

Power to the OLD People



IF YOU SAW people over the age of 45 dancing around in front of the Rolling Stones during the Super Bowl halftime show, you can thank me. Well, not me specifically, but people like me who railed at the news that the NFL imagemeisters, who, claiming safety and stamina as the reason, were set to ban the grayhairs from the on-field party. On my blog I mentioned how silly that seemed. Those kinds of responses—thousands of them—managed to change the minds of the NFL before the next news cycle dawned.

To paraphrase a 1960s slogan: Power to the OLD people.

Having turned 54 last month, I am more than a bit sensitive to being referred to as an “older worker.” But by most definitions, that is what I am. Our cover feature this month on the skills gap touches on the question of whether people of my generation are leaving the workforce or hanging around longer than expected. A fear a few years ago was that the baby boomers would head for the hills *en masse*, taking institutional knowledge with them. Now, some people think we will hang around too long and cut down on opportunities for younger workers to move up. Not to mention that, in many cases, the older workers earn higher salaries, which can be a detriment to a company's bottom line in this slash and burn business economy.

The problem of pronouncements on the topic is that they have mostly ignored that being 50-plus today is quite different from a generation ago. Long before they reached 60, my parents ran off to Florida to become carefree retirees. So did so many others of their generation. My generation, as far as I can tell, doesn't want to call it quits quite yet.

The companies that continue to employ us have to make some tough decisions, however. If they want us to hang around, then they need to accommodate our learning needs (or possibly turn us into sage advisors and coaches). They should leverage our knowledge for the entire organization. Employers should also accept that many of us want to play a reduced role, but still be connected to our organizations. We may not want to dance like fools in front of the Rolling Stones. (Frankly, many of us have already done that.) But we don't want to be told that we can't.

Rex Davenport
Editor
rdavenport@astd.org



ASTD
1640 King Street, Box 1443,
Alexandria, VA 22313-2043

Vice President
Content
Patricia A. Galagan
pgalagan@astd.org

Editor
Rex Davenport
rdavenport@astd.org

Managing Editor
Paula Ketter
pketter@astd.org

Associate Editor/Books/News
Josephine Rossi
jrossi@astd.org

Art Director
Elizabeth Z. Jones

Publications Assistant
Clover Soares
csoares@astd.org

Circulation Manager
Marnee Beck
mbeck@astd.org

Manager
Supplier Sales & South/Midwest
Richa Batra, 703.683.8127
rbatra@astd.org

Northeast/Europe/Middle East
Account Executive
Mark Stout, 703.683.8142
mstout@astd.org

West Coast/Canada/Asia
Account Executive
Lyndsey Toto, 703.683.8124
ltoto@astd.org

For ad specifications, contact
Eric Brandt, 703.683.8175
ebrandt@astd.org

Customer Service/Subscriptions
703.683.8100
www.astd.org

PRINTED IN THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

©2006, ASTD Inc. All rights reserved. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Society. The appearance in *T+D* of advertisements and product or service information does not constitute endorsement by the Society. The publisher has not investigated the claims made by any advertiser; product information is based solely on material received from suppliers. Send editorial communications to the editor. Send inquiries concerning subscriptions and membership to the Customer Care Center. Printed by Cadmus Specialty Publications, 2901 Byrdhill Road, Richmond, VA 23228-5867.