

Need help caring for an elderly parent? Log on to this site

Social net making debut this week fills void for many boomers, so it's no surprise advertisers are lining up

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CALL IT BABYCENTER.COM FOR OLD-TIMERS. Instead of targeting new parents, Caring.com targets adults taking care of their elderly parents.

While it sounds like one of the odder website launches in recent years, to hear founder Andy Cohen talk about it, the venture makes a lot of business sense. According to him, there are 34 million adults in the U.S. providing care for someone 50 or older, and a third of those are long-distance caregivers.

Mr. Cohen was inspired by his struggle a few years ago to care for his lung-cancer-stricken mother, who was living in Chicago. The former manager of Quicken, Mr. Cohen lived in San Francisco and was continuously trolling the web for good resources on how to care for his mother, from what kind of wheelchair to buy to how to handle her financial and legal affairs. There was a void in the market, he said, because sites such as WebMD are focused on health issues and sites such as AARP don't offer the caregiver point of view.

Mr. Cohen took his lament to a few venture-capital friends of his. Great idea, they said, why don't you build it? He got another pal, Jim Scott, former editor in chief of BabyCenter, onboard, and they started building the site. The result, Car-

The screenshot shows the Caring.com website. At the top, there's a search bar and a 'Search' button. Below that is a navigation menu with links for 'Welcome', 'Health', 'Housing', 'Finances', 'Legal', 'Care Stages', 'Life', 'Topics A-Z', and 'Local'. The main content area features a 'Medicine Cabinet' section with a photo of an elderly woman and a caregiver, and a 'Today's Headlines' section with news items