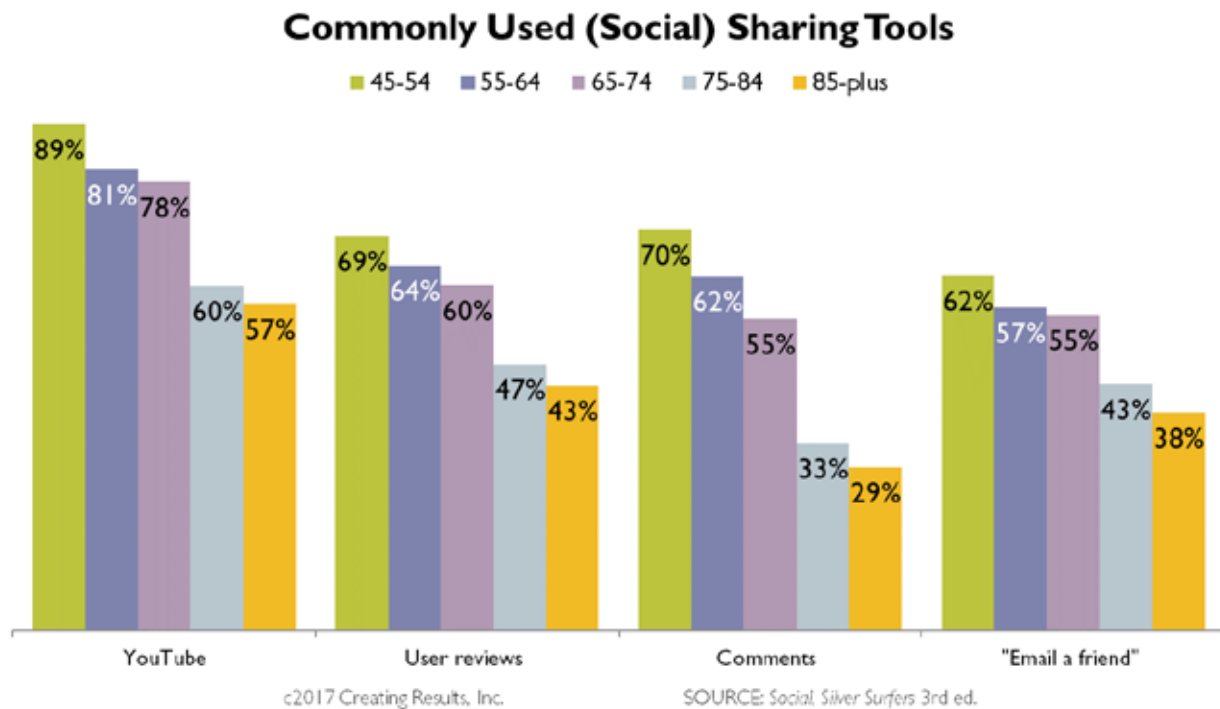
In this latest edition, there was a marked increase in the use of User Reviews, from a rate of 21% in 2010 to a rate of 60% in 2016.

YouTube – always in the top 2 of sharing – has become the #1 tool (78% of older adults use YouTube).

And the use of Comments held steady (used by 56% in both 2013 and 2016) while the use of “Email A Friend” Widgets fell from 77% in 2013 to 55% in 2016.

Many of the trends related to social sharing tools reflect overall digital trends.

- Social platforms, email services and even cell phone systems have made sharing and watching video a positive experience.
- It's easier than ever to share images. AND photo messaging services such as Snapchat are very popular with younger adults – those same family members who motivate older adults to join social networks. This helps explain why use of photo messaging / sharing services by all 40+ers has gone from 2% in 2010 to 34% in our most recent survey. And why they're used by more than ½ of older adults who go online mostly via mobile devices.
- User Reviews are now part-and-parcel of directory listings, shopping sites – heck, even your insurance provider will ask you to write an online review the second you've hung up with customer service.



The younger and more mobile the respondent, the more likely they are to use a greater number of social sharing tools and at a higher rate.

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



Brands need people talking with them and positively talking them up across the web. Social engagement – conversations, ratings, digital tips o’ the hat – is critical to achieve greater brand awareness.

Here are four steps to take to be sure you’re measuring and leveraging that social engagement.

- I. Work with your marketing team or agency to be sure you’re monitoring social activity around your brand across the web.

Identify, recognize and thank influencers who extend your brand in a positive way through their reviews, shares and comments.

2. Amp up your video content. Don't focus on what you want to show; think about what your *target market* values and will want to share. Take the same strategic search engine optimization techniques you are currently applying to content on your website and apply it to anything placed on YouTube.

Also, be sure you cross-promote that video content within Facebook and other social networks. You could/should promote videos on your website, as well, as it is a way to engage older adults who may not be actively using social networks.

3. Look closely at your website analytics. Are you effectively measuring and reporting traffic that comes in via social channels? Do you know how the behavior of this traffic differs from other traffic? Are you modifying content, timing of posts and placements based upon your results? If not, you aren't maximizing your ROI.
4. Social marketing should be measured by the same yardstick as other marketing techniques: did it drive inquiries and, in turn, purchases?

The social item your organization posts should be strategically linked to content on your site, driving traffic and lead capture. When there isn't a direct link, create an indirect one in the consumer's mind, bolstering your unique selling propositions and improving chances for a sale.

CAREGIVER CONNECTIONS

This most recent edition of ***Social, Silver Surfers*** marks the first time we asked respondents to identify themselves as Caregivers.

There are an estimated 43.5 million Caregivers in the US; 15% of those are considered Long-Distance, per the National Center on Caregiving. This is not an insignificant segment.

These unpaid Caregivers are responsible for purchases not only for themselves and the members of their household, but for the older adult they support (the "caree"). The typical Caregiver is female, nearly 50 years old and will provide care for a parent for four or five years.

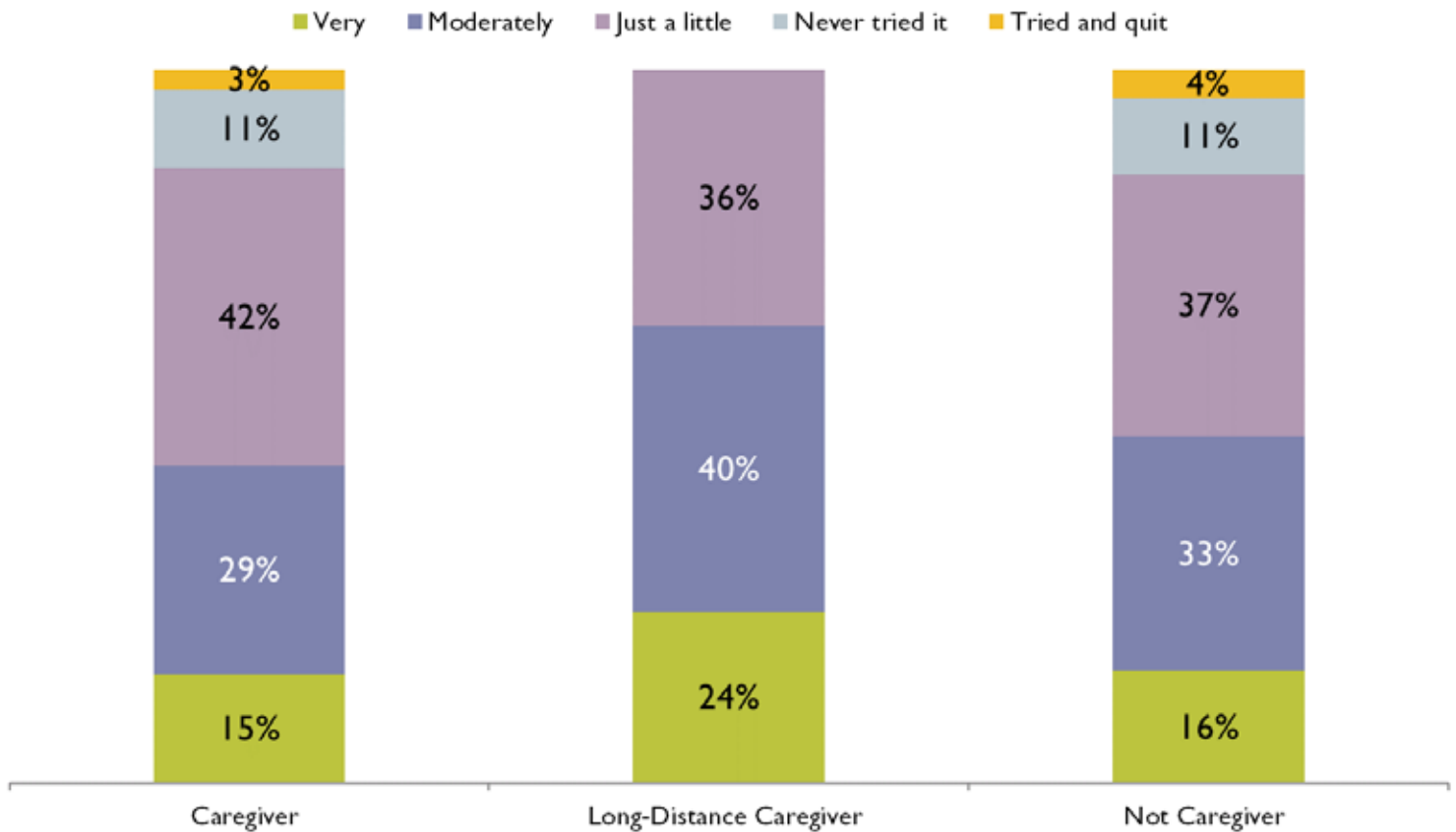
It's a challenging, difficult and stressful role. It often involves coordinating care and dispersing information to family members in multiple states. The physical demands can mean Caregivers are often lonely.

All of which helps explain why online social tools and platforms can be especially important to those who provide unpaid care.

Distinctions within Caregiver Social Activity

Caregivers are slightly less active on social networks than Non-Caregivers – who has time for Facebook “trending” when there’s laundry, food prep, medication, bathing or other duties to attend to?

Social Networking Activity Level



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SOURCE: Social, Silver Surfers 3rd ed.

When it comes to social sharing tools, Caregivers over-index on use of YouTube (89% of Caregivers vs. 78% of all 40+ respondents) and Message Boards (32%). They’re pulling in the information they need and want to help themselves and/or the caree, or to help with the other parts of their lives.

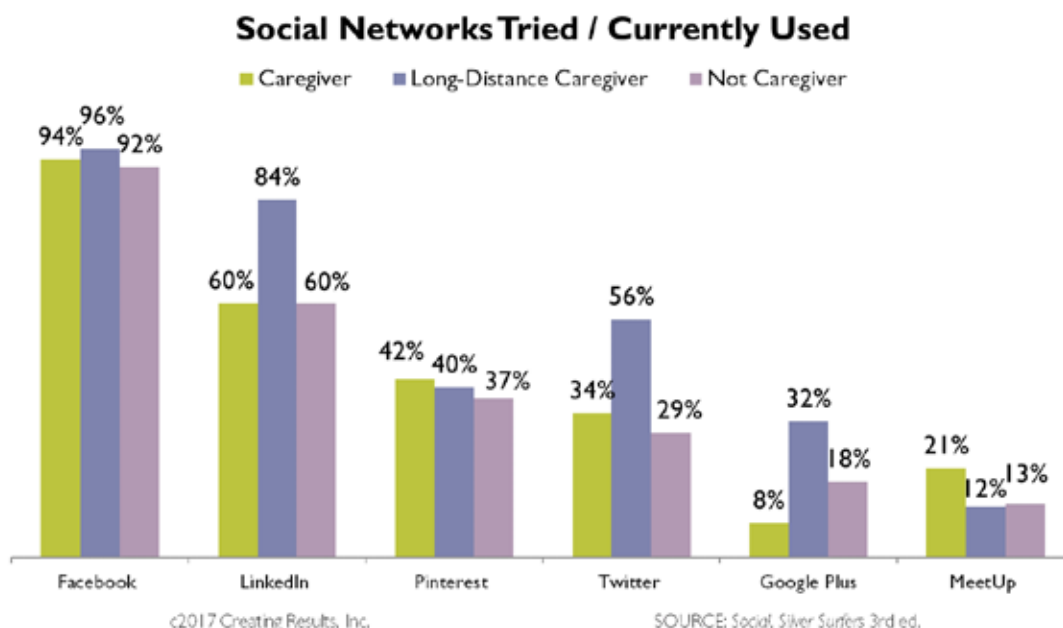
Long-Distance Caregivers over-index on almost every type of sharing tool. They are more likely to use:

- **“Share with Your Network” Widgets** (36% of Long-Distance Caregivers vs. 27% of ALL),
- **Message Boards** (36% vs. 27% of ALL),
- **Blogs** (56% vs. 38% of ALL),
- **Comments** (68% vs. 56% of ALL), and
- **User Reviews** (76% vs. 60% of ALL).

These mature consumers rely on social networks and tools for connections – to the caree, to others in similar situations, perhaps even to a sibling who is the close-to-home or in-home Caregiver.

Distinctions within Caregiver Social Platforms

If you want to attract Caregivers and Long-Distance Caregivers as customers, here’s where you’ll find them:



While the “average” caregiver will work outside the home in addition to the unpaid care they provide their loved ones, the fact is that eldercare often does become an obstacle to paid employment. *(The AARP Public Policy Institute has an excellent PDF on the subject: <http://bit.ly/2gA1XjF>.)*

This seems to be reflected in the significantly higher percentages of Long-Distance Caregivers using LinkedIn, Twitter and Google Plus. All three of these social networks skew more towards business objectives and content and would be more useful to those in full-time, paid jobs.



Is your social marketing making the grade with Caregivers? [Click here for an online assessment tool, plus tips for improving ROI with all 50+ers.](#)

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



Marketers should seek out Caregivers within the platforms where they spend their time, while being sensitive to what these targets are seeking.

Caregivers are dealing with a number of challenges. Knowing this, we recommend you position your brand as a helpful resource.

Instead of a hard-sell for your product, your social marketing should create a softer world for Caregivers. Connect Caregivers to experts within your team via blog posts and “live” digital opportunities. Offer support, both moral and tangible.

