

Seniors' Customer Service Preferences



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Customer Service

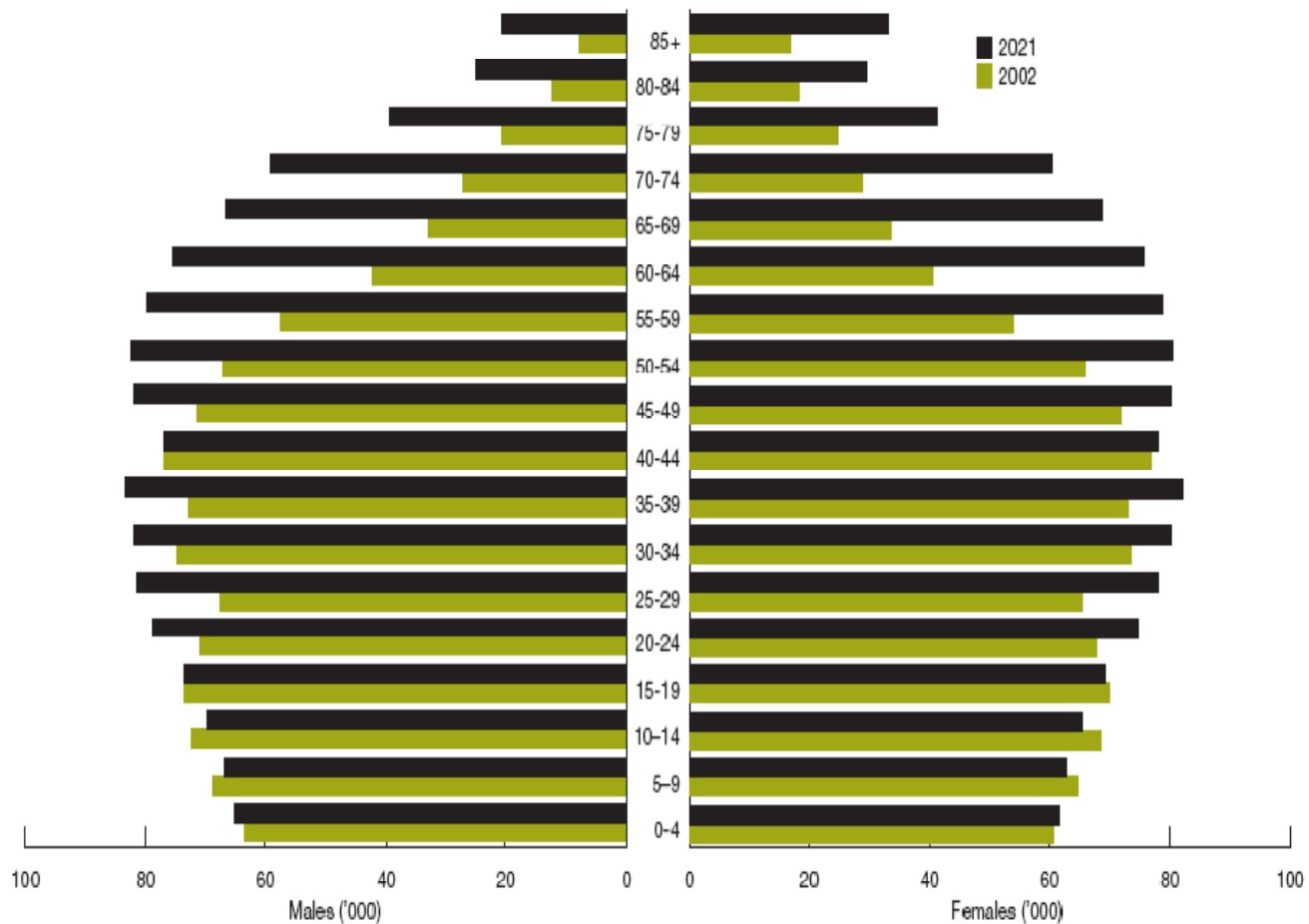
Definition:

- Those aspects of service that support the provision of the company's core products.
- The personal interaction that occurs in the exchange process.

