

Why 50 is the new 30

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Let me introduce you to my mom. She's 58 years old. But there's not a grey hair in sight...



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She wears Guess jeans. And she loves shopping at Zara, Cotton On and Mango.

She sends me emails from her iPad (complete with hot pink cover), and calls me on her iPhone 5. Usually, to tell me she's lunching at Melrose Arch, or drinking a G&T in Greenside.

My mum might be a granny, but she's no "golden oldie" suffering hot flushes and purple rinses. She's actually cooler than I am, even though I'm 20-odd years younger than her.

I'm not the only one to notice that 50-somethings are the new 30-somethings.

Researchers at GfK South Africa have decided to take a closer look at the South African 50-year old, to try to understand what is making its grannies and grandpas so young-spirited and hip.

It used AMPS data to compare attitudes in 30 year olds and 50 year olds, between 2007 and 2012 and it has found a clear shift evident in LSM 7-10, with the attitudes of 50 year olds moving closer to those of 30 year olds.

For example, attitudes like "People who use particular brands and products to be accepted and admired" and "I am more likely to buy brands that I have seen or heard advertised" have seen a 5% shift. "I can now go out and enjoy myself" has seen a slightly greater shift of 7% and "People who keep up with the latest trends, fashions and styles" a 6% shift.

This could be a game-changer for marketers and brands. Until now, most brands have focused on a market aged 18-35 years, particularly when it comes to brand innovation and brand development. However, these new insights make it clear that it is time to broaden this market segment, to include 18-59 year olds.

The research found that they are aware that buying certain brands is one sure way to improve their personal image and gain street cred. Moreover, they have the bucks to take those brands home or to take their brands out for a bit of showing off.

The big question now is, are marketers going to do something noteworthy with these insights? Is your brand going to start talking to the 50-something market in the right tone of voice, with the right message? This market has a large wallet and the time to enjoy using it.

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