

Audience Insights

Communicating to Moms (with Kids at Home)



There are approximately 83 million moms in the United States today.¹ Moms are the primary gatekeepers to household decisions and finances, controlling more than \$1.6 trillion a year in spending.² This report will help you understand the subtle nuances that exist among different generations of moms (i.e., baby boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y) and how you can capture their attention more effectively.

Insights into Moms

1. Baby boomer moms who waited to have kids behave more like Gen X moms who have kids the same age as theirs.² A 48-year-old boomer mom and a 35-year-old Gen X mom who take their toddlers to the same preschool have more in common than the boomer mom has with her boomer peers who have older kids.
2. Most moms go online daily, and more than half go online more than 20 times per week.³ The explosion of social networking sites and blogs for moms allow women to connect with and learn from each other.
3. One of the most effective ways to reach moms is through their peers. Moms are much more likely to follow unsolicited advice from their friends and family than anything they see, hear, or read via mass media channels.⁴
4. Moms put a great deal of time and effort into choosing what is best for themselves and their families, and they
1. want to feel like they have accomplished something meaningful when they've made a decision.²
2. The average age of first-time moms was 25.2 in 2005,⁵ up from 21.4 in 1970.
3. Sixty-five percent of moms with preschool-aged children worked in 2006,⁶ up from 30% in 1970.
4. The number of single moms has increased 300% over the last 30 years, from 3.4 million to 10.4 million.⁶
5. In 2007, 40% of births were from unmarried women, up from 34% in 2002.⁷
6. The average stay-at-home mom spends 91.6 hours a week doing mom-related jobs (cooking, cleaning, laundry, driving, etc.). If paid the going rate for each of these tasks, her annual salary would be approximately \$122,732.⁸

Audience Insights can help you to communicate more effectively with your audience in order to influence their behavior. CDC's Strategic and Proactive Communication Branch (SPCB) divides audiences into segments with similar needs, preferences, and characteristics and provides CDC programs with audience-specific information, marketing expertise, and communication planning. To develop **Audience Insights**, secondary data is collected and analyzed from CDC-licensed consumer databases, books, articles, and the Internet. **For more information, email SPCBHealthMktg@cdc.gov or contact Fred Fridinger, Chief, SPCB, at FFridinger@cdc.gov.**



Department of Health and Human Services
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Moms at-a-Glance

These composite profiles are for illustrative purposes only.



“My involvement with my friends and different school groups is an important part of who I am. I’m not going to let being a mom keep me from reaching my goals. I want to help my son become his own person.”

Maria Thompson (Gen Y Mom)

Occupation: Student

Age: 23

Single; One son

- ❖ Wants to teach her son good values and help him develop a strong sense of self so he can make good choices.
- ❖ Reads newspapers and women’s magazines to stay informed.
- ❖ Considers doing the right thing for her child and staying active her biggest health concerns.
- ❖ Connects with friends through MySpace and text messages.
- ❖ Refuses to put her life on hold just because she has a child.



“It’s important to achieve a balance between using discipline and modeling good values to help my children reach their full potential. Raising good, successful children is absolutely a woman’s top priority.”

Sally Park (Gen X Mom)

Occupation: Full-time mom

Age: 35

Married; Two daughters

- ❖ Keeps the family in line, and takes care of her parents.
- ❖ Pays bills, emails, and stays in touch with friends online.
- ❖ Makes her children’s education a priority; saves for their college, and plans their annual family vacation around learning opportunities (e.g., museums, historical landmarks).
- ❖ Believes in doing things by the book, including monitoring her kids’ TV viewing and online activities.
- ❖ Prefers multiple communication sources, including traditional and new technology.



“I enjoy spending time with my family and seeing my kids’ progress. Rather than go out to eat or see a movie, I like to attend my kids’ practices, and make sure they participate in lots of extracurricular activities.”

Nancy Bellingham (Baby Boomer Mom)

Occupation: Small business owner

Age: 46

Married; One daughter, one son

- ❖ Balances career with personal and family needs, but will go to work when sick.
- ❖ Shops at Target and often shops online to save time.
- ❖ Wants her kids to do great things and helps them be popular, fashionable, and competitive.
- ❖ Worries about rising health costs; stays physically active and tries to eat right.
- ❖ Stays current by reading the front page of the newspaper, and loves watching Lifetime Movie Network.

