



Baby Boomer Tool Kit



Employer's Tool Kit For Attracting,
Recruiting And Retaining Baby Boomers



Tool Kit Highlights:

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Overview of BC's Labour Market Trends

BC's Changing Demographics: Looking Ahead and the Bigger Picture

Regardless of the state of the economy, finding and keeping good employees is an ongoing challenge for any organization, and seems to be even more so for small to medium-sized tourism and hospitality businesses.

Employers who remember the last round of severe labour shortages will recall the difficulty in finding adequate staff, and in some regions of the province it was nearly impossible. These labour pains are

being felt again in BC, and they are projected to worsen over the next 10 years. Added to that, the recruitment of temporary foreign workers, a critical recruitment pool for some operators, is getting more challenging. The go2hr Baby Boomer Tool Kit was developed to help BC tourism and hospitality operators to develop strategies to diversify workforce demographics and to lessen the impact of labour shortages.

Leveraging Opportunities: Recruiting, Retaining and Engaging Boomers

All of the above factors are creating a "perfect storm" for labour shortages and the adage "there is no time like the present" is certainly fitting when considering the development and implementation of hiring strategies that could effectively deal with the current and emerging labour challenges.

While these demographic changes provide obvious challenges for any employer, they can also provide unlimited opportunities and advantages to your

business if thoughtfully managed and executed. By acting now rather than later, it can help to ensure your organization is ahead of the game and will make weathering the storm much easier in the years to follow.

The following resources will provide information and tools that will help your business to leverage this currently under-utilized labour pool: the "baby boomer" generation.

The challenge of changing workforce demographics is being faced by almost every industry sector in BC, which means keen competition for skilled and qualified workers from a shrinking talent pool. This is compounded by the lure of competitive wages and lower living costs from other prosperous regions such as Alberta and Saskatchewan. Tourism employees are particularly attractive recruits because of their high level of customer service skills.

~ go2hr Tourism Labour Market Strategy

THE PERFECT STORM: Why Your Business Should Start Planning Now

BY 2020, OVER 1,000,000 NEW JOBS WILL BE CREATED IN BC

101,430
new jobs
will be created in
TOURISM

57,210 from retirement
44,220 from replacement



there will be a shortage of **14,000** tourism workers

TOP 3 LABOUR CHALLENGES IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

1 High Reliance on Youth

TOURISM & HOSPITALITY

is the largest employer of
15-24 year olds

Tourism and hospitality is nearly twice as reliant on young workers as other sectors in the province, yet this demographic group has a lower projected growth rate than other groups.



1/3 Tourism & Hospitality



Other Industries

2 Seasonal and Remote Operations

The seasonal nature of many businesses in the tourism industry creates challenges finding and retaining staff.

43% based outside of the Vancouver, Coast and Mountains region in communities with smaller labour pools



3 Competition for Talent

There is stiff competition for skilled, qualified workers from other sectors due to a shrinking talent pool.

TOURISM



OTHER SECTORS



This is compounded by the lure of competitive wages and lower living costs from other regions.

Who are the Baby Boomers?

By definition a baby boom is a marked rise in the number of births such as what occurred in Canada post World War II. Although the exact years defining the generation may vary slightly, the baby boom lasted around 20 years from 1945 to 1964. The generation born during this era is referred to as the “baby boomers” or “boomers” for short.

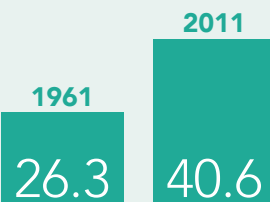
For the purpose of this tool kit we are referring to the many boomers who are healthy, active and looking to remain active in the workforce in a way that is aligned with their current stage of life and personal interests.

While it's impossible to generalize traits of an entire generation, the boomers are known to be team players, possessing strong work ethic and a consensual leadership style. With more life experience than younger generations, they can make an excellent addition to your team.

Did You Know?

In 1961, the median age in Canada was 26.3.
By 2011 it had risen to 40.6.

