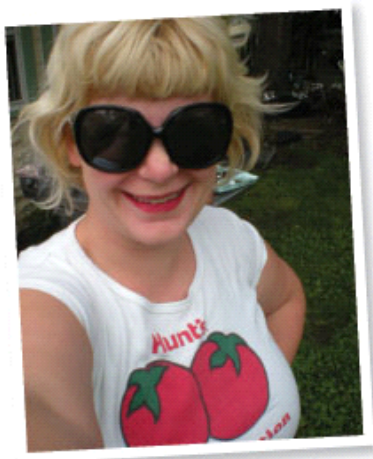


Columns

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February: In Like Black Ice, Out Like Mardi Gras

Amanda Thomsen



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Since my kid was born, just over five years ago, I haven't had a steady job as much as I've had 19 side-hustles. There are days that I work so hard, at any combination of side-hustles, that I don't have time to take a breath for 27 hours and there are days—infrequent ones—that I do nothing more than watch old “Gilmore Girls” episodes and eat goat cheese while lounging on the couch. But now that Hazel is almost 6 and will be a first grader next year, it's high time for me to return to the workforce.

February is THE WORST month of the year, right? The fun of winter has dissolved into a gray/black pile of mush. It's got nothing going for it except Mardi Gras and falling on black ice. If I had to come up with the BEST thing about February, it would have to be that it's when my hort-

mind friends and I start looking for new jobs in the garden industry. Yep, it's when landscapers and garden centers might start to hire for the New Year, the beginning of the help-wanted ads, employment posts and word-of-mouth searches. It's the official inception of the outset dribble of the dawn of the beginning of The Season, just barely. So I'm looking around, so are my friends and the big question, for 2017 is.... What's worse, working for a Baby Boomer or working for a Millennial?

First off, where are the Gen Xers in this industry? Can I get a shout out? Can you hit me on the hip (meant to invoke a memory of pagers)? A fax? A dedication of “Bittersweet Symphony” by The Verve on the radio? Where are you? My theory is that there were so many Boomers doing the garden center thing that there was no reason for Gen Xers to break into this biz. We just didn't see the point. We were too busy wearing flannel shirts tied around our waists or going to therapy to recover from our years of being a latchkey child. True, I've seen Xers running the show, managers, buyers, but the owners are often Boomers.

What are the Pros and Cons of working for Boomers?

- Super established, in customer base and habits

- You can learn a lot
- Not adaptable and collaborative
- Do not embrace technology
- Traditional structure
- Alllllll the experience
- “You may be right, but I’m the boss”
- Can pull through in tough times
- Everything is paid for; credibility
- They don’t get your nonstop ’90s music references

And then there’s a slew of new plant-based businesses started in recent years by Millennials. Instead of being born into the business (although some have been) or studying horticulture for years, they woke up one day and got a loan for a terrarium shop or a garden center where all the plants, pots and accessories are a creamy, alabaster white and no one speaks above a whisper or ever get dirty.

What are the Pros and Cons of working for a Millennial?

- Tech savvy
- Not known for being team players
- Everything is new and exciting
- Enthusiastic
- Open collaboration
- Lots of confidence
- Prefer you work smarter, not harder
- Flexible
- Diversity skills
- Still paying off student loans and the loans for the business, too
- They don’t get your nonstop ’90s music references

Hmm. Usually a pro/con list helps me figure things out, but right now? It’s still looking a little fuzzy. Maybe I’ll just stick with the side-hustles ... **GP**

Amanda Thomsen is Kiss My Aster. You can find her funky, punky blog planted at KissMyAster.co and you can follow her on Facebook, Twitter AND Instagram @KissMyAster.