

Boom or Bust?

Meeting the challenge of fundraising from
the Baby Boomer generation

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Introduction

Charities have had nearly twenty years of successful growth fuelled by direct marketing. Direct mail, DRTV, face to face, telephone, even online – through these and other channels, fundraisers for a wide range of causes have been able to bring in a steady source of income at a healthy return on investment.

But over recent years, the recruitment and retention of donors has become more challenging, as a generation of highly responsive donors is starting to die out. Traditional supporters were predominantly (though not exclusively) female, born before the Second World War, and were fondly known to fundraisers as Dorothy Donors. In their place, the Baby Boomers are reaching the ascendancy, and demanding a very different approach from charities.

There are two key reasons why fundraisers cannot afford to ignore the changes in their potential supporter base:

1. Dorothy Donor is already in her 70s or 80s, and her continued support simply cannot be relied upon beyond the next few years.
2. Meanwhile, estimates suggest that the Baby Boomers could hold up to 90% of the UK's disposable income in 10 years time. If you do not include this demographic amongst your supporters, your fundraising potential will be seriously compromised.

So what can you do about this phenomenal opportunity... and how can you avoid the pitfalls of communicating with this new, and very different audience?

To help you answer these key questions, DMS and our sister agency Whitewater have carried out substantial focus group and desk research into the Baby Boomers, and pooled our knowledge and insights with other members of The Direct Marketing Group. This report brings together – for the first time – what you really need to know about Baby Boomers, and some ideas to take your fundraising forward successfully.

Who are the Baby Boomers?

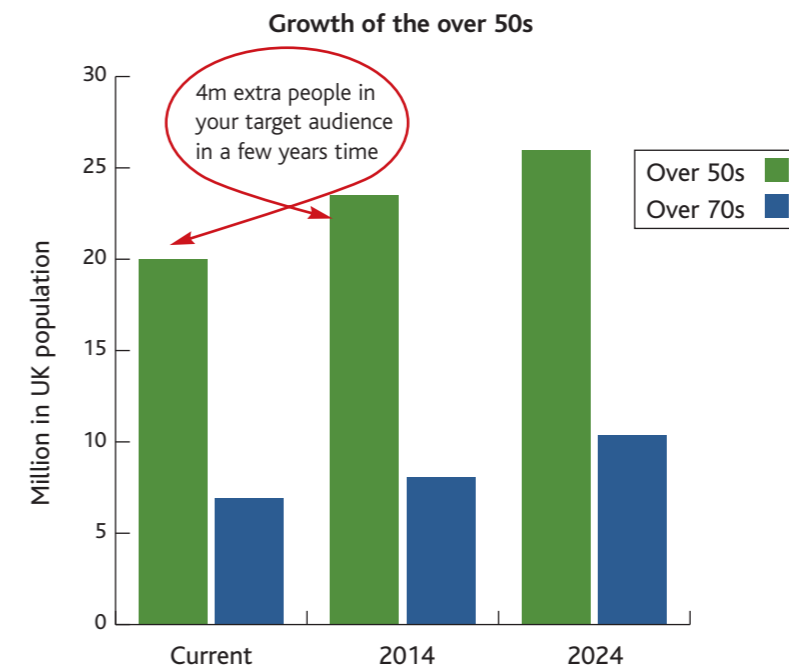
At the end of World War Two, soldiers returned home, settled down, and enjoyed steadily increasing affluence. As a result, there was a noticeable "boom" in the numbers of children born in the years between 1946 and 1964. Though the definitions are not fixed in concrete, the term Baby Boomers generally refers to people born between these years. They created an unprecedented bulge in the population that threatened to overwhelm the fledgling NHS, and took school class sizes to bursting point. (Do you remember the "terrapiin" classrooms put up in school playgrounds in the sixties and seventies? A completely different situation to today, when many schools are merging or closing because of falling numbers.)

Today there are 16 million Baby Boomers aged from mid-40s to early-60s, and bringing their considerable clout to what used to be known as the grey market.

50,000 people in the UK turn 50 every week. By 2020, the over 50s will represent half of the UK population, and this is the only growth demographic.

Interestingly, there is no bulge behind the bulge. Numbers in the subsequent generations flatline completely... leading to potential problems as there are insufficient younger people to fund the costs of pensions and long term care for the Baby Boomers in the future.

This all adds up to mean that the years ahead represent a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for fundraisers. Their sheer force of numbers makes the Baby Boomers a force to be reckoned with – add to that the fact that these are demanding and feisty individuals, and we can expect to see them change the face of charity marketing as they have changed almost everything else in society in the course of growing up.



Every school in the country required an extra "terrapiin" classroom to accommodate the Baby Boomers

Source: TDMG

Dorothy Donor

- Born before the Second World War
- 11% of current UK population
- Charity comes naturally as part of religious faith, combined with a belief in duty and community
- She has enough money to support a number of the charities she cares about
- She has time to spend reading charities' communications
- She is moved by touching case histories
- She trusts authority in general, and trusts charities to spend her money wisely

Baby Boomer

- Born 1946-64
- A quarter of the UK population, who own about 80% of the wealth
- They have created enormous social change, driven by a deeply held belief in justice (e.g. rights for women in the workplace, racial equality)
- Their approach to charities is that of a consumer choosing between products, and looking for the best deal
- They expect to be treated as individuals – on their own terms
- They use a wide variety of media and expect synergy in messaging
- They are suspicious of emotional fundraising approaches
- They take nothing on trust, even from charities

What makes the Baby Boomers so special?

There's been a great deal of discussion about the Baby Boomers as a group. Who are they? What do they look like? How do they think, feel and behave? And what makes them different from the generations either side.

Of course, it's inevitable that there are many differences amongst a group of 16 million people, including both genders, all social classes and a full range of lifestages. In particular, the link between age and lifestage is much weaker than in the past, when most people would marry, have children and retire at roughly the same age.

Naturally, any individual's wealth and interests will be shaped by circumstances such as whether they have children and how old they are, as well as whether they are responsible for caring for elderly parents.