~ **National Post**



Why boomers want to keep working

While some boomers need to remain working for financial reasons, others choose to extend their work or careers voluntarily for a number of reasons. According to Statistics Canada, 55% of retirees cited at least one of the following non-financial reasons for returning to employment: 22% did not like retirement; 19% cited intrinsic rewards offered by work (e.g. challenging tasks, social contacts, sense of purpose); and 14% felt they were needed or wanted to help out.

Bill Coleman is vice president of research and employer certification at retirementjobs.com, an online service that specializes in connecting businesses with aged 50-plus employees.

People in the early two-thirds of working lives are focused on mobility, promotion, upward salary,” he says. “People in the last third are focused on stability, something to do, reasons to be useful, and ways to interact. Work is about human interaction and community.”

That translates well for businesses that need good customer service skills because older workers tend to be more empathetic, better communicators and more comforting, he says. “Retailers, pharmacies, health care and the travel/resort/hotel industries are discovering what big employers like Home Depot already have.

~ **Inc. Magazine**

The Business Case: 10 Reasons Why Recruiting and Retaining Baby Boomers Will Improve Your Business and Your Bottom Line

The business case has less to do with traditional retention than with the links between flexibility and engagement and between engagement and business results. Creating innovative and adaptable approaches to getting the work done ties these two management strands together.

~ [Marriott case study](#)

1. Wealth of Knowledge and Experience

Baby boomers bring with them years of varied employment and life experience and skills, all of which can bring value to your business. But what may be their most valuable asset is emotional maturity and intelligence, which plays a key factor in supporting successful communications and personal interactions.

2. Dependability and Dedication

Many baby boomers choose to work after reaching traditional retirement age, which translates into a high level of commitment and loyalty to their chosen job and organization, positively impacting turnover and potentially reducing recruitment and training costs.

As a generation they generally require less supervision and are motivated to perform at a high level. Additionally, today's boomers are generally healthy and physically active, with no studies suggesting they have more absences due to illness or injury than any other workplace demographic.

3. Applicable Skills and Service Orientation

Those baby boomers who choose a position within the hospitality and tourism industry enjoy serving people and feel it is a meaningful and important occupation. Possessing a high level of effective communication, problem-solving and interpersonal skills, this demographic is especially well-suited to the requirements of the tourism and hospitality industry.

4. Technologically Savvy

Boomers are often cited as the fastest growing segment of the population in terms of increased use in technology – including social media. According to a survey done by [Volunteer.ca](#), approximately 78% of boomers use the Internet for varied purposes. They also enjoy learning new skills and seek out opportunities for further training and development.

5. Built-in Leadership and Mentoring Abilities

With both interest and ability in coaching and mentoring, boomers can provide a great support to the younger demographics within the workplace. With strong leadership abilities based on years of experience, they can positively impact the performance capabilities and outcomes of younger workers.



Did You Know?

41% of boomers stay in the workforce because they want to, not because they have to.

~ [Financial Post](#)



6. Availability/Flexibility

Baby boomers are an under-utilized labour pool waiting to be employed in a meaningful way. They can have significant flexibility in terms of shifts because of less consistent family commitments (i.e., children are grown and not living at home). Pursuing personal interests at this stage of life is also of high importance allowing them to explore different job options.

On top of that, there are boomers in every community and by recruiting locally your business will not have to relocate potential staff, and can fill job openings more quickly.

7. Ability to Build Strong Relationships with Guests

Baby boomers have shared life experiences and therefore a strong understanding of customers and guests, especially those from the same demographic. It is easy to understand the potential benefit to your business of having boomers as part of the face of your organization.

8. Money is Not the Driving Factor

Oftentimes boomers are “subsidizing” retirement salary rather than supporting a family on their wage/salary, and as such, money is not the main driving factor for them working.

9. Employee Diversity Within an Organization is an Excellent Marketing Tool

Promotion of diversity within the workplace is seen as positive within a community and having a demographic mix that mirrors that of the larger community is good for business.

10. Team-focused

Baby boomers enjoy working in teams and have the skills to do so effectively. Multi-generational teams are more innovative and likely to come up with creative solutions that positively impact the business. In general, this generation is extremely inclusive and welcoming of new ideas from different perspectives.

