

Hello and welcome!

An article in the AFR Magazine a few months ago, quoted David Droga, Creative Chairman of Droga5, as saying that "All communication has to be mutually beneficial now. Entertain me, inform me, educate me, inspire me and be honest with me. Just don't bore me, patronise me or take my attention for granted."

We will do our best to live up to this in our newsletters. Our objective is to lighten your load, keep you up-to-date, and perhaps even tell a story or two.

So in this issue, we introduce the first part in a series called "Through My Eyes", which tells the story of organisational change through the eyes of different participants. This episode features **The Career Professional**. And to keep you up-to-date and actively thinking about important topical issues, we offer a brief take on **Boomers in organisational bathwaters: sink, swim or go with the flow?**

We appreciate that you might have different ideas about what is entertaining, informative, educational or inspirational, so we invite you to send us your comments, along with any suggestions you might have for future editions.

With our very best regards,

The Team at Lee Hecht Harrison.

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The Career Professional

Think about this: you are a senior manager, mid-career. You messed around in university and managed to graduate with a business degree, majoring in finance. The first part of your career was easy. It was the 80s, you were in demand and neither a threat to more senior team members nor a major expense to organisations. You climbed the corporate ladder without giving it much thought.

Along the way you managed to keep playing some sport, have a good social life, and date. You found someone really special and married. Had children. Got a mortgage. The children grew, and you took on school fees and all the trappings that go with a successful life.

Eighteen months ago you were promoted to a senior executive role. You have been consumed with getting the business back on track; costs are creeping up, competitors have encroached on your market share, and the parent company has given you some very tough financial targets. You know that eventually – probably sooner rather than later – that will translate into reducing headcount. You spend your days racing between meetings, putting out fires, sorting out internal politics, and only at the end of the day do you get to sit down and look at what really needs to be done.

Whilst all of this is happening, you are also a single parent with two teenagers and you know you need to be home at a reasonable time to deal with the challenges of kids in secondary school.

One Tuesday morning, as the trees are just beginning to bloom, your Managing Director calls you into his office. "Please sit down," he says. You sit, cross your legs, You sense this is important, not as impromptu as it seems.

"You know that we've been looking at the organisational structure over the last few months and rationalising some of the levels of management. Consequently, your role has been made redundant as part of the national restructure."

There is a moment's pause. You are not sure what to say as the message sinks in. Your boss looks at you steadily, a little uncomfortably, waiting. You feel a whirling sensation, a flutter in the pit of your stomach.

What will you say?

(Look out for the next edition of *Careerfocus* in which we continue the story - this time through the eyes of "The Boss – I'm Just the Messenger!")





Boomers in organisational bathwaters: sink, swim or go with the flow?

The Boomer Exodus: Ready to Pass the Torch? This was the title of a recent issue of Trendwatcher – a newsletter from The Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) - which spoke of the imminent exodus from the workforce of millions of baby boomers. This is an issue that is widely acknowledged, anticipated and well documented, but not widely recognised as having immediate implications requiring action, along with debate and discussion.

In May 2008, i4cp and HR.com conducted a survey of 118 organisations and asked:

“What is HR doing to ease the transition and the transfer of knowledge from retiring Boomers to younger workers awaiting the passing of the torch?”

The survey results led to the conclusion: **“Not enough it seems.”** Other studies confirm this, and indicate that employers have been slow to seek solutions, despite a growing awareness (and concern) about the loss of corporate knowledge.

Here in Australia, it is estimated that over the next four years there will be close to a quarter of a million workers aged over 55. Increasing numbers of these older employees are preparing to leave the workforce, taking with them an invaluable store of knowledge and experience. Businesses will need to find ways to capture this knowledge, engage and retain key talent, and develop new organisational competencies. Research shows that for the majority of baby boomers, retirement is not the chosen option and they would prefer to remain at work in either a part-time or contractual capacity. Organisations will need to assess the impact of changing workforce demographics on their individual businesses.

At LHH, we too have been pondering the issues and considering how we might best support our customers to prepare for this eventuality. So early this year, we engaged a group of Management and Marketing students from The University of Melbourne to research the market and report on the potential value of career transition services specifically developed for the boomer generation.

With your permission, we would like to send you a copy of the **Executive Summary** which may help identify the ways in which these issues may impact on your own organisation.

We welcome your questions, reflections, opinions and ideas and end with a story that we feel carries a useful message – or a call to action?

There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but Nobody did it. Somebody got angry about that, because it was Everybody’s job.

Everybody thought Anybody could do it but Nobody realised that Everybody wouldn’t do it. It ended up that Everybody blamed Somebody when Nobody did what Anybody could have done.