



Generational Branding:

RECRUITING IS AGELESS, CANDIDATES ARE NOT

April 2008

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A CHALLENGING LABOR MARKET

An estimated 5.4 million new jobs are expected to be created before 2010, and hiring managers are voicing concern over their ability to fill vacant positions with skilled staff¹. Nine out of 10 employers said finding good workers was more difficult today than compared to a year ago; anticipating the retirement of even more Baby Boomers in the next year, the same number believe it will be equally or more challenging to recruit qualified candidates to replace them 12 months from now.

ONE SIZE FITS ONE

Today's labor market presents ever-changing challenges to hiring managers, creating a vital need for employers to position their companies as places where candidates seek to work. An often overlooked threat in effective recruiting is the power of individual choice. With technology changing lives and opportunities multiplying daily, the patterns of job seekers become even more difficult to predict and understand. The one-size-fits-all approach to the world is dead. And the process of micro targeting – identifying the needs and wants of small, intense subgroups and communities² – provides an opportunity to isolate and attract the specific candidates' business needs.

THE AGE OF RECRUITING

With so many ways to self-identify – from garden clubs to social networks, professional organizations to political activism – there are unending ways by which a modern person can be defined. In a 2007 Gallup poll, 82% of Americans polled identified with a religious faith; while in a University of Minnesota study, 74% of participants indicated identifying by race was important – 37% of whom indicated it was very important³. So how can employers segment the workforce and better connect with job seekers?

One way is by generation.

The current labor market is comprised of four generations: Generation Y, Generation X, Baby Boomers and Retirees re-entering the workforce. One competitive recruiting strategy is to understand the attitudes, lifestyles and behaviors unique to each generation. Most positions warrant a level of experience held by one or more of the four generations. Communicate career opportunities in a way that resonates best with the ideal candidate and level of experience needed to fill the role. Adopting this approach engages specific candidates, delivers highly interested applicants and improves the likelihood of hiring a qualified, culturally compatible employee that

sticks. In the information that follows, learn the defining characteristics of each generation – along with ideas on how to best convey a company's brand and career opportunities to each group – and make wider strides toward becoming a true employer of choice.

GENERATION Y

Perhaps the most highly sought and complicated generation for employers, Generation Y represents the future of America's labor force. Born between 1980 and 1995, some 78 million Gen Y-ers comprise 25% of the population. A survey conducted by Harris Interactive indicated that in 2008, 58% of employers plan to hire recent college graduates, and 24% will hire more new graduates this year than they did last year. Profiling this generation is more difficult than any other because of their highly fragmented interests, lifestyles and behavior. Their strong digital lifestyle and tendency to communicate electronically often make them appear aloof, selfish and self-absorbed. But Gen Y possesses values strikingly similar to those of the Baby Boomer generation – including confidence, compassion, empowerment, ambition, tradition, optimism and idealism⁴.

The strongest defining characteristic of the Gen Y group is their technology-driven lives. Nearly all teenagers have Internet access at home, school, work, the library and a friend or relative's home. One study predicts that current 17- to 21-year-olds will spend one third of their lives (an average of 23 years⁵) on the Internet. Social networking is a cornerstone of their online behavior with more than 55% of Generation Y maintaining a profile on a social networking site and a new user joining the instant messaging (IM) community every 3.5 seconds⁶. Growth in online communities and sites like Second Life, which offers users virtual life experiences aside from their own, sheds light on the importance of community for Generation Y. Networks of friends sharing common beliefs and experiences provide a virtual community – often comprised of people who have never met in person. Sharing information among online peers is especially important to Gen Y, and often, the group members have come to value the opinion of their online peers more than their friends and family. According to the Committee for Information, Computer and Communications Policy, 16- to 24-year-olds produce the most user created content (UCC) and were instrumental in the proliferation of Web 2.0 through the use of discussion forums, blogs, web page creation and peer-to-peer file sharing.