Targeted Health Communication

Knowing the **habits and preferences** of different types of moms can help you plan more effective health communication and marketing efforts for this audience.

- ❖ Use mobile campaigns to reach moms. They are heavy mobile phone users.
- ❖ Use magazines to reach “non-working” moms. Magazine advice ranks higher than pediatricians’ advice for medical updates and trends.

Moms often turn to the Internet before any other source of information.⁴

- ❖ Leverage word of mouth. Ninety-one percent of moms follow what other moms recommend to them.
- ❖ Make them laugh. When done right, humor is engaging and effective for this group.

Moms shop at Wal-Mart for food six times more often than any other grocery store.

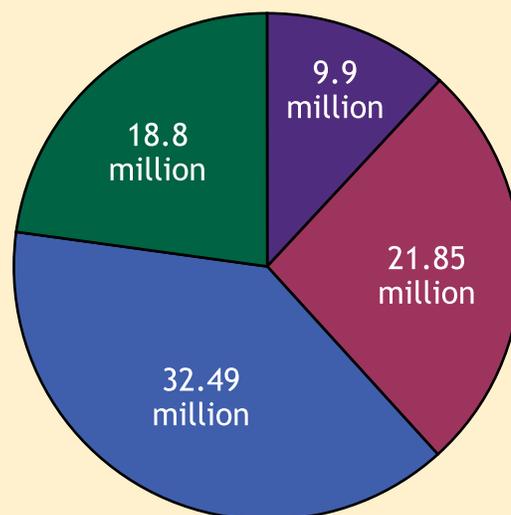
- ❖ Keep it simple. Busy moms, particularly those with small children, prefer to shop where they can take care of multiple errands in one place.
- ❖ Be sincere. Moms demand sincerity and credibility regardless of the topic.

Nearly two-thirds of moms consider their doctor their primary source for health information.

- ❖ Consider medical professionals in your messaging. Give them the tools they need to engage moms in the decision-making process.
- ❖ Elementary schools are good dissemination channels because many of them give students information packets to bring home to their parents weekly.

* Age ranges vary based on the study.

Number of Moms by Generation



- Gen Y Moms (14–27)
- Gen X Moms (28–43)
- Baby Boomer Moms (44–62)
- Older Moms (62 and above)

Source: U.S. Mom Market Facts. Baby Center 21st Century Moms Panel (2008).*

Top Concerns of Moms

A 2008 survey⁹ of more than 1,000 moms revealed some of the issues moms were most concerned about—

- ❖ Relationship/communication with their child.
- ❖ Quality of children’s education.
- ❖ Safety for their children, including online safety.
- ❖ Drug use among their children’s peer group.



Moms at Work

Most moms are working moms and have to balance the needs of their child against the needs of their employer.

- ❖ Of the women who gave birth for the first time from 2001 to 2003, 67% worked at some point during their pregnancy compared to 44% who gave birth for the first time from 1961 to 1965.¹⁰
- ❖ More than 60% of pregnant women report working into the last month of their pregnancy.¹⁰
- ❖ After giving birth, 65% of moms returned to work within a year,¹¹ and 75% of moms returned to work when their children were from 3 to 6 years old.¹²
- ❖ For those who do return to work, decisions about childcare can be overwhelming. The cost of infant and toddler care (through age 3) can be \$10,000 per year or more.¹³
- ❖ The workplace is adapting to retain productive and talented women in their workforce by providing part-time or flexible hours and making accommodations for breastfeeding and other needs.

Attitudes About Health

Depending on their generational affiliation, moms with young children have very different perspectives on health. For example, Gen X and baby boomer moms are more likely than Gen Y moms to eat healthy foods, and a greater percentage of Gen X moms than Gen Y or baby boomer moms said they would go to work even when sick.