A wide-angle photograph of the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort and Conference Centre. The resort is a large, multi-story building with a light-colored facade and numerous balconies. It is situated on a waterfront with a marina in the foreground where several boats are docked. The background shows a clear blue sky and distant mountains.

EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT: Delta Grand Okanagan Resort and Conference Centre Leverages the Local Demographics

Shari Avery, Director, People Resources at the Delta Grand Okanagan Resort and Conference Centre in Kelowna recalls a conversation with her movers on the day she moved from the Lower Mainland to Kelowna: "You are kind of young to be moving to Kelowna aren't you? Isn't that a retirement place?" In response she said, "We are opening a hotel there, that's all I know."

Since then she has learned that there are many retirees there, but mainly people move to the Okanagan for the lifestyle – the wineries, the lake, and not too much snow. "A couple of weeks ago a retired professor from Okanagan College dropped by the lobby. He had taken a retirement package but realized he was bored and asking if we needed any help. People realize they don't want to sit at home," says Avery.

"Out of our 330 staff, we have approximately 12 people who are over 55 years old and the average age of our staff is 41," says Avery. There are many advantages Avery has found to hiring boomers. "Especially when it comes to the retirees, their availability works for our operation. We are almost always busy on weekends and the boomers are available evenings, weekends and holidays and they are reliable."

Boomer staff members hold a variety of positions, says Avery. "They are working as boat lock attendants, as room attendants, laundry attendants, kitchen and maintenance. You have to get past the stigma that someone older can't keep up and they will get hurt more often," comments Avery. "For example we have a wonderful gentleman over seventy working in kitchen and he has no problem keeping up with the younger team members. Productivity is not a function of age."

For recruitment, Avery says they don't target boomers specifically. "We ask everyone the same questions in interviews. Most of our jobs are physically demanding so we need to ensure they can handle the work tasks, and some of the more technical roles may not be a fit if a person hasn't had experience with computers."

"Don't judge based on age."

"Don't judge based on age," Avery suggests. "At our hotel we have no evidence to suggest that the older employees are injuring themselves more often than the younger employees. They may take a bit longer to recover from their injuries but they are not having more accidents. At the end of the day I don't think there is a correlation between the age and frequency of claims."

Avery says that when the company was developing their Employee Value Proposition, a survey was conducted with both current employees as well as potential candidates. One key message was consistent across the ages. "Every person from every age group surveyed really wanted to be somewhere where they matter, where they can contribute and learn and grow," says Avery. They also want interesting work that challenges them and allows them to be empowered. We value people as individuals, not based on age or other."

For training Avery explains that one of Delta's Core Values is that they are one team. "Everyone gets the same training; matching up with the right job to begin with is most important. More importantly, we need to remember that just because you are over 50 doesn't mean you are any less talented or enthusiastic about contributing to the success of our hotel. We all play a part."

Running a multigenerational workplace has not presented issues and Avery finds collaboration happens naturally. "With our older workers there is a general respect. The team gains perspective from them and they are often sharing life lessons."

For staff who are nearing retirement age and want to cut down hours, Delta offers some options. "We have a declaration of availability to work 3, 4 or 5 days per week as a preference. If an employee wants to work a lesser week, we work with them. The manager will accommodate as best they can based on seniority," says Avery. "For a lot of people their work is their life, there is an emotional connection to work that gets people out of bed in the morning. We allow them to reduce hours and maintain their seniority as they work towards retirement."

Is Your Business “Boomer-Ready”?

There are many benefits to engaging boomers and changing demographics have made the need to do so a reality. Fortunately for tourism and hospitality, the flexible, often leisure friendly, and social aspects of work in the industry make it attractive to this demographic.

But in order to successfully attract and recruit this demographic, you will need to assess your business and you may need to make some changes. As a first step, ask yourself if your business can meet the following criteria.

Checklist: Is your Business “Boomer-Ready”?

