

# Press Kit

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Although the mature markets represent only one-third of the population, 50-plus consumers control 70 percent of the nation's total net worth, with spending power totaling over \$2.3 trillion.

And these consumers not only go online, they buy online, spending approximately \$7 billion annually – making strategic Internet marketing critical in capturing the wealthiest consumer in history.

But no single strategy fits every product, service, or 50-plus consumer. Specializing in Internet marketing for the mature markets, Immersion Active enables companies to leverage interactive media to effectively connect with pre-retirees, active retirees, seniors, and other distinct market segments of adults ages 50-plus.

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## Company Fact Sheet

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- Immersion Active is the only Internet marketing agency in the U.S. specializing in the 50-plus markets. Most companies target younger consumers, thinking that youth reigns online. We know better.
- Along with comprehensive interactive solutions for everything from virtual tours to e-commerce solutions, we maintain a progressive approach to on-site usability testing and ongoing research.
- Our most recent white paper, "Interactive Design Preferences of 50-Plus Users," was selected for nationwide presentation at all of the 2006-2007 Direct Marketing Association's Mastering the 50+ Marketplace conferences due to its comprehensive and innovative content.
- Our Mature Connections online advertising solution offers the industry's most extensive media planning database and target strategies.
- We offer the only 50-Plus Website Audit program to companies targeting boomers and seniors in the U.S. This audit, which can be followed up with our Mature User Panel, is a testing service that brings together targeted users across all 50-plus market segments.
- When the AOPA Air Safety Foundation needed e-learning solutions for its pilots, they called us. When Senior Lending Network needed a powerful online advertising campaign targeting mature users, they called us. When AARP Magazine needed an interactive timeline to celebrate the life and times of rock legend Paul McCartney, they called us. And when the Virginia Opera Association needed a website that catered to mature users, without disenfranchising the young, they called us.
- The Washington Business Journal has consistently ranked Immersion Active among the top interactive agencies in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

## 50-Plus Marketing Philosophy

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50-plus consumers aren't settling into rocking chairs — they're just getting started.

While many Internet marketing firms believe interactive equals young, research says otherwise. Baby boomers and seniors represent the Web's largest constituency, making up one-third of the 195.3 million Internet users in the U.S. And they're not just surfers, they're buyers too, spending \$7 billion annually online.

When you market to the 50-plus consumer, you have to check your assumptions at the door and forget everything you thought you knew about turning 50. It is not the "beginning of the end" for these consumers, but rather a new era in their lives. They are ready and eager to partake in new experiences and embark on new adventures.

But how do you capture the 50-plus consumer online? This is not a demographic to which you can apply traditional marketing formulas. Instead of marketing based on income level, marital status, and the likelihood of home ownership, as you might do for a younger demographic, you are now marketing to a life stage, such as becoming a grandparent, retiring, developing health issues, and so forth. And to connect with these consumers, your Internet marketing efforts have to be appropriately researched and tested.

Add to the equation that "50-plus" is not the final adjective. There are key segments within the mature market (which actually begins at age 42), including pre-retirees, active retirees, seniors, and other distinct consumer groups. They each respond to different approaches and have unique needs.

A traditional Internet marketing strategy simply will not work across the 50-plus spectrum. Internet marketing needs to address these powerful purchasers as the active, vital consumers that they are.

## 50-Plus Fact Sheet

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While it seems that defining boomers and seniors is difficult, the cohorts that make up this group are actually highly targetable. So here are some things we know about these consumers.

Be sure to check off the facts you didn't know, because chances are your readers and viewers don't either.

### Population characteristics

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- Baby boomers are defined as the approximately 76 million people born between 1946 and 1964. The oldest of them turned 60 in 2006. Seniors are defined as anyone older than that.
- Boomers perceive themselves as being on the early side of middle age, so marketing to them as "oldsters" is a huge mistake. Many feel that they are just getting started.
- The 18 to 49 demographic will increase by only 856,379 over the next 10 years, while the 50-plus segments will grow by 22 million.
- 40 percent (36.2 million) of the 97 million Americans who are 45 or older are single, and more than 20 percent believe that this is their year for romance.
- 90 million Americans will be 65 and older in the next 40 years, doubling today's senior population.

### Online behavior

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- 50-plus consumers represent the Web's largest constituency, as one-third of the 195 million current Internet users in the United States.
- The Internet is the most important source of information for baby boomers when they make a major purchase, such as automobiles and appliances.
- Households of 50-plus consumers are the fastest growing user segment to embrace computer technology.
- The Internet is becoming an increasingly important resource for the healthcare decisions of older adults.
- Mature consumers spend more overall time online than teenagers.
- Baby boomers and seniors spend an average of \$7 billion online per year.