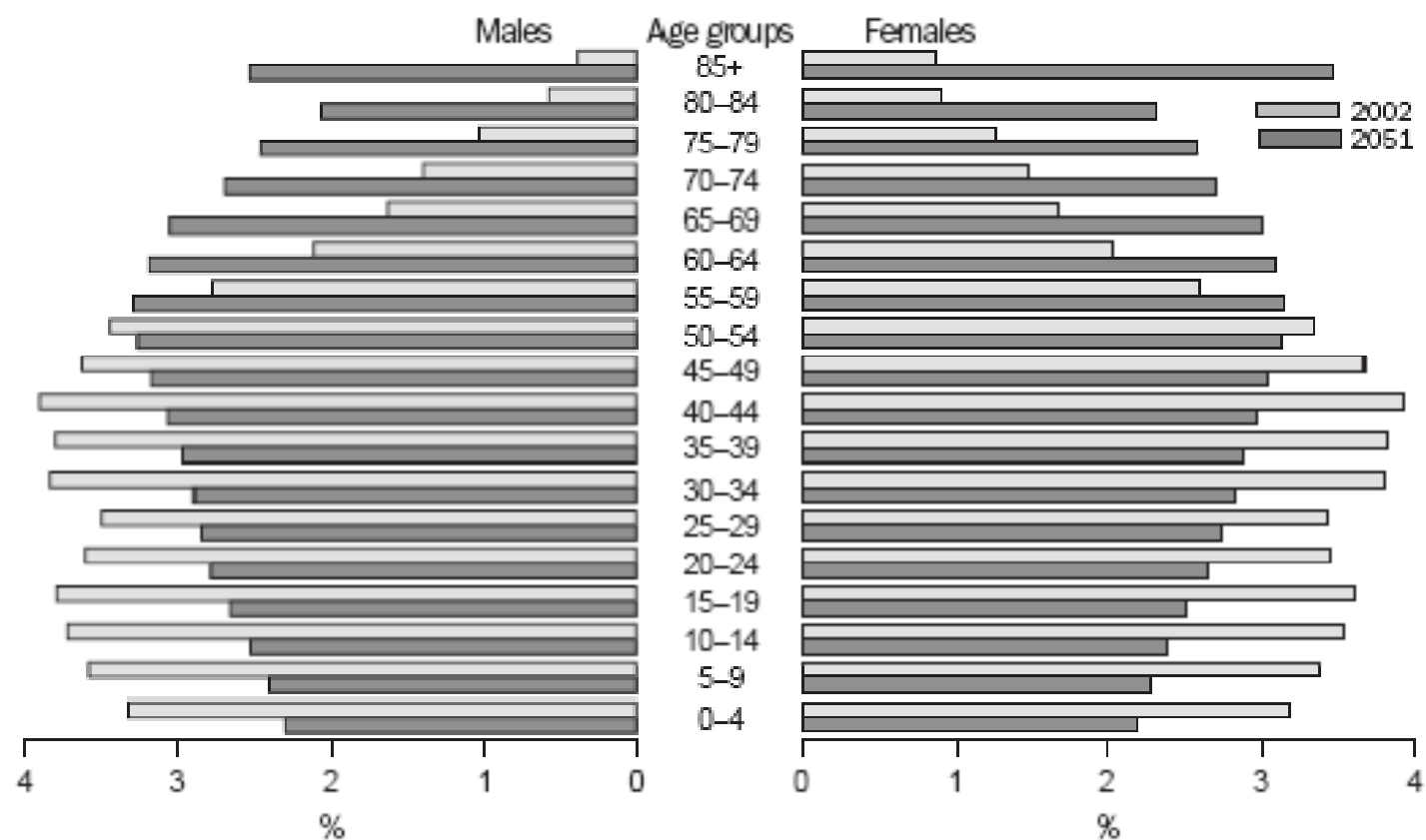
Why focus on customer service?



