

She Isn't Invisible. Your Systems Are Blind to Her.

You have heard for ten years that women 50+ are underserved. This briefing is not that argument again. It shows how the way ads get bought, targeted, and measured filters out the most valuable customer in America, and what to do about it.

123M

Americans 50+, or 36% of the U.S. population¹

\$10.7T

spent by 50+ households in 2024, more than half of U.S. consumer spending²

\$10.9T

in investable assets women already control, about a third of the total³

2.6%

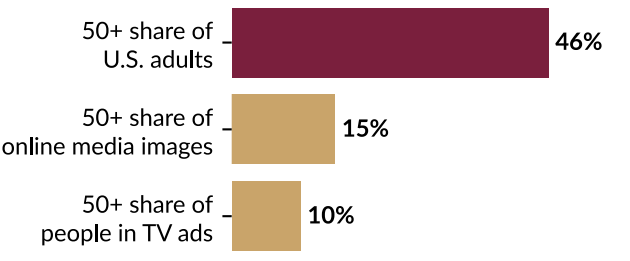
of age-targeted podcast ad impressions go to listeners 55+, vs. 43.5% to younger adults ages 25–34, per a 2025 study⁴

~1 in 10

people shown in TV ads are 50+⁵

The Real Problem: The Plumbing

Half the adults, a sliver of the images



Marketers don't dislike her. The machinery they use was built around a younger customer, and it still runs on autopilot. Three defaults cut her out before a creative brief is ever written.

The result shows on screen. Ad characters over 60 fell 62% between 2022 and 2024, to just 1.4% of all characters.⁶ Adults 50+ are 46% of U.S. adults but appear in only 15% of online media images.⁷

1

The buying demo. TV and video are still traded against the 18–49 and 25–54 demos. Yet one analysis found 61% of TV ad impressions are delivered to adults 55+, so she is seen but never planned for or paid for.⁸ In a 2025 survey, only 3% of Americans over 50 said they feel "seen" in advertising.⁹

2

The age bracket. On Facebook and Instagram, the oldest age setting an advertiser can choose is "65+." It lumps a 66-year-old executive and a 92-year-old into one cell.¹⁰ In the UK, 55+ isn't even a traded TV audience.¹¹

3

The last click. 72% of marketers agree last-click attribution ignores the upper funnel.¹² She is the upper funnel: she researches, compares, and reads reviews before she buys.^{13,14} Weeks of influence get credited to whichever ad she clicked last, or to nothing at all.

She researches before she clicks

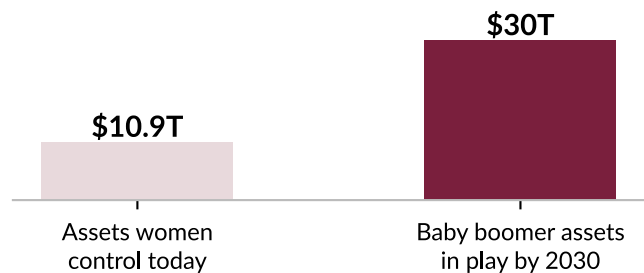


Why this matters for your budget

- **Her path is long, and then she stays.** Half of Gen X and boomer shoppers read up before buying, and they are more brand-loyal once they choose.¹⁴ Last-click reporting penalizes the customer with the highest lifetime value.
- **She regrets less.** In one Adobe study, 37% of Gen X and older shoppers reported buyer's remorse, compared with 57% of millennials. Fewer returns means more margin.¹⁵
- **The fix is measurement, not more awareness.** Plan against 50+ audiences directly, split "65+" into real life stages, and judge results by repeat purchase and lifetime value, not only by last click.

