Department for **Community Development**
Government of **Western Australia**

Volunteering Secretariat

From

'BOOMN*E*T'

To

'BOOMN*O*T'

Part Two of a Research Project

on

Baby Boomers and Volunteering

Conducted by TEAM CONSULTANTS

Principal Consultant - Judy Esmond, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

A Special Thank You to:

Trish O'Reilly and the staff of the Volunteering Secretariat, Department for

Community Development

The research team at TEAM Consultants

All those participants who volunteered their time

List of Tables

1.   Background to the Research Project

This research is the second study in a two-part research project examining 'Baby Boomers and Volunteering'.

Part One of this research was commissioned by the Department of Premier and Cabinet in partnership with the Office of Seniors Interests in Western Australia. The research was undertaken by TEAM CONSULTANTS – a research, education and coaching company – under the direction of principal researcher, Judy Esmond, Ph.D.

The key objectives of the first study were:

- To identify the 'motivators and barriers' for Baby Boomers to include volunteering in their plans for later years.

- To develop strategies to recruit and support Baby Boomers as volunteers, in urban and rural/remote areas, both now and in later years when they retire or change their work practices.

The research methodology involved five components: a review of the relevant literature; interviews with representatives from organisations that utilise volunteers; creativity sessions with Baby Boomers; interviews with representatives from the indigenous community and focus group discussions with Baby Boomers.

From this research, the report 'BOOMNET: Capturing the Baby Boomer Volunteers' was published. The findings in this report highlighted seven strategic focus areas on which organisations need to concentrate in order to optimise their prospects of recruiting Baby Boomers as volunteers. The findings were presented under the acronym BOOMNET:

B - Boomers

O - Organised

O - Openness

M - Meaningful

N - Needs

E - Education

T - Time

B is for understanding the aspirations and characteristics of the Baby Boomers

O is for organised, professional and well-managed organisations

O is for an open and a supportive organisation where volunteers are truly valued

M is for meaningful, interesting, creative and challenging volunteering opportunities

N is for meeting the needs of Baby Boomers

E is for education rather than simply 'traditional' training

T is for Baby Boomers feeling they do not have enough time to volunteer

The findings from the BOOMNET report were also presented at a public forum and a full copy of the report is available at the following website address www.dpc.wa.gov.au/volunteer/boom.pdf

Building upon the BOOMNET report findings, Part Two of this research project into Baby Boomers and Volunteering was undertaken.

Part Two of this research was commissioned by the Department for Community Development, Volunteering Secretariat in Western Australia. Again, TEAM Consultants under the direction of principal researcher, Judy Esmond, Ph.D. completed the research, which forms the basis of this report.

2. Research Objectives

In the BOOMNET report, seven key strategic focus areas were identified for organisations in order to capture Baby Boomers as volunteers. A key question that then remained was: Had organisations that currently utilise volunteers in the Western Australian community thought of and/or put into action recruitment strategies to specifically target Baby Boomers as volunteers? If some of those organisations were actually 'casting a net' and capturing the Baby Boomer volunteers, surely much could be learnt by other organisations.

The brief for this research therefore involved *three key research objectives*:

- To identify those organisations in the community that utilised volunteers who had *thought* of specifically targeting Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) to recruit as volunteers.

- To identify those organisations who had put into *action* recruitment methods specifically targeting Baby Boomers as volunteers.

- To examine the recruitment methods of orgranisations in targeting volunteers in general.

With these key research objectives in mind, a large amount of data was subsequently collected and analysed and this has provided a greater understanding of the recruiting methods of organisations in attracting both Baby Boomers specifically and volunteers generally.

3.   Methodology

For this research, the methodology undertaken combined two methods of data collection:

- telephone survey

- email survey

It should be noted that *no review of relevant literature* was undertaken in Part Two of this study. As the literature review undertaken in Part One of the research explains:

"The purpose of the literature review was to examine research and literature specifically relating to Baby Boomers and Volunteering. In recent years there has been an increasing amount of literature written about the Baby Boomers *per se* (Dychtwald, 1999; Dychtwald & Flower, 1990; Foot & Stoffman, 2001; Mackay, 1997; McCallum & Geiselhart, 1996; Salt, 2001). However, research *specifically* examining Baby Boomers and Volunteering is practically non-existent in Australia and throughout the world, even though this population cohort represents our greatest potential pool of volunteers both now and in the future" (Esmond: 2001a:3).