- ✓ First Step: You will need to think outside the box, consider not just how your business exists today, but how could it change to incorporate this strategy?
- ✓ Can you offer part-time, seasonal or flexible work options, and if so, what types of roles?
- ✓ Do all levels of your organization, including the leadership team, support an age-diverse and flexible workplace?
- ✓ Can you offer work opportunities that are genuine and rewarding where boomers can use their skills?
- ✓ Can you offer training and development that will allow boomers to acquire new skills necessary to perform in new roles?
- ✓ Does your compensation plan include perks that will appeal to boomers and their families, and are you communicating this in your recruitment marketing? This could include opportunities for social interaction, benefits (e.g., medical, dental, transit subsidies, etc.) and perks (e.g., discounts at affiliated tourism and hospitality businesses, season passes to local attractions, etc.).
- ✓ Does your employer brand work with and support this initiative? Be truthful. If not, don't say that you do. If so, take the time to develop the messaging and talk about what you can offer, such as:
 - Welcoming people of all ages to apply for opportunities - “all who are interested are encouraged to apply”
 - Speaking to your inclusive workplace culture - “we have multiple generations working together to serve multiple generations”
- ✓ Is your recruitment marketing and online content inviting for boomers, or is it targeted towards younger workers? (**Tip: See examples and more in Boomer Recruitment Marketing 101**)
- ✓ Just like any prospective recruit, look for energy and attitude. If boomers have a young mind and young attitude, that's what your customers will see.

Flexibility is Key

Flexibility is typically key to attracting boomers. They're often ready for more work/life balance, and some may need it to accommodate changing personal, health, and family priorities, such as grandchildren, and aging parents. But this also has to work for your business at all levels.

Ways to offer flexibility include:

- Part-time/seasonal employment opportunities
- Flexible break times
- Job sharing (e.g., splitting a salaried job between two people)
- Allowing flex hours on a particular day of the week
- Consulting/contract work (e.g., on an as needed basis)
- Flex time/core hours (e.g., offering some choice of work start and end times as long as certain core hours are covered)
- Compressed work weeks (e.g., working longer days for a shorter week)
- Leaves of absence (e.g., the job is waiting when the employee returns), offering downtime or leaves without pay during slower times
- "Snowbirding" (e.g., spending half the year at one location and half at another)
- Job rotations - working in different positions during the work week
- Work process redesign (e.g., pairing a younger housekeeper with an older one, and teaming up for specific tasks which are more physically demanding and then switching off)
- Off-site/virtual/telecommuting opportunities (e.g., sales agent jobs)
- Cross training - staff can pick up shifts in other areas where they can learn and/or work in a less physically challenging position several days per week.
- Consider a seasonal staff exchange by partnering with another business (e.g., ski resort/golf resort).





Photo Credit: Tourism Kelowna

Retaining Boomers

The things that attract boomers to your business will also help retain them. Keeping your long-term, experienced employees saves recruiting, orientation, and often training costs. It also helps keep valuable experience, know-how, and knowledge in your business.

As employees reach typical retirement age it's important to have regular conversations to understand their intentions and needs so that you can effectively plan to staff your business.

Some employees will undoubtedly be looking forward to retirement, some may want to continue with their current jobs, and others may want to reduce their responsibilities or physical demands while continuing to contribute.

Checklist: Retaining your Boomer Staff

- ✓ Review your workforce regularly and identify who would be a considerable loss to your organization. Have open and ongoing discussions to understand what interests them and where they see themselves in two, five or ten years. Could you use their skills and experience in other areas of your business?
- ✓ Apply flexible work arrangements to the current job to make it more appealing.
- ✓ Gradually move the employee toward retirement by reducing hours of work per week, hours of work during particular seasons, etc.
- ✓ Make the employee a consultant or contractor on an as needed basis (e.g., to train seasonal staff, or in a sales role during peak business times).
- ✓ Maintain a "temporary opportunities database", enabling your retired workers to be notified of any upcoming short-term projects, seasonal opportunities or roles that may appeal to them.
- ✓ Transition the employee to a new role that's more flexible, less physical, or otherwise appealing. After working in the same job for years, many seasoned staff may welcome opportunities to gain new skills in areas of interest.

However, even with retention strategies in place, people won't stay where they don't feel welcome. Creating a workplace where multiple generations work together effectively and value each other is critical to your business's success.



