

Good retailing: deliver on your promise

by Janet Doyle



Chris Cormack ... Baby boomers are brand savvy and influential customers.

Diet, passive smoking, weight gain and exercise are among the top 10 health concerns for people aged over 40 – and pharmacy can leverage off this.

This is according to exclusive research revealed by Senior Agency managing director Chris Cormack during a presentation on retailing and marketing to the mature demographic at Pharmacy 2006 in September, hosted by the AFSPA.

Senior Agency is a consultancy that specialises in reaching baby boomer and senior consumers.

Given there are 9 million people aged over 40 in Australia and that number is set to grow, Mr Cormack was able to show delegates how to target this wealthy, highly influential and brand savvy customer.

However, he stressed it is certainly not a case of one-size fits all.

"For example, you need to promote your wellbeing to the 40-49 age group and immediate needs to 60-74 demographic," Mr Cormack told delegates.

But, he added, baby boomers never be 'sold' to; they know what they want. They are 'a want, not need generation'.

"You have to offer quality if you want baby boomers to keep coming back and spend more."

Mr Cormack said pharmacy could leverage off the fact that the

over 40s are big purchasers of anti-wrinkle creams, vitamins and sunscreens "because they want to look good on the outside".

However, he said the most influential customer were women in their late 50s – they influence their children and grandchildren's purchases and, more than likely, they influence one or both of her parents. At the same time they influence and are influenced by their peers.

"She's shopping in your outlets, she's looking after the family, she's likely to go to you for add-ons after prescriptions, such as anti-ageing creams, sunscreens and vitamins. She trusts you for being an expert. She knows she can find what she's looking for and she thinks you are an essential part of a healthy community."

But the irony is, according to Mr Cormack, while this is your most influential customer, she is shopping at your pharmacy reluctantly.

"She doesn't really want to have to come to you because she wants to be fit, healthy, wrinkle-free.

In a way, she's coming to you unwillingly," he said.

Mr Cormack revealed there are huge opportunities in the mature market given that his research found the over 70s demographic is visiting the pharmacy monthly and in some cases even weekly.

One of the main drivers was knowledgeable staff, he said.

Other drivers were location, customer respect, convenient stores hours, price, atmosphere, ease of shopping, quality merchandise, private label range and convenient parking.

In addition, the research found that for the over 60s group, women claimed to be the main decision-maker when visiting a chemist.

However, when Mr Cormack looked at customer satisfaction the bad news was that many said they

found the store layout made it a "hassle". He said a lot of women said getting to the dispensary is "like an obstacle course" because of poor merchandising.

On the other hand, he said satisfaction improves for the older people because they tend to shop at less busy times and have more time.

Mr Cormack emphasised it is, therefore, vital to offer "retail comfort", make your store easy to navigate and offer simple things like water coolers.

His research also found that the over-40s demographic did not like shopping centres, as they perceived they were for the young, and preferred shopping in retail strips. So, if your pharmacy is located in a shopping centre, make sure you offer a clean and friendly environment.

Also, every pharmacy should train its younger employees to put themselves in the mind and under the skin of mature consumers and also employ older staff, he said.

You have to offer quality if you want baby boomers to keep coming back and spend more.

"Remember comfort. Your eyes peak when you are 7-years-old, so imagine what you are like at 70? Design things they can read when you put it in the window."

But, never, ever insult them with your advertising or marketing. Be clever how you communicate externally with them and talk their language and recognise from whence they came, Mr Cormack said.

He said the message was quite simple; deliver on the promise that is on your door.

If you want to find out how to develop a marketing campaign to target the mature customer you can contact Chris Cormack on 0411 11 66 00, email him on cormack@senioragencyaustralia.com.au or visit www.senioragencyaustralia.com.au.

Don't miss Chris's next column which will be entitled 'Baby Boomers: strip retail or shopping centre - how they feel!'



New advice on management of stomach aches

Gastroenterologists are urging people who suffer from stomach aches and cramps to avoid certain pain relievers and consider antispasmodic medicines following new research which suggests many still use ibuprofen for stomach ache. This choice of medication is continuing despite widespread evidence linking ibuprofen with gastroenterological side effects and clear on-pack warnings that say: "Do not take if you have a stomach ulcer or other stomach disorder."

A recent consumer survey of Australians who say they

experience symptoms of stomach pain or cramping every few months or more show that 14 per cent report having taken a leading ibuprofen brand on the last occasion. Twenty-two per cent of people who have suffered from stomach pain or cramping at least twice in the past year mention a leading ibuprofen product when asked which medicines they have heard of that can be used for treating these conditions.

According to gastroenterologist professor, Terry Bolin, who is the president of national health education group, the

Gut Foundation, the results demonstrate the importance of continuing to educate consumers about the side effects associated with non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), while also highlighting the availability of effective treatments like antispasmodics that can help people relieve symptoms without the side effects.

"We've known for many years that ibuprofen is associated with stomach-related side effects. What we didn't know was that consumers are actually choosing ibuprofen to relieve their stomach-

related pain. Using NSAIDs like ibuprofen in this way could potentially lead to serious side effects – especially if the stomach pain is being generated by some gastro complaint like an ulcer," professor Bolin said.

The Gut Foundation is urging people with stomach aches and cramps to consider antispasmodics rather than analgesics, as antispasmodics are not associated with gastroenterological side effects.

According to Melbourne gastroenterologist and the Gut Foundation councillor, professor

Mel Korman, antispasmodics work by relaxing the cramped muscles of the digestive tract and relieving the spasms that cause abdominal pain.

"Over-the-counter antispasmodic treatments can be very important in helping to alleviate the symptoms and shorten the duration of the stomach pain and cramping," professor Korman said.

The Gut Foundation has emphasised that people who have continuing stomach pain should consult their GP or community pharmacist for advice.