

# The Retirement Education Revolution: What It Means for You and Your Clients

As the largest generation in U.S. history, baby boomers have always defined the times. As children in the 1950s, it was the age of innocence, as teenagers in the '60s members of this generation led massive protests for social change, and when they began to marry and have children in the '70s, boomers redefined our concepts of family.

Today, as the boomer generation hits their 60s, they are redefining the retirement landscape as well. Once considered a passive time when you stopped working and relaxed, "retirement" for this generation means living longer and pursuing more active lifestyles than ever before. A growing number even consider retirement to be a second career.

In the process of serving over 400 organizations with unbiased financial education programs, we see a new industry for retirement education emerging dedicated to helping this and future generations retire successfully. Historically, retirees have had limited sources to educate themselves on this time of their lives, often turning to one another to learn about retirement, or to the media—typically newspapers, financial radio talk shows, and occasional

retirement segments on television.

Now pre-retirees and retirees have unlimited sources of information on retirement:

- **Other Retirees** - With more retirees who have longer life expectancy, there are millions of retirees who can share their experiences and advice to help others plan for, and live in, retirement.
- **Media** - The concept of mass media has expanded to include the Internet, cable news channels, satellite radio, a whole category of financial and retirement planning books, tapes, DVDs, and financial planning kits and materials.
- **Retirement and financial “gurus”** - These are people like Suze Orman, David Bach, and prominent financial planners who dominate retirement coverage in their local markets with sage (and sometimes not so sage) advice on how to retire comfortably.
- **Employers** - As pension plans decline, some employers are helping workers make smart choices about managing and investing their retirement assets. Most employers have a retirement education program in place to help employees retire comfortably. Generally this consists of live workshops, in-person financial planning consultations, online financial planning tools, and print materials.
- **Financial Planners** - As more planners look to serve the baby boomer

generation, they are beginning to integrate retirement education into their financial planning practices through workshops, newsletters, content on their Web sites, and free consultations and plans for pre-retirees and retirees focused on informing them about their options.

If you don't educate your clients about retirement, chances are good that someone else will. In the table below are some tips on how you can become the trusted resource for your clients on all their retirement needs so that they don't have to turn anywhere else.

While the trends that baby boomers have heralded may be debated for their contribution to society, as they enter retirement, the debate is over. Our experience shows that education works: Organizations we have worked with who committed to an on-going program of retirement and financial education have helped their employees to dramatically increase their retirement savings. On average, companies who implemented our financial education programs have increased retirement plan participation 15% to 20% in less than a year and doubled retirement plan deferral rates. In addition, 97% of employees surveyed say they are better prepared to make a financial decision and 84% surveyed within 45 days of attending a workshop say they have already taken action to improve their financial situations and achieve their financial goals.

This trend toward retirement education is long overdue, and has the power to completely revolutionize retirement so that it can be a time where people have the money and freedom to pursue their wildest dreams. As a financial planner, you have the unique ability to help shape this trend by sharing your

expertise and educating your clients and other local retirees on a profit-making basis or as part of your pro bono work. Not only is this a great business, it is a great privilege and an even greater responsibility.

**HOW TO BECOME A RETIREMENT RESOURCE FOR CLIENTS**

<b>EDUCATION SOURCE</b>	<b>PROVIDERS</b>	<b>HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE</b>
<b>Media</b>	Local and national TV, radio, magazines, newspapers, Web sites	Become an expert resource. If possible, poll your clients to compile research on different retirement trends. The media love research and are more likely to profile research providers deemed credible.
<b>Other Retirees</b>	Retirees and pre-retirees who want to help others through the retirement process	Establish alliances with organizations that serve retirees so you can become an information source for them. Offer to provide retirees and pre-retirees affiliated with these organizations free retirement education services.
<b>Retirement and Financial Education Gurus</b>	Suze Orman, David Bach, Jean Chatzky, John Nelson (author of <i>What Color is Your Retirement Parachute?</i> )	Start by becoming a guru to your clients. Develop an educational newsletter or Web site or workshop series that differentiates you and positions you as an expert.
<b>Employers</b>	Unbiased financial education firms that focus exclusively on educating employees. Examples include Financial Finesse, The PFE Group, and Retirement Educators. Also, credit unions, financial institutions, and retirement plan providers who offer workshops and on-site financial planning as a part of their client service program for employers	If education is your passion and you are talented at it, consider a career as a financial educator. You'll spend your time helping people without the risk and conflicts of interests associated with selling financial services. Financial educators typically conduct workshops, in-person financial planning sessions, phone-based financial coaching, and develop curriculum for these services and online tools.

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