



TOTAL MERRILL™

TOTAL MERRILL RETIREMENT VISUALIZER

Creative Brief

April 15, 2004



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Total Merrill Retirement Visualizer*

Introduction

It is expected that as the Baby Boomers reach retirement age, they will be interested in life options beyond those typically associated with the “golden years.” Many will have neither the desire nor the ability to simply stop working, and many will be youthful, healthy and active enough not to want to merely relax and wind down. The Baby Boomers will reinvent retirement just as they have transformed everything else their massive demographic has touched. How can Merrill help them envision this next stage of their lives and thus help them be better prepared to have a substantive conversation with a financial adviser who will help them plan for and achieve their goals?

Objective of the Application

Presented in the form of a questionnaire, the Retirement Visualizer is designed to help make people aware of the myriad possibilities available to them beyond traditional concepts of retirement. It will leave users with an understanding of their true interests and goals for retirement apart from pure financial considerations. And it will help users differentiate Merrill from other financial services institutions by showing the company has a real interest in their lives, not just in their money. Ideally, users will come away from the experience with an enlightened view of retirement, a better and more positive view of Merrill, and a desire to contact a financial advisor to discuss their results and the implications of those findings.

Audience Insights

This is not your father’s retirement—the one where they threw you a party, handed you a gold watch, and put you out to pasture. When Boomers retire, their lifestyles will be multifaceted, active and evolutionary. Many do not know

* Working brand name.



what to expect or how to approach this next phase in their lives, and as a consequence they have difficulty articulating their goals.

Since there is uncertainty and fear associated with retirement, the Retirement Visualizer will expose users obliquely to the various concepts related to retirement and get at their true feelings and motivations apart from any misconceptions or other “baggage” they may bring with them.

A note on language: The word “retirement” itself may be a misnomer and may also be burdened with preconceptions of golf carts and rocking chairs. It may be beneficial to our audience if we minimize use of this term and instead speak in terms of “the next stage.”

Primary Target Audience:

US Baby Boomers (40-58)

50/50 male-female split

Upper-middle to upper-class income (targets should be able to give Merrill at least \$250,000 in assets to manage)

Secondary Target Audience:

US Post-Baby Boomers (25-40)

50/50 male-female split

Upper-middle to upper-class income (targets should be able to give Merrill at least \$250,000 in assets to manage)

How the Test Works

The application loosely follows the structure of a Myers-Briggs assessment. Just as the Myers-Briggs tool assesses certain fundamental behavioral patterns and thus arrives at a “personality type,” so the Retirement Visualizer assesses the respondent’s retirement preferences and arrives at a “retirement personality type.” After providing an introduction to set user expectations, the application leads the user through a series of AGREE/DISAGREE questions designed to obliquely address and elicit the user’s core beliefs and motivations around retirement—i.e., what does he or she really, truly want to do next?

The oblique nature of the questions is central to the success of this application. For example, Myers-Briggs tests don’t ask *Are you extroverted?* but instead ask for responses to a number of statements relevant to that question but sufficiently abstracted from it to allow the respondent a chance to provide an unbiased answer. The answers are then tabulated on the back-end to arrive at the overall personality type.

The Retirement Visualizer works in a similar way. For example, if a question simply stated head on, *Do you want to travel?* then the user’s response would be colored by his or her preconceived notions about travel and retirement. *YES, that’s what I’m supposed to do in retirement,* or *NO, I can’t afford to travel* might be two of the expected responses, neither of which necessarily gets at the underlying truth. However, if a question is written more in the manner of *There are parts of the world I would like to visit,* then the respondent is encouraged not so much to search for the “right” answer but instead to get at the inner truth.

Outcome

The outcome of the test—that is, the results the user sees—could take one of several forms, and it will be useful to get some audience learning on this specific subject before making a decision.