She Is Gaining Wealth, Not Losing Relevance

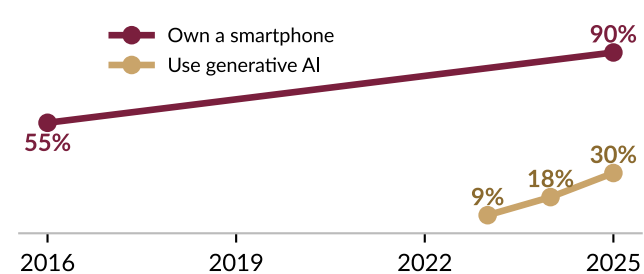
The wealth shift into her hands



- **The wealth is shifting to her.** Women control about a third of U.S. household investable assets today. They are expected to control much of the \$30 trillion baby boomers will hold by 2030.³
- **She powers the economy.** The 50+ generated \$12.5 trillion in U.S. economic activity, and women drive 64% of consumer purchases globally.^{16,17} 98% of women 50+ travelers are their household's decision makers.¹⁸
- **She is under pressure, and very selective.** 62% of women voters 50–64 say their finances fall short of what they expected, compared with 39% of those 65+.¹⁹ 71% have cut nonessential spending.²⁰ She cuts the brands that don't earn her, not the categories.

The Tech Myth Is Over

Adults 50+: the tech myth, retired



Brands still picture her as needing help with the remote. The data say otherwise:

- 90% of adults 50+ own a smartphone, up from 55% in 2016.²¹
- 30% use generative AI, more than triple the 2023 rate.²¹
- 79% shop on e-commerce sites, and 88% of online shoppers 50+ use Amazon or Etsy.²²
- 71% bought technology in 2025, spending \$94.5 billion.²²

She is not late to digital. She is fluent in it.

How She Shops Online

Channel	What the data show	What it means for brands
Amazon	Adults 55+ make up half of Prime subscribers (65+ are 29%, 55–64 are 21%). ²³ 69.85% of adults 55–64 are members. ²⁴	Retail media and marketplace search are where her research turns into purchases. Optimize listings, reviews, and Q&A for her questions.
Live shopping	Boomers made 31% of live-shopping purchases in one survey. ²⁵ She grew up with QVC and HSN.	Live selling is a familiar format for her, not a Gen Z novelty. Expert demos and honest try-ons convert well.
Affiliate & creators	Gen X and boomers are more resistant than younger buyers to generic creator content. ²⁶ Creators her own age perform differently (see Creator Proof).	The issue is not whether creators work. It is which creator. A peer's link earns trust that a 24-year-old's link can't.
Brand sites & email	71% of boomers visit brand websites before buying. ¹³ Boomers say retailer emails are their second step when researching apparel. ²⁷	Owned channels close the sale. Build lists, and send useful content rather than just discounts.

"She doesn't want to be marketed to as an age. She wants to be spoken to as a woman, one with taste, money, opinions, and decades of experience spotting a brand that doesn't get her."

Segment by Life Stage, Not Just Birthday

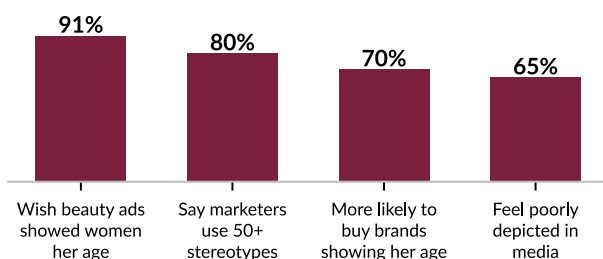
Segment	Who she is	What she needs from brands
Ages 50–64	Peak career, caregiving for kids and parents, menopause. 53% struggle with health costs. ¹⁹ Uses YouTube (85%), Facebook (71%), and Instagram (41%). ²⁸	Smart value, time savers, confidence. Menopause, sleep, and strength are open lanes; Boots No7 proved it (see Brands That Already Proved It).
Ages 65+	Retired or reinventing, grandchildren, travel. Mainly on YouTube (65%) and Facebook (59%). ²⁸	Experiences, quality, legacy. Treat her as an active customer, not a "senior."
Solo women	33% of women 65+ live alone (10.5 million). ²⁹ Widows are 29% of older women. ²⁹ 43% of adults 55–64 have been divorced at least once. ³⁰	She makes every decision herself: money, home, safety, travel. Solo-friendly pricing, independence, and peer community.
Multicultural	42% of adults 50+ are Black, Hispanic, Asian, or of other multicultural backgrounds. ¹ 78% of 50+ population growth over the next decade is multicultural. ³¹ 86% of Latinas control or share household financial decisions, and 80% feel treated as an afterthought. ³²	Culturally specific casting, hair and skin expertise, and bilingual creators. She notices immediately when she has been treated as an afterthought.
Still working	18 million women 55+ are in the workforce, 10.8% of all U.S. workers. Labor force participation for women 55–64 is 61.4%. ³³	Workwear, polish, time-saving, and professional relevance. Her income is earned, not fixed.
Founders	97% of women 50+ entrepreneurs say starting a business was the right choice. ³⁴	Tools, services, and B2B offers. She is a buyer for her household and for her business.
Grandmothers	Grandparents spend \$172 billion a year on grandchildren, an average of \$2,654 each. ³⁵ More than \$700 of that goes to gifts, and half of adults 50+ are grandparents. ³⁶	Gifting, toys, kids' clothing, education, and travel. She buys for three generations.