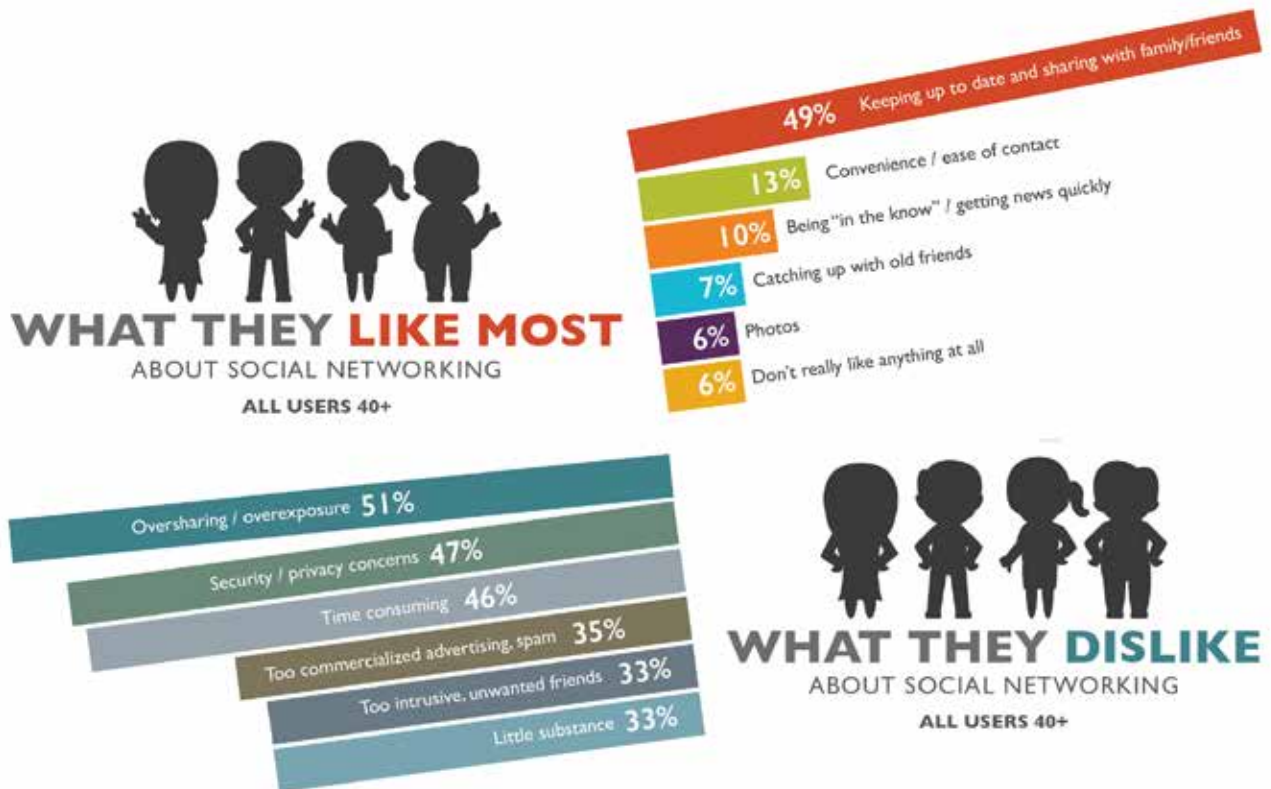
Encouraging and promoting user reviews are actually one way to achieve this. Reviews streamline decision-making and allow Caregivers to feel connected to others dealing with similar situations. Does your team have a strategy and plan for soliciting positive social reviews? If not, make it a priority for the coming months.

Instead of shilling the “features” of your offering, highlight the ways your service or product fosters stronger connections between Caregiver and caree. This sensitive approach will, in turn, foster stronger connections to your brand.

THEY LOVE ME, THEY LOVE ME NOT

It wasn't unusual to hear **social, silver surfers** tell us that online social platforms are "a necessary evil."

Social networkers of all ages often have a love/hate relationship with the various systems in which they participate.



©2017 Creating Results, Inc. | Source: *Social, Silver Surfers - 3rd. ed.* | ebook: <http://bit.ly/50plusDigital>

To improve your marketing results, try to leverage the aspects Baby Boomers and beyond DO like about social media and avoid those they DON'T.

Mature social networkers DO want to feel like an insider, feel on top of all the news, feel connected.

They DON'T want to feel like their personal space is being overrun by oversharing, is unsafe or being invaded by advertising.

And no one, no one – whether they're a 41-year-old mother of elementary school children or an 81-year-old retiree – wants to feel like their time is being wasted.

Some trends to note:

- The appreciation of Sharing with Family & Friends increased 2.3x since 2010. The frustration with Oversharing increased more than 2x as well. There's a fine line between post and pest.
- The percentage of **social, silver surfers** praising the Ease of Contact/Convenience of social networking decreased from 23% in 2010 to 13% in 2016.

As other devices and tools have increased their penetration of the older adult market and made it easier to connect, there are many rivals for the mantle of “Convenient.”

In addition, more of our respondents now use multiple platforms. It's less convenient when your one-to-one conversations with a friend criss-cross Facebook Messenger, text, Snapchat and so on. People remember having an interaction, but can't recall where to find it again.

- Social networking Security / Privacy concerns have risen dramatically. 5% of respondents complained of this in 2010; 47% did so in 2016.
- Irritation with Advertising / Commercialization also has increased dramatically – from 3% in 2010 to 35% in 2016.
- This was the first time that respondents described social networking as “Too Negative / Critical.” 14% of all **surfers** complain of this.

The negativity about negativity is particularly strong among GenX (17%) and Younger Boomers (21%).

21% of mature Internet users we surveyed who go online mostly by mobile device cited Negativity as a frustration. Perhaps there's something about receiving a steady stream of “bummer” in your pocket that makes it too much?

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



Marketers should keep it positive, keep it personal and keep it private.

POSITIVE: Use your social channels to inspire your audiences! Share success stories. Offer resources that make followers' lives easier and things they would feel positive about sharing with others.

PERSONAL: Keep in mind that very, very few mature consumers are online for commercial reasons. Therefore your outbound messaging shouldn't be commercial.

Use a warm and authentic voice that makes your posts and interactions feel like exchanges with a friend, not a salesperson.

PRIVATE: Repeatedly assure and re-assure social media followers that your team is actively creating a safe and constructive space for them. You could post a photo of the team "moderator" and/or explain the rules for the online community in your ABOUT sections.

SHOW ME THE MONEY

In 2015, Deloitte Development, LLC published a report called "Navigating the Digital Divide."

The divide they identified was "the gap between consumers' digital behaviors and expectations and retailers' ability to deliver the desired expectations."

We frequently see a different divide: a gap between companies' expectations for driving purchases through social marketing and the reality of consumers' purchase behaviors.

Is there a digital influence on sales? Indisputable.

Does mobile have influence on sales? Yes and it's growing.

Does social motivate purchase? Not so much.

As Deloitte put it,

“Perhaps unsurprisingly, younger adult consumers are heavier users of digital than older generations. Forty-seven percent of all Millennial consumers use social media during their shopping journey, compared to 19 percent of non-Millennials.”

Creating Results is laser-focused on creating results for our clients with “non-Millennials.” Therefore we have collected a variety of insights built on the latest data that relate to social media and purchase behavior:

A Tale As Old As Time

Marketer meets consumer. Marketer adores consumer.

Marketer launches Facebook page and invests resources in social marketing, to catch the attention of the consumer.

Consumer ignores marketer.

This may be the real “behind the headlines” story of digital marketing. No matter what effort your brand might put into wooing consumers of all ages on all social platforms, those consumers are just not that into you.

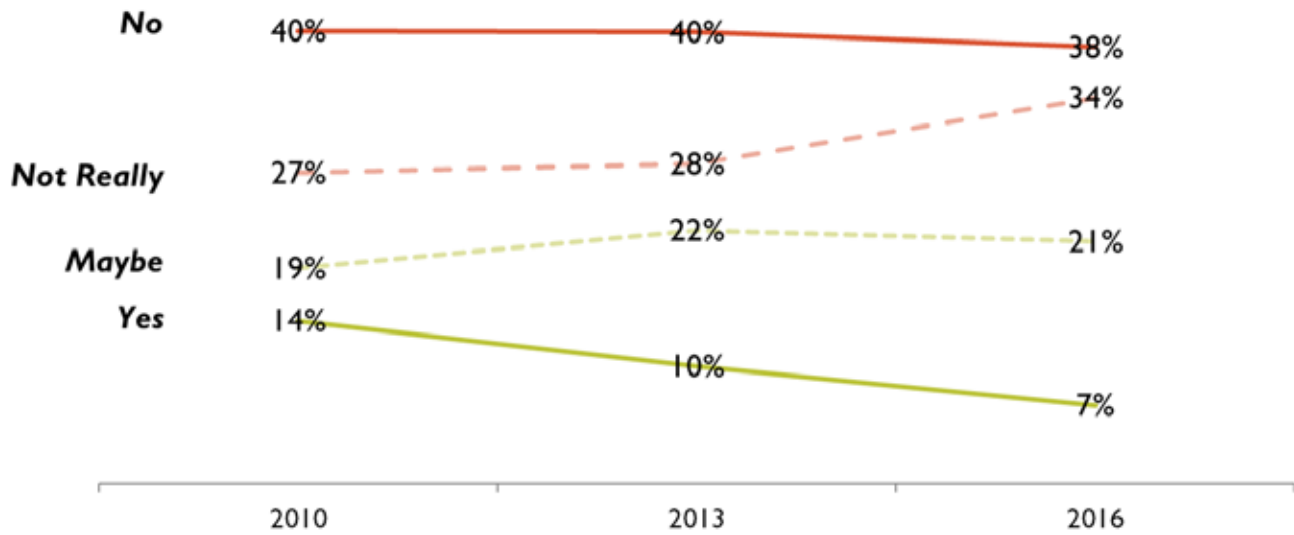
We asked **social surfers** “do you want to engage with brands in social channels?”

They mostly answered, “no thanks.”

7% of all 40+ respondents say “yes” they’d want to engage, 21% say “maybe,” and 72% say “not really” or flat out “no.”

This plot line has remained pretty much the same since we premiered **Social, Silver Surfers** in 2010. In the latest sequel there has been a slight decrease in the number of flat out “no” responses. Sadly, there’s been a larger percentage decrease in the number of straight “yes” answers.

Do You Want to Engage with Brands via Social Channels?



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SOURCE: Social, Silver Surfers 3rd ed

It seems brand persistence has not led to greater enthusiasm for social channel interaction.

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY...



Staying In the Driver's Seat

Marketers like to “drive traffic” from social media to websites, lead capture forms and sales teams. Aging adults like to stay in charge. They’re not truly ready to be “driven” that way.

Why are so many mature consumers unwilling to interact with brands on social media? The **social surfers** we surveyed say it’s because they see potential potholes around the bend.

Among the reasons why NOT to follow/friend a brand are feelings of being Overloaded with Advertising (21%), Privacy Concerns (11%) and the idea that Organizations can be Pushy (8%).

25% of those surveyed protest that social media is “a Personal Space, Not a Commercial One.” (Brands are unwanted hitchhikers.)

Another 25% would Rather Call/Seek Information on their Own. Bob is a 70-something Google addict in the MidAtlantic. He wants as few digital connections to companies or organizations as is possible.

“I do have ... what do you call it, an account in Facebook? I do have one of those and I can’t remember the last time I looked ... The times I have looked it was fun ...

“But I sort of like driving my own car. If I want their information, I’ll go get it.”

[CLICK TO WATCH FULL VIDEO](#)

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



Open, (Social) Sesame!

If marketers are to fulfill our heroic destinies, how can we get mature targets to open their caves ... er, minds ... and let our social messaging in?

The list of reasons why consumers would not engage reveals many are stereotyping brands as the villain of social media. Show them your organization's true character!

1. Respect their personal space – don't be so pushy.
2. Add to the online experience of older adults through posts that inspire and educate instead of simply sell, sell, sell.
3. Give them many different ways (including the good old phone) to reach out when they're ready to start a new chapter in your relationship.

The list of reasons why older adults would want to interact with a brand on social offers even more suggestions for proving your (click-)worthiness.

1. "Discounts, Coupons and Offers" are the top reason why *silver surfers* say they would fan/friend/follow a brand. Are there deals you could offer first or even exclusively via a preferred social channel?

Discounts have been the #1 reason to engage with brands for more than one thousand and one nights. In each edition of **Social, Silver Surfers** it's been the top motivator cited by respondents. The older the social networker, the more appealing the potential savings.

2. Reflecting the increase in digital noise, this edition did see a tie between the desire for Discounts and "Convenient Information Channel" (each cited by 19% of respondents). Consider how your organization can save time for social followers with strategically placed news updates.
3. Have you heard about FOMO? It stands for Fear of Missing Out, and is a condition that seems to plague young adults more than elders. Perhaps that explains why "Being the First To Know / Sneak Peeks" is a potential benefit to social engagement cited by 26% of Gen X respondents and 14% of all surveyed.

4. Let's not forget that while most social networks are designed for personal expression, people need to succeed in their work lives as well. 14% of all respondents say they feel interacting with a company or organization via social media would "Help My Business / Help Me Professionally."

IS THERE HOPE FOR A HAPPY ENDING?

Despite all of the above, we're not giving up on social channels for marketing to older adults. Here are several of the reasons why.

The Synchronicity of Social and Search

Any organization serving older adults or any brand wishing to sell more products / services to boomers and beyond must be investing in SEO on an ongoing basis.

Developing content and engaging via social platforms can have a positive, indirect impact on SEO and therefore on your older adult targets.

- Even though few older adults actually subscribe to blogs, that doesn't mean they aren't reading the content at all.

They typically will find your advice and information via search, which makes search engines very important blog readers!

- The consistent publishing of blog posts pays off in other ways, too. When a person types (or speaks) a query, Google, et al want to return results that are really relevant. Good blog posts are typically tightly focused on one specific topic, which means that they'll be more relevant to searchers.

In addition, Google, et al prefer sites that have fresh content. Teams which regularly publish blog content will be more disciplined in keeping the whole site up to date.

- Even though many seniors are not active on social networks (especially true for those over 75), social activity may still influence how much exposure your brand gets to these targets, because social can indirectly influence your search engine rankings.

If a piece of content shared on a social network such as Facebook brings visitors to your site, Google sees the traffic and engagement as proof that the page is popular. This means social can indirectly boost the page in search results.

- Finally, many social platforms are, themselves, search engines. YouTube is the world's 2nd largest search engine by volume, and a Google property.

Facebook has for years been trying to take search business away from Google. Creating Results is a certified Google Partner so we can report that Facebook hasn't yet succeeded (though it is making inroads in terms of local search). As we write in mid-2017, Google owns 77.43% of the global search market, per Net Market Share.

Larry Kim, Founder of Wordstream, is a digital marketing legend (we don't use that term lightly) who has written extensively on the "co-dependent" relationship between social media activity and organic search. [Here's a link to one article that can help you better understand the correlations.](#)

What all this means is SEO is one good reason to keep at your social media marketing efforts.

