Over 50s: The Good Years?

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25% of sample equate being over 50 with â€œbeing oldâ€• and bodily deterioration where as 45% associated their generation with freedom, less responsibility and well deserved time for oneself in retirementâ€¦

In June this year, Vox Pops International filmed and interviewed 40 respondents in Greater London and Manchester as part of their Lifestage Omnibus Video Research into the Over 50s.

A mix of positive and negative sentiment towards being 50 was expressed by all respondents, with 25% of people equating the age to â€œbeing oldâ€• and bodily deterioration.

â€œI see this person in the mirror and I think â€˜whoâ€™s that?â€™ and itâ€™s me! â€¦ But thatâ€™s not me, because itâ€™s me inside, so itâ€™s not very nice getting old. Sometimes I canâ€™t do things that I used to do which frustrates me, but you jus have to accept it, get on with it.â€• - Secretary, 61, f

On a more positive note, the majority of respondents (45%) thought being over 50 meant freedom, less responsibility, more confidence, time to do as one pleased, and grandchildren. For 13% of respondents, being over 50 meant nothing at all, and was simply another number.

â€œFreedom. The kids are grown up and you get an immense sense of freedom and offloading of responsibility, you can now think - I can do what I want to do, and what money I've got is for me to go and enjoy myself and start having holidays I've never had before.â€• - Retired, 75, m

â€œNothing its just another number, I carry on my life as I want to it doesnâ€™t make any difference not at all.â€• - Retired, 65,

â€œIt means that itâ€™s the most contented time of your life. Youâ€™ve done the things you wanted to do when you were your Youâ€™ve got still just about enough health and energy to enjoy yourself. Its actually, if you can afford it, a very good age to retire.â€• - Retired volunteer, 64, m

Amongst the biggest fears for the over 50s in order were deteriorating health / illness (35%), the economic state (25%), financial worries (15%), treatment of the elderly (13%), their children facing debt (10%), old age (8%), the euro crisis (3%) and spouse dying (3%).

â€œI think as I havenâ€™t had children, retirement does worry me in terms of care. Who will care for me one day?â€• - Educatio Consultant, 53, m

â€œIf the banks were to go bust things could get very difficult because then presumably there would be no interest at all therefore there would be no income and therefore no pension.â€• - Retired, 61, f

The most popular brand for 25% of the over 50s was Marks and Spencer. 68% of people preferred the BBC for news consumption, whilst the majority of respondents had Nokia and Samsung mobile phones (68% collectively). Smartphones were less popular with just 10% of respondents in possession of an iPhone, BlackBerry (10%), HTC (5%) and LG (5%). Generally, the older the respondent, the less interested they were in Smartphone technology.

An Accountant, 55 told us of his reservations:
â€œIâ€™ve always used Nokia. I just find them very easy. To switch to an iPhone would be a major shift in technology for me. I canâ€™t get used to using fingers.â€•

Out of the multiplicity of social networking sites, some respondents used a combination of social media with 38% of people on Facebook and 13% on Twitter. Use varied from the very sophisticated to simply using the sites to keep in touch with friends and grandchildren: â€œI use them for the immediacy of contact with friends.â€• A male political advisor, 52, told VPI: â€œFacebook I use for fun. I use Twitter through three accounts. A personal one, a work political one and another one with an organisation.â€•

53% respondents did NOT use any social networking sites, and of this percentage, 20% mentioned they used email despite not using social networking sites. When asked why, a female Catering Assistant, 54 told us: â€œBecause I mistrust them. I read that theyâ€™re insecure and I donâ€™t want my private details broadcast to the world.â€•

The majority of the sample had a combination of financial plans / schemes in place inclusive of private pension schemes (38%), savings (18%), work pension schemes (15%), investment returns (15%), redundancy payment (8%), ISAs (5%), Independent Financial Advisors (5%), bonds (3%) and Disability Allowance (3%). Only 3 female respondents said they had not financially planned for their retirement, on account of their husbands taking care of the finances.

A female Administrator, 61, told VPI: â€œIâ€™ve got a got a couple of private pensions and a work pension, and two ISAs.â€• However, an Accounts Manager, 62 expressed her doubts about pension returns: â€œI have a few properties, which are to let which should adequately look after my retirement. And some pensions which are totally useless. We stopped subscribing to them some years ago. The returns arenâ€™t great so I went into property and there are good returns and thatâ€™ what Iâ€™ll be doing for retirement.â€•

By Charlotte De Maria

About the Author
Charlotte De Maria is the PR and Marketing Manager at Vox Pops International. She is responsible for generating new business leads and writing, marketing and distributing newsworthy insight content on behalf of Vox Pops International, a video communications agency.

Relevant Links
For more information on how to create your own video from the footage, get full access to all the transcripts and watch the â€˜Attitudes to being over 50â€™ video, please go to:
http://www.voxpops.com/vpiresearch/over-50s-2012/

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