



Generational Employment Attitudes

November 2007

Baby Boomers, the generation that once fully expected to be marginalized from the workplace mainstream by the time they hit midlife and beyond, are sounding surprisingly upbeat these days. How do the various generations view their position in today's workforce? Do they want to continue to work as long as they can? As they age, are they getting the respect they feel they deserve? Recent research conducted by the Natural Marketing Institute in conjunction with the FH Boom whitepaper "Boomer Wanted", sheds some light on how Boomers feel about their jobs, their prospects and their general optimistic outlook about their work lives.

Length of employment

The majority of people who are currently employed believe they will be able to continue working as long as they would like, even as they get older. In fact, Boomers are just as likely as Gen Y or Gen X to think so. While this may reveal a very positive aspect of Boomers perception of their position in the workforce, it may also reveal some underlying Boomer attitudes which may change the dynamics of the future workforce. Current research shows that Boomers are less prepared for retirement than they need to be. Boomers, therefore, may be realizing that retirement at 65 may not be an option and that they will have to continue to work in order to support themselves at their current status. The Boomers may have also taken full advantage of the "buy now, pay later" attitude of the 1990's, and it is now, "later", another reason Boomers may need to prolong their presence among the employed.

Figure 1: % Those employed who strongly/somewhat agree that they believe they will be able to continue working as long as they would like

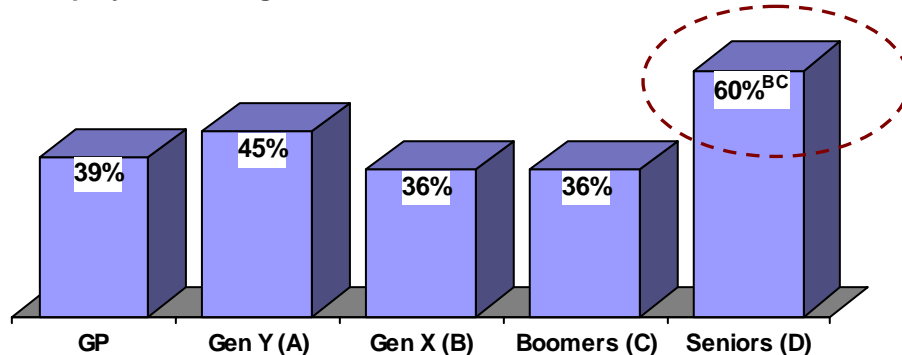


Accommodating

Almost two out of five employed people (39%) feel that as they get older, their employer is willing to be flexible in order to accommodate them in their current position, or if need be, find them a position equal to the one they currently possess. Neither the level of education nor the income level makes any difference in an employer’s willingness to be flexible, perhaps indicative that the value of an employee is not defined by their income or education, but by other intangibles such as loyalty, honesty and hard work.

Age, however, does seem to be a factor. Seniors, defined as those over the age of 61, or “post Boomer”, are significantly more likely to indicate their employers are willing to be flexible with them, compared to Gen X and Boomers.

Figure 2: % Those employed who strongly/somewhat agree that their employer is willing to be flexible in order to accommodate them



On a more negative note, Boomers are more likely to somewhat/strongly *disagree* that their employers are flexible with them compared to younger generations. In fact, a quarter of Boomers (25%) compared to only 13% of Gen Y or Gen X do not believe their employer is willing to be flexible and accommodate them in their current position. This perception plays against Boomers’ belief that they will be able to work as long as they

desire. If employers are not willing to accommodate them or find an equivalent position for them, they may not be able to stay in the workforce for the length of time or at the level they want.

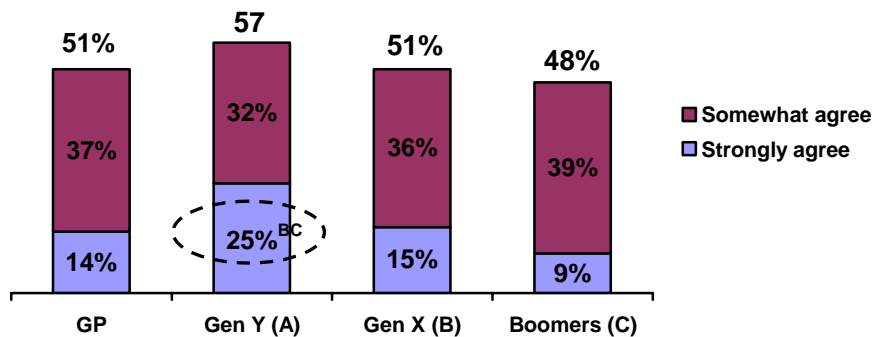
Respect at work

Half of the population agrees that the older they get, the more they are respected at their job. While there are no differences between men and women and the perceived level of respect they receive at work, education does appear to make a difference. College educated respondents are more likely to feel that as they get older they are more respected at their job (63%) than those with less than a college education (46%).

No significant differences occur across generations in the amount of respect they feel, with one exception. Generation Y (18-27 year olds) are significantly more likely to “strongly” agree that they gain more respect at work, the older they get.

Boomers also feel they are respected more as they get older, proving false the widely held perception that older employees do not feel respected. While Boomers may see their employer as less flexible with them as they grow older, it may not be due to less respect by the employer. It may, in fact, be evidence that after spending many years in the workforce, Boomers’ skill set may be somewhat limited or less responsive to change, giving the impression that they are not capable of performing well in other positions or in different circumstances. This highlights opportunities for continued education programs to help keep Boomers relevant.

% Those employed who agree that "when thinking about their job, the older they get, the more they are respected"



About Natural Marketing Institute

NMI is an international strategic consulting, market research, and business development company specializing in health, wellness and sustainability. For more information on NMI’s proprietary research reports and services, visit NMI’s web site at <http://www.nmisolutions.com/>.

About Fleishman-Hillard

Fleishman-Hillard Inc., one of the world's leading public relations firms has built its reputation by using strategic communications to deliver what its clients value most: meaningful, positive, and measurable impact on the performance of their organizations. The firm is widely recognized for excellent client service and a strong company culture founded on teamwork, integrity, and personal commitment. Based in St. Louis, the firm operates throughout North America, Europe, Asia, Latin America, Australia, and South Africa through its 80 owned offices. For more information, visit the Fleishman-Hillard Web site at www.fleishman.com.

About FH Boom

Fleishman-Hillard is the first global PR firm to offer a U.S.-based practice group that is exclusively dedicated to helping companies build powerful relationships with the men and women of the baby boomer generation. For more information, visit www.TheBoomerBlog.com.