After answering the questions, users will see an interpretation of their responses along with links to case studies/profiles designed to further help them visualize retirement possibilities. Their responses may help categorize them as a “retirement personality type,” though it is not the goal of this application to stereotype or pigeonhole the respondent.

One way of structuring the results could be a Myers-Briggs style “personality type,” that is, a “score” evaluating the respondent along several categories, then grouping those categories into an overall type, which would have a plain-English identifier. (For example, in Myers-Briggs, a respondent receives a four-letter



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identifier, and attached to this sometimes is a plain-English name, for example, “the salesperson”). Along with the type identifier and plain-English name, the user would receive explanation of what this type indicates. The method might be of most use to financial advisors—they could quickly learn a standard number of types that would essentially serve as shorthand for them as they do their financial consulting. As mentioned above, care must be taken not to run the risk of making people feel somehow typecast.

Following is an early-stage “for discussion purposes only” idea of how we might contextualize and convey the results the user receives at the end of the experience:

Your retirement personality type:

You are an **Xxxxx**

Based on your answers, you are an Xxxxx.

Xxxxxes tend to view retirement as a continuation of their working lives, with some important modifications. Having been **very career-focused**, as they approach the next stage many Xxxxxes value both the work itself and the sense of staying in touch with a work-related support network. That said, Xxxxxes nonetheless **appreciate having greater flexibility** to take part in activities not directly related to the careers. Thus, many Xxxxxes transition to part-time consulting work in their own field, thus maintaining a sense of purpose and connectedness while also **achieving the goal** of having more time available for non-work pursuits.

Xxxxxes often approach the non-work aspects of retirement with the same **drive and gusto** that characterizes their work-related behavior. They are eager to master a new skill or visit a destination they have never seen before, and often find it necessary to prove (to others and themselves) that though they are “retired” they have not slowed down.

If you have a **spouse or significant other**, it might be interesting to have him or her take the Retirement Visualizer questionnaire too. We’ll help you see where your ideas and interests are similar and where they are different.

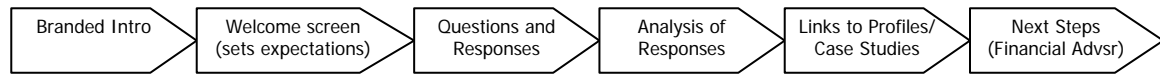
The **profiles below** provide real-life examples of Xxxxxes and how they visualized and structured their own retirements; you might find it interesting to compare your own ideas with what these people did.

Remember, retirement planning is very individualized, and no one else’s solution is necessarily right for you. We recommend you **discuss these results with your financial advisor** for additional interpretation as well as guidance on your retirement financial planning.

Again, audience research in advance of our designing the final application is the best way to make sure the end product matches users’ needs and expectations.



Main User Experience/Application Flow



[My Account](#) | [Help](#)

Branded Introduction

This brief introduction is intended to introduce the tone (it also serves the purpose engaging the user while the main application loads) and to connect the application to larger issues.

It may be a short, animated sequence consisting of questions such as *What is retirement? What does the future hold? What's next for me?* This sequence then resolves to the Welcome screen.

Welcome Screen

This critical screen sets user expectations. Users will want to know how much time the test will take, what sort of questions they'll be asked, what kind of output they can expect, and how they might use that output. It is also likely they will want some reassurance that the test is "serious" and will provide meaningful insights. Lastly, it is important to note what these results do and do not represent. They are a snapshot of a person's motivations and deep-seated feelings. They are descriptive rather than prescriptive; the purpose of this test is not to tell the user what to do, but instead to make the user aware of his or her internal drivers and to connect those to ideas for how to structure the next stage of life.

This is also where users register or sign in. Registration is necessary so users can go back and see/change their answers, and so we can collect necessary information to forward to the financial advisor along with the test results.