Telephone and email survey to organisations utilising volunteers

The telephone survey was chosen as the preferred methodology for this research, as compared to other methodologies such as a mailed questionnaire, for the following reasons:

- As this research involved a limited amount of time to collect the data, a telephone survey was considered to be a quicker way of obtaining the data than through a process of mailing out questionnaires.

- It was also considered that the telephone survey would elicit a higher rate of response from participants than a questionnaire, as participants would be more likely to spend some time on the phone answering a few questions than completing and returning a written questionnaire.

- A telephone conversation with participants was also considered more likely to provide other information in discussion with the researcher than would be able to be obtained from written responses to a questionnaire.

A database totalling 1005 organisations that utilise volunteers was then collated from a number of sources. From this database, organisations were then categorised and cross-checked and those organisations represented by a number of branches or sub-centres all providing the same community services, were collapsed to reduce duplication. A random representative selection was then made for this telephone survey. This process reduced the number of participating organisations on our original database by approximately one-half and these organisations then became the sample population used for this survey.

To ensure, however, that a sample of organisations from rural areas was included, all organisations located in country areas were categorised together and then a small representative sample across different sectors was selected.

In undertaking the telephone survey, the intention of the researchers was to keep the survey brief and a total of *six* main questions based on the key research objectives were designed. Each of these questions will be discussed in the section on research findings in this report.

The 480 organisations that were contacted for this research were distributed across a range of sectors in the community, as shown below in Table 3.1. In considering Table 3.1, it can be noted that there was a high degree of overlap in some categorisation, as many religious-based organisations could have also been described as welfare-based organisations, as could many programs undertaken by shire/councils or health-based organisations.

Further, the apparent over-representation of welfare-based organisations can be somewhat misleading as many small welfare organisations were included, whereas some large organisations in other sectors, such as emergency services, were collapsed into only a representative sample of their branches or sub-centres.

The inclusion of Table 3.1 therefore is not aimed at reflecting a truly equal representation of organisations across sectors but to illustrate that there is a representation of organisations from a wide range of sectors.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Organisations Across Community Sectors

Types of Sectors	Number	Percentage (%)
Environmental	39	8.1
Health/Hospital	34	7.1
Emergency Services	42	8.8
Education/Training	62	12.9
Sport & Recreation	25	5.2
Arts, Heritage & Tourism	31	6.4
Welfare	156	32.5
Shires/Councils	40	8.3
Youth	23	4.8
Religious	24	5.0
Employee Programs	4	0.8
Total	**480**	**100.0**

The researchers then contacted organisations by telephone and asked to speak to the person responsible for volunteers within the organisation. These participants had a range of titles and positions such as manager of volunteers, volunteer coordinator, executive director, president, manager of human resources, team leader, community education officer, officer in charge, etc that differed with each organisation. On average, it took two to three phone calls to reach the relevant person and the telephone interviews were, on average, about 15 minutes in length. A total of 1391 calls were made including local, mobile and STD calls.

After three phone calls without being able to make contact with the person responsible for volunteers in the organisation, the researchers then attempted to obtain an email address for this person. Where possible, the researchers then sent a short email survey containing the same questions as those in the telephone interviews.

A total of 40 organisations were contacted through an email survey, following unsuccessful telephone attempts to reach the person responsible for volunteers within that organisation.

At the completion of the survey, there still remained 35 people responsible for volunteers within certain organisations with whom the researchers were unable to make contact or obtain a response from either the telephone or via email. The main reasons for being unable to make contact with these people included:

- No one ever answered the phone.

- The person responsible for volunteers in the organisation was away on holidays and no one else knew anything about the volunteer program.

- The person responsible for volunteers in the organisation was only part-time and no one else knew anything about the volunteer program.

- The person responsible for volunteers in the organisation never returned calls when several messages were left for them asking them to do so.

- The person responsible for volunteers in the organisation never returned emails.

Although there was a non-response rate expected by the researchers, the situation in some organisations does raise the following question: "If the researchers, after persistent attempts to make contact with the person responsible for volunteers in an organisation were unable to do so, how do prospective volunteers make any contact?"

In the final analysis, using the telephone and email survey, a total of 445 organisations responded to this research, of which 10% were located in country areas. Table 3.2 illustrates this below.

