



## **Are your staff over 55 human assets or human fodder?**

The world of work has changed significantly over the past 40 years. For those that started their careers 40 years ago, computers were the size of houses and the telex machine was the closest we saw of communication across the airways. At this stage in history there is no way that the younger generation can even begin to understand the exponential leap this generation has taken during their journey through the world of work.

Over the past twenty years the tsunami of change that has happened as a result of the internet has changed the world of work for all of us. We also have seen major changes in our nation due to political change in 1994. Longevity is another major trend that is giving many of us an extra season of healthy life beyond 60. With all these trends colliding, no wonder there is a sense of confusion, lack of care and fear in the minds of these employees. The employers are also either ignoring them, hoping they may go soon or starting to see an implosion within middle management as this loyal, hard-working, experienced generation leave the workforce in droves.

The trend 40 years ago was to get a degree, a good job and stay the course for forty years with a promise of a gold watch at the end. There may be very little gold at the end of this rainbow due to job hopping, retrenchment or spending your savings along the journey. Many are not that happy about a longer period of life as they fear becoming a statistic of the state. When asked about their dreams and hopes for the future there is often not that much joy. The less than 7% who may be able to retire with enough money are not the norm. We need to address and bring hope to the 93%.

Unilever, did a piece of research in 2007 called Prime Time where they determined that we have about two million baby boomers in South Africa with skills and the possibility of looking after themselves. What if we could help 5% of this group look at a second career that could not only support them financially but also help to transfer skills and engage in some kind of social change needed in our nation? If this 5% did this for 10 years this would equate to ONE MILLION years of change for South Africa. That is the goal on my horizon daily within Refirement Network.

**So what can you the employer do to see your staff as assets for the future rather than fodder to discard?  
Below are some ideas of how to go about doing this:**

Do a human resources audit and determine what percentage of your staff are over 55.

List your group of key employees with wisdom and skill that you know will impact your business when they leave.

Offer all employees over 55 both a LIFE and FINANCIAL planning session within 5 years of retirement.

Work closely on a wisdom continuity process with key employees to help identify how you may be able to transfer this wisdom through mentoring and coaching over the last few years in the workplace.

Give your staff a sense of hope for the future and empower them to take responsibility for their next season of life.

Engage senior managers in programs like Partners for Possibility within 5 years of retirement so that they can learn new skills and build relationships outside their current worldview.

Start offering REFIREMENT Fellowships to staff who may want to bridge from the corporate sector to the social sector as they exit the workplace.

Do a risk analysis of what the loss of these employees may mean to your future strategy so that you can plan accordingly.

Baby Boomers will hold on to their knowledge and skills if they feel like fodder. This will be the power they may use to try and become a consultant back to your organisation. No wisdom transfer will happen in this model and in many instances that is what has been happening for the last 20 years. If you first help the employee to understand their future and bring a sense of hope and a future into their world, they will be more willing to engage and work with you to transfer skills.

Imagine a future in South Africa where we together see each person as valuable and useful. We build more capacity within the corporate structure, bring a sense of purpose to the baby boomers by engaging in using their skills in the social and entrepreneurial sector and help build the future for all our citizens. That is a South Africa alive with possibility. Our human resources are a key asset that we dare not discard.

Refirement Network is able to help your company take this conversation further: [www.refirementnetwork.com](http://www.refirementnetwork.com)

## Refirement's Social Networking



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