However, beyond individual circumstances, there are some attitudes and characteristics that are common across this generation. Generally speaking, the Baby Boomers are:

- Consumerist
- Individualistic
- Wealthy
- Sceptical
- Change-makers

The challenge for fundraisers is to combine these general characteristics, and make them relevant to the different subgroups within their Baby Boomer audience, using a variety of approaches that may not have been necessary in the past.



People in their 50s may be grandparents, or parents with children at university, or parents with children at primary school, or step parents, or parents to a second family, or amongst the increasing number of childless families.

Consumerist

The Baby Boomers are the ultimate consumers. They've been in love with shopping since they first started buying rock and pop records in the 1950s and 60s... and they are still going strong. People aged 40 to 60 buy more music than any other age group. They're also still going to see the same bands they've loved all their lives – The Rolling Stones and The Police had the top grossing tours of 2007.

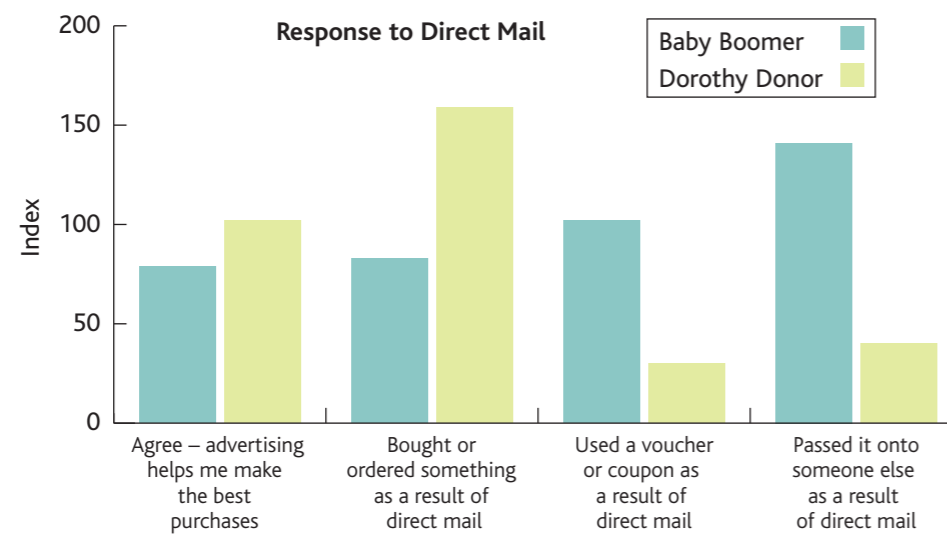
The Baby Boomers' impact revolutionised the music industry, and they have gone on to change the fashion, entertainment, financial services, and technology markets.

Throughout their lives, they have used their spending power to buy experiences as well as goods and services. The Baby Boomers created the notion that the customer is king, and they demand to be treated well by the organisations they deal with. If they are unhappy, they will readily take their business (or donations) elsewhere – and probably broadcast their negative comments on a blog, too.

- They are well travelled with cosmopolitan tastes.
- They demand choice in every aspect of their lives and expect to get what they want.
- They are savvy about marketing.
- They demand information not hype, and claim to be less influenced by advertising.
- 86% of over 50s believe that advertising isn't relevant to them.

The graph below compares Dorothy Donor and Baby Boomers who have given £25 or more to charities in the last year and have responded to direct mail three or more times. It indicates a more trusting attitude towards advertising from Dorothy – though the Baby Boomers are more likely to take advantage when they are offered a tangible benefit for themselves or a friend.

Six of the ten top-selling music tours of 2007 were by bands who also toured prior to 1986.



Source: TGI

Individualistic

In contrast with Dorothy Donor, for whom church, community and duty were central to her life, the Baby Boomers are focused much more around themselves and their families.

Baby Boomers want all of their experiences to have personal meaning – to be the biggest, the best, the most unforgettable. They don't accept tradition simply because it is tradition... this is the generation that has thrown out over 300 years of the Book of Common Prayer in order to write their own marriage vows and create their own funeral rites.

In response to the Baby Boomers' demands, commercial brands are offering more choice than ever before.

- An average Tesco store stocks 40,000 product lines, with 8,000 new products introduced each year.
- Mercedes-Benz is able to offer you 1.5 million different permutations of one car.
- Banks and building societies have transformed their offering compared with 30 years ago – a greater variety of accounts with different rates, different conditions, different benefits and different means of access (e.g. online or telephone), as well as "premier" offerings to give personalised service to the wealthiest customers.

- As children the Baby Boomers were taken on the first "package" holidays. Today they demand a more personalised holiday – leading the way to new destinations and fuelling the boom in low cost airlines and weekend breaks.
- There's also growing demand for "gap years" for the over 50s – an opportunity to see the world from a different perspective.

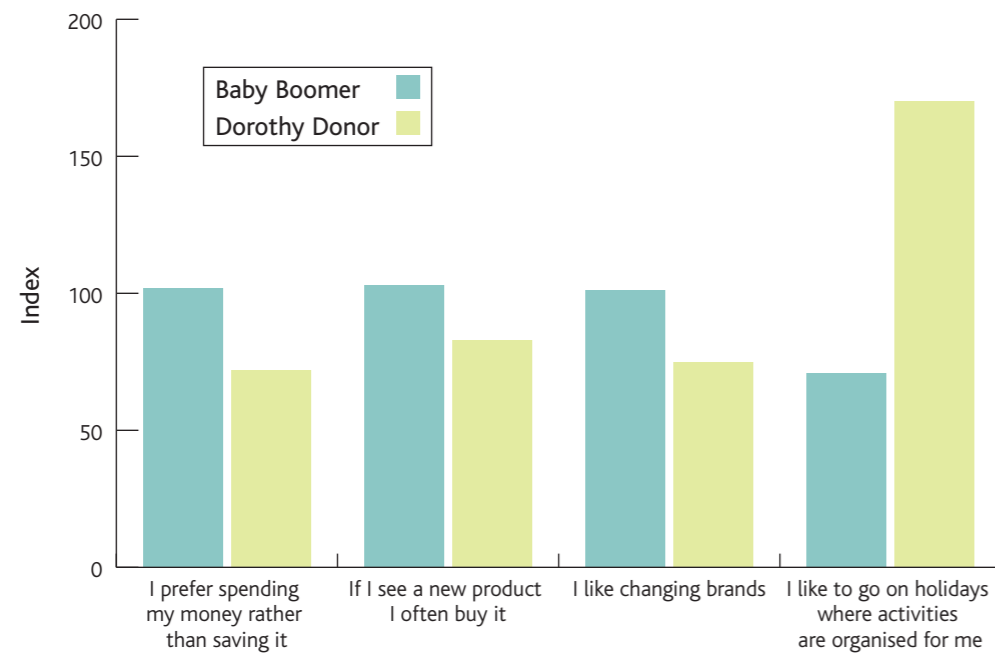
Baby Boomers lead the way in writing their own marriage vows and funeral rites.