Table 3.2 Location, Response Method and Responsiveness of Organisations

Location (n = 480)		Response Method		Responsiveness	
Metropolitan 432	Country 48	Telephone 440	Email 40	Responded 445	No Response 35

4. Research Findings

The analysis of data and subsequent findings of this research can best be examined in terms of the *six* main questions asked by the researchers of participants. These questions were: What are the main types of activities undertaken by the volunteers in your organisation? What is the target age range from which your organisation aims to recruit volunteers? What is the average age range of the volunteers in your organisation? What are the main recruitment methods used by your organisation to attract volunteers? Has your organisation thought of specifically targeting Baby Boomers to recruit as volunteers? Has your organisation put into *action* recruitment methods specifically targeting Baby Boomers as volunteers?

What are the main types of activities undertaken by the volunteers in your organisation?

The open-ended format of this research did not superimpose categories but rather allowed for the range of descriptive words from participants to emerge to describe the main activities undertaken by the range of volunteers found in their individual organisations.

This proved to be an enormous list as participants described a total of 1790 activities. Even when the list was cross-checked, categorised and collapsed to remove duplication, one-third of the activities remained from the original. This final list was too extensive to present in this research but the sheer number of activities reinforces both the depth and variety of work undertaken by volunteers.

What is the target age range from which your organisation aims to recruit volunteers?

When participants were asked about the target age range from which they aimed to recruit volunteers, few organisations were found to identify and specifically target any particular age range of potential volunteers.

This is illustrated in Table 4.1 below, as 56% of organisations described a very broad age range such as from 16 years and older or 18 years and older. A further 26% of organisations were identified as aiming to recruit volunteers that were from any age group. The target age of the final 18% of organisations represented as 'other' was scattered across different years, however, these organisations often did target a fairly specific age range, for example people within the age range consisting of 'senior citizens' or 'young adults'.

Table 4.1 Target Age Range From Which Organisations Aim to Recruit Volunteers

Age Range	Percentage (%)
16 years and older	11.0
18 years and older	45.0
Any age	26.0
Other	18.0
Total	**100.0**

What is the average age range of the volunteers in your organisation?

Following on from the previous research question, when participants were then asked what was the average age range of volunteers in their organisation, the responses were markedly different from the age range identified as the target age range of volunteers they were aiming to recruit. For instance, a large number of organisations that aimed to recruit volunteers from 16 years and older and/or 18 years and older, were found to have an average age range amongst their volunteers of between 60 to 70 years of age.

When further analysis was undertaken and the targeted age range of volunteers was compared with the actual average age of volunteers in organisations, the results highlighted an interesting discrepancy between these two age related characteristics, as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Age Differences Between the Targeted Age of Potential Volunteers and the Average Age of Volunteers in Organisations

Age difference between targeted age and average age	Percentage (%)
0 to 10 years	20.0
11 to 20 years	16.0
21 to 30 years	17.0
31 to 40 years	22.0
41 to 50 years	21.0
51 to 60 years	4.0
Total	**100.0**

Only 20% of organisations had no more than a 10 year difference between the average age range of their volunteers and the age range of volunteers that they targeted in their recruiting process. However, for almost two-thirds of participating organisations, there was 20 years or more difference between the targeted age range and the average age of their volunteers.

Amongst those organisations that had a 15 year or less age difference between the targeted and actual average age of volunteers, it was found that 80% of these organisations were providing child and youth based services and recruiting volunteers in the youth to young adult age range. Because these organisations had a clearly defined limited target age range from which they were attempting to recruit volunteers, there remained a high correlation between the ages of those volunteers already involved with the organisation and the ages of those potential volunteers being targeted and recruited to the organisation.

What are the main recruitment methods used by your organisation to attract volunteers?

When asked to identify the main recruitment methods used to attract volunteers to their organisation, there was a wide variety of recruitment methods described and a total of 32 main methods in all. Table 4.3 below highlights these methods and although there is a large number of methods listed, only a limited number were used consistently by organisations.