POPULATION PROJECTIONS – IMPACT OF THE AGEING OF WA'S BABY BOOMERS



PROJECTED POPULATION, Series B, Western Australia—As at 30 June



Sobering thoughts

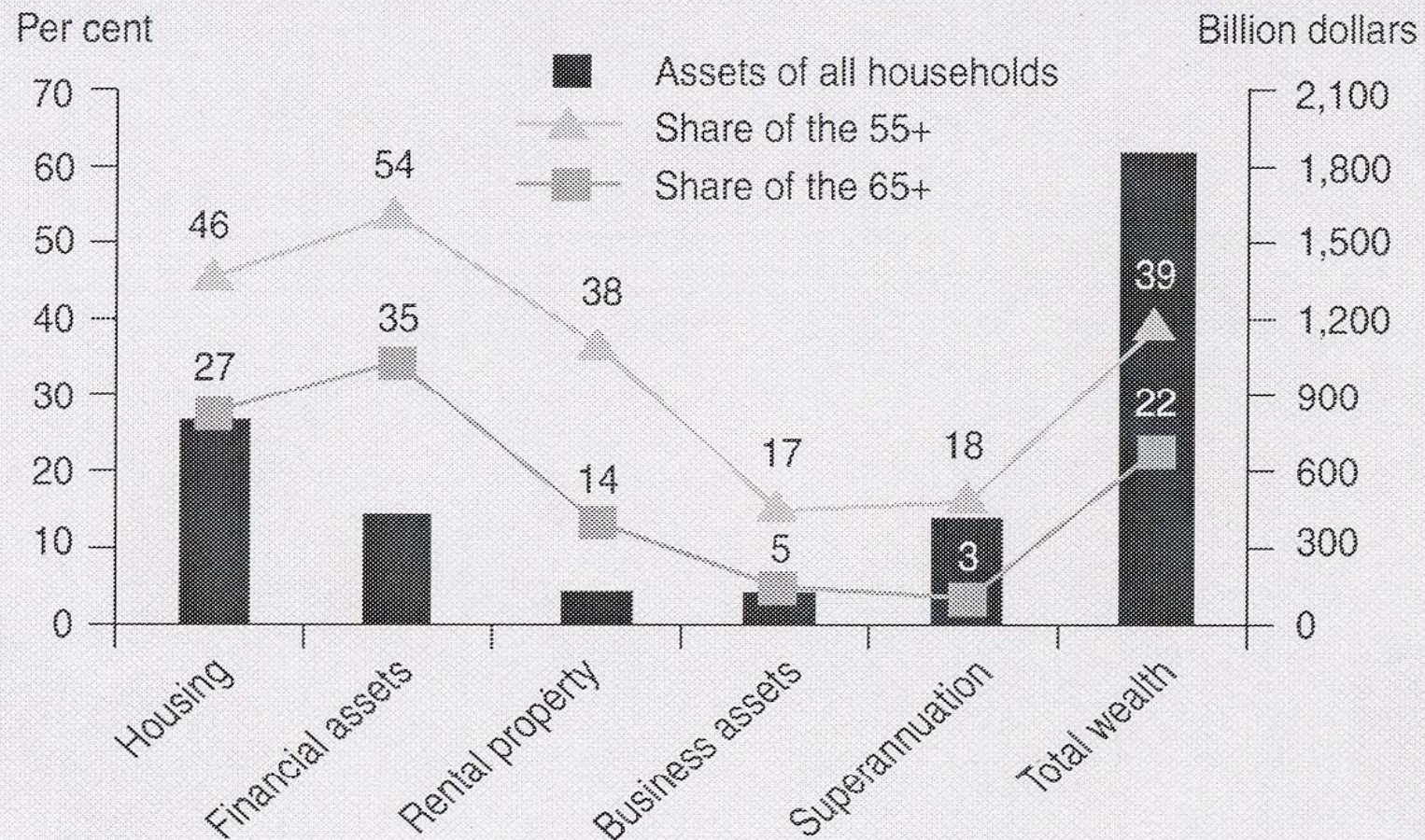
- Increased government spending on health, aged care, and pensions
- Shrinking workforces
- Slower economic growth
- Need for well-planned and innovative marketing strategies
 - Strong focus on consumer needs
 - Careful segmentation
 - Competitive advantage
 - Customer service



What do we know about older consumers?

