

BUSINESS AND PEOPLE BUILDERS

Meet generation C

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CPD CREDIT

You've heard of baby boomers and generations X, Y and Z, but who are generation C?

*"They are realists, they are materialists. They are culturally liberal, if not politically progressive. They are upwardly mobile, yet they live with their parents longer than others ever did. Many of their social interactions take place on the internet, where they feel free to express their opinions and attitudes. They've grown up under the influence of Harry Potter, Barack Obama, and iEverything – iPods, iTunes, iPhones. They are generation C: connected, communicating, content-centric, computerised, community-oriented, always clicking. As a rule, they were born after 1990 and lived their adolescent years after 2000. Having owned digital devices all their lives, they are intimately familiar with them and use them as much as six hours a day."*¹



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The digital natives

The rise of consumerism is driving healthcare providers to become more patient-centric in everything they do². Convenience is paramount in this environment. Digital natives, generation C expect instant gratification and will soon divert their attention elsewhere if they have to wait. They are comfortable with negotiating the myriad choices available to them, assessing information quickly and turning deftly on a decision. They want to be in control of their interactions with service providers, including healthcare professionals. Although not strictly defined by a particular year of birth, generation C can refer to a person of any age who is digital savvy and navigates seamlessly between platforms and devices. They are comfortable with online purchasing, but only if it is more convenient or gives them another advantage that they are prepared to wait for, such as lower prices or an exclusive item.

How can pharmacies help to meet the needs of this customer group?

A distinct advantage of pharmacies is their convenience. Pharmacies are widely distributed, meaning that most people in populated areas live not far from their nearest pharmacy. Customers can access a pharmacy without an appointment and can seek medical advice at no cost. For many minor medical conditions, treatment can be provided to the customer without need for a referral to a medical practitioner.

Learning objectives:

After completing this CPD activity pharmacists should be able to:

- Describe the demographics of Generation C.
- Discuss how pharmacy can cater for the consumer needs of Generation C.

Pharmacist competencies addressed: 1.3, 2.1, 3.3.

Accreditation number: A1405RP3

All of these features of pharmacy appeal to generation C customers. Loyalty and trust are essential for this customer group. They are loyal to the brands they love and many brands have cult followings. However, lose their trust and the whole world will know about it, very quickly, as they share their views and opinions through their extensive social media networks. On the whole, pharmacists are trusted professionals, but upholding high standards of service and professionalism, with a clear focus on customer needs, is critical to holding the attention of generation C. Stereotyping these customers as 'young' and ignoring or patronising them will not only lose them as customers but have them spread the word to everyone they know and many they don't know. Generation C consume content at a ravenous pace. If they're prepared to wait for their prescription, they will fill the gap by interacting with their smartphones. This will involve reading their carefully curated newsfeeds, playing the latest game, messaging friends on social media, tweeting about

how long they have to wait in this pharmacy and comparing your prices with those of online stores. As mobile devices become an extension of themselves, many of this group will not own or use traditional desktop or even laptop computers. Even if you have an online presence, or offer online sales, you will not reach generation C without a mobile-optimised site and preferably an interactive app that allows them to order, pay and arrange delivery or pick-up, all in a couple of swipes. Even the concept of 'clicking' may seem antiquated to them, as they are unlikely to be using a mouse.

Filling the gap

The challenge for pharmacy is to meet generation C consumers where they're at — firstly, by aiming to reduce the waiting gap as far as possible and, secondly, by proactively filling that gap. Targeted content and other interactive approaches that engage the customer help to reinforce your place as a trusted adviser, improve health outcomes and drive repeat business. Smartphone apps that provide access to content have become cheaper and easier to produce. Where you once would have had a brochure printed, an app may be the alternative that allows your customers easy and convenient access to exactly the information they need. Referring patients to credible third-party health information can be done while they wait, perhaps by using QR codes handed to the customers when they drop off their script, or placed on signs around the pharmacy in areas where people wait. While in-store tablets have been used in some retail environments,



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▶ they are mostly superfluous now, when smartphones are so ubiquitous. You don't need to provide the device, but you need to acknowledge that customers carry and interact with these devices as part of their retail experience, and find ways to integrate this interaction into your customer service work flow. Another way to incorporate mobile app technology into a pharmacy service offering is through integration with biometric apps and other health-monitoring applications. These types of apps can take your pulse, read your heart rhythms, tell you how many calories you have burned or consumed during your day and provide myriad other metric monitoring methods that are now, literally, at your fingertips. There are apps to log your medications, diet, exercise and mood, and even how much breast milk you express. Pharmacies can make use of these applications as part of their professional service offering, such as in diabetes care or weight management. The pharmacist can review the customer's vital statistics more completely over an extended period, rather than just as a snapshot during the pharmacy visit. (Some common health apps

App	Description
GPS4Soul	Measures heart rate via the iPhone camera lens. Gives the user a measure of their stress levels and strategies to reduce stress.
RunKeeper	Used by more than 28 million people worldwide to track their exercise. Sets goals and generates progress reports. Shares activity with friends via social media
Lifesum	Sets weight-loss goals. Incorporates a calorie counter and barcode scanner for food items. Integrates with RunKeeper to balance calories burned with calories consumed.
Blood Pressure Companion	Keeps track of blood pressure, heart rate and weight. Provides reports on these.

are listed in the table). When thinking about using digital content as a customer engagement tool, it's important not to think of content as just words on a page. YouTube is the second biggest search engine after Google. Generation C are visually literate and digest graphics and video easily and in preference to reading plain text. Generation C have been raised on digital media, rather than traditional print and broadcast media, such as magazines, newspapers, TV and radio. They are in control of what they consume. Any content you produce or reference needs to be visually appealing, easy to access and seamlessly integrated with the platforms being used daily by your customers.

