Gen X as Buyers
A Quad Infographic Study
OVERVIEW

Gen X gets more credit for its sense of detached irony and impending doom than for financial prowess. But irony of ironies, the generation that embraced its inner angst and let its ironic flannel flag fly has also become the multigenerational glue of the ages. Xers have shown a knack for securely bonding the past & the future, the traditional & the techy, the boomer & the millennial, and all with a sense of determined (and quite lucrative) stick-to-it-iveness.

- Gen X composes 20.5% of our population.¹
- With an estimated $2.4 trillion in spending power, Gen X is one of the juiciest of all generations!²
- Gen X is more likely to clip coupons. Paper-based deals and promos still edge digital.³
- Gen X prefers PCs or laptops for accessing email, browsing and social. However, mobile use is catching up.³
- Gen Xers are highly social – even more so than millennials! Nielsen recently discovered they average almost 40 more minutes per week on social networks.⁴
- Gen Xers not only make their own purchase decisions, they also make the lion’s share of their Gen Z prodigy’s (already larger than Gen X!).

Source 3: Quad Customer Focus 2017 Research Study
Born in-between Boomers and Millennials, Gen X is slightly smaller than both. First, there’s the generational span of 16 years vs 19 & 17, respectively. Plus, while Boomers are known for babies (it’s in the name), Millennials had pretty prolific parents, too. Whereas Gen Xers’ parents simply had fewer kids. But while birthrates may have been less than their generational bookends, Xers are financially fertile with trillions in economic power—yes, that’s “illions” with a “tr.” So avoid triggering the stereotypical middle child's lament and pay attention to this generation!
Gen X – A Snapshot

1965–1981
55 MILLION
(Age 36–52 in 2017)

43% suburban 71% homeowners

53% $75K+ Income

55% Caucasian
26% Hispanic
12% African American
8% All Others

DIVERSE GENERATION

55% COLLEGE GRADS

LIFE CHANGERS

54% HAVE KIDS 12–17

46% LIVED IN SAME COMMUNITY
5–15 YEARS

78% employed

Source: Quad Customer Focus® 2017 Research Study
Maybe they earned the detached, self-deprecating persona. Maybe they didn’t. One thing they DID earn? Degrees. As the most educated generation, the wealth of smarts led to success. Higher wages. C-suite positions. And while those degrees also netted some lingering college debt, their wallets still pack a whole lot of wallop. Especially considering raising kids plus aging parents have made Gen X leaders in multi-generational households.
Spending Power = $2.4 Trillion

Gen X Holds 31% of Total Income Dollars

85% own a smartphone

75% provide financial assistance to elderly parents who need it

provide financial assistance to adult child who needs it 52%

7 in 10 will make a digital purchase this year

47% Turn to Internet First to Assist with Purchase Decisions

24% Purchased via Mobile Device in Past 30 Days

VISITED STORE PER

28% Email

34% Ad Insert

36% Direct Mail

75% provide financial assistance to elderly parents who need it

52% provide financial assistance to adult child who needs it

24% Purchased via Mobile Device in Past 30 Days

47% Turn to Internet First to Assist with Purchase Decisions

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Gen X – X-tra Large $$$ Power
Gen Xers survived the Great Recession. They know Social Security isn’t a security blanket. They’ve saved for their college, their kids’ college, homes, businesses, and retirement. They get saving. And considering the large majority still bring in the mail every day, are more likely to get paper bills vs electronic, use DM coupons, and still seal & stamp birthday cards. They definitely do print. But their constant connection to email—at work or home, PCs, tablets or smartphones—means they don’t mind e-tail, either. So while they skew slightly more traditional on ad preference, they may be the original crossover generation.
Advertising GenX **Love**

- Ad Inserts & Circulars: 69%
- Direct Mail: 68%
- TV Ads: 55%
- Catalogs: 49%
- Magazine Ads: 41%
- Radio Ads: 40%
- Internet Ads: 39%
- Email Solicitations: 38%
- Mobile Texts: 44%

Advertising GenX **Ignore**

- Ad Inserts & Circulars: 60%
- Email Solicitations: 61%
- Internet Ads: 53%
- Radio Ads: 39%
- Magazine Ads: 40%
- TV Ads: 26%
- Direct Mail: 27%
- Mobile Texts: 28%

**DISCOVERY CHANNELS**

- Emails
- Google

**PURCHASE MOTIVATIONS**

- Quality
- Unique Products

**HOW THEY BUY**

- Comparison of products
- Omnichannel

Source: [Quad Customer Focus® 2016 Research Study](https://www.tapbuy.io/en/blog/millennials-vs-gen-x-can-adopt-shopping-habits/)
Where Gen X Prefer to Get Coupons & Offers

- 53% Direct Mail
- 70% Printed Ad Inserts & Circulars
- When there was a coupon included
- 20% Mobile Text
- 37% Email
- 14% Magazine Ads
- 34% Newspaper
- 31% Internet Ads
- 25% In-Store Display
- 15% Catalog