In addition to online activity, Gen Y is the largest user group of video games and electronic devices. The popularity of video

Generational Branding

games is growing quicker than ever, with March 2008 sales increasing 50% over the previous year, as reported by market research firm NPD. A 2007 survey of 7,705 college students in the US reported that 97% own a computer, 94% own a cell phone, 76% use Instant Messaging (15% of whom are logged on 24 hours a day/7 days a week), 34% use websites as their primary source of news, 44% read blogs (28% of whom own their own), 49% download music using peer-to-peer file sharing, and 60% own some type of portable music and/or video device⁷.

Generation Y represents the fastest-growing segment of the workforce – the largest generation next to the Baby Boomers. This workforce will continue today's technological developments and create innovative alternatives in transportation, energy, engineering and the sciences for the future. Generation Y professionals are entrepreneurial and seek challenging work with a high sense of responsibility. Driven by opportunities that deliver a solid sense of accomplishment, this group puts much less emphasis on money than other generations. Creative expression and disciplined freedom to complete tasks using their own innovative methods gives Gen Y the confidence and satisfaction they need to be a loyal employee. Growing up with parents who promote higher standards for education and on-demand information at their fingertips, this workforce of 20-something professionals value opportunities for educational advancement, mentoring and advice for improving their skills. Training and growth opportunities within a company are so important that most Gen Y workers will accept less pay in exchange for meaningful work.

Generation Y has grown up among efforts to promote sustainable living and equality; therefore, it is no surprise that they, too, value an inclusive, humanitarian employer. Research suggests that this generation finds organizations that are civic contributors and socially responsible more attractive for both consumer and employment consideration. Companies that produce environmentally safe products, relief services or give back to the global community are held in highest regard. Gen Y seeks managers who treat them like valued colleagues, not subordinates, and provide guidance and feedback that aids in their professional growth. The ideal manager proactively fixes problems for his or her team and rewards above-average performance. This generation wants their ideas and opinions to be respected and taken seriously despite their limited résumés.

Recruiting and retaining this generation as they enter the workforce requires distinct employment branding. More than any other generation, this group is outspoken in wanting to know why they should work for a company and what an

employer can offer. The Internet habits of this group make a strong online presence vital to being a sought-after employer. Aside from posting open jobs online, display advertisements and targeted emails help this young generation learn more about a company's potential as an employer. Employer micro sites created specifically for Generations X and Y provide a viral opportunity to speak the language of the young workforce; telling them exactly why they should apply. Microsoft, for example, launched the View My World site this year to target trendy and diverse young art professionals for careers in software, video game and graphic design.

A presence on social networking sites like Facebook and sharing company videos on sites like YouTube allow Gen Y-ers to get access to company information and entry-level job openings and find out how their peers rate a potential employer. Respected companies like Starbucks, Google and Target have branded pages on Facebook; many others, like Chico's, are benefiting from the CareerBuilder.com partnership to create Facebook pages of their own. An organization that participates in emerging social media will become more familiar to, become easier to relate to and has a better chance at attracting top young talent. And it speaks volumes about culture. Most importantly, messages shared in social media must be authentic. Companies pretending to be something they are not can backfire when this generation discovers they have been misled, ultimately leading to rejection of career and consumer offerings.

When targeting Gen Y, an employer's brand should focus more on career opportunities, including flextime and telework, and professional development programs than compensation and 401K benefits. Continuing education should remain at the forefront of job branding and include company-sponsored training, leadership development programs and tuition reimbursement, if offered. According to the 2007 Deloitte Volunteer Impact Survey, 70% of Gen Y-ers surveyed believe companies should use volunteering as a professional development tool, while 76% responded that volunteering offers an opportunity to enhance one's leadership skills. Given these beliefs, it is no surprise the 62% prefer to work for a company that provides opportunities to apply skills to benefit non-profit organizations, or that 50% of respondents felt an employee's community involvement should be considered as part of his or her performance review. Educate Gen Y on company vision, values and community involvement in unique messages written just for them – highlighting green initiatives, civic programs and employee volunteering opportunities.

Attracting the next young workforce begins long before candidates are in the market for a job. Internship programs

Generational Branding

aimed at developing young professionals while still in college should reflect the branding of entry-level jobs that will match their experience level after graduation. Advertising these opportunities on social networks and at campus career fairs is a highly targeted way to allow future professionals to interact with, and favor, a company's employment brand.