Promising Data Points

Here's another good reason. There are several data points that indicate that consumers may some day WANT to interact with brands on social:

1. For the first time, a small percentage of older adults (4% of all 40+ respondents) say they **began using social media for the purpose of Researching and Making Purchases.**
2. As noted above, there has been a 39 point **increase in the use of User Reviews** by *social, silver surfers* since this longitudinal study began in 2010.
3. In the companion Web-specific survey, 45% of all internet-using 40+ers say **User Reviews and Ratings are a "favorite feature"** of websites.

4. Of mature Movers (see chapter specific to this subsegment of respondents), 4% say they **used social media to research their new home or community**. 6% of people who helped an older adult with a move say they used social media when helping their loved one make a decision.

Creating Results also found several data points proving many 40+ers are already engaging socially with organizations, despite negative attitudes voiced to researchers:

1. 5% of mature Movers say they have **shared information from a company website** with a friend or family member via social media.
2. Another 4% of 40+ers who moved within the last two years say they've **given a social endorsement** to a real estate community.
3. Roughly 45% of those surveyed have liked/followed a company, product or non-profit on social media.
4. Nearly half of respondents report clicking through to a company website from a social post or ad. More on this in the next section!

From Clicks to Commerce

In this edition of the **Social, Silver Surfers** study we asked two questions specific to social media and purchase intent / behavior:

Q: What actions have you taken while or after spending time on a social network?

Researchers from Stanford University recently studied Pinterest user activity to see [what cross-platform behavior might signal purchase intent](#).

“It is essential to understand how user activity might build up over time into purchase intent, and ultimately, a purchase,” wrote Caroline Lo, Dan Frankowski and Jure Leskovec. Their team focused on four actions they termed discovery: searching; going close-up into a post for more information or a bigger picture; click-through; save.

Our team also looked at social engagement which might indicate eventual purchase intent. The social behavior we inquired about, however, somewhat aligns with the various stages of the purchase journey:

- **Awareness / Interest:** Clicked on an ad or sponsored post; Liked/followed a company, product, service or non-profit organization
- **Consideration:** Watched a video; Took part in a contest
- **Preference / Evaluation:** Shared brand social posts with personal network; Read Reviews/Comments, Signed a petition; Clicked through to the company/organization website
- **Purchase:** RSVP'd for an event; Called or emailed company/organization
- **Loyalty:** Checked in to real-world location; Reviewed or rated company/organization

The majority (87%) of respondents have been spurred by social networking to take more than one of these actions. Fewer than 2% of those surveyed specified they'd taken no actions, while another 13% didn't confirm or deny socially-prompted behaviors.

Q: Has social media ever influenced you to make a purchase, or helped you decide what products and services to buy?

45% of all respondents say yes, social media has influenced a purchase or helped them decide what to buy.



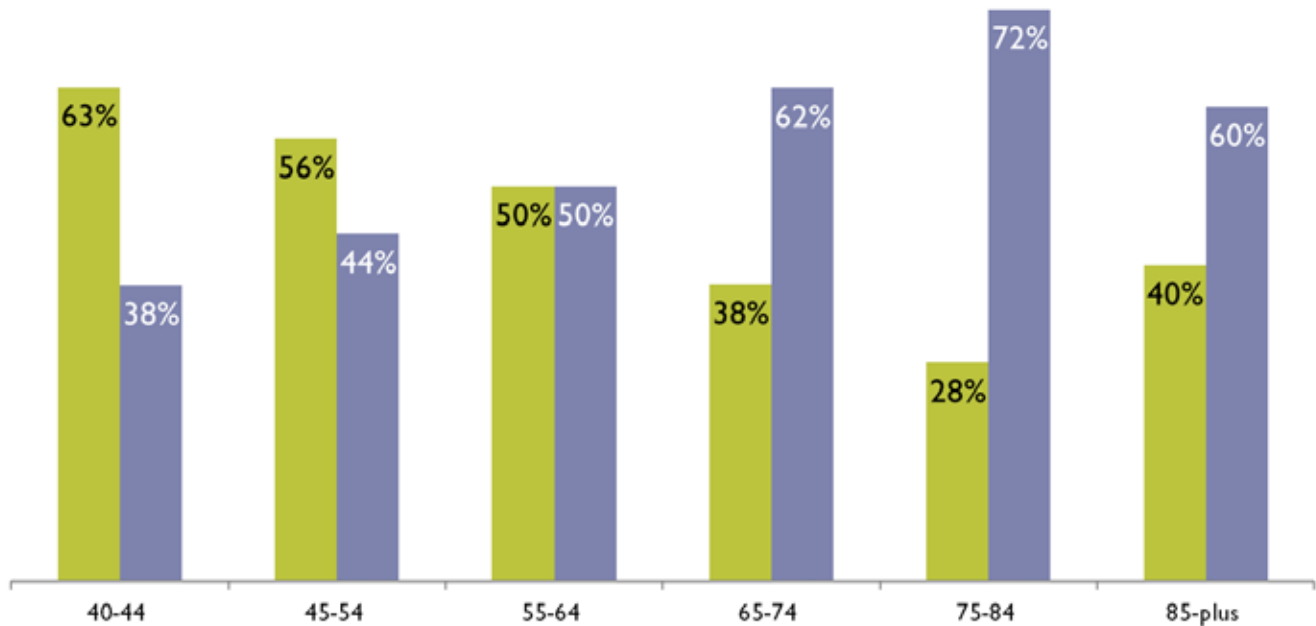
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For Creating Results this is the most promising data point, reinforcing our decisions to include social marketing in client's integrated programs. It's where the web meets the wallet.

Whether it be branded content or user generated chatter, the younger the person, the more likely they are to report a connection.

Has Social Media Influenced Purchase / Purchase Decision?

■ Yes ■ No



©2017 Creating Results, Inc.

SOURCE: Social, Silver Surfers 3rd ed



Is your social marketing meeting the needs of an older audience AND your brand? [Assess the strength of your program with this interactive tool.](#)

PART 2: SILVER SURFERS

CANNING THE CLICHÉS

Feel free to scoff at ads and comedy skits that portray all elders as tech-resistant or tech-incapable.

The Creating Results team frequently scoffs (or screams). Here's why.

As noted in one of this book's earlier "scenes," internet use by mature consumers has risen significantly in the years in which we've been studying *silver surfers*.

- In 2010, 74% of 50-64 year olds were going online, along with 43% of 65+ers. (Pew Research Center)
- In 2013, 81% of 50-64 year olds were going online, along with 56% of 65+ers.
- In 2017, Pew's most recent data puts internet adoption at 87% of 50-64 year olds and 64% of 65+ers.

Older adults also are using mobile technologies in greater numbers.

Pew Research found that 42% of 65+ seniors have smartphones, with adoption nearly quadrupling from 2011 to 2016. As of 2016, 32% of seniors were using tablets. (You'll find more about mobile later in this chapter.)

These simple stats do not even hint at the changes the internet can bring to the lives of older adults.

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY...



“Plot, or evolution, is life responding to environment.” William Wallace Cook, 1923

Phyllis taught elementary school for 36 years. During her last years on the job, the school department put five computers in each classroom and gave each teacher a short workshop.

“I did what I was told to do with them – which wasn’t much by today’s standards – and didn’t see much value.”

Other teachers in the building “were not generous with knowledge” and she did not have a computer at home, so knowledge didn’t stick.

Once retired, Phyllis saw how others were increasingly wired. She enrolled in a local community college computer class. The instructor encouraged questions and her confidence grew.

“I was one of the few older people in the class. It may sound silly, but I was very proud of the ‘A’ I earned. It has become symbolic of how much my computer knowledge has meant to me.”

She’s since invested in a computer and a maintenance plan, and has taken additional classes at the local library.

Here are a few of Phyllis' favorite online activities:

- Volunteer work
- Online banking
- Automated online bill payment
- Shopping
- Downloading books to read in a browser
- Photo editing

“Something I really love is all the information available to people online. I appreciate being able to Google what I need to know about any subject. I was just on YouTube the other day learning different ways to tie an infinity scarf!

“Younger people take all these things for granted. But I can recall that it was not too long ago when information was much more difficult to access.

“I know the things I've mentioned, that mean so much to me, are just the way things are to younger people. However, I am very grateful for the basic knowledge I have and am well-aware how much larger my world is as a result of it.”

Tools of the Trade

Erin works as an usher at the Providence Performing Arts Center (PPAC). In exchange for seating patrons and pointing out the bathrooms, she sees 30+ musicals and performances a year. It's the best and most selfish volunteer job in the world.

It's especially fun for Erin because many of the volunteers have been actively ushering for 25+ years ... and they started the gig in retirement.

The demographics make Erin's “volunteering” even more selfish, as she gets to spend time with vibrant, active elders. Both the shows and the ushers are entertaining.



In 2016, the PPAC management introduced a digital platform for ushers to use when committing to events. Instead of lining up to have names penciled into a paper calendar, ushers now use an online system (or related app).

There was a pretty good amount of grumbling when the announcement was first made. The management team braced for pushback and a long, slow slog of tech support.

After a few months, however, more than 85% of all the ushers were managing their commitments digitally. By about halfway through the season, all the grumbling stopped.

Why? Because the older adults value the convenience and control of online sign-up.

One of the ushers even purchased her first home computer, because she now sees how useful the web can be! Some of the ushers don't have easy internet access at home, so aisle captains at the theater use an iPad to log those performance selections.

Moving beyond PPAC, are some matures resisting or struggling when it comes to the internet and other technologies? Yes. But not all are.

The moral of this story is that older adults can and will embrace technology IF they can see the benefits.

"We use the internet for nuts and bolts information, what specifically are the rates and terms. And then we often follow up by telephone ...

"We use the internet just a great deal. It's also a source of great frustration. We've become so dependent on that tool that when it's down -- whether there's some glitch or I've hit the wrong button and it's frozen up -- we get cranky." – Richard, Maryland retiree

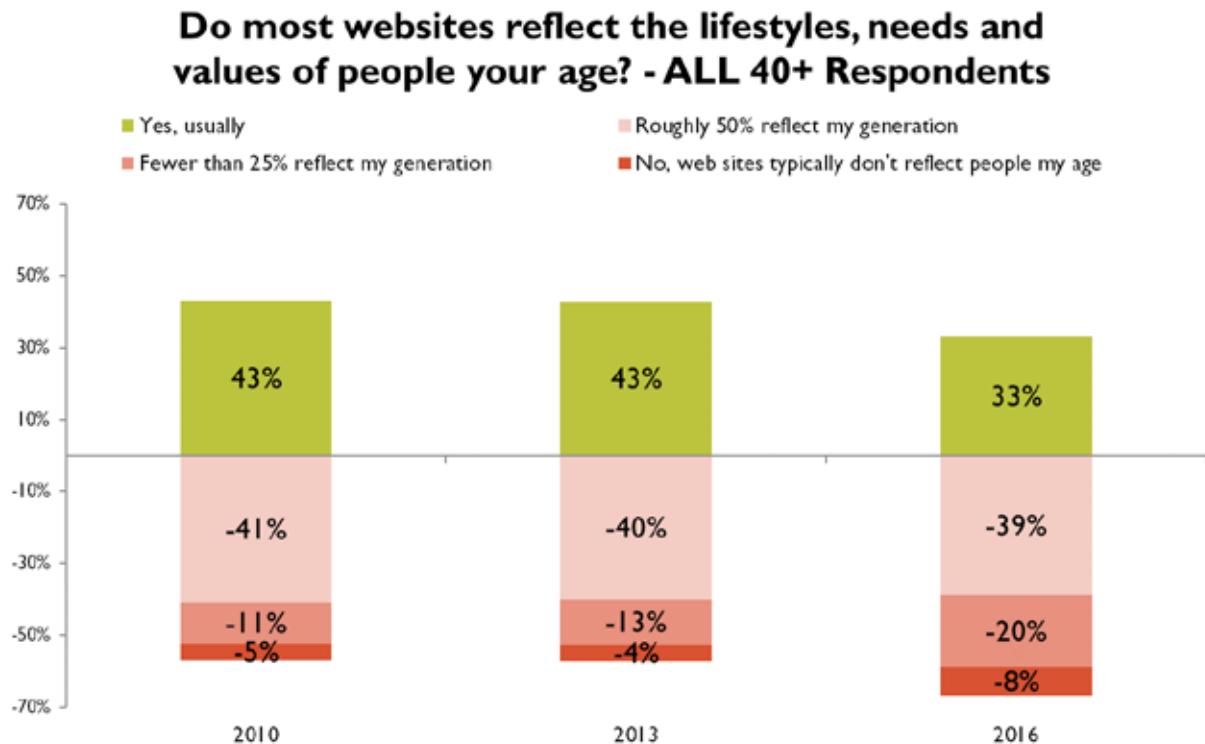
Older adults typically see the internet as a TOOL, not as entertainment.

However, most marketers and web developers are younger adults. This may help explain the next data point from our study.

Do You Feel Most Websites Reflect the Lifestyles, Needs or Values of People Your Age?

Whether it's content or user experience or usability, most seniors do not feel most sites are meant for them. This question has been posed to matures in each edition of ***Social, Silver Surfers***.

In each edition, an increasing number of respondents has answered "not really."



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SOURCE: *Social, Silver Surfers* 3rd ed.

These are consumers who have money, time and interest to spend online. Yet the typical website is letting them down.

A generation gap seems to be partly to be blame.

- The average age of an advertising creative is 28.
- A Stack Overflow survey found that the average US developer is 31.6 years old.
- The median age of Americans is 37.9.

(For the curious, the median age of participants in this edition of ***Social, Silver Surfers*** is 70. Average age was 66-and-a-half.)

As New York City-based ad industry pro [Lisa Reswick wrote](#) for the Washington Post,

“This obsession with young talent may be short-sighted ... people older than 50 have double the discretionary spending power of any other age group. The average head of household is 52. The average new car buyer is 56. The average Mac user is 54. So marketers must appeal to older consumers and may soon regret banishing everyone who saw the Beatles sing ‘I Want to Hold Your Hand’ live on the ‘Ed Sullivan Show.’

“In your 20s and 30s, it’s pretty hard to understand the mind-set, needs and tastes of those decades older.”

Part of that mindset is the function-over-fun concept noted above.

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



The prevailing attitude of older adults is that the web is a useful tool. They’re ready to pick the right tool for each job, with your help.

Marketers can leverage this insight in many ways to achieve greater digital success with matures and improve their ROI.

- **User Experience Design (UX).** Described as the “human-first way of designing products,” UX will enhance the ease of use and satisfaction a customer enjoys during their interactions with your company.

Make sure that younger team members and vendors understand it’s older-human-first design that is required for your organization to succeed.

