

Today's BOOMER

The Business and Lifestyle Newsletter of TheAmericanBoomer



Welcome

We invite you to learn more about our business and services.

Welcome to the first edition of Today's Boomer Newsletter. The focus of our newsletter is to acquaint our clients and you with our business and provide you with organization and lifestyle Strategies For Success.

The AmericanBoomer Group is a Madison Wisconsin based Speaking/Consulting and Internet Enterprise dedicated to improving the performance of business, the lifestyles of America's Baby Boom Generation and making a difference.

Future editions will devote more space to business/lifestyle issues with information and resources to help you cope in this chaotic .com world.

Founder/Editor Profile

**Meet John Vardallas,
owner of TheAmericanBoomer**

Hello I am John Vardallas the Founder/CEO of TheAmericanBoomer. My business and life have evolved into a personal mission of helping people and organizations reach their potential and live more fulfilling lives.

As a professional speaker and consultant I have had over 25 years of experience working with business and non-profit organizations in the health care, education, retail, hospitality and financial services industries.

Through this newsletter we hope to share with you a few ideas to help you prosper in today and tomorrows world. You can also find out more about us by going to our web site www.theamericanboomer.com

TOP 10 Strategies To Improve Your Economic Prospects

1. Keep Up Your Skills
2. Do Not Limit Yourself to One Employment Sector
3. Market Yourself
4. Build Networks
5. Stay Connected with Peers, Family and Friends
6. Learn to Live Beneath Your Means
7. Learn to Think Outside The Organizational Box
8. Reward Yourself Periodically by Celebrating Your Accomplishments
9. Stay Positive
10. Maintain a Survivor Mindset

Check out AARP's efforts to help older workers find jobs through the Featured Employers Program at www.aarp.org.

Career Survival

Reinventing Yourself

Reinventing yourself is no longer a career strategy reserved for Hollywood entertainers. In today's economy it's necessary for survival. About one half of all Americans 45 to 54 years old report being dissatisfied with their jobs, according to a recent survey by the Conference Board, a research organization based in New York.

Even though the economy is picking up speed, most economists are forecasting a jobless expansion for the next few years. During the last economic downturn, organizations paid the price for maintaining large staffs; they are reluctant to "staff up" again. The result is that lay-offs and downsizing will continue to be commonplace.

If you are unhappy with your job and your intuition tells you a job layoff is imminent, it's a good idea to have a strategy to maintain your professional and personal edge. And if you're considering a career change, there are actions to take to make this happen. In a nutshell, you'll want to be prepared to reinvent yourself. The following is a strategy for your professional development.

Conduct a Professional & Personal Inventory

Make an honest assessment of your marketable skills and determine which can be transferred to another career. For example, if you are a marketing manager with writing, communications and sales skills, these skills could be transferred into a public relations position.

Networking is critical to professional development and potential career change. Most people find a new job through personal contacts. Ask your friends and

colleagues about opportunities in the areas you are interested in pursuing. Think of your network as your personal database that needs to be continually refined and updated.

Identify Your Professional Goals

What do you really want to be doing with the next five, ten years of your life? The days of lifelong employment are a thing of the past—most of us will have several careers in our work life. If you are considering a new career, what additional skills do you need to bring to the employment table?

Additional training doesn't necessarily mean going back to school, but it could mean courses at night or weekends. After conducting your inventory it may include technical courses, training in a new technology, or advanced college coursework. Volunteer work is a great way to obtain both skills and experience. It's an inexpensive method of trying out a new career without a large professional or emotional investment. It's also a way to make new connections.

Develop the Ability to Respond to Change

Develop flexibility to be able to adapt and adjust to changing situations and different work patterns so you are not tied to a particular job or type of organization. Starting a new career can mean a smaller paycheck and less prestige. It's a good idea to have savings for at least six months of living expenses for a safety net.

Become a survivor—one with resiliency who is not thrown by crisis, defeats, or failures. You want to bounce back, learn from failure, and realize things could be worse—keep a positive attitude and Never Let Go Of Your Dreams!

Boomers Plan for Retirement

Now that the proposed changes to Social Security have become a national debate, many Americans are starting to think seriously about their retirement plans. People are now healthier and expected to live longer. It is no longer unusual to spend as much time in retirement as in working full-time. Many retirees are depending on relatives, government assistance and part-time work to survive. The 70-year-old at the grocery check-out is likely to be partnered with another retiree bagging groceries.

Special Challenge for Boomers

Baby boomers will make up the largest population of retired workers in history with the longest life expectancy. Boomers will be the most diverse group of retirees. They may be funding their children's education, supporting adult children, and caring for elderly parents.