Questions and Responses

Users will see a series of questions on-screen, one question at a time. The intent is to encourage the user to focus on each question rather than racing through multiple questions at once. Having the questions presented one at a time, in sequence, also permits some variation in the visual treatment of each, to help maintain the user's high level of engagement. Questions will cover categories relevant to retirement, such as:

- Community
- Education/Self-improvement
- Family
- Hobbies
- Interests
- Leisure

- Nonprofit organizations
- Politics
- Religious organizations
- Second career
- Travel
- Most questions will likely be drafted as declarative statements allowing users to respond AGREE or DISAGREE (perhaps with an option for NO OPINION as well).

Some questions may take a slightly different format, both because the content of the question indicates a different treatment and also because adding variety should help keep the user engaged and fresh and thus lead to more accurate responses.

Users should have several options for completing the questionnaire. This will allow them flexibility

- One, preferred, is to answer the questions all at once, straight through from beginning to end. This method should provide the most consistent input, since the responses are gathered at a single point in time.
- Second is to save one's responses and to return later to complete the questions.
- Third is to complete only a portion of the test. Typically, this would mean answering at least 2/3 of the questions, at which point the user would have the option to "Get results now." However, the user would be encouraged to answer all questions to achieve a more accurate result.

Analysis of Responses

Once the user has finished answering questions, the system delivers results. We may choose to have the results indicate a named, identified personality type; however, as stated above, care must be taken not to create the impression of force-fitting a unique individual into a box. The results should describe the retirement personality traits identified from the responses to the test and put these in context, with an explanation of their implications.

It must clearly be stated that the results of the test are subjective, not absolute, and that they can vary over time.

Link to Profiles/Case Studies

To help users visualize their retirement personality type, users will be encouraged to browse one or more profiles or case studies of “successful retirement” to add substance and clarity to the assessment as well as to provide food for thought as users begin creating their own plans.

These profiles are intentionally soft, that is, they are about retirement lifestyles, not about the financial planning and structuring necessary to achieve them.

Each is probably a few paragraphs long and accompanied by photographs illustrating the lifestyle. Perhaps there is also a chart depicting the person’s time allocation (this would be an interesting counterpoint to the usual portfolio allocation chart and might reinforce the idea that Merrill is focused on you, not just your money).

Next Steps

The application strongly recommends that the user send this information to his or her financial advisor.

- If the user is a current Merrill client, he/she can simply fill in the FA’s name or email address.
- If the user is a current client but does not know the FA’s name or information, the user can send the information to a central clearinghouse where it will be forwarded to the proper party.
- If the user is a prospect, the information is also sent to a clearinghouse for sorting and forwarding.

Users also have the option of comparing results with those of a spouse who has also taken the test. This comparison will be achieved in a simplified manner, probably by having results emailed to a common address.

My Account

Users have standard account/profile management capabilities, e.g., change password, etc.

Help

Users are able to call up a help screen with step-by-step instructions on how to interact with the application.

Style and Tone

Link to Total Merrill

The application will be consistent with the Total Merrill expression and graphic guidelines. Perhaps more important, it is a natural and meaningful extension of the Total Merrill idea of integrating all aspects of a client's financial picture. If Total Merrill is about a client's total *financial* life, then Retirement Visualizer is about *life*, period. Merrill helps clients imagine the next stage of their lives, and then helps them structure their total financial picture to support those goals.

Throughout the application, copy should remind users of these important concepts. Understanding your life goals holistically leads to understanding your financial goals holistically, and that enables Merrill to make your money work harder by working together: the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

At the application exit point (perhaps the bounceback page after results are sent to the FA), the application should show the theme line "We see your financial life in total."

Design

Look and Feel

Layouts, typography and images must dovetail with Total Merrill guidelines—indeed, to divert from these would undercut the core messages of the campaign. Photography should depict age, ethnic and gender diversity reflecting that of the target audience. Photographs are used to create a mood and ensure that the application has a strong visual connection to the Total Merrill campaign.

Introductory Screen Concepts

The introductory screen would be the first thing the user sees after clicking to the application from www.askmerrill.com. Its purpose is to introduce the application; it provides information while the main application loads.

