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## Epoch aims to keep exec baby boomers in workforce

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WINCHESTER — According to the U.S. Census Bureau, an estimated 78 million workers from the baby boomer generation are nearing retirement. But a startup professional services firm in the Bay State is betting those boomers won't want to be counted out just yet.



**Epoch founder and president Linda Stewart is targeting boomers who aren't ready to stop working.**

Winchester-based Epoch specializes in placing experienced executive-level professionals into temporary work assignments.

Epoch founder and president Linda Stewart thinks the firm is poised to seize on a talent gap that will force business to re-examine how they staff top-level management.

"Boomers are going to be leaving their jobs, but they don't necessarily want to leave the workforce," said Stewart. "Really they just want to leave traditional employment."

Epoch, which launched June 11, markets itself as a staffing firm that can offer the right fit for seasoned executives who may not want to jump into another career.

Stewart, whose own past experience includes a stint as executive vice president and acting operations chief for Veritude LLC, a recruiting and staffing organization owned by Fidelity Investments, said the typical candidate is someone who might want to travel six months of the year and spend the other half in an interim corporate assignment.

"These are people who no longer really need to work but want to continue to be engaged and use their knowledge," she said.

The firm plans to recruit corporate veterans like Carol Vahey, who worked for many years as the COO for a Fidelity unit. Vahey said when she left her high-demand career with Fidelity four years ago, she was happy to have as much free time as she did.

"For the first two years I mostly slept," she said.

But after the luster of unlimited relaxation wore off, Vahey began to examine what she wanted to do with her retirement years. She now travels and runs a small business designing and manufacturing women's jackets, but would also prefer to be back in a corporate environment in a way that would enable her to continue traveling frequently, too.

"I'd really like to share my varied 30-plus years of experience," said Vahey.

Epoch may be well positioned for growth due to the anticipated corporate changes coming due to the boomers' retirement, according to David Corbett, founder of New Directions, a Boston-based provider of transition career services.

Corbett said New Directions counsels former senior executives who are at a fork in the road of life and they often examine three possibilities: go into another position, open a business or develop a portfolio of part-time activities. The third option is the fastest-growing choice for retirees, said Corbett. New Directions even coined and trademarked the term "Life Portfolio Program."

"Retirement used to be much easier. You could retire, play golf for three or four years, then die. People lived shorter lives," said Corbett.

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