As well as their restless desire for the new, the different, the never-before-experienced, the Baby Boomers are also impatient customers. They want what they want, and they want it NOW. In the fast-paced world they've created, patience is no longer a virtue. Bandwagons roll faster than ever and companies need to constantly develop new offerings to engage their attention.

- 23% of Baby Boomers won't dine at a restaurant if it means waiting for a table.
- Eons – the US social networking site aimed at Baby Boomers – had 1.2 million members in May 2007. By January 2008 it had plummeted to just 400,000.
- Alternative gifts brought in millions of extra pounds for charities in 2005 and 2006, but the market appears to have shrunk in 2007... perhaps as Baby Boomers moved on to something new.

Consumer Attitudes



Source: TGI

Wealthy

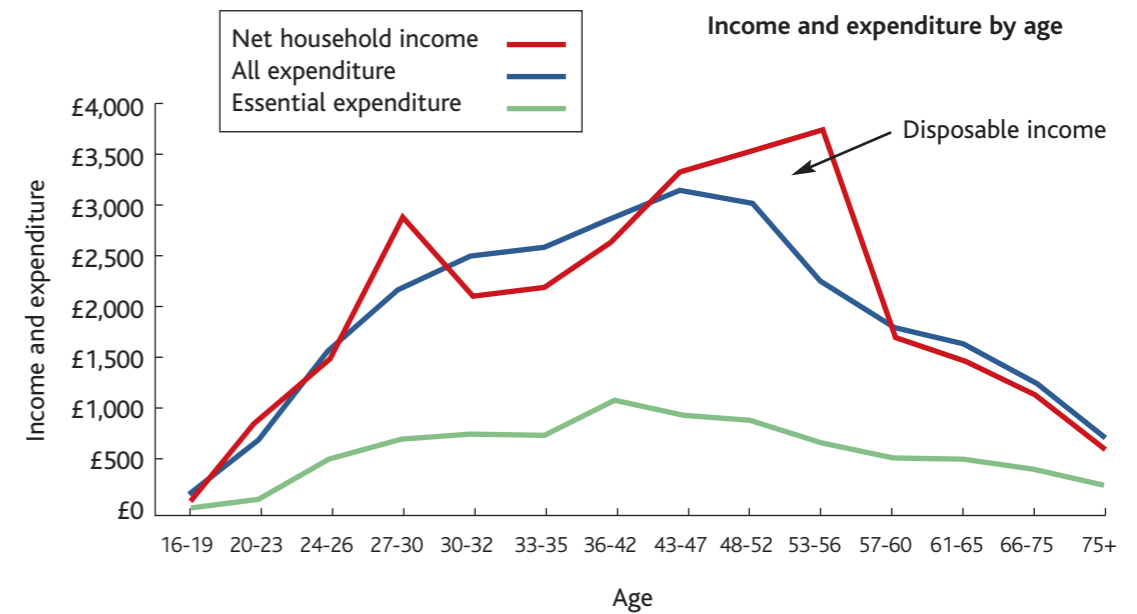
Baby Boomers have benefited hugely from the rise in house prices, the long-term rise in the stock market, and generous pension provisions.

- They currently own 80% of the wealth in the UK, an amount estimated at £5 trillion, larger than the GDP of every nation in the world except the USA.
- Today's Baby Boomers already have more disposable income than any group behind or ahead of them.
- Estimates suggest that within 10 years, they will control 90% of all disposable income in the UK.
- They buy more new cars than under 50s and those in employment outspend under 50s by more than 20%.

However, it is important to remember that not every individual Baby Boomer feels well-off. A substantial minority will discover on retirement that they have not made sufficient pension provision. Significant numbers will also be affected by divorce, with the consequent reduction in their assets. And those Baby Boomers caught between ageing parents needing expensive care and children needing expensive education and a helping hand onto the housing ladder will not feel themselves to be very wealthy, at all.

The crucial task for fundraisers is to identify the Baby Boomers who do have the means to support charities, and to reach them with an appropriate message.

British Baby Boomers own £5 trillion.



Source: The Future Foundation/FES

Sceptical

In 1963, when the first Baby Boomers were teenagers, the Profumo scandal provided them with a telling phrase that would serve as their watchword throughout their lives. When Lord Astor denied in court that he had had an affair with Mandy Rice Davies, she famously replied "Well he would, wouldn't he?" It was the beginning of the end for all forms of trust in authority and respect for "elders and betters."

