

**AAUW MEMBERSHIP
MARKETING TO YOUNGER MEMBERS
OR “HERE COME THE BOOMERS”
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Each generation has differing expectations. The challenge is to bring these diverse generations together through multiple options and opportunities. We must understand the unique needs and styles of each generation, volunteers and constituents, and create ways for each to receive personal satisfaction and rewards. Over the next 20 years the Baby Boomer generation will surge into retirement. This is the 60's generation that rebelled against authority, organized movements and changed the workplace. Although they're not one homogeneous group their vision of retirement is different from their parent's. They expect to live longer, have far more choices plan to spend periods of time away from home traveling, view retirement as an option to begin a new career, and to generally stay put in their communities.

Volunteer generations 2003:

Silent Generation 1925 – 1942 (78 – 61) prefers structured volunteer experiences

- Prefers conformity, uniformity, order
- Not always comfortable with technology
- Often likes things as they are & are reluctant to implement change

Baby Boomers 1943 – 1960 (60 – 43) prefer volunteer activities aligned with their skills

- Look for meaningful roles
- Individualistic in thinking
- High education levels
- Will make multiple entrances & exits in labor market
- Focus on skills & interests
- Volunteer experience must meet personal needs not just those of the organization

Generation Xers 1961 – 1981(42 – 22) prefer learning opportunities rather than social events

- Attracted to opportunities for skills building, career enhancement, networking & professional/leadership development
- Like to be engaged quickly & made to feel like insiders
- Want meaningful assignments
- Good at multi-tasking
- Want meeting material brief & scannable

General strategies:

- Ask people personally
- Invite people to become involved in a specific way
- Identify what people in your branch can do
- Provide recognition

Benefits of volunteering:

Incredible networking opportunities

- Develop personal & professional relationships

Retain & sharpen old skills

- Do things you used to do & liked

Develop new skills

- Serving as committee chair increases facilitation skills
- Planning & implementing events can develop goal setting, planning & budgeting skills
- Supervising & training other volunteers helps to develop supervisory & training skills

Practice skills in a relatively risk free environment

- Build self-confidence through practice

- Opportunity to observe other people & select best practices
- Expand horizons
- Great way to enhance cultural awareness
 - Group work fosters teamwork
 - Opportunity to learn more about different perspectives
 - Perfect way to explore new skills or interests
 - Way to strengthen personal/professional mission & vision
- Satisfaction of knowing you're doing good & being involved
- Get involved in something you feel strongly about that is happening/not happening in your community
 - Work with others to craft new solutions to community problems
- Creates visibility
- Opportunity to be seen & known to a wide range of people
 - Be seen as someone who gets things done
- Energizing/renewing activity
- Break in routine
 - Create balance in your life
 - Energy & sense of fulfillment can carry over into work situation
 - Help relieve work tensions
 - Foster new perspectives for old situations
- Create leaders
- Volunteer groups respond more to leadership than management
 - Lead by persuasion, innovation, your ideas & ideals
 - Help learn strategic thinking, change management, conflict resolution skills
 - Learn about your community, trends & issues, people & resources
- Demonstrate skills
- Workplace skills/management skills/customer service skill/leadership skills that can be documented in a resume

Ten ways to target Baby Boomers:

1. Offer choice, flexibility & responsiveness to today's lifestyles.
2. Pair volunteer activities with educational & recreational activities like:
 - *Lifelong learning*
 - Family & intergenerational relationships
 - Activities that can lead to new employment options
3. Begin **now** to develop & promote information for those approaching retirement. This generation is already planning for their retirement years.
4. Use the Internet to give information, make statewide & national connections to recruit volunteers.
5. Enhance your marketing messages with images of volunteers doing new, unexpected things, of having a good time together, of volunteer "experts" solving problems.
6. Don't rely on "civic duty" and "make a difference" as marketing messages for this generation. Offer opportunities for new experiences, challenges & stimulation. Personal growth & the desire for new knowledge & skills are powerful forces within this generation.
7. Develop career paths for volunteers to promote *lifelong learning*, advancement and skill development.
8. Provide opportunities for volunteer to "try-before-you-buy" experiences as a marketing tool. This is a consumer-oriented generation that looks for quality, efficiency & effectiveness. Episodic volunteering has been the norm for many of these busy working people.
9. Provide clear expectations regarding time, tasks and training.
10. When possible promote the connection to local issues and local problems, and communicate *how* volunteers will make a difference.

New approaches to volunteer activities respectful of volunteer skills without “dumbing down”:

Episodic volunteerism once or twice a year

- Work at fundraising event
- Work on special project/event

The 30 - minute volunteer workout *or* embracing new approaches for short-term, time-intensive engagement for busy people *or* how to get them in the habit of a 30 – minute volunteer fitness workout 3 days a week.

- Proofreading
- Pick up something to be delivered or mailed
- Post-upcoming events
- Keep in touch with other volunteers with a phone call once a week
- Do an email exchange once a day

Meetings:

- Evening & weekend opportunities
- Rotate times and locations
- Don't conduct business at meetings
- Keep short & to the point
- Address community concerns
- Provide lifelong learning opportunities

Reaching potential volunteers:

- Partner with neighborhood or grassroots organizations meeting community needs to access volunteers where they live
- Find new ways to work with or publicize activities to businesses to interest potential volunteers before they retire
- Publicize AAUW in every way imaginable
- Post list of AAUW programs, events, mission in:
 - Grocery stores
 - Health clubs
 - Libraries
 - Banks
 - Malls
 - Recreation centers
 - Anywhere there is a community bulletin board
 - Work places of current members (schools, hospitals, etc.)

See www.merrillassociates.net for more info.