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# Evolving Resident Demographics

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Marketing to the Millennial & Baby Boomer Generations  
July 2011



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## About J Turner Research

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Based in Houston, **J Turner Research** specializes in developing and executing innovative and affordable research services for the multifamily industry. The company utilizes email based surveys to accurately measure perceptions of prospects and current residents to optimize operational and marketing efficiencies. With its monthly resident satisfaction trending and real time prospect feedback, J Turner Research provides real time operational intelligence to ownership.

J Turner Research also has developed a new social media application which provides frequent, original resident content to property Facebook pages.

For more information, please call (281) 558-4840  
or visit [www.jturnerresearch.com](http://www.jturnerresearch.com).

## Objective and Value

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The purpose of this study is to determine the attitudes and views of renters across different generational demographics. With the speed of technology today, there is a schism between how different generations want to be communicated with, what they view as important in their communities, how they view amenities and what determines their decision to rent.

The data in this study offers insight about each generation of apartment renter. The survey covered residents from the millennial generation to “The Silent Generation,” and measures preferences, perspectives and values related to apartment search and rental life. Insights from this study enable operators of apartment communities to target their message and marketing to generational subsets and developers of communities by knowing what prospects are seeking.

## About the survey

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This study was presented to an educational session of the National Apartment Association in June 2011. With the help of DEI Communities and Forest City Residential portfolios, a 14-question, email survey was distributed to 12,646 residents at 71 communities nationwide. J Turner Research secured 4,275 responses representing a 33 percent response rate. Some material enclosed is from a two year on-going survey tracking trends in apartment resident use of social networking as well.

For the purpose of the survey the population was divided into the following generation demographics:

- Millennial Generation (Ages 18-30)
- Generation X (Ages 31-44)
- Baby Boomer Generation (Ages 45-65)
- Silent Generation (Ages 66+)

## Key Findings

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The Millennial Generation, ages 18-30, dominated with 47 percent of respondents, indicating they are the generation that apartment owners should target in marketing and communications.

### Reaching Renters

Visiting a property’s social networking page is becoming more common, especially at properties that are actively engaged in social media.

- Facebook is the most popular social media channel across all generations. Twitter is a distant second but more popular with the younger generation.
- “Drive-by” ranks across all generations as a popular source used to find apartments but is more important to the older generations.
- Internet marketing is the source least used by the older generation.
- Craigslist is used by Millennials by a significant margin over Baby Boomers (ages 45-65) and the Silent Generation (ages 66+).
- Word-of-mouth is the single most important source for the Silent Generation respondents.

## Key Findings [cont.]

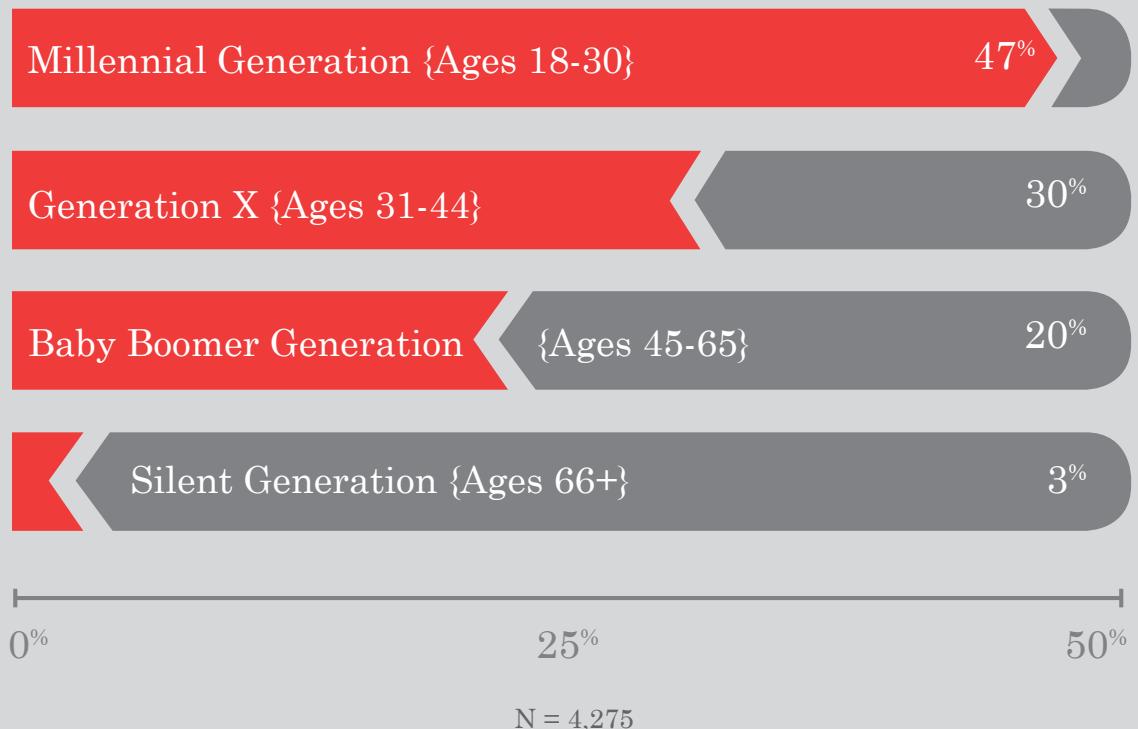
### Rental Preferences

The decision to rent is based primarily on location. Price matters less to older survey participants by almost two to one. Renters in general like to communicate by email with the management office. However, they prefer to have more direct contact with the staff (phone and face-to-face) when communicating situations that are important to them, such as maintenance requests and concerns.

Regarding common area amenities, fitness center and parking, rank the highest. The top amenity preferences, within the unit, boil down to stainless steel appliances for younger respondents and window coverings for older respondents.

There are many common wants and needs among all generations, but it is recognizing the differences between them that can help operators and managers target messages that will appeal to a particular group. There is an opportunity to establish “prospect profiles” based on this data. Understanding unique audiences enables better marketing strategies for more productive leasing.

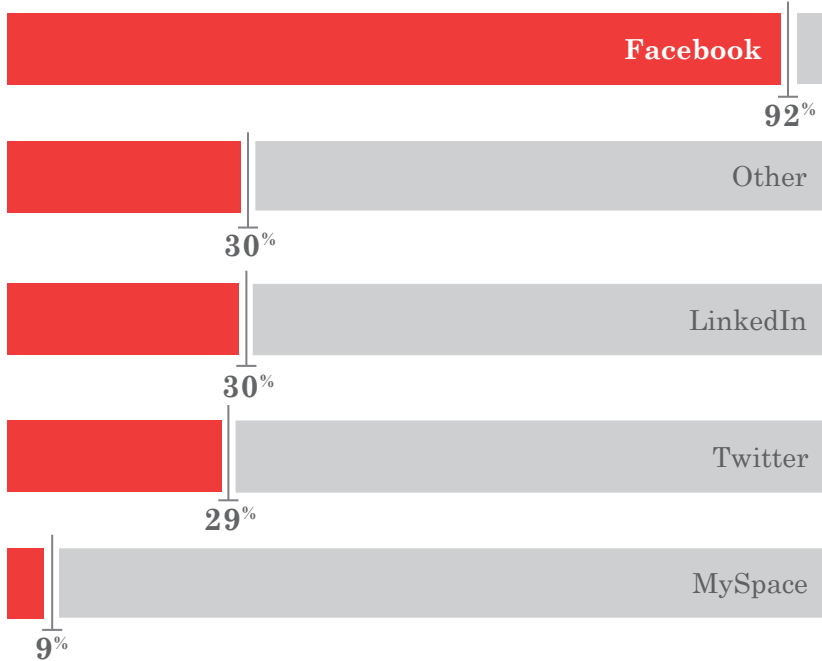
## Demographic Breakdown



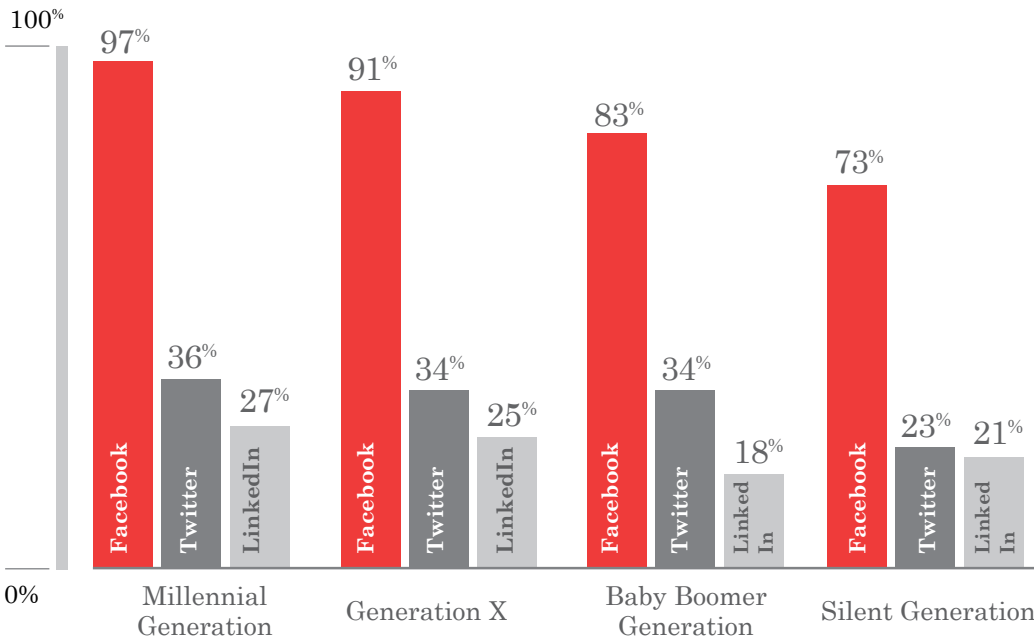
## Reaching Renters

Which two social media channels do you use most frequently?

### Overall



### By Demographic



Facebook is the clear choice among all demographic groups, with Twitter strongest among the younger generations.