GENERATION X

Generation X consists of 44 million people born between 1965 and 1979 and makes up about 16% of the population. Representing 34% of today's workforce, Gen X is the most diverse of all working generations at 14% African-American, 12% Hispanic and 4% Asian¹. Blended cultures make this generation more inclusive and able to empathize with global issues much more easily than generations before them.

Like their younger Gen Y successors, Gen X-ers are media savvy, technologically connected and major multitaskers. Having witnessed modern social milestones like the mainstream adoption of the personal computer and cell phones and advancements in music and television, this generation has a unique ability to adapt to change and quickly absorb large amounts of information. Growing up in the information age, the generation developed a strong culture that values constant learning. With a strong appetite for learning, Generation X seeks employers that offer professional development opportunities and career training that makes them individually more marketable. Contrary to the traditional loyalty of the older workforce, this generation embraces frequent career change—often changing jobs several times before middle age. Continuing education prepares this generation for new opportunities to achieve the things they want from work.

Members of Generation X are typically very independent and possess an innate entrepreneurial drive. Children during the era when divorce became prevalent, roughly 40% have divorced parents, and even more were raised in homes with two working parents. The first generation to know weekend visits and daycare at a young age, Gen X-ers developed self-reliance and autonomy, further contributing to their ability to easily manage change.

Maintaining a healthy work/life balance is highly valued by Generation X, who believes that worth should be measured by productivity, not hours spent working. Companies with egalitarian structures and who are supportive of this generation's desire for balance find it easier to retain employees. Interesting work and positive relationships with

colleagues are important. In a recent Fortune poll, however, over half of the 1,200 respondents reported they would accept an opportunity to commute, and 61% of Gen X women said they would leave their current job for more flexible hours. Given the openness to new opportunities and emphasis placed on fulfillment outside of work, the Generation X workforce is not loyal to employers by default. And some 77% of Gen X-ers say they would change jobs if offered "increased intellectual stimulation" at a different company.

Managers who develop mentoring relationships with Gen X employees and assist them in achieving their personal and professional goals will earn their deepest loyalty. Fortune 500 companies like Whole Foods Markets and Plante & Moran have instituted self-managed work teams and work/life balance initiatives targeted at Gen X employees. Frequent, informal feedback at work—both positive and constructive—is important to help this generation monitor their performance and how their work contributes to the success of the company. The least important things to Generation X are commonly recognition, power, prestige and salary, all of which differ greatly from what motivates Baby Boomers. Like Gen Y, this group wants to work as equals and in some cases, compensation packages developed by Boomers often miss the mark in motivating and rewarding the Generation X workforce.

To create job ads that appeal to the Generation X workforce employers, focus on encouraging self-sufficiency and detailing opportunities for growth. Demonstrate support for work/life balance by highlighting benefits like paid professional memberships and health club reimbursement, along with company sports leagues and volunteer projects. Gen X-ers prefer to communicate via email over phone calls, so targeted emails and online display ads prove most effective at raising awareness for an employer.

For those who have families, this serves as their primary motivating factor. Benefits like flex-time, telework, extra paid time off, and on-site daycare centers are a big plus to this generation. Time-saving features such as on-site valet dry-cleaning, fitness centers and health care clinics should be emphasized in job branding as well. Video Branding is excellent for reaching Generation X with employee testimonials to not only tell them, but show them all the benefits of choosing a particular employer. Generation X is interested in new technology, so creating an employment brand that includes video, micro sites and social networking will convey a culture that embraces technology and is adapting to change in the workforce.

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BABY BOOMERS

Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 and comprise roughly 40% of the total US population. According to a 2005 survey by Merrill Lynch of 3,448 US Baby Boomers, few companies focus on aging workers, lending greater focus on hiring younger, healthier workers in an effort to minimize benefit costs. Competing employee priorities like maternity leave and child care, however, render avoiding winter-off options and prescription drug coverage less effective than originally expected. Health issues that have historically positioned the aging workforce as less desirable are diminishing – mostly due to the proliferation of the information age. The modernization of the work environment and healthcare improvements, ranging from drug enhancements to the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, also make working longer possible.

