

“The shortest distance between two people is a story!”

~Patti Digh

Connecting to another person, or group, can help us understand the reasons for being, decision making and shed light on how to connect. We aim to help you better understand the Canadian 50+ demographic. Here we will present to you profiles of **50plus Matters™** panel members. Their journey and their story compose a unique and diverse tapestry that is part of the Canadian 50+ demographic. Through Initiative **50+™** you can gain insights on how to better reach this dynamic target group.



Meet Bob P. from Edmonton, Alberta.

Bob describes himself as being friendly and kind every day and a man who deeply cares for his family.

He is a fun, outgoing gentleman with lots of things on his to do list and is tech-savvy to help him make informed decisions. Being in the 50+ age group hasn't slowed him down at all.

What do you want us to know about you?

I am an individual, and one who has travelled to at least 25 countries, made about 500 flights for work and play and have jogged or run somewhere around 25,000 km since the age of 35. All added up, the formula is 'small steps' x 'many years' = 'big data'. This phrase plays on our modern 21st century tech language. It's just been a way of living here in Edmonton.

What challenges do you face being 50+?

You realize that health and energy levels are your personal number one project, without them, quality of life is significantly, if not even suddenly or too quickly, altered. At first, it's frustrating to have to dedicate more time to health and wellness. Moreover, the healthier I am, the more energy there is to give to my booming family! And grandchildren, who I 'love to bits', take a lot of energy to enjoy. I know I need to make time for getting regular checkups, fixing even the smallest issue. So, life stays busy; there is no such thing as slowing down in this world. It's all about your energy resource. Life is simply more fun with more energy.

What are you doing to keep active?

I play Canada's game, hockey, and balance it with yoga. I enjoy dancing, cycling with friends through our short summers, and a lot of walking all year, even all winter. I'm also active with my children and grandchildren: your DNA intuitively relates you to your grandchildren. What's just as nice is that your grandchildren are the happiest people in your life, and their love for you is unlimited. So, they keep you happy and your life is inherently meaningful.



What are you looking for in a relationship?

Friendship and love, both personal and physical. As humans we are made for relationship connections, it's intuitive and healthy. Personal Connection: With our great technology, friendship and love express themselves in daily texting, a "Hi, how are you?" or "Hey, I just thought of you!" is all it really takes. I think most of the older generation know that although a healthy individual is one who is truly independent and self-reliant, a relationship offers an external outlet to express one's happiness with their life and family,

and to experience that same from a one or another who matters to you. "I'm done talking to myself exclusively, therefore, I need you".

Where do you go to meet others who share your interests/passions?

I love the Opera! ... and have always had 2 subscriptions for our 3 Operas in a season. I challenge myself to find a suitable companion before the upcoming curtain. Simply getting out of the home and into art galleries and cultural events can 'BUMP' you into someone interesting. I go to many classes, Spanish, yoga, and now social dancing. A lot of times we extend this by meeting after class in coffee shops, and restaurants. Through outside activities, I meet about 100 people a week. I also signed on to match dot com in December where there is an opportunity to know some basics about a lady. It is somehow more comfortable than meeting someone at a Spanish class. I woke up on New Year's Eve Day with no 'date' and no idea about going out New Year's Eve. Maybe even more than Valentine's Day, I'm feeling this could be my loneliest evening of the year. I had been married 30 years, and remember well the joy and fun of a romantic night out. So, I notice a "Match", sent her an invite, and before 2 o'clock I'm hanging out with a smart and attractive woman, and we say "ya, let's go dancing". It was a 'magic' eve.



Tell us about an average day / Tell us about a perfect day

An average day for me is a game of hockey (including connecting with its fraternity), some cross training and unwinding time at yoga. Then covering my internet contacts and daily news while at a Starbucks or Tim's. But the perfect day recently was throwing a birthday party for one of my 3 daughters (30+ who'd of thought!). I always say to the other 2, "please bring a salad and a grandchild". Having 12 people and 20 balloons around ... well it gets pretty crazy. And I love it!

Do you have a Bucket List? What's next to be scratched off?

I'm in a different space than many peers where bucket holidays are on many lists. I made sure to do these ones: the Inca Trail (Peru) and the West Coast Trail (BC), Berg Lake (AB), etc., while able to do them safely and fully. Now I don't mind dropping into a place like Madrid and hanging around their coffee shops and so many available culture stops! I loved their Opera House Teatro Royal and heard La Traviata, an ultimate experience in culture. So, returning to familiar places and enriching the experiences is a nice thought. That's why Spanish learning is on my bucket list, there are 22 Spanish-speaking countries!

Are you a different shopper than you were 10-15 years ago? How?