Table 4.3   Main Recruitment Methods Used by Organisations to Recruit Volunteers

Main Recruitment Methods	
30% of organisations used • Word of mouth	1% of organisations used • Public displays • Public events • Radio • Referral from other community groups
16% of organisations used • Membership, congregation and networking	
9% of organisations used • Volunteering Centres • Advertisements in the local/community papers	Less than 1% of organisations used • Articles in state-wide papers • Advertisements in state-wide papers • Advertisements in national papers • Open days
6% of organisations used • School/Universities/TAFE students	• Television • Website (own) • Go Volunteer/Seek Volunteer websites
4% of organisations used • Articles in local/community papers • Newsletters/members magazine or newspapers	• Referral from other community groups • Walk-ins • Posters • Window advertisements • Mail-outs
3% of organisations used • Community noticeboards • Work for dole/mutual obligation/CSO	• Mail drops • On the bottom of receipts • Seniors card holders application • Guest speaking
2% of organisations used • Flyers and brochures	• Corporate Citizenship programs • Training programs

Word of mouth was the most common method of recruiting volunteers by organisations. When combined with the next category of 'membership, congregation and networking', which many participants described as variations on word of mouth

recruiting, a total of 45% of organisations used some form of word of mouth recruitment. Further, it was also found that 21% of all participating organisations used *no* other method of recruiting volunteers.

The next most common recruitment methods involved utilising volunteering centres and advertisements in local/community newspapers. This was followed by the recruitment of students from schools, universities and TAFE colleges, which interestingly may bring into question the whole idea of 'volunteering', as many of these tertiary students are recruited as a compulsory requirement of their course, such as being on supervised practicum.

When the number of recruiting methods were totalled for each organisation, the results are shown in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 Number of Recruitment Methods Used by Organisations to Recruit Volunteers

No of Methods Used	Percentage (%)
1	24.0
2	27.9
3	32.8
4	10.4
5	4.4
6	0.5
Total	**100.0**

Most organisations (85%) used no more than three methods in recruiting potential volunteers. Very few organisations utilised a broad diversity of methods in their volunteer recruitment programs.

<u>Has your organisation thought of specifically targeting Baby Boomers to recruit as volunteers</u>?

When participants were asked if their organisation had specifically thought of recruiting Baby Boomer volunteers, very few organisations had even thought of targeting this particular age range. Participants gave a variety of reasons for this situation and included statements such as:

- *We're unsure how to go about specifically recruiting Baby Boomers.*

- *There is no time to develop any specific recruitment program to target Baby Boomers.*

- *We thought of attracting Baby Boomers, but they are too hard, we've decided to attract younger volunteers instead.*

- *I don't think Baby Boomers are really interested in volunteering – we thought about it but they don't respond now, we couldn't see how they would in the future.*

- *There is no infrastructure in our organisation to develop a larger program.*

- *We are not looking at recruiting in that age group.*

Out of a total of 445 organisations, only 29 organisations had actually thought of targeting Baby Boomers as volunteers. This represented only *six percent* of organisations in this population sample.

<u>Has your organisation put into *action* recruitment methods specifically targeting Baby Boomers as volunteers</u>?

Of the 29 organisations that had thought of specifically targeting Baby Boomers as volunteers, only *five* organisations reported that they *were developing or had put into*

action recruitment methods specifically targeting Baby Boomers as volunteers. In the overall sample population, this represented *one percent* of the 445 surveyed. Of these five organisations, two were still developing recruitment programs targeting Baby Boomers as shown in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Type of Activities of Organisations Targeting Baby Boomers as Volunteers

Type of Activity	No of Organisations
Currently Targeting Baby Boomers	3
Developing Recruitment Programs to target Baby Boomers	2
Total	**5**

Of the three organisations that are currently targeting Baby Boomers as volunteers, they are all targeting a very specific group of Baby Boomers, predominantly because of the type of volunteers they utilise and/or the nature of their organisation. These specific examples were:

Organisation A: Baby Boomers who have turned 55 years of age and have retired early.

Organisation B: Baby Boomers who are unemployed between the ages of 40 to 55 years referred under Centrelink programs.

Organisation C: Baby Boomers who are Vietnam Veterans.

For Organisation A, there had actually been limited change in their general recruitment strategies to target Baby Boomers as volunteers - it was more a case of Baby Boomers themselves now beginning to turn 55 years and looking at early retirement. In other words, Baby Boomers were now beginning to reach the target age range for this organisation.

In the case of Organisations B & C, the type of Baby Boomers they were targeting had more to do with the circumstances of actual volunteers, i.e. unemployed or war veterans, than the fact that these volunteers were in the Baby Boomers age group.

