

motto interview

Creating the Boomer Brand

The founder of monster.com wants to do for baby boomers what he did for careers: revolutionize how you see them. **Sylvia Lafair** talks to **Jeff Taylor** about generating major business ideas and living “the biggest life possible.”

As founder, chairman, CEO, president and “Chief Monster” of monster.com, Jeff Taylor changed the way people think about careers and how to get jobs. Monster.com went from idea in 1993 to launch in 1994. And grew from a lone visionary, Taylor, to 6,000 employees today. While leading that company, Taylor vowed to himself: “I won’t leave here until I have another monster idea.” That “aha” moment became a company in September 2006 with Taylor, again, as chief everything. Now more than 60 employees later, his media company is ready to change the way we view aging. **PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALLISON SHIRREFFS**

MOTTO: *How does an idea move from an interesting thought to an action plan?*

JEFF TAYLOR: In 1998 I was a speaker at a career fair at the Javits Center in Manhattan. The ques-

tion on everyone’s mind was, “What will happen when the baby boomers exit from the workplace?” I caught that one and it began to cause fireworks in my brain.



“It’s time for each one of us to be a dream generator”

MOTTO: *Sounds like a similar explosion to when Monster was developed.*

TAYLOR: Pretty close. Back in 1993 I was a marketer when one of my clients said, “I want a monster of an idea.”

MOTTO: *And that was it?*

TAYLOR: Not quite. I counsel entrepreneurs, “Never let anyone tell you how long to stay in a shower.” I know it sounds strange. Strange and true. It was there, using indelible markers on the tile walls that the idea of a career Internet site was born. A perfect storm! The job market was hot, the Internet was growing and there was nowhere for one-stop shopping. We were in a transition phase from old style employment agencies into the world of click and find.

MOTTO: *So what is your new perfect storm scenario?*

TAYLOR: When that guy yelled out, “What are the boomers going to do?” I thought, Yeah, the world has changed and this group is filled with change agents. They aren’t going to retire to bingo and shuffleboard, and the demographics show we are living longer.

MOTTO: *Jeff, take us into your mind, the mind of a visionary, so we can learn how to catch an idea and grow it.*

TAYLOR: I’ll accept the visionary label if you add something basic to it. A visionary is a listener and a researcher. It isn’t “aha” and it’s done. It takes a lot of attention to detail. From 1998 to now the boomer idea became an itch that was scratched by gathering data and more data; by reading books and looking at trends in the media and talking to lots of people.

MOTTO: *It’s fascinating to see magazine covers all over the walls of your new office about the baby boomers and their explosion into the world of retirement.*

What’s your **motto**,

Jeff Taylor?

“80% of life is showing up.”

TAYLOR: I don’t call it retirement. I call it graduation. You know, moving from one phase to another where you build on the experience of the past. The idea kept growing, moving away from the connotation of turning 60 to the celebration of turning 60, and while we’ve named 60 the “new 40” I hope folks take that as meaning it’s OK to stay young and vibrant rather than the obsessive youth cult of the past decades. Our motto is “Live to be 100 or die trying.”

MOTTO: *So your task is to help an entire generation and those that come after reframe their own ideas about aging.*

TAYLOR: In a large sense, that’s it. We made monster.com a destination brand. There is no brand for the boomers. We’re creating that. It’s a place to get guidance and inspiration about living the biggest life you can live, for a life of adventure, creativity and meaning. Every phase the baby boomers have hit has created social and economic change. This is just what’s next.

MOTTO: *You seem mighty young to be so impassioned about getting older.*

TAYLOR: I'm actually at the end of the boomer group. I'll be 46 in October, so I qualify. But more than that, I'm interested in what makes a quality life, what gives folks joy and passion. I've had great role models. My mom is 69 and dad 72. They are in great health. Both retired educators, they are involved in helping a village in Guatemala, way out in the middle of nowhere, grow into the 21st century in a responsible way. They are an example of what is possible. I want to find the best information for the most people to have a place to connect, a watering hole if you will, to bring together spirited, inspirational and challenging experiences so we can all grow.

MOTTO: *And the name of this newest bold and vast idea is...*

TAYLOR: Eons.

