



Becoming an Age-Friendly Business in New Westminster

New Westminster Chamber of Commerce – January 30, 2013

Outline of Presentation

This presentation will address the following:

- **An Aging Population**
- **Age-Related Considerations**
- **Becoming an Age-Friendly City**
- **Benefits to Businesses**
- **Becoming an Age-Friendly Business**
- **Guide and Assessment Tool**
- **Moving Forward and Conclusions**



Continued Growth and Development

- New Westminster had a population of 65,976 in 2011.
- By 2021, the population is projected to increase to about 76,000.
- By 2031, the population is projected to increase to about 88,000.



An Aging Population

In 2011, there were 23,060 people 50+ and 8,835 people 65+ in New Westminster.

Therefore, people 50+ comprised 34.9% and people 65+ comprised 13.4% of the population.



An Aging Population

By 2036, there are projected to be 41,216 people 50+ and 20,325 people 65+ in New Westminster.

People 50+ will increase by 87.7% and people 65+ will increase by 130% for the 25 year period in question. By comparison, the population-as-a-whole will increase by 43.9%.

People 50+ will comprise 43.4% and people 65+ will comprise 21.4% of the population.

An Aging Population

This aging of the population has been referred to as:

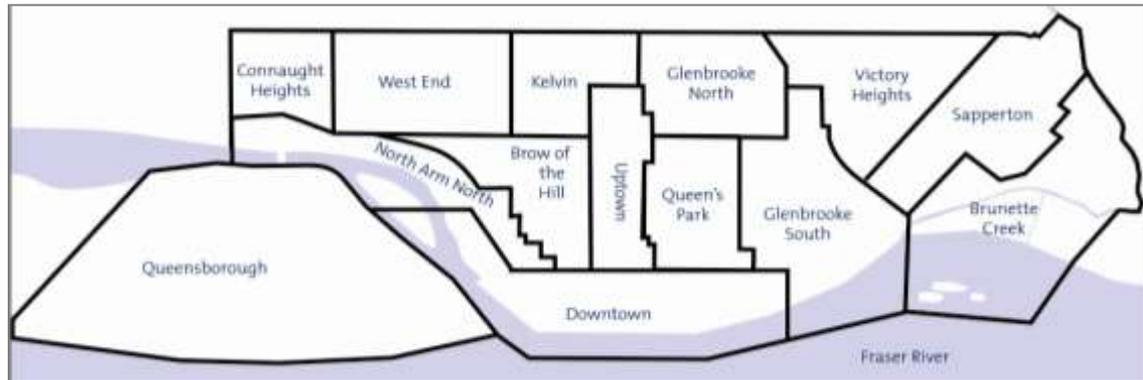
- The Age Wave
- The Gray Wave
- The Gray Tsunami
- The Silver Tsunami



Beware the "silver tsunami" – the Boomers turned 65 in 2011

An Aging Population

- The Uptown (24.2%) has the highest percentage of seniors (65+); followed by Glenbrooke South (21.0%), Glenbrooke North (15.5%) and the Downtown (14.1%).
- Factors influencing the distribution of seniors are access to health and retail services, availability of rental housing, and topography.



An Aging Population

Those serving seniors now and in the future must resist stereotyping.

Seniors no longer fit into the mould of retirees rocking on the front porch.

Seniors are a diverse group with varied abilities, attitudes, and needs.



Age Related Considerations

Some relevant indicators for people 65+ in New Westminster include the percentage who:

- report health and activity limitations –**57.0%**
- immigrated –**39.4%**
- live alone –**38.2%**
- do not have a high school certificate, diploma or degree –**34.9%**
- have a mother tongue other than English or French –**30.1%**
- lived in a different municipality, province or country 5 years ago –**13.9%**

An Aging Population



Crisis

or

Opportunity



Becoming an Age-Friendly City

The City is planning for an aging population and is adapting its policies, processes and services to become more accessible and inclusive of older adults. As such, it is looking at the opportunities.

Businesses also need to take action and identify the opportunities, thus maximizing their market potential and providing them with a competitive advantage. If not, they may find themselves in crisis mode.

Becoming an Age-Friendly City



Businesses are a vital part of the community and no community would be complete without the business sector.

Older adults depend on local businesses for countless aspects of their day-to-day lives. Businesses provide everything from food to housing, to home maintenance and repair services, to personal care.

Given its importance, the involvement of the business sector is crucial to making a community more age-friendly.

Benefits to Businesses

Based on the research related to the benefits to businesses, the following are some interesting findings:

- *Baby Boomer spending has increased nearly twice as fast as spending by people 35 and under.* (Age-Friendly NYC)
- *In the United States, grandparents spend \$27.5 billion annually on their grandchildren.* (Age-Friendly NYC)
- *More people continue to work after age 65, thus they tend to have far more discretionary income.* (Age-Friendly NYC)

Benefits to Businesses

- Satisfied customers focus their spending power where they have a long-term relationship.
- Older adults tend to be loyal customers.
- Older adults are the fastest growing demographic, thus represent an increasingly important share of the market.
- If a business is age-friendly, there is the potential to attract and keep older customers.



