

THE UNDERSEA JOURNAL

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X, Y, BOOMER!

How to Seek, Acquire and Retain Today's Divers

**Training: Maximize
Adventures in Diving**

**Go Green for the
Bottom Line**

**Turning up the Heat
in the Latin Market**

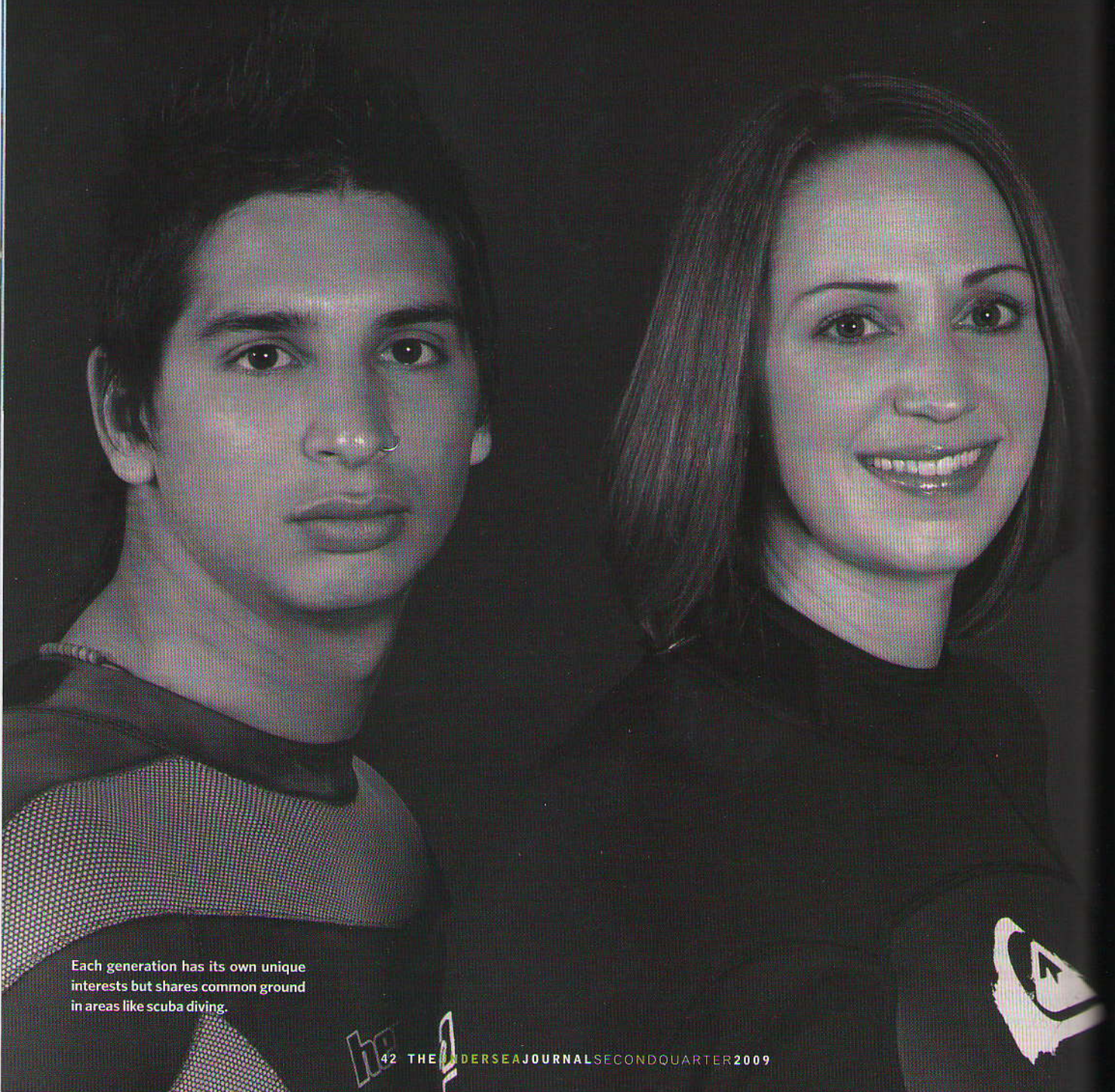


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**+ ENRICHED AIR NITROX GOES ONLINE
SHOPPER'S MENTALITY: DO YOU HAVE IT?**

BUSINESS OF DIVING

THE GENERATION MANIFESTO



Each generation has its own unique interests but shares common ground in areas like scuba diving.



TIONS'

An Essential
Guide to
Success in
Today's
Marketplace

BY MEGAN DENNY,
SALES CONSULTANT,
PADI AMERICAS



To run a successful dive business, your customer base should be as diverse as an ocean ecosystem. For example, a healthy store needs pelagic customers — big guys with financial heft who buy a lot of equipment and take a lot of trips. But you also need colorful, benthic divers — your local, repeat clients who bring new customers to your store or dive boat. They make up the resident populations who sustain the business in tough economic times.

Think of your last 10 divers. If they were about the same age, you may be setting yourself up for stagnation because you may only be reaching one market segment. Read on to discover the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of marketing to Baby Boomers, Generation Xers and Echo Boomers.

Myths to bust: Teenagers aren't the number one internet surfers. Stereotypes to tear down: Active retirement homes aren't just for old fogeys. And, at the end of it all, you will see your customers in a whole new way.

But first, a disclaimer: Demography is not an exact science. The start of the baby boom has a closely defined line, but the line between Generation X and the Echo Boom is not so clear. While we'll try to accurately describe each generational segment, there are exceptions to every rule.

