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# Brand Research Trends



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Pamela Cox-Otto, Ph.D.

# The Big Three Messaging Issues

1. Heuristics
2. What Part of the College and you Selling
3. Generational Factors

# Heuristics

or

May I be excused,  
My brain is full?

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## How it Manifests ...

### Duality of Messaging

Practical	-	Ivory Tower
Options	-	Trapped
Quality	-	Quantity
Quantity	-	Stingy

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## How it Manifests ...

Simplicity of Messaging

Good/Bad

Right/Wrong

Moral/Immoral

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# How we do the Predictable

## Two-Year College Messaging

- Affordable
- Close
- Accessible

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# How we do the Predictable

## Four-Year College Messaging

- Explore
- Be Challenged
- No Promises (Really) (Hubris)

# The Way We think

Dual Processing

Mindful

Mindless

- We all want to believe we are Mindful
- Each generation is more Mindless

**-THE MAGIC OF “BECAUSE”**

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# Mindful

- Fully thinking about the issue
- Deep processing
- The act of mindful persuades
  
- Lasts longer
- Harder to change
- More durable
- Anchor Attitude

Facts and Information Rule

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# Mindless

- Judgment based on limited attributes
- Shallow processing
- Shortcut
  
- Immediate
- Flexible
- Not long lasting unless ingrained
- Attitude Spike

Design and Image Rule

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# Mindful or Mindless?

## 1) Motivation

- Ego Involvement
- Personal Relevance
- Cost of Incorrect Decision

## 2) Capacity

- Time
- No Distractions
- Energy

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# THE MINDLESS SHORTCUTS (Heuristics)

Cost = Quality

Expert = Truth

Rare = Better

Attractive = Honest, Kind

Money = Success

Hidden = Bad

Reciprocity = Fair

Easy = Cheat

Outcome = Promise

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What part of the college  
are you promising?

# The Three Brand Points

First Step -

Decision Points

Second Step -

Process Points

Third Step -

Outcome Points

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## Two-Year Colleges

- Step One - Decision
- Step Three - Outcome
- Reinforced by Branding that plays into the two edged sword of Shortcuts.
  - Cheap
  - Close to Home
  - Everyone can get it

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## Four-Year Brands

- Based on Location
- Based on 2nd Step - Process
  - Explore
  - Challenge
  - Journey
- And limited brand promises

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# Good Brands

Use All Three Points

Decision - Process - Outcome

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# Generational Factors

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# The Generation Effect

- Marketing to 3 (and 4) Generations Simultaneously (Messages, expectations, Values)
- Gen Y- Traditional Students
- Gen X- Non-Traditional Students
- Boomers - NonTrads & Business (And Management)
- Traditionalist - Business and Life-long Learning (And Management)

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# WHAT TO DO?

Realize there are strong generational media and design preferences

Know whether your audience is Mindful or Mindless in every situation

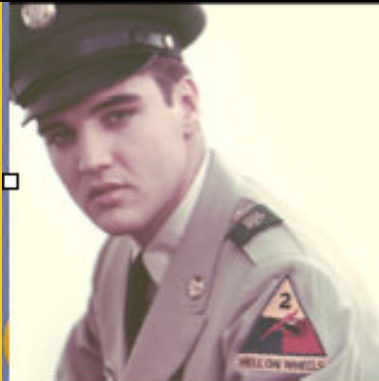
Make a promise - your institution will keep for the entire process

# The Generations

## Traditional

1925 - 1945

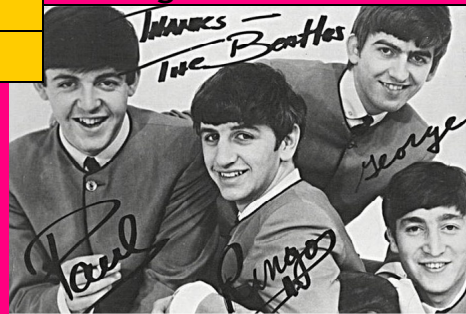
Age 60+



## Baby Boomers

1946-1964

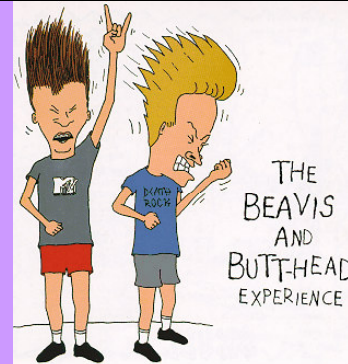
Ages 41 - 60



## Gen X

1965 - 1980

Ages 25 - 40



## Gen Y

1981 - 2003

Ages 3 - 24



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# How Different?

- Boomer

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# How Different?

- Gen X

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# How Different?

- Gen Y versus Gen X

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# How Different?