Attitudes About Health by Generation			
Health Attitude/Behavior	Gen Y, % (18–29)	Gen X, % (30–44)	Baby Boomer, % (45–64)
I try to eat healthier food these days	41	56	51
When sick, I still drag myself to work	53	62	54
I consider myself brave, courageous, daring, and adventuresome	45	43	43
I think fast food is all junk	38	43	35
I think of the calories in what I eat	27	31	38

Source: Simmons National Consumer Study. Women with kids ages 0–6 (Fall 2008).

Media Habits of Moms

Moms' media habits vary by generation. This variation exists even among moms in different generations with kids in the same age range.

Magazines

Magazines are a common and effective channel to reach moms. If you are considering using media for a national campaign, remember that not all magazines resonate with all moms. Some magazines have a specific and unique target audience.

Magazines Read in the Last Six Months by Generation			
Magazine	Gen Y, %	Gen X, %	Baby Boomers, %
People	44	47	43
Parents	39	33	16
American Baby	35	22	7
Parade	31	41	54
Better Homes and Gardens	22	29	40
Allure	16	8	8
“O” the Oprah Magazine	12	20	21
Seventeen	15	4	3

Source: Simmons National Consumer Study. Women with kids ages 0–6 (Fall 2008).



Newspapers

Moms have differing behaviors when it comes to reading the newspaper. Depending on which generational group is being targeted, ads should be placed in newspaper sections according to reader preference. Forty-two percent of moms who read newspapers report reading only some sections while 10% report reading the entire newspaper.

USA Today is the most commonly read paper among moms of all three generations.

- ❖ Of those sections that were read, baby boomer and Gen X moms were most likely to read the front page, while the classified ads were the most popular with Gen Y moms.
- ❖ Baby boomer moms are more likely to read home and garden sections than Gen X or Gen Y moms.

Newspaper Sections Read by Generation			
Section Read	Gen Y, %	Gen X, %	Baby Boomers, %
Classifieds	26	16	17
Front Page	20	29	36
Home and Garden	4	7	18
Comics	13	8	13

Source: Simmons National Consumer Study. Women with kids ages 0–6 (Fall 2008).



Internet

- ❖ Thirty-one million moms are online, and they're online more time than they are watching TV (13.2 hours/week vs. 7.6 hours/week).¹⁴
- ❖ Online activity tends to be greater when household income level is higher.
- ❖ Moms network with each other online via social networking sites and blogs.

Internet Activities by Generation			
Internet Activities by Generation	Gen Y, %	Gen X, %	Baby Boomers, %
Internet at work	13	24	18
Email	50	65	45
News and Weather	27	37	20
Travel Reservation	7	12	6
Download Music Files	11	8	3
Instant Messaging	12	10	8