YOU, US, THEM

{ Baby Boomers: 45-63 years old }

"People try to put us d-down
Just because we get around
Things they do look awful c-c-cold
I hope I die before I get old"

—*"My Generation"* by The Who

Following World War II, many countries experienced a birth spike referred to as the "Baby Boom." The increase was so massive that Boomers now represent one-third of the world's population. This generation set out to change the world, and in many ways, it did. More prosperous than any generation before them, Boomers are the movers and shakers in today's world. And, recent demographic research has shown there are two types of Baby Boomers.

"Classic Baby Boomers" are between 55 and 63 years old, and are characterized by their optimistic outlook, willingness to try new things and passion for change. Some memorable events for this generation include

the moon landing, Vietnam War, England's World Cup victory, *Star Wars*, punk rock, the Beatles, Stones, Doors, Led Zepplin, civil rights, women's rights, the assassinations of JFK (John F. Kennedy) and MLK (Martin Luther King, Jr.), and an era of drug and lifestyle experimentation.

Most of the second wave of Boomers — aging from approximately 45 to 54 years

old — wasn't old enough to be drafted in Vietnam, and many are younger siblings of the Classic Boomers. Dubbed "Generation Jones," their most-memorable events include the Cold War, high inflation, global gasoline shortages and disco. The Jones' are not

Baby Boomers were influenced by global events including the movement started by Martin Luther King, Jr., the man on the moon and The Beatles.



BABY BOOMERS: FAST FACTS

- » Born between 1946 and 1964
- » **Worldwide population:** 2 billion (approximately 30 percent)
- » **Boomers are 25 percent** of the US population: 78 million people
- » **Every seven seconds** an American turns 50
- » **By 2012**, 50 percent of the European Union's population will be 65 and above
- » **By 2030**, in Italy, retirees will outnumber active workers
- » **Seventy-eight percent** of Boomers

have made a purchase online

- » **Boomers watch** an average of 19.3 hours of TV per week
- » **Things they use that are popular with other generations:** Facebook, Twitter
- » **Generation gap Boomer quandary:** Why do younger generations never use their mobile phones to talk to anyone?



em. Turn the ideas and advice on each generation into action. And you will succeed.

as optimistic as the Classic Boomers, but (generally speaking) don't carry the skeptical outlook often attributed to Gen Xers.

Currently, most Boomers are approaching a significant life event: retirement. This mass exodus from the workforce was expected to peak in 2011, but the current economic climate may alter this expectation. Some theories had predicted negative economic consequences.

CONSUMER STRENGTHS

Boomers have rallied against the standards set by their parents almost since birth, so don't expect them to become humble, penny-pinching retirees. This consumer group pioneered the 60-hour workweek and, even after retirement, prefers an active lifestyle and top amenities.

The average Boomers' household has \$24,000 (US) in disposable income, and (historically speaking) they prefer to spend rather than save. Boomers have the deep pockets of all the generations. In the United States, Boomers hold about 80 percent of the money in savings accounts and control 48 percent of discretionary purchases.

WHAT ATTRACTS THEM TO SCUBA?

Retired Boomers are ready for new life experiences, travel and entertainment. Others want to spend more time pursuing lifelong passions, such as photography. Either way, scuba diving fits the bill.

HOW TO MARKET TO BOOMERS

Keep things simple. Boomers hate being "nickel and dimed," and (comparatively speaking) don't spend much time researching their purchases online. Retired Boomers will shop around for the business with the highest level of convenience and expertise.

Offer dive-training packages with one-stop shopping convenience and all-inclusive certifications for one price including everything customers need to get certified. On your website and in your collateral materials, list the price and what it includes. Emphasize that it includes *everything* the customer needs to get certified: gear package, rental, PADI Open Water Diver course fees, etc. Mention gear upgrades and course add-ons, such as photography, on subsequent pages.

Time is precious to this demographic, and Boomers will pay a premium for convenience. They're perfect for PADI eLearning.



Baby Boomers, with their deep pockets and discretionary income, are primed for a new life experience.

READY TO SPEND

{ Generation Xers: 27-43 years old }

"We've all been raised on television to believe that one day we'd all be millionaires, and movie gods and rock stars. But we won't. And we're slowly learning that fact. And we're very, very pissed off."

— Tyler Durden in *Fight Club*

The term "Generation X" was first coined by

the British press. It was described as a group of people who "sleep together before they are married, don't believe in God, dislike the Queen and don't respect parents."

In the United States, Generation X was originally called the "Baby Bust" generation, and were also called "tweeners" because they were between the Baby Boomers and their children's generation. After cresting from 1946 to 1954, birth rates fell by half. As a result, Generation X is 11 percent smaller

CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT: CARRIE GARCIA; SHAUN LOWE; AP PHOTO; NASA KENNEDY SPACE CENTER; MARION S. TRIKOSKI/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS



Family is the number one priority for Gen Xers. They love to express their uniqueness and are defined by outside activities.

than the Boomers. By the time the Echo Boomers (generation born from 1983-1999) grow up, they'll outnumber Generation Xers by 31 percent (in North America).

This presents both opportunities and challenges for the Gen X market.

The result of their upbringing is two-fold: Generation Xers grew up to be self-reliant and fiercely independent. On an individual level, Gen Xers can be fearless and innovative, and/or pessimistic and skeptical of mainstream values. This is the generation that brought us Facebook and grunge rock.

