



Career Management & Transition Specialists

Companies Seek "Boomer Talent" and Boomers Seek Jobs

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By Dan Moran

I am a boomer. I have reached that time of my life that years back everyone feared. That time of life when people think they have passed their useful purpose. Boomer was another work for "old".

How wrong. Corporate America agrees as well. Being a boomer is just one more opportunity in life, and boomers are discovering this. Today's workforce is over 40% boomers and a vast majority are already planning to change their involvement in the workplace in some fashion. A Rutgers's University Workforce Development study found that 28% of boomers are planning to work part-time or engage on other activities because they either need the money, or want the mental stimulation. Another study stated "Employment among older workers is booming. The number of workers 55 and older nationwide hit a record 24.6 million recently, with workers 65 and older jumping 44 percent over the last decade to 5.2 million." We are not washed up --- we are in demand!

This article will focus on the resources, opportunities (including where to look for a boomer job and who is hiring) and plans boomers like me are using to secure their future and continue contributing to Corporate America.

Boomers are in demand – and companies are courting us

The workplace will continue to need us. As we grow older as a nation, and as fewer skilled people come out of our universities, boomers will form a core of experience, knowledge, and skill that will be invaluable to sustaining many organizations. This is even more critical as the nation faces yet another shortage of skilled and experience workers like we experience in the 90's.

As a group, employers have found boomers to be excellent employees. Most older workers are known to have a better work ethic, are more dependable, tend to be more loyal and are more appreciative of having a job and care about doing a "good" job. A recently conducted study by AARP (American Association of retired Persons) listed boomer's assets from the employer's perspective:

* Boomers have lower absenteeism rates and are always on time for work.

- * We are more committed and less likely to job hop creating turnover which is expensive to companies.
- * Boomers exhibit better customer service and people skills and a willingness to learn new skills.
- * We are just more positive in our attitude.
- * We deliver experience – experienced gained over our years that is valuable to a company who may have lost talent due to turnover or retirements.

Of course, the stereotype of “old” workers does continue in some companies who just don’t get it and are living in the past. Unfortunately many companies that fall into this category are the ones that need our experience, talent and commitment. As one looks through the list of companies that actively recruit boomer talent, it is easy to notice who isn’t – fast-charging technology companies who still believe in the “old” stereotype, old-school manufacturers and government (that is surprising) to mention a few.

Finding opportunities as a Boomer

On the flip side, companies that have discovered this needed and untapped resource of talent actively recruit boomers, targeting their job messages to sources on the web, print, radio and through direct mail. There are firms that just specialize in this area – helping companies recruit boomer talent. Web sites dedicated to matching boomers with companies seeking boomers can be easily accessed (more on this in a minute).

Before you start looking for the next opportunity, think about how you should market yourself through your:

- * Resume
- * Interview Preparation
- * References

Companies who target boomers are looking for the experience you bring, the skill & talents you can contribute and the “fit” to the job and company. How you present yourself and prepare must address each of these needs.

Your resume – The cookie-cutter chronological resume – with just the facts (company, title, dates and duties) won’t cut it. Rather, a carefully written resume that highlights your transferable skills (skills that you bring from one employer to another), your unique talents and your personality is required (visit my blog at XXXXXXX) and you will see an example. Consider investing in a professional to help write this – it is that valuable first impression – before you even get to the interview.

Preparing for the Interview – Before your interview, document your skills, strengths, qualifications and of course, that one weakness you don't mind admitting. Focus on those attributes that you can contribute to the company --- attributes they may not find in a younger, inexperienced applicant.

References – Your references should be able to speak to your ability to learn new things, change when needed and reliability and dependability. Prep those you plan to use as references in advance so they are prepared.

With your skill-driven resume, interview preparation and references lined up, start looking. The web sites below are highly recommended:

Retiredbrains.com – I searched this site and found over 750 jobs listed in the Greater Capital District Region --- jobs that encompassed technical, retail, hospitality, sales, customer service, etc. A great source.

www.aarp.org/working_options/home.html - On this site, you will find very good career resources, and a listing of employers who employ boomers.

www.fortypus.com - Lists jobs, resources and networking groups so you are not alone in this search

www.matureservices.org – Lists job fairs and employment resources

<http://careersat50.monster.com/> - The specialty web site for boomers, from Monster.com

www.notyetretired.com - Includes information on starting a business, freelancing, finding a post-retirement job, and more.

www.retirementjobs.com - Free job board whose goal is to "identify companies most-suited to older workers and match them with active, productive, conscientious, mature adults seeking a job or project that matches their lifestyle".

www.XtremeRecruiting.com - News and articles for Baby Boomer job seekers.

Workplacefairness.org – A good site and blog on career issues and fairness to older workers.

2young2retire.com – Source of job leads, information and strategies as boomers enter their next career. Also good information on starting a business – an option many pursue (like me for the second time).

An excellent article:

<http://www.careerjournal.com/myc/fifty/20050919-coombes.html> The 50 best companies for workers 50 and older.

And of course, my blog:

Mattersofyourcareer.typepad.com

Last piece of advice – get your head on straight or out of your butt

I fell into this trap myself for a time. Many boomers get it in their mind that no employer wants them, or it is going to be so hard to get a job since employers discriminate.

A true friend of mine helped me through this. He made an example of the top CEO's of Fortune 500 companies – by age. Almost all were in their 50's +. End of discussion; I got it. If you have been thinking this, get it on straight and out of your butt. Good luck and please let me know your experience on my blog.