



Ink Matters

A quarterly newsletter from EasyRead Copywriting™

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Still Young After All These Years

On a recent flight, I sat in the same row as a curious 10-year-old boy and a patient 30-year-old man. The young boy was asking the gentleman non-stop questions about rap musicians.

“Name every rap artist you know,” he said. When the man got to Puff Daddy, the boy turned to me and asked if I had heard of him. I answered yes. He didn’t believe me. Hey, I may be middle age but I am like many baby boomers—I’m still very young at heart.

According to AARP, by 2010, approximately 54 million baby boomers

will be between age 50 and 64, bringing the total 50 plus population to a whopping 90 million. That’s 90 million people who although middle age, don’t think of themselves as old. This demographic is young-at-heart, working well into later years, and reevaluating priorities.

Boomers are healthier, more active, staying involved longer, and living longer. They control more than \$7 trillion in wealth and are responsible for 50% of all discretionary spending.

If you are a business or organization that is marketing to this popula-

tion, consider the following:

- * Most baby boomers do not think of themselves as old.
- * They are naturally skeptical.
- * They like convenience, but not at the expense of quality.
- * They are still making their own rules.
- * They still don’t trust anyone over 30 (but now it’s 70).
- * And, they are more diverse than any other market segment.

So don’t overlook our ge...ge...ge...ge...generation. We’re still a force to reckon with.

Write It Easy to Read

Writing information so it’s easy to read is not about dumbing down the information. It’s about clear, concise communication.

Case in point...read these two writing examples. The first is the original text followed by a revised version. Concise writing saves time, money, and space.

Original text:

A living will is a written declaration directing your doctor to provide, withhold or withdraw lifesaving procedures should you be diagnosed as having a terminal condition or exist in a vegetative state and you lack the capacity to make the decision.

Revised text:

A living will is a paper you

sign telling your doctor whether you want treatments that could keep you alive if you have a terminal disease or are in a coma. This lets your doctor know how you want to be treated if you are not able to make the decision yourself.

Original and revised text from “The Low Health Literacy Experience,” Pfizer, Inc.

Make Your Written Materials Easy on Boomer Eyes...

1. Use serif fonts.
2. Use dark print on a light background.
3. Use at least a 12 pt. font.

We’re Moving!

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Kristina Anderson has been in the freelance writing and editing business since 1990. Her wide range of experience includes managing retail stores, volunteers, and nonprofit programs. She works with health promotion publishers, health providers, nonprofit organizations, literacy organizations, marketing agencies, educational institutions, technical companies, corporations, book publishers, and authors. Her expertise includes writing for low-literacy and limited English-speaking audiences and assessing readability and literacy levels of printed materials.

“Companies know we’re not materialistic, and they’re trying to use that to their advantage, but we know better. It’s just another marketing strategy, and we see right through it.”

— Generation Y

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The Marketplace from the Mouths of Babes

Call them the Nintendo Generation, Generation Net, Generation Y, Echo Boomers, Generation 2001 or the Teflon-Coated Generation (because not much has stuck to them). Whatever you call them, they are 73 million strong, and the second largest generation ever.

Born between 1982 and 1999, this generation is entering the workforce, and marketers are studying their behavior, attitudes, and buying habits. “We’re conscious about how the world really is, not how it is portrayed by the media,” says one 18 year old.

When marketing to this segment of the population, consider this:

- * 1 in 4 lives in a single parent household.
- * 3 out of 4 have working mothers.
- * 64% come from dual-income families.
- * They’re competitive.
- * They are technically savvy.
- * They want the truth.

Unlike their parents, Gen Y can absorb information quickly, and they prefer a lot of it all at once. They’ve grown up in a media saturated environment, but they are discriminating in their tastes. “Companies know we’re not materialistic, and they’re trying to use

that to their advantage, but we know better. It’s just another marketing strategy, and we see right through it.”

Marketers will need to appeal to this generation’s social passion and individuality. One size won’t fit all. Like their parents, they are skeptical and want the truth. “We’re the product of hippies,” explains a college student.

Marketers should not see this generation as kids. They are a huge force coming into the marketplace with money to spend. “We want to know how we’re going to benefit, what the setbacks are, and how much will it cost.”