

Brand Health Check

At a glance tips to help you engage your customers



We're here to help you reach your customers in the best way you can, and our recent brand research report has a wealth of information on how you can best position your brand and engage potential clients.

We know how busy you are, so we've pulled together the highlights from the report that will be most useful for you, so you can see at a glance the ways you can really make an impact with the over 50s market.

**Creating a
strong brand**

**Improving
your brand**

**Top tips for the
over 50s market**

Creating a Strong Brand

Your brand and business name

- Choose something simple and easy to pronounce
- Familiar everyday words are easier for customers to remember
- If your brand name doesn't clearly say what you do, you don't need to go as far as rebranding
- You can just add a really clear strapline that makes it clear what you're here to do
- The over 50s tend to prefer straightforward brand names and straplines
- Many see quirky business names as more for the younger crowd, so it's best to stick to something simple

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Brand colours

- Customers subconsciously recognise your brand through your colours
- It's why it's important to be consistent
- Your brand colours can have a 60 to 80% influence on customer purchase decisions
- Be aware of colour associations in customer minds when choosing your brand colours

Brand Colour Associations

Red	Energy, strength, passion, urgency
Blue	Peace, natural, non-aggressive
Yellow	Happiness, intelligence, energy
Orange	Enthusiasm, friendliness, cheerfulness
Green	Health, environment, relaxation
Purple	Creativity, imagination, calming, knowledge
Pink	Finesse, kindness, dreams
White	Simplicity, purity, hygiene
Black	Power, bravery, integrity, reliability

Communications and tone of voice

- The over 50s tend to prefer a friendly but professional tone that's not too chatty
- They still appreciate the formalities – letters with proper signatures and communications that aren't 'sloppy'
- But don't feel the need to be overly formal – you can be professional without being austere
- They need to feel that you are being yourself and they can find any pretence or falsehood off-putting
- Deadlines are particularly important to this age group
- If something is going to be late, tell them
- They like to be kept informed and up to date if anything changes

A strong website

- Similar to your brand name and strapline, your website needs to be really clear and to the point
- Have your key words front and centre – customers won't necessarily scroll to find out more
- The over 50s do their research before they buy so it's important that your website is up to scratch
- They're more time rich than the younger demographic and are looking for a clear website that's easy to navigate
- A clear FAQs section and strong testimonials will resonate best with older customers
- Have a phone number on there – it's a real gripe for this age group when it's not there
- Webchat annoys many of them and they like to be able to speak to a real live person

Share who you are

- People like to see the faces behind the business - people buy from people
- The over 50s in particular like to deal with and speak to real people they can get a feel for
- People tend to trust what they can see, so letting them see who you are can help to build brand trust
- An 'about us' section on your website goes a long way to sharing your story and helping customers feel a connection with both you and your brand
- If you're a small brand, this can work to give your customers a sense of a personal touch that the bigger brands struggle to achieve



- There's also a recent focus on the importance of supporting local business, so sharing your locality and the regional element of who you are can really help to engage your customers

Head of Communications,
The Centre for Ageing Better

"I think people trust smaller brands more, starting from something small and local. I think people like to be part of that, thinking they were there. Supporting them from the start."

Living and breathing your brand

- Make sure everyone who works for your business understands your brand and represents it well
- Your brand reputation can be affected by your customer service on the telephone, a staff member popping out for lunch still wearing their lanyard, or staff comments on their own social media if it shows who they work for
- High quality standards of service are particularly important to the over 50s market, and so they need to be first class at every customer touchpoint
- Be authentic and don't make promises you can't deliver on
- Know what it is you do, stick to it and do it well
- It's useful to have 3 to 5 brand values that you can refer back to whenever you make big business decisions, always asking the question, does it fit with our brand values
- Your brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room, so make sure they're saying only good things, that you're a brand they will recommend and return to for future business