Navigation and plug-ins that might be intuitive for a Millennial might leave an older-human confused or frustrated. Not the best way to start building a relationship. This does not mean you will end up with a dated-looking site, but one that work well for people of all ages and technical abilities.

- **Testing.** Good UX designers will test web designs with older adults at various stages of the development process, including prototyping. We recommend you leverage user testing beyond the launch as well.

A/B testing of landing pages and emails ensures that what you ultimately publish has the best shot at successfully converting visitors. Users who fit your ideal customer profile should beta test new features, and can provide feedback when a feature or even a specific webpage is under-performing.

- **Demos and training videos.**

One PPAC usher told us, “I wasn’t confident that I’d be able to use the online sign up system right away. But I was confident there would be people to help me learn!”

Think about your own site. Are you building confidence by helping users learn? Anticipating stumbling blocks and providing guidance?



Identify features which are unusual or a little more “advanced,” and are under-used by visitors. Then, create a video that shows each tool in use, with step-by-step directions and a little reinforcement of the benefits. Make it easy to access video tutorials on the website, as 55+ housing developer Traditions of America did with its [Interactive Floor Plans explainer](#). Deliver videos by email as part of an onboarding series.

If your heavy users are local, consider scheduling a “demo” of the tool that subscribers or log-in users can attend when you introduce new functionality.

These heavy users will appreciate both the education and the feeling that they are VIPs, the first to know about new features. The demo can be recorded and made available on demand for future reference or as new members join your online community.

- **Sell the steak not the sizzle.** Yes, that interactive floor plan feature is very cool. But older adults want to know less about the cool factor and more about the helpfulness factor of any tool.

You'll get more users to try a web feature if in the online description you emphasize utility over novelty.

- **Don't add silly stuff.** Bells and whistles may make your designers feel good but they could interfere with a senior's ability to access or navigate the website. Unnecessary slideshows (vs. putting the information on one printable page), floating GIFs that appear at random, music that plays automatically ... These aren't tools. They're torture.

Remember point #1 in this list, about UX: keep your design older-human-first – include just what is needed / desired for an enjoyable online experience.

Your marketing goals are the #2 consideration; what content and features will motivate users to act the way you need them to for business success? Everything else is bloat.

MATURE AND MOBILE

Over the years Creating Results' research has shifted with our audience.

In the 3rd edition, for the first time, we asked respondents to not just tell us if they went online at all but to share how they went online.

46% of all respondents aged 40 and older say they go online primarily via a desktop or laptop computer. 15% say they go online mostly via a mobile device. And 39% say they split their online access between mobile and desktop/laptop.

This means 54% of all *social, silver surfers* surveyed are going online via mobile much or all of the time.

There were some differences in mobile use by demographic select:

- **AGE:**

- + 72% of Silent Generation seniors use mostly a desktop / laptop to go online vs. 13% of Gen X who access the internet that way.
- + 30% of Gen X are mostly mobile in their internet use, vs. 13% of Younger Boomers and 21% of Older Boomers.
- + Younger Boomers are most likely to split their access between mobile or desktop: 62% of this cohort report doing so vs. 57% of Gen X and 23% of Silent Generation.

- **GENDER:**

- + Men in our study were less likely to use mobile much or all of the time for internet access: 44% of males did so vs. 50% of female respondents.
- + It's worth noting that women who participated in the survey also were more likely than men to have children living at home, were more likely to be Caregivers and more likely to be employed part- or full-time in addition to their child/elder care duties.

- **INCOME:**

- + 60% of those reporting less than \$50k a year in household income go online primarily via a desktop or laptop.
- + 42% of those with an annual income of \$100k-\$150k say they go online primarily via desktop; 58% in this income bracket use mobile devices all or most of the time.
- + 34% of those with more than \$200k in annual household income are using desktops as their primary way to access the internet; 67% use mobile devices all or most of the time.

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY ...



Mary: Lagging, Leaping with Technology

Mary, 84, has a hand-me-down laptop (from her grandson) that she primarily uses to generate volunteer committee reports. She believes “email” is a social network.

Her grandson comes from college a few times a year and reminds her how to delete and file email messages away in AOL. (The index card with instructions always gets lost.)

Mary has a cell phone that she regularly loses in her house or purse, forgets to charge and/or turn on.

You might think this senior is behind the times, technology-wise. And yet ...

A voracious reader, Mary has a Kindle connected to her local library for instant borrowing.

A second tablet, a Kindle Fire, is used for online banking, social networking (Facebook), emails, daily online horoscopes and games.

She upgraded to a smartphone years ago so she could take digital photos on vacations. She asked for a GPS system at Christmas for navigation help when daytripping to similarly-aged friends who “are too old to get around.”

Mary's also leapt into messaging / chat.

“My goddaughter had me start using that – what was it called? Instant chat or something like that. I would log into my AOL account, check my email and then we’d send messages back and forth. This was when she was in college.

“Now she’s graduated, living away. So now we talk with Facetime. She tries sending me texts on my cell phone but I don’t know how to answer. And I only go on Facebook once a week. With Facetime I can just talk to her. It happens right away and is easy.”

Lagging or leaping when it comes to technology and social media?

Sometimes it’s a bit of both.



Is your website leaping with or lagging behind the older adults you’re trying to attract? [Click here for an online assessment, with tips for improving ROI.](#)

TOO HOT? TOO COLD? MAKING WEBSITES JUST RIGHT

Roughly 200 years ago, a story was being told and re-told around England. It was the tale of a vagrant old woman breaking into a woodland home and being dissatisfied with the food and furnishings found within.

Even in fairy tales, it seems, older adults lose plum parts to the young.

The tale was recast, with a little girl replacing “Silver-Hair:” Goldilocks and the Three Bears has become one of the most popular fairy tales of all time. Readers, listeners and story-tellers of all ages seem to relate to the concept of a middle path through two opposites, of a “just right” choice found at the mid-point between two “wrong” ones.

Today’s “Silver-Hairs” are finding far more than three choices online. There are an endless number and variety of porridges, chairs and beds.

And mature consumers are finding many choices that are “wrong” – the list of pet peeves seems to grow with each edition of **Social, Silver Surfers**.

These too cold/too hot issues can lead targets away from taking the digital actions we marketers want them to take. They're running out the door of the cottage instead of into the arms of our brand.

Not Willing to Grin & Bear It

We asked: “What are your biggest Pet Peeves about websites?”

40+ers answered: “Pull up a chair. This may take a while.”

The number of “Pet Peeves” reported has grown over the years and respondents are, for the most part, increasingly dissatisfied.

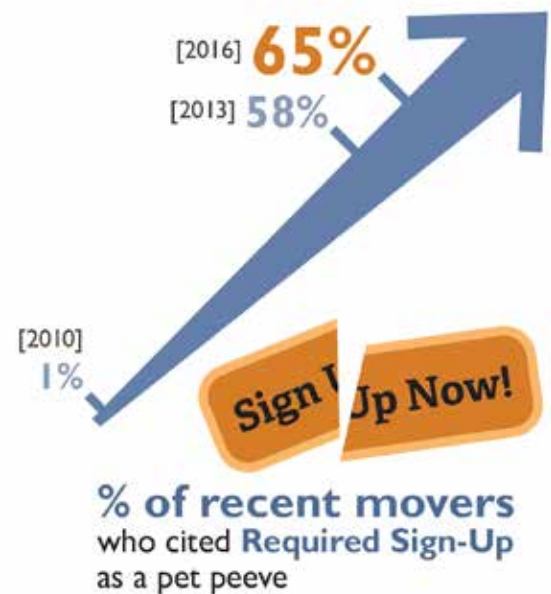
Our research team clustered these annoyances ... er ... “opportunities for improvement” ... into three categories. Below we offer some critical stats and some suggestions for preventing Goldilocks visitors from becoming hot under the collar:

“Jumping Hoops.”

- I. Required Sign-Up.** Complaints about having to register in order to get information online have soared from 1% in 2010 to 79% in 2013 to 87% in 2016. Especially frustrated are Older Boomers.

Richard, a very tech-savvy former businessman, told Creating Results: “My source of irritation is #1 passwords ... You can't do anything without registering now. Go through the whole password, the email address, and that is extremely annoying.

I will often not pursue that and try other means because it's an extreme timewaster ... You have to join or register or become a member ... It's somewhat deceptive now. They offer more information but the gateways are more complicated.”



INSIGHT TO ACTION: Reconsider required sign-up. At what point and for what information should you request? Build a relationship and earn the trust of your prospect before asking for their contact information.

(We'll talk more about sign-up later in this chapter.)

- 2. Needs Special Apps.** Sure, your website visitors could enjoy that too-high chair if they were just willing to download a related “chair assist” software. But most won't and those that do will do so begrudgingly.

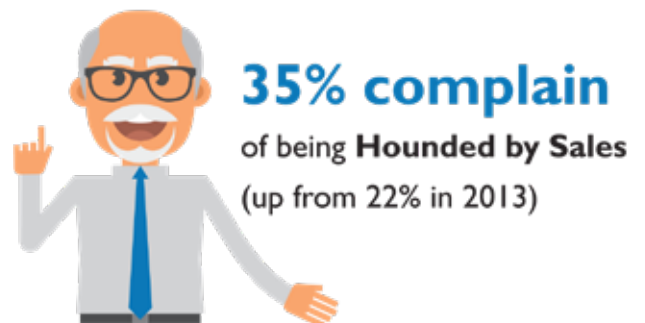
Requiring proprietary or specialized set-ups in order for mature consumers to access content is a pet peeve of 59% of all respondents.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Challenge any web developer who recommends a feature that requires visitors to download an app or have the most current browser in order to realize the benefits of the tool.

When designing your UX, research what popular tools could be incorporated into your site in a “plug and play” fashion. If you use WordPress, pick widgets that are more commonly used and therefore likely will feel familiar / trustworthy to a greater number of older adults.

INSIGHT TO ACTION, PART 2: How do you know what tools and features already have been adopted by your targets? You could ask them, during the design phase of a new site or via polls of heavy users. You also could use your website analytics system to see audience browsers, devices and other technical details. These stats can highlight popular set-ups / constraints of which developers should be aware.

- 3. Hounded by Sales.** Goldilocks ducked out of the cottage as quickly as she could, but four in 10 mature consumers tell us they feel like the bears have pursued them across the woods and just will not stop yammering away.



INSIGHT TO ACTION: Use automated (drip) email campaigns to nurture new leads, with triggered workflows that identify when that lead is shifting from a discovery stage of the purchase journey to an action stage. Train sales teams so that they recognize the line between “persistence” and “pest.”

Design / UX (User Experience).

1. **Slow.** 46% of all **silver surfers** are frustrated by slow websites. Unsurprisingly, it's the younger respondents who feel this most intensely; 55% of Gen Xers surveyed complain about site speed.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Google Webmaster Tools are one way to identify pages or elements of a website that are too slow. Google also offers advice for fixing these speed issues.

2. **Poor Navigation, aka “Where do I go?”** Like several fairy tale characters, too many older adults (40%) are losing their way in the (web) woods.

Four in 10 people say confusing Navigation is a Pet Peeve, and Gen Xers surveyed are the most annoyed, with 53% of this cohort citing the frustration.

Older adults hate to have their time wasted, and participant comments reveal that seems to be driving the feelings around this pet peeve.

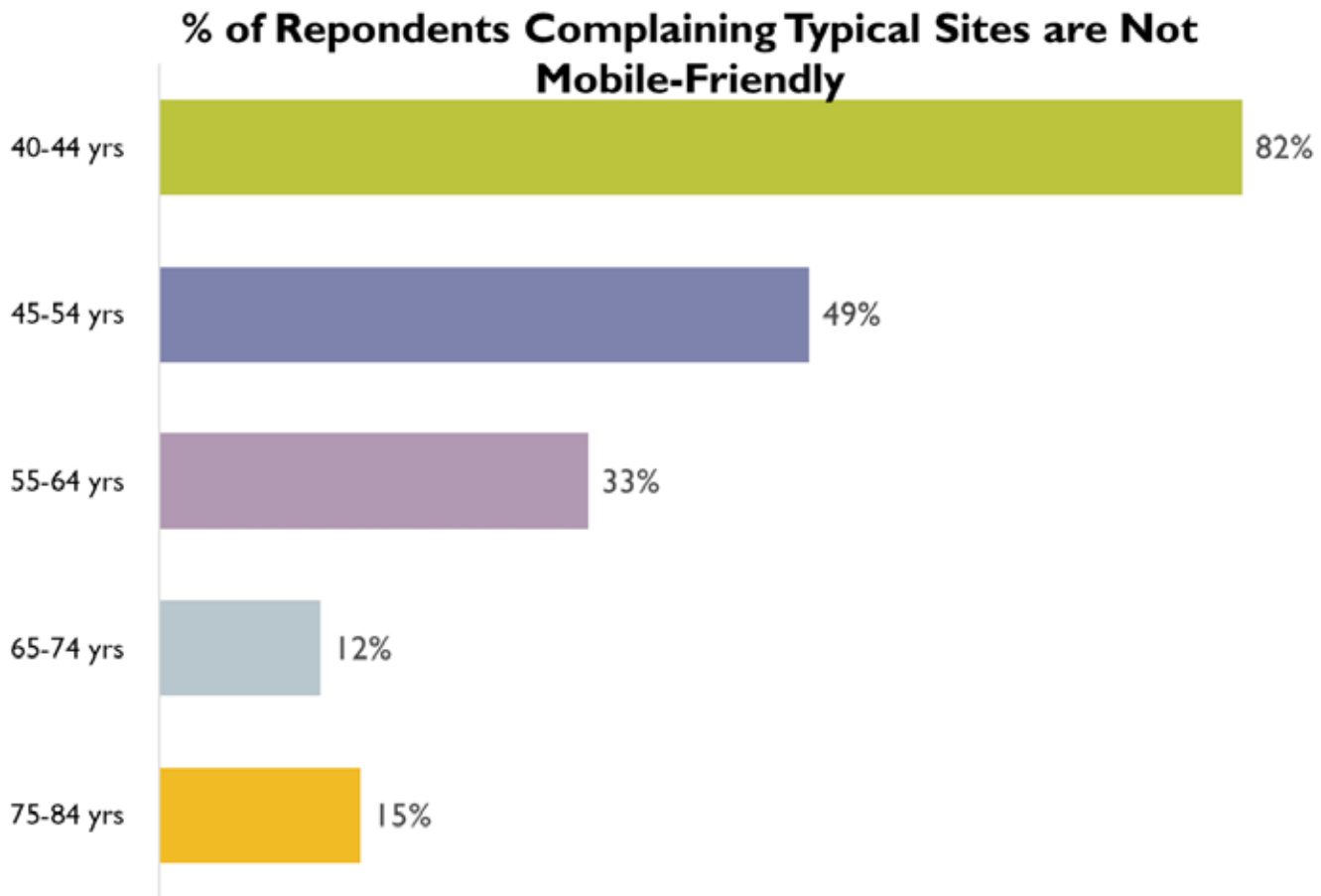
- Michael, a 70-something in Delaware: easy navigation “takes less time. I'd probably come back and use that site again.”
- Judith, nearly 80: “I want to click through the windows quickly and easily. The link has to be blue.”
- Judith, retiree: “Easy to navigate would mean easy to get to. It would mean finding what I'm looking for without any hunting and pecking.”
- Barbara, mid-70s: easy navigation means “Easy to get from something that you're reading to something that's related ... Those links absolutely need to be a different color [dark blue], and underlined so you know it's a link.”