Photo Credit: WorkSafe Magazine, WorkSafeBC.

EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT: Fairmont Waterfront Vancouver Focuses on Retention and Training

At the Fairmont Waterfront in Vancouver, close to fifteen per cent of the housekeeping room attendants are over 45 years old and are valued, seasoned employees, most of whom have been with the company for many years. Michael King, safety and loss prevention manager for the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel, has put a focus on housekeeping where the most impact has been felt from aging staff due to the physical nature of the job. It's King's goal to retain these workers and to keep them safe and healthy for the remainder of their careers.

"We do not find an increase in injuries among older workers however when an older worker is injured they take longer to recover," says King.

Prevention for Retention

Taking a focus on prevention, the Fairmont provides information sessions for all of their staff through the hotel HR directly in the form of wellness newsletters, wellness activities and visits by third parties, such as their benefits provider who puts on seminars and sessions on various topics relevant to demand and interest by colleagues.

Running a multigenerational workplace can be challenging, but the Fairmont leverages it as an opportunity for mentorship and knowledge sharing. "Within our industry I would say that the age variances enhance the environment we work in as it leads to greater sharing of knowledge and also creates opportunities for mentoring and acceptance of the fact that each generation is different from the previous one mainly due to advances in technology and how the work environment has changed due to expectations and the changing economy," comments King.

In regards to training, it's all about experience, not age. The Fairmont pairs more experienced colleagues with newer staff. "We conduct training for colleagues with a selected previously trained and experienced colleague where their age is of no consideration," says King. "It is more about passing on good knowledge through programs such as Train the Trainer. Our competitive advantage comes from hiring practices I believe, and then the subsequent training that helps develop the colleagues' knowledge and skillset."

"We conduct training for colleagues with a selected previously trained and experienced colleague where their age is of no consideration."

For more information, see King's interview in ["Hotel Makes Room for Aging Workforce"](#) article as published in WorkSafe Magazine.

Managing Multigenerational Workplaces: Overcoming Stereotypes and Collaborating Within a Multigenerational Workforce

Boomers don't want to learn new things, especially not if they involve technology. GenYs don't want to pay their dues; they want to walk in and become managers.

We all have assumptions and beliefs about our own generation and other generations in the workplace. When it comes to working together, these beliefs influence our behaviour and can even get in the way.

Building a workplace where employees value the unique skills, experiences and strengths that each generation brings to the business means breaking down stereotypes. This isn't as simple as telling people that their beliefs are wrong or holding training that builds awareness of generational myths versus realities.

Telling people that long held beliefs aren't true is a start, but it isn't enough. To change beliefs, and change behaviour, people need to be exposed to ongoing experiences that prove their assumptions wrong.

Consider these opportunities to break down negative assumptions about the generations while building collaborative working relationships, transferring knowledge and skills throughout your business, and fostering understanding and respect for the things that each generation brings to the workplace.

- **Build Multigenerational Problem-solving Teams** – Bringing together multigenerational teams to brainstorm solutions to workplace problems often results in assumptions and stereotypes being put aside to reach the common goal - particularly if there's pressure to do so quickly. Not only do age diverse teams help build multigenerational working relationships and showcase strengths, but the business also benefits from solutions that work for employees and customers of all ages.
- **Start a Mentoring Program** – By going deeper than superficial relationships, mentoring bridges generation gaps, builds openness to new ideas and perspectives, shares knowledge of industry culture and trends, and renews passion for performance. Experience and expertise - not age - make a mentor so mentors can be of any age. In fact, when older workers shift companies or industries, the mentor is often the youngster in the relationship.
- **Recognize Across Generations** – Recognizing employees builds awareness of strengths within the team and helps people know who they can go to and count on for advice and support. Star performers and up-and-comers often enjoy the lion's share of recognition, but it's equally important for the business to recognize other employees to reveal strengths in employees of all ages.
- **Use Training Opportunities** – A common misconception is that older workers don't want to learn new things or that their knowledge is obsolete. There are many internal training opportunities that can help dispel such myths. Consider having younger workers train enthusiastic older workers who are new to the team, or pairing a younger and older worker together to develop and deliver customer service trainings with each generation providing unique insights into customers like themselves.