Source: Quad Customer Focus® 2016 Research Study
COUPONS GEN X REDEEMED – PAST 30 DAYS

14% Catalogs
22% Mobile App
14% Mobile Text
33% Email
27% INTERNET
30% Ad Insert from Newspaper
41% DIRECT MAIL

VISITED STORE TRIGGERED BY AD MEDIUM – PAST 30 DAYS

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Source: Quad Customer Focus 2016 & 2017 Research Study
Computerless world? Who can remember that? Gen X, that’s who. These guys came of age when digital communications were just being born. Half analog, half digital, they built the bridge from old school to new school. So while Gen Z may “always be on,” Gen X knows that powering down doesn’t mean shutting off. They get digital. They like mobile. They do social. But they also get that there are other info sources. They’re less self-centered about their tech and more about multi-channel info-seeking.
**Gen X Devices**

![Sources](https://www.millwardbrowndigital.com/marketing-to-genx-the-in-between-generation/)

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### TRENDING

**DIGITAL ON THE RISE**

Digital ad spend is forecast to grow over the next few years, tapering as the market matures.

#### Generation X & Digital

- **62%** Ignore Internet Ads
- **42%** Enable Ad Blocking Software on computer or laptop
- **10%** Scanned QR code
- **22%** Used Mobile App Coupon (past 30 days)
- **27%** Used Internet Coupon (past 30 days)
- **28%** Redeemed a mobile coupon (past 30 days)

**Source:** Quad Customer Focus 2017 Research Study

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**Source:** eMarketer
As the smallest of the 3, you might think Gen X would be shy. But although they have a reserved way about them, Gen X more than holds its own with Boomers & Millennials on finances. Plus, Xers have become the glue for the modern multi-generational family, supporting both their Boomer parents and their Gen Z kids.
$2.4 TRILLION
Est. Spending Power\(^1\)

AGE 36–52
in 2017
55 MILLION
Population\(^1\)

85%
Own Smartphone\(^2\)

SIGNATURE PRODUCT
Personal Computer\(^2\)

COUPONS
Use Digital & Print

AGE 53–71
in 2017
75.4 MILLION
Population\(^1\)

64%
Own Smartphone\(^2\)

SIGNATURE PRODUCT
Television\(^2\)

COUPONS
Use Print

$2.6 TRILLION
Est. Spending Power\(^1\)

AGE 19–35
in 2017
83.1 MILLION
Population\(^1\)

89%
Own Smartphone\(^2\)

COUPONS
Use Digital & Print

SIGNATURE PRODUCT
Tablet & Smartphone\(^2\)

$1.4 TRILLION
Est. Spending Power\(^1\)

CUSTOMER FOCUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Quad Customer Focus® is a quantitative annual study of 2,500 adults, a solid representative sample of demographic U.S. Census estimates. The research study provides current and historical views on singular and integrated media usage, as well as winning marketing strategies across numerous industry segments. The study reveals consumer shopping habits and media preferences by a number of different demographic elements. The data can be viewed using various cross tabulation methods, including combinations of demographic variables to create custom customer profiles. Additionally, the study tracks the media usage and shopping behaviors of shoppers at 40 of the Top 200 Retail brands.

Two-thirds of the participants are contacted by telephone. A random digit dial method of telephone interviewing is used. This method ensures that a representative sample of the market will be interviewed. The phone numbers are computer generated randomly, based on all working prefixes in the area specified. This sample includes both listed and unlisted households, but deletes business numbers. Researchers are exempt from the Do Not Call List and so those households are contacted as well.

Interviewers attempt four callbacks on different days and times to ensure each randomly selected household is more likely to be contacted. Interviews are conducted 7 days a week, Monday-Friday from 5-9 p.m. and on weekends from 12 noon-5 p.m. This is done to avoid getting too many retirees, homemakers, unemployed and students in the mix; and also insure the study includes high income and white collar workers.

Households that do not have a landline are also contacted via email or by cell phone and directed to an online survey, which makes up about a third of the study participants.

Also, after each night of interviewing, the results are reviewed against Claritas data for annual age, income, ethnic background and population distribution figures, to ensure our data matches the demographics of the survey area just called.

The study has been conducted annually since 2001, and has been expanded and modified to reflect the growing number of media channels used to engage consumers today. The study has been conducted by Marshall Marketing, the leading provider of quantitative and qualitative research for the media industry since 1985. The company is based in Pittsburgh, with offices in Charlotte, Knoxville, Orlando, Raleigh, Seattle & Spokane. They study over 100 markets annually, conducting 75,000 interviews each year. Media clients include: TV and radio stations, cable, circular and direct mail printers. Industry verticals they provide custom research for include: financial institutions, auto dealers, furniture stores, hospitals, restaurants, grocery stores and others.

We augmented the Customer Focus® research information in this paper with research and reports on demographics and media habits of Generation X (Americans born from the early-to-mid 1960s to the early 1980s).