### Facebook Usage

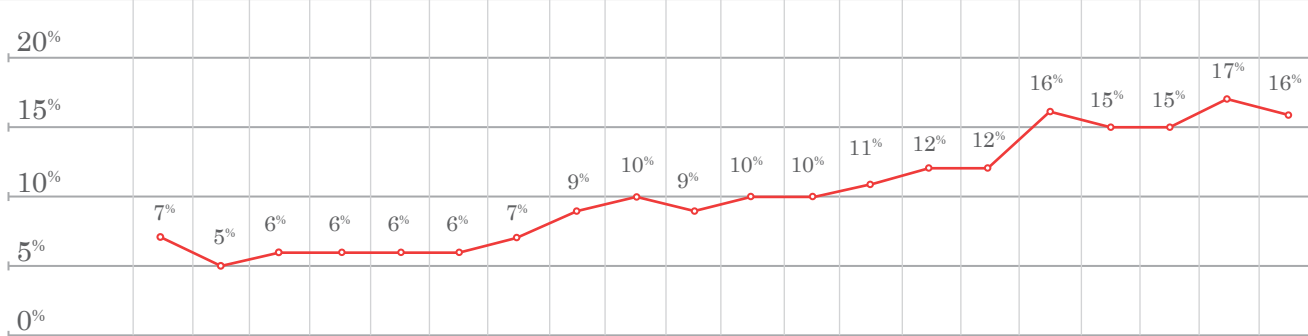


### Twitter Usage

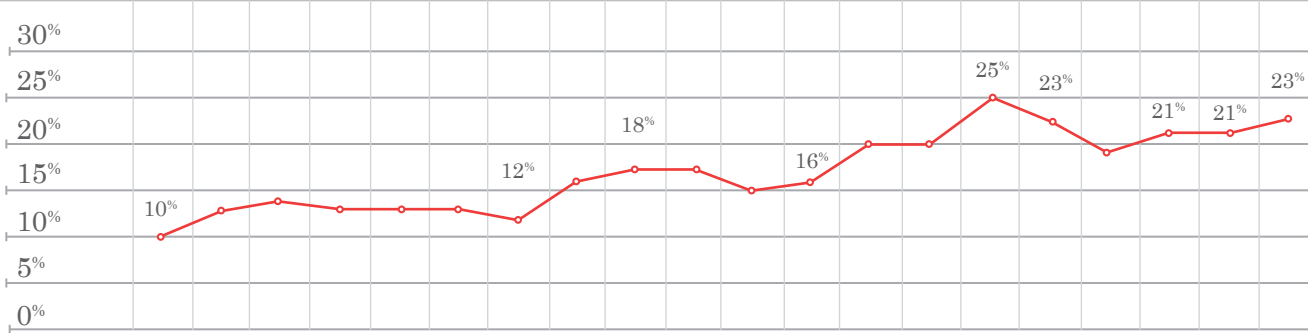
## Reaching Renters

Have you ever visited an apartment community's social networking page on Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, LinkedIn, Orkut, etc.?

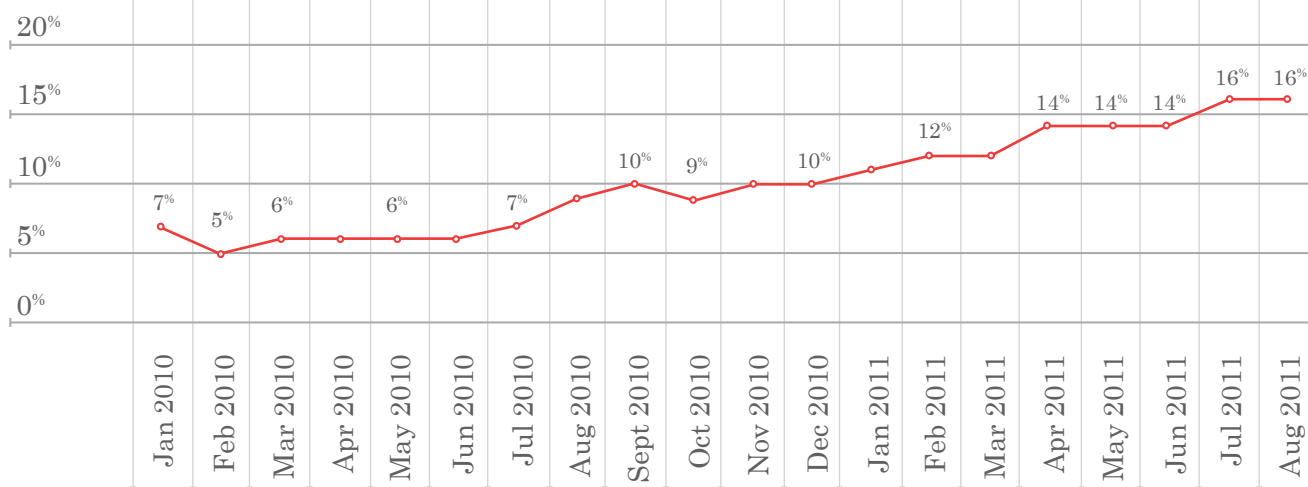
Aggregate



Active Properties\*



Not Active Properties

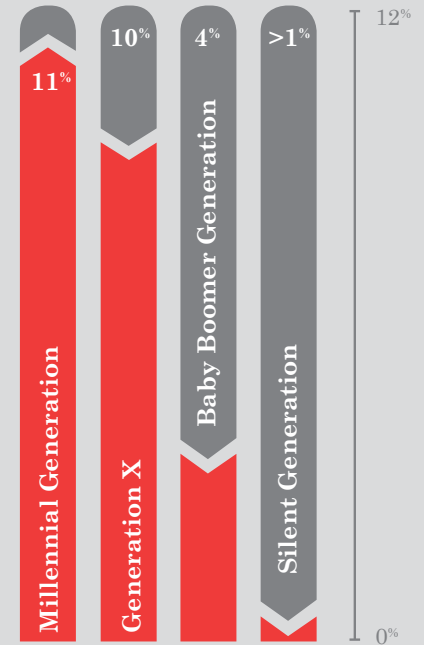
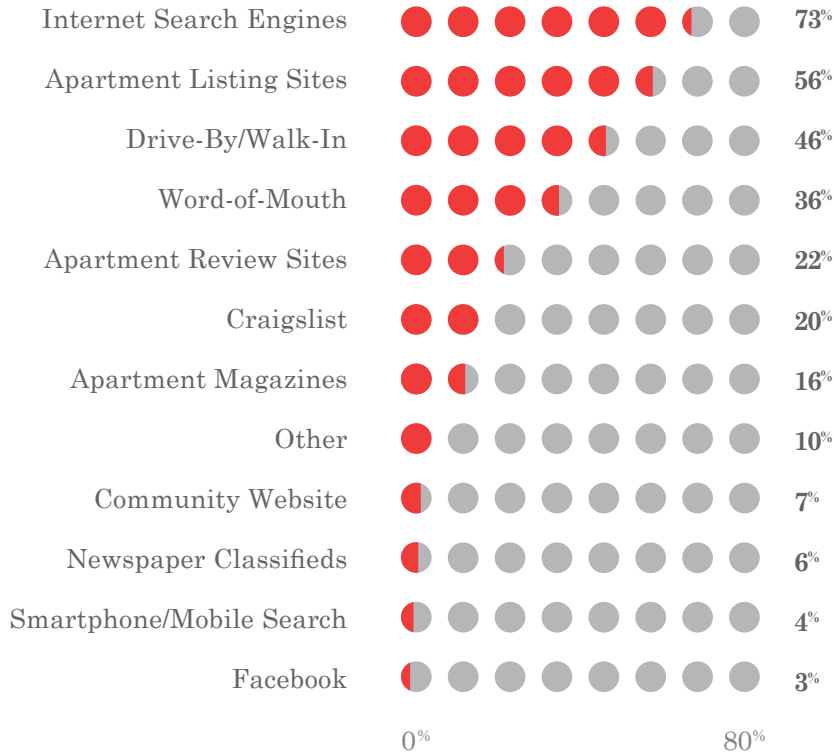


\*Active Properties are engaged in social media (primarily Facebook and Twitter). Visitors to an apartment community's social networking page are increasing, particularly for highly engaged properties.

## Reaching Renters

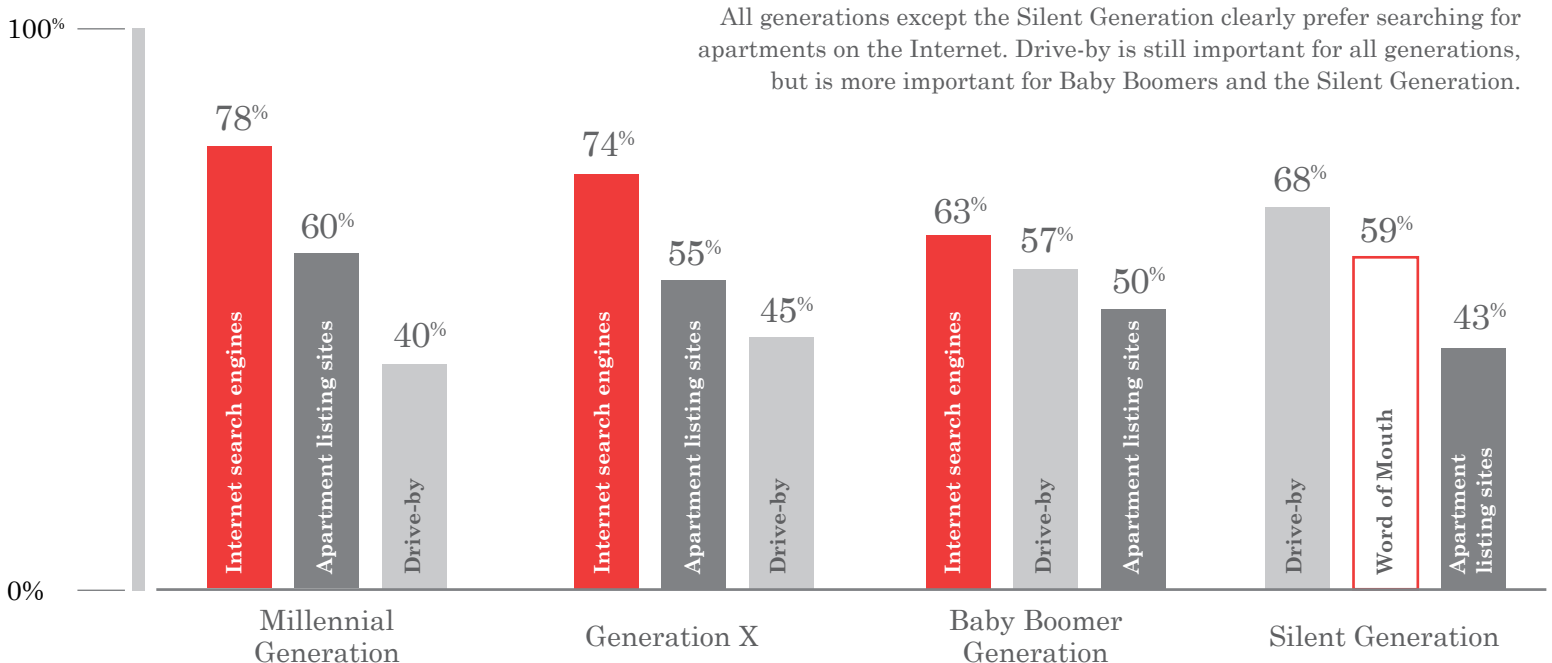
What are the three primary sources you used to find your current apartment community?

### Overall



**Craigslist Across Demographics**  
Craigslist has significantly higher following among younger renters, and practically no importance for the Baby Boomers or Silent Generation.