The results of the two final questions in this study clearly highlighted that very few organisations in Western Australia have considered or have actively developed formal recruitment programs to specifically target and capture the Baby Boomer volunteers.

The explanation for this finding can not be that Baby Boomers do not volunteer, for according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics in Western Australia: "Of the 35 to 54 years age group 200,600 people volunteered 35.7 million hours, having the highest volunteer rate (37%), as compared to those aged 18 to 34 years (30%) and 55 years and over (27%) (ABS, 2001).

Obviously, many organisations do attract and recruit Baby Boomers as volunteers in their general recruitment programs, however, very few organisations have embarked on a specific concentrated recruitment campaign to capture the Baby Boomer volunteers.

The researchers believe that this finding highlights a clear opportunity for organisations in Western Australia to increase their volunteer numbers by actively targeting Baby Boomer volunteers.

5. Discussion

The discussion of the results of this research will be considered under three main headings, with the aim of challenging organisations to reflect upon both the concepts of recruiting Baby Boomers specifically and volunteers in general.

5.1 One Size Does Not Fit All!

Although this research began by looking specifically at the targeting and recruitment of Baby Boomers as volunteers, it provided an interesting general profile of how organisations recruit volunteers of any age group.

The overwhelming message from discussions with organisations about their recruitment methods was that there is often very little 'method' at all. Few organisations reported having planned, formalised, on-going recruitment programs that are constantly evaluated and improved. Many stated that they have an entirely ad-hoc approach to the process of recruiting volunteers. Sometimes, the approach was considered to be a planned one, but many simply consisted of using the same recruitment method at the same time every year (e.g. advertising annually in the newspaper for volunteers). No analysis had ever been undertaken to determine the effectiveness or otherwise of these methods. It is not that these methods did not result in recruiting volunteers, indeed they did. However, it appeared that there had been no consideration of how much more effective and successful the organisations could be at recruiting volunteers if there was a systematic and planned approach.

This point was highlighted when participants spoke of the 'target' recruitment age of their potential volunteers. As previously reported, 82% of organisations stated that they 'targeted' volunteers from 16 and/or 18 years and older and/or of any age. Quite apart from the fact that such a broad age grouping of volunteers has little to do with any sort of 'targeting', the results showed that for most organisations, there was a large number of years difference between the actual age of their volunteers and the age of the volunteers they were trying to attract through their recruitment programs.

Although many organisations do attract volunteers across a wide range of ages, how many more potential volunteers are lost because a single volunteering message is used to try to attract everyone?

Crandall (1996) in his book *Marketing Your Services: For People Who Hate to Sell* notes that target marketing has become one of the most effective methods used by for-profit organisations to attract customers. Yet few non-profit organisations seem to have considered adopting such an approach in their recruitment processes.

Those organisations in this research that effectively identified a market and actively targeted that particular market, based on a specific age group, were most often those organisations that were predominantly youth based and aimed to attract and recruit a

target market of adolescents and young adults. Their advertising, recruitment methods and image were all aimed at attracting a younger market of volunteers, and this approach of targeted marketing resulted in a high correlation between the ages of the volunteers they sought to attract and the actual ages of their volunteers.

Of course, many organisations do not wish to recruit only a limited age group (and most organisations in this research fell into this category). However, many of these organisations are still attempting to attract volunteers of all ages with a 'one size fits all' approach. Unfortunately, one size does not always fit all. The recruitment methods and message that would attract an 18 year old to volunteering could well be very different to that which would attract a 60 year old.

Interestingly, an organisation does not have to be large with unlimited resources to be effective in target marketing. Often, smaller organisations can be less hampered by bureaucratic processes and have greater flexibility to develop marketing strategies to capture a 'niche' market of volunteers.

However, whether large or small, to effectively target a particular market, there is a need to research that market and continually refine and evaluate organisational recruitment methods. As Esmond (2001a: 170 & 181) points out: "find out as much as you can about your target group. If you can understand and relate to your target group, you're well on your way to recruiting them…Whatever your target audience, once you've identified them, find creative ways to "zoom in" on the target." The more specific your message is to your audience, the more likely you are to attract their attention.

The need to develop different volunteer recruitment strategies and messages to target different markets are now not just interesting concepts, but of vital necessity for the very survival of many organisations in the non-profit sector. For these organisations, their traditional sources of volunteers have begun to 'dry up' perhaps because of the increasing age of their volunteers. Many organisations have begun to respond and their answer has often been to undertake strategies to target the 'youth' market such as developing cadet programs.