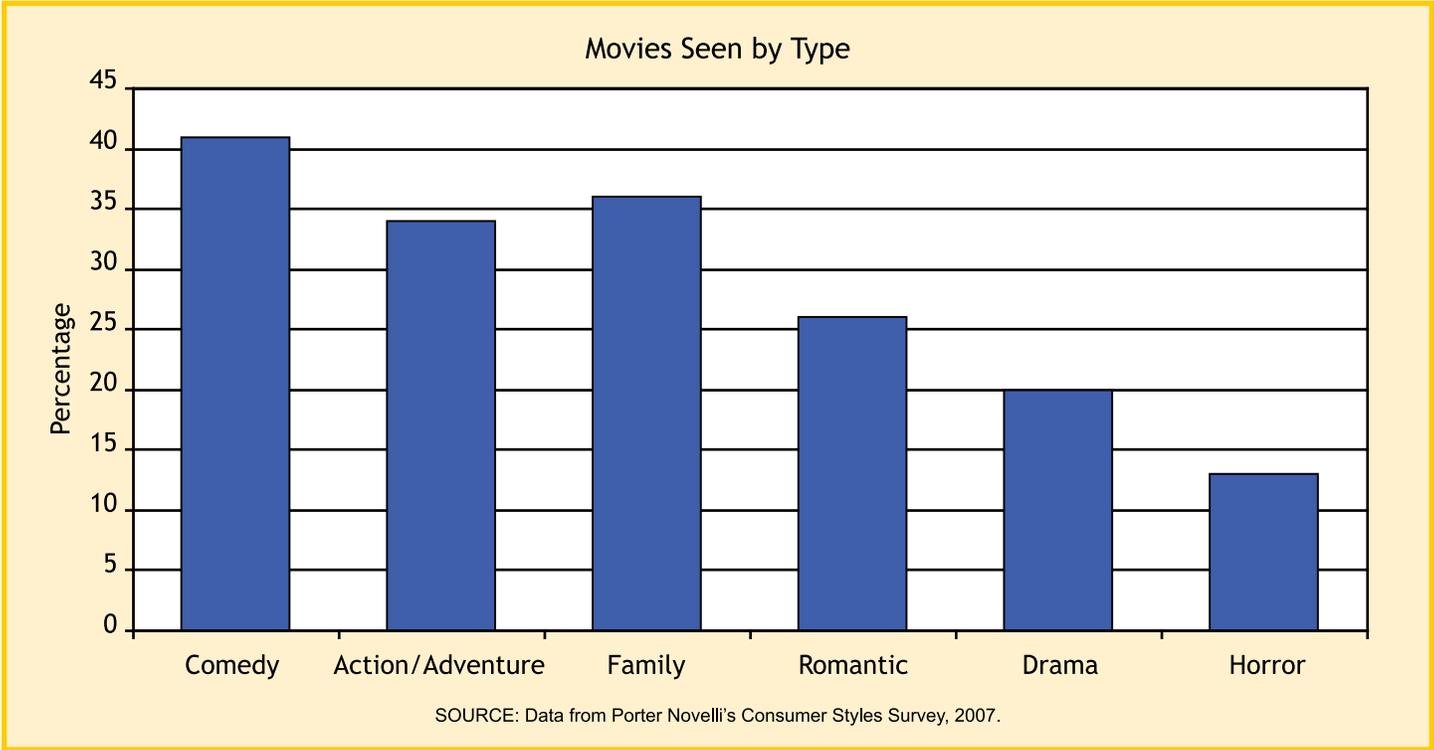
Source: Simmons National Consumer Study. Women with kids ages 0–6 (Fall 2008).

Blogs for moms exist on just about any topic imaginable—from adoption to cooking to work. Because of their increasing popularity, blogs should be considered as part of an overall strategy to reach moms with targeted messages. A few examples of the more popular blogs for moms according to Technorati rankings include the following:

- ❖ <http://www.blogher.com>
- ❖ <http://www.busymom.net>
- ❖ <http://www.5minutesformom.com>
- ❖ <http://www.themomblogs.com>

Where Moms Go On the Internet			
Web Sites Visited in the Last Week	Gen Y, %	Gen X, %	Baby Boomers, %
Google.com	33	47	26
Amazon.com	8	10	14
Myspace.com	22	10	2
Weather.com	10	12	4

Source: Simmons National Consumer Study. Women with kids ages 0–6 (Fall 2008).



Television

Moms have generational preferences when it comes to the types of channels and programs they watch on TV.

What Moms Like to Watch on TV			
TV Channels Viewed in the Last 7 Days	Gen Y, %	Gen X, %	Baby Boomer, %
Disney Channel	32	31	27
HGTV	13	22	20
TWC	21	20	33
FX	20	11	21
BET	14	6	17

Source: Simmons National Consumer Study. Women with kids ages 0–6 (Fall 2008).

Interests and Hobbies

The top two leisure activities for all three groups are listening to music and dining out. Approximately 75% listen to music as their primary leisure activity; the difference is how they go about listening to music.

- ❖ Gen Y moms download music from the Internet and play it on their MP3 players, while baby boomer moms play CDs, tapes, and even the occasional LP.

How Moms Like to Spend Their Leisure Time			
Leisure Activities/Hobbies over the Last 12 Months	Gen Y, %	Gen X, %	Baby Boomers, %
Listening to music	82	74	77
Dining out (not fast food)	55	61	43
Visiting a zoo	35	43	26
Gardening	25	33	43
Going to bars, nightclubs, or dancing	24	19	15
Visiting museums	19	29	25
Visiting an aquarium	19	26	21

Source: Simmons National Consumer Study. Women with kids ages 0–6 (Fall 2008).

- ❖ A greater percentage of Gen X moms report going out to eat than other moms.
- ❖ Baby boomers are the most likely to enjoy gardening.

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