Improving your Brand

Understanding your customers

- To engage your customers you need to genuinely understand them, know what motivates them and what they're interested in
- Their attitudes and interests will always be changing so it's important to listen to them and learn
- Surveys and questionnaires are one way to do this, but constant requests to complete these can be a source of annoyance amongst the over 50s
- Take the time to chat to them as part of your appointments – find out what topics of conversation interest them and join in those conversations
- Find out what social media platforms they are on and be on those platforms yourself, to engage them and continue those conversations
- Personalise your messaging to their interests where possible
- There's so much advertising noise out there today that you need that level of understanding to be heard above the noise
- We each hear on average at least 150 different advertising messages from different brands per day, so that personal connection can really help you stand out above the crowd

150 advertising messages per day

4,500 per month

54,000 per year

Adapting to change: Covid-19

- It's important to learn and evolve alongside your customer base, meeting their needs both now and into the future
- The last 18 months has been a seismic event and the way we work and live has changed forever
- There's been a change in what's important to customers and as brands we need to move in line with those changes
- We can't rely on what customers wanted two years ago as for most, there's been a significant shift in mind set
- Customer emotions are much more at the surface and there's been time for reflection on what's truly important to them
- There's more of a focus on the importance of health and wellbeing, family and friendships
- Material possessions and buying things are less important than they once were, particularly for the over 50s
- This is important to consider within your brand messaging and positioning, always moving with the times so as not to be left behind the competition

Friends & Family ✓

Wellbeing ✓

Health ✓

Possessions ✗

Material ✗

Status ✗

Brand behaviour in times of challenge

- How you act as a business in difficult times really reflects on your brand reputation
- During Covid, brands who didn't stop and continued to push the sell showed a lack of sensitivity to the mood of the nation
- The ambulance chasers who tried to turn the crisis into an opportunity really lost the respect of their customers, with lasting reputational damage
- Those who hit the pause button to offer sincere and transparent support really improved customer trust in their brand
- Communication was key for the brands that fared well, providing clear information and updates and maintaining that connection with their customer base
- When face to face service was no longer possible, those who made the effort to offer alternative virtual online solutions were appreciated by customers
- Learning from those who did well and those who didn't is a valuable exercise for the future of your brand



The importance of social responsibility

- Giving something back from a charitable or environmental perspective is something that's become more and more important to customers
- It's something they are actively looking at to decide if a brand is ethically sound
- If it isn't, many are choosing to shop elsewhere
- Various studies have shown that 9 out of 10 consumers state that when choosing between similar products, the company's reputation determines which they will purchase
- BrandVue, a data insight company which specifically looks at brand performance metrics, has added social responsibility to its list of measurable attributes in the last two years, due to its increased importance
- The successful brands of the future will need to demonstrate that they are socially responsible
- The over 50s in particular do their research well, and those ethical credentials are part of what they look at in order to choose a brand

"We're becoming a bit better educated on ESG issues and these do feature in companies we might turn to."

(Age 70 & 74)



Top Tips for the over 50s market

Our research looked at who the over 50s are today, helping you to understand your customer base and engage them for an improved business performance

Who are they?

Spending power

- The over 50s as a whole are responsible for half of all household spending
- Many have high levels of affluence – baby boomers with relatively big houses and final salary pensions
- Data insight from Experian splits the over 50s into seven segments, and four of these seven segments have an affluence banding of over 50%
- This isn't true for everyone, with the affluence banding for one segment as low as 0 – 5%, but there's an ample amount of wealth amongst this group as a whole
- Despite their spending power, they are often overlooked by many brands
- Brands really need to make the effort to engage them in order to be considered as recipients of that spend

Suburban Stability Age 56 – 60	Mature suburban owners living settled lives in mid-range housing	56% – 65% affluence
Prestige Positions Age 61 – 65	Established families in large detached homes living upmarket lifestyles	96% – 100% affluence
Country Living Age 71 – 75	Well off owners in rural locations, enjoying the benefits of country life	91% – 95% affluence
Senior Security Age 86 – 90	Enjoying a comfortable retirement with assets	61% – 65% affluence

Time rich

- They are not only rich in the financial sense, but they're also rich in time
- As they start to work part time or retire, as the children have grown up and moved away, they have more time on their hands than the younger generations
- They're not battling the 9 to 5 working pattern or bringing up families, and so have time to research and look at a brand in depth before making a decision
- Make sure everything is aligned across all your digital platforms so that there's no mixed messaging
- Make sure all the information that's out there is up to date, as it's a real source of annoyance for them when it's not
- Testimonials from other customers are a great way to engage the over 50s, and they actively look for these as part of their research
- They want to know that others have had a good experience with your brand, checking platforms like Trust Pilot, so it's a good idea to be on these and to maintain a good brand rating