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Don't get cute with navigation cues. See earlier tips regarding UX design and user testing.

3. **Automatic Music.** Since we began this study in 2010, the number of people who are turned off when your music selections turn on has more than doubled, from 18% to 38%.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Whether it's an autoplay video or "background music," turn the sound off!

4. **Not Mobile Friendly.** With increased use of mobile devices comes a NEW pet peeve! 28% of all respondents complain that websites aren't rendering properly on mobile devices. This data point is highly correlated with age:



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SOURCE: Social, Silver Surfers 3rd ed.

EBOOK: bit.ly/50plusDigital

INSIGHT TO ACTION: This is another area where Google Webmaster Tools can help you identify the problem. (As can any of your prospects, just by firing up their smartphones.)

We humbly suggest you turn to experts such as a marketing agency or experienced web developer to fix the problem and build a responsive website. A true mobile-friendly site doesn't just re-size images to the size of the browser window. It delivers a positive experience no matter what the scale.

Content.

1. **Can't Find Contact Info.** Nearly ½ of all older adults (48%) say they can't find a way to call, email or otherwise connect with organizations via the organizations' websites.

We say, huh?

Too many brands are investing heavily in online and offline marketing that drives to their websites, yet failing to give interested visitors an easy and highly visible way to connect. What a sad waste of the prospect's time and the organization's money.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Put a large, easy-to-read phone number at the top of every page. Make “Contact Us” pages accessible from the top menu or main menu on every page. This isn't the place to get clever with wordplay or funky design.

2. **Don't Say Price.** Another common website failing that defies logic is not providing the price for a product or service to the people expected to purchase said product or service. 46% of all 40+ respondents, including 55% of Younger Boomers, cite this as a pet peeve.

Note that the problem is even greater in 55+ / senior housing. Our research team asked this same “pet peeves” question of matures who had moved within the last two years or who had assisted an older adult with their move. 68% of recent Movers and 75% of Move Helpers complain that prices are not revealed on websites. (More on this in a later chapter.)

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Take a tip from Caspar the Friendly Ghost and become more transparent. Share your prices or price ranges for more complex products/services. At the very least, explain how your pricing is structured, what's included and what's not.

3. **Outdated Info.** Is it that brands lack financial resources, lack time or lack commitment to generating new content? Either way, 36% of all *silver surfers* complain websites frequently are not as fresh as they need to be to deliver a motivating experience.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Make a commitment to updating your web content regularly, swapping photos and revising copy and/or adding new items that answer common prospect questions.

Also, set an annual appointment on your calendar to update the website copyright line on January 1. Copyright lines function much the way “sell-by” date stamps do in the grocery store; don’t give leads a reason to suspect you don’t pass the sniff test.

4. **Ads.** A NEW complaint in the third edition. 5% of respondents took the time to choose “other” and then specify that advertisements – pop-up, sidebar and more – are now ruining their enjoyment of the typical website.

Long-Distance Caregivers are most likely to be frustrated. They cited this “pet peeve” at a rate of 3x the average.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Your marketing team understands that campaigns need eyeballs. They may have good intentions about making sure that every site visitor is aware of new incentives. But most seniors think anything that pops up is an advertisement and an ad is an annoyance. Be thoughtful in how you position special offers.

[CLICK TO WATCH FULL VIDEO](#)

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY...



“Every effin’ page is filled with annoyances”

There was a new frustration cited in this year’s survey, which seems to be reflecting “advances” in computer programming over the years as well as marketers’ determination to sell, sell, sell! 28% of those who participated in our survey say “Page Items Move or Jump” is a pet peeve. Baby Boomers hate this anti-user experience the most.

Just how irritating is this practice is to older adult targets? We’ll let Ronni Bennett of Time Goes By explain.

Ronni is a digital pioneer, the managing editor for CBS-TV’s first website in the late 1990s. She runs a blog that satisfies thousands of highly-engaged older adult readers. She often humorously catalogues her experiences with sites that don’t respect their visitors.

The typical website brings out Ronni’s “Crabby Old Lady” persona. In her words:

“In the upper left corner of the Washington Post home page is a photo that changes every four or five seconds ... so when Crabby is reading something below, the text jumps up and down as the different sized photos load and Crabby loses her place. Not to mention that that her brain goes all wonky from the jerky movement ...

“The number of animated ads has increased so there is hardly any site on which Crabby isn’t distracted by flickering off at the edge of her vision field as she is trying to read. It makes her brain go all squirrely.”

Squirrelly, wonky, jerky and CRABBY. Is that the experience you want visitors to enjoy on your website?

This year Ronni – a professional blogger – wondered if the internet is even worth it anymore, given the invasion of auto-play videos, pop-up everythings and moving GIFs.

“Every effin’ page is filled with annoyances and the amount of it has been growing for years ...

“Do they think we don’t notice what websites we’re on when these cruel and (Crabby believes) dangerous interruptions occur? Surely, by disrupting thought and focus they are rotting our brains. There are plenty of studies showing how short our attention spans have become. What must all the unnecessary disruptions do to us?”

Marketers, what say you? Has your team given any thought to the disruptions and distractions, and how they might divert a potential customer from a mutually-satisfying relationship?

(Again, this isn’t a new frustration but a growing one. Read more and add your own comments at <http://www.timegoesby.net/weblog/2008/02/blog-and-intern.html>, or <http://www.timegoesby.net/weblog/2009/09/why-crabby-old-lady-spends-less-time-online.html>, or <http://www.timegoesby.net/weblog/2017/03/crabby-old-lady-is-the-internet-worth-it-anymore.html>. Tell Ronni we sent you.)

Golden Features to Lock in Satisfaction

We asked: “What are your favorite website attributes, features or tools?”

40+ers answered: “Tools that make it easy on me.”

The “Favorite Features” of mature consumers online have remained pretty consistent through the years.

- Easy Navigation – 75% of respondents to this edition:

- ✚ Ranked #1 in 2016, #1 in 2013

- Printer Friendly Pages – 61% of respondents:

- ✚ Ranked #2 in 2016, #3 in 2013, #2 in 2010

- Integrated Search – 52% of respondents:

- ✚ Ranked #3 in 2016, #2 in 2013, #1 in 2010

What these features have in common is to remove obstacles in the path between a senior and the information they need / desire to make a decision.

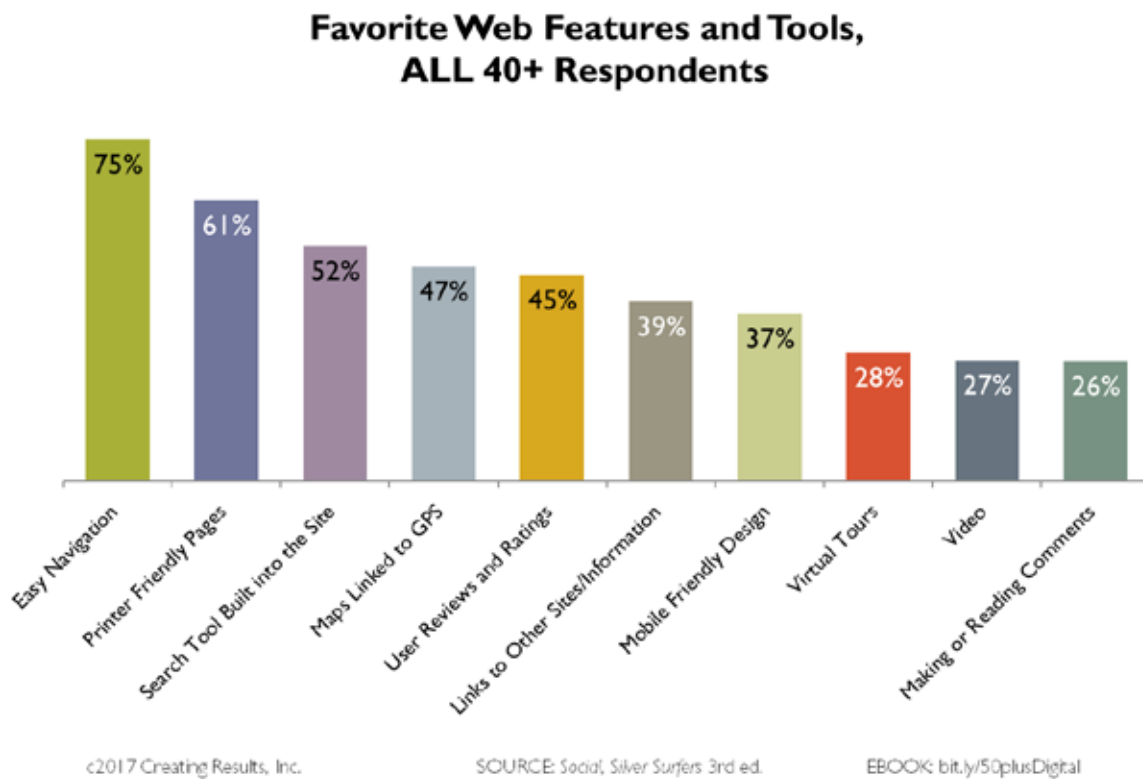
Easy Navigation and Integrated Search Tools are tops among ALL generational cohorts. They are most important to GenX prospects. 82% of GenXers name Easy Navigation as a favorite and 52% praise Integrated Search Tools.

It's as if they want your site to function the way some managers prefer employees function: Be Brief, Be Bright and Be Gone.

We suspect it's because these younger respondents are especially pressed for time as they try to juggle work, family, care for aging parents and more.

In contrast, the older the respondent, the more they typically value Printer Friendly Pages. 64% of Silent Generation seniors and 64% of Older Boomers selected this functionality as a "favorite."

These are the top 10 features/tools for ALL ages 40+:



The digital world moves extremely fast; therefore, many survey respondents now praise features that were barely on their online radar three years ago.

- Maps Linked to GPS
- User Reviews & Ratings
- Mobile Friendly Design – especially appreciated by Gen X (70%) and Younger Boomers (61%) and the more affluent (46% of those with annual household incomes of \$150k or more)
- Virtual Tours – more on this feature in a later chapter on recent movers

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



Too many organizations are spending money to design sites that irritate their prospects.

Whether you call it User-Centricity, (older) Human-First Design or Customer-Driven Marketing ... putting yourself in the prospect's shoes will make your journey together much more successful. It will ensure that you aren't wasting money and reputation when you design your website. Especially when building sites for mobile users, maximize those small screens and you'll create a big impact on visitors:

- Make it easy to get around (*navigation*)
- Make it easy to print (*printer-friendly*)
- Make it easy to find (*internal search*)
- Make it easy to connect (*prominent phone numbers and contact information*)

THE RISE OF THE non-conFORMists

Like that famous glass slipper, online forms seem to be a poor fit for most older consumers.

Of those surveyed for this most recent edition, roughly seven in 10 respondents say that Required Sign-Up is a website "Pet Peeve."

- 65% of those who had moved in the last two years voice this complaint, as do ...
- 71% of "Move Helpers" who assisted an older adult in their journey to a new home, and
- 86% of Caregivers, and
- 87% of those who were not Movers or Move Helpers.

Older adults are not just complaining about sign-up. The actions of matures online reveal more about their feelings.

Only 22% of all recent Movers say they have filled out a form online – compare to the 60% of this segment who have printed something out.

29% of Move Helpers say they have filled out a request for information form – compare to the 68% of the group who printed or the 50% who have called a community after visiting its website.

Why are so many mature web users what we like to call “non-conFORMists”?

Our team sees are a variety of reasons.

1. Frustration that a one-time request for information leads to an endless stream of marketing – respondents frequently told us they were unpleasantly surprised to be put on a mailing list.
2. A feeling that the “submit” button means submitting to pushy sales teams – 35% of Movers, 54% of Move Helpers and 40% of non-Movers/non-Move Helpers complain of being “hounded”
3. The design of many forms is not senior-friendly and/or underestimates the realities of aging. Struggles with eyesight and dexterity (“fat fingers”) and interface fatigue (“gorilla arms”) all increase the likelihood of mistakes. Increased frustration typically leads to decreased desire to even try filling out a form.
4. Most importantly, there are widespread concerns about the privacy and security of online forms. This fear isn't new but it is growing. A greater percentage of all respondents express this worry with each edition of **Social, Silver Surfers**.

In our most recent study, 75% of Movers and 75% of Move Helpers report form fears. So do 89% of the active adults who had not recently moved and nine in 10 Baby Boomers (92% of Older Boomers and 90% of Youngers).



75% concerned
about Form Privacy/Security

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY ...



Marvin: "Privacy is Always in the Forefront of My Mind"

Marvin, a self-described Luddite, is in his mid-80s.

At the same time, he's actively traveling, is a devoted and generous grandfather, and is the very-involved head of a volunteer senior theater group. He uses technology because he has to, not because he wants to. Marvin's younger girlfriend is very tech-savvy and loves him enough to connect him to a tech support group that makes house calls.

"I don't even bank via the net because I know how insecure it is. Privacy is always in the forefront of my mind.

"Unless it's something I really intend to purchase, I usually do not fill out the form. For instance, I had to join a portal that links all my hundreds of doctors so they know exactly what state of tottling I'm in. I put it off so long that when I finally addressed it, with the help of a friend, it had expired. Better the link expired than me, right?

"I am not from a generation that does things by computer. Today I called up to make a reservation. I did not go online. Tomorrow I will do the same thing. Because I am inept I always seem to commit an error. Therefore the forms that I fill out online are only those which are completely necessary."

Marvin believes that only forms connected with credit cards and financial institutions are completely necessary. Even then, he has a process for tackling online forms.

“First I scan the size of what I’m going to fill out. Then I scan the type of questions. I see the ones that are circled ‘you must fill out this.’”

If Marvin’s triage leads him to think the form will be just too much work, he’ll pick up the phone or visit the office instead.