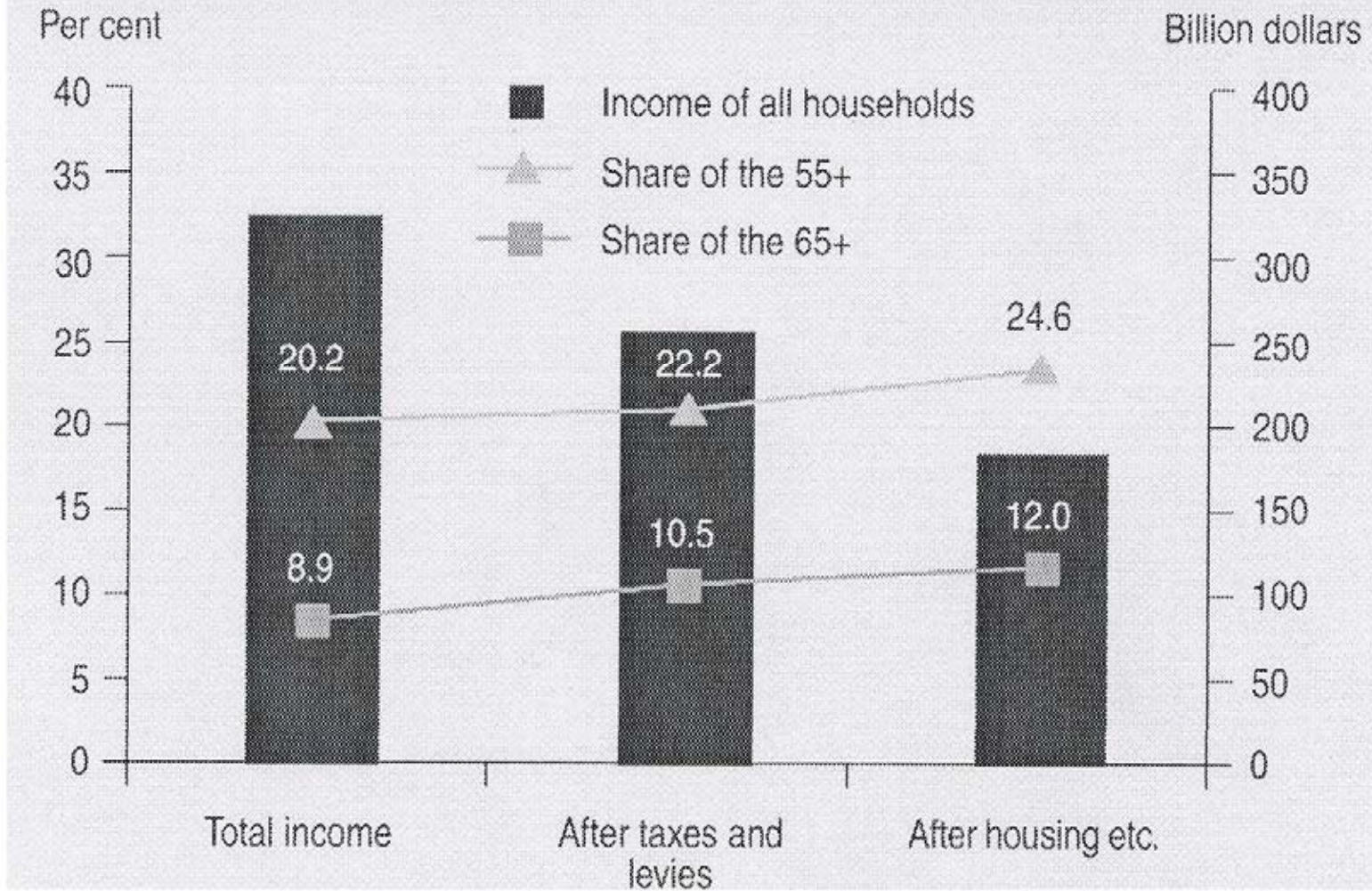
- Rapidly growing segment
- Varying age cut-offs:
 - 50+, 60+, 65+
 - Chronological vs cognitive age
- Heterogenous
 - Age sub-segments
 - Ethnicity
 - Health
 - Lifestyle preferences
- Affluent





Access Economics, 2001

Figure 25. Household income



Access Economics, 2001

Products in demand

- Insurance
- Financial services
- Skincare
- Retirement housing
- Healthcare/medical
- Travel and leisure
- Boats
- Gambling products
- Tools
- Toys



Consumer characteristics

- Competent consumers
- Loyal, especially to local businesses
- Social interaction
- Risk averse
- Quality emphasis
- Environmental concerns
- Fastest growing segment of Internet users
- Often under-represented and stereotyped in advertisements
- May resist age segmentation cues and seniors' discounts
- Less likely to complain when receiving poor service
- Especially vulnerable to fraudulent business activities
- Customer service implications?





Physical Needs

- Vision
- Hearing
- Mobility
- Dexterity
- Taste discernment

Psychosocial Needs

- Cognitive processing
 - Self pacing
- Social interaction
 - Older sales staff
- Vulnerability
 - Ethical implications



A collection of military medals and a pocket watch are arranged on a wooden surface. The medals include a red ribbon medal with a circular emblem, a blue ribbon medal with a circular emblem, and two silver star-shaped medals with circular centers. A pocket watch with a metal case and a white face is visible in the bottom left corner. The background is a light-colored, textured surface.

