

u3a Chairs' Forum: From Baby Boomers to Generation X

1946-1964 & 1965-1980

WARNING

Baby Boomers and Generation X are not about age

but...

attitudes and behaviours



	Baby Boomers 1946-1964	Generation X 1965-1980
Background	Post-war recovery; TV era; free higher education	Economic uncertainty; home computing and video games
Advertising	Broad, trusted media with clear, inclusive messaging	Targeted, outcome-driven messages via digital platforms
Retirement	Relaxation and enjoyment	Reinvention and growth
Interests	Leisure, cultural enrichment, structured activities	Purpose-driven, niche interests
Learning preferences	Group-focused, leader-guided, mentally stimulating	Growth-oriented; mix of group and independent activities
Values	Community-minded; sociable and inclusive	Independent, self-reliant; value diversity and flexibility

Broader social changes

- Increased use of technology across all generations
- Increased interest in wellbeing (e.g., physical, mental and social)
- Preference for flexible participation to fit commitments
- Increased care responsibilities
- Increase in single-person retired households
- Less interest in volunteering

New members since Aug '22 (443 of 919 Worcester u3a)

Non-pickleball members

80% of new members

More like existing members:

- Pay for membership in the same way (69% online)
- Same gender representation (66% female)
- Join the same groups: walking, history, arts, languages

Baby Boomer-like?

Pickleball players

20% of new members

Less like existing members:

- 85% make payments online
- More balanced gender representation (55% female)
- Less likely by 50% or more to join history or arts groups
- More likely to walk and play other sports & games; similar in joining language groups

Generation X-like?

Areas for change & suggestions

- Attracting new, engaged members:
 - social media, image update, focus on wellbeing, targeting
- Starting new groups & greater member participation:
 - paid tutors, weekends & evening options, hybrid groups
- Recruiting volunteers for the committee:
 - role sharing, flexibility, less demanding roles that are better presented
- Realise the full potential of using digital systems:
 - electronic payments, paying for groups online
- Change well-established attitudes:
 - resistance to change, cliques

For discussion:

1. How important is it to change?
2. In which areas are the greatest changes required?