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



Creating Results understands the critical role marketing teams play in helping organizations meet sales goals. As a marketing agency, we are laser-focused on generating online conversions that the sales team can nurture and close. There is a lot of pressure to keep capturing those leads. The problem, however, is that many older prospects feel that they’re the ones being pressured.

The glass slipper pinches. What’s a prince marketer to do?

Here are three ways you can better woo those fleeing from forms.

I. Ask, is the form necessary?

To quote the 2013 *Social, Silver Surfers* e-book:

“Allow people their anonymity unless the information is truly unique/high value and can’t be found elsewhere for free. Consider offering a free excerpt, a topline report or other sample which can prove the value of the resource you offer. If possible, program the site so that it recognizes frequent flyers and saves time of entering and re-entering their information.”

Marvin (see surfer spotlight) said even he, a definite non-conFORMist, will consider a form if he can be persuaded that the information to be provided is worth the effort: “I think the end result is the definitive reason for whether I fill out the form.”

2. When a form is called for, take steps to address the fears of your targets.

Include a link to a privacy policy. Tell them how their information will be protected (“never sold or rented”). Make it clear whether or not they are opting in to ongoing communications or if this is a one-time exchange.

3. Experiment with a “less is more” approach, i.e. “asking for less private information will get more leads into my funnel for later nurturing.”

It has been our experience that most senior living sales teams ask a lot of required questions on online forms. They think it will save them time if the prospect has already filled out name, address, phone, timeframe for move, preferred location, rank, serial number, name of their first grandchild ...

Prospects don’t want to spend time filling out many fields. The more fields you require, the less likely they’ll be to fill out the form.

In one test for a CCRC client, we reduced the number of fields on a landing page from five to three.

Significantly, one of the fields we removed was the request for a phone number. We also removed a drop down field because these can be tough on mobile users.

The result? The number of form completions tripled after the change.

Based on this, we’ve shortened forms across several client websites and happily see positive results.

Encourage your sales and marketing teams to speak honestly with each other about what fields are truly required. Ask just the right number of questions. Then, test the form design to be sure it’s easy to complete, no matter what the prospect age or the device used.



4. Make sure the shoe fits.

Don't assume that because someone has completed a form, they are ready to buy. People take off their shoes every day. Not all are vying to fit their feet into a slipper held by a prince; many are just trying to get through airport security.

Cookies and analytics can help you uncover warmer leads without forcing them to complete a form. Behavioral analytics systems track what site visitors do BEFORE they register, delivering actionable insights to improve website experience (and ROI).

Lead InSite is one such platform, focused on the senior living industry. They report that “80% of website research is done before a sales prospect provides their contact information.”

Use digital tools to nurture the 80% of visitors not yet ready to buy. Your website can deliver dynamic content based on past online behavior, speeding visitors to conversion. Incorporate “calls to engage” and create opportunities for anonymous interaction. That way, when it does come time to fill out a form, it won't feel like a TSA frisking – they'll want to act.



How would silver surfers grade your website? [Click here to try our interactive assessment tool, with tips for improving ROI.](#)

PART 3: MATURE MOVERS AND MOVE HELPERS

ON THE MOVE

Creating Results is a full-service marketing agency that helps clients in a variety of industries improve their marketing ROI by helping them to understand and motivate mature consumers.

We've designed customer service curriculums for wealth managers ... helped a Virginia travel destination win regional and national awards ... increased awareness of a team of estate lawyers ... developed and launched capital campaigns for non-profits ...

Two significant segments of our client portfolio involve people who are making major and expensive decisions to move: 55+ real estate developers and continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs, also known as life plan communities).

To better serve our clients AND the older adults who research, purchase/rent and move to new homes each year, our research includes questions specific to recent Movers.

This edition expanded to include questions specific to Move Helpers, people over the age of 40 who assisted an older adult with their decision/move to a new community or home.

Roughly one quarter of all respondents to the web-specific survey instrument had moved within the last two years. 20% of non-Movers qualified themselves as Move Helpers.

This edition also marks the first time our researchers qualified participants as Caregivers, recognizing the sometimes-outsized influence a caregiver can have on the move decision. 22% of respondents were Caregivers; another 8% were Long-Distance Caregivers.

In this section, we'll provide DO's and DON'Ts for those marketing real estate / senior living to older adults.

THE BUYER'S (OR RENTER'S) JOURNEY

A lot of marketing people talk about a purchase funnel – with the idea that you put a bunch of leads in at one end and a percentage of them emerge from the other as happy customers.

The reality of a move to a new home or community is far more complex. From the organizational view, there is a lot of engagement happening in the funnel and there are many outside influences.

From the consumer's point of view, it's not a funnel at all. It's a purchase journey.

Understanding how Movers use the web in that journey can help your team improve sales and ROI.

The Journey Begins ...

For nearly half of all mature Movers, the internet is the first place they turn when beginning their home purchase / move journey. Those who helped older adults with a move in the last two years also used the web, but in a different way.

And, that's not the only time either group will turn to the web, which is an important insight to apply to integrated marketing plans.

Mature Movers are prompted to go online by a variety of triggers, at a variety of points in their journey.

The older the mover, the more likely they will research a home online after a friend or family member points them there. Print advertising, mailings and signs also will send them to the web.

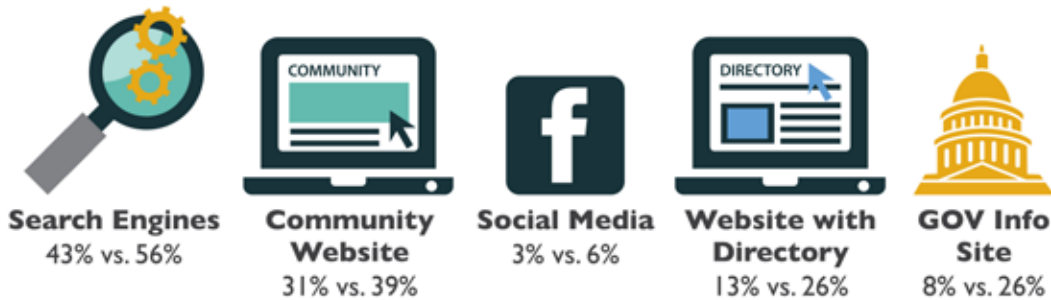
However most Move Helpers (37% of this segment), especially those who are Long-Distance Caregivers (62% of this subsegment), say they take charge of online research and then share what they learn with their loved one.

Our research finds these helpers also say they employ a wider variety of sources in their research than do the Movers themselves.

Many of the sites Move Helpers rely on are not direct sources such as a builder or Realtor® website; they're curated or even crowd-influenced sources such as directories and government information sites.

Popular Online Tools/Sources

Used for New Home/Community Research (Recent Movers vs. Move Helpers)



The reliance on search is dramatic for the youngest Movers surveyed – more than nine in 10 report using this source. It's also big for older Movers: four in 10 of our 75-84 year old Movers used search engines when conducting their research.

Social media is one of the least-used tools by matures during the move journey. It ranked eighth out of nine options in our survey, used by 3% of recent Movers and 6% of Move Helpers.

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



Prospects may go digital first and digital often has the lowest cost per lead. However, your marketing cannot be digital only.

DO: When planning, create a strategic, integrated marketing program in which offline and online channels work together.

DO: Be sure to invest in a well-optimized website that will rank high in organic search results.

Search has consistently been the #1 online tool of *social, silver surfers* who recently moved. Invest in SEO so that your site will be presented to prospects by search engines at the critical point of inquiry.

DO: Many directory and government listings now incorporate user feedback and reviews. These “virtual references” could get you crossed off a prospect’s list before they ever make it to your website. Your team should invest money and time to confirm the listings are accurate and effective at driving links to your site.

Work across departments to ensure that your organization consistently delivers positive experiences to customers. Quickly and appropriately address negative comments and guide happy customers through posting positive reviews.

Stop! (In the Name of Leads)

In any epic journey, the hero or heroes will face many obstacles. Some so daunting the reader fears the character might turn around and abandon the effort.

Marketing new homes and community living to mature consumers shouldn’t be an epic journey. And yet ...

Many developers and providers are actually encouraging interested web visitors to abandon them. They are building daunting obstacles right into their sites – the dreaded Required Sign-Up forms.

In the last chapter we noted that complaints about having to register in order to access online information have soared over the three editions of ***Social, Silver Surfers***.

Among recent Movers, the percentage of older adults citing “Required Sign-Up” as a peeve has risen from 1% in 2010 to 58% in 2013 to 65% in 2016!

A higher percentage of Move Helpers – 71% – also voice this frustration.

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



As a marketer you must have the discipline to balance the importance of capturing leads, against the need to respect this feedback from older adults. They're feeling too pressured, too soon. It is preventing many of them from ever engaging with your brand or stepping foot in your community.

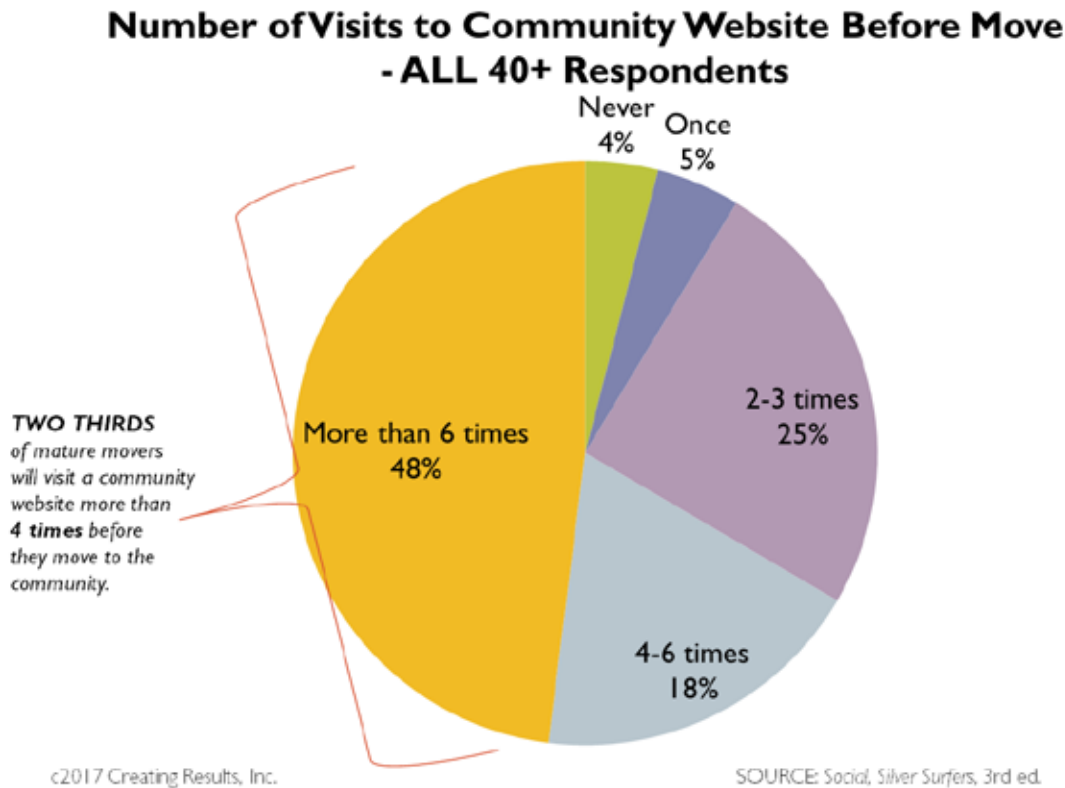
DON'T: Put information that is freely available elsewhere, or seems “basic” to a prospect, behind a sign-up form.

DO: Prove your value and foster trust by making it easy for prospects to get price sheets, floor plans and other desirable information. You'll make their journey a lot less epic and a lot more likely to feature a happy ending.

The Long and Winding Road

As noted previously, mature Movers will visit a community website at a variety of points in their purchase journey for a variety of reasons.

Whether online or offline, older adults move cautiously when it comes to a move decision. Two-thirds of respondents say they visited the website of their chosen community more than four times before they moved in.



FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



Imagine a prospect returned to your campus again and again. Would you repeat the same conversation each time? Show them the same model home every time?

Instead, your sales team would tailor each visit to the visitor's needs and interests at that point in the journey. You'd keep interactions fresh and lively. The same care must be taken with your website.

DO: Keep the information and photography up to date. Have content that makes them want to revisit because they find your site to be a valuable use of their time.

DON'T: Treat every visitor the same. Return visitors have different priorities than those who are just becoming aware of your brand. Create pages and features that speak to both, and guide them along their decisionmaking journey.

DIAL M FOR MOVERS

The Alfred Hitchcock classic movie, “Dial M for Murder,” features an intricate, shifting plot.

Mature Movers are far less mysterious. Whether in responding to our survey or in their behavior on your website, these internet users are perfectly clear about what they need to find in your site to make their home purchase plot advance.

Our team consistently advises senior living and 55+ housing clients to “Lead with Lifestyle.” Our experience has been that older adults are concerned about whether they’ll fit in to a community. Their homes are full of comfortable stuff and memories; marketers need to entice them to move.

The **Social, Silver Surfers** research backs up that advice to a point.

While lifestyle is still very important, the FIRST thing prospects are looking for when they get to your site is to determine if the community offers the type of home they want at a price point that they can afford. Lifestyle matters once they can see themselves affording a home they like. To figure that out, they need product details.

- 28% of all respondents say they go to a community website looking first for Floor Plans.
- 11% first look for information about Home Features.
- 18% of all recent Movers over 40 say they are looking for a Sense of Lifestyle on their first visit to a community website.