MOTTO: *Doesn't that mean billions of years?*

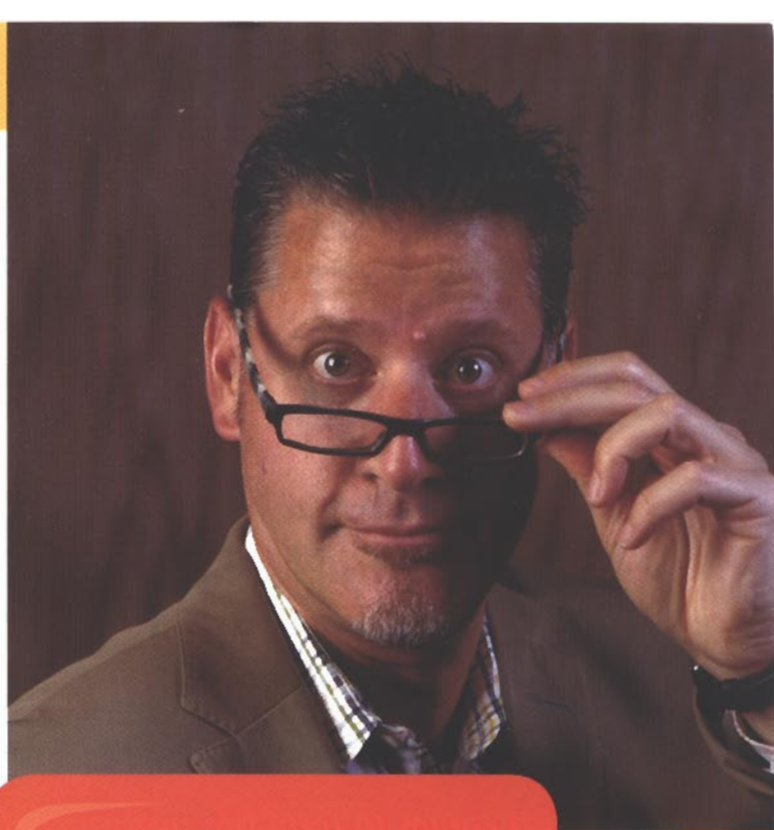
TAYLOR: Think about it, you meet an old friend you haven't see in a long time and say, "I haven't seen you for eons." The word has an interesting connotation of time out of time. And that's the image we want to create. Let's make life about celebration, about living beyond just chronological age. Until now we really didn't need a plan for longevity because not enough people lived long enough.

MOTTO: *So what are some of the demographics we should be aware of?*

TAYLOR: The world of work has changed at a core level. Pre-boomers' average tenure with a company was 23 years. Now on average we change jobs every five to 10 years. Pre-boomers who left jobs were looked down upon, like they were poor employees with problems. *Now the question is, "How come you've stayed in your job so long?"* What we're looking for at work is a full life experience. Boomers started that and they can add value helping companies re-think what work offers, to make it **MOTTO**.

MOTTO: *Sounds like boomers will continue to change everything they touch. Work is meant to be more than a daily drudge, and this does seem to be the time and place to work, as our motto says, with purpose, passion and profit.*

TAYLOR: Exactly. Exciting jobs are at an all-time high. In this country we have unparalleled wealth and we are in the midst of this longevity revolution. Just think, 25 years ago 1 out of 10,000 lived to be



What's your **motto**,

Jeff Taylor?

"If you coast, you only coast one way: downhill."

100 years old. Babies born now, the statistics now are 1 out of 3,000 will live to 100 or beyond. Right now 40,000 people are over 100. By 2050 there will be over 1 million in that range. So work takes on a whole new meaning and Eons is a destination brand to help us all understand and create a new image for growing older.

We all can be interested in exploring all of life. Health, money, love and fun are the categories we use on the website. Our aim is to set the table for a longer life that is more fulfilling, more spirited and more inspirational. It's time to live the biggest life possible, to re-create our view of our bodies, how we use money, a broader perception of family, how we give back to society, how we play, how we take care of the planet, the whole package we call life. It's time for each one of us to be a dream generator. **TM**

Sylvia Lafair is co-founder and president of Creative Energy Options Inc., and is an executive coach and leadership educator. She wrote about the meaning of power in a previous issue.