

The Plug-in.

Engaging older consumers in new technology

Miranda Starke
The Plug-in, COTA SA
ITAC 2020, Brisbane



The Plug-in.

COTA SA's social enterprise The Plug-in is a specialist consumer engagement and insights consultancy which connects a community of older people with government, business, industry and researchers who want to understand them better.

theplugin.com.au



The Plug-in.

We give people aged 50+ an influential voice...

and enable clients to innovate and improve their products, services and policies for older Australians.

theplugin.com.au



The Plug-in.

- + Consumer engagement, insights and market research
- + Co-design, focus groups, in-depth interviews, surveys
- + Product testing, innovation, development
- + Participant recruitment

Aged Care, Health, Technology, Finance, Retail,
Transport, Nutrition, Lifestyle, Legal, Government



The Plug-in.

Engaging older consumers in new technology :

- + understanding the digital divide
- + barriers to engagement
- + technology and independence
- + what it all means for engaging older consumers



The Plug-in.

Understanding the digital divide.

“Not everyone’s online you know!”

“I couldn’t live without it!”



The Plug-in.

“It needs to be understood that there are still many, many people who do not have access to the internet. Too many organisations do not have alternatives to on-line services. Using the internet is not cheap, either, taking into account the cost of devices, NBN etc.”



The Plug-in.

“I would be lost without my smart phone although I’m not almost permanently attached to it like many young people. Often I forget about it for hours or leave it at home. But next to my wallet it’s something that would devastate me if I lost it. And my iPad/Netflix subscription accompanies me to bed at night!”



The Plug-in.

Barriers to engagement.

*“When she started talking about the app
I just switched off.”*



The Plug-in.

“Privacy and security of personal and financial information is my main concern. I find it hard to trust any organisation, government department or company that says it will protect my privacy, given the regular media reports of information leaks and sites hacked.”



The Plug-in.

“Coping with the technological demands of the future is my greatest FEAR for the future, particularly as memory deteriorates not improves.”



The Plug-in.

Technology and independence.

“I would welcome exploration of technology which would allow me to continue to live at home – but not at the expense of human contact”



The Plug-in.

“I constantly messenger my family, just chatting, as if they were around the corner, when they are 100s of miles away. We discuss many topics I need advice on.”



The Plug-in.

“I enjoy browsing and purchasing items and paying bills without having to leave the house, especially in the hot weather. It has made my life easier and more enjoyable.”



The Plug-in.

“I don't have to rely on others for information.”



The Plug-in.

Tips for engaging older consumers in technology.

“I am open to using technology when I can identify benefits for me”



The Plug-in.

#1: Increase familiarity

- + The more familiar, the more likely older people will be to use it (late adopters)
- + Information rich marketing, word of mouth
- + High involvement, personal selling
- + Repeated exposures are important
- + Use analogue as well as digital comms



The Plug=in.

#2: Sell the benefits not the technology

- + Focus on overall benefits – why would they want this?
- + Increasing independence is a driver
- + Don't focus on tech features or functionality
- + Tech talk can be intimidating, esp. to women



The Plug-in.

#3: Make it easy for the customer

- + Don't shift the burden of set up, this could create a barrier
- + Low tech users have low threshold for complexity, require more support
- + Provide support and training in a variety of formats : face to face, printed manuals, and YouTube instructional videos
- + Plug in and play is a winner



The Plug-in.

#4: Face-to-face wins every time

- + Older people prefer dealing with a human
- + New tech more likely to be accepted if taught by a person
- + Provide phone or in person support, not just online
- + Face-to-face in-home set up, trial, training, support is highly appealing



The Plug-in.

#5: Engage older consumers early

- + build co-design into your product development plan
- + understand drivers and barriers before you're too far gone
- + conduct rolling testing and feedback
- + co-design a sales and marketing strategy with potential customers
- + ask The Plug-in how: connect@theplugin.com.au



Connect with The Plug-in

connect@theplugin.com.au
theplugin.com.au