Just as for-profit organisations have had to become increasingly sophisticated about how to attract potential customers, so too will non-profit organisations need to become more creative, for as was explained in Part One of this research in the BOOMNET Report: "make no mistake, non-profit organisations seeking to attract and recruit volunteers are in the 'customer service business'. They are selling the volunteering experience. The question is then: "Is the volunteering experience that the organisation is selling, worth buying?" (Esmond, 2001b:21).

The use of target marketing will be a vital process for organisations, not only in attracting and retaining volunteers in different age categories, but also to target volunteers from a whole range of other markets based on gender, profession, trade, familial status and life-stage. Target marketing will greatly assist those organisations willing to invest the time and effort, not only to be more effective in how they presently attract and retain their volunteers, but also to open up a range of other markets and possibilities in the future.

5.2 If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got!

Having discussed a volunteer recruitment 'process' in target marketing, we can now consider a specific recruitment 'method'. This research found that 'word of mouth' was still the main recruitment method for most organisations. This finding is consistent with that of many other authors (Ellis, 1996; McCurley & Vineyard; 1988, McCurley & Lynch, 1994; Noble & Rogers, 1998) in identifying word of mouth as the number one recruitment method of most organisations.

Interestingly, just as the non-profit world could learn much from the business world about target marketing, the business world has only recently begun to understand what non-profit organisations have always known about the power of word of mouth marketing, often referred to as 'one-to-one relationship' marketing.

However, knowing about word of mouth marketing and actually harnessing this powerful volunteer recruitment tool may be two very different processes for non-profit organisations. Although 45% of organisations identified using some form of word of

mouth recruitment, most participants in this research described this method as an ad-hoc, haphazard event that just somehow happens! Their volunteers tell other people about their organisation and then other people come along and become volunteers.

Few organisations in this research had taken this powerful recruitment tool and researched it, developed specific strategies to harness its potential and continued to refine and evaluate its effectiveness. This is certainly a challenging process, but with so many organisations in this research utilising 'word of mouth' as their most important recruitment tool, to develop it beyond merely a haphazard event to a coordinated and refined process could significantly increase the number of volunteers an organisation may attract.

Although just how word of mouth recruitment is developed will differ for each organisation, some of the following ideas and suggestions adapted from Esmond (2001a: 64-94), could be a starting point for further discussion within organisations.

- As networking is an important skill in word of mouth recruitment, provide all volunteers and staff with training in networking techniques.

- If your current volunteers are your best recruitment ambassadors, be sure to provide them with responses to the most frequent questions asked by prospective volunteers.

- Provide staff, board members, volunteers and clients, with business cards that contain your volunteering message, so they can readily give these to anyone who might be interested in volunteering.

- Select a team of 'recruiter' volunteers, whose only duties are to develop and implement an effective word of mouth recruitment program.

- Have everyone in the organisation brainstorm all the people they know in their 'networking circles' from close family members through to distant

acquaintances. Suggest that each person then aim to contact three of these people in their own network and ask them to consider volunteering.

There are many other ways in which organisations can utilise the human resources they already have – paid staff, board members, volunteers and clients – to develop even more effective word of mouth recruitment methods.

However, a word of warning! Although word of mouth is a very important recruitment tool, to rely solely on this method of personal recruitment has its problems. Even though existing volunteers may be some of the most successful recruiters for organisations, it must be kept in mind that they tend to recruit people similar to themselves from their own social networks (Fischer & Schaffer, 1993). For the 21% of organisations relying on this method alone, they may find that there is an increasing lack of diversity amongst their volunteer base.

In order to maintain a dynamic, diverse and open volunteer base, it is still important for organisations to incorporate a range of other recruitment methods to attract other prospective volunteers outside the networks of current volunteers, staff and clients.

5.3 From BOOMN*E*T to BOOMN*O*T

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this research has been the finding that only six percent of organisations have thought of specifically targeting Baby Boomers to recruit as volunteers and only one percent of organisations have put into action some form of recruiting approach specifically targeting Baby Boomers. The fact that such a very small percentage of organisations are actively targeting Baby Boomers was of great interest to the researchers.

