

Turning Silver to Gold: Seven Reasons for Pursuing the Aging Adult Market

Even massage therapists, body workers, spa directors and estheticians who have a loyal, stable, repeat client base will benefit from actively pursuing the aging adult market in the coming years. Savvy salons, spas, and skin care specialists who focus on this dynamic emerging market can help to establish a long and successful client base that will be stable throughout their career.

Why is the aging adult market so significant to your business? There are at least seven good reasons why you should consider targeting your marketing efforts and practice outreach to accommodate this target group.

Reason #1: The sheer size of the market

The population surge---some would call it a tsunami of babies born between 1946 and 1964---is approximately 78 million strong. Baby boomers are just beginning to reach their older years. As you read this article, a baby boomer is turning 50 years old every 11 seconds. The first of the boomers will reach age 65 in 2011, and the trend will continue for 21 years. No other target market has the size, longevity, education or wealth of the baby boomer market.

Reason #2: Older adults seek and receive more massage than younger adults

In a recent American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) Consumer Survey, baby boomers aged 45 to 64 had an average of seven massages in the year preceding the survey as compared with adults aged 18 to 44, who only averaged five massages. Why not target a group that is already looking for you?

We all know that massage is the “gateway” to other spa services this is where to start! The AMTA Massage Therapy Industry Fact Sheet reported *“Spas are where most people continue to receive massage, with 23 percent of those surveyed in July 2011 saying they had their last massage at a spa.”*

Reason #3: Older adults are open to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and utilize it!

In a nationwide government survey conducted by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, which is a part of the National Institutes of Health, nearly 50 percent of all adults aged 18 or older had experienced some form of CAM during their lifetime. Adults aged 50 to 59 were the most likely to report using one or more CAM therapies in the last year.

Reason #4: More than six of every 10 baby boomers will be managing more than one chronic health condition during their lifetime

Living with and managing a chronic health condition creates its own kind of stress. When the symptoms, side effects, potential medication effects and other issues associated with a specific health condition are added on, the individual gets a double dose of stress. Take, for example, diabetes, which requires managing schedules, exercise, diet, supplements or medications, and add to it the potential side effects of poor circulation in the extremities which is a common problem for a person with diabetes. You can see why and how massage and bodywork would be of benefit to this client.

Reason #5: Nearly one of every two baby boomers will be living with arthritis

Maintaining strength, flexibility and managing the pain and discomfort of arthritis can be some of the benefits of a regular massage therapy program. The American Arthritis Foundation endorses the use of massage therapy for people with arthritis---and even offers a free brochure on the subject. All of those fads that were part of this generation---high impact aerobics, jogging and the first wave of jogging shoes---made the boomers fit, but has played havoc with their bodies.

Reason #6: Baby boomers have the resources to pay for massage---and prioritize wellness as a necessary expense

Baby boomers have more disposable income than their parents, they stand to inherit additional money from parents and grandparents, and as the famous “me” generation, they prioritize spending money on themselves. However, baby boomers are shrewd consumers who evaluate purchases carefully. Marketing the benefits of massage and bodywork as a healthy lifestyle choice may appeal more to this target market than a “pampering” or “luxury” approach.

Reason #7: The aging adult market is not a one-size-fits-all market

From the 50 plus weekend warrior to the adult living in a senior community, assisted living, long-term care or receiving home health or hospice services, today’s older adult expects and demands to have options. They expect to be actively involved in their health-care choices. There is room in this target market for a wide variety of approaches, therapies and options for promoting wellness and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This offers the massage and body worker the opportunity to not only grow their market share of this population, but expand on the variety of services they offer. But just a hint: Whatever you call your services, stay away from using the term “anti-aging.” It is better to be pro “lifelong health” or pro “maturity” than to be anti anything!

Reach out to the growing older adult market---they and your bottom line will thank you!

Sources

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