

Women over 50: Their perspectives on life and portrayal in advertising



Mature women between the ages of 50 and 80 feel they are not well understood and ignored by many advertisers and marketers alike, despite being Australia's most influential spenders.

A recent study conducted by Perspective Research and Evergreen Advertising and Marketing involved discussion groups with women between the ages of 50 and 80 from various backgrounds. The study aimed to enter the hearts and minds of these women to understand how they feel about their lives, what their priorities are and how they feel they are depicted in the media.

The Evergreen Report, uncovers insights to a powerful audience that deserves more attention by astute marketers with foresight.

As part of the research process, a range of television and print advertisements were evaluated. Participants then discussed the images and messages from the advertising that they found appealing and those that failed to strike a chord.

Women throughout the various groups said they rarely see images in magazines and on television with which they can identify.

"Generally speaking, if there are ads of older women at all, they show them to be frumpy and old-fashioned or trying to look and behave like younger women", says Christina Branagan, leading researcher and Managing Partner of Perspective Research, "but women today don't see themselves the way society sees them and this is frustrating and unfair".

"I certainly don't look the way my mother did when she was my age", said one of the focus group participants, "and I don't think I behave in a way that others expect a 60 year old to behave either!"

"Advertising needs to be more honest and representative", says Gill Walker, Managing Director of Evergreen Advertising and Marketing – an advertising agency dedicated to developing marketing strategies and advertising campaigns for the 50+ market.

"Older women deserve our recognition and respect, and there is no reason why we shouldn't be seeing more faces of older women in advertising and these should be realistic and positive images", says Walker.

"If we want to harness the spending dollar of the most influential person in society, we need to acknowledge the mature woman and speak to her in an appropriate way".

HOW MATURE WOMEN SEE THEMSELVES

Accomplished - "I've achieved a lot in my life" - The mature woman is proud of her achievements in life and wants recognition.

Positive - "Life is good" - This stage of life, and especially retirement is a very positive time for many older women as long as they are financially secure.

Comfortable - "I'm more comfortable with myself" - As women age it would seem they become more self accepting and less anxious about what others think.

Confident - "Being attractive holds a different meaning for me now" - Attractiveness holds a new meaning for older women and has more complex inner directed components.

Healthy - "Health and fitness are really important" - It would seem that health and fitness become more important as women get older and it is not just about the body, the mind is also important.

MATURE ADVERTISING TIPS

✓ DO

- Make the woman hero
- Be positive in your messaging
- Recognise that women have several roles
- Show women as being confident and proud, and comfortable with who they are
- Focus on self-approval and inner beauty
- Gently challenge stereotypes by being fun and playful
- Show inter-generational exchange
- Use humour

✗ DON'T

- Assume women over 50 represent a homogenous group
- Make fun of women in a condescending manner
- Focus on objects and materialistic needs
- Use nudity as a way to capture attention
- Pretend that women don't age
- Use younger models

By understanding the mature woman better and considering her needs more often, your marketing strategies, communications, products and services will be far more effective. With the increased effectiveness of your activities aimed at this group of women, your brand is more likely to benefit from increased profit.

If you would like a copy or to find out more about *The Evergreen Report*, contact Perspective Research or Evergreen Advertising and Marketing. See details below.



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