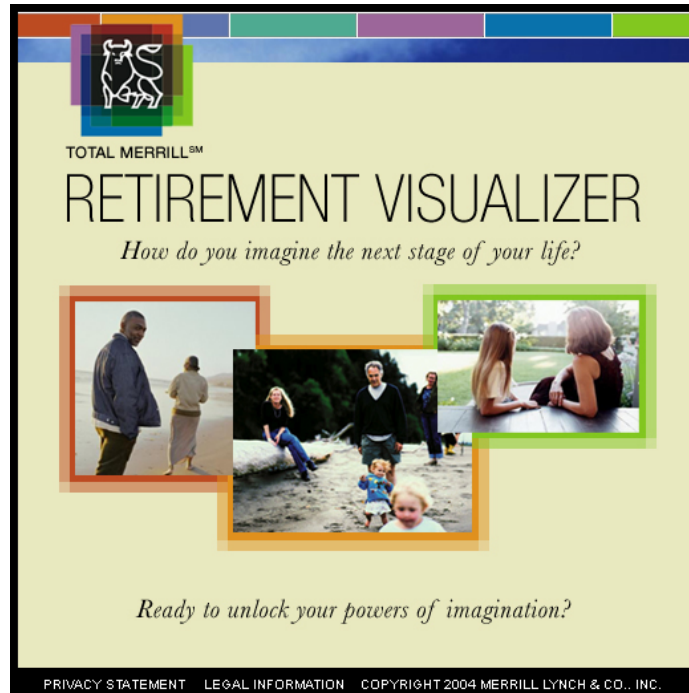
(Design concepts next three pages)



