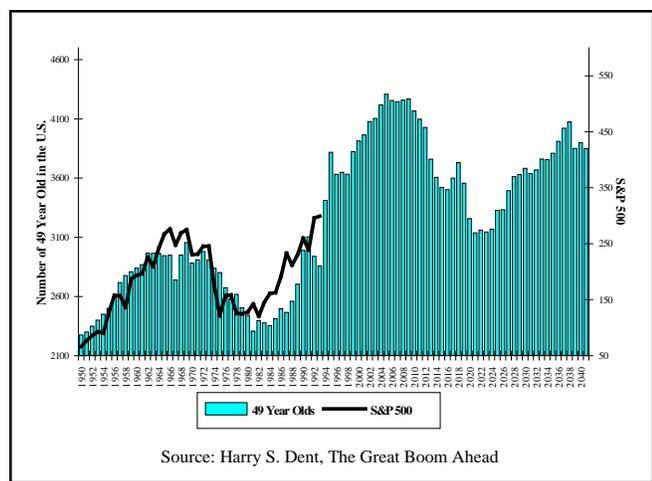


# The Great Boom Begins

By Steve Saenz / January 1995

In 1995, the first baby boomer turns 49! While this may seem like an obscure fact for trivial pursuit, a closer look reveals a powerful story that will have profound implications for the U.S. economy. Most importantly, it could have an exceedingly positive impact on your career *if* you know how to take advantage of it.



According to author Harry Dent (*The Great Boom Ahead*) *peak spending* occurs at age 49 for the average American. This, in itself, is intriguing given that over two-thirds of economic activity in the U.S. is driven by consumer spending. However, when you consider the *number* of baby boomers in the system, the picture begins to get interesting. There were over 76 million people born between 1946 and 1964. This group, commonly referred to as the Baby Boom Generation, makes up nearly one-third of the U.S. population. Presently, all of the “boomers” are between the ages of 31 and 49. During the next 18 years, each of them will celebrate their 49th birthday. The chart, above, shows what we can expect during this period. Note that the number of 49-year olds increases steadily until the year 2005. This is extremely important because, as Dent also points out, there has been a high correlation between the number of 49-year olds and the direction of stock prices (he uses the S&P 500, adjusted for inflation, as a proxy for economic activity). To put this in perspective, consider that (on average) over 11,000 people will turn 49 *every day* for the next 18 years. Suddenly, the scenario becomes downright exciting!

The next logical question is, “How do you take advantage of this opportunity?” In two words: GATHER ASSETS! This is a time to be out, talking to prospects about what you do. Let someone else manage the money.

The first step in building a successful consulting practice is to develop a clear and positive *vision*. Decide what is important to you and then develop a growth strategy for your business. As you develop your game plan, make sure you know who your clients are. What type (size) accounts are you targeting? If you think in terms of fewer but larger accounts, you will be better off in the long run.

Another important point to keep in mind is that you have to be committed to your marketing plan. As Stephen Covey says, “first things first.” You must find the time to develop new business and that activity must come before all others. Most of us can find a few “unproductive” hours in the day if we honestly look at how we spend our time. Also, keep in mind that you are not alone. Unfortunately, it seems that every financial services organization on the planet is gearing up for something big. In the future, you must prepare for the following:

- The competition will get worse
- Pricing pressures will increase
- Product lines will become more homogenous
- Investors will suffer from information overload
- The financial markets will remain volatile
- Industry consolidation will accelerate

The good news is that there will be plenty of business to go around. In this kind of environment, however, it is critically important to effectively *differentiate* yourself. You should strive to attain “best of breed” in everything you do. In order to accomplish this, you must stay one step ahead of your competition. One way to do this is to *out-service* them. Take the time to find out what your customers want and need. The key to achieving customer service excellence is getting closer to your customers. Spend more time with them and show them how much you care. Remember that little things sometimes mean the most. Be creative and consistent. In a business world grown numb, your customers will respond favorably to the extra attention. More importantly, you will find that they will tell others about you. Last but not least, be patient and stay focused. If ever there was a time to seize the day, this is it. CARPE DIEM!