### By Demographic



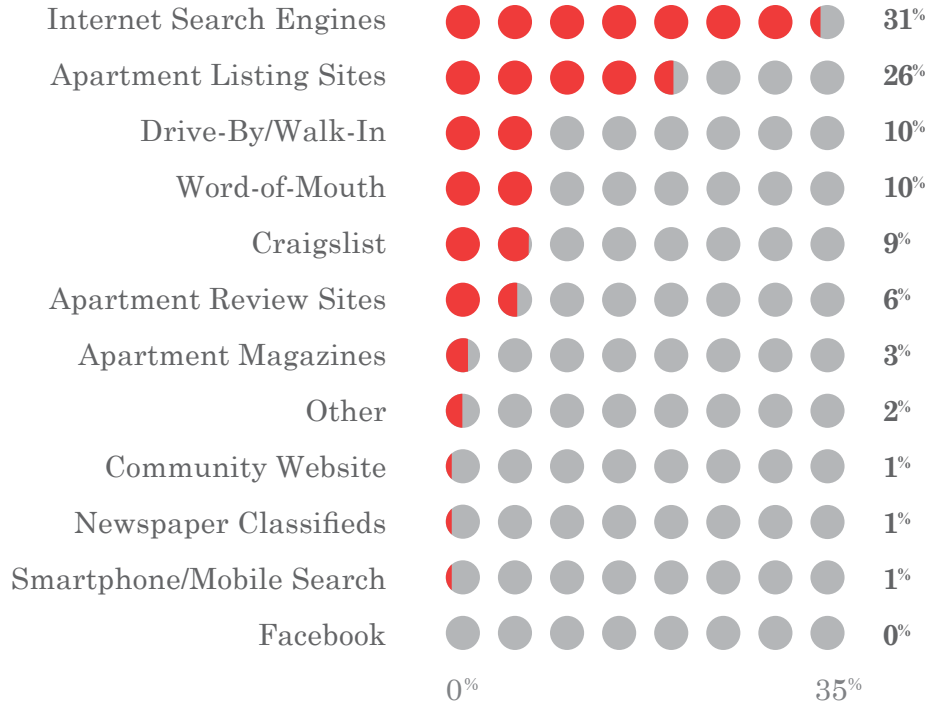
All generations except the Silent Generation clearly prefer searching for apartments on the Internet. Drive-by is still important for all generations, but is more important for Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation.



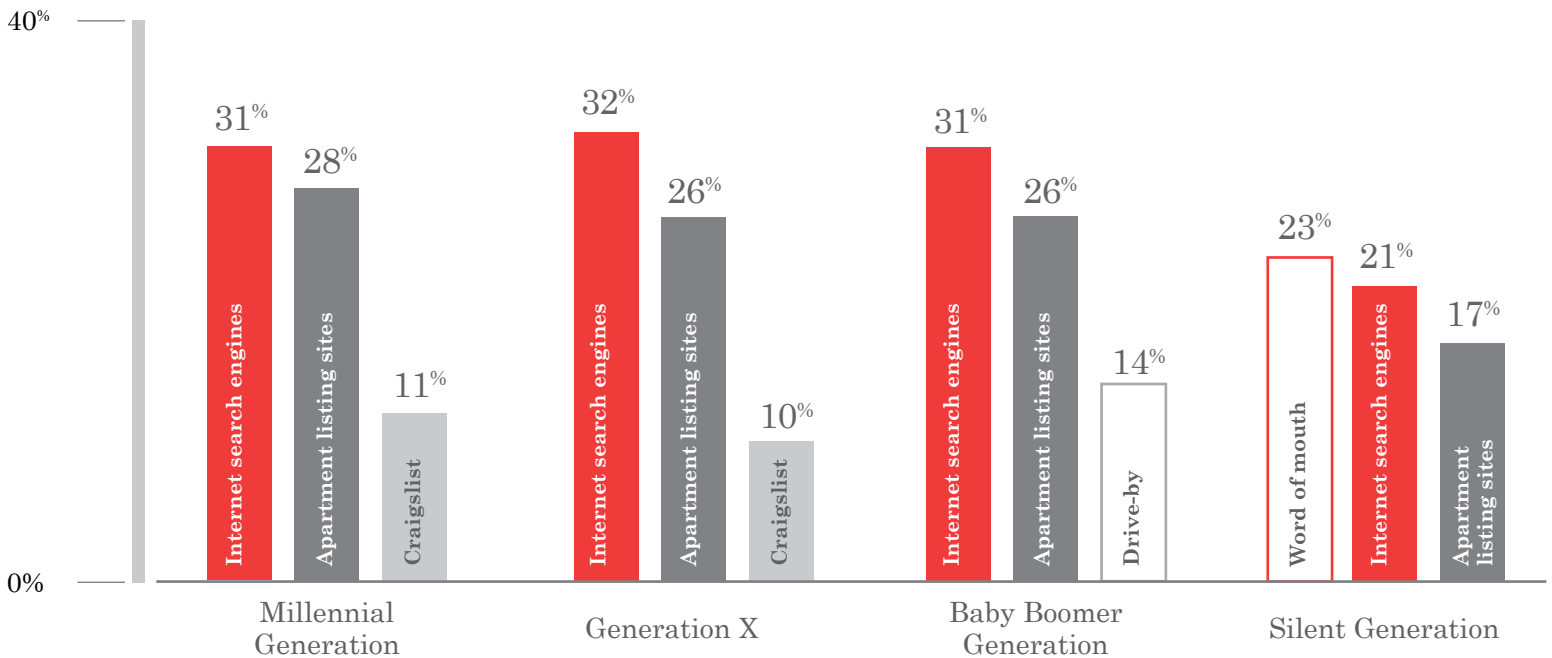
## Reaching Renters

If you had to choose a single source for your apartment search, which would you choose?

Overall



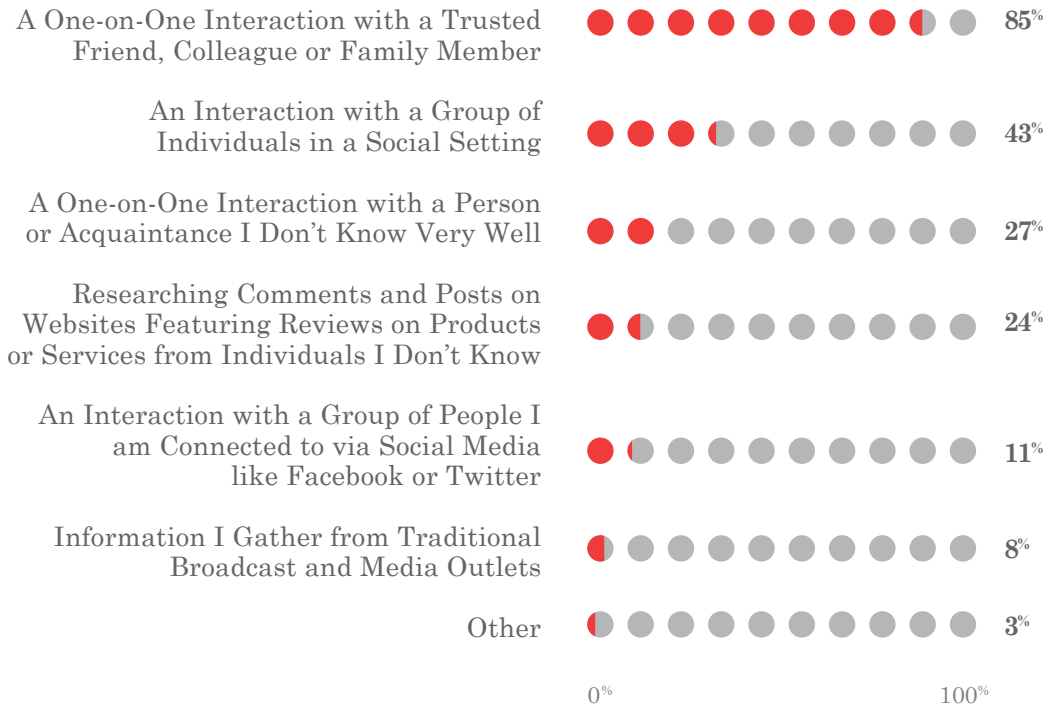
By Demographic



## Reaching Renters

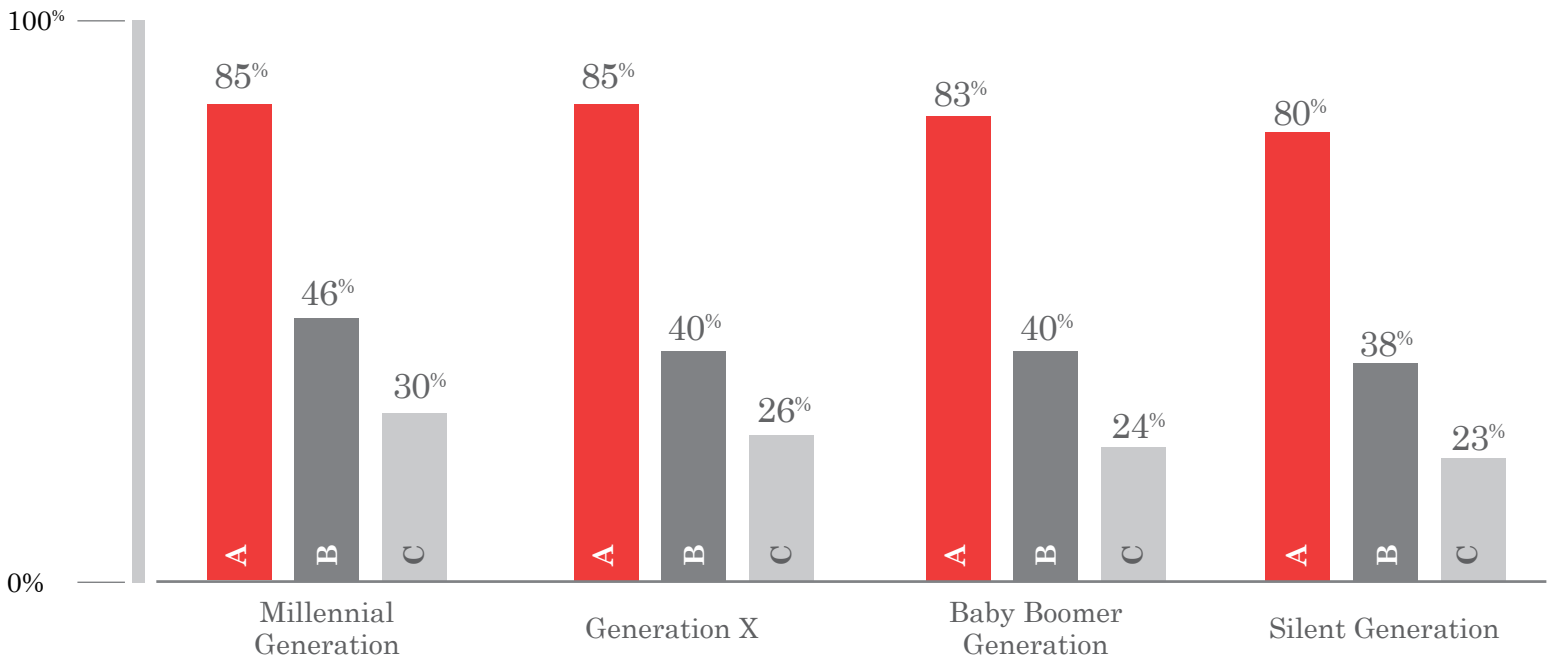
Select two of the following responses which best describe “word of mouth” from your perspective.