Experienced and astute

- With more time on their hands, they're more aware than ever of what's going on in the wider world
- They have a lifetime of learnings from all the times they've made mistakes or been burned by false promises or bad customer service
- It's foolish for brands to assume that they are easily confused or need to be spoken to in a patronising manner
- There's a strong sensitivity in the current media toward the vulnerable nature of this age group and many brands position themselves as supportive, helping them through this time in their lives
- While there's nothing wrong with this, it's important to remember that there's a fine line between offering support where it's needed, and offending those who can handle things perfectly well by themselves

What's important to them?

Quality

- Quality over price is a recurring theme
- The over 50s are willing to spend a little bit more for products that will last and provide a positive overall experience
- High quality of service is equally as important as quality of product
- The effort a brand puts into its communications is also important to this age group
- A letter or email that is polished and grammatically correct goes a long way to reassuring the customer that if the communications are of a quality standard, everything else will be as well

"I like a quality brand with values and service to match."

(Age 59)

"I'm put off by those that have a sloppy written communication, like sending a letter with no signing off or signature."

(Age 68)

Sally Winfield,
Silver Marketing Association

"Quality is important. The over 50s may buy less, but they will spend more on the quality. I think that is something that comes with age."

Accessible Brands

- Brands that make an effort to accommodate the diverse needs of their customers also seem to resonate well
- Adverts and websites which are accessible for those with visual, hearing or motability impairments will resonate more with the over 50s age group
- It's something brands will need to consider more and more from a regulatory perspective
- In 2020 it became a legal requirement for public companies to make their websites accessible for all
- It's not yet the case for private sector brands, but it's likely something that will be coming in the near future
- Avoiding use of technical jargon is also really important
- The simpler the better so that you're not alienating customers or making your services inaccessible through a lack of understanding

"Dazzling bright colours hurt my eyes and tiny words on websites can be too small to read. Buttons as well can be too small to click on properly."

(Age 71)



The soft sell

- There's a particular theme amongst this age group that a big part of quality service is in not being rushed
- They like to take their time and to do things on their terms at their own pace
- Many find nothing more off-putting than the hard sell approach

"Everything just feels like it's moving so fast now. I don't want to be rushed into buying something I might regret. I want to be left to decide in my own time without any pressure."

(Age 71)

"I don't like a sales culture that's pushy. I like to gather information and make an informed decision rather than having something pushed onto me."

(Age 59)

Beliefs and attitudes

- Insight into certain beliefs and attitudes amongst this age group are particularly useful to consider when positioning your brand
- While diversity and inclusion of gender, race and sexuality is an important consideration in today's society, some older customers can struggle somewhat with it being far more visible now than they have been used to throughout their lives
- It's certainly not all over 50s who feel this way, but it's an important consideration for brands who have this age group as their specific target market

**Logan Bonham-Smith,
Founder of Unmasked Mental Health**

"From the older age group, we had a fair few messages saying they were unfollowing us on social media because we had changed our logo to rainbow colours in support of LGBTQ."

"Companies seem to push the diversity thing because that's what everyone else seems to be doing. People can be whatever sexuality they want but we're not used to seeing it displayed everywhere and it can be quite uncomfortable sometimes."

(Age 67)

Choice of communication channels

- There was a lot of debate about online vs offline communications for the over 50s market, and what their preferences are
- There's a strong feeling that there's just no substitute for being able to talk to a real person, to receive the real quality of customer service which is so important to this group

"We shouldn't be made to go online. It should be my choice, I want to speak to someone if that's what I want to do. That's what I've done for the last 60 years and I don't see why it has to change now."

(Age 74)

"Why do companies hide behind an email address or chat app. If they can't be bothered to talk to me I can't be bothered to talk to them."