Many Gen Xers grew up with frozen dinners and a television as their nannies. They are determined to do better than their parents and spend quality time with their children. You can thank Generation Xers for giving us the home office, flex time and work-from-home technology.

It's not uncommon for Gen Xers to be distrustful of large companies and somewhat apathetic about their careers. Many saw their parents return exhausted after working 12-hour days, only to be laid-off by an uncaring corporate boss. As a result,

maintaining a balance between work and "real life" is important to this generation.

Additionally, Gen Xers hate being identified by their job title. Outside activities, hobbies and family truly define who they are. In Gen Xers' talk: "I am not Megan Denny, the PADI Sales Consultant. I am a drummer, blogger, scuba diver and Portlander who works for PADI."

As a consumer, Generation X is feeling the squeeze. Older Gen Xers are putting their kids through school and waiting for Baby Boomers to vacate high-paying upper-management positions. Younger Gen Xers are making payments on their first mortgage and raising small children. So, is Generation X a worthwhile target market?

CONSUMER STRENGTHS

Over the next several years, Generation Xers will inherit high-paying jobs vacated by Baby Boomers. Gen Xers will finally come into their own financially and as world leaders. Consider that at age 47, newly elected United States President Barack Obama was at the bottom of the Baby Boomers and only missed being a Gen Xer by four years. To amplify this effect, for every 10 jobs retiring Baby Boomers vacate, there are only nine Gen Xers to take their place (due to their 11 percent smaller population). For Gen Xers, this means a lower unemployment rate, greater job security and leverage to negotiate higher salaries and more vacation time.

Gen Xers love to spend money, especially

Average Annual Income (Before Taxes) by Age Group (United States)

AGE	INCOME
Under 25	\$28k
25-34	\$57k
35-44	\$75k
45-54	\$77k
55-64	\$65k
65-74	\$46k
75 and older	\$29k

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

on entertainment. They were the first generation of children to be directly targeted by advertisers, the first "Happy Meal Generation," the first video-game addicts and the generation that wants its MTV.

A recent survey by American Express showed that Gen Xers spend more in the "luxury experience" category than any other generation, specifically, in entertainment, personal/health services and sports/sporting events. Pair this with Gen X's motto, "I will not be defined by my job," and that's a winning combination for scuba because this segment of the population is willing to spend money on experiences and wants to establish an identity outside of work.

CHALLENGES

Gen Xers are in, or are approaching, their "sandwich" years — caring for both aging parents and their own children. This causes both time and money to be in short supply.

WHAT ATTRACTS THEM TO SCUBA?

Family is the number one priority for most Generation Xers. A recent msnbc.com article profiled several families in financial strife. In all instances, the family cut back on everything to ensure their kids would have money for university.

Not every family can afford to get certified, but after-school activities are an option for many. Position your PADI Seal Team program as an after-school program similar to karate or piano lessons. Research the going rate for these activities and how many sessions are typically offered. Schedule and price PADI Seal Team programs accordingly, adding in distinctive Aqua Missions to appeal to local interests and ideals. Getting kids involved in an AWARE Kids Program at school is also a good way to generate an interest in diving.

Gen Xers without children are often active in local charities. Contact local nonprofit organizations and ask about sponsorship in exchange for promotion. Most charities have an annual dinner/auction, and a private Discover Scuba Diving experience can be an attractive auction item.

HOW TO MARKET TO GEN XERS

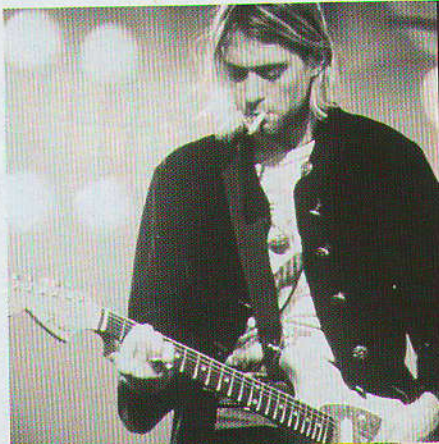
Generation X is the *Star Wars* generation. Based on a 2008 survey of PADI Certified divers, conducted by PADI Americas' Market Research Manager Cheryl Gilmore, in the last few years playing video games has become one of the top 10 activities divers enjoy (besides diving). There is no doubt

about the influence of Generation X. They may be adults on paper, but they still love sci-fi, computer games and new technology. Don't believe me? Say the words "wireless transponder" to a Gen Xer and watch their pupils dilate. Appeal to Gen Xers' geeky side by promoting the sci-fi side of scuba: the feeling of weightlessness, the Darth-Vaderesque sound of a regulator, monitoring your air consumption via a high-tech, electronic wrist computer, etc.

Remember: Generation Xers were the first to embrace personal electronics (Sony Walkman, personal computer and Gameboy).

They are a prime market for tricked-out dive computers and photo/video equipment.

There's one last thing you need to know about Generation Xers: They're into instant gratification. Attract Gen X spending by selling your products and services online; sell them a product when they're hot and heavy to buy. Don't make them wait, which means having online sales. For items you can't sell online, include a thorough description and encourage customers to visit your store. Gen Xers have an inherent distrust of big companies and support local retailers.



Gen Xers were the first generation to embrace personal media and staunchly refuse to let themselves be defined by their jobs.