What all of these suggestions have in common is that they build relationships and let people of all ages show and be respected for their strengths. After all, it's hard to judge a book by its cover once you've read the story.

Tip: See Page 19 for more links and information related to managing multiple generations.



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT: Boomers are a great fit for Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort

Best known for its picturesque, beautiful beaches and parks, Parkville on Vancouver Island is also known for its high population of retirees. In fact, the median age of the population is just shy of sixty, twenty years older than the median age provincially. Laurie Sagle, Director of Human Resources for the Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre in Parkville, has tapped into the boomer labour pool for years now and has some valuable advice to share.

"We currently have 56 workers over the age of 50 which is about 22% of our total workforce. If you add in those who are 40-plus years old, it is close to 40% of our workforce," says Sagle. "And most of our 50-plus workers have been with us for a long time."

At Tigh-Na-Mara boomer-aged staff work in all types of roles and departments including administration, banquets, food and beverage, kitchen, front office, housekeeping, sales and marketing and spa. The gift shop and maintenance teams include many year-round team members over 50 years of age, says Sagle. "37 are full-time employees, the rest are part-time with one casual at this point."

Commenting on the health and safety aspect Sagle says, "There have not been more injuries with our older workers. We don't do anything different. We don't have a specific multigenerational program and we treat everyone as a team. There are younger managers who are managing older workers at Tigh-Na-Mara, but it's not a twenty-year-old managing a fifty-year-old and we haven't found it to be an issue."

"Older workers bring this wonderful wealth of experience and a strong work ethic; there are some real advantages."

In a smaller community Sagle finds local career fairs to be an excellent recruitment venue. "We see all ages represented from twelve-year-olds to people in their seventies. It's a great way to recruit people because you get to meet people in person. I meet people whom I may not have called in for an interview because nothing on their resume matches, yet when I meet them, they are so friendly and personable and I can see them doing a certain role."

Sagle acknowledges that the labour market is tough right now in her region. "We have such a small pool to pull from here, and especially for positions such as culinary, massage therapists and leadership roles. I have had a housekeeping supervisor position open for a year; we can't find anyone. We have been doing without which is not good as we are moving into our high season..

Flexibility is one of the keys to success for Sagle. "For example, one of our more senior staff who work in a small department takes off for 6 to 8 weeks per year. But she's a star employee and a couple of other workers are happy to pick up extra shifts. We wouldn't have had her as long as we did if we weren't able to accommodate her lifestyle." She suggests that employers be more flexible where possible with scheduling. "Older workers bring this wonderful wealth of experience and a strong work ethic; there are some real advantages," says Sagle.

Sagle offers advice for other employers looking to recruit boomers, highlighting the need to be clear with expectations. It's about being clear about what the job is about whether there are computer requirements, physical demands or other. "It's about finding the best people you can, training them properly and having clear communication lines where people understand what is expected of them. Being fair, clear and consistent with everyone no matter what age you are," says Sagle.

"As the labour shortages continue, we will need to start adapting more than we already are. Moving forward we will have to start looking at more part-time shifts, maybe two people that work a shift if that's what you can find. I think we are going to have to look at the flexibility a lot more," comments Sagle.



Boomer Recruitment Marketing 101

Retailers, health care and other sectors are successfully targeting boomers and it's worth taking a look at what others are doing in order to learn how tourism can benefit. For example, the Home Depot has been targeting boomers for years and has developed effective, targeted employment branding to attract this demographic, which includes their slogan "Passion Never Retires". It is strongly supported by similar website messaging and imagery that is welcoming to diverse age groups.

The Home Depot relies heavily on the Internet to recruit through their own website, partnerships with job boards and organizations like the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), and also non-employment websites that are of interest to the 50-plus crowd.

Quite simply, seniors make good workers. All of our internal metrics are very positive as they relate to older workers whose tenure is longer, and voluntary attrition rates are much lower for us. They also have better attendance as a group.