Given that aging workers can work longer, will they? That answer is yes. Many Baby Boomers are already working long past retirement age, and that number is expected to grow. The Merrill Lynch study revealed that more than three in four Baby Boomers have no intention of seeking traditional retirement⁸. Reasons for continuing to work included retaining health insurance and income needed to maintain a current lifestyle; however, the desire to keep working for a sense of connectedness, mental and physical activity, and the ability to make a meaningful contribution was often the more important motivator.

Although aging Baby Boomers can be expected to work full steam ahead, they are less likely to stay in the same career in their later years. As children leave the nest and financial security is achieved, many Boomers begin seeking more meaningful work in the second-half of life. The concept of putting professional skills to use for greater good is widespread, best summarized by a comment of Dick Tarlow, President of Revlon's in-house advertising agency, "I've got, what 10 good years left? Why not use 'em to help other people." Examples of shifting gears to find purpose range from doctors who switch from private practice to working in free clinics to school teachers joining the Peace Corps. And executives are exiting their corporate roles to launch foundations and serve as leadership for not-for-profit organizations.

According the June 2006 U.S. News and World Report, mature people highly value the opportunity to do work that matters to the larger community. The concept of working with a purpose is embraced by companies seeking the unique Boomer market, including Motto Magazine. The magazine,

whose mantra includes "We believe it's impossible to have a meaningful life without meaningful work..." is the first media company for people seeking fulfilling work with purpose, passion and profit.

If trends continue as indicated, it will mean good news for employers. Not only does it ease the risk of a mass Baby Boomer exodus into retirement, but it provides a unique opportunity to retain and leverage the contributions of experienced professionals. Of the four generations, Baby Boomers are the most loyal and are less likely to leave their current employer unless offered the right opportunity. The group tends to be very cautious with career moves in later stages of life and want meaningful opportunities with a minimum level of job security. With a strong work ethic, Boomers value status and career paths, rather than vacation time and money.

Brand image and culture is perhaps more important with Baby Boomers than any other generation in the workforce. And since they are nearing their last career move, benefits like 401K are more important than with younger workers. As a potential employer, attracting this group requires a unique and different approach when describing the company's core values and career opportunities. Appeal to their desire to contribute to a greater good by outlining charitable contributions, donation matching policies and the organization's not-for-profit involvement in the corporate overview statement. Provide tangible examples of enriching culture and emphasize a healthy work/life balance by describing team-building programs and paid volunteering programs if offered. In addition to humanitarian values, provide a detailed company and job profile to highlight the organization's stability. Specific investor information, including growth projections and future strategic outlook, will also enhance employer credibility.

One way to ensure that Baby Boomers receive a message tailored specifically to their values is by identifying open positions which require their level of experience and creating those postings with a unique job branding. Candidates who possess more professional experience will naturally be attracted to higher-level positions, but they will be more than twice as likely to apply if the company highlights and job description provide the information they care most about. Having a presence on career sites like PrimeCB.com, created just for aging workers, is another effective way to ensure a company's opportunities are specifically targeting the mature workforce.

Generational Branding

RETIREES

Today, there are 5 million workers aged 65 and older in the US labor force, more than double that of the early 1980's. And the population will continue to grow as the total is expected to more than double again in the next 20 years – increasing from 35 million to over 71 million people. Health care and technology will give this growing group another edge: they will be healthier, better educated, more affluent and live longer than any other seniors in history.

Like the Baby Boomer generation, retirees continue to work past retirement for health care coverage, mental and physical activity and a sense of belonging. According to a Harris Interactive poll that asked workers why they are postponing retirement, 44% surveyed said it was because they could not afford to retire, while 33% said they “need the health insurance benefits.” Twenty-three percent responded that “enjoying their job” was a reason for staying on. Medical care is one of the greatest needs of the aging population and social security payments applied to rising health care costs create the need for supplemental income for some seniors.

While some mature workers are expressing an interest in postponing retirement, there's still a large number of this critical segment of workers who will be leaving their current jobs in the next decade. The challenge now is connecting retirees with employers who want to preserve the value of having these experienced and skilled workers at their companies. A CareerBuilder.com survey revealed that one in five employers (22%) say that given the shortage of qualified workers, they are planning to rehire retirees from other companies in 2008. Thirty percent of employers surveyed said they were concerned about the loss of intellectual capital at their organization due to the large number of workers approaching retirement age, and 14% of employers said they were looking at how to provide incentives for older workers to stay with the company longer.