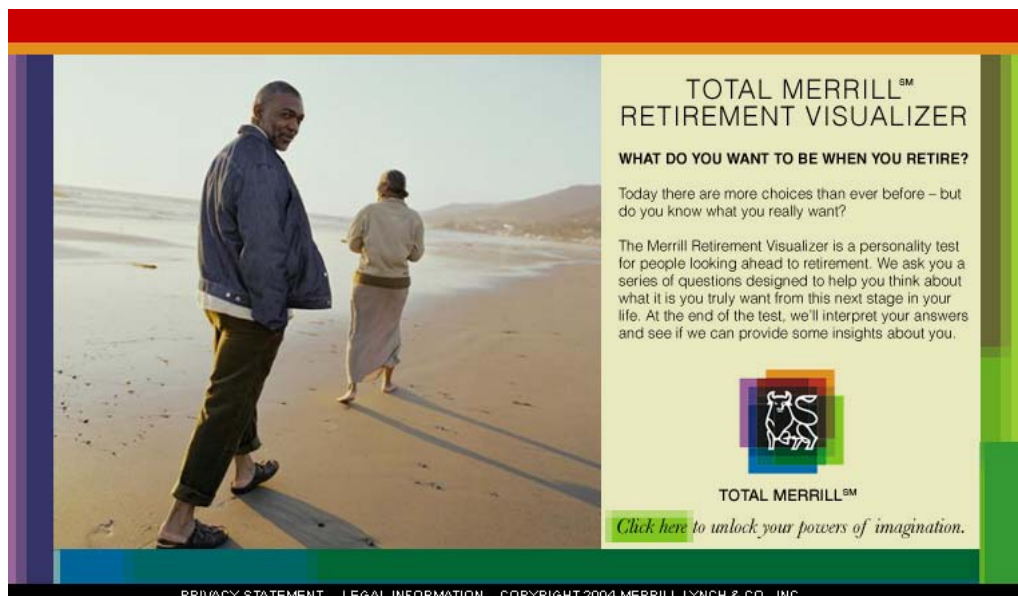
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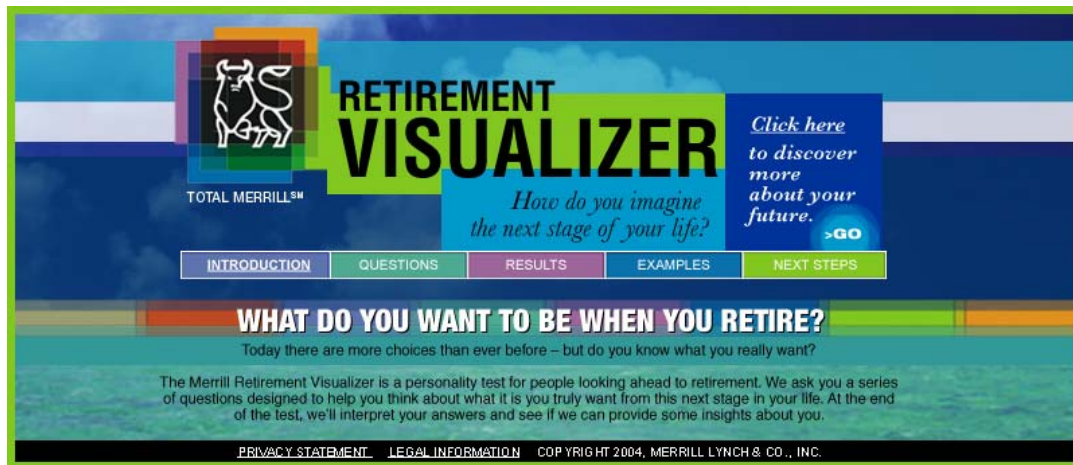
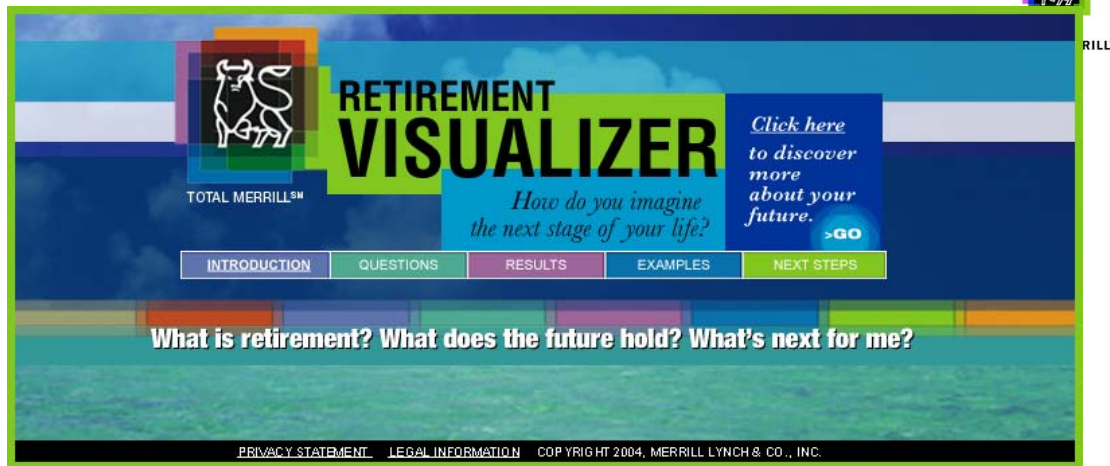
Intro screen concepts 1 and 2: These concepts key off the Total Merrill logo to create the application's outer frame.



Intro screen concept 3: This design keys off the square format of the approved Total Merrill concepts. Colors at top pick up the colors of the “buckets” from Total Merrill. The screen would also convey a sense of movement, with colors and images drifting.



Welcome screen concept: This design shows how more detailed information about the application could be conveyed.



Pushing the envelope: These two design concepts show how the Visualizer could key off the Total Merrill color palette to create a look at once related to Total Merrill but clearly its own entity. Imagery is less people-focused, since the Visualizer is about the test taker, not about people depicted in the ads. (People imagery would be used for the profiles/case studies portion of the application.)