


# MARKETING TO BABY BOOMERS

## WITH EFFECTIVE MESSAGING



Baby Boomers represent a collective power that will drive American consumption for decades to come. To help you connect with them, we've put together examples revealing how some companies are structuring marketing messages that reach this influential audience.



# Introduction

From a marketing perspective, the numbers are staggering: Nearly 80 million people born between 1946 and 1964.



Today, Baby Boomers **control** 70 percent of the disposable income in the United States. And yet, **marketers target** less than 10 percent of their advertising messages specifically to Boomers.

What's more, companies are largely **missing the mark** when trying to appeal to Baby Boomers. Many Boomers feel advertisers are relying on inaccurate stereotypes when targeting their age group. Perhaps a better understanding of what drives the generation is needed.

In their youth, Boomers tended to challenge the cultural norms that limited access to human rights. They

protested wars, discrimination, pollution, and political corruption. Boomers gave voice to the country's consciousness—and in the process of impacting social change, they became well aware of their relevance.

With that in mind, advertisers would do well by conveying to Boomers that they are as relevant today as they ever were. Marketing should assure Boomers that their ideals still matter, that their efforts still make a difference, and that their voices continue to be heard.

We've compiled some examples that illustrate how companies are targeting this powerful generation.



# Cadillac



Cadillac's "Dare Greatly" **campaign** is attempting to revitalize GM's luxury division and reposition the brand as a viable contender against foreign competitors.

When rolled out in 2015, the ads featured innovators—including some well-known Baby Boomers—who succeeded by daring to challenge the status quo. In a break from tradition, the campaign's early ads were missing something seemingly important: images of automobiles.

"To once again become the standard for excellence around the globe, we cannot follow any of the examples set by the luxury market 'establishment,'" **says Cadillac president, Johan de Nysschen.**



That explanation will surely resonate with Boomers who grew up defying various kinds of establishments, including the government and college leaders (and, for that matter, anyone else over 30 years old).

In 2016, Cadillac **updated the campaign** with a series of stories featuring younger subjects and the tagline variations, "Don't You Dare" and "Daring Pursuits." And while the automaker hopes the ads attract buyers from Generations X and Y, the spots carry a message that will undoubtedly appeal to daring Boomers.

# Dove



☐ grey?

☐ gorgeous?

Why can't more women feel glad to be grey? Join the beauty debate.

[campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk](http://campaignforrealbeauty.co.uk)  | Dove

When Unilever began looking for ways to revive its Dove soap brand, the company commissioned a **study** asking more than 3,000 women in ten countries their opinions on topical subjects. The study found that only 2 percent of women consider themselves beautiful. So, Dove set out to help women decide for themselves what it actually means to be beautiful.

Dove's **Campaign For Real Beauty** began with a billboard series featuring multiple-choice questions. The outdoor ads featured images of various-aged women alongside two tick-box options. One ad showed a Baby Boom-aged woman next to the choices, grey or

gorgeous. Another showed a woman with wrinkles and the options, withered or wonderful.

Dove found an effective message for Boomers, who are busy changing society's perceptions about aging.

The campaign launched in Canada and spread to the United States and United Kingdom. Critics called Dove hypocritical, arguing that its cosmetics help fuel women's insecurities about beauty. But the company turned the campaign into a decade-long global discussion—and a new definition for beauty that goes beyond physical images.

# Standard Life



PEOPLE DON'T GROW OLD  
LIKE THEY USED TO

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**STANDARD LIFE**  
**active money SIPP**

Investment company Standard Life is headquartered in Edinburgh, Scotland, with operations around the world. The company's marketing message has a global appeal to investors who are 55 and older.

Standard Life's **campaign** points out that "people don't grow old like they used to." The message speaks to the outdated stereotypes that most firms use to predict when investors will need to access their retirement funds.

In its approach to targeting Boomers, Standard Life is touching on the generation's perception of real age versus "lifestyle age." Simply put, **the company recognizes** that clients over 55 are more active and ambitious than most marketers believe they are. Boomers, Standard Life believes, tend to enjoy lifestyles more in line with society's idea of how 25 year olds live.



# L'Oreal Paris



In the early 1970s, the Baby Boomer-led feminism movement was well under way and making inroads. Ilon Specht was a 23-year-old copywriter working on the L'Oreal Paris account and thinking about her newfound independence while **creating an ad** for the brand's hair color product. The spot included one of advertising's most memorable phrases ever: "Because I'm worth it."

Four decades later, actress Helen Mirren appears in a new L'Oreal ad **campaign** promoting the brand's anti-aging cream. Speaking directly to today's Baby Boomer consumers, Mirren delivers an updated version of the famous tagline: "And we're still worth it."

L'Oreal understood Boomers in the 70s, and they clearly still get them today.

# Mazda



In 2013, Mazda introduced a campaign it called, “Game Changers.” The ads featured not-so-famous historical figures whose creativity somehow changed our culture. One of the ads included fashion designer Mary Quant, who raised Baby Boomers’ hemlines—and their parents’ eyebrows—by inventing the miniskirt.

According to the ad copy, in Quant's miniskirt "a generation of women was suddenly able to establish its freedom and break away from restrictive design." And just in case any rebellious Boomers miss the car-miniskirt connection, the ad describes the Mazda6 as "a bold statement against conformity."

# Subaru

Few cultural events symbolize the Baby Boom generation better than Woodstock does.

In this ad for Subaru Outbacks, a Baby Boomer and her family travel back to the famed music festival site, and to the very spot where she met her husband. She points out a tree where she remembers first seeing her future beau, and her granddaughter affectionately wraps her arms around it. Soon the whole family is sharing a group tree hug, while the announcer reminds us that “some things are worth holding onto.”

Turns out, we learn from the ad, Subaru Outbacks have very impressive longevity statistics. Whether they’re holding onto their vehicles, or clinging to the past, Boomers will likely appreciate the nostalgic emotions created by this charming ad.





# Harley-Davidson



"American by birth. Rebel by choice."

Harley-Davidson's iconic tagline could apply equally to the company's products and to the Baby Boomer generation's nonconforming nature. One **print ad** especially plays up the mutual distain for convention that Boomers and Harley-Davidson share.

The piece features a biker applying makeup using her reflection in the chrome on her Harley. The text mocks the rules someone tried unsuccessfully to instill in her.

"Do this. Do that. Don't do this. Don't do that. Blah, blah, blah."

No wonder Harley-Davidson's motorcycles are so popular with Baby Boomers.

Harley-Davidson's **advertising** in the past few years has largely focused on cultivating business from young and future generations. But with messaging such as the "Blah, blah, blah" ad, the company will always connect with Boomers.



When it comes to designing a brand, people usually know what they like – and what they dislike. However, few know what actually works.

Our job at The Creative Block is to design and implement branding that looks great while meeting your marketing expectations. Or, put another way, to know what you like and to know what works.

**[thecreativeblock.marketing](http://thecreativeblock.marketing)**