Benefits to Businesses

If a business is comfortable for older adults, it will also be comfortable for others, including:



- pregnant women
- parents with children in strollers
- people with injuries
- people with sight, hearing and mobility limitations
- people with limited English

Benefits to Businesses

- Making your business more age-friendly will also serve as a powerful expression of social responsibility.
- It will support the City's goal of becoming an age-friendly community and demonstrate your commitment to making the community stronger.
- It will be noticed and appreciated by all residents, creating goodwill and enhancing your reputation.
- This will translate into repeat business and more profits.



Benefits to Businesses



- As part of *Creating an Age-Friendly Business in Alberta*, it reports:

Just as they have changed social trends throughout their lives, Baby Boomers will redefine what it means to grow older. In general, they are expected to be healthier, more educated and more affluent than previous generations of seniors. That represents a lot of potential revenue if your business is more age-friendly.

Benefits to Businesses

- In a controlled study of select businesses, it was found that:

participating businesses in Age-Friendly New York City demonstrated an increase in sales in comparison to non-participating businesses.

Participating businesses received free promotion and were provided with low cost or no cost tips to attract more older customers.



Becoming an Age-Friendly Business



Based on a survey of older customers, they felt:

- marginalized and less valued because of their age;
- the physical layout of stores was problematic;
- customer service was often indifferent to their needs.

These concerns prevented them from shopping and living independently.

Becoming an Age-Friendly Business

- Attending to some of the common issues related to aging will increase the age-friendliness of a business.
- Consideration should be given to how an existing or a planned business fosters:
 - Safety
 - Comfort
 - Visibility and Clarity
 - Respect



Safety

Considerations could include:

- parking lot is well and evenly lit
- entrance door is automatic or can be easily activated
- aisles are wide and uncluttered
- flooring is non-slip and non-shiny
- mats are securely fastened
- ramps are available for changes in floor levels
- stair edges are clearly demarcated
- stairways have sturdy handrails on both sides

Comfort, Visibility and Clarity

Considerations could include:

- background music is absent or low in volume
- customers are offered assistance when taking items to their cars
- scooter parking is available by the entrance
- seating is placed in line-up or waiting areas
- seating has arms for people who need to push themselves up
- signage has legible fonts and good contrast
- washrooms contain at least one accessible toilet



Respect



Considerations could include:

- staff are trained to avoid condescending behaviours (speaking too familiarly or loudly)
- staff are trained to be friendly and patient
- staff are trained to manage situations such as falls and outbursts while preserving a person's dignity

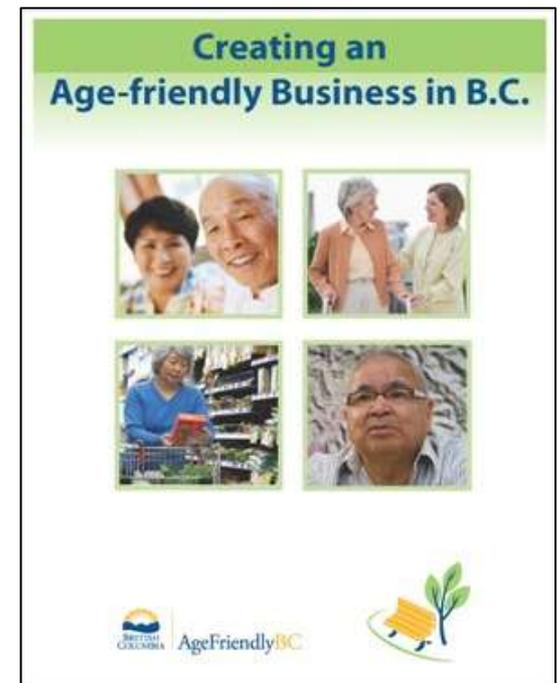
Tip: Consider recognizing or awarding staff for being friendly, patient and respectful.

Guide and Assessment Tool

The Seniors' Healthy Living Secretariat, BC Ministry of Health, has developed a *Guide to Creating an Age-Friendly Business in BC* (2011).

This guide includes an *Age-Friendly Assessment Tool*, which can assist in making one's business more safe, comfortable and attractive for older customers, as well as everyone else.

The guide suggests that it may be a good idea to involve older adults in conducting the assessment.



Moving Forward



- Seniors have expressed an interest in distributing the guide and assisting businesses to conduct such assessments.
- The business community could consider: (1) developing a decal for businesses that have been assessed and become more age-friendly; and (2) recognizing the most age-friendly businesses in New Westminster.

Conclusions

- **There are many benefits to businesses becoming more age-friendly:**
 - loyal customer base and repeat business
 - large and growing market segment
 - increased profits
 - recognition for being socially responsible
- **These is a guide and assessment tool to assist businesses to become more age-friendly.**
- **There are older adults who would be willing to assist businesses to assess and enhance their age-friendliness.**

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