

Ask the Young Professional

Q. What job-search advice can you offer to recent college graduates?



A. “Stay positive. You may not get the perfect job right out of college but embracing the challenge of something outside your comfort zone will help you grow. You will learn valuable and marketable skills no matter what first job you take.”

– **Jackie Berti**, event planner, Heritage Hill State Historical Park



A. “Take advantage of networking opportunities your college offers. If you’ve participated in an internship or have worked during your college career, be sure to highlight this work experience and the relevant skills that you offer as a result. Be aggressive with posting your resume on several search engines. Brand yourself. Utilize social media outlets such as LinkedIn to highlight your skills and experience and to connect with other people.”

– **Tonya Dittman**, marketing coordinator, Miron Construction Co.



A. “Regardless of what line of work you may be headed toward, consider planning just the next four years of your life (as you did with college). Rather than forecasting a vision long into the future, spend a few years obtaining experiences. Learn the practical things you haven’t. Find your passion. Discover yourself.

Commit to four years of development, contemplation and reflection so that you’ll know what you want in the next chapter of your life. Chances are, that isn’t all that employable at the moment – but it will be when combined with some unique experiences that allow you to discover what suits you best and makes you happy.”

– **Nadia Farr**, communications specialist, EAA



A. “Get out there and advertise yourself by networking. It is the best way to find a job. Don’t be shy about who you are and your talents. Social networking is great, but it is priceless to meet a potential employer in person through networking.

– **Dawn Philippi**, internet marketing specialist, Infinity Technology Inc.



A. “Gain exposure and market yourself any way possible. In addition to the traditional sending of resumes, get involved in networking opportunities to meet quality people in the fields you might be looking for. It is much easier to make a positive impression in person,

than it is on paper. By making that impression, you stand to be referred to other potential people and opportunities you might have missed.”

– **John Woerfel**, financial representative, Northwestern Mutual Financial Network

Answers are from members of the Current Young Professionals Network, a Green Bay Chamber of Commerce program designed to facilitate professional and personal growth among young professionals.

OPINION

Boomers key to economic recovery

**LARRY
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I get tons of e-mails. Many are from national book publishers asking if I want to interview authors about their most recent book. Usually, I just hit the delete button, but the subject line in one I received last week – “Why Baby Boomers Are Key To Economic Recovery” – caught my eye.

Being born in 1946 puts me on the leading edge of the baby-boomer generation, which is defined as the group of people born in this country between 1946 and 1964.

Now, I despise terms such as leading edge and state-of-the-art. But, in this rare occasion, I’ll let it slide – because all of us born in 1946 really are the leading edge. I also like to think of myself as state-of-the-art, but I leave that to you to decide. I’m also beginning to grow fond of another title for those of my generation – Aging Hipster.

My apologies to Generation Xers, the MTV Generation, and Generation Y, but I believe the author of this book, Steve Howard, is right.

According to the e-mail pitch I received for Howard’s latest book, “Boomer Selling,” boomers control more than half of the discretionary spending in the country, hold more than 70 percent of the country’s wealth and are still spending that money, even during the recession. That’s why, he wrote, they hold the key to America’s economic recovery and why the best thing American business could do right now is market to boomers.

“When the American economy recovers, it will be on the backs of baby boomers,” Howard said. “Consumer spending is the backbone of our economy, and boomers are still spending – they are simply being more

selective than before the recession. When selling to them, you can’t ‘quick close’ them (passing a trillion-dollar stimulus bill without evening reading it?), you can’t corner them into buying something they don’t want (putt-putt cars?) and you can’t trick them into buying something they can’t afford (huge deficits?).”

Boomers, he said, carry with them not only the hopes of companies that offer consumer products and services, but also the economy itself. “When it’s crunch time in the ball game, you field your best players,” Howard said. “In a recession, the best spenders are the star athletes, and right now, they are boomers. They are ... smart consumers, and their buying patterns help the cream of American business rise to the top.”

In his book, Howard describes the characteristics of boomers:

- They are smart, caring, direct, confident and suspicious.
- Marketers and sales people have been trying to sell to them since they saw their first cereal commercial on a 12 inch black and white TV (before cable).
- Sales tricks and pressure tactics do nothing but insult them.

- They not only know the value of a dollar, but they also know the value of a penny. They’ll buy a \$1,000 suit at Nordstrom’s, then stop at Wal-Mart for socks.

- They’ll bargain and haggle at the drop of a hat. Their favorite question is “is that the best you can do?”

- They know they are special, and believe they should be recognized for being unique.

Not listed above is something I also believe makes boomers the key to economic recovery. It’s the past experiences they can draw from.

When I was a child, the first house I lived in had no hot water and we had a fruit cellar with a dirt floor, not a basement. We had no TV. My first job was as a car hop where I was paid \$1 an hour. When I graduated from high school, my dad was making less than \$10,000 a year as a paper-mill plumber. The first new car I bought was in 1973, when I was 27. It cost \$3,000. The first house my wife and I bought, in 1975, cost \$14,000. At the time, we thought we lived well, and we were happy.

So, boomers, along with holding more than 70 percent of the country’s wealth, also carry with them a historical perspective no following generation has

To rephrase one of Howard’s comments, government leaders – in Washington and Madison – need to convince boomers they’re headed down the right path. So far, it appears they haven’t. When they do, baby boomers are likely to become the next notable generation – the economic-recovery boomers.

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