(Age 68)

- Older customers often want to have a conversation with someone, then go away and read something and then come back
- They would much rather have the important documents printed out and in their hands rather than just online, and they're more likely to want you to go and visit them on site
- It doesn't mean however that the over 50s are completely averse to using online channels
- 31% of UK Facebook users are 55 plus
- Data from Experian showed that many over 50s listed the internet in their top 2 preferred channels of choice
- The key is to offer a choice of channels to your customers, as you would with any age group
- Not purely online or solely face to face, but facilitating a range of options for customers to engage with your brand, whatever their preference



Looking and feeling good

- Society today has a significant interest in staying healthy and looking good
- The total size of the global fitness club market is \$87 billion
- The health and beauty industry sits at \$511 billion
- This mind-set of wanting to be fit and healthy doesn't just suddenly stop once we reach the age of 50
- The older generation is far more active and beauty conscious than often assumed

Sean Masters,
MD, Brand Clear

“Walking football for the over 50s is one of the fastest growing sports because there are more people now wanting to exercise and stay active and so there are more and more clubs.”

“We’re not the 50, 60 and 70 year olds that people think we are. We’re a lively vibrant group who want to be out there meeting up with friends, walking, kicking balls about with our grandchildren and who have lots of different hobbies.”

Annie Stirk, over 70s model

The impact of stereotypes

- It's important to remember that although there are common themes amongst this age group, their age doesn't define them completely and they are all very different individuals
- It's interesting to look at the accepted grouping of 'over 50s' as one big segment which spans up to 50 years of living
- When you look at other age demographic splits, they are segmented into much smaller age ranges, with just ten to fifteen year gaps

10s

20s

30s

40s

50s

- There's a danger of forming caricature style stereotypes when a segment grouping is this big
- This age group have a strong awareness of who they are and who they're not

- The way they're depicted through brand advertisements can really influence their purchasing decisions when it comes to those particular brands

"I don't think they know who we are. I don't think they know what makes us tick. I don't think they've evolved with us. I think that brands know we're there, but I don't think they know how to market to us."

Annie Stirk, over 70s model

- Imagery plays a big part in forming positive or negative stereotypes
- Fewer than one in five of us feel that the media makes old age seem exciting
- Even more believe it brings the negative aspects of ageing to the fore
- 66% of 5000 retirees felt that there were unacceptable expectations of how they should look
- And it's not just the negative stereotypes that can have such an impact
- Images that are overly positive, healthy and happy can feel fake, or worse, result in older customers making comparisons with themselves that leave them feeling inadequate
- It's a fine balance to achieve but there is support for brands to find realistic images that will resonate with the older audience

"Happy smiling adverts of old people on TV annoy me. They're just fake. Life's not like that, and it's a bit patronising."

(Age 72)

The Centre for Ageing Better Image Library (Jan 2021) <https://bit.ly/3D1dOSz>

"Imagery is so important, and so we've launched an image library to try and get more realistic images of people in their 50s, 60s, 70s and beyond into mainstream campaigns."



Consideration of new brands

- It's often believed that more mature customers have more limited consideration sets when it comes to choosing new brands
- It's assumed they've already made decisions about the brands they will consider and those they will reject
- Data insight company BrandVue however, found that this wasn't necessarily the case
- The number of brands considered by the over 50s were in fact, in line with those of younger age groups
- In some cases, new brand consideration amongst the over 50s was even higher than the younger age groups when it came to the financial services space
- People become more engaged with different financial services products as they progress through life stages, for things like insurance, pensions, annuities and lifetime mortgages
- There's new brand consideration at every life stage when new products and services are required

This insight that the over 50s will show consideration of new brands, particularly within financial services, gives businesses all the more reason to engage these potential customers in a way that really resonates with them.

The Over 50s Market at a Glance

Responsible for **half** of all **household spending**



31%
UK Facebook users are 55+

25%

of us will be over 65 in less than 20 years

50% of retirees in 2021 choosing not to give up work completely

Spans up to **50 years of living**, not a one size fits all

Time rich

Quality Value

Reliable service

Ethical brands

Soft sell approach

Challenging **stereotypes**

Experienced and astute

Balance of **digital** and **traditional** channels

66%

of 5,000 retirees felt that there are **unacceptable expectations** on how older people should look

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For the full report of brand research findings,
contact Pure Retirement at
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