



## Tools | Technologies | Techniques

### Introduction

#### Before How Comes Why

The following is the [Introduction](#) to Boomer StrataGEMS™ — Tools, Technologies and Techniques by Brent Green, author of the new and influential book *“Generation Reinvention: How Boomers Today are Changing Business, Marketing, Aging and the Future”*

The Internet provides Boomers with the most potent medium in history to effect change, nearby and far away. Social networks are no longer merely local and temporal but rather global and eternal. We have daily opportunities to influence hundreds, thousands or even millions with a single Tweet, Facebook post, or Linked-In update. One brilliant blog article can transform nations.

The power of these 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies became clearer to me when watching an extraordinary YouTube video entitled [“Where the hell is Matt?”](#) Matt Harding’s contemporary story reminds me of a younger version of me — full of adventure and idealism during college. Like many of us back then, he is a young iconoclast stubbornly intent on making the world better while having a blast doing it.

Matt traveled to 42 countries in 14 months to create a 4-minute, 30-second video showcasing his silly dance. Through the social network he enlisted thousands of strangers to silly-dance with him. Through YouTube he has attracted over 33 million viewers. That’s over 33 million impressions of an uplifting metaphor: a message underscoring we’re fundamentally all the same regardless of nation, race or culture. That’s a Boomer generation coming-of-age theme, flung into hyperspace with a social networking tool that didn’t exist before February 2005.

Boomers are no longer swarming college campuses where many staked their idealistic claims on the future. We’ve grown up and apart, geographically and mentally. Author David B. Wolfe has written about the inexorable influence of aging on adult psychological development. As we age we become more “individuated, introspective and autonomous.” Intrinsic connections to generational peers become misty and diffuse.

This has all begun to transform since Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web in 1989 while working for the European Particle Physics Laboratory. Burgeoning online social

networks that have since emerged create new pathways into generational consciousness. The Internet allows legions to reach across geographic boundaries, to find like-minded contemporaries, and to discover universal life themes and passions.

Online social networks offer rich potential for connecting, learning, engaging, and changing the status quo, much as our colleges offered us in youth. The Internet creates the campus experience for us today, a *mélange* teaming with ideas, insights and camaraderie.

I submit that one critical “why” of building worldwide social networks is to come together, right now. Online and interconnected we can tackle challenges of shared concern: ageism; age discrimination in the workplace; third-age careers; availability of affordable healthcare; viability of social insurance programs such as Social Security and Medicare; and, ultimately, legacies of a generation, whether environmental, technological, or social. We can focus attention on public education for our grandchildren, or saner immigration policies, or more funding for research into “orphan diseases.” We can nurture vanishing art forms such as quilt making or angler’s fly tying. We can raise money to do all this.

It’s through our expanding online networks that we can debate the issues we once deliberated late-at-night in dorm rooms throughout the nation’s college campuses. We can find closeness with contemporaries we’ll never meet face-to-face. We can remain intimate and current with far-flung children and grandchildren and use the network to assure intergenerational transfer of our values. We can organize our thoughts and plan actions through distributed teams. We can link, tweet, and write articulate blog arguments to improve “collective mentalities” around the worth of elders.

We can even bring fame to new artists and iconoclasts of the generation, who often herald possibilities before change takes hold in mainstream beliefs and values. Susan Boyle showed us one way in 2009.

Susan, age 48, a church volunteer from lackluster Blackburn, Scotland, became an instant celebrity. [The YouTube video](#) of her shocking performance on “Britain’s Got Talent,” the UK version of “American Idol,” has received tens of millions of views. According to Visible Measures, a company that computes viewings of Internet videos, her catalog of online clips has been watched over 310 million times.

But trouncing Simon Cowell, the cynical talent judge, is not the end of this Boomer woman’s remarkable accomplishments. Her debut CD, “I Dreamed a Dream,” sold over 700,000 copies in the United States in one week, becoming the fastest-selling album in British history, soaring to the number one sales position in Canada, New Zealand, Ireland, and Australia. Susan has shattered any arguments that emerging musical talent belongs only to youth. In terms of sales, she smashed the best debut album of The Beatles.

We can still change the world with our creative gifts, making it better, fairer, more inclusive. We can use these networks to connect with many more peers than possible during

our college years. We can live beyond our time, influencing social and political evolution long into the future. We can ensure that our forebears move closer to realizing our ideals of peaceful coexistence, a healthy planet ... a world less dominated by human suffering.

Graham Nash, the British member of classic rock supergroup, Crosby, Stills & Nash, wrote a politically charged song about the chaotic 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Regardless of the song's original context, his lyrics ring true through decades:

*Though your brother's bound and gagged  
And they've chained him to a chair  
Won't you please come to Chicago  
Just to sing  
In a land that's known as freedom  
How can such a thing be fair  
Won't you please come to Chicago  
For the help we can bring  
We can change the world –  
Re-arrange the world...*

Today we share a world less dominated by traditional media, a world connected through fiber-optics and satellites, a world shrinking into desktop computer monitors displaying media channels born of this century: Twitter, Linked-In, Facebook, MySpace, Typepad, YouTube, Blogger — websites conceived to draw us together, to engage our passions, to affect how we see ourselves and believe in our possibilities.

And now, more than ever, we have a unique generational challenge to *be the change*, to re-engage with more mature purpose, to rearrange the world. We have the tools and freedom like we've never had them before.

Those tools, and how to leverage them, are now before you in this eGuidebook. The rest is up to us.

—Brent Green



#### **About Brent Green**

Brent Green is a marketing communication strategist, creative director, business writer, speaker, trainer and consultant focusing on generational marketing. He is author of [Marketing to Leading-Edge Baby Boomers and Generation Reinvention](#).

View the entire Table of Contents of Boomer StrataGEMS Tools, Technologies and Techniques [here](#). The eGuidebook is available for immediate download [here](#).