GENERATION XERS: FAST FACTS

- » Gen Xers are between 27 and 43 years old
- » There are 69 million Gen Xers in the US (about 22 percent of the total population)
- » Fifty-six percent are married (80 percent of this group has children)
- » Sixty percent are college educated
- » Eighty percent work full-time
- » Peak retirement year: 2030
- » Watch an average of 15.1 hours of TV per week

- » What they like made by other generations: DVRs, smartphones, video games
- » Generation gap: Why do Baby Boomers love to have meetings? And why do they last so long?



TRY ANYTHING ONCE

{ Echo Boomers (aka Millennials, Gen Y): 10-26 years old }

“Now, why you wanna try
To classify the type of thing
That we do
‘Cause we’re just fine
Doin what we like
Can we say the same for you?”
— “Pop” by NSYNC

While Echo Boomers are the largest generation North America has ever seen (about 109 million people), they aren’t quite as big a force in other parts of the world. Either way, this generation is considerably smaller than previous generations. Though their population varies throughout the world, there are several common characteristics.

Today’s 18-year-old was born during the peak of the Echo Boom in North America (around 1991). They are digital natives, that is, generally speaking, an Echo Boomer’s world has always included high-speed internet, cable television and mobile phones. To the befuddlement of the Baby Boomers’ generation, Echo Boomers rarely use their phones to actually speak to someone. Their preferred methods of communication are (in order) text messaging, emailing and social network IMing.

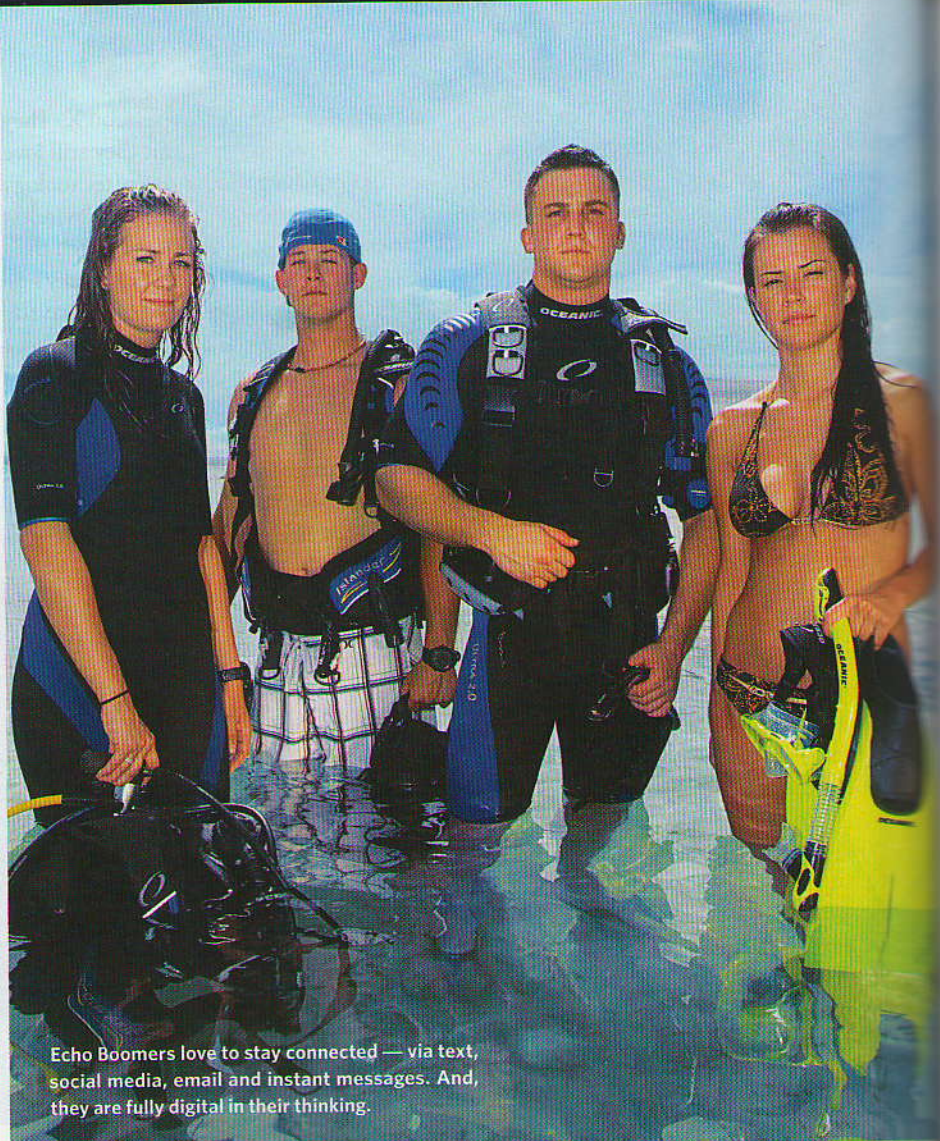
Members of this generation own two or more portable electronic devices (mp3 player, mobile phone, etc.) and will probably never purchase a home phone (landline). Only a handful have ever used a typewriter or adding machine, and few will learn how to drive a manual-transmission car. Echo Boomers don’t understand what other people’s problems are with technology, but the good news is they’re happy to show you how it works.

Echo Boomers place a high priority on being connected — to the internet, to friends to the world at large. Among themselves, they are very interconnected; everything is available and nothing is private. If this generation has a motto it’s, “Why not?”

ECHO BOOMERS INTERNATIONALLY

While North America prepares for Boomer Wave Part II, other parts of the world have the opposite problem.

