

industry news

The Boomer Opportunity: #1 Target for Newspapers

The 78 million people who make up the Baby Boomer generation should be the number one target audience that newspapers focus on, according to John W. Martin, co-founder of [The Boomer Project](#) and president/CEO of Southeastern Institute of Research, Richmond, Va.

In an hour-long presentation at the SNPA Annual Convention, Martin talked about where Boomers fit in with newspapers, what makes them tick and 10 things newspapers can do right now to maximize the Boomer opportunity.

Martin told SNPA publishers, "The old thinking is that the paid daily should be all things to all people. We believe the new mantra should be that paid dailies should be hyper-focused on its core readers. These are the last folks that we want to lose to the Internet."



John W. Martin

He advised newspapers to:

- Design for fast grazing. Use strong headlines, keywords, large type, bold/accurate statements, compelling stories, well-crafted packages and limited use of jumps.
- Design for reading comfort, being careful with the use of color. Use pastel colors, which are easier on older eyes.
- Run positive stories whenever possible.
- Make stories compelling. Tell a human story.
- Talk about life's stages – not ages – in stories and features. Martin says people's lives are very much like the four seasons – spring, summer, autumn and winter. Each one's about 20 years long. Through each stage, people have a different focus on life – a focus that changes over time.
- Base marketing position on readers' needs. Find the most compelling need in the market and own it.
- Be conditional and offer choices and solutions. Stay away from "best" and "only" claims when marketing the paper. Instead, talk about attributes and the benefits of reading the paper.
- Aim inwardly. Newspapers need in-depth understanding of their Boomer customers and what's happening in their lives. Humanize the paper by keeping these questions in mind: Is this story about something that could happen to me? Does it look out for my interest? Does it connect to my life and community? Does it make me smarter?
- Become an "experience" newspaper. Boomers are into experiences. They want to be connected with their communities and they want to participate...to be engaged. Newspapers need to make their brand part of the fabric of the community that they serve.
- Keep exploring and learning. Readers are evolving; stay in touch with them.

SNPA members are invited to subscribe to The Boomer Project's free newsletter to receive monthly insights about connecting with Boomers over 50. [Click here to subscribe](#) (then scroll to the bottom of the page).

Publishers wanting more in-depth information about traits and preferences among the Boomer generation, research done with the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch and details about Martin's 10 suggested steps for reinventing the newspaper can listen to Martin's full convention presentation. [Click here to order a CD](#) containing an audio presentation of Martin's talk.