Where the Category Growth Is

Category	Signal	Opening for brands
Beauty	Women 50+ spent about \$22 billion a year on beauty in AARP's analysis. ³⁷ Only 22% of women 50+ feel heavy pressure to meet beauty standards, compared with 41% of women under 50. ³⁸	Pro-age, not anti-age. Show real skin and texture; she has opted out of chasing youth.
Hair	About 25% of women show hair loss by age 50, rising to 41–50% by 70. ³⁹ Gray hair, thinning, and texture changes are almost universal.	Thinning care, gentle tools, scalp health, and gray styling. Education beats promises; this is the core of BRT's brush education.
Health & supplements	75.9% of adults 60+ take a dietary supplement. ⁵⁶ Women spend over \$13 billion a year treating menopause symptoms, and more than \$10 billion of that goes to nonmedical options such as supplements. ⁵⁷	Menopause, sleep, bone, joint, and hair-from-within support. She reads labels and wants proof, so pair clinical evidence with a peer she trusts.
Travel	Spending by U.S. and Canadian women 50+ is projected to grow from \$245 billion to \$519 billion. ¹⁸	Solo, girlfriend, and wellness trips are mainstream, not niche.
Fashion	55% of women 50+ have cut back on clothing as prices rise. ⁴⁰	Fit, quality, and versatility, plus membership and value messaging.
Home	Adults 55–64 spend 56% more on home improvement than adults 25–34. ⁴¹	Downsizing, aging in place, and redecorating after the kids leave.
Financial	Women stand to control much of a \$30 trillion transfer, ³ yet many report feeling patronized by financial professionals. ⁴²	Respectful, plain-language advice. The first firm that treats her as the decision maker wins her for decades.

What She Is Telling Brands

What she is telling brands



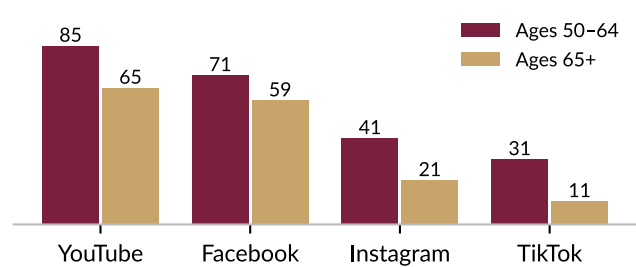
These are not complaints. They are buying signals. When she sees herself, she buys. When she sees a cliché, she leaves.

- 91% wish beauty ads showed realistic women their age, and 70% are more likely to buy from brands that do.
- 80% say marketers portray 50+ lives through clichés.
- 65% feel inadequately depicted in media.