A 2008 *New York Times* article reported, “... around the world, even in developing countries, birthrates have plummeted — from 6.0 globally in 1972 to 2.9 today.” In the 1980s and 1990s, Southern Europe and Japan experienced a rapid drop in birthrates.



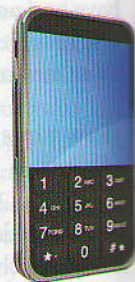
Echo Boomers love to stay connected — via text, social media, email and instant messages. And, they are fully digital in their thinking.



ECHO BOOMERS: FAST FACTS

- » Echo Boomers are between 10 and 26 years old
- » US population: 100 million (approximately 32 percent)
- » Worldwide population: Approximately 2 billion (just under 33 percent)
- » By 2018, half of the working population of North America will be Echo Boomers
- » Watches 10.5 hours of TV per week (the least of all the generations)

- » Nine out of 10 Echo Boomers own a computer
- » Eighty-two percent own a mobile phone*
- » Stuff they like from previous generations: Their parents, mobile phones and the internet
- » Generation gap: Why doesn’t Mom want a new cell phone?



This was felt to a lesser extent in Northern and Eastern Europe.

Forty years ago, Europe represented 12.5 percent of the world's population. Today, it is 7.2 percent, and if current trends continue, the United States Census Bureau's International Database projects that by 2050, only five percent of the world will be European.

In Japan, the population is expected to peak at 128.15 million in 2009. After that, the country's population will decline to about 100 million by the year 2050 (according to Japan's National Institute of Population and Social Security Research).

Australia will see a similar, though less severe, decline in its youth population. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the proportion of the population ages 15 and under has declined slightly from 22.4 percent to 19.3 percent. However, due to an increasing lifespan, the country will not see a significant decrease in its overall population.

In the United Kingdom, immigrants are filling the population gaps. According to a 2007 government report, Britain will have 11 million more people by 2031 — with approximately 69 percent coming from immigrants and their children.

Internationally, Echo Boomers grew up in smaller families. They had smaller class sizes at school, and more individual attention from teachers and family members.

The *Cairns Post* recently reported, "Once upon a time teenagers couldn't wait to leave home. But things have changed and there are now more and more 25 to 29 year olds still living at home with their parents."

A similar trend is underway in the US and UK. A recent monster.com survey found that 60 percent of college graduates plan to move back home following graduation (a 50 percent increase since the 1970s).

CONSUMER STRENGTHS

In the US, Echo Boomers spend approximately \$172 billion (US) per year and strongly influence many adult consumer buying choices. A significant portion of this money is essentially donated by the Baby Boomer generation. In other words, selling something to an Echo Boomer means selling it to the Baby Boomer as well. Be sure your Echo Boomers now have solid talking points for selling scuba to mom and dad.

CHALLENGES

Echo Boomers are a divided group with a great disparity in ages. Some still depend on

their parents, while others struggle through their first years as independent adults.

Echo Boomers are extremely market-savvy. They are cool-hunters and loathe imposters. Don't try to fake cool. Young people don't fool easily and prefer dealing with straightforward people who treat them like adults.

WHAT ATTRACTS THEM TO SCUBA?

"I'll try anything once!" has been the battle cry for generations of young people. If your dive business is in a college town, this is a huge opportunity. PADI courses qualify for college credit recommendations in many countries (for additional information, visit padi.com) and working with university-age students can be easier than teaching adults.

When targeting the younger generation, keep in mind that their parents often provide the financing. Echo Boomers can be effective salespeople, but may need assistance closing the deal. This generation is notorious for "helicopter parents" who hover over and micromanage their children's lives. Give your younger customers talking points, such as scuba is something the family can do together, scuba teaches self-reliance and the certification is good for life.

Now is the ideal time to promote a career in scuba to Echo Boomers. From age 16 to about 26, these young adults are searching for their path, a defining moment. Working as a dive professional may be the right decision for those who aren't ready to settle into life at a desk. Capture the young person's imagination by explaining how a PADI Instructor certification is a ticket to explore the world, and how you'll never forget handing your

first student the PADI Open Water Diver certification card. It's also worth mentioning that the presentation skills and training methods learned during the Instructor Development Course translate directly to the business world.

Honeymoons are also on the forefront of many Echo Boomers' minds. This generation has just begun their marrying years, and with marriage comes the honeymoon. Many couples prefer tropical destinations, and look for an exciting shared experience like scuba diving.

According to international demographics on nationmaster.com, the average age of marriage for the US, UK and Canada is 26. In South Africa, the average is 27, and in Japan, Australia and Italy, it's 28. New Zealanders get hitched a little earlier at about 25. Swedes and Danes take the longest to say, "I do." Many wait until the age of 32. Most couples in Central America marry between the ages of 20 and 22, but in Mexico, Argentina and Brazil, the average age is 23.

Act fast though. The same survey tells us 56 percent of Americans have kids before age 30, and the median age for first-time homebuyers is 32.

Echo Boomers are also called "Gen Y" and "Millennials." A recent Harris Interactive survey revealed this generation dislikes the Gen Y and Millennials labels. They prefer "The Internet Generation." However, since this group did not invent the internet (Boomers did) nor make any significant improvements to it (Xers did), Echo Boomers seemed more appropriate. Sorry, kids.

Echo Boomers motto:
"I'll try anything once."