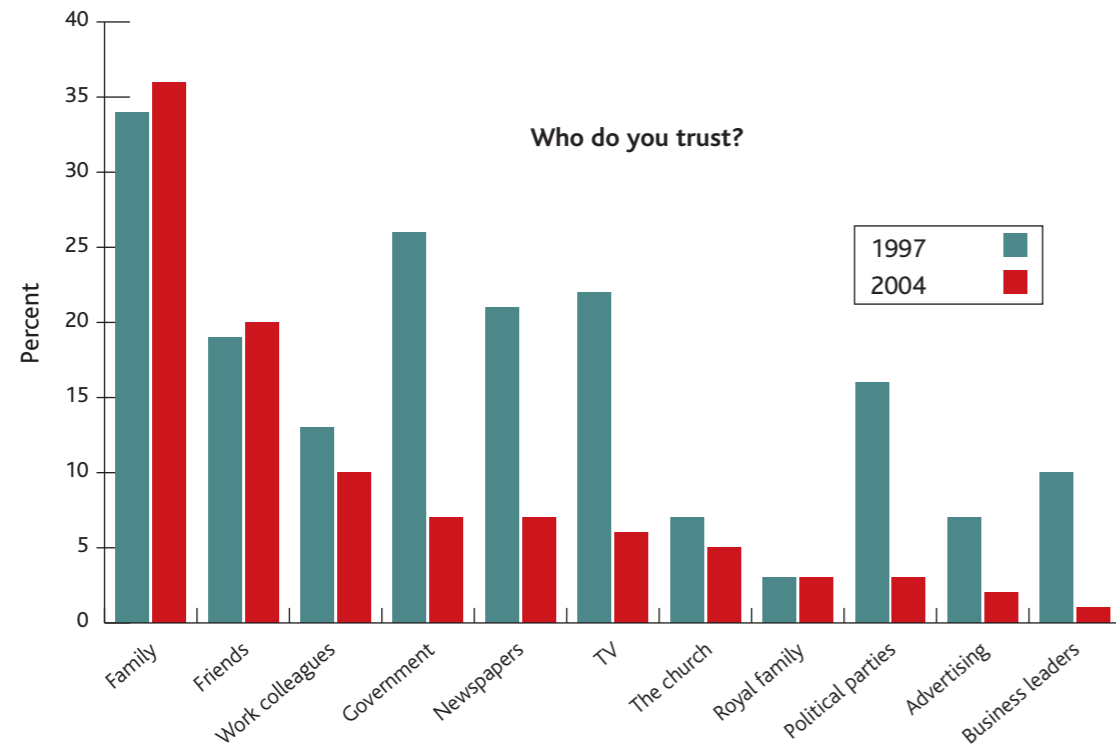
When they were young the Baby Boomers coined the phrase "don't trust anyone over 30". Now they themselves are over 30, they have stopped trusting anyone at all. They take nothing at face value. They want to see the proof. They examine the small print. They are wary of being taken for a ride. And they are suspicious of anyone

who could have an ulterior motive. Instead of turning to a company for information about the products it provides, they prefer to look for the "unvarnished opinions" of consumer reviews on the Internet. And instead of hearing from a Chief Executive about the good work that a charity does, they like to hear from a beneficiary or an unbiased third party.

Research shows that the level of trust in almost every public institution is at an all-time low, and declining still further as the Baby Boomers become an ever more dominant force in society. They only trust people whom they believe will be on their side, predominantly their family or friends. Even charities are not above suspicion.

"81% of NSPCC's money goes on admin – my friend told me."

Baby Boomer in Whitewater focus group research



Source: The Responsible Organisation: BT/Future Foundation

Change-makers

From the anti-Vietnam War rallies of the 1960s to the Racial & Religious Hatred Act 2006, the Baby Boomers have been dedicated throughout their lives to making the world a better place.

They have driven phenomenal social change – working towards equal rights for women, racial minorities, disabled people, homosexuals, and other groups affected by discrimination or disadvantage. Most recently, their generalised desire for justice has overlapped with specific self-interest, in campaigns and legislation to combat ageism.

Whilst the Baby Boomers are much less likely than previous generations to be regular church goers, they still consider themselves to hold, and to act on, strong moral beliefs. In particular, the idea of justice is a powerful motivator for them.

This drive to make a difference helps to explain why campaigning messages have been so successful with this audience –

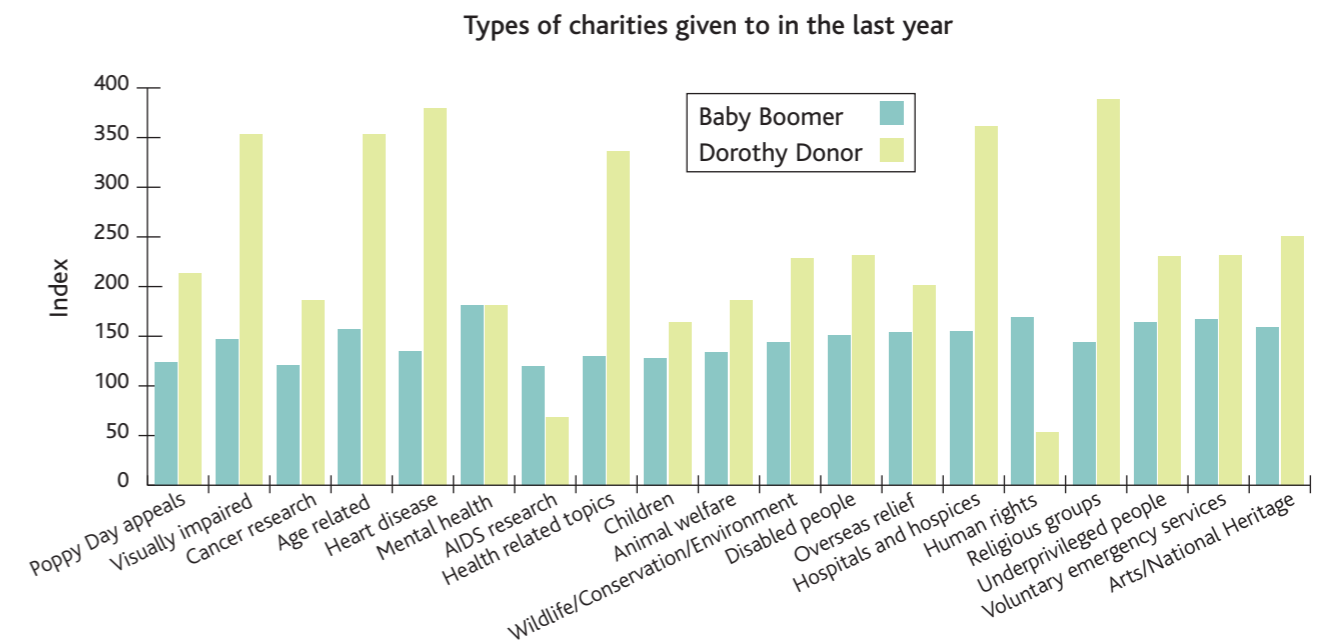
though only a few charities have so far recognised the tremendous potential of the over 50s as campaigners.