The Age Friendly Guidelines Project

**The Positive Ageing
Foundation
of Australia**

Age Friendly Guidelines Project

Objective:

To make the marketplace more senior-friendly by developing customer service guidelines for organisations targeting older consumers



Stage 1: Selecting Industries

- Focus groups – 260 WA seniors
- Mail survey – 1,300 WA seniors
- Industry selections:
 - Financial Planners
 - Supermarkets
 - Healthcare:
 - GPS
 - Hospitals



Stage 2: Developing the guidelines

- 12 focus groups
 - Segmented by gender and age (50-64, 65+)
- Development of draft guidelines
- Industry collaboration
- Survey testing (n=505)



Financial Planners

1. Create a trusting working relationship where the client is treated with dignity
2. Charge reasonable and fully disclosed fees and commissions
3. Keep up to date with changes in the financial environment
4. Provide information in clear English
5. Document the expectations of both parties
6. Obtain, maintain, and display relevant qualifications
7. Provide a list of independent contacts
8. Take the client's total financial situation and desired lifestyle into account
9. Disclose all vested interests
10. Provide a history of past performance



Supermarkets

1. Ensure staff are courteous, friendly, and efficient
2. Provide and maintain appropriate trolleys and baskets
3. Ensure goods can be easily reached
4. Ensure easy access within and without the store
5. Assistance with product location
6. Supply quality produce in small packet sizes
7. Provide delivery options
8. Allocate adequate express lanes
9. Offer a comfortable in-store environment
10. Provide seniors' discounts



General Practitioners (Doctors)

1. Provide prompt referrals to specialists
2. Stay up to date with recent medical developments
3. Be familiar with the patient's history and background
4. Have a caring bedside manner
5. Provide explanations of medication usage, side-effects, cost options
6. Listen to patients' concerns
7. Explain fee structures
8. Allow appointments with the preferred doctor
9. Provide estimates of waiting times
10. Provide a nursing service



Hospitals

1. Nursing staff to introduce themselves and call patients by name
2. Nursing staff to spend time with patients and demonstrate empathy
3. Arrange for continuity of care from nurses
4. Nursing staff and doctors to communicate effectively with each other
5. Meals to be familiar and appropriate for patient's condition
6. Thorough provision of preadmission information
7. Prompt and streamlined admission
8. Availability of proximate pick-up/drop-off areas
9. Provision of in-hospital transport
10. Age-appropriate facilities: large button phones, railings, electronic beds, menus with large font size



Primary take-outs

- Dominance of relationships
 - Empathy
 - Social interaction
- Communicate clearly
 - Verbal
 - Written
 - Especially about costs
- Provide comfortable physical environments



Relationships

- Staff:
 - Recruitment
 - Training
 - Retention
- Mature customer service staff



Communicating

- Written versions where possible
- Non-glare paper
- **Avoid blue/green colour combinations**
- Font size



Physical Environments: Think Big!

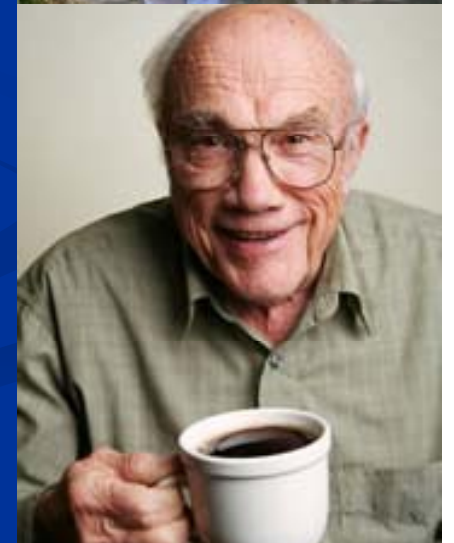


Physical Environments: Avoid being senior-proof



Consider...

- Multiple access points:
 - Stores, phone, internet, home delivery
- Using technology to advantage
 - e.g., talking and voice activated appliances



To Conclude

- Empower seniors through superior customer service by meeting their
 - Physical needs
 - Cognitive needs
 - Social needs
- Source of competitive advantage that will be difficult to mimic