The good news is that if these

customers are impressed by what you offer, the word will spread on this as well. If their experience is positive, then the viral nature of digital communication can work in your favour. These digital platforms put the power in the hands of consumers, allowing them to express their views instantly and increasing the imperative for retailers and service providers to look after the needs of their customers.

Serving customers for life

While most businesses are quick to treat those who speak and dress well with extra attention, there is sometimes a scale of service that bottoms out for those who may be seen as 'less valuable' customers, including young people.

While renting apartments as a university student, I encountered this treatment from real estate agents who wouldn't return phone calls, were rude and abrupt, or even dishonest in their dealings. Even now, when looking to buy a house or an investment property, I wouldn't take my business back to those providers. Short-sighted businesses fail to appreciate that today's student is tomorrow's successful professional and that today's tenant is tomorrow's landlord.

Taking a long-term view for your business means thinking of every potential customer as a customer for life. Good businesses treat everyone who walks through their door as if they were their best customer. Excellent businesses go further, realising that every person they meet, even before they walk through the door, is a potential customer. Whether it's your fellow passengers on the bus to work or

the people you party with on the weekend, customers for life are those who feel that you respect them and that you treat them that way regardless of the situation. Historically, some banks have been good at this. They have offered attractive deals for students on savings accounts, credit cards or loans. By taking this approach, they recognise that today's medical student is tomorrow's doctor and treat them as a customer for life from the start.

In the same way, today's fashion-savvy teenager is tomorrow's customer for high-end designers. Many offer a separate label targeted at the younger demographic, and more reasonably priced than their signature line.

If young customers feel well treated by the brand when they first take an interest, they are more likely to become long-term customers and, ultimately, ambassadors for the brand.

Pharmacists serve customers throughout their life and it's important to consider how their needs change over the course of their experiences with you. How can you ensure that from the very first encounter each customer sees you as a business they will want to deal with in their future?

This extends to treating teenagers and the young children of your customers well. Generation C will not wait until they are parents themselves to take control of their purchasing decisions. Despite the fact that they will live with their parents longer than any other generation has, they typically earn their own income and are very savvy consumers. They are not just your next-generation customers, they are your customers now and, if delighted with the experience, will come back with fond memories and a smile. ^{RP}

References

1. Friedrich R, Peterson M, *et al.* 2010. 'The Rise of Generation C: Implications for the World of 2020'. Booz & Co. Düsseldorf.
2. Ahlquist GD, Javanmardian M, *et al.* 2010. 'The Pharmacy Solution: An expanding role for pharmacies in healthcare delivery'. Booz & Co. Chicago.


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This activity has been accredited for 0.5 hr of Group One CPD (0.5 CPD Credit) that may be converted to 1 Group Two CPD Credit upon successful completion of the below assessment for inclusion on an individual pharmacist's CPD Record.

Ms PZ (36 years) visits your pharmacy today and heads straight to the skin-care section to look at the facial-cleansing products. When you approach her, she tells you she needs something 'really strong to strip away the pimples fast' before she heads overseas on a work trip – it's really important for her to leave a good impression during this trip, and she doesn't want to be embarrassed about her skin. Ms PZ says she doesn't understand why her skin has become so bad: she had acne as a teenager, but no problems with pimples in adulthood. She says she is quite stressed about it and does not want to 'go through acne' again. How do you respond?

1. Which of the following is a correct (TRUE) statement about acne:

- A) It occurs during life stages that are unlikely to cause psychological distress.
- B) It is much more common in older adults, compared to adolescents.
- C) It is associated with significant psychosocial comorbidity.
- D) All of the above are true.

2. The average duration of chronic acne is:

- A) The same duration as puberty.
- B) About two years.
- C) About 10 years.
- D) Lifelong.

3. Which of the following are psychological consequences of chronic acne?

- A) Depression.
- B) Psychosomatic symptoms.
- C) Suicidal ideation.
- D) All of the above are true.

4. The challenges of using pharmacotherapy in persons with acne include:

- A) The social stigma and embarrassment of seeking treatment for acne.
- B) Negative connotations of certain therapies (eg, the pill), which may be in conflict with personal beliefs.
- C) Fears about the side effects of certain therapies, such as the unproven link between suicide and isotretinoin.
- D) All of the above are true.

5. In persons with severe acne, the onset of depression may specifically indicate the need to initiate isotretinoin therapy.

- A) TRUE.
- B) FALSE.

ENJOYED THIS TOPIC?

Additional resources for healthcare professionals:

- All about acne www.acne.org.au
- SA Government Women's and children's health network <http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetails.aspx?p=243&np=292&id=2154>
- VIC Government Better Health Channel <http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/LFourPagesMoreInfo/Acne>
- Medline Plus <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/acne.html>
- PubMed Health <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0001876/>



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1. The demographic known as generation C was born:

- A) After 1990.
- B) Before 1900.
- C) After 2000.
- D) Yesterday.

2. The C in generation C stands for:

- A) Connected.
- B) Communicating.
- C) Content-centric.
- D) Computerised.
- E) All of the above.

3. Two advantages for pharmacy when dealing with generation C are:

- A) Convenience and connectivity.
- B) Trust and convenience.
- C) Content generation and brand recognition.
- D) Price and loyalty.

4. Serving customers for life means:

- A) Taking a lifetime to serve your customers.
- B) Focusing on customers who are in their later stages of life.
- C) Demonstrating respect for every customer, regardless of their stage of life.
- D) Locking customers into long-term loyalty programs.

5. Generation C consumers use digital devices on average:

- A) Up to six hours a day.
- B) Only occasionally.
- C) Only for work purposes.
- D) Only to play games.

Answers:

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