As donors, it is notable that the causes which are more likely to be supported by Baby Boomers than by Dorothy Donor (human rights, AIDS, along with mental health, where support from the two groups is identical) have a clear link with social justice.

However, it is also clear that the causes which score most highly with Dorothy Donor are predominantly those where there is a high level of self interest. As the Baby Boomers age, there is a strong probability that they will also be motivated to support these charities, provided that they are approached with a relevant message to inspire them.

"One person can make a difference and every person should try."

John F Kennedy



Source: TGI



The most exciting fundraising opportunity in modern history

The next few years offer charities a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to engage with some 16 million Baby Boomers – people with sufficient wealth and disposable income to put into practice their ideals of changing our world for the better.

The Baby Boomer generation is already leading the way in volunteering – in the USA more than one third of Baby Boomers serve as volunteers, more than any other age group. Some organisations have successfully recruited them as campaigners too.

And everything on paper suggests that this group could be motivated to become financially generous charity supporters too.

- They are committed to ideals of justice and a better life for all.
- They believe in their ability as individuals to change the world.
- Although less likely to be a member of an organised religion, they are still “spiritual” and seek for a higher meaning in their lives.
- They have proved responsive to direct marketing from consumer brands, via a combination of mail, phone and internet.
- They have substantial levels of disposable income.
- In some groups, they also recognise how privileged their children are, and they are looking for more “deserving” ways to spend their money, and especially to receive their legacies.

But early indications are that it's not easy to turn these theoretical advantages into actual support for charities. With this audience (unlike with Dorothy Donor) it is not enough to simply ask for donations. They are less responsive to traditional case-study based fundraising approaches. They have little loyalty to the charities they do support, and are the most likely group to cancel Direct Debits.

The question is: how can we capture their imagination and inspire them to support charitable causes, not just with their time and energy but with substantial financial donations too?

The challenges in getting Baby Boomer support

What sort of gifts will they give?

For a number of years, the “£2/month by Direct Debit” proposition appeared to be working well with Baby Boomers. Charities with big brand names (e.g. Oxfam, NSPCC, CRUK) reached out to a wide audience with this easy-to-buy, low-commitment offer. It is widely offered via DRTV, a familiar channel for Baby Boomers, and it is particularly attractive to people younger than the traditional Dorothy Donor audience. (Dorothy is typically wary of making long term financial commitments; she is also likely to spread her support across a number of charities and feel less inclined to commit to any one of them.)

However, a number of issues are starting to arise:

- Direct Debit donors are often called “committed givers” by charities, but Baby Boomers do not see themselves as committed. In fact, they are the group most likely to cancel their Direct Debits, without changing their support to other methods.
- Many Baby Boomers express disenchantment with the treatment they receive from charities after signing up to Direct Debit – they believe their support is undervalued by the organisation.

- Although Direct Debit can be an attractive option to people on a salary, it appears that many Baby Boomers cancel their Direct Debits as they reach retirement.

- Smaller and less well known charities have had great difficulty in achieving the economies of scale to make this high-volume/low-value approach work.

Alternative product and payment methods are called for. And it is time to review the traditional donation form too, as cheques become less and less widely used.

- 79% of Baby Boomers believe that society will one day operate without cash and cheques and conduct all payments electronically.

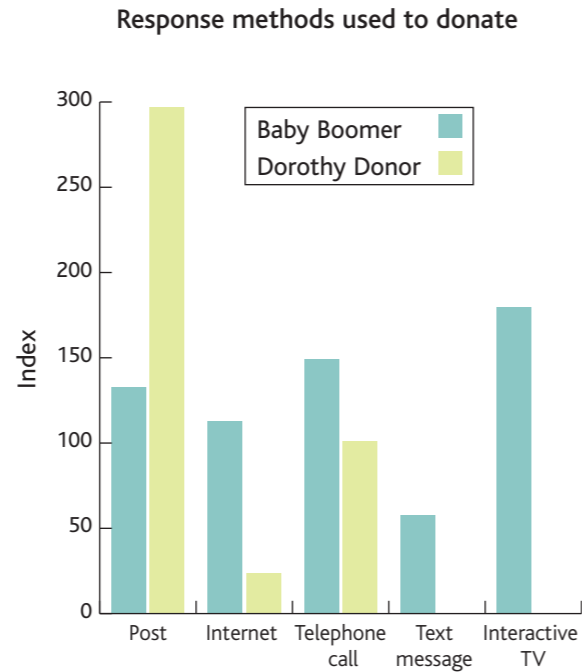
Reaching the Baby Boomers

Over the years, direct mail proved easily the most effective way to communicate with Dorothy Donor. But whilst donating through the post is still relevant for Baby Boomers, they are also comfortable with a much wider range of channels.

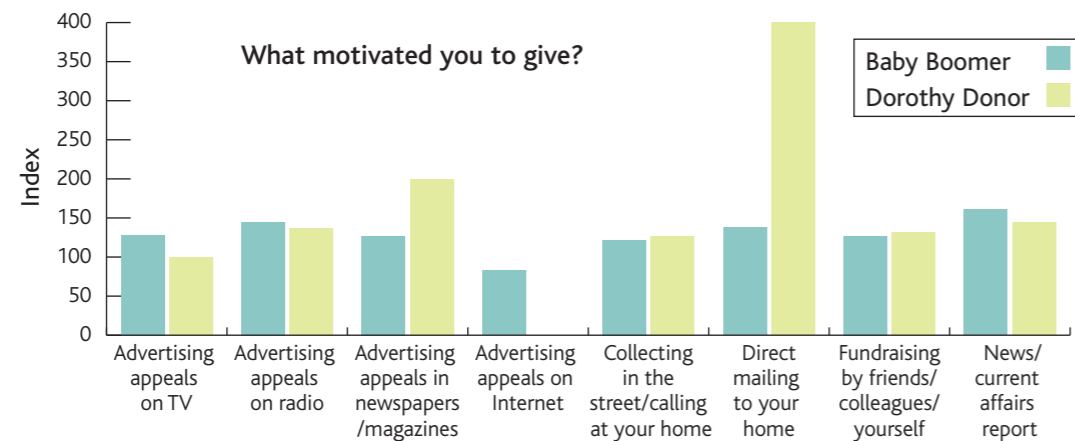
Many charities have already had great success in using the telephone, particularly for soliciting Direct Debits. DRTV can also be successful with this audience. Internet and text messaging are less popular than the traditional media, but it is clearly true to say that the more recent the technology, the less likely it is that Dorothy will use it.

