



healthcare now | Unique insights to navigate a complex market

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How to live long and prosper:
healthcare marketing
to the over 55s



Bray Leino



About Healthcare Now

Rooted in research and insight, essential provocation for brands and businesses in the health and wellbeing space.

We've got a long history of helping brands navigate the complex sphere of healthcare.

The main challenge used to be regulatory compliance, but today there are so many more factors to consider. It's a landscape completely changed by events of recent years and that change is constant...and happening quickly.

As two entities working across the full spectrum of health and wellbeing, from common ailments to rare diseases, Bray Leino and Solaris Health are in a unique position. In 2022 we came together to commission independent research agency QuMind to conduct a nationwide healthcare study of

1,000 respondents across both consumer and core patient groups*. This exclusive, quantitative and qualitative research study – State of the Nation Wellness Report – unlocks previously unattainable insights to power healthcare marketing, now.

Through our programme of thought-provoking content, we'll reveal the beliefs and experiences that are shaping health attitudes and behaviours. From consumer and patient insight, we'll explore human perspectives and derive potential implications for brands and businesses navigating this space. Ultimately, we set out to see the world of healthcare through the eyes of those that matter.

*Those in primary care for with an ongoing medical condition and those with an ongoing chronic/rare medical condition.





Core insight:
**Over 55s are
throwing down
the gauntlet to
millennials when it
comes to proactive
health behaviours**



+ Time to take control

Stories of billionaires with eye-catching lifestyles intended to extend their youth into middle age or live forever may grab headlines, but the rise in life expectancy and increasing numbers of nonagenarians and centenarians mean that more and more of us are considering quality of life as it lengthens. By the time you reach 55, if you haven't had a health scare yourself, you will know someone who has. You become aware that you are not as indestructible as you seemed in your teens and twenties.

This combination of long life and increased awareness of its fragility means the over 55s are more proactive with their health and wellbeing, increasingly aware that health is precious and not guaranteed.

Our research revealed that as people age they have two big health concerns. One is 'how can I ensure that I live for as long as I can with a good quality of life?' The second is 'how can I ensure I remain happy and comfortable?'

+ Independence and self-reliance matter

We found that 36% of over 55s agree that 'taking a proactive role in my health and wellbeing is a top priority in my life', a significantly higher proportion than younger adults (29% for 18-34s). This proactivity is likely prompted, in part, by a higher reliance on prescribed medicines – a constant reminder of the importance of health. 37% of those aged 55+ take prescribed

medication, a proportion that is unsurprisingly far greater than younger adults. Other reported motivations for over 55s taking responsibility for their health include lack of faith in the NHS (either through direct experience or media coverage), preserving independence, and wanting to avoid being a burden.



+ Better mental health is increasingly important

Mental health is also to the fore, with women aged 55+ the most likely to take medication for their mental health. While there are many reasons why people start taking medication, many women said their feelings of depression were triggered by family/personal issues. Despite the higher prevalence, relatively few over 55s have cut their working hours for the sake of their mental health, with work/life balance a much bigger

consideration for younger adults. Older generations are also less likely to meditate – 9% of those 55+ practise meditation compared with 20% of 18-34s. They are more likely to have regular dental, medical and optician appointments though, implying that they see more benefit in proven conventional medicine than treatments that are focused on wellbeing.

It's likely that some of the preference is due to generational attitudes and habits built up over time, but also likely that when you need to address real health problems, tried and tested medical science wins out.

This preference for established treatments suggests that solid evidence with proof of efficacy and outcomes should play a central role in health marketing to the over 55s.



+ Health over vanity

Looking at activities undertaken for health benefits, over 55s are into lighter exercise, such as walking, whereas 18-34s favour higher intensity exercise workouts and sport. Proactivity towards exercise among 18-34s is more motivated by wanting to look good, whereas at 55+ it's about living longer.

Older adults are also significantly more likely to say they consciously eat a healthy or well-balanced

diet (53% vs 34% 18-34s) and to take supplements or vitamins (38% vs. 25%).

It is striking that many older adults are as focused on their mental health as well as well as the physical, with many of them emphasising the importance of work/life balance, and actions such as avoiding stress and taking time for mental wellbeing remaining important into retirement.



+ Appeal to a sense of independence

The findings imply that health and wellbeing brands might need to adopt different strategies for older and younger audiences...

Older adults' proactive attitude towards their health and wellbeing means that brands do not need to be interruptive and sales-y in their marketing messages. This group of people is actively looking

for treatments, and it means that awareness and clarity of purpose are vital, so the health benefits and role in preserving people's independence are clear.

This group's scepticism over the NHS's ability to keep them well means that, as well as promoting the ability to take control of their health, there could be value in talking about the role self-care

can play preserving NHS resources, echoing the Covid-19 sentiment of 'stay home, protect the NHS, save lives'. There could also be a role for the behavioural science strategy of loss avoidance, communicating a brand's ability to help older people avoid losing their independence, their health, their quality of life and so on.



+ Younger adults are focused on now

Younger adults are likely to be in good health, not taking prescription medicine and more concerned with their immediate wellbeing than any longer-term health issues. They will be most open to messages that focus on enhancing their lifestyle and helping them live the balanced life they crave. Health worries, long term medication and physical deterioration feel remote from most young adults and the barriers

to 18-34s taking a more proactive role include lack of time, lack of information, emotional readiness, and expense. In terms of connecting with this demographic, they are more likely to use friends and family as an information source and, predictably, more likely than those 55+ to use digital resources, such as apps, forums or communities and online medical services.

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Summary

Core Insight:

Over 55s are throwing down the gauntlet to millennials when it comes to proactive health behaviours

What this challenges:

The idea that older people are set in their ways and reactive, waiting for adverse events before acting

Points of view

Unique perspectives on the core insight



Tanya Elliot

Account Director - Bray Leino

Only a matter of years ago, it felt like the prevailing attitude among 55+ was that health issues are just part of getting older – something we all have to put up with and can't really change. It's great to see that attitude disappearing.

This audience is ready to be engaged. But we have to be really aware that we can't patronise this age group, and we can't treat them all the same... If we're lucky, we're 55+ for over a third of our lives. Some still have 15 or so years left in the workforce, while some are retired and, further down the line, some are in assisted living facilities. So, there are vastly different lifestyles, attitudes and states of health to consider, and we need to target and communicate with them accordingly.



Sarah Firth

Co Founder and PR Lead - Anything But Grey

Taking care of your health doesn't necessarily take priority as you hit 55 but it does become more of a focus – and a multifaceted one at that because managing your healthcare is not just about longevity, but quality. This is an audience who are actively looking for brands who can engage with this motivation – not as is often perceived, stuck in their ways, but instead they are empowered information gatherers, wanting to know more to be in driving seat when it comes to what they need. It's a compelling combination of competence, confidence and curiosity.



Henry Challender

Associate Creative Director - Bray Leino

It's always good to remind ourselves that we need to tailor work to different age groups – and specific segments, attitudes and outlooks within those groups. This is purely anecdotal, but I get a sense of gallows humour among older people. My father-in-law buys a new drill and says, 'That'll see me out.' And my mother and her friends call the decade they're in 'Sniper's Alley.' Clearly, there's scope to explore comms that respond to their proactivity; perhaps there's also room to tune into their sense of levity. Another inference worth mulling: if a significant portion of this market are proactive about their health and wellbeing, an opportunity lies in nudging the ones who aren't.



Contact us

For more information on how we can help drive growth for your health and wellbeing brand, contact Sam Crocker – scrocker@brayleino.co.uk