While some boomers do an adequate job of saving for retirement, many wait until it is too late. People have a difficult time estimating their retirement expenses because they fail to keep track of their own spending habits.

Estimate Your Spending Habits

It's a fallacy to assume that your spending habits will dramatically decline during retirement. Many retirees travel and pursue other activities that keep themselves occupied. The first step in retirement planning is to get an estimate of your expenses—your annual cost of living. There are several ways to do this.

- Keep a journal of everything you spend for a few months.
- Compile the year's expenses via cancelled checks, bills, and cash withdrawals.
- Determine your take-home pay over a period of time. Calculate what you've saved—what's left will give you an idea of what you are spending.

Retirement Income

After you've estimated your expenses, you'll need to determine if your retirement income will cover your living expenses. Only one-third of boomers save enough of what they need to retire at their income level, according to *USA Today*. The “three-legged stool” of retirement income consists of personal savings, Social Security and pensions.

It's a good idea to get an estimate of your Social Security benefits. The Social Security administration began mailing out benefit statements to those 25 years and older in 1999. If you haven't received yours, visit the Social Security Web site at www.ssa.gov or call 800-772-1213.

If you have a pension or 401K, calculate your benefits. If a previous employer went out of business, you may still be able to claim benefits. The Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation guarantees pensions and lists names of people that have unclaimed money due them. You can find the list at www.pbgc.gov.

Add up all of your personal savings and determine how much you can withdraw each year. Make sure to determine any other expenses you'll likely have during your retirement. A recent survey indicated that two out of every three boomers think that they will be the primary caregiver for an elderly parent or family member. A nursing home can cost from \$45,000 to \$55,000 a year.

All of these dynamics will re define retirement and may call for Boomers to stay engaged in work beyond their golden years. More resources on this issue can be accessed at www.aarp.org

Leadership Is a Fine Art

The story has been told so many times it has become a business cliché. A staff member is well-regarded and competent in his technical area; he is promoted to management. And after a few years, it becomes evident that he is inadequate as a leader. Leadership requires skills that are quite different from the technical skills of creating new software or developing a marketing campaign for a new product.

Leadership is a fine art that few practice well. A competent leader is not a manager but one who develops an environment for employees that is develops trust, open communications, accountability and involvement.

Employees become leaders because colleagues accept them in that role—a mere title does not convey leadership. Every organization has “unofficial” leaders who others turn to for guidance.

We Are What We Do

“We are not what we think, or what we say, or how we feel. We are what we do,” said Dr. Gordon Livingston in his book, *Too Soon Old, Too Late Smart: Thirty True Things You Need to Know Now*.

“Conversely in judging other people we need to pay attention to not what they promise but to how they

TOP 10 Executive Tips For Coping in a Chaotic .com World

1. Focus on Your Goals & Passions.
2. Learn to Say No more Often.
3. Use All of Your Vacation Time.
4. Delegate More Often.
5. Handle an issue Once.
6. Take a Break or Getaway if You Need One.
7. Do Something for Others.
8. Keep Yourself Growing & Learning.
9. Learn to Release More of Your Endorphins through Laughter, Exercise, Love.
10. Never Let Go of Your Dreams.

Leadership (continued)

behave. This simple rule could prevent much of the pain and misunderstanding that infect human relationships,” said Livingston.

Your employees will be judging your leadership by your actions, not your words. And what Dr. Livingston writes is apt for the work place; a good deal of misunderstanding could be avoided if management actions are allied to their words. Leaders lead by example. Employees are weary of hearing the latest management philosophy only to see their managers doing the opposite.

As a leader you need to match your actions with your words. Nothing thwarts success like hypocrisy. If, for example, you say your door is always open, or that “I’ll give you all the resources you need—just ask,” you need to honor that and other statements you make. What you say is important; it sets direction for what the organization sees as its goals. By doing what you say you are going to do, you’ll be on the road to changing your organization for the better.

Interpersonal Competence

Interpersonal competence—how we get along and work with others—is the key to successful leadership in the

21st century. It is simply the method by which we figure out how to get what you need in each work relationship. Whether you personally like or dislike an individual is irrelevant; successful leaders have the flexibility to work with a variety of personalities.

Understanding your personal style is vital to becoming an effective leader; it will help you gauge your effect on others. Leaders can affect their employees profoundly. There is no one “right” or “wrong” personal style, but there are personality traits that are helpful in the workplace. In a service-based industry, people work with others in confined areas and in often intense situations. Flexibility, resiliency, adaptability and optimism are important skills to possess.

Leadership is a mindset—it’s a way of thinking and being and carrying out your daily responsibilities. In facing uncertain times, the words of Alexander the Great are instructive, “Difficulties are only steps to a goal. A courageous person calls them challenges.”