When targeting the younger generation, keep in mind their parents often provide the financial support

GENERATIONS' BUYING HABITS

If I were you, I would feel dubious about this article so far. Does the year someone was born really make a significant difference in what kind of consumer he is? Why not write about the buying habits of Scorpios? I had the same concern. So, in December 2008, Gilmore and I sent a survey called the "Consumer Habits of Gen Y, Gen X and Baby Boomers" to several hundred consumers in North America. The purpose was to investigate consumer behavior by generation. Here are some sample questions:

- How much money do you consider a "splurge"?
- What you'd do with \$2000 (US)?
- How much time do you spend surfing the internet recreationally?
- How much do you budget per person for an average vacation?

Our survey results agreed with popular research. For example, here are the results when asked:

What are the top factors that influence your decision to try something new?

» **ECHO BOOMERS:** 76 percent – If it fits my budget.

» **GEN XERS:** 66 percent – If it's something I can do with my family.

» **BABY BOOMERS:** Three-way tie (19 percent each) – If it fits my budget, is something I can do with my family and if it has the ability to challenge me.

As expected, the Baby Boomers have the most free time of the generations we profiled.

How many hours per week do you consider free time?

» **ECHO BOOMERS:** 25-plus hours per week

» **GEN XERS:** 15-20 hours per week

» **BABY BOOMERS:** 7-14 hours per week

Similarly, Generation Xers spend the most time at work or doing work-related activities. Here's how it breaks out by age:

» **AGES 40-47:** 52 percent work between 41-50 hours per week

» **AGES 26-30:** 40 percent work between 41-50 hours per week

» **AGES 31-39:** 36.8 percent work between 41-50 hours per week

The cusp group between Gen Xers and Echo Boomers (27- to 30-year-olds) was number one for recreational internet use. Classic Boomers use the internet the least.

Not surprisingly, the over-40 crowd has the most disposable income, and the majority of individuals 25 and younger remain dependent on family for the finer things, as reflected when asked:

How much do you consider a splurge?

» **BABY BOOMERS:** \$100 (US)

» **ECHO BOOMERS:** \$20 (US)

Older Gen Xers and Boomers tied for the highest dollar amount budgeted for vacations (\$2000-\$2999) per person, while nearly one-quarter of Echo Boomers reported, "Someone else pays for my vacations."

Parents and family are also a strong influence on younger divers — 62 percent of divers 25 and younger reported they got certified because a parent or family member dives.

For additional survey results, visit padipronorthwest.blogspot.com.

ELECTRONIC MARKETING — A BUSINESS REQUIREMENT

Today, internet-based marketing technologies aren't just cool; they're requirements in the world of business. Whether communicating business-to-business or business-to-consumer, customers don't simply expect you to communicate with them — they demand it. From dynamic, continuously updated websites with compelling content to newsletters that keep customers informed, eMarketing has become vital for any business today. Since diving is such a social activity, this level of communication is even more important to the dive industry. And, it's a terrific opportunity for PADI Members.

PADI Members have long had access to an array of online tools. In the eMarketing arena, PADI staff members understands how critical it is to constantly adapt and retool these eMarketing efforts:

- » padi.com
- » [Online shopping](#)
- » [PADI eLearning](#)
- » [PADI Pros' Site](#)
- » [My PADI social networking](#)
- » [Electronic newsletters](#)

But, the PADI organization's commitment to eMarketing tools extends well beyond these efforts. Working with Integrated Scuba Systems (ISSYS), the PADI Offices have developed tools enabling PADI Members to easily incorpo-

rate web-based marketing tools into their businesses. Enter EVE OnLine from ISSYS.

EVE OnLine is an effective, easy point-of-sale (POS) tool that manages nearly everything — including inventory, sales, course scheduling, travel planning, customer communication and much more. With EVE OnLine, you have eMarketing tools that are unprecedented in the dive industry:

ONLINE SHOPPING CART — The EVE online shopping cart integrates with your in-store POS system. This allows customers to shop, book classes or schedule trips 24/7. Plus, you can manage and update the online shopping cart from anywhere you have an internet connection.