It's also apparent that simply sending appeals designed for Dorothy Donor to a Baby Boomer audience is rarely successful. Many fundraising techniques have hardly changed in many years, but to work today, your approaches must have:

- A greater impact to cut through the "marketing noise" to which they are exposed – not just from other charities but from a vast array of financial services and leisure products all competing for the Baby Boomers' disposable income.
- A clearer message to differentiate your charity from your competitors.
- A more compelling answer to the questions "Why should I give, why me, why now?"
- Most commercial brands talking to this audience use multimedia – recent research from Royal Mail shows 57% of consumers state that they are more likely to respond to something if it is communicated both by post and online.



Source: TGI



Source: TGI

Creating trust

Baby Boomers are distrustful of large companies, which they see as essentially self-serving. Successful brands are those such as Virgin and Easyjet which position themselves as taking on the establishment, and standing up for the consumer.

Large charities can easily be tarred with the same brush as large corporations. One of the top ten myths addressed on the intelligentgiving.com website is "The boss of Oxfam is paid a small fortune". And perhaps the distrust of "brand name

charities" is expressed most forcibly by Baby Boomer icon, John Humphrys, on the website for his Kitchen Table Charities Trust (www.kitchentablecharities.org).

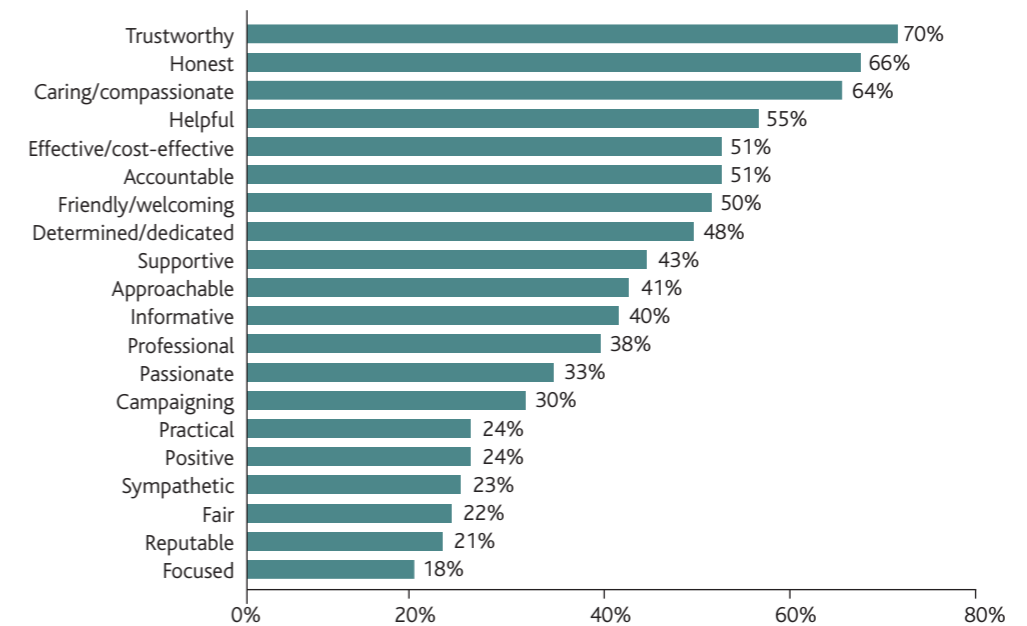
When prospective donors were asked about the attributes for an ideal charity, the top answers were not about the cause, the commitment, the passion or even the effectiveness of the organisation. In fact, the top two attributes for an ideal charity are "trustworthy" and "honest" – answers that in themselves are indicative of a group of people experiencing serious lack of trust.

"There are a vast number of small charities all over the world who do a wonderful job. You've probably never even heard of them. They don't have swanky offices or air-conditioned Land Rovers or money to spend on expensive advertising."

John Humphrys

Top 20 adjectives for the 'ideal charity'

Listed below are a number of words that could be used to describe a charity or not for profit organisation. Please choose up to 10 words that you think describe your IDEAL charity...



Base: All respondents (1,000), March 2006.

© nfpSynergy

They resist manipulation

Whereas the voice of authority – a director or Chief Executive, for example – carried weight with Dorothy Donor, Baby Boomers want an unbiased view. They want to hear from someone representing their interests as donors, not the charity's interests. They want evidence of the charity's work and proof that it is meeting its aims. Celebrity endorsements can be successful – provided that the celebrity him or herself is a trusted figure.

Many charities have become used to telling Dorothy Donor "We know how best to spend your money." However, this is only possible where a relationship of trust exists. For Baby Boomers, this approach is at best patronising, and at worst an indication that the charity has something to hide.

"I want documentaries. Not adverts."

"If they want to ask for more, they need to show us what they did with the last donation."

Baby Boomers in Whitewater focus group research

Baby Boomers are deeply suspicious, too, of fundraising that tugs on their heart strings. Although their emotions are, naturally, important in deciding which causes to support, they strongly resist any attempt to manipulate them. They want a straight-talking approach to the problem, and they want to see a solution which is both practical and fits with a greater vision. They see the use of shock or guilt to motivate a response as cynical cheap tricks by charities.

Responding to their demands

Compromise does not come easily to the Baby Boomers. They like their own way, and they are used to getting it. This is the age group most likely to go through the huge emotional and financial trauma of getting divorced, rather than settle for an unsatisfactory personal relationship. So settling for an unsatisfactory relationship with a charity is simply not on their agenda. Their consumerist expertise tells them that if one charity won't provide what they want, another one will. They may be committed to a cause, but they are unlikely to remain loyal to a charity unless it continues to meet their requirements.

Specifically, research has found that donors want charities to offer them a "vision" of what they can achieve; clearly tangible ways that their donation will make a difference; and the ability to choose how their gifts are used.

