

“It’s a 1099 World, Baby!”

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Introduction by Lorraine Rinker

After leaving my job as an IT executive at the end of 2002, I did what any “healthy” Type-A over-achiever would do - - I immediately began a job campaign to acquire another senior level job in the Corporate World. Job competition in 2003 was fierce as there were so many other, highly successful “Baby Boomer” executives hitting the street in job campaigns of their own. I reveled in making final round interviews knowing my competition was made up of “the elite”. I was still running with the “big dogs”, only thing was we were all chasing after the same game.

As 2003 concluded, I was still unemployed but found relief in doing pro-bono consulting for other executive job seekers and owners of small business. Pretty soon, I started to become aware of the “signs” along the way, and re-discovered my passion for helping others. I also came to a “real world” conclusion that the right thing for me to do was to close the chapter on my successful IT executive career and alter my life-course.

And, so my own transition was in full swing - - and what a ride it has been!

I finally got it - - meaning I finally stepped back long enough to see all the signs along the way converge on a point of clarity. It felt amazing to move in line with my destiny. I was destined to live my life in the “1099 World” of consulting.

Today, I am a happy “boomer” running my own business; helping other professionals (labeled in the press as Boomers, X’ers, and Y’s) find their way. In my constant networking with contacts in the Sacramento Metro area and research of the job market and career trends, I come across valuable information in the form of statistics, articles, and opinion. The following is a small sample of my idea of “valuable and applicable” information in the form of excerpts.

The Baby Boomer Demographic (Source: [Baby Boomer Headquarters, www.bbhq.com](http://www.bbhq.com), Business Week)

Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964 inclusive) represent 28% (approximately 76 million baby boomers) of the U.S. population today. Baby boomers are now between 41 and 59 years old.

Generation X (born between 1965 and 1978) number about 17 million in the U.S. and are now between 27 and 40 years old. Generation Y (born between 1979 and 1994) represent 26% (approximately 60 million) of the U.S. population today and are now between 11 and 26 years old.

No matter how you look at it - - you cannot help but notice how the Baby Boomers have transformed social, political, and marketplace themes; transforming lifestyles (traditional retirement is out, phased-retirement is in) and consumer trends (fashion, auto, technology, and the investment marketplace to name a few). As Ken Dychtwald,

PhD. states in his article *Demography is De\$tiny*, “the most important thing to remember about boomers is that they are rule breakers. Individuality over conformity is a consistent boomer pattern. They always have done it differently than the way it was done before.”

Boomers Today - What's Happening? (Source Fortune Magazine)

The cover story of the May 16, 2005 issue of Fortune Magazine was “50 and Fired!”

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics survey of “displaced workers” covering the years 2001 through 2003 found that 55 to 74 year old displaced workers were less likely to find new jobs than 25 to 54 year-olds. Of those lucky enough to be rehired, older folks take a much bigger pay cut than the younger workers.
- A 2003 survey by DBM (an outplacement agency) found that only 32% of workers over 57 earned the same or higher pay at their new employer (versus 42% of 38-56-year-olds and 60% of 21-37-year-olds).
- In a survey of 428 HR Managers by the Society of Human Resource Management; 53% said older workers “did not keep up with technology”, and 28% characterized them as “less flexible”.

From 2002 to 2012, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects the number of 35-44-year-olds in the labor force will decline by 3.8 million, while the number of available 55-64-year-olds will increase by 8.3 million. Ken Dychtwald, the demographer, figures that businesses must roughly double their number of older employees over the next decade.

John McDorman, an outplacement counselor in Dallas encourages his clients to abandon their corporate job searches before they ever get started and start or buy their own business - - provided they have the requisite cash, skills, and attitude. McDorman is basically doing his part to ease people into their next life stage: involuntary entrepreneurship, stating “Your W-2 days are over, it’s a 1099 world now.”

Baby Boomers in the Future (Source: Princeton Survey Research Associates International and Civic Ventures, www.civicventures.org)

Civic Ventures (an organization that “works to transform the aging of American into a source of individual and social renewal”) published the results of the *New Face of Work Survey* in June 2005. The findings show that half of all Americans age 50 to 70 want jobs that contribute to the greater good now and in retirement. Survey results show that boomers and pre-boomers:

Want to do work that helps others, now and in retirement.

- Two out of the three types of work mentioned most often were jobs in education, healthcare, and social services.
- 58 percent say they would consider taking jobs now or in the future that would serve their communities.

Want careers that are about people, purpose, and community.

- 59 percent say staying involved with other people is very important in attracting them to a job in retirement.
- 57 percent say it's very important that the job give them a sense of purpose.

What is “A Great Place to Work”? (Source: Great Place to Work Institute, www.greatplacetowork.org)

In his article “Creating a Great Place to Work”, Robert Levering (a journalist and founder of the Great Place to Work Institute, based in San Francisco) defines a great place to work as “one where employees trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do and enjoy the people they work with.” Levering goes on to explain that the most important factor that distinguishes “great places to work” is a “very high level of trust between the employees and the management. Levering says management demonstrates trust through the following actions: sharing information broadly, willingness to answer hard questions, delivering on promises, showing recognition and appreciation, and demonstrating personal concern.

Conclusion

Here are a few “reality bytes” derived from first-hand experience during the past two years:

- I believe in the 1099 World and advocate it for Boomers in transition or considering phased retirement. To be successful in the future, organizations will need to enlist the “phase-retired” boomer as a part time consultant to help mentor the next generation of leaders.
- Labels are great for trend analysis, but in reality – no one likes being thought of as a “label”. I prefer to drop the labels (Baby Boomer, Generation X, and Generation Y) and treat everyone as individual human beings when assisting people with their career decisions and plans. This really speaks to Levering’s point about “demonstrating personal concern”.
- It is possible to take a rational approach to the projected workforce shortages as boomers retire from their traditional “9-to-5” jobs. Organizations have a choice to make; either to rethink current resource allocation plans, or not. Make the change to focus on retention rather than succession planning; or not. Think in terms of global-sourcing rather than out-sourcing; or not.
- Every organization can be a “Great Place to Work” but will only do so if there is adequate long term change in organizational behavior. Most fail over the long term because whenever “enough” stress is introduced to the situation without adequate transition management, behavior reverts back to the “old way of doing things”.

Lorraine Lee Rinker is a Principal Consultant with Rinker and Associates (a Transition Management Organization). Possessing in-depth Fortune 100 experience and a 22-year Information Technology career culminating at the executive level, Lorraine now applies her passion for helping others find their “next step” through career and business consulting.