~ Cindy Milburn, senior staffing director for Home Depot

Did You Know?

Job boards and LinkedIn are becoming popular tools for boomer job seekers. 87% of Baby Boomers choose job boards as their primary resource, followed by 82% of GenXs and 77% of GenYs. LinkedIn is the top website among boomers (29%) who use social networking in their job search.

Checklist: Boomer Recruitment and Marketing

- ✓ Explore opportunities to market your jobs in conjunction with your consumer marketing. For example, "Spend more time doing what you love, work at XYZ Fishing Lodge this summer."
- ✓ Put a focus and effort on developing employment branding that will appeal to boomers.
- ✓ Don't use references to age when advertising positions, including subtleties such as "seeking mature applicants". Instead, use phrases such as: "We value experience, wisdom, judgement".
- ✓ Avoid application forms that directly seek the age of applicants, such as date of birth or date of high school graduation.
- ✓ Use images in your online and recruitment marketing materials that reflect diverse ages and ethnicities. Following are a few examples:
 - **Home Depot welcomes diversity in the workplace**
 - **Custom House specifically targeted "Experience" in their recruitment**
- ✓ Talk about what you can offer such as seasonal, part-time opportunities, and other perks that would appeal to boomers/career changers (e.g., medical, dental, transit subsidies, etc.) and perks (e.g., discounts at affiliated tourism and hospitality businesses, family passes for local attractions).
- ✓ Make type size readable in all of your marketing materials and website. Fonts with a serif (i.e., Times Roman versus Arial) are most readable, and limit the use of text reversed-out of a dark colour. Avoid acronyms.
- ✓ Consider recruiting via your existing season pass holders or visitors.
- ✓ Use the Internet! 96% of baby boomers conduct job searches online – practically as much as younger generations, and in fact more so than GenYs (92%), according to the Multigenerational Job Search Study Online.
- ✓ Consider online job posting and recruitment sites that specifically target baby boomers:
 - retirementjobs.com
 - jobover50.com
 - thirdquarter.ca
 - retiredworker.ca
- ✓ Consider advertising in more general interest, non-employment publications and websites that would be of interest to the 50-plus crowd as boomers can also be passive candidates.
- ✓ Partner up with relevant community organizations. This will vary depending on the community but consider community centres, Rotary or other service-clubs. Get in touch with the **Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP)** to see how they can help in your area.
- ✓ Host an open house, deliver a presentation, or host a booth at local events or career fairs that will be attended by boomers.
- ✓ Create an **employee referral program**.
- ✓ Post your jobs (at no cost) on **go2hr's Job Board**.

Myths and Realities: Baby Boomers

There are vital older people and worn out younger people.

~ The State of Queensland, Department of Industrial Relations

MYTH: Older workers have difficulty learning new skills, particularly with respect to technology

REALITY: Many experienced workers are eager to learn new skills, but are often overlooked for professional development opportunities as a result of assumptions about willingness to learn new skills. Discussing and offering new training opportunities is vital to creating an environment where learning can comfortably occur.

MYTH: Older employees will not work for many years

REALITY: Research suggests that boomers sustain the highest job tenure overall. Their traditional values of dedication and service translates into loyalty for your company.

MYTH: Older workers have more health problems that will cause them to miss work

REALITY: Employees aged 50-plus do not sustain more injuries or absences than their younger counterparts. Many boomers remain employed because of the psychological and social benefits a workplace community provides. This positive correlation between work and health has been well-documented and indicates that people who stay engaged in work tend to remain in better health and live longer.

MYTH: It is awkward for young employees to manage older workers

REALITY: A multigenerational workforce provides an excellent opportunity for mutually beneficial relationships. A commitment to ongoing and open communication creates an environment where respect and understanding can thrive.

MYTH: All older workers want to work part-time

REALITY: Boomers are often interested in flexible work options. Providing flexibility to your employees will help distinguish you as an employer of choice, not only for older workers, but also to other potential labour pools such as immigrants, First Nations, young people and people with disabilities.

~ **WorkBC**

Rather than letting generational attitudes entrench themselves, the Conference Board of Canada, in a report on generation gaps, recommended putting workers' personalities before their generations: What are their workplace motivations, personality types and learning styles?