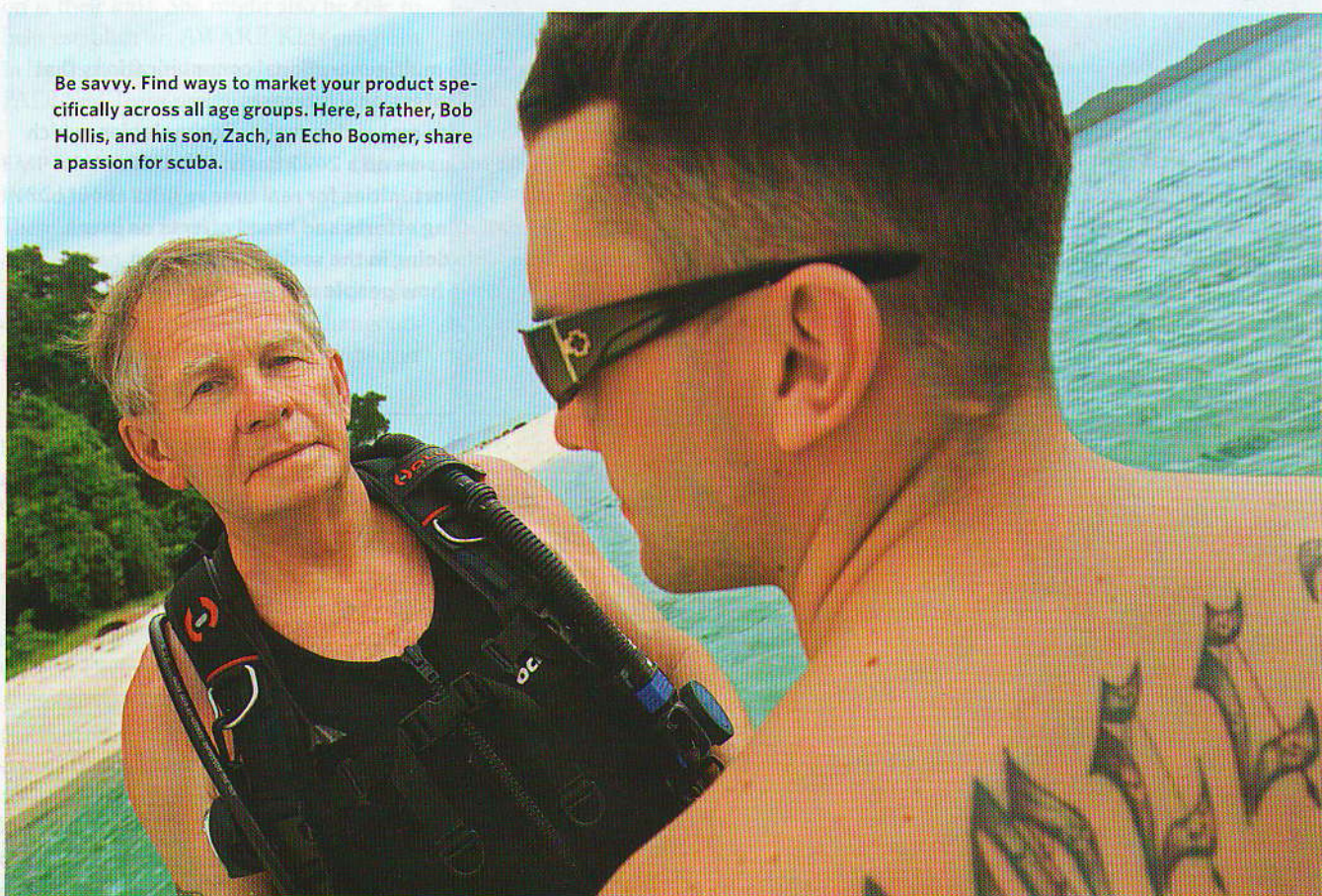
E-NEWSLETTERS — You can regularly communicate with customers using EVE OnLine's integrated newsletter functions. You can email your customers or target groups with specific messages.

CUSTOMER-RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT — Maintaining positive and effective customer relationships has, in the past, been time consuming and often costly. But, with EVE OnLine, you can send electronic greeting cards, track customer preferences, maintain diver-training histories or even keep tabs on a customer's favorite activities outside of diving.

Contact your PADI Office for more information on how you can get started with EVE OnLine today.

ing ... [but] now is the ideal time to promote a career in scuba diving to Echo Boomers.

Be savvy. Find ways to market your product specifically across all age groups. Here, a father, Bob Hollis, and his son, Zach, an Echo Boomer, share a passion for scuba.



LIFE ON THE CUSP

Generational demography is not an exact science, and at the edge of each generation (27- to 30-year-olds and 48- to 51-year-olds), things are murky.

Some say Generation X ended in 1976, others say 1982. There is a Gen Xer/Baby Boomer cusp affecting individuals around age 50. For fun, here are the findings for those born during the generational in-between times:

YOUNGEST GENERATION XERS OR OLDEST ECHO BOOMERS?

The cusp of Gen Xers and Echo Boomers is about 27- to 30-years-old. Fifty-two survey respondents from the December survey fit this description and, after comparing answers, the majority affiliated with Gen Xers rather than Echo Boomers.

This suggests that age norms are more powerful trend predictors than are generational ones. By age 27, most people have completed school and have a few years of work experience under their belt. By age 30, more than half are married and a sig-

nificant population has children. It makes sense for this group to relate more to their family raising, home-owning counterparts in Generation X.

This cusp group ranked number one for internet usage — 30 percent surf recreationally for two hours per day and 25 percent are on the web more than three hours per day. They are number two for number of hours spent working (40 percent work 41-50 hours per week), and number one for the most time spent with friends (42 percent spend 4-6 hours per week socializing with friends, 23 percent spend even more time, 7-14 hours).

OLDEST GENERATION XERS OR YOUNGEST BABY BOOMERS?

Survey respondents in this cusp group were between 48 and 51 years old during the survey. After comparing this group's answers to those of the Gen Xers and Baby Boomers, they split right down the middle.

This Gen Xer/Boomer cusp group works longer hours (like Generation Xers) and puts a priority on purchases that benefit their family. However, this group had

lower internet usage (similar to Boomers) and were more likely to donate money to charity or a family member (Xers preferred to save or pay off debt).

CONSUMER PROFILES

Other generational subgroups include:

THE ALPHA MOM

Known previously as a "Soccer Mom", she's ditched the minivan for an urban-assault vehicle and replaced the headband with a Bluetooth headset. An Alpha Mom may or may not work outside the home, but she has money to spend and a large network of friends. She's also wired — online 87 minutes per day according to ComScore Networks. Alpha Moms often have a blog (check your local newspaper's website) and are highly opinionated.

Invite Alpha Mom and her family to a PADI Bubblemaker party. Ask her advice on developing a summer PADI Seal Team program. Receive a favorable testimonial from

continued on page 53

THE CONNECTION

Is your social networking strategy actually costing you customers?

