

ADVERTISEMENT

**The
Economist**

Subscribe

Menu

Business

May 8th 2021 edition

The boomer boom

Older consumers have learned new tricks in the pandemic

Companies had better keep up



May 8th 2021



BABY BOOMERS, aged 57-75, are as the name implies, plentiful. Healthier and

D more adventurous than similarly aged cohorts in the past, since 2018 over-65s have outnumbered the under-fives. They are also wealthier. America's boomer-led households spend \$64,000 a year, almost twice as much as those headed by

youngsters born from 1997 onwards. Together with the earlier "silent" generation, they account for two-fifths of American consumer spending. Yet brands and retailers have long given older shoppers short shrift, focusing most of their attention on the wrinkle-free. As with many things, the pandemic is demanding a rethink.

For one thing, fear of covid-19, more deadly for the elderly, has ushered oldies online. Last year British over-65s made up 30% of consumer-goods purchases online, up from 20% in 2019. In August Britain's Office for National Statistics

Already signed up? [Log in](#)

What happens next?

Navigate an uncertain world with *The Economist*


50% off your first 12 weeks

View subscription options →

Cancel at any time

- ✓ The app and economist.com—distinctively distilled analysis
 - ✓ Digital newsletters—curated topical opinion
 - ✓ Audio version & podcasts—immersive listening
 - ✓ The digital archive—all our content since 1997
 - ✓ Webinars and conferences—intelligent debate and informed analysis
 - ✓ Flagship franchises—The World in and 1843 magazine
 - ✓ Give up to five free articles per month
-

 **NewsGuard**

 This website adheres to all nine of NewsGuard's standards of credibility and transparency.

OR

Continue reading this article

ADVERTISEMENT



CHECKS AND BALANCE

The best of our coverage of American politics

Delivered to your inbox every Friday

example@email.com

Sign up

More from Business



Paul Blow

Bartleby

Can human creativity prevent mass unemployment?

A shot in the arm

America wants to waive patent protection for vaccines



Honky Tonk Warren

Berkshire Hathaway’s questionable performance and governance



Subscribe

Reuse our content

Group subscriptions

Help and contact us

Keep updated



Published since September 1843 to take part in “a severe contest between intelligence, which presses forward, and an unworthy, timid ignorance obstructing our progress.”

The Economist

The Economist Group

About

The Economist Group

Advertise

The Economist Intelligence Unit

[Press centre](#)

[The Economist Events](#)

[The Economist Store](#)

[Careers](#)

[Which MBA?](#)

[GMAT Tutor](#)

[GRE Tutor](#)

[Executive Jobs](#)

[Executive Education Navigator](#)

[Executive Education](#)

[Terms of Use](#) [Privacy](#) [Cookie Policy](#) [Manage Cookies](#) [Accessibility](#) [Modern Slavery Statement](#)

[Do Not Sell My Personal Information](#)

Copyright © The Economist Newspaper Limited 2021. All rights reserved.