Figures from AARP surveys.^{37,20,55}

Channel Map

Platform use, % of U.S. adults (2026)



- **YouTube and Facebook** reach the most of her. Instagram reaches 41% of adults 50-64.²⁸
- **Pinterest** reaches 33% of adults 50-64 and 22% of those 65+,⁴³ and women outpace men on it in every age group.⁴⁴
- **Podcasts:** monthly listening among Americans 55+ more than doubled, from 21% in 2023 to 44% in 2026.⁴⁵ Yet listeners 55+ get only 2.6% of age-targeted podcast ad impressions.⁴ That gap is an open lane.
- **Connected TV:** streaming is now 44.8% of all TV viewing,⁴⁶ so CTV is how to reach her on the TV set without buying against the 18-49 demo.
- **Email** remains one of her trusted research tools.²⁷

Brands That Already Proved It

Brand & campaign	What they did	Result
Dove, Beauty Never Gets Old	Starred women 60+ in a mainstream beauty campaign	\$11M increase in Beauty Bar sales, 70% higher dollar sales, and 1.4B earned impressions ⁵⁰
L'Oréal Age Perfect	Built a long-running campaign around Helen Mirren and older women	78,000 new buyers, with ROI rising from 2:1 to 4.50:1 over time ⁵¹
Boots No7 Menopause	Spoke directly to menopausal skin needs	+39% sales of menopause items, +7% penetration among women 45+, and £3.35 return per £1 spent ⁵²
LYMA	Worked with 31 creators aged 40-60	6.84x return on ad spend and 4.9M impressions ⁵³
Midi Health	Partnered with a midlife creator on menopause care	3.2% engagement, compared with the creator's 2.1% average, and about \$362K in earned media value ⁵⁴

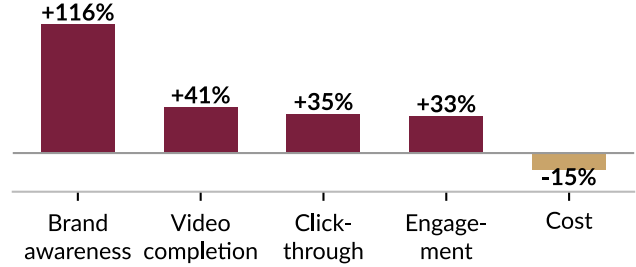
The Advertiser Playbook

- **Buy her on purpose.** Add 50+ audience targets to media plans, and stop treating her as spillover from the 25-54 demo.
- **Split "65+" into real life stages:** working, solo, grandmother, founder.
- **Measure the whole journey,** using lift studies, repeat-purchase rates, and lifetime value alongside last click.
- **Cast her, and hire her.** 70% are more likely to buy from brands that show people their age.³⁷
- **Go where she buys:** Amazon, live shopping, affiliate links, CTV, and email.
- **Partner with a peer voice.** Credibility is what a 50+ creator brings that a demo buy can't.

About Joanna Stone. Joanna is the founder of Bunny Ruffle Tail, a lifestyle, media, and commerce brand for women 50+, and its shoppable storefront, The Bunny Edit. She sells live as an Amazon Influencer and Walmart Creator, and she brings 20 years of sales, publishing, and marketing leadership, including roles as group publisher and CMO. Agencies offer strategy with no storefront, and creators offer a storefront with no strategy. Joanna brings both, and she is also the customer this report describes. **Partnerships:** joannastoneofficial@gmail.com

Creator Proof

UK creator campaigns: 45+ vs. under-45



Only 5% of UK influencer spend goes to campaigns featuring creators 50+.⁴⁷ Yet in WPP Media's GOAT analysis of UK campaigns, those aimed at audiences 45+ outperformed under-45 campaigns: +35% click-through, +41% video completion, +116% awareness, and +33% engagement, at 15% lower cost. When older creators spoke to older audiences, relevance scores were 73% higher.⁴⁷ A separate study found creators 45+ deliver 19% higher click-through and 7% higher return on ad spend.⁴⁸ In a TikTok field experiment, an influencer who appeared to be in her late 40s to mid-50s drew 70-90% more views than a 20-something persona.⁴⁹

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