

# Gen Trends

May 2007

*Catching the Wave of the Generations to Come!*

## Winning the Electronic Application Wars

The proliferation of internet-based resumes and applications has become both a blessing and a curse. On the positive side, even the smallest of employers can post an opening with little, if any, financial investment. On the not-so-positive side, those same employers will probably get inundated with resumes and applications from those possessing little, if any, qualifications for the job. Virtually anyone these days can go to “you-name-the-job-board.com,” create a generic resume, electronically sort through the openings, click on the five, fifty or five hundred that interest them, submit their electronic applications and hope that lightning strikes. It’s like playing the lottery.

In response, firms are employing software to eliminate applications that don’t fit a particular profile. (You can locate information on this software by using the key phrase “resume screening software” in the search engines such as Yahoo and Google.) But as before, there are pros and cons to this approach. On the one hand, this strategy can weed out a great deal of the misdirected and even nonsensical submissions that are the result of on-line postings. On the other hand, it can preclude the consideration of qualified candidates because they didn’t place the right keywords within their application materials. The result can be a needless game of cat-and-mouse between employers and applicants as each tries to outwit the other.

To resolve this dilemma, a new genre of hiring tools is being created that promises to screen out inappropriate applicants and allow the suitable

ones to put their best feet forward. While these tools require an investment of time before posting a job, the result will be a process that identifies submissions that more accurately meet the employer’s specific expectations.

Based somewhat on matchmaking sites such as eHarmony.com, employers can create a customized survey using the tool’s prepared questions or adding some particulars of their own. They can also specify which of the responses to these questions will get past the screen and into the employer’s mailbox. This software also requires applicants to spend several minutes answering questions before the application is submitted. That requirement, in itself, will dissuade those who are simply “surfing” for jobs. It will also force those with the qualifications to reflect on the job’s requirements and expectations before simply submitting their names to every opening for which they are qualified. Go to [www.protuo.com](http://www.protuo.com) for an example.

Another offering on the horizon is that of sites that provide profiles of potential job candidates by assembling information from available online data, regardless of whether these people are looking for jobs. This technology allows employers to circumvent the service executive recruiters provide, at least to some degree. These sites will be able to search by a person’s name, an occupation, an industry, and other parameters. Go to [www.zoominfo.com](http://www.zoominfo.com) for an example.

The key to dealing with all of these options, of course, is to have clearly defined characteristics in mind before posting the job and thoroughly researching each available option before setting a course for recruiting and screening candidates. Technology will also be a mixed blessing, and it is critical to thoroughly consider the impact of each new option before making it practice.

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## “GenTistics”

**82% of organizations surveyed cite succession planning as a grave concern for competing in the future.**

*Knowledge Infusion and the  
International Association for  
Human Resources*



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## Fighting the Brain Drain

According to the Associated Press, aerospace firms have added Facebook.com to their arsenal of tools for recruiting college students and recent graduates. With the average age of a worker within the industry presently estimated be 45, every company is scrambling to fill the slots now being vacated by Baby Boomers. Analysts estimate that by the end of 2008, one in four current employees will be eligible to retire.

For years, aerospace firms and thousands of others have relied on fliers, campus visits, luncheons faculty referrals and the like to make contact with these soon-to-be engineers. But with the competition for face-time heating up, they are now turning to the world of virtual communication to capture the attention of these young multi-channeling adults.

The Boeing Company, for example, advertised a contest last year to win an iPod Nano for those who were willing to listen to a short video and answer a few questions on Facebook.com. A company employee in southern California has created a Facebook group for this year's crop of interns. Its young employees also keep in touch using these social sites and are available to answer questions from interns and interested college students about what it is like to work for the company. They also serve as a valuable resource for assisting with the basic needs that interns and new employees have about housing, and other topics.

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### A Drop in Earnings

The Pew Charitable Trusts has just released a study indicating that men in their 30s are earning 12% less than those in their 30s in 1974 adjusted for inflation. Based on an analysis of US Census data, this finding appears to refute the notion that succeeding generations are better off than their parents.

## Case Study Corner

*How should an older worker deal with feeling out of the loop on technology, or new developments, that their younger boss might know about? How would you show that you are just as knowledgeable, and valuable, as he or she? I think a lot of older workers fear that their skills base is becoming irrelevant... is there anything an 'older worker' should do or say when faced with a situation in which their experience may look outmoded? In short, what the heck does one do??*

This situation has a two-part answer. Older workers will never be able to catch up and match the technology acumen of younger bosses. It's the old argument about the difference between technology natives and technology immigrants. That's not to say they should surrender.

The first thing to do is to observe the way the boss prefers to communicate. If that's by e-mail, get better at it. If it's by text messaging, learn it. One has to stay current, within reason. That doesn't mean you stop using the phone, but you'll get a faster response in the boss' preferred environment.

Secondly, don't worry about skills becoming irrelevant just because there's a new sheriff in town. That said, one must remain current on the knowledge that enables the job. Thirty years of experience will not compensate if you haven't stayed up with the changing knowledge base. If you do, you arguably trump a new boss simply because you may have more experience in addition to the skills. But don't mention it. The boss already knows.

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### *Just released!*

The Center for Generational Studies has just released its latest video program offering. *Leadership and the Emerging Generations* is based on the popular program of the same name that's been presented for associations and corporations across the US. Discover how aspiring leaders are going to change the way we all do business. Learn how to anticipate these upcoming impacts. For more information, [CLICK HERE](#).

## College Expectations and Millennials' Exuberance

According to an analysis of studies conducted by several sources and compiled by Florida State University, fifty percent of high school seniors in the year 2000 were planning to continue their education after college and earn an advanced degree. Sixty three percent planned to get a professional job such as doctor, lawyer, or college professor by age 30. In 1976, only twenty percent expressed similar goals.

The actual percentage of high-school graduates who obtained advanced degrees remained the same in this 25 year period, suggesting that the gap between expectations and final outcome grew twenty-two percent. What worries some educators is that today's teens are highly ambitious and increasingly unrealistic. This irrational exuberance can be attributed to several factors: 1) Media portrayal of those who have "made it big" in their fields. 2) Parental pressure on their kids to succeed. 3) Teens feeling the pressure of having to earn a large income to keep up with a convenience-filled and increasingly materialistic world 4) A society that has spent the past 20 years telling this generation that they're special.

Unfortunately, this gap between expectations and reality can lead to disappointment and discouragement rather than optimism and success. While some youth do benefit from ambition, the relationship between drive and grades is largely unfounded.

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