### Overall



### By Demographic

A A One-on-One Interaction with a Trusted Friend, Colleague or Family Member  
 B An Interaction with a Group of Individuals in a Social Setting  
 C A One-on-One Interaction with a Person or Acquaintance I Don't Know Very Well



## Rental Selection Criteria

What was the most important factor influencing your decision to rent at your community?

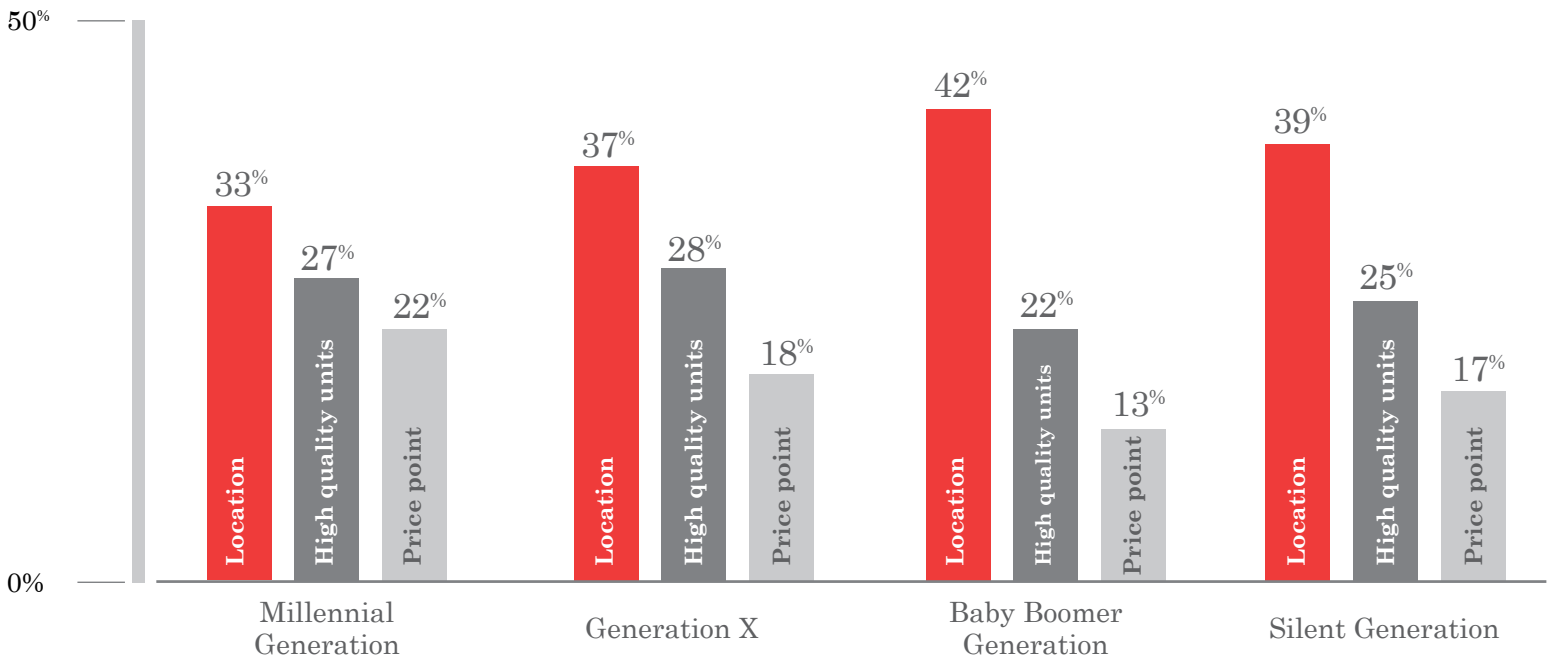


### Price Point

Location is the primary decision factor to rent across all demographics, with high quality units ranking as the second determining factor. Price point is less important for Baby Boomers than for any other demographic.



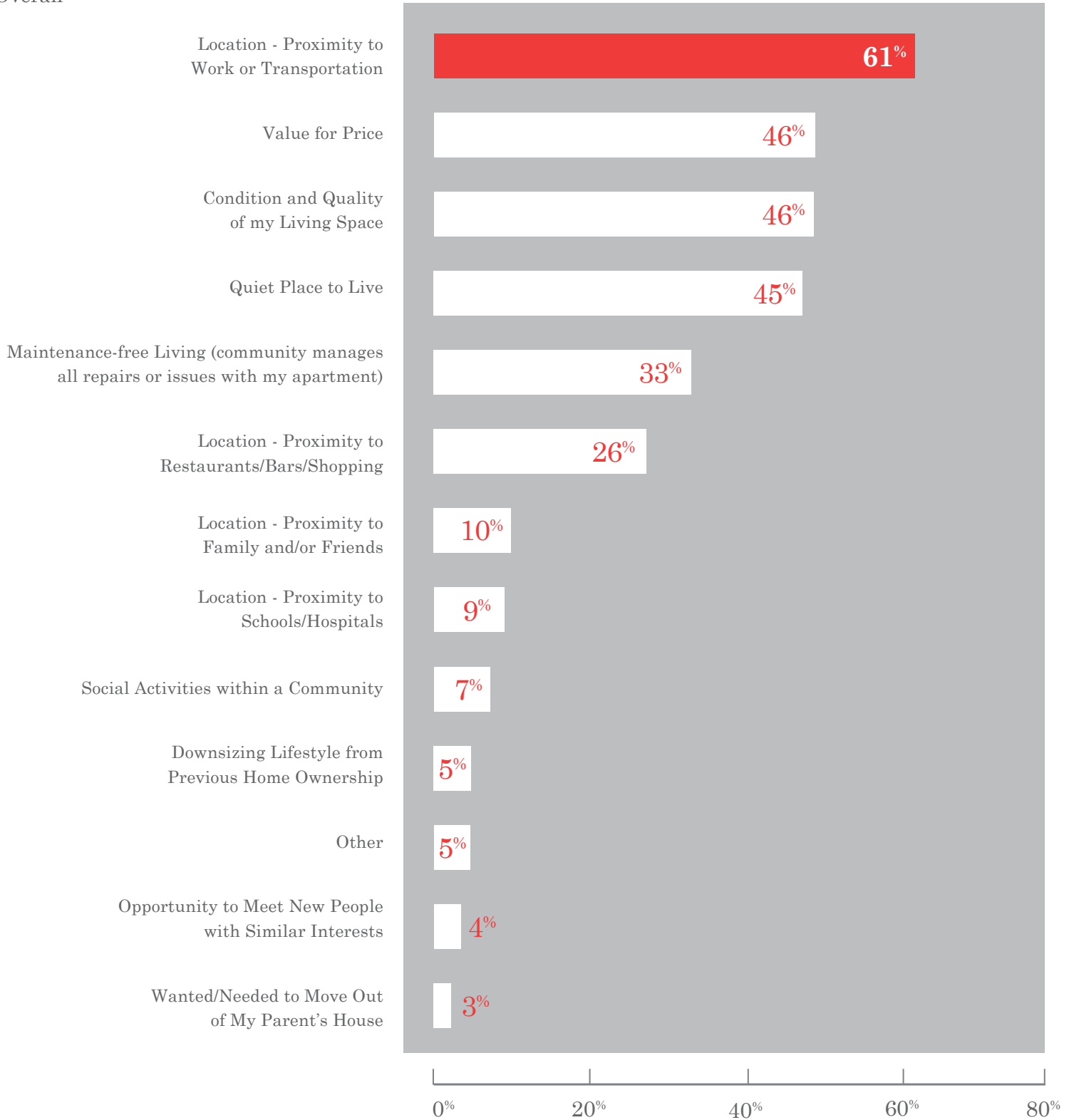
### By Demographic



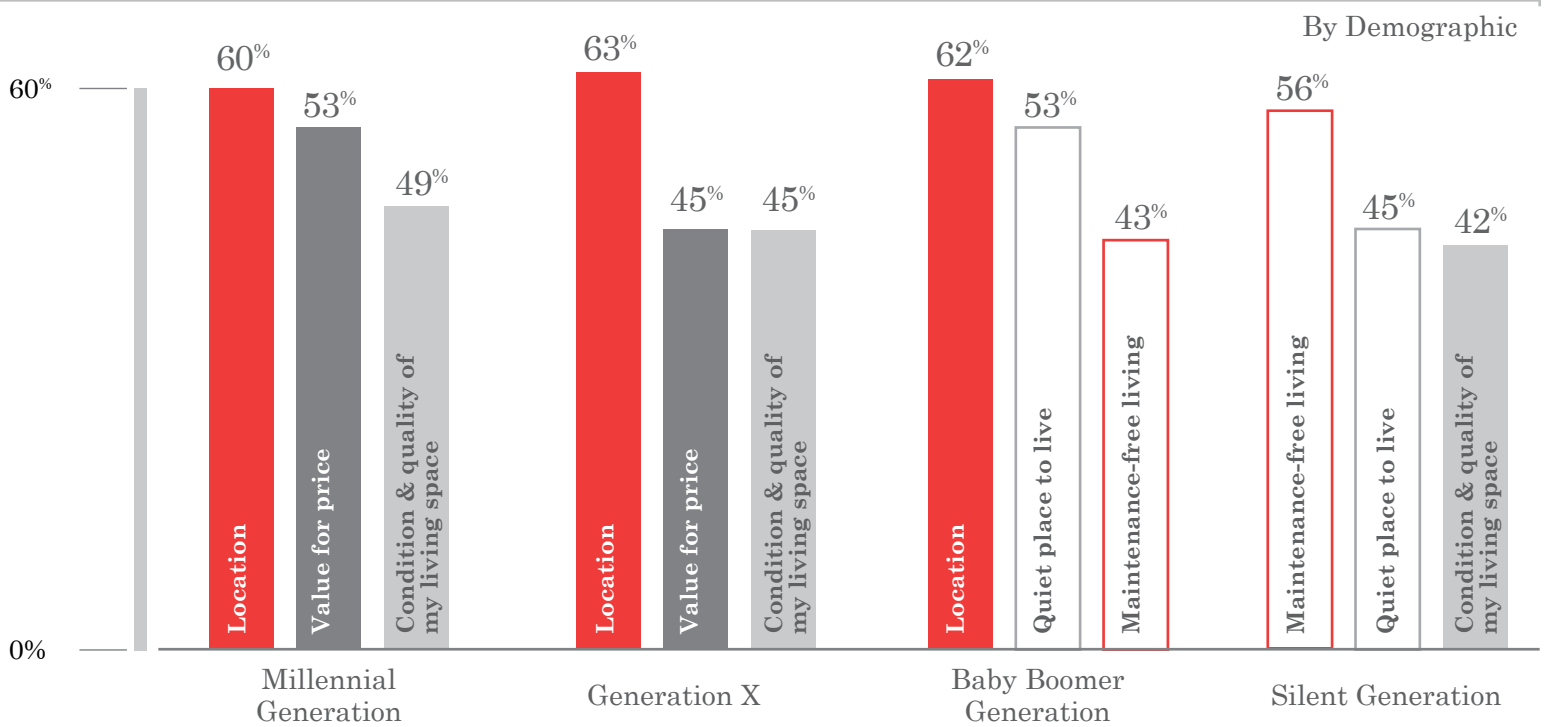
## Apartment Lifestyle Preferences

What three aspects of the “Apartment Lifestyle” were you looking for in a community?

