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Baby Boomers and Generation Y chase flexibility

Flexing their muscles

Claire Heaney

EMPLOYERS battling a skills shortage will need to be even more flexible if they want to recruit Baby Boomers and Generation Ys.

And social demographer Bernard Salt has urged small business entrepreneurs to tap into the growing opportunities provided by an ageing population.

Speaking at the launch of Energise Enterprise, the State Government's small business festival, Mr Salt said Baby Boomers were embarking on what he called a 'portfolio' lifestyle.

That lifestyle would see them hav-

ing an extended transition phase from the workforce to retirement.

Mr Salt, a business analyst with KPMG, said Baby Boomers would be sea-changing and tree-changing and pursuing a lifestyle that balanced work and leisure. They would never retire, unlike an earlier generation that left work at 65 and had limited time in retirement before they died.

As a result of increased longevity, he warned that they would want very flexible working arrangements and businesses, including the small business sector his address was pitched at, would need to accommodate that flexibility.

He said people would enjoy 20 good years of health and activity and

businesses needed to look at lifestyle and health services for Baby Boomers.

Mr Salt said Generation Ys, born between 1975 and 1991, were the products of "rich, guilty and indulgent" parents.

Many of the parents were both working and had enjoyed good economic conditions.

"They would have got ipods when they came out in 2003," he said of the Gen Ys.



Bernard Salt

Often they were single children and could be the product of a broken marriage where they benefited from parents eager to please.

As employees they think nothing of quitting their job and heading off to London for six months and if that does not work out they will come home and live with mum and dad, he said.

"They want for nothing," he said.

Mr Salt said they would be more inclined to work for an ethical company.

He warned that in the workplace the Generation Xers would be niggly because they felt that the Generation Ys were getting everything their own way.

But, he suggested, the Generation Xers would soon get their own back as they would be the bosses as the Baby Boomers phased out of the workforce.

Small Business Minister Joe Helper, who officially opened the festival at the Champions Bar at Federation Square, said it was hoped up to 30,000 people would attend the 360 events staged during August.

He said by 2011 the aim was to have attendance topping 50,000.

He said the program provided networking opportunities and a celebration of the importance of the small and medium business sector.

Net link: www.business.vic.gov.au/energise

Taking heat out of fuel equation

Helen Carter

ADAM Wilson might be one of the few people whose business is being helped by soaring fuel prices.

His environmentally-friendly insulation covers cut fuel costs by reducing or eliminating the need for refrigeration during truck or ship transport.

The Insulcap pallet insulator is like a thermos bag which slips over pallets of food or drink, protecting temperature-sensitive products. It keeps goods at a stable temperature and reflects 98 per cent of solar rays, reducing the need for temperature control and thereby reducing fuel costs.

Refrigerated trucks use five to six litres more fuel per hour than non-refrigerated trucks so it can save \$12 an hour on diesel fuel, Mr Wilson said.

It significantly improves product integrity and reduces all emissions with less fuel needed, whether truck or ship transport.

"We see it as our future, particularly with fuel prices being so high," Mr Wilson said.

While the fuel pricing climate was a big selling point, Mr Wilson said its main benefit was protection during transfer and after arrival.

Five thermal layers, including a type of bubble wrap, prevent spikes in temperature which can spoil goods.

"Goods are often sent refrigerated but when they arrive may be left sitting on docks in temperature extremes," Mr Wilson said.

The bags keep cold products chilled in a standard truck, or room temperature items at room temperature in a refrigerated truck, preventing condensation. This means goods which need different temperatures, such as grapes and tomatoes, can be transported side by side.

"You can mix frozen, cold, cool and dry goods in one shipment, therefore not sending half empty trucks or containers," Mr Wilson said.

Bags can be used in combination with or instead of refrigeration, depending on produce, and are being used by major supermarket, shipping and dairy companies to



Refuelled: Adam Wilson's environmentally friendly insulation business is one of a rare group actually benefiting from high fuel prices.

transport dairy, meat, chocolate, fruit and other produce.

The former plumber and plumbing salesman came across the product in its raw form in a roll when working for a packaging company. Realising its potential, he quit and

'IT'S NO GOOD DOING THINGS HALF-HEARTED. YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE IN YOUR PRODUCT.'

established his own business to develop it further.

"I thought wouldn't it be good to have it as a bag you could put on things," he said.

"I saw a void in the market with Australia being so vast and items needing transporting at different temperatures."

Mr Wilson, 39, established The Wilpak Group in 2005, built and

trademarked the Insulcap brand and established manufacturing in a Melbourne factory.

"It was really tough at first. We set up a website and DVD and knocked on thousands of doors," he said.

But persistence and perseverance paid off, with annual turnover now \$2.4 million.

"It's no good doing things half-hearted. You have to believe in your product and keep punching," he said. "I kept knocking on the door of a large transport company until I got into the right area and convinced them."

In another coup it took 18 months to win the business of a major dairy company but once it used the bags, impressed clients advised not to ship again without it.

Austrade helped establish export links to India and New Zealand and Mr Wilson is investigating US markets as 20 per cent of website hits are from the US.

Net link: www.insulcap.com

Best in the city

THE Wilpak Group is one of 11 small businesses to benefit from the City of Melbourne's latest small business grants program.

It received \$30,000 to relocate its office within the municipality. The total pool for the March round of grants was just under \$300,000.

Other recipients of the current round of grants include:

INNOVATIVE retailer Bluebag has scored \$20,000 to develop a reusable coffee cup.

INDEPENDENT clothing and sewing lounge, Thread den, received nearly \$30,000 to develop a website.

THE Auspicious Arts Incubator received \$30,000 to provide business training, financial management, mentorship and coaching to small arts businesses.

RETAILER Kimono House has scored \$21,500 to expand and conduct Japanese cultural classes in the central business district and secondary schools.

MELBOURNE Private Tours has received \$10,000 to assist with tours with various themes concentrated in Melbourne City.

TURTLE House has received \$28,000 to develop digital vending kiosks which deliver pre-paid services directly into a customer's mobile device without using vouchers, cards or pin numbers.

Since the grants were launched 11 years ago more than 180 businesses have received assistance worth more than \$4 million.

Net link: www.businessmelbourne.com.au