

## The Boomer Shift

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Bernie Young's firm helps companies prepare for the time their Baby Boomer managers ride off into the sunset.

**L**LITTLE BABY BOOMERS GROW UP. They find steady jobs. Then they retire. And with them goes a graying head full of knowledge unique to the company that employed them. If that knowledge isn't captured before Baby Boomers amble off into the sunset, the

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organizations left behind may literally "lose their minds."

And that's when the "shift hits the fan," says Bernie Young, president of St. Petersburg's Bernie Young and Associates Inc. "And companies need to be ready to deal with it."

Statistics from the Government Accounting Office concur. Between 2008 and 2030, some 76-million Baby Boomers will retire. There will be 48-million new workers available (though not necessarily skilled) to fill those Florsheims and Aerosoles, or just a 63-percent replacement rate. By 2010 the Bureau of Labor Statistics forecasts an overall worker deficit of 10-million in the United States. Tampa Bay's share of that "missing" workforce will be about 89,000.

Sounds grim, but there are solutions, Young says. "Like hurricanes, the people who complain are the ones

that don't prepare."

That's where Young and her company come in.

"What we're trying to do is create an awareness of what companies can do now ... not to get people afraid," she says, "but to create a sense of urgency."

The urgency, she says, is grounded in statistics. Consider: The first of the Baby Boomers turned 50 on January 1, 1996. Since then about 11,500 people turn 50 every day. That translates to more than 4 million annually for the next several years. Moving up along the "gray scale," nearly 6,000 Americans turn 60 every day. For the next 20 years, a Boomer will turn 60 every eight seconds. In 2012, the oldest Boomers will turn 65. In less than ten years nearly 10,000 Boomers a day will be turning 65.

"The shift," Young says, "is coming fast."

Young, 57, has been through some "shifts" of her own. She's grown from a tentative public speaker to one who has engaged crowds of up to 4,000. In 2002, she was awarded the Outstanding Business of the Year by the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

Young's career began slowly in the '70s, when, as a



### Millennials March In

Sometimes called the hottest commodity on the job market since Rosie the Riveter, Millennials – those born between 1980 and 2000 – are set to take over where the Boomers left off. Here's some tips on how to attract and keep them.

**You get to be Leader:** Millennials actually like their parents, and grew up with structure and supervision. They may want to be the leader some day, but they'd like great role models first.

**Give them a Challenge:** Millennials want assignments from which they can learn. Trying new things is their biggest wish.

**Give them Friends:** Millennials like to work with their buddies. Some companies are even interviewing and hiring groups of friends.

**Be Flexible:** Millennials are busy, connected and civic-minded. They aren't going to give up their activities due to a job. Rigid work schedules will make them run.

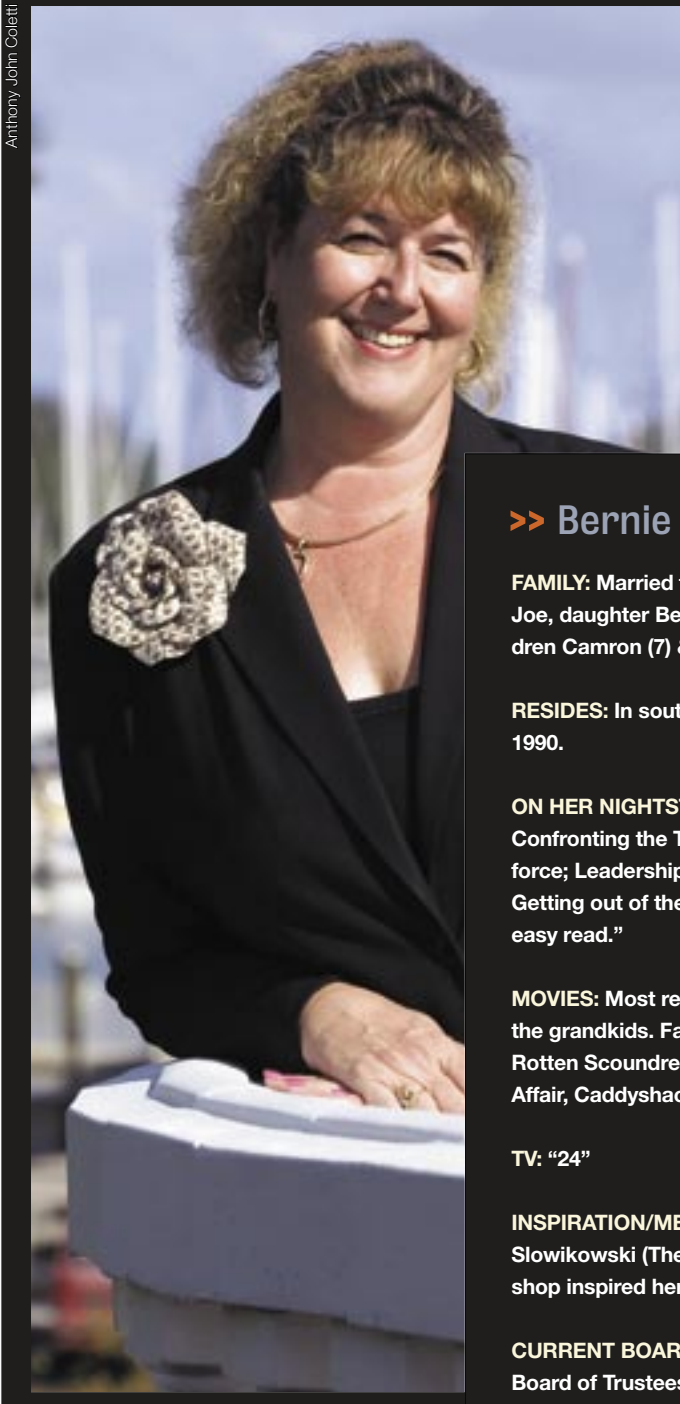
**Respect Them:** Millennials have a can-do attitude born of parents who pushed self-esteem. They'd like their ideas listened to, even though they haven't been around a long time.