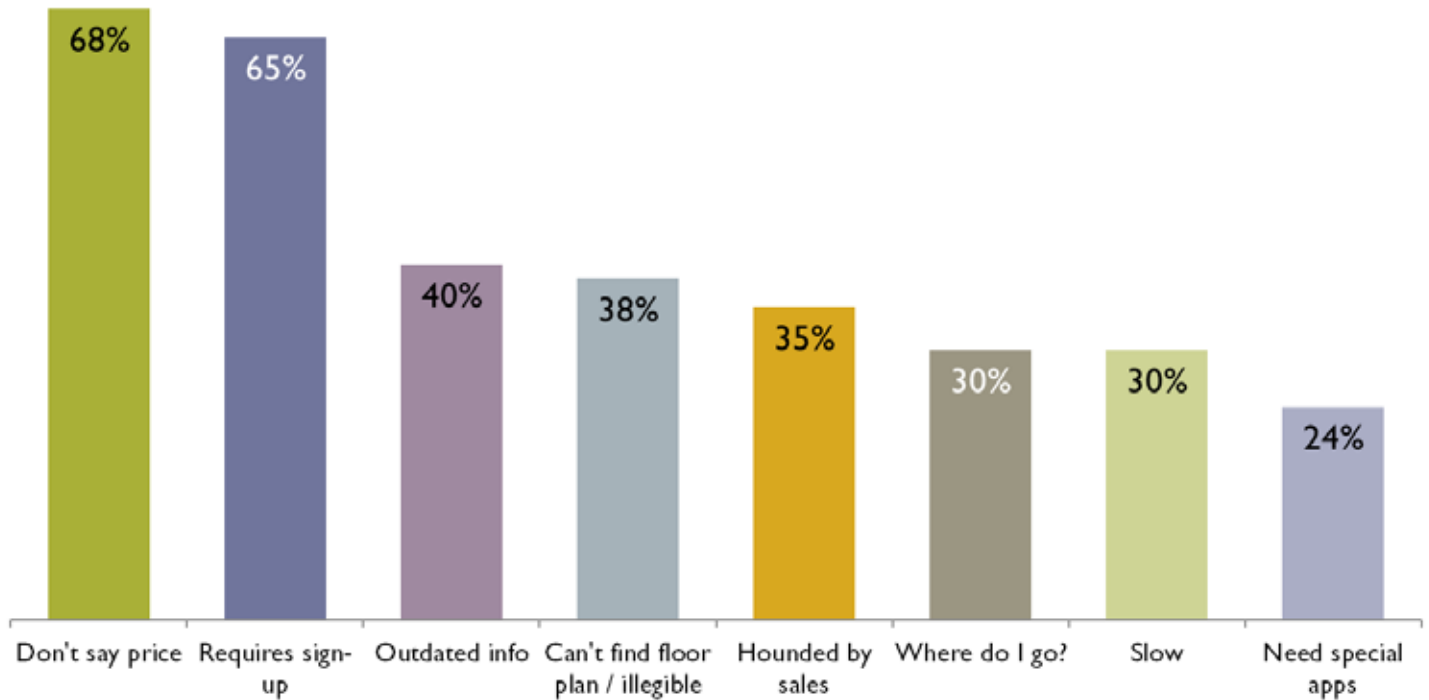
“Product” information – Floor Plans, Features – is especially important to younger Matures, GenX and Baby Boomers (the typical active adult homebuyer target).

The oldest Movers (75-84 years old Silent Generation, the typical CCRC target) tell us they have a different priority for that first web visit: Pricing. 30% of this group first arrives at the community website seeking Pricing and/or Fees.

It is especially disappointing to prospects when a website fails to provide the information they seek.

68% of all recent Movers over the age of 40 complain that housing websites don't clearly state prices. Another 38% say they Cannot Find Floor Plans.

Housing Website Pet Peeves - ALL 40+ Recent Movers



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SOURCE: Social, Silver Surfers, 3rd ed.

In other words, what they desire / need to learn is being kept from them. One CCRC resident told us that this secrecy around floor plans cost her:

"I would have made better choices and better decisions. I ended up with [a residence] with no dishwasher. And I kept asking, can I see the plans? Can I see the plans? It came to the week before I was to move in and I only had one drawer."

The secrecy has cost the organization as well. The resident said she has been reluctant to refer others to the community for this reason.

After making significant investments in online and offline marketing which drives web visitors to a website, why are so many communities shrouding themselves in mystery?

Taking the Mystery out of Prices and Fees

As seen above, the #1 frustration older adults have with housing websites is that they “don’t say what the price actually is.”

In this edition of the study, 68% of Movers voiced this frustration along with 75% of Move Helpers.

If we translate this to the real world, it would be equivalent to having a prospect ask again and again about fees. But the sales counselor responds with information about the pool. Or directs them to look at the cool new juice bar.

By not including information about costs on their websites, CCRCs and active adult communities are not answering the most pressing question prospects are asking.

Mature Movers are best at telling this tale:

Websites without pricing left me feeling “slightly irritated. I needed that to make a decision. And I needed to contact the organization to get the price. I like up front things. It’s like buying a bed; you cannot get the price.”
– Ursula, early 80s

“When I want to know something, I go and compulsively look up everything I can. Every review, comment and article I can get a hold of ...

“I rarely ever find anything adequate about pricing on just about anything. It drives me crazy. You have to click and say order before they’ll tell you what you’ll pay. [It makes me feel] suspicious. Anybody who tells you anything is telling you a fraction of the facts. I’m sneaky myself so I know the tricks.”
– Don, early 70s

Creating Results has been sharing this data-driven insight with senior living providers for more than six years. And for more than six years, many have pushed back against our advice.

You can’t put pricing on a CCRC / active adult / custom home / assisted living website, they say.

- Our pricing is too complicated for people to understand.
- The fee structure is something only our counselors can explain.
- We need to get people excited first and build value before we discuss pricing.
- People will see a price and they won't call, they won't become leads. Our sales numbers will go down.

This isn't meant to be a horror story. We know it's a scary concept for most senior housing sales and marketing teams.

Our experience — and that of leading 50+ marketing pros — shows that becoming more transparent with pricing on websites can lead to a happy ending.

North Hill is a life plan community outside of Boston, Mass. A transformation of the campus and an integrated marketing plan generated a steady stream of traffic to the (new) website.

The website featured an internal search tool. Search logs showed that for several years, nearly one in 10 searches was price related. Visitors would use many different words but all were looking for prices.



However the site had no content related to prices. Searches yielded “no results.”

Working with North Hill’s terrific sales director, Maria Byrne, Creating Results tested adding pricing and fees information to the site.

Price sheets that were given to leads in the “real world” during offline visits are now made available online. This web page is linked to an older blog post which provided more context for the numbers, showing a wide range of prices / entrance options and stressing benefits such as a refundable entry fee. This provides a sense of the affordability while simultaneously motivating prospects to discuss the options with someone in the community.

Byrne acknowledged that some people might review the prices and decide they couldn’t afford North Hill, so they wouldn’t call. Perhaps some of these people actually could afford the community. While the sales team might lose an opportunity to try to overcome this objection, they gain all the time they had previously spent talking with unqualified prospects.

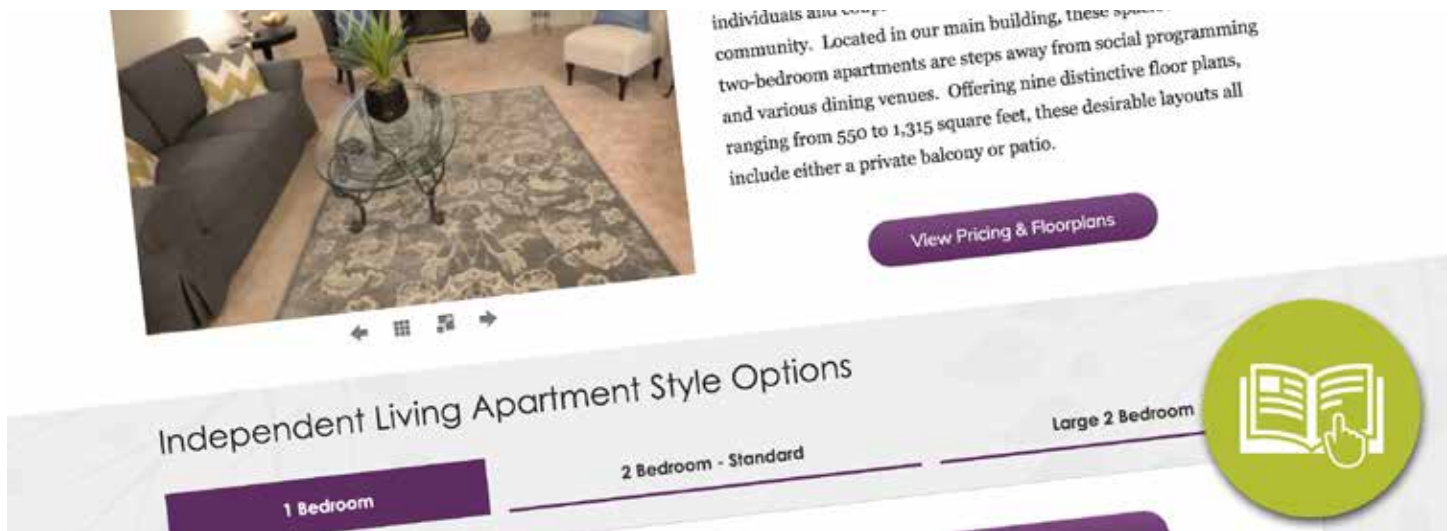
Byrne believed that her team would be more productive by investing their limited time with higher quality leads.

RESULTS:

- Pricing page is now the 6th most popular page on the site, receiving between 700 and 900 page views a month.
- 80% of people who view the pricing page also read the related post.
- Entrances via the pricing page exit at a rate that is one-half the site average.
- There has been no drop-off in leads; there has been no drop-off in total goal completions. (The website is one part of an integrated marketing program which has increased sales; the community is now up to 93% occupancy.)

[CLICK TO WATCH FULL VIDEO](#)

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY ...



A Provider's Perspective on Sharing Pricing Online

Christina Kim is the Director of Marketing for Silver Maples of Chelsea, a Michigan continuing care retirement community. She wrote recently to share her experience.

"I will never forget what [Creating Results] said years ago in Denver when I first saw your presentation, about why we should put pricing on our website.

"I went back and immediately started talking to our web partner and agency about the appropriate place to put it on the website.

"I must admit it wasn't right out in the open, but it was there. About 3 months ago we were looking at our web analytics and found that most of our traffic lands on our 'Accommodations' page which is not really a surprise. We decided to add an easy link to our pricing on the side bar.

"What's amazing is that we have found that recently our new prospects are coming in to meet with us with printed brochure and pricing from the website, and are much further down the sales cycle than ever before.

"We get many compliments on our website and how easy it is to locate the information they need. We actually did a Search Engine Marketing campaign earlier this year and put "Pricing Available On-Line" as one of our test messages and found that the content with this line in it got far more hits than others.

“What surprises me is that I am still of the minority of providers in the room that actually put their pricing on-line. So I just want you to know that I listened and did as you suggested and have not regretted it!”

Where’s the Plan, Stan?

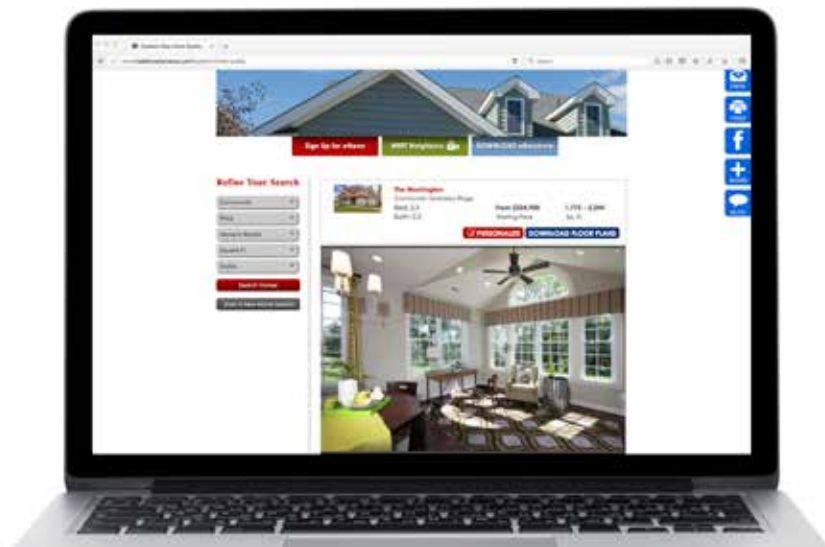
Creating Results has had the privilege of working with a leading 55+ housing developer, Traditions of America, for more than a decade.

The client’s approach to homebuilding is extremely customer-centric; we strive to match that with the web experience. We apply insights from *social, silver surfers*, from focus groups and from Google Analytics.

In a recent overhaul, we made it easier for prospects to find floor plans and home details.

We created a custom-built “homefinder” tool for every page, to help prospects find homes matching their criteria (price, location, style) more quickly. The visibility of PDF floor plans was improved. Static floor plans are included in slide shows, so prospects can see them without additional clicks.

Features and details such as price and square footage were plainly stated.



We added an Interactive Floor Plan system. Web visitors gained the power to personalize plans, move walls, add sun porches and more. The system only required sign-up if the prospect wanted to save their customizations.

These tools worked on any platform/device. (Younger mature movers, the type to move into 55+ housing, are more likely to use mobile.)

Giving web visitors easy access to the information they want – home details and floor plans – paid off for Traditions of America.

RESULTS: In the first year ...

- 197,269 uses of Homefinder search
- 87% of home page traffic advanced through Homefinder
- Lower exit rate for Homefinder users
- Nearly 7,000 visits / experiments with Interactive Floor Plans – 3% chose to register, yielding 210 captured leads
- Proven to positively influence conversions

There has been a direct correlation between the Interactive Floor Plan System and sales.

Analytics show which home types, price levels and other selects are applied in Homefinder searches, so the client gains valuable market data and can build / promote accordingly. Sales team members use the insights captured for more productive meetings with prospects. These leads are further along in their purchase journey, because they've invested time creating their "Dream Home."

We often hear about prospects placing deposits holding a print-outs from the website, showing exactly where they plan on placing their furniture in the new home!

FROM INSIGHTS TO ACTION



DO: Give prospects what they came for.

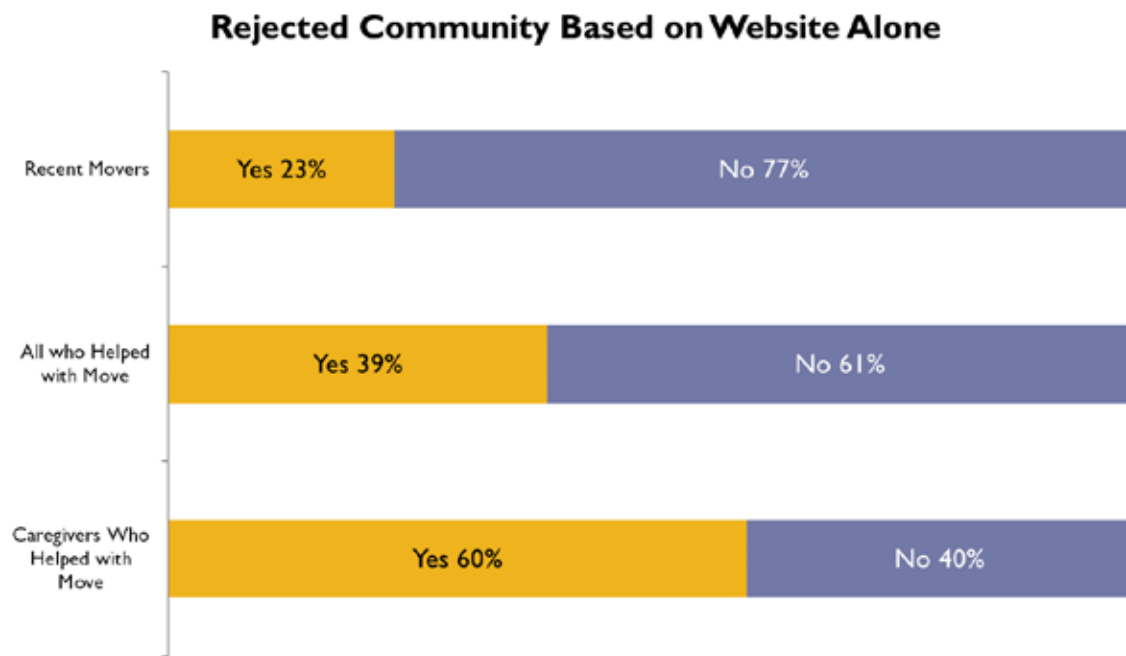
While lifestyle messaging is important, it should not take priority over product information. Make it clear and easy to find floor plans and pricing. Do so in a way that makes them want to visit and engage, not feel like they have to just to get basic information.

