



Alumni Segmentation Model[®]

Student experiences differ widely from campus to campus and over time. It is vitally important to understand these differences when communicating with or trying to engage alumni. Traditional research looks at generational differences to provide segmentation insights. In alumni relations, however, generational differences only tell part of the story.

Alumni relationship is based on an event, the four to eight years that a person spent at their college or university. This event includes the generational characteristics of the student, the environmental characteristics of the institution, and the cultural characteristics that are driving the political and economic situation while the event occurred. To account for this, and in response to what the data from over 100,000 respondents to the Alumni Attitude Study[®] (AAS) told us, the AAS research team has developed a new segmentation model for use in alumni relations based on era of graduation. Below are some defining characteristics of each unique alumni segment within this model.

Era of Graduation

WWII/Post WWII (- 1963) With WWII behind them, a reinvigorated, heavily male student population remains generally pleased with their alma mater and how it prepared them for their careers/lives after college. They generally looked at college as a path to a career that they would keep for their entire life and that they would be married early, have a family while young, and work hard for what they earned. They lived through a war and the depression and wanted to get moving with the rest of their lives.

Woodstock/Vietnam (1964 – 1973) This Era is populated by early baby boomers who believed in a more economically safe world that did their parents. They were in school during an unpopular war and believed that they could change their country's involvement in that war. They watched and participated in the civil rights movement, watched a war on TV, believed that man could and would go to the moon, and did not necessarily see college as the way to get started on a career and family. Liberal Arts became a more central part of the campus than ever before and their hero's were more likely to be E. E. Cummings or Herman Hesse than McArthur.

Post-Watergate (1974 – 1980) This Era is a more pessimistic version of their predecessors. The students are from the same generation but do not want to be the



remake of their older brothers and sisters. Their student experience occurs in a more pessimistic time both politically and economically. In many ways this group is characterized by being between the heady days of the 60's and the boomy days of the Reagan 80's.

Yuppie/End Cold War (1981 – 1993) This is the Era of economic growth and prosperity. For the first time in many years the hottest place on campus is the business school and the MBA is a power degree. These are the Reagan years of economic prosperity and belief in the marketplace. The cold war is much less scary and we believe in what we are and can accomplish as a nation. This is a period of optimism and national pride.

Electronic Revolution/Dot-Com (1994 – 2001) This Era is defined by two things. The first was the end of the cold war and the prosperity and peace that its end seemed to manifest. And the second was the emergence of the computer and more importantly the internet. This created the “new economy” where young college graduates could become unbelievably wealthy starting companies that didn't have to sell anything. IT, Computer Science, and Business were go-to parts of the campus and geeks ruled. Companies would all be run by recent, geeky, college graduates and no one would wear a tie in the workplace again. We were spending the peace dividend and writing entirely new economic models that did not include supply, demand, or productivity restrictions.

Post-9/11 (2001 -) At almost the same time the “new economy” and our belief in peace forever ended. Economically, the party was over. Dot-Com companies were falling apart everywhere and business was reverting back to its old ways. Bosses were old and companies were conservative. A college IT degree and a Microsoft Certification was no longer a ticket to guaranteed wealth possibly not even a ticket to full time employment. We went from spending the peace dividend to fighting a world war against an enemy we did not understand and that we could not fight in a way we understood. College students knew fellow students that signed up to fight this new enemy. The country at first rallied and then divided on how to best fight this new war and the political environment has become more polarized than it has ever been.