**Have Fun:** A little bit of silliness will go a long way in making your work environment more appealing to Millennials.

**Do's and Don'ts:** Don't expect them to pay their dues, and don't be a killjoy with their enthusiasm. Do encourage them, mentor them and learn from them.

**Be Ready For:** High expectations and maybe even the involvement of parents.

Source: Claire Raines Associates



homemaker and mom, she found herself restless and disillusioned. “I’m 29 years old, married, with one kid,” she says, “And I’m thinking ‘is that all there is ... is this it?’”

A girlfriend invited Young to one of her workshops, and something clicked. Young decided to make her own go at public speaking and self-help workshops.

“I felt I had a calling, a gift, to help people put their lives into perspective,” she says.

Her first seminar – Journey to Self-Ful-

fillment – had zero attendees.

Her second – where she gave away free tickets – had 16. Young immediately fired off press releases boasting “1600% Increase in Seminar Attendance!”

“It’s all in how you look at it,” she laughs.

That positive spin seems to characterize Young and her company, made up of Young, her husband Joe and daughter Beth. The three work from Young’s south St. Petersburg home office and partner with project managers and research experts when needed.

Over the years, Bernie Young & Associates has developed several customer service systems, including “S.M.A.R.T. Service,” originally developed for a Texas hospital; “P.E.R.M.I.T. Us to Serve You,” developed for Pinellas County; “Service for L.I.F.E.,” developed for Florida Blood Services; and the “P.I.E.R. Team Approach to Customer Service,” developed for the St. Petersburg Pier.

As a consultant, professional speaker and corporate trainer, Young focuses on issues of leadership, change, team development, communication, strategic planning, succession planning, volunteerism and service culture. Her long list of clients includes Quaker Oats, Square D Corporation, American Hospital Association, Tech Data, Honeywell, Marriott, Nokia and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

To what does she credit her decades of success?

“What I have isn’t different from what anyone else has,” she says. “It’s all in how it’s packaged and communicated.”

Through the years, Young says she’s navigated economic twists and turns by maintaining an array of core competencies. “During times of change, we’ve been able to shift gears to best serve the needs of our clients.”

Case in point: Before the bottom fell out of the high-tech and dot-com industries, most of Young’s clientele spent big bucks for “adventure and event” teambuilding

## >> Bernie Young

**FAMILY:** Married for 34 years. Husband Joe, daughter Beth, and two grandchildren Camron (7) & Ashlynd (5).

**RESIDES:** In south St. Petersburg since 1990.

**ON HER NIGHTSTAND:** *Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Aging Workforce; Leadership and Self-Deception: Getting out of the Box*, “a phenomenal, easy read.”

**MOVIES:** Most recently, *Happy Feet with the grandkids*. Favorites include *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Thomas Crown Affair*, *Caddyshack*.

