

# Staffing agency finds way to help boomers' careers

## New Boomer Group division offers career counseling

The Boomer Group staffing firm of Denver recently expanded from just finding jobs for experienced baby boomers to advising them about their entire careers. The company launched a division, called What's Next Career Transition Services, that offers career counseling to the older clients it has placed in short- and long-term jobs for the last five years.

Baby boomers range in age from the mid-40s to early 60s.

The Boomer Group fills jobs in a wide range of industries, such as energy, health care and financial services. The company doesn't reveal the names of its employer clients.

"In the fourth quarter of 2008, a lot more boomers started to call us as they saw what was happening to their 401(k)s, so we started What's Next," said Stephanie Klein, founder and president of The Boomer Group.

The Boomer Group, and its seven-person staff, also have adapted to the recession by cutting expenses as well as doing more marketing and business development.

A Denver native with degrees from Colorado State University and Regis University, Klein is a veteran human resources and recruiting professional. She started The Boomer Group in 2004 with a \$200,000 bank loan, and was her company's only employee.

Since its inception, the company has placed roughly 2,000 workers. Only 40 percent of the people who seek work through the company are chosen to apply for jobs, and only 40 percent of those chosen get jobs, according to Klein.

In 2008, The Boomer Group had its best year financially, increasing revenue 45 percent to \$2.2 million. The company is profitable, but Klein declined to reveal its net income.

The firm hopes to increase revenue again this year. "Last October, we planned for growth [in 2009]," Klein said.

Whether or not The Boomer Group has higher sales this year, Klein believes its future is rosy because of the continuing large population of baby boomers willing to work and companies' demands for seasoned employees.

"The boomer model is different, and that's why I think our best years are ahead," Klein said. "The boomers are not retiring. They keep working because they need the money and the stimulation."

The boomer employment model also tends to be more high-touch than others.

"It's important for the boomer population to have a place where it can go and feel taken care of. ... Stephanie is one of the most approachable and rich communicators I know," said Rob Spangler, executive director of the Colorado Human Resources Association (CHRA) and a baby boomer. "That's important to people looking for a job; they want straight talk."

Klein is CHRA's 2008-09 president.



Photo: Kathleen Lavine

### Stephanie Klein founded The Boomer Group.

The Boomer Group has a deep well of talent from which to draw now and in the future. Metro Denver is the U.S. baby-boomer capital, with roughly 33 percent of its population born between 1946 and 1964 - the so-called "Baby Boom" - according to the 2000 U.S. census.

Baby boomers make particularly good employees, according to Klein and research being conducted at the University of Denver's Daniels College of Business.

Employees in that age group tend to be more loyal to companies, and are less likely to quit unexpectedly, according to Karen Newman, a DU management professor who's researching baby boomers and is a baby boomer herself. Boomers are just as able as younger people to learn new skills, but they're often not given the chance because employers assume they can't - or won't.

"We make more money and our health benefits cost more, but we bring to the party wisdom and experience," Newman said. "We're less interested in [getting promoted], but more interested in feelings of accomplishment."

Newman formerly was dean of the Daniels College, resigning last year and joining the school's management department as a full professor.

The Rose Community Foundation of Denver is helping to fund the DU study, and Newman and Klein know each other from formerly sitting on a Rose task force together.

The Boomer Group doesn't have a formal mission statement, but it has a central belief of respecting both its employer and employee clients - the baby boomers especially. "We help baby boomers sell the fact that their experience is an asset," Klein said.

### At a Glance

The Boomer Group  
Headquarters: Denver  
Founder/president:  
Stephanie Klein  
Business: Staffing  
Started: 2004  
2008 revenue: \$2.2 million