America’s Kings & Queens Deserve World Class Service

As the United States continues its evolution to a service economy, providing good service becomes more critical. But, as most consumers attest—and research backs this up—good service is hard to find, and exceptional service is even rarer. Organizations that provide world class service have a competitive advantage.

One of the reasons is lack of employee training. If exceptional customer service is a goal, most organizations need to invest in continuous training that focuses on developing a long-term approach. The ultimate goal is to create “lifetime” relationships with customers. When viewed as a one-time transaction, both the customer and the organization lose—you want your customers to come back again and again.

Kings and Queens of America

Customers should be regarded as the Kings and Queens of America because they provide us with choice, access and resources. Customers don’t have to frequent our organizations. They are the lifeblood of our business, but many organizations are quite willing to bleed themselves to death.

World class service should be regarded as the key competitive advantage organizations have in the service industry. Organizations can compete on price, products and convenience. What will differentiate us in the marketplace is our friendly and warm service—being our customer should truly have its advantages.

Customer/Member Centric

Organizations that add true value to consumer lifestyles will be the ones that succeed in the future. Organizations need to become “customer/member centric” to continue to differentiate themselves from other services. Customer centric is simply putting the customer’s needs first and foremost. After every transaction, the employee should ask with sincerity: “Is there anything else I can do to help you?”

A CEO was asked about the type of employee he was hiring for a new store. He said that it was important to get the “right people, friendly, bubbly, inviting, the type of person that would ask you in for cup of coffee.” These are the type of employees that put the customer first.

Employees must be trained to value the customer in all interactions. This training should include professionalism, sales, and coaching. In order for this to happen, the management must treat its employees in the same manner.

There’s no secret to world-class service. The next time you are in a service organization, and are treated poorly, ask yourself how the organization treats its own employees. Then ask how your own employees would answer that same question. Their answers will tell you whether you have world class service.

TOP 10 Traits of an Effective Leader

1. A powerful business and people acumen.
2. The ability to inspire and motivate people.
3. A visionary and strategic thinker.
4. Being a servant leader.
5. A curiosity of the world.
6. The ability to build trust in partnerships/alliances.
7. A facilitator of change.
8. A risk taker.
9. The ability to convert ideas into practice.
10. A developer of people.



John A. Vardallas, CAE
Editor
Founder/CEO

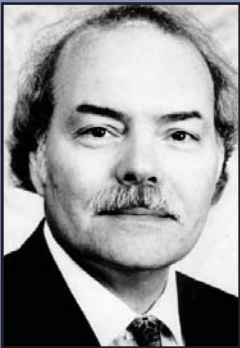
TheAmericanBoomer
6 Loretta Court
Madison, Wisconsin 53716
USA

(608) 221-4621

Cell (608) 577-8707

jvardallas@aol.com

www.theamericanboomer.com



John A. Vardallas, CAE
Speaker/Business/
Lifestyle Strategist



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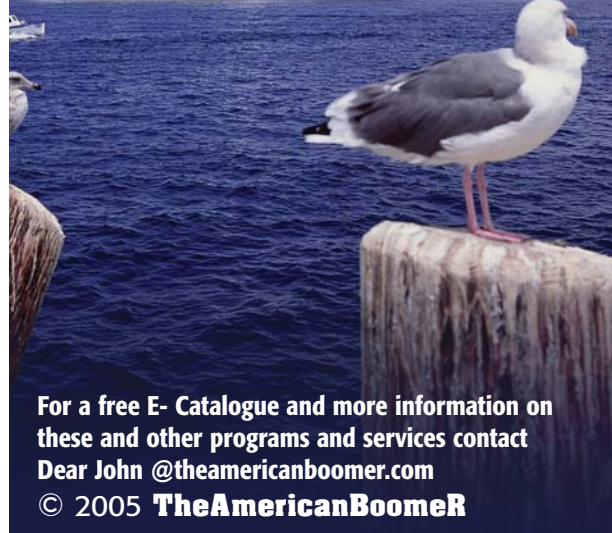
- 50 Is The New 30: *"A Boomers Guide For Achieving The American Dream"*
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Need A Facilitator to help improve your organizations Strategic Planning Process?

- Johns "Sherpa Guide Approach" To Strategic Planning Facilitation may be the answer

Want to Plan A Program on a Cruise Ship?

Contact the Boomers Partner Captain Tony Robinson (high seas meeting planner extraordinaire) Check Our 2005 Schedule of EduCruises @www.educruises.com.



For a free E- Catalogue and more information on these and other programs and services contact Dear John @theamericanboomer.com

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