CHICAGO—Turns out you can teach an old employee new tricks of the trade, according to Laurel Kennedy, president of Age Lessons, the Boomer solutions firm. “Nearly three-fourths of Boomers envision a working retirement as the chance to try something new that engages untapped talents and leverages proven skills. Employers, however, typecast older workers into the same jobs, just on a part time basis.”

Chances of breaking the stalemate don't look particularly good, judging by the disconnect between employer strategies and retirement realities. Despite a looming labor shortage that could number as many as 10 million surplus jobs by 2010, only half of U.S. companies are addressing the older worker issue. The vast majority of corporate recruiting, training and retention activities continue to focus on younger workers—by a huge margin.

“A willing, able and proven resource stands ready to work, but on new terms,” noted Kennedy. “Boomers want employment plasticity; employers want predictability. We think you can have both by exploring creative alternatives.”

Responding to the need for creative workforce solutions, Age Lessons has developed new ways to help companies match skill needs to those of aging workers. They include:

- • a job-shaping process that borrows a page from classic consumer product development techniques to design positions that meet both organizational and retiree needs;
- • a way to harness the expertise and creativity of highly trained and knowledgeable employees;
- • a matchmaking service for employees looking to job share and employers wanting to stay connected to retired workers; and
- • a new job designation that allows workers to mentor a pre-set group of projects that expands and contracts with the business need.

For more information about the Age Lessons “working retirement” solutions portfolio, contact Laurel Kennedy at 773.252.0123 or visit the company web site www.agelessons.com .

About Age Lessons : Age Lessons offers innovative solutions addressing the unique needs of the Baby Boomer cohort including “working retirement” solutions designed to help companies retain and attract mature workers, as well as BoomerView ™ audits that evaluate advertising messages, packaging and product designs against Boomer normative benchmarks.

A Boomer advocate, Laurel Kennedy, Age Lessons president, is writing a book that discusses Boomer women juggling career, kids, spouse and elder care needs and proposes program ideas for employers, government agencies and local communities that would provide some relief.