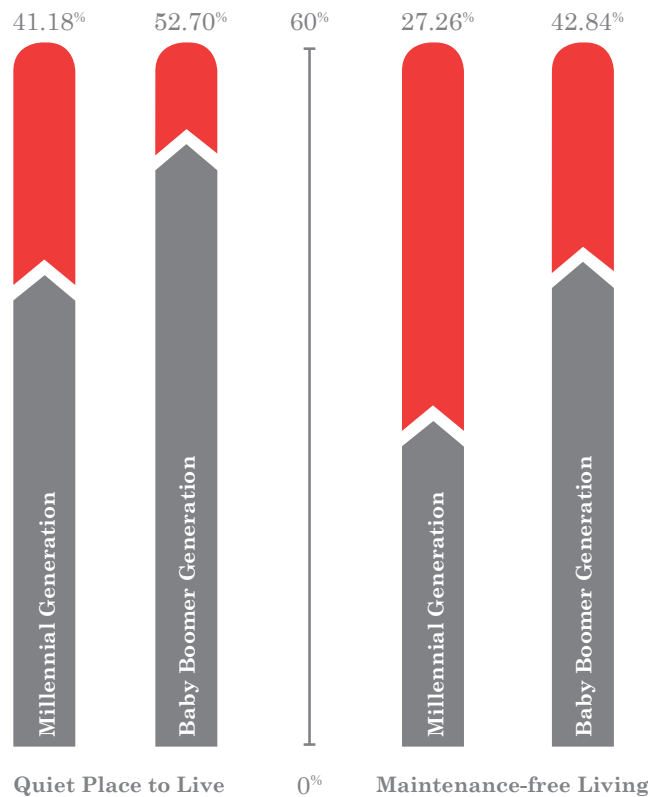
Overall



## Apartment Lifestyle Preferences



### Apartment Lifestyle: Second Choices

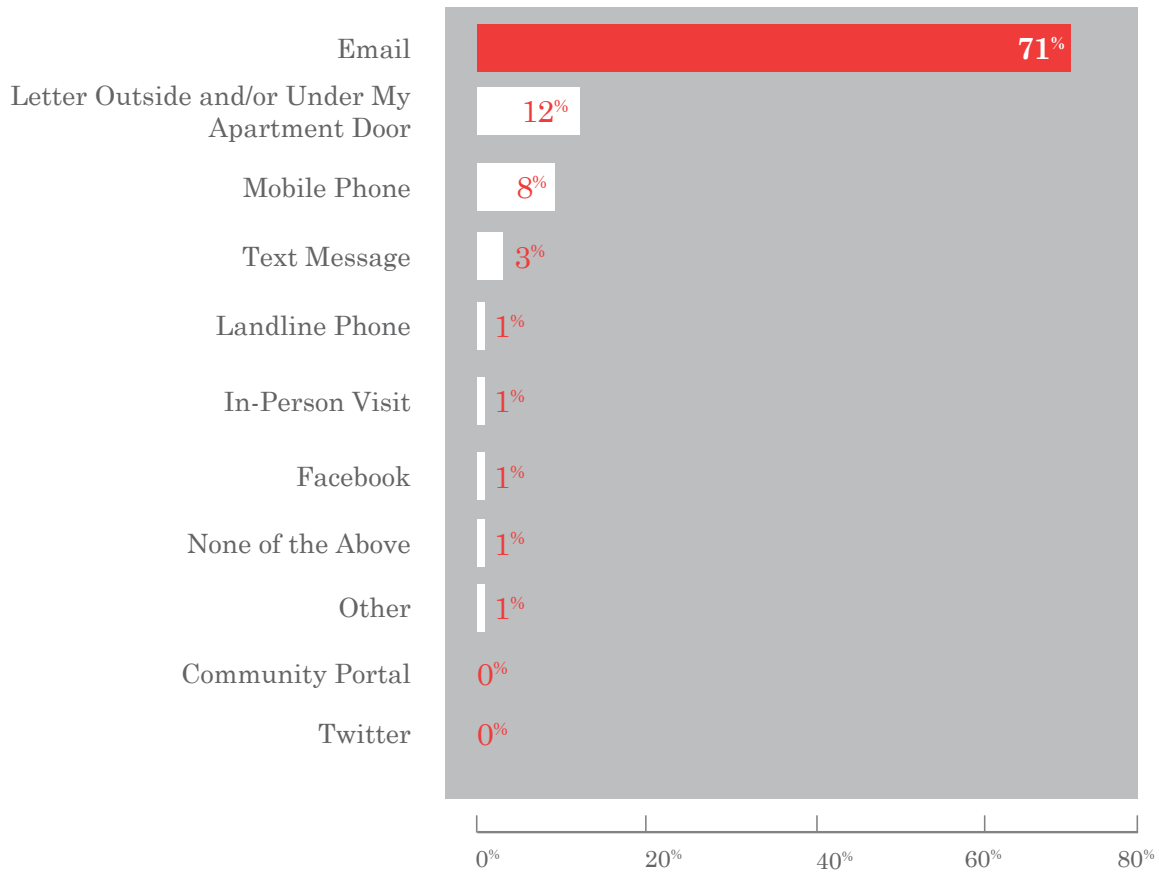


Location continues to be an important lifestyle aspect for most demographic categories, however it is of lesser importance for the Silent Generation. A quiet place to live and maintenance-free living move up in importance for older renters.

## Communication with the Community

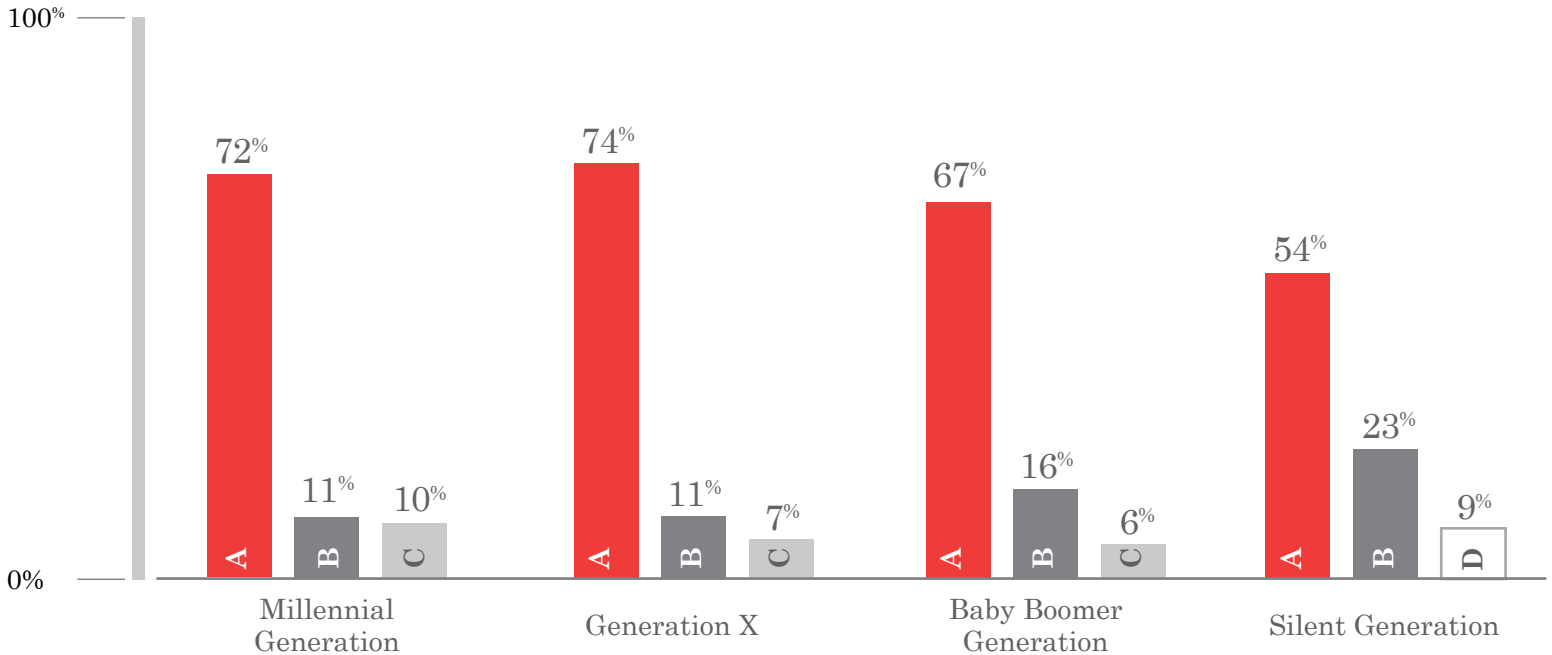
How would you prefer the community communicate with you?