Legal Considerations

While these considerations apply to any age group, it is important to be aware of certain legal issues in order to minimize risk. Job postings, interview questions, checking references and making job offers all need to be done in a way that meets legal requirements.

In some cases, you could be asking unlawful or even discriminatory questions without even knowing it. Many of the mentioned items require some basic knowledge of the BC Human Rights Code. According to the BC Human Rights Code (Discrimination in employment advertisements), you must not publish job postings or advertisements that give preference to race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation and age.

Once you are ready to begin your interviews, there are a few key points to keep in mind when designing questions. You need to ensure your interview process is not intentionally or unintentionally asking questions on prohibited grounds. Here are a few examples:

For example, if a job requires heavy lifting, do not ask:

"Do you have a bad back or any medical issues?" as you might be discriminating against a candidate with a disability.

To ensure the candidate can meet the physical requirements for the role, you should ask:

"This job requires periods of heavy lifting for most of the day. Are you able to do this?"

It is important to note that you cannot ask questions that are illegal during any stage of the recruitment process including your interview or while conducting reference checks.

For example, just as you cannot ask a candidate about a disability in the interview process, you cannot then ask their former employer, **"How many sick days did they take last year?"** However, you can ask if they were reliable and punctual.

In all steps of the recruiting process (job postings, interviews, checking references and making the offer), remember the prohibited grounds and make sure all questions are asked in a way that gives all applicants a fair chance to respond based on your job needs. Doing so will minimize the risk and chance that you might be charged with discriminatory hiring practices. Good recruiting is also good ethical and business practice, which will foster your positive reputation and make it easier for you to recruit. Remember that every interview you conduct is like an advertising opportunity. Every candidate should leave wishing they would have the opportunity to work for you.

~ go2hr

Expert Tips: Ageism and Discrimination

Know the law. The abolishment of mandatory retirement in Canada means that older workers have the option to stay actively involved in the workplace longer. In the event of performance deterioration related to health issues, employers need to ensure they understand legal issues related to accommodation and termination.

Be aware of potential ageism. Employers should be prepared to protect against ageism – both overt and covert – and should consider:

- Establishing and upholding a zero-tolerance policy on discrimination in the workplace;
- Delivering employee sensitivity training to promote an understanding of what constitutes harassment and discrimination;
- Awarding opportunities for career progression and advancement due to skill and ability – no matter the candidate's age;
- Providing access to training and development to upgrade skills.

~ Ceridian



Photo Credit: Tourism Kelowna

The Conference Board recommends focusing on working conditions that all employees respond to, regardless of age: Fair compensation, interesting work, trustworthy leadership, recognition, and respect.

Ready to Get Started? Here are Your Next Steps

By engaging the boomers in your workplace, you will be increasing your competitive advantage as an employer as labour shortages become more prevalent. Following are some additional resources and information.

Please feel free to contact **go2hr** if you would like more information by email: info@go2hr.ca or phone: **604-633-9787**.

- 1 If you haven't already done so, start with the Checklist: Is your Business "Boomer-Ready"
- 2 Visit go2hr.ca where you will find **related information**.
- 3 Interested in more general front-line team leadership information? Check out go2hr's new **Leadership 2 Go**
- 4 Additional information and case studies:
 - Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College **"Flex Strategies to Attract, Engage & Retain Older Workers"** (includes the Marriott case study)
 - WorkBC **"It's About Ability - How to Attract, Retain and Engage Mature Workers"**
 - The ThirdQuarter **"Engaging Experience: Opportunities for Older Workers In the Workforce, The ThirdQuarter Difference"**
 - Homewood Human Solutions **"Managing a Multi-generational Workforce"**
 - BCHRMA HRVoice.org **"Moving Forward with Reverse Mentoring"**
 - Ceridian Corporation: **Second Wind: The Evolving Nature of Retirement Research Report**



Suite 450, One Bentall Centre
505 Burrard Street, P.O. Box 59
Vancouver, BC V7X 1M3

604 633 9787 • info@go2hr.ca