DON'T: Underestimate the power of a Caregiver.

If you don't give people what they want, they may not give you what your brand wants: consideration.

Nearly a quarter of recent Movers have rejected a community based on its website alone.

Gatekeepers like to take complete charge of online research. These Move Helpers also are more likely to reject a community based on web presentation alone. Caregivers who help with a move appear to be the toughest audience of all.



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SOURCE: Social Silver Surfers, 3rd ed.

EBOOK: bit.ly/50plusDigital

DO: Find ways to address the sometimes conflicting interests of both prospects and their influencers – the Caregivers and Move Helpers.

Images, content and special features can help convince Caregivers you are worthy of consideration. It's a delicate dance, and a very important one. It also is critically important to ensure that your website doesn't contain elements that we know undermine confidence and frustrate visitors of any age. *(See sections in book on web frustrations and UX.)*

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

Like the general older internet users discussed in the previous chapter, mature Movers want websites to deliver a positive, easy experience.

The tools they use while on community websites reflect this. They also reflect the desire of older adults to stay in charge for as long as is possible.

The following are some key insights and related action items to help you improve digital marketing ROI with mature Movers.

1. The #1 action taken by recent Movers / Move Helpers on a community website is to Print Something Out. Printer-Friendly pages are the #2 most appreciated web feature by this group.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Make sure the style sheets for your site allow for pretty print-outs **AND**, if possible, incorporate the sales phone number into every page.

2. #2 action is to Use the Search Tool. Again, this is a top-ranked "favorite feature" as well.

Many web visitors already know the information they're looking for on your site. They want to be pointed to that resource immediately, much like a terrific team member would direct a visitor to the right spot, right away.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Integrate a search tool and make the field easy to locate and use. Then review the search logs! You'll gain wonderful insights that can help you continuously improve the visitor experience and your sales team's effectiveness.

3. The third most popular action taken on community websites is to Download a PDF. If you recall that older internet users often complain about being hounded by sales, this action makes a lot of sense. They can educate themselves without feeling "sold."

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Take a look at your PDF materials. Do they include calls to action for further engagement? Hyperlinks to additional valuable information? Your sales team's contact info?

4. More frequently, the actions taken by mature Movers are not the ones the organization would most desire them to take.

Sales teams want people to fill out forms (only 22% of recent Movers report doing so), to email requests for information (26% of all Movers say they have done so, a figure which drops to 21% for 55+ housing buyers), or to call.

On the last point there is some good news for continuing care retirement marketers. 33% of CCRC Movers say they have placed a call to a community after visiting the website. This is a higher rate than the average mature Mover.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Make it easy for interested internet users to call you! Put the phone number at the top of every page, even on landing pages, and make it easy no matter what type of device a visitor is using.

Then, train your team to ask qualifying questions of inbound callers so you can accurately note the appropriate online source in your database.

5. Virtual/360-degree Tours have become quite popular. 33% of those surveyed who moved to a CCRC say they have "taken a tour" in this way; 53% of those who moved to a 55+ community have done so. The younger the mover, the more they love the feature.

This is a new item since the last edition of *Social, Silver Surfers*, as the technology has become more user-friendly and affordable.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Investigate how you can add this feature to your community website. It's a great way to proactively answer questions about lifestyle / fit, while showcasing both product features and amenities.

6. Watching Videos is another action becoming common for the first time in the longitudinal study. 43% of all Movers say they've done so and this feature, again, is more popular with younger Movers (55-64 years old).

Forrester Research has calculated the value of one minute of video as 1.8 million words. Crazy statistic, we know! Dr. James McQuivey started with the idea that a "picture is worth 1,000 words." He multiplied that figure by 30 frames per second, which meant 30 pictures = 30,000 words. Then, multiplied that by 60 seconds to get the estimate of 1.8 million words.

Time is especially valuable to older adults. They'll appreciate anyone that saves them 1,800, 18,000 or 1.8 million words!

Video makes a stronger emotional connection with prospects that can help your brand cut through the marketing clutter. And it can improve your results in organic search, mobile marketing and email.

INSIGHT TO ACTION: Welcome messages, testimonials, people profiles, product demonstrations, "how to" ... There are many types of videos that will help you help prospects. Partner with an experienced marketing team to tell stories that matter (and influence purchase decisions) through video.

We've gathered videos related to this story, the story of **social, silver surfers** on our YouTube channel.

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/user/crvideolibrary> to hear straight from some of the storytellers we've featured in this book.



Is your digital HQ appealing or appalling, in the eyes of Movers and Move Helpers? [Click here for an interactive tool to assess your website and improve ROI.](#)

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

This e-book has endeavored to provide guidance and insights for marketers trying to motivate older adults to buy products/services by

- presenting new data,
- spotlighting changing preferences and behaviors compared to our 2010 and 2013 studies, and
- sharing the illustrative stories of older internet users.

We hope that this research has helped you to see these “characters” in new ways – to understand their motivations, to respect their anxieties about the dark web “woods” and to see new ways you could guide them on their purchase journeys.

By applying these insights to your actions you can stop wasting money on things that frustrate your target market. Instead, you will deepen relationships and improve your ROI.

Shakespeare is credited with the play titled *All's Well that Ends Well*.

Ironically, it didn't end so well for the Bard. Few critics are enthusiastic about it and many debate whether it's a drama or a comedy. Likewise, there is a lot of gray area when it comes to marketing to matures online.

MarketingProfs founder Ann Handley has been quoted as saying “The best marketing simply tells a true story well.”

The items that dominate the headlines today aren't telling the story of older adults well. They tend to pigeonhole boomers and beyond, minimize their aptitude for tech or lump all aging adults into one faceless ensemble.

However, the Creating Results team believes that if marketers avoid getting caught up in those un-true stories, we can craft websites and social campaigns that will help brands achieve their goals.

This book aimed to enlighten organizations and provide tools for more effective digital marketing to boomers and beyond. We wish you well in your own journey to connect with mature consumers. And we hope you'll reach out and share your experiences (or let us know if you'd be interested in partnering with us on future research).

Are you and your organization ready to turn a new page and truly begin connecting with ***social, silver surfers?***

METHODOLOGY

The Third Edition of ***Social, Silver Surfers*** is a survey of a nationally representative sample of Americans over the age of 40.

This ongoing study explores the attitudes of older adults towards websites and social networks. A section of the research is dedicated to recent, mature movers and how the web did/did not play a role in their housing purchase decisions. Previous editions include [Social, Silver Surfers 2010](#) and [Social, Silver Surfers 2013](#).

The non-quota survey was conducted through offline intercept polling and online polling, between March 2016 and July 2016.

- **Online research** – invitations via senior-serving / senior-focused organizations; intercept polling; word of mouth (word of mouse?)
- **Offline research** – face-to-face with interviewer in locations that attract active, engaged and typically more affluent older adults

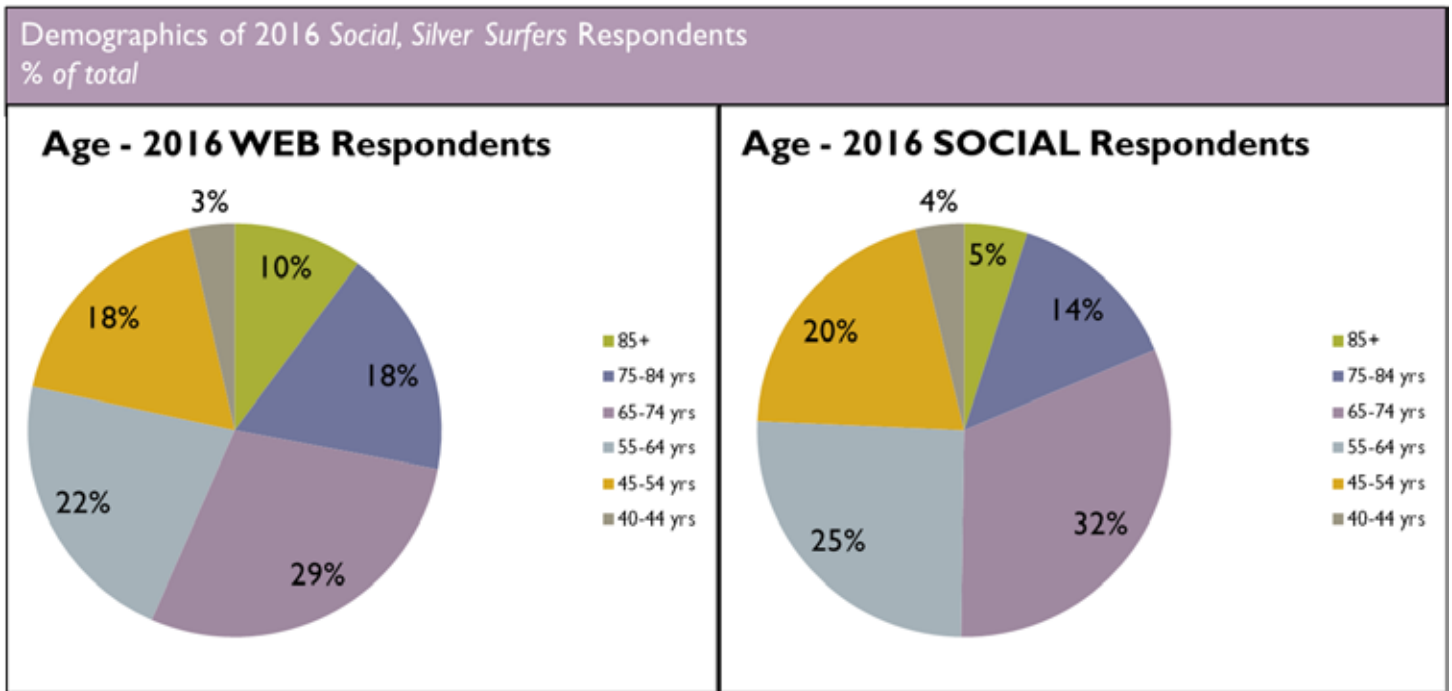
Screening consisted of two qualifying questions:

1. **Are you 40 or older?**
2. **Do you go onto the internet?**

The research included two survey instruments, one with questions specific to web experiences and one with questions specific to social networking attitudes and preferences.

A total of 506 responses (including 82 partially completed) were recorded for the Social survey.

A total of 626 responses (including 94 partially completed) were recorded for the Web survey.



Source: Creating Results, "Social, Silver Surfers" report, 3rd ed.

As noted above, the research team deliberately sought out respondents who were more educated and more affluent than the average American. This is because a) Creating Results' typical clients target this segment of older adults, and b) internet use has been shown to rise with income and education levels.

Since women are often the driving force behind purchase decisions, we had more respondents who were female. By focusing on mature consumers who have higher educational attainment and greater disposable income, as well as a higher percentage of women, Creating Results' data is more relevant to our clients.

While seniors are the demographic group most likely to not go online, the affluent and educated are the most likely to go online.

As of 2016, 85% of Americans use the internet, per Pew Research Center data. This includes 94% of those with incomes between \$50K and \$74,999 and 97% of those with incomes above \$75K.

METHODOLOGY

Demographics of 3 rd Edition <i>Social, Silver Surfers</i> Respondents % of total			
<i>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</i>	Web Survey Respondents, 40+	Social Survey Respondents, 40+	US Population, 35+
High School	9%	11%	28%
Associates Degree (2, 3, 4 years)	12%	13%	10%
Bachelors	33%	33%	19%
Masters	33%	32%	9%
Doctorate	13%	11%	3%
<i>EST ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME</i>	Web Survey Respondents, 40+	Social Survey Respondents, 40+	US Population, 40+
\$50k or Less	16%	18%	32%
\$51-75K	18%	20%	11%
\$75-100K	20%	19%	8%
\$101-\$150K	22%	22%	10%
\$151-\$200K	11%	10%	5%
More than \$200k	13%	11%	5%
<i>GENDER</i>	Web Survey Respondents, 40+	Social Survey Respondents, 40+	US Population, 40+
Female	66%	67%	53%
Male	34%	34%	47%
Sources: Creating Results, Inc., "Social, Silver Surfers" report, 3 rd ed; US Census			

ABOUT

CREATING RESULTS

We are a team of sales and marketing consultants who specialize in motivating baby boomers and seniors with relevant, strategic solutions.

Creating Results believes that WHY is critical to success. Our WHY is we believe older adults deserve to enjoy a higher quality of life, so we collaborate with those who create opportunities and environments for successful aging.

We partner with clients in housing, healthcare, hospitality, financial services and other industries to build brands and drive sales.

We're passionate about WHO our clients serve – consumers over the age of 40. To understand their aspirations and attitudes we have invested years in proprietary studies of the more affluent members of the X, Baby Boom and Silent generations.

Creating Results is proud of WHAT we have achieved, including praise, referrals and awards for branding, online and offline marketing and advertising that helps our clients grow their businesses. To see our past WHAT (*and consider how we might help you in the future*), please visit www.CreatingResults.com/results-created.

THE AUTHORS

Erin Read spearheads integrated and digital marketing programs for organizations targeting mature consumers. She researches the marketing behaviors/preferences of Boomers and beyond and builds on the insights gained with strategic recommendations that improve ROI. She has co-authored four national studies/e-books for Creating Results.

Kimberly Hulett serves as President of Creating Results, directing a talented staff with her thoughtful, strategic guidance and experience at all levels of senior living. Kimberly is an expert at brand development and implementation, and has been a catalyst for transformation in the organizations that she has served.