Overall



By Demographic

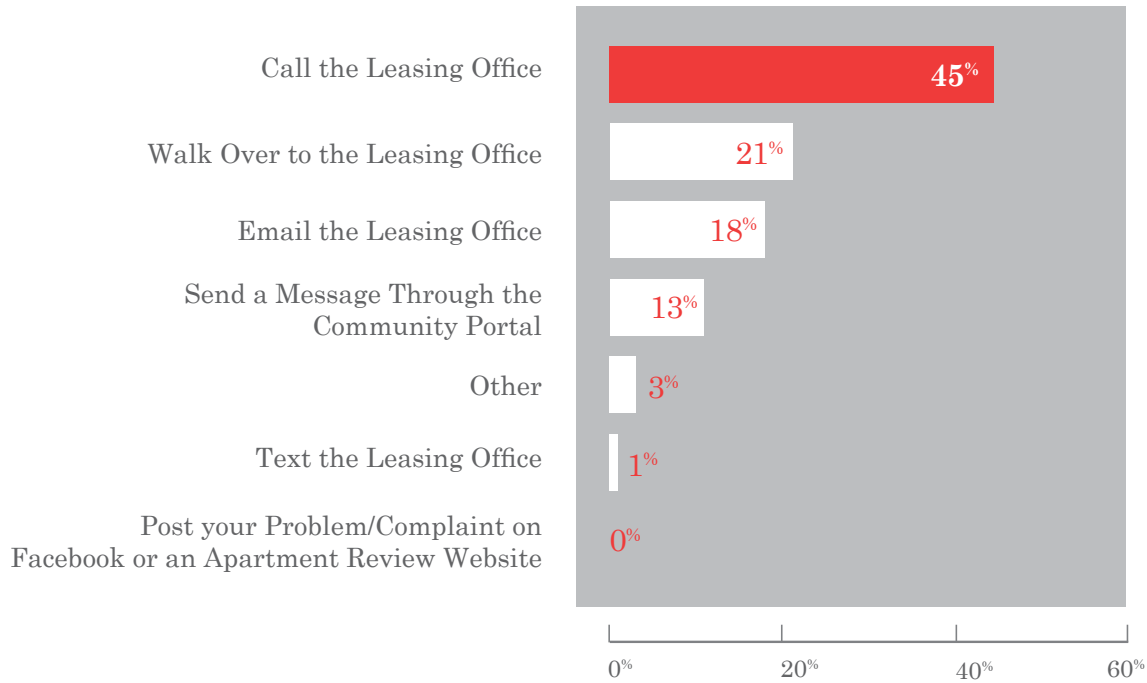
A Email    B Letter Outside Apartment Door    C Mobile Phone    D Landline Phone



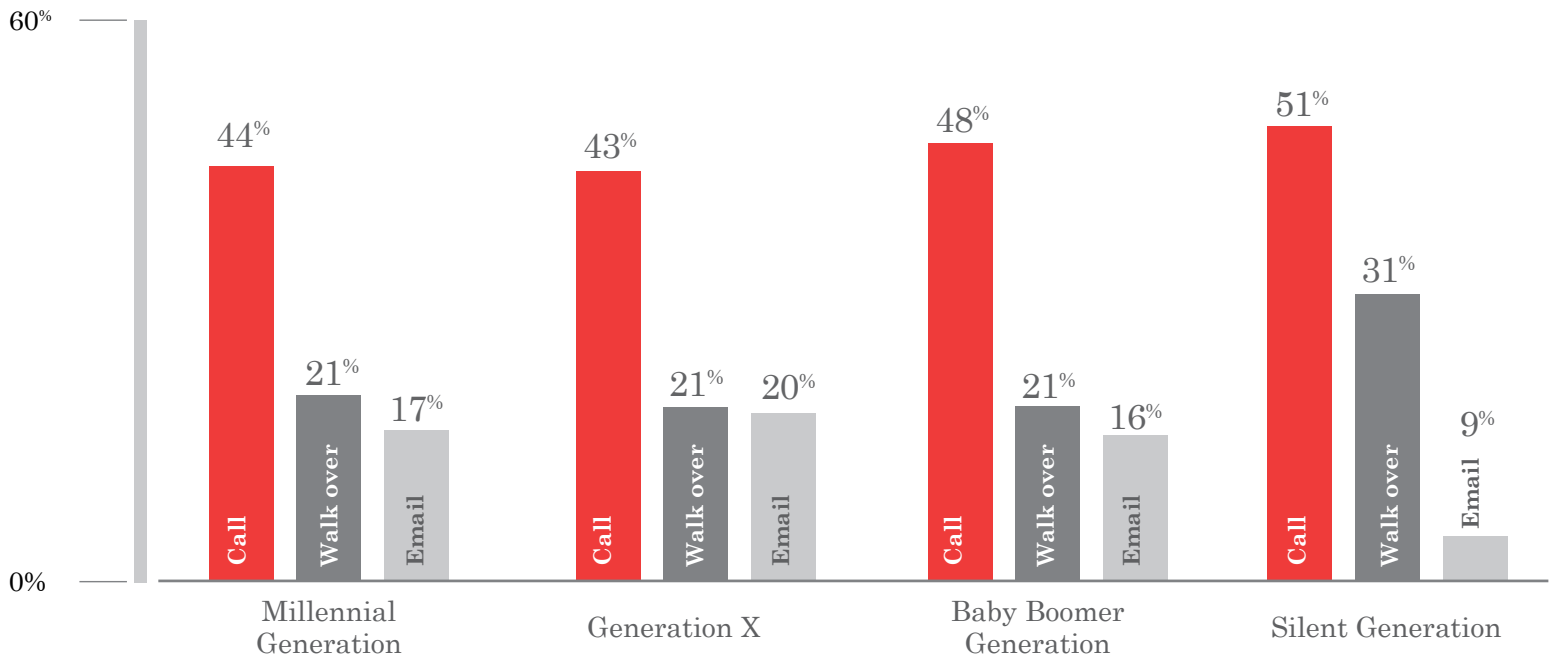
## Communication with the Community

How would you communicate with the community about a maintenance request or problem?

Overall



By Demographic

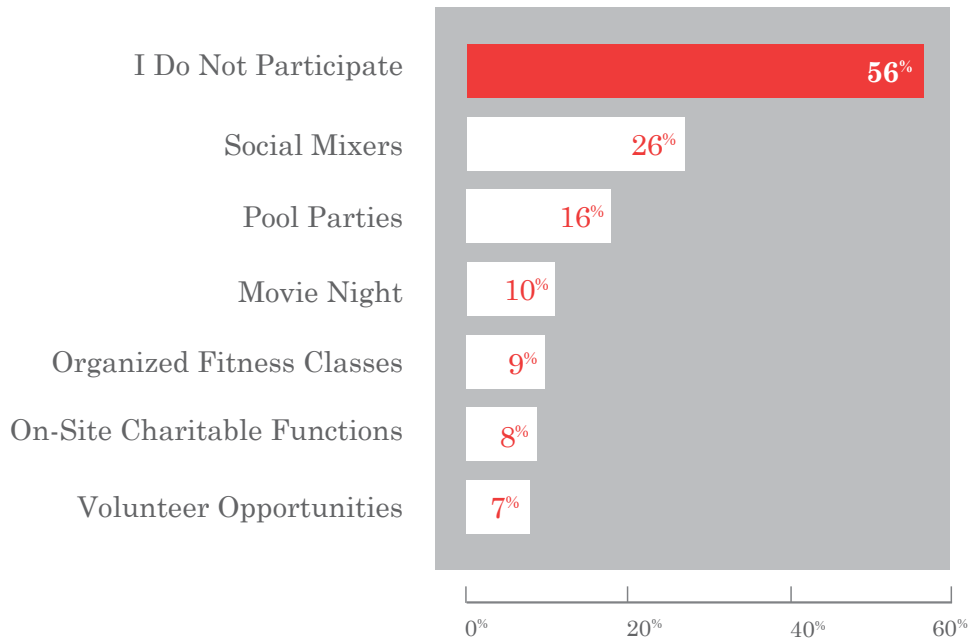


Communication preferences boil down to this, residents want you to communicate with them by email, but they want to communicate with you more directly by phone or face-to-face.

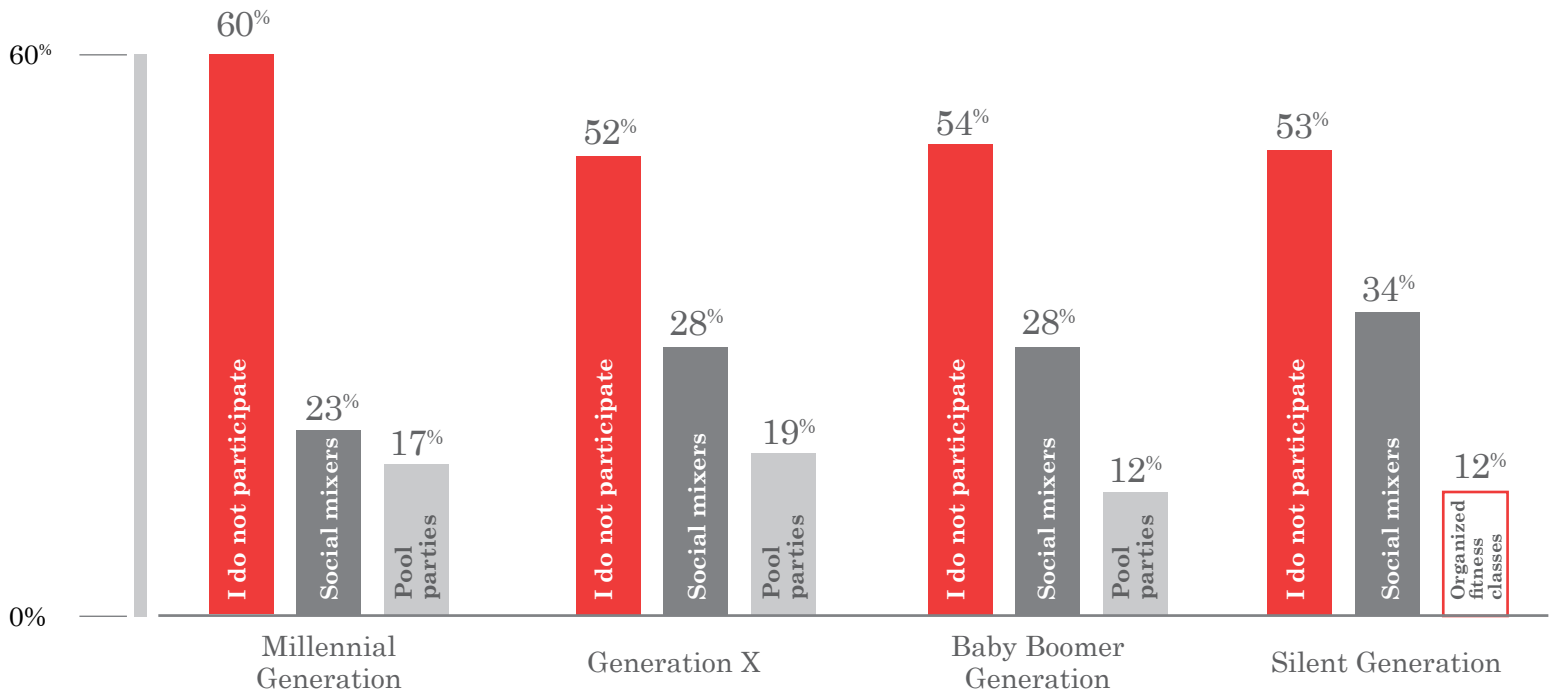
## Communication with the Community

What kind of community sponsored events do you participate in?

Overall



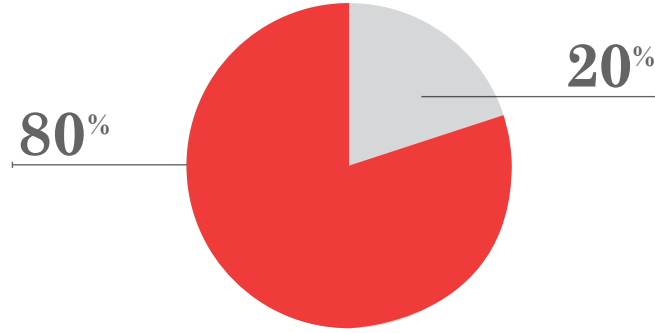
By Demographic





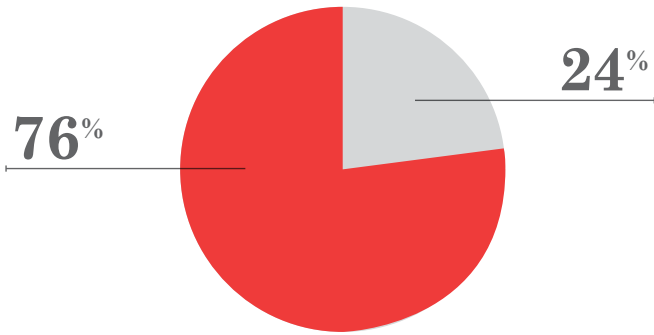
## Amenity, Feature and Service Preferences

Friends versus Amenities: If you had to choose between one of the following communities, which would you choose?

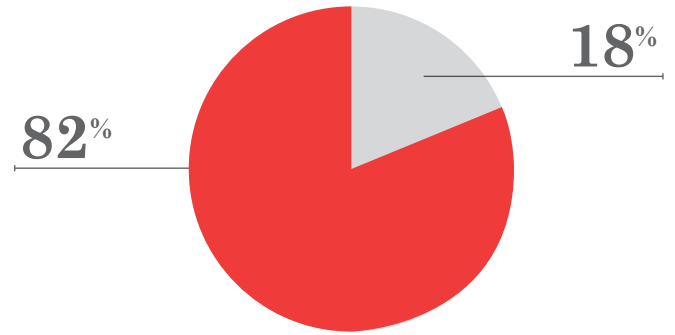


Overall

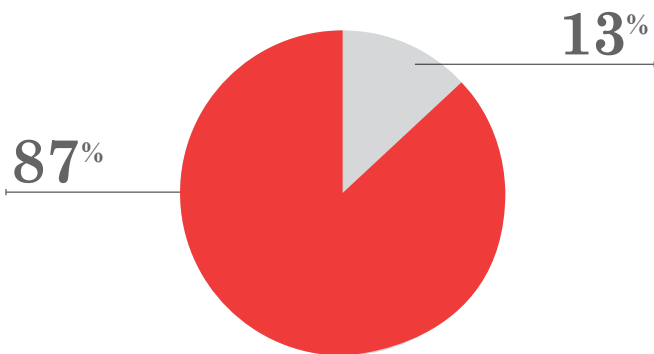
By Demographic



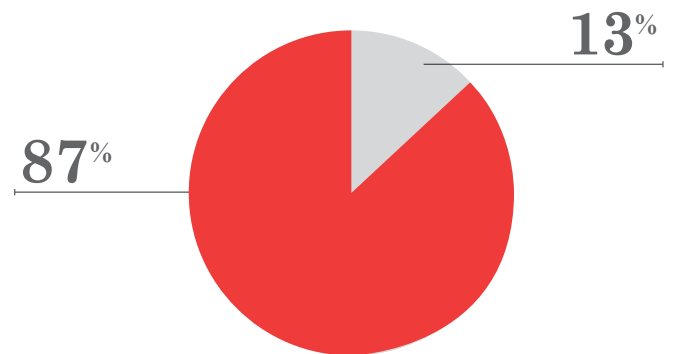
Millennial Generation



Generation X



Baby Boomer Generation



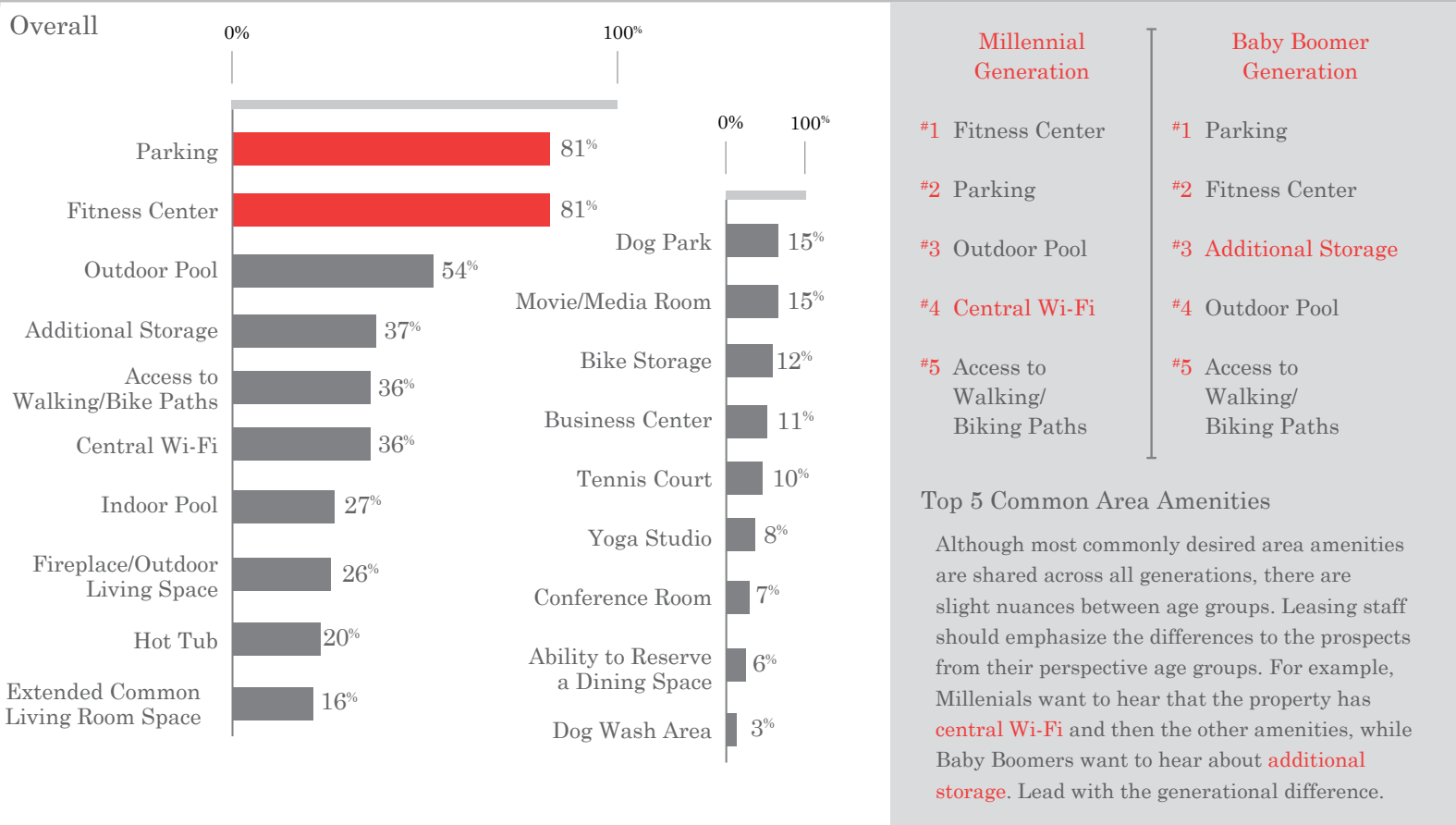
Silent Generation

● A community where my friends live but doesn't offer all the amenities I want

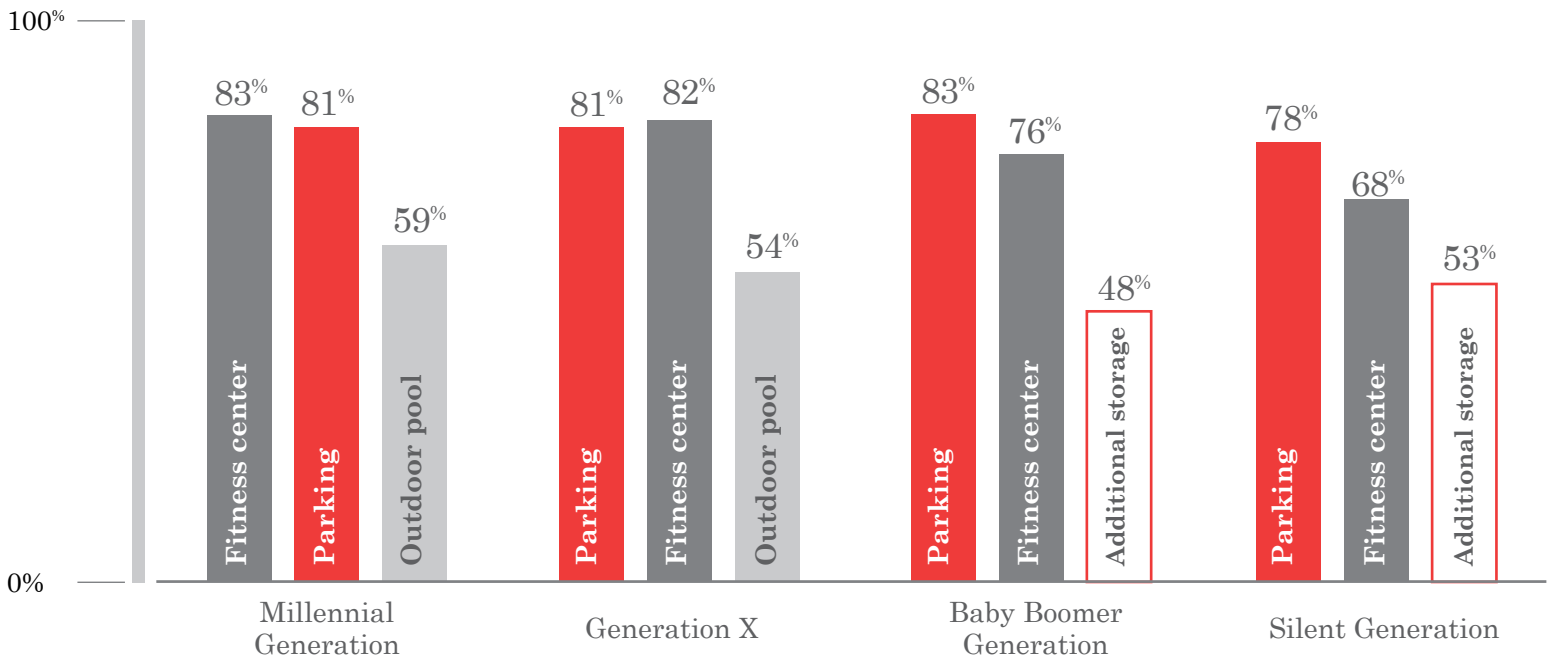
● A community that offers all the amenities I want, but I don't know anyone else who lives there

## Amenity, Feature and Service Preferences

Which are the five most important common area amenities to you?



### By Demographic



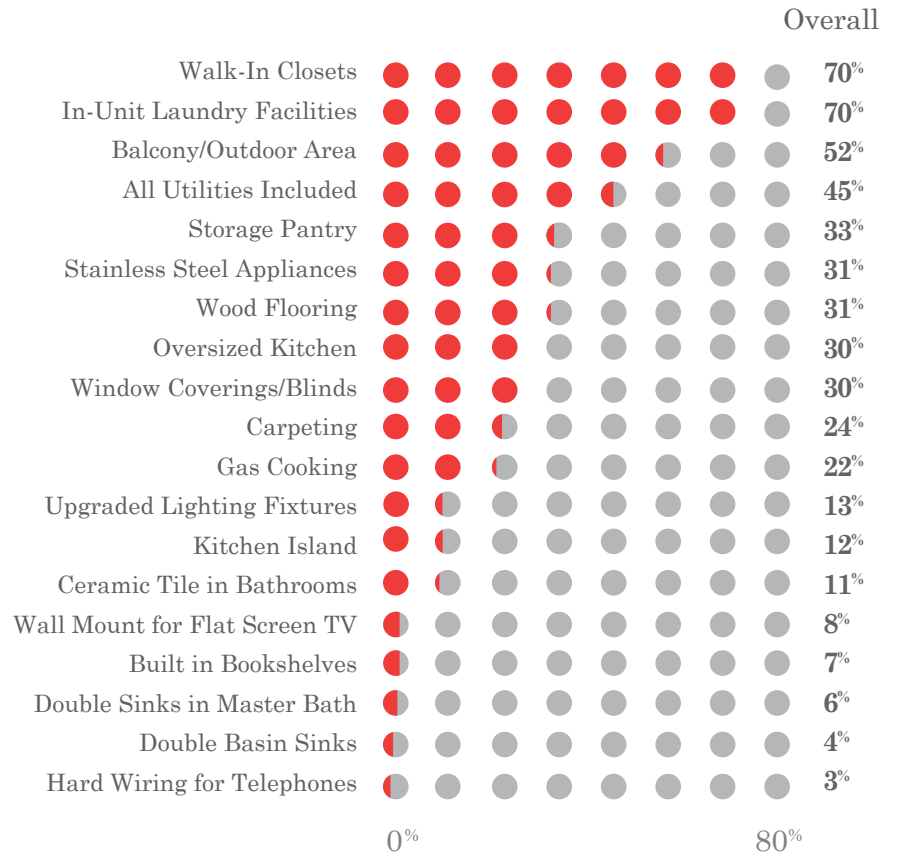
# Amenity, Feature and Service Preferences

Which are the five most important apartment amenities to you?

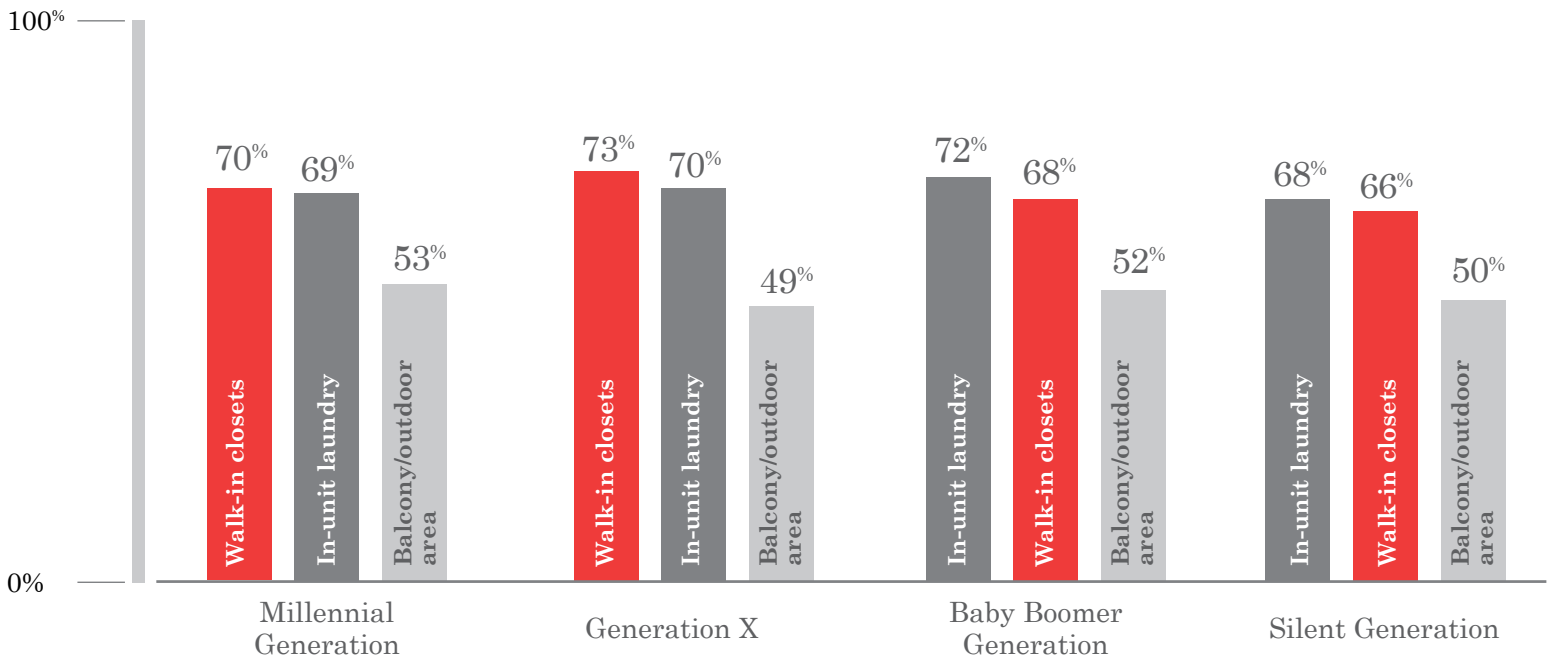
Millennial Generation	Baby Boomer Generation
#1 Walk-In Closets	#1 In-Unit Laundry
#2 In-Unit Laundry	#2 Walk-In Closets
#3 Balcony	#3 Balcony
#4 All Utilities Included	#4 All Utilities Included
#5 Stainless Steel Appliances	#5 Window Coverings/Blinds

### Top 5 Apartment Amenities

Although most apartment unit amenity requirements are shared across all generations, there are slight nuances between age groups. As with common area amenities, leasing staff should emphasize the differences to the prospects from their perspective age groups. For example, Millennials want to hear that the property has **stainless steel appliances** as well as the other amenities while Baby Boomers want to hear about **window coverings**.



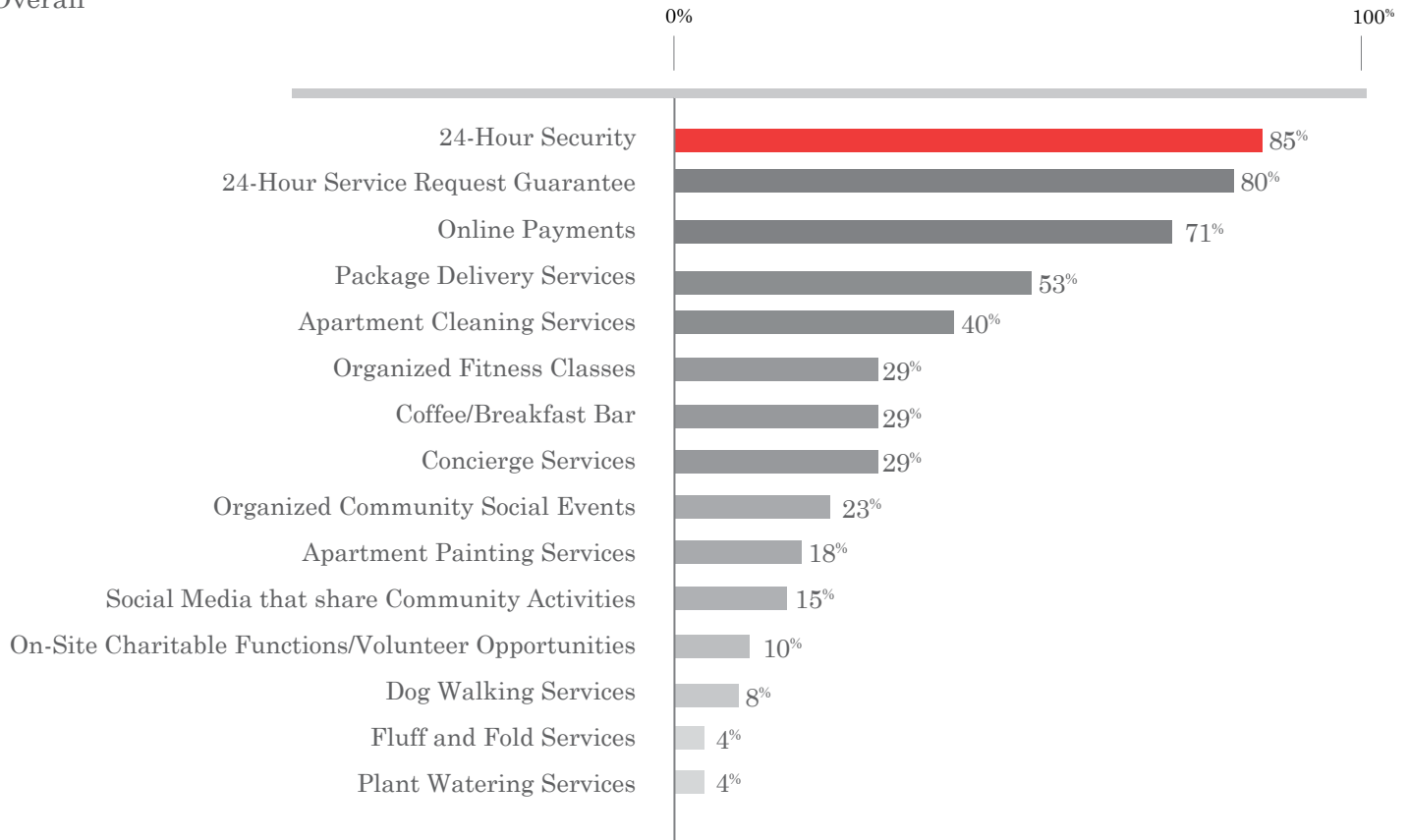
### By Demographic



## Amenity, Feature and Service Preferences

Which are the five most important community amenities to you?

Overall



By Demographic