**TV:** “24”

**INSPIRATION/MENTORS:** Mary Kay Slowikowski (*The girlfriend whose workshop inspired her 27 years ago*).

**CURRENT BOARDS:** Co-chair of the Board of Trustees, Bayfront Medical Center; Chair, Quality Committee of Bayfront Board; American Stage; Executive Board of Suncoasters; Past Interim CEO of the St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE:** Instructor for St. Petersburg Chamber’s Entrepreneurial Academy; Mid-Pinellas Homeless Outreach; CASA; United Way; American Heart Association; YouthLead-Family Resources; Christmas Toy Shop; Southside Soccer Coach.

### *What is the value of personal branding?*

Just as products have a brand, so do people. Having a strong personal brand can do for you what a strong brand does for the fashion line Prada. It helps you grab attention quickly and lets employers, clients or customers know what qualities you possess and what they can expect from you consistently.



Creating an effective brand is a painstaking process requiring serious self-evaluation and the discipline to act on your brand principles and promise. Keep in mind that a brand is simply people's experience with you over time, so you already have a brand. Only you know how well it is working. If you'd like it to work better, then here's what you need to do.

First, our brands are always authentic. If individuals try to be something they are not, then they will be branded phonies. So pinpoint the qualities you already possess, including what you do and how you do it, your personal style. Next, identify your values, which could be the desire for achievement, to make a difference, to win, to explore, to be independent, to be secure. The list is different for everyone. From those qualities and values, you must ultimately develop your brand promise, which is what you pledge to deliver over and over again.

This is not easy work, and many people hire a personal brand coach who can help you define your brand and support you to live up to it daily. If you do, you will have no trouble standing out from the crowd.

— Sue Engelhart  
Sue Engelhart & Associates  
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sessions.

"As the dot-coms disappeared and the technology industry dried up, so did our Team Adventures," Young says, "and at the time, our adventures were responsible for almost 40 percent of our revenue."

Young shifted her focus to customer service processes and leadership succession programs. Her new passion is in helping organizations dodge the workforce shift as it hits the fan, preparing for the future as Baby Boomers retire.

"As Baby Boomers leave, companies will have to make decisions based on 'mission-critical' positions," Young says. "If a position is mission-critical, you can not lose it."

Don Doddridge, CEO of Florida Blood Services (FBS), is one client of Young's who saw the writing on the wall. "We were looking for ways to develop our employees internally," he says, "because our top management were all approaching late middle age, and we needed to think about who would replace them when they retired."

With Young's coaching and personality profiling, FBS identified potential future leaders and implemented mentoring programs, leadership training and an array of courses to hone employees' leadership skills.

"We can lay out a plan for them now," Doddridge says. "People may have thought they were in a dead-end job, now they realize they can be vice president. I feel confident it's going to help us produce better people to assume those retiree roles."

Young also helped FBS and its some 600 employees create a strategic business plan.

"I don't think you need a consultant

every time you turn around," Doddridge says, "but sometimes you do need outside people looking in at your organization. Bernie helps you get out of the box."

Getting out of that box on succession planning is complex. Management, Young says, are usually Boomers themselves. Their challenge is to renew themselves and be the architects of the future organization. Her method relies on guiding companies to identify their ideal team, their mission-critical positions, their ideal leaders and their possible leaders from an internal pool. Once potential leaders are singled out, Young and her partners weed through them using a scenario-based assessment tool.

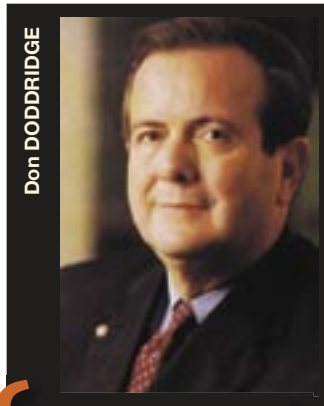
"Companies are sometimes a little bit scared, a little bit intimidated about succession planning," Young says, "but when you've worked so hard to build the company, you have to plan to keep it going."

Since the inception of her leadership selection process, Young says the candidates she's helped to identify and assess have stayed with their companies a minimum of five years with many still in leadership roles.

Young, a Boomer herself, has laid out

her own company's succession plan. Her daughter, who's been "on the road" with her since she was five years old, is set take over. But Young hasn't stopped there.

Her grandson, just seven years old, is helping her with an upcoming presentation in Washington, DC. "I'm taking it a step further," she laughs. "I'm even preparing the next generation." ☐



Don DODDRIDGE

Bernie helps you get out of the box."