

THE FLAT AGE SOCIETY

13 : 05 : 2015 The Flat Age Society : Boomers : Aging

In 2014, we identified The Flat Age Society, a group of optimistic and entrepreneurial consumers aged 60 and over who are creating a world in which age doesn't matter.

The Flat Age Society Overview



The Old Ladies Rebellion Catwalk Show, New York

It's a subject laden with cliché. You're as young as you feel, young at heart... Yet these sayings, however hackneyed, point to an aspiration that is becoming a reality. People are living longer and retiring later, or not at all. They don't look, act or feel old. They are healthier. Today, people are coming to the realisation that the way we've aged since the mid-20th century needs to change.

Having tracked this group and their growing spending power, in 2014 we saw another shift in mindset and behaviour, and a cult of youth starting to fade, replaced by a culture of agelessness.

LS:N Global first identified the **Neo Boomers** in 2010, a tribe in their 50s and 60s reflecting attitudes that used to be the preserve of a younger generation.

Members of The Flat Age Society are technology-sawy, love luxury and want more from food than soft textures and vitamins. For this group, images of 20something models fronting advertising campaigns for anti-ageing products seem incongruous and will no longer do. In this world, where Flat-Agers are rewing up rather than slowing down, the term 'old' is dead and gone.

2014



Blogger Frou Frou interviews Linda Rodin

April: **Youthful urban neighbourhoods attract Flat-Agers**

Baby Boomers, or at least the young at heart among them, are moving to neighbourhoods associated with hipster culture, according to [The New York Times](#).

Key Development: The numbers suggest that attitudes rather than demographics will define an area as youthful in the future.



White Hot haircare range

June: **Grey hair is being reclaimed as a new signifier of hip, defiant, pro-age sentiment**

A range of specialist grey-enhancing hair products are emerging, such as niche Swedish brand Sachajuan's best-selling Silver Shampoo, global leader Pantene's Silver Expressions range and White Hot Hair, a colour care range that founder Jayne Mayled hopes will spark debate around the whole acceptance of grey and white hair.

Key Development: New product categories are starting to emerge within beauty that specifically address the needs of older women.



Image courtesy of Stitch

June: **New social app Stitch connects older adults**

Stitch is a new mobile app hoping to connect older adults for romantic and non-romantic companionship.

Timely because in 2013, for the first time, more Americans over 50 were single because of divorce than because of the death of their partner, according to **The New York Times**.

Key Development: Flat-Agers are splitting up and hooking up, and new services are emerging to help them get busy.



These guys still got game? by Centrum

July: **Film short for Centrum shows Flat-Agers on the ball**

Advertising agency Leo Burnett tests just how ageless The Flat Age Society is in a film short for multivitamin brand Centrum, which sees a team of basketball players aged 46 and over pitted against a team half their age. The film is supported by a social media campaign bearing the hashtag #StillGottl.

Key Development: This is a brave test of the vitality of The Flat Age Society, with a strong link to a product that helps people retain physical and mental fitness in later life.



Jaeger Mothers & Daughters A/W 2014

August: **Jaeger celebrates mothers and daughters in autumn/winter campaign**

Channelling the ageless spirit of The Flat Age Society, Jaeger releases a campaign featuring three famous models photographed with their mothers.

Key Development: Brands are recognising the power in aligning with an intelligent, accomplished and empowered older spokesmodel.

2015



Bo Gilbert in Harvey Nichols advertisement for British Vogue's centenary issue directed by Kell Mitchell, UK

January: **Baby Boomers show their creative side for Selfridges**

A recent [article](#) by The Guardian reveals that the over-50s are leading an entrepreneurial boom in the UK.

Right on time, Selfridges launched its **Bright Old Things** campaign, a twist on its annual Bright Young Things campaign. The retailer invited 14 inspiring 40–80-year-olds who have embraced a new creative vocation later in life to lend their talents to a series of in-store events.

Key Development: Brands are aligning with Flat-Agers making the most of new or rediscovered skills, who are re-inventing themselves as entrepreneurs.



75+ Chair by Tor Nørgaard Klerk at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts at Stockholm Furniture Fair

February: **Designers are inspired by elderly counterparts**

At the Stockholm Furniture Fair, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and Schools of Architecture, Design and Conservation **KADK** presented the 75+ exhibition, designed to explore how the functional needs of Flat-Agers can influence contemporary design. Twelve chairs designed for the growing active older generation were presented to challenge the concepts of age and tradition.

Key Development: Designers are embracing the design challenge of physical difficulty to create products that turn medical necessities into stylish accessories.



Bolder Platform curated and photographed by Dominique Afacan and Helen Cathcart, UK

March: **New online platform celebrates the lives of Baby Boomers**

Founded by photographer **Helen Cathcart** and luxury journalist **Dominique Afacan**, Bolder curates inspirational stories from Boomers who are shunning age stereotypes and following their passions.

Key Development: This generation want images they can relate to and media platforms which are representative of the lives they have led.



Charlotte Rampling for Nars, US

April: **The cosmetics industry in Britain sees a surge in sales among Baby Boomer women**

A study by beauty e-commerce site Escentual found that women over 45 account for 58.14% of Escentual's beauty market and customers aged 45–54 are now spending an average of £2,238 (€3,117, \$3,300), up 4.1% from previous years.

Key Development: These statistics chime with the launch of recent campaigns from beauty brands such as YSL, L'Oréal and NARS, that have all featured Flat Age models in their campaigns and are choosing to promote a more positive, affirming message about ageing.

2016



WiseWear campaign featuring Iris Apfel

January: **Flat-Ager Iris Apfel collaborates with wearable technology company WiseWear**

WiseWear announced plans to launch a range of smart jewellery with unique safety features in collaboration with Flat-Ager Iris Apfel. The brand's Socialite bracelet, which is geared towards the Flat Age market, features mobile alerts and fitness-tracking capabilities alongside a novel distress signal feature that can be activated by tapping the device three times.

Key Development: Flat-Agers are more fashionable than ever and brands are taking notice, designing technology that offers style alongside safety.



Love is Welcome Here: #Hostwithpride by Molecule for Airbnb, San Francisco

April: **Flat Agers are the fastest growing age group of Airbnb hosts in the US**

A new report by Airbnb reveals that Baby Boomers are the fastest growing demographic of hosts in the US. Half of older hosts use Airbnb for financial reasons, often supplementing retirement payments, and 41% say that hosting has helped them afford to stay in their home.

Key Development: The sharing economy is not solely for Millennials who lived through the recession, but is finding increasing appeal among older demographics.



Ily by Insensi and Map, UK

May: **Ily is a new smart landline phone connecting Flat-Agers with Generation I**

Created by design firm **Map**, Ily is a smart landline phone designed for 85% of grandparents who feel like they do not see or speak to their grandchildren enough. With the bare minimum of features – video, voice and messaging – the device is more inviting to those who aren't technology-savvy.

Key Development: Future family concepts are now welcoming each generation and not just honing in on Generation D and Millennials.



Unlimited Youth by Nike, US

August: **A new campaign by Nike celebrates an 86-year-old record-breaking triathlete and Catholic nun**

Directed by Wieden + Kennedy, the tongue-in-cheek film highlights Buder's extraordinary determination and athleticism, and shows that age is no obstacle to taking part in sport. The powerful campaign celebrates the determination and personality of The Flat Age Society.

Key Development: Brands such as Nike are increasingly focusing on psychographics rather than demographics.