Baby Boomers want a vision

"It needs to capture one's imagination."

"It needs a story, it needs the facts. The vision. Before we donate £3 a month."

Baby Boomers in Whitewater focus group research

Baby Boomers want tangibility

"I want to donate to something with a beginning and an end."

"I don't want to keep the charity running."

Baby Boomers in Whitewater focus group research

Baby Boomers want choice

"It makes me feel in control and involved."

"It flips the whole thing around. It doesn't feel like charity begging."

Baby Boomers in Whitewater focus group research

Meeting their restless desire for innovation

Baby Boomers are in love with change and novelty. They are very open to clever new ideas, and will be at the forefront of taking up innovative ways to support charities. Alternative Gifts (e.g. Oxfam Unwrapped, Good Gifts) have been hugely successful with the Baby Boomer audience. However, after a few years of growth in this market, Christmas 2007 saw a decline in alternative gifts, perhaps as the novelty started to wear off.

There is a substantial opportunity for charities to look at their transactions with the Baby Boomer audience in a more commercial way. By recognising that they are selling a product, fundraisers open up the possibility for new product development, and to create a suite of ways to give which will meet the Baby Boomers desires.

- Unlike Dorothy Donor, who gave out of a sense of duty without looking for a return, Baby Boomers weigh up “What’s in it for me?” when they donate.
- They desire new stories, experiences and opportunities on a regular basis – 70% of leading commercial organisations say that “experiential” marketing is very or extremely important to their success.

However, in creating new products or opportunities for their Baby Boomer audience, charities need to be wary of seeming to become like big businesses with well-paid marketing departments. John Humphrys, writing in the Daily Mail about the response to his Kitchen Table Charities Trust, said

“One common theme in those 2,000 letters was that Mail readers want to know that virtually every penny of any donations they make is used to alleviate suffering and not pay for expensive advertising campaigns or high salaries.”

Breaking through with a new fundraising approach

The challenges of fundraising from the Baby Boomers are very apparent. What has “traditionally” worked now seems to be working less well, or not at all. But is there anything you can do to try and revitalise your fundraising communications and make a connection with this audience? Fortunately, yes! There are some clear ways forward to address the specific concerns of the Baby Boomers. And the best news of all, is that many of these new approaches have also proved successful with Dorothy Donor, so there is no need for charities to give up on their old friends in order to court their new ones. The three key messages for charities are:

- **Work on building trust.**
- **Look for ways to offer donors choice.**
- **Review your programme as well as individual communications.**

“If anything, I have become more radical with age.”

Baby Boomer in Whitewater focus group research

Work on building trust

You can expect Baby Boomers to start from a position of suspicion, so it makes sense to take every possible opportunity to prove that your organisation can be trusted.

Transparency about income and expenditure

Donors tend to believe that charities spend much more on "admin" than they actually do in most cases. The typical "pie charts" from annual reports which show income and expenditure may have a place in other donor communications. Consider printing on a mailpack or newsletter a statement of how much (i.e. how little) it costs. Remember that donors have good reasons for not wanting lots of their money spent on appeals, so think twice about approaches that look cheap but aren't... but if investing more in your communications results in a higher net income, be ready to justify your approach to your donors.

Authenticity

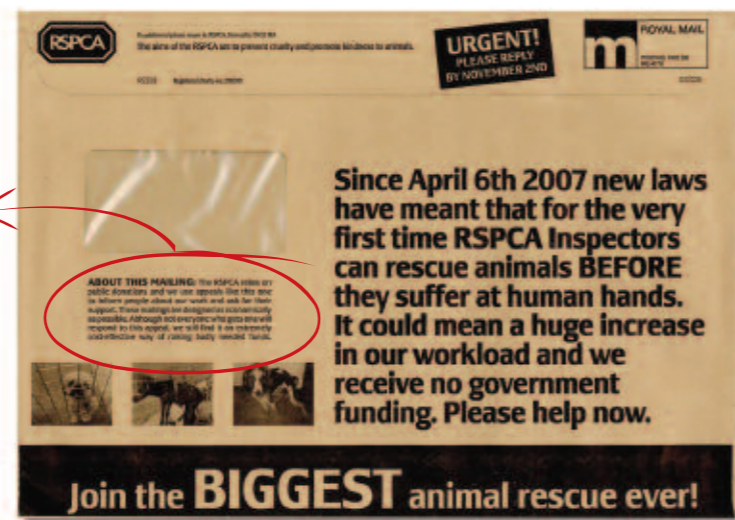
If you use models in your photography, do you have a really good reason for it? If you exaggerate stories or over-sentimentalise

your case histories, have you tested this against a more authentic approach? On the other hand, do you use the same jargon with donors that you might put into a grant application? Baby Boomers are likely to respond better to the simply stated facts and an honest emotional response from the writer/signatory. Consider also who that person is... does your Chief Executive really think, talk and write in the way the appeals are written? And make sure you are not missing out on the experiences or insights of people within your organisation that can really bring your fundraising to life.

Tangibility

Earmarking funds is often an area of considerable concern for fundraisers. However, the Baby Boomer audience are very clear that they don't want their gifts to go towards running the charity. Increasingly, these donors want the level of "say" over their small gifts that has traditionally been more associated with major donations.

ABOUT THIS MAILING: The RSPCA relies on public donations and we use appeals like this one to inform people about our work and ask for their support. These mailings are designed as economically as possible. Although not everyone who gets one will respond to this appeal, we still find it an extremely cost effective way of raising badly needed funds.



Get-out clauses such as "your donation will support XYZ and many other important projects" may no longer be acceptable to donors.

Consider offering a choice on your donation form "I want my donation to go to XYZ" or "I want my donation to be used where it is needed most". The majority of donors will tick the second box, but still feel satisfied that they have been given the option (see more about choice on page 23).

Alternatively, consider whether you can earmark a certain amount of income from an appeal. Then if you raise more than that sum, go back to donors and ask them if it is alright to use their donation for other purposes. Almost all will agree, and you will have cemented your reputation for honesty and straight dealing.

Whether or not you earmark funds, can you be really clear about what, precisely, your charity spends money on and how much it costs. Don't forget to make the outcomes of your work tangible too... let donors visualise clearly what they are achieving through their gifts.