These concerns are apparently well-founded, as 27% of workers aged 50 or older said they don't have much opportunity to share their knowledge with younger workers. When asked what employers could offer to make it more attractive for them to stay in the workforce, a majority of workers age 50 or older recommended the introduction of more flexible work schedules and greater control over their own job; while others pointed to the ability to mentor others and greater time to pursue other interests within the company.

As seniors stay active and live longer, the simple desire to work becomes even stronger. The typical American works an average of 1,800 hours per year, much more than most countries around the world. US workers also take fewer vacation days than the Western workforce, leaving nearly half unused and logging an average of 13 days of vacation to the 28-day average in Great Britain and 37-day average in France. And according to a poll where 23% of participants checked their voicemail or email while away from the office, today's vacations are not completely devoid of work – a statistic that increases an average of 7% each year.

The word “retirement” is derived from the French word “retirer” meaning to “go off into seclusion”; however, the traditional definition, marked by days at the golf course and evenings in the bingo hall, is becoming less typical among today's retirees. Many of the seniors that do take retirement re-enter the workforce within three years. Trends indicate that lower-income retirees move toward retail, often part-time opportunities as they re-enter the workforce. Hourly employers can utilize these responsible, experienced retirees to lead teams and perform thorough, reliable work. Individuals with higher incomes prior to retiring find roles as consultants and independent contractors in a field they love. Older workers make up 7% of independent contractors, versus only 2.5% of workers in traditional arrangements; creating tremendous opportunity for more traditional full-time employers to obtain highly-skilled consultants while minimizing the costs of staffing permanent positions.

The working retired can mean huge opportunities for employers, including a substantially larger workforce than analysts had projected. Roughly two million Americans turn 65 each year, and if half of them decided to keep working, that would be more than one million unexpected participants in the labor force – or almost an additional 1% of the current workers².

		1985	2006			1985	2006
Men	65-69	25%	35%	Women	65-69	13%	24%
Men	70+	11%	13%	Women	70+	5%	8%

To attract this valuable generation, employers – including Wal-Mart, McDonald's, CVS Pharmacy and Honda dealerships – have begun creating work programs targeting seniors. Home Depot joined with AARP in 2004 to create a program that allows snowbird seniors to transfer between stores in different geographic locations during the winter and summer

Generational Branding

months. Retirees offer a strong work ethic and extensive work experience, and demonstrate exceptional personal relations with co-workers and patrons, making them ideal candidates for public-facing roles such as greeters and at info booths.

The best way to show that a company's job opportunities are a right fit for seniors approaching retirement, or retirees re-entering the workforce, is through unique branding initiatives that speak specifically to them. This generation seeks information on flexible work hours, disability or health accommodations, medical benefits (if offered), volunteer opportunities, vacation policies and detailed job descriptions of part-time work. Highlight special programs created just for retired workers – including involvement with foundations like AARP. Retirees are less concerned with money and career advancement, so appeal to their need to give back by communicating clearly how their contributions will have a positive impact on the organization.

Along with branding the company as a place to work for seniors, consider adopting flexible working arrangements that enable retirees to enjoy their newfound social life and the benefits of working in the second half of life. Posting hourly job openings using language and branding that will resonate with retirees is another way to reach this audience online. Put a new spin on traditional methods of recruitment, such as custom magazines distributed at senior centers and career fairs in retirement communities, to demonstrate senior-friendly employment opportunities. And there's no need to discount emerging methods of recruitment advertising, such as targeted emails and job ads that also offer a consumer incentive. Seniors are online and, since they tend to exchange less email, read more of what they do receive. Finally, seniors who remember the Depression era demonstrate higher frugality and redeem incentives more than any other generation, so job ads co-branded with a consumer offer are a great way to engage this group as well.

GETTING STARTED

Implementing generation-specific branding initiatives can be a reality with the help of CareerBuilder.com. For more information on solutions that help you communicate effectively to the generation with the experience level you seek, refer to the Generational Branding Solution Supplement.

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