Of course, there are various reasons why organisations are not targeting Baby Boomers, including the fact that their programs and activities may require volunteers from a different age group (e.g., young people). Also, some organisations that are actively targeting Baby Boomers may not have been included in the representative sample population and therefore have not been contacted.

A further explanation of the finding that so few organisations are actively targeting Baby Boomers may also be that it is a reflection of the general finding that only a limited number of organisations in this research were involved in effective *target marketing* for *any* age groups, and even fewer had systematically developed strategies for word of mouth marketing, even though word of mouth was by far the most commonly identified recruitment method.

However, as 365 out of 445 organisations (82%) are 'targeting' volunteers from 16 and/or 18 years and older or of any age (therefore including Baby Boomers), and as Baby Boomers are our largest population cohort, it remains surprising that there are not more organisations actively targeting this specific segment of the volunteer market.

As pointed out in Part One of this research project in the BOOMNET report: "The enormous size of the Baby Boomer population ensures that the non-profit sector can expect to experience a surge in the number of potential volunteers. Volunteering increases with age and the huge Baby Boomer generation is beginning to enter a life stage when their children are grown and leaving home. They may not necessarily 'retire' but will begin to 'scale back' their working life in order to pursue other activities, and they see volunteering as one of these activities. Those organisations waiting to target the Baby Boomers when they retire will be too late. Baby Boomers are already considering their futures and how they will use their time. By the time that they eventually do retire (if they do at all), they will already be a long way down the track in planning the activities they will undertake" (Esmond, 2001b:37).

Although many organisations in this research are already utilising the volunteering services of the Baby Boomer generation, that seems to be more by circumstance than by design. The opportunity remains to begin to develop specific strategies aimed at recruiting volunteers within this particular age range.

This research suggests that the time is right for organisations that utilise volunteers to re-evaluate their recruitment methods. Whether organisations have an abundance of volunteers and a waiting list, or a dearth of volunteers, the opportunity exists to enhance their recruiting by continually evaluating their recruitment programs and adding new strategies such as target marketing.

The possibilities are limitless for organisations, whether large or small, to be more effective and successful in recruiting volunteers. Combining planned word of mouth and other recruitment strategies, with target marketing, particularly aimed at our greatest potential pool of volunteers – the Baby Boomers – will help to realise the opportunities for more West Australians than ever before to become volunteers in our community.

6. References

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2001). *Voluntary Work, Australia*. ABS Cat No. 4441.0. Canberra.

Dychtwald, K. (1999). *Age Power: How the 21st Century will be Ruled by the New Old.* New York: Penguin Putnam.

Dychtwald, K. & Flower, J. (1990). *Age Wave: The Challenges and Opportunities of an Ageing America.* New York: Bantam Books.

Crandall, R. (1996). *Marketing Your Services: For People Who Hate to Sell.* Illinois: Contemporary Books.

Ellis, S.J. (1996). *The Volunteer Recruitment and Membership Development Book*. (2nd edition). Philadelphia: Energize.

Esmond, J. (2001a). *Count Me In! 501 Ideas on Recruiting Volunteers*. Perth: Newseason Publications.

Esmond, J. (2001b). *BOOMNET: Capturing the Baby Boomer Volunteers*. Perth: Department of Premier & Cabinet.

Fischer, L.R., & Schaffer, K.B. (1993). *Older Volunteers: A Guide to Research and Practice*. California: Sage Publications.

Foot, D.K., & Stoffman, D. (2001). *Boom, Bust & Echo: How to Profit from the Demographic Shift in the 21st Century.* Ontario: Macfarlane Walter & Ross.

Mackay, H. (1997). *Generations: Baby Boomers, Their Parents & Their Children*. Sydney: Pan Macmillan.

McCallum, J. & Geiselhart, K. (1996). *Australia's New Aged: Issues for Young and Old.* Sydney: Allen & Unwin.

McCurley, S. & Lynch, R. (1994). *Essential Volunteer Management*. London: The Directory of Social Change.

McCurley, S. & Vineyard, S. (1988). *101 Tips for Volunteer Recruitment*. Illinois: Hertiage Arts Publishing.

Noble, J. & Rogers, L. (1998). *Volunteer Management: An Essential Guide*. South Australia: Volunteering SA.

Salt, B. (2001). *The Big Shift: Welcome to the Third Culture.* Melbourne: Hardie Grant Publishing.