- Gen Y versus Boomer



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# The Media they Use

## HOW:

Media Convergence

## WHAT:

TV to Internet  
Not newspaper  
Yes Radio  
Yes Internet  
Direct Mail\*\*\*  
Select Print

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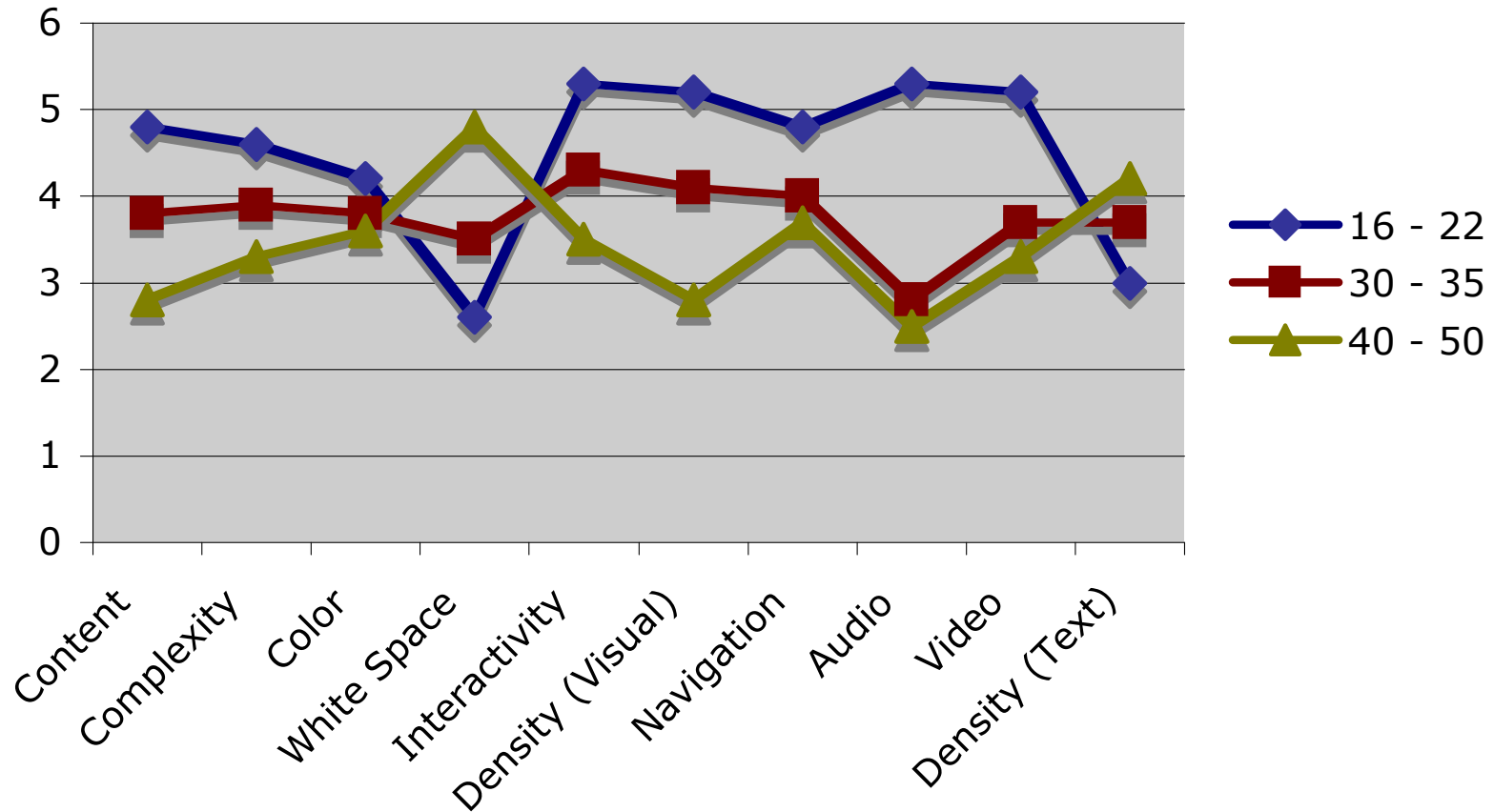
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# Design & Structure

## Screen Preference by Age Group



Preference Variations

Sample: 3,350 Community College Students

Interact Fall 2004



# Web Preferences Us/Them

	Color/ Complexity	White Space	Interactive	Screen Forces	Text/Design
Y	High/High	Low	High/High	Break	Low/High
X & (Young) Boomer	Medium	Medium	Medium	Break	Low/High
Late Boom and Trads	Low	High	Selective Use	Maintain	High/Low

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# We Can All Communicate

- Doing it all

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# Brand Research Thoughts

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