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## Spending power

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- This group represents \$2.3 trillion in disposable income.
- Boomers are the largest, wealthiest, and best-educated population segment this nation has ever seen, and they have great influence over their senior parents' buying decisions.
- They control 70 percent of the total net worth in the United States.
- 50-plus consumers want and will pay for luxury upgrades, such as houses, cars, and travel accommodations. Overall, they feel that they've worked hard and worked long, and they've earned it.
- Between now and 2010, the total spending for 50-plus households will increase by over \$900 billion.
- In 2005, boomers spent \$35 billion on their grandchildren and \$30 billion on anti-aging products.
- Two-thirds of empty nesters have full wallets, as their discretionary income goes up at least \$5,000 per year when the kids fly the coop.
- The 50-plus set owns:
  - 75 percent of America's financial assets.
  - 80 percent of America's savings.
  - Over 50 percent of all corporate stocks.
- 50-plus consumers are responsible for purchasing:
  - 41 percent of all new cars.
  - 25 percent of all toys.
  - 80 percent of all luxury travel (spending 74 percent more on vacations than the 18- to 49-year-old set).
  - 60 percent of all healthcare.
  - 74 percent of all prescription drugs.
  - 51 percent of all over-the-counter drugs.

## Awards

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Immersion Active has been the recipient of over 80 regional, national, and international awards for our work in interactive design and marketing. Below is a list of some of the organizations that have publicly recognized our work.

- Mature Market Resource Center
- Webby Awards
- ADDY Awards
- Federal Aviation Administration
- NAMA (National Agri-Marketing Association)
- PRINT Digital Design Competition
- National Paragon Awards
- LACP Spotlight Awards
- International Economic Development Award for Excellence in Multimedia

## Recognition

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- Our most recent white paper, “Interactive Design Preferences of 50-Plus Users,” was selected for nationwide presentation at all of the 2006-2007 Direct Marketing Association’s Mastering the 50+ Marketplace conferences due to its comprehensive and innovative content.
- Immersion Active’s development of the website for continuing care retirement community Westminster Canterbury Richmond ([www.wescanric.org](http://www.wescanric.org)) earned a Gold Award from the World Wide Web Mature Media Awards in 2006.

## Press Releases

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For the most recent press releases, visit [www.immersionactive.com/company\\_news](http://www.immersionactive.com/company_news)

## Photos and Logos

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David Weigelt and Jonathan Boehman: [Download Photos](#) (1.8 MB PDF)

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## Principle Bios

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David Weigelt

### **David Weigelt, Chief Marketing Strategist and Partner**

After attending Western Maryland College (now McDaniel College), David began his career at a creative services consultancy, where his roles ranged from managing the service bureau to consulting with local designers and marketers. He then moved on to the world's largest aviation association, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), as their senior designer. While at AOPA, David was instrumental in the association's transition from a CompuServe bulletin board to a 30,000 page website and was responsible for development of their foundation's award winning e-learning platform. During this time, David became an adjunct instructor at Frederick Community College, where he taught various courses in marketing, design, and the Internet. Seeing that the Web offered an opportunity to create an even more relevant means of communication between individuals and companies, David, in concert with partner Jonathan Boehman, launched Immersion Active in 1998.

Since co-founding Immersion Active, David's primary responsibility has been within the marketing strategy and business development arenas. He is responsible for working with prospective clients to help them define their needs and goals, as well providing them with insight into ways to leverage digital media in their strategic marketing initiatives. In addition to his work at Immersion Active, David serves on the board of the local American Advertising Federation ad club and is an adjunct professor at McDaniel College.

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## Principle Bios

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Jonathan Boehman

### **Jonathan Boehman, Chief Creative Director and Partner**

Always drawn to creative design, Jonathan studied art and design at McDaniel College, where he now teaches web design as an adjunct professor. Prior to co-founding Immersion Active, Jonathan worked for area advertising agencies, acquiring frontline user experience that could be infused into design for more identifiable commercial results. Throughout his interactive experience, Jonathan noticed that an effective user experience was consistently missing from online marketing materials, and co-founded Immersion Active to change that.

Due to his creative and strategic direction at Immersion Active, he has enhanced interactive experiences for such clients as Long Fence, AOPA, AARP, Virginia Opera, the U.S. Navy, and the Baltimore Ravens. Jonathan also participates in numerous portfolio reviews throughout the year, and is passionate about the professional and artistic development of younger Immersion Active staff members. He ensures that all of Immersion Active's campaigns yield meaningful and measurable results through attractive and effective architecture, design, and execution. But most importantly, Immersion Active's projects result in sophisticated and engaging experiences for mature users.