Yes. First I'm buying things for grandchildren, books, toys and clothing. I shop a lot of music and books online, and travel, and some furnishing items online too. We (50+) are downsizing in some ways so it's important to pick the most suitable product and avoid casting something downstairs soon after taking it home. I still enjoy going to a few stores like Indigo to browse and even shopping for small gifts for grandchildren.

When shopping are you brand loyal or do you price compare?



It's a bit of both, but starting with my favourite brands Arc'Teryx, Royal Robbins, ExO'ficio, for travel and adventure clothing. These products are all very well designed for you, the busy guy, even for everyday and at home. A lot of casual wear can be created from, for example, Running Room gear if your cohort of friends are active people too; they get that you're comfortable and fit enough to wear these items, at a party, or casual event. So, often your closet doesn't need Mark's or Winners to duplicate T's and winter wear. Mark's is great for jeans at reasonable quality and price. I like to buy several of each item when on sale, and simplify the closet.

What is more important when shopping – Quality or Quantity?

Quality certainly, but not at any price. I've got a bit more time and 2 mobile networks to look for value in the quality aisle. So, I would not pay double the average for a quality product.

What do you look for when you're shopping online?

Simple web design, clear, rapid wayfinding within the site, clear price and content descriptions, and with an obvious security interest by the provider. We have seen over time everything burst out of data records of every kind of company. So, buying Canadian is one way I reduce risks.

Do you look at email often?

Yes. Every day. Even with challenges, I love technology, and have 2 cell phones. One takes notes and the other texts nicely with my "Millennial Family". It's a way to keep up on news, and culture, what's going on in our communities and occasionally what's going on in places we might be traveling to. Social media, we've seen too often, can change quickly. What happened to the Palm Pilot and the 'cloud' or backup data we had there once that suddenly vanished with our 2,000 addresses? So email is the 'reliable' system now and in the future. Even texting doesn't 'keep' very well. So I tell my Millennial Family to not get too hung up on today's app, or device; you'll all too soon be the one looking outdated!

Do marketers get you?

Well, Apple, Starbucks, IKEA, and the old Timex watch seemed to get us. Other new companies can't tell the difference between consumers with 5 years of adult living and 35 years of adult living. They use 'millennial' language I suppose to be cool and entertaining. But I'm buying something through a knowledge decision model. There is the 'lost in translation'. We are well educated and get frustrated seeing "low information content words" as on so many online purchasing sites. Information is scattered on every web page like stars in the sky, rather than some common communication model like logic according to your English major or master's degree! Too many words come from old video games these millennials used 2 years ago. It feels more like the millennials are marketing to themselves. Commercial sites don't get to the point quickly and often don't answer the right questions we "50+rs" might have. For example, what's on the actual product label, cotton or polyester? Where was the main product made ... we are tired of poorly sourced products, and their inherent, regularly occurring, flaws.



If you could tell a Brand/Product what they don't understand about you, what would it be?

Males 50+, even very fit, are barrel wasted. We've been talking about having a strong core, which inherently means muscle around the waistline. The media today have so many graphic tools but still default to outdated and even inappropriate models.



How should companies approach the 50+ market?

Hire a complete team. Use algorithms that bias 50+ instead of those same algorithms that, by default, bias "who knows whom or what?"

Why did you join the 50+ Matters panel?

Boomers and younger, we have always influenced our own future from the 70's and 80's onward. We are used to it. Moreover, life gets better when we have influenced our environment. Our population is growing and this growth isn't going to stop for quite a while. Any marketer finding success now can literally, I think, bank on its future. That's why I signed on to 50+Matters. Any way to speak to the other side of the 'fence' can help bring the right solution to the right need or problem. How long did it take seat belts, quitting smoking, to become popular? Well constant common sense talk over time against existing cultural thinking, eventually prevails, as for using seat belts and quitting smoking.

Do you think this group can make a difference?

Yes, of course. Like above "Boomers and younger, we have always influenced our own future from the 70's and 80's onward. We are used to it, expect it. But today our money is the voice, and we know how to use it, nor have the luxury to waste it.

Any final thoughts you would like to share?



Boomers and our immediate peers are better educated than ever. We lived in the time of sky-high interest rates, buying a house with mortgages 16-18%; then saved for retirement during historically low savings interest rates while our parents lived on the bond market, and we were pushed almost entirely to securities. Would millennials like to imagine going through those same metrics today? While there is too much junk information that some may fall to, many of us are very capable through experience and continuous learning to filter it. We have defied every metric even 2 years old in the media about us, and our success is constantly being measured and repeatedly (and repeatedly/-) updated. Active living is connected to health and that 150 minutes a week you keep reading about will be seen as a bare minimum next year. So, coffee shops, good news articles, books, active wear, easy care, driverless everything, one appliance that does everything in the home can all win us over. Let my peers in **50plus Matters™** add to this list. They are my best chance of living well for long into the future for what seems to be a much unknown quantity still.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to think out loud. – Bob P.

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