Give feedback on what donations have achieved

Baby Boomers need a rational as well as an emotional case for giving. Proof that previous donations have made a difference are an important part of this.



Look for ways to offer donors choice

Third party endorsement

If your donors are reluctant to trust a spokesperson for the charity, who will they trust to tell them the truth about the organisation's work, and how their donations are being used? Beneficiaries are an option for some charities, but not for animal or environmental causes, for example. And even if a beneficiary will speak up for you, Baby Boomers may still be suspicious... after all, a beneficiary may not be objective and unbiased. No, what the Baby Boomer donor really wants is to see the work for themselves. Alternatively, the next best thing is for somebody like

themselves, or somebody they know to see it. The third party endorsement can have a lot of weight with this audience. Endorsements can come from celebrities such as Michael Palin or Lorraine Kelly who are known and trusted by Baby Boomers. Or they could come from ordinary members of the public – individuals who are “representing” the donor, who care about the same things they care about and have no axe to grind.



In the past, many charities have had the luxury of being able to use most donations for general funds. Only major donors have usually been offered the opportunity to specify the work their donation will support. However, the financial level at which donors want some say in the way their money is used is getting much lower. Charities can respond to donors' desire for greater control by offering choices in a number of areas.

Choice of projects

Invite donors to fund specific projects, or broader areas of work, or perhaps geographical areas. You may need to involve your trustees or financial director in looking at your accounting processes – in which case remind them that the problems of NOT addressing these issues until too late far outweigh the difficulties of tackling them now.

Choice of “products” or ways to be involved

For example, invite donors to choose how they want their support to be recognised. Offer them alternative donation “price points” with different rewards.

Opportunities for more interaction/to get closer to the work

Would your donors like to hear from you by mail, by phone, by email, by text? Would they like to hear about your campaigning work, or your volunteering opportunities? Would they like to visit your projects?

Review your programme as well as individual communications

These guidelines apply each time you interact with your Baby Boomer audience through any medium. But most importantly, they should also influence the totality of your interaction with supporters.

Your communication stream needs to become donor-centric.

What each donor hears from you should be driven by the interests they have expressed, the appeals they have supported and the knowledge you have acquired about them. Every Baby Boomer is an individual!

Are you thanking donors enough?

Dorothy Donor was happy to know in her own heart that she had done her duty... Baby Boomers need more external recognition. Adding a specific thank you programme – with no direct ask – can substantially uplift responses to future appeals.

Is your vision clear and consistent?

Baby Boomers buy into a bigger picture, which sets the context for their support of individual appeals. They want to know that they are working towards a goal, not just firefighting. And they want to know that your organisation is coherent and focused. Your purpose needs to be restated in an inspirational way in every communication, and across all your media channels.

Conclusion

Charities who fail to understand and address the requirements of the Baby Boomer generation will see their donor base decline dramatically over the next few years. They will also experience a catastrophic loss of legacy income. For many charities, all the gains and the growth of the last 20 years could be lost entirely.

Approaches which have been successful in fundraising from Dorothy Donor cannot be relied upon to continue working, because Baby Boomers demand:

- A more individualised approach.
- More choices and control within the fundraising relationship.
- More authentic insight into the charity's work, and tangible proof of success.
- More "product innovation" – offering different ways to support and appealing to different motivations.
- More feedback and recognition for their support.
- More multimedia communications, with a consistency of vision across all messages.

However, charities which find an appropriate way to communicate with their Baby Boomer audience will benefit from their powerful combination of a fundamental desire to change the world and the wealth to make it happen.

Charities cannot afford to ignore either the opportunities or the challenges the Baby Boomers present.

How DMS can help you

DMS has studied this market extensively and can offer support in a number of ways to charities who want to seize the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that Baby Boomers present.

- We carry out regular and ongoing research with Baby Boomers, both online and through focus groups, so we can understand in-depth how they think and what they want. We have the opportunity to put specific questions to our groups on behalf of individual charities, in order to get real insight into their reaction to your work.
- We have unique data-mining and profiling tools to help understand how to differentiate amongst the diverse Baby Boomer market. We can help you find the older or younger, richer or poorer, and target those most likely to support your cause.
- We have looked in detail at the media consumption of this group, and can offer you unprecedented insight and analysis. We have also mapped media usage onto our segmentation model, allowing you to reach your target audience most precisely.

- We are committed to a constant process of testing – testing messages, testing offers, testing media, testing timings, testing innovations. In fact, testing every aspect of communications in order to discover the most effective and cost-effective ways to engage with this audience.

In short, we are determined to develop and maintain a thorough understanding of Baby Boomers and their giving habits, so we are best placed to advise charities of all types about how they can survive and thrive through the years ahead.

If you'd like to know more, please get in touch with Marie Newcombe on 01242 584175 or email: marie.newcombe@directmarketing.co.uk

Appendix

A note on age and ageing

Just as this generation have redefined every aspect of life they have touched so far, they are now redefining the meaning of "getting older".

- They are in better health and have a longer life expectancy compared with their parents at their age.
- They are better off, and likely to remain so, as they expect to continue working for longer. 80% of Baby Boomers will work beyond 65.
- Their desire for stimulation remains equally undiminished. 75% are keen to try new experiences when they go on holiday, with nearly one in five interested in trying extreme sports.
- They are just as engaged with current affairs as ever – for example, this is the group that is most concerned about climate change, and 75% say they are likely to take action in their personal lives to reduce their carbon footprint.
- 26% are considering cosmetic surgery.

However, the physical aspects of ageing will continue to have an important effect on the development of communications aimed at the over 50s.

- Eyesight deteriorates significantly from age 40 onwards and type in small point sizes becomes harder to read.
- As retina yellows with age, it becomes harder to distinguish between blues, greens and purples – easier to see reds and yellows.
- A 50 year old's eyes receive 50% less light than a 20 year old – an 80 year old's 80% less.
- Hearing deteriorates after 50, making it harder to discriminate between background and foreground noise.
- Arthritis grows more common with age.
- Central nervous system declines – slowing information processing.
- Verbal memory declines faster than visual memory.



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