BY CHERYL GILMORE, PADI MARKET RESEARCH EXECUTIVE

If you think social networking is only for the young and tech-savvy, guess again. Social media are on the rise with all ages and all walks of life all around the world. Are you asking yourself, "What's a social networking strategy? This doesn't apply to me or my business." Then I say, "The train's about out of the station, so you better get on board."

Social media has proven itself to be more than entertainment for teens or useful for a select few. Professionals and businesses have adapted to this technology, using it as a tool

to foster worldwide multigenerational communications that mix personal and professional interests.

Social media is also embracing mobile technologies, which allow access to the users on a 24/7 basis. What does this mean? It allows opportunities for real time results about our reputation, marketing efforts and brand effects on users.

What are people doing in the social media?

This chart shows how people use social networking sites by generations.

HOW PEOPLE SPEND THEIR TIME ONLINE

	YOUNG TEENS 12-17	YOUTH 18-21	GEN Y 22-26	GEN X 27-40	YOUNG BOOMERS 42-50	OLDER BOOMERS 51-61	SENIORS 62+
Creators publish web pages, write blogs and upload videos to sites like YouTube	24%	37%	30%	19%	12%	7%	5%
Critics comment on blogs and post ratings and reviews	24%	37%	34%	25%	18%	15%	11%
Collectors use RSS and tag web pages to gather information	11%	16%	18%	16%	15%	16%	11%
Joiners use social-networking sites	51%	70%	57%	29%	15%	16%	11%
Spectators read blogs, watch peer-generated videos and listen to podcasts	49%	59%	54%	41%	31%	26%	19%
Inactives are online, but don't yet participate in any form of social media	34%	17%	21%	42%	54%	61%	70%

Source: Forrester Research

What are the top social-networking sites globally? Ranked by unique worldwide visitors, November, 2008

Blogger	222 million
Facebook	200 million
MySpace	126 million
WordPress	114 million
Windows Live Spaces	87 million
Yahoo Geocities	69 million
Flickr	64 million
hi5	58 million

Source: comScore



Alpha Mom, and you've recession-proofed your business. The last thing families scrimp on is their kids. She might also be able to help establish an AWARE Kids program in local schools and attract children to your PADI Seal Team programs.

EMPTY NESTERS AND DINKS (DUAL INCOME NO KIDS)

These active, tech-savvy and well-financed couples can bring a lot to your business. They enjoy traveling and volunteering for community activities. DINK hangouts include charity auctions, health clubs and online travel forums.

RETIREES AND ACTIVE RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Walt Bolton at Central Oregon Diving has one of the best scuba gigs there is. He co-owns the store with Liz and Mike Simpson, but half of the time, Bolton's away on a tropical island diving his brains out. Central Oregon Diving is located in Bend, Oregon — repeatedly nominated as one of the best places to retire in the United States. Retirees choose Bend because it offers beautiful scenery and plenty of opportunities for an active lifestyle. A significant number of Central Oregon Diving customers are retirees with the time and money to travel. As I write this, Bolton is preparing for Raja Ampat, Indonesia, and two months later, he's going to Fiji.

Active retirement communities are also a good target market. Most have pools, and the typical minimum age for residents is only 55. Some communities may have a travel or "Boomers" club you could work with directly. Active retirees may prefer to complete PADI Open Water Diver course training in a warm-water location. Be prepared to offer a complete travel package with scuba, golf and sightseeing. Keep pricing simple and all-inclusive.

TECH GEEK

In Malcom Gladwell's popular book *The Tipping Point*, he describes the importance of connectors, mavens, and salesmen in word-of-mouth marketing. Give your customers an incentive to play one of these roles.

As a business owner, you may not have time to update your website everyday or maintain a social network — but others do. Offer customers incentives to promote your business on their blog, Facebook page, etc. For example, such promos can include, "Help us spread the word about scuba diving. Write a blog post about your dive experi-



At the end of the day, no matter how you reach your market, the end product is the chance to explore the world's last frontier.

ence and save \$20 off your next class." Or "Post an underwater photo of yourself to your Facebook profile page and your friends can try scuba free by bringing in a print-out."

THE COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE

It never fails. A store will call and ask, "Does PADI make a PADI Open Water Diver Manual in Korean? I need one."

The next day the store will call back, "Um, I need five more."

Chances are, your local immigrant population isn't being marketed to, or they're only being targeted by businesses that speak the same language. PADI materials are available in more than 20 languages. Though the language barrier can be challenging, there can be significant long-term rewards to reaching out to an under-recognized community.

GREENIES

The last time I visited Honduras, I returned with two-dozen empty water bottles stuffed into my dive bag. Why leave trash on Roatán when I can recycle them in California?

Who cares what those customs guys think.

The "greening" we saw in 2008 is just the beginning. The Baby Boomers who pioneered the environmental movement instilled these values in their children. Environmentally friendly business practices are not a selling-point, they are an *expectation* for Gen Xers and Echo Boomers.

Attract the "green" dollar by promoting scuba as a sport for the environmentally conscious and offer opportunities to take part in conservation activities. Create an eco-page on your website with information on cleanup activities and statistics. Offer coral monitoring dives locally or as part of a travel package depending on your location. Tailor your activities to suit a green lifestyle. This could be booking a trip to an eco-friendly resort or offering an "Eco-Diver" course. For example, take the regular PADI Adventures in Diving program and offer Peak Performance Buoyancy, AWARE Fish Identification and Underwater Naturalist Adventure Dives. 