## Q&A With the Partners

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Join us in a conversation with David and Jonathan to gain more insight into Immersion Active and its unique positioning.

The trend of focusing on 50-plus consumers started in Europe. How do you feel about it gaining momentum in the States?

D: On one hand it makes me nervous that a lot of people will jump on the bandwagon for the promise of “getting rich quick” and, in doing so, stop truly solving the problems of marketers targeting 50-plus. On the other hand, as the only interactive firm in the U.S. that focuses on these markets, it would be some nice validation.

What does Immersion Active bring to the table when considering the mature markets online?

D: Our goal is to help people do two things: connect with older adults online en masse, and better convert them once they have their attention.

What is the most important factor about a mature user’s online experience?

J: A common misconception is that they are brand-loyal consumers at this point of their lives. In reality, they are extremely thoughtful consumers who are willing to try new things. While they are open to new products, services and experiences, they must first be able to trust the companies they patronize. It is easy to speak down to them and turn them off with inappropriately executed technology, and that must be taken into consideration online.

D: Absolutely. One of our passions is for functional user experiences that are also elegant. The fact that there is such a disparity in terms of older generations is a huge motivating factor for me. Younger generations have a higher level of user satisfaction because, from an interactive standpoint, the media is created for them and by them. I don’t feel like most product design, online experiences, and so forth come close to giving older adults the level of satisfaction that younger demographics enjoy. That is one of the good things about all of the media hype around baby boomers; historically, they have been the generation capable of initiating change.

J: I agree. It is exciting, and we can help them with that change.

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### If people could have one impression of Immersion Active, what would you want it to be?

**D:** Our name 'Immersion Active' articulates how we approach any web-based presence or campaign. We simply immerse ourselves in our projects to get our hands around all aspects of a client's problems. And because we concentrate on the mature markets, we can better solve our client's problems by the nature of being more focused.

**J:** I think something that really stands out about us is that we try to fight the good fight when it comes to our suggestions on a project, not because of pride, but because we always have the best interests of our clients in mind. And we would not be able to do so if we didn't have such a dedicated staff who truly want to provide the best possible solution for our clients.

### Immersion Active was established in 1998. How did it survive the dot.com crash?

**J:** It was all in how we decided to grow during the dot.com days. After seeing money thrown at firms like ours, and watching them go from 3 to 300 people in a few months, we made a conscious decision to grow organically. We've always realized that delivering a good product, and being a good company is a balance that you have to strike.

**D:** And from the very start, we've always had a passion for the Web as a vehicle that could drive tangible results. We've never lost sight of that, and rather than going big, our strategy has been more focused on what do we need to do to create the best projects for the clients we have now.

### Is there anything you would like to change about Immersion Active?

**D:** Our work with websites makes people think that we are just a web shop, which is definitely a strong point for us, but our ability to consider how other channels, such as email, kiosks or mobile phones, might impact the success of an online campaign is a big reason for the success of a lot of our projects. I think this aspect of our work often gets lost because our websites come off as very rich, dynamic, and interactive.

**J:** But that point speaks to marketing to mature consumers online very well. Just because they are older, and certain elements relating to their age need to be considered, does not mean that web-campaigns targeting these consumers can't be dynamic. It simply hammers home that they are active, viable consumers, which makes what we do so enthralling.

## Topics, Article/Segment Concepts, Interview Questions

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While 50-plus marketing theory seems to be tackled from time to time in popular media, CEOs and small business owners alike want to know the specifics of how to beef up the bottom line.

Here are some ideas that will get your viewers and readers to sit up straight:

### What is interactive marketing anyway?

#### Topic:

Interactive marketing, which is usually associated with Web marketing (such as websites and email campaigns) and other electronic media (such as DVDs or iTV), is actually any medium that engages the target audience in a two-way experience.

Interactive marketing can serve many of the same objectives as traditional marketing, such as branding, lead generation, and direct response, but unfortunately, interactive marketing is often isolated from traditional marketing efforts because of the logistics involved in doing so.

And more importantly, does the mature market respond to this non-traditional approach?

#### Article/Segment Concept:

- Interviews with businesses who feel that interactive solutions, such as e-learning modules or DVD sales presentations, have boosted 50-plus business.
- Interviews with mature marketing consultants who avoided interactive because of a perceived expense, technical concern, or 50-plus consumer challenges, and how they felt after incorporating interactive measures.
- Case studies of businesses that use interactive measures to attract the mature market extensively.

#### Interview Questions:

- What are the biggest mistakes you see otherwise smart and progressive companies making with their websites and other Internet marketing measures?
- Effective Internet marketing doesn't come cheap. How long does it take the average company to recoup the interactive investment?
- Is there a higher, lower, or comparable (to traditional methods) ROI?
- Is it more expensive to employ interactive measures for the 50-plus markets than it is for younger markets?

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## Do 50-plus consumers really buy online?

### Topic:

Many businesses think that since some boomers and many seniors didn't grow up with computers, they avoid doing anything with them.

The truth is that baby boomers and seniors not only go online; they are consistently the fastest growing group of Internet users and spent over \$7 billion online last year. But where do you find boomers online? What are the factors that affect whether or not they'll buy from you?

Find out why what a company is not doing could be hurting sales.

### Article/Segment Concept:

- Case studies on sales activity and profit margins before and after websites were redesigned.
- Interviews with boomers and seniors who regularly buy online – what website design or usability functions affect websites that capture their business?
- Interviews with boomers and seniors who refuse to buy online – why? Have they had negative experiences, and if so, what were they? If they've never tried to buy online, why haven't they, and what would entice them to do so?

### Interview Questions:

- Isn't zeroing in on the 50-plus demographic a little risky?
- Are you alienating younger markets that are culturally more apt to go interactive if you target 50-plus consumers?
- While there is obvious money to be gained in the financial services, health care, and travel industries, what do other industries have to gain by optimizing their Internet marketing efforts for the 50-plus markets?

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## 50-plus market segmentation and why it matters

### Topic:

Many businesses are all too aware that 50-plus consumers have money to spend. What they're not aware of is the fact that there are unique segments within the mature markets that respond to online marketing differently.

Pre-retirees, active retirees, seniors, and other distinct consumer groups each respond to different approaches. Find out why a blanket Internet marketing strategy simply will not work across the 50-plus board, and what a company can do to identify and attract its true 50-plus target consumer online.

### Article/Segment Concept:

- Interviews with companies whose online marketing results changed significantly upon implementing segmenting efforts.
- A comparison between two competing websites: one using the "50-plus blanket approach" online and the other showing a more targeted and segmented approach.

### Interview Questions:

- What is this concept of marketing to a life stage and how is that different from other marketing approaches?
- What are the most common life stages 50-plus users encounter and how do those help you segment them?
- What does it mean to actually apply segmentation to your marketing? Can I use the same message with a different presentation or do I need a completely different message?
- In many cases, such as choosing a retirement community, the boomer adult child has considerable input into the senior parent's choice ... if not the full-blown responsibility (financial and otherwise) for that decision. What amenities does a retirement community, for example, have to emphasize beyond a great floor plan to capture both the senior parent and their boomer child?

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## What are the online preferences of 50-plus users?

### Topic:

Any type of interactive marketing strategy must be presented to the consumer in an appealing and relevant way. But how do the specific preferences of 50-plus users affect a company's online efforts?

Although they are the fastest growing group online, some baby boomers and seniors may have limited computing experience and online capabilities. They also may be suffering from the physiological and cognitive degradation that naturally occurs as humans age. What methods can be employed to cater to these distinct challenges?

Baby boomers and seniors often have higher expectations of products and services, including a website itself, when compared to other age groups. How can a company's website exceed this group's expectations? Will this result in drastic changes to their online marketing strategies?

### Article/Segment Concept:

- Interviews with a range of people in this demographic, evaluating their own computing/online experience and preferences.
- Profiles of the most popular websites among these users – what are they doing better than other sites?
- Interviews with company executives who have seen an increase in site traffic, conversion, etc. after implementing changes that made their site more 50-plus user friendly.

### Interview Questions:

- Why is it worth changing current online marketing strategies to fit these users' needs?
- Since the body is aging and the eyes are fading even with the healthiest 50-plus consumer, what tips do you offer on how to combat the physical changes with which the user must contend?
- How can you relate your online marketing messages to these consumers' own life experiences without making them feel old?

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## Interactive Usability Testing and the 50-plus Consumer: Why Bother?

### Topic:

50-plus consumer groups are made up of many various segments based on their life stages, but the single most important difference is one of increased physical limitations. From Presbyopia to Parkinson's, macular degeneration to muscle problems, there are inevitable physiological and cognitive degradation issues to be considered ... enter comprehensive usability testing.

Many companies don't incorporate usability testing because they don't want to delay the project schedule, but the results of such testing usually reveal several small changes that are quick to implement, but have a huge impact on the efficacy of the project.

### Article/Segment Concept:

- Interviews with companies who opted out of usability testing, and it ended up costing them more in the long run.
- Interviews with boomers and seniors who have actually been involved in testing.
- The most common interactive media errors uncovered through usability testing.

### Interview Questions:

- Tell me about your on-site usability testing setup. How does it work?
- Do you implement it for big projects, or for all projects, regardless of size?
- How do you find target-appropriate people to do the testing?
- What are the criteria for good testers in your market?