



Marketing Yourself to Land a Job

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Published: Thursday, August 26, 2010 7:55 PM CDT

While the overall unemployment rate in the United States was 9.5 percent in June, it was 15.3 percent for those aged 20 to 24, compared with 7.8 percent for ages 35 to 44, 7.5 percent for ages 45 to 54 and 6.9 percent for those 55 and older.

In Plano, the average was 7.5 percent unemployed, so the city is below the national average, which is good to hear, but this doesn't mean the population is out of danger.

Sherri Elliott-Yearly, founder of Gen InsYght, CEO of Optimance Workforce Strategies and the author of , *Ties to Tattoos: How to Turn Generational Differences into a Competitive Advantage*, believes there is hope for the future in the workforce even though the population may seem like it is hitting some pretty big bumps in the road right now.

She divides the workforce into four categories:

- * Traditionalists born between 1922 and 1944, who typically came of age during the Great Depression and World War II.
- * Boomers born between 1945 and 1964 who are retiring at a faster rate than ever.
- * Gen X born between 1965 and 1980, possibly the most misunderstood generation in the workforce.
- * Millennials born between 1981 and 1999, "the future of corporate America," Elliott-Yearly says.

She associates these dates with the year of birth.

"We determine each of the four generations' DNA, but they can also have a generational personality, which is based on life events such as birth order, morals and values," Elliott-Yearly said.

"In 2009 Plano residents filed over 291,000 unemployment claims," she added. "On average, Plano residents are highly educated and the median salary is \$81,395."

Elliott-Yearly is on a mission to reach out to the millennial group because the many generational gaps in the four categories seem to act as a collective fortress against a smooth transition into the future.

"Millennials, also known as gen Y, are perhaps the best-educated and tech-savvy generation ever, but many can't find jobs," Elliott-Yearly said. "Ages 20 to 30, many are faced with staggering college loans and no job, forcing them back home to live with parents."

Elliott-Yearly sees the millennials as a group that inevitably needs some guidance because so much has changed in the world which has also influenced them personally such as technology. There are

approximately 36,614 millennials in Plano which is 14.1 percent of the city's population, according to the American Community Survey.

"According to a recent report from Pew Research Center, millennials are less likely to be employed than gen Xers or baby boomers were at the same age," Elliott-Yearly said. "Millennials are generally well-educated, but commonly described as entitled narcissists who are tech-savvy and will work for cheap."

Elliott-Yearly believes it makes matters worse that the recession is forcing these younger workers to compete for jobs with baby boomers who are trying to save for retirement and gen Xers with homes and families.

Elliott-Yearly offers tips that can help millennials, as well as all other generations, land jobs even in the toughest of times:

- * Ask your parents to help share your resume with their network since baby boomers are the most connected.

- * Let your guard down and don't fear being authentic – It's hard to make a connection with someone who seems fake or appears to be hiding something. After all, with social media it's become easier for people to discover who you really are.

- * Check your ego at the door: Don't turn down a good opportunity at a great company because it carries an entry-level title. Get your foot in the door and prove yourself.

- * Find a mentor - Find someone who can be a sounding board and help you see things more clearly and realistically.

- * Listen – "You can learn something from everyone you meet if you're willing to listen," Elliott-Yearly said.

She recommends everyone venture to understand what drives the four different generations.

"By doing so, you'll be able to understand what's important to the baby boomer who might be interviewing you," Elliott-Yearly said.

She adds to her list of tips:

- * Express gratitude - Send a thank-you voice mail the next day and put a handwritten thank-you note in the mail.

- * Stop hiding behind technology - Connecting with people on a personal level will never be 'old school.'

- * Intern for free with a company you like and get a strong referral letter and experience on your resume.

- * Volunteer with church and community to network with others – "Make connections and build relationships. You never know where a relationship will take you in your career," Elliott-Yearly said.

She explained that the newest generation are the millennials and are 28 years of age and below, which means they are just now entering the workplace.

"This is the reason we are seeing the clash vs. collation of the four generations," Elliott-Yearly said. "In addition, traditionalists who are ages 65 to 87 are staying in the workforce longer due to the fact we now have a 201K not a 401K, and the increasing cost of medical does not permit the baby boomer generation or traditionalists to retire when they had originally planned."

Mandie McCollum, business development/sales executive for Sentari Technologies, is a millennial.

“Sherri’s support with her people and generational knowledge is helping me in my current role as a new business development executive by really pushing me out of my comfort zone and helping me to get involved in networking groups as well as in the community to grow my communication skills,” McCollum said. “She has shown me the necessary skills needed to succeed in my position and engage and understand how to interact with the other generations.”

McCollum feels that by targeting different generational groups and learning how to most effectively work with each other is something that is an urgent need in the workforce.

Another employee at Sentari Technologies is Denise Vadala, recruiting executive, and is considered a baby boomer.

“It is sometimes difficult to relate to younger people because naturally they are at a different place in their lives, and we may not have as much in common as we do with those of our own age,” Vadala said. “I appreciate millennials’ energy and hunger for learning our business.”

Vadala thinks the Gen InsYght program helps millennials.

“They are our future,” Vadala said. “Sherri’s program and company can be a great tool to help any business understand what is going on with interrelationships within the organization.”

Now an entrepreneur, Elliott-Yearly is full-time human resources consultant who focuses on multi-generational issues and how they affect the workforce. Prior to that, she was the vice president of risk management for Snelling and Snelling. For information, visit www.geninsyght.com, www.optimancestrategies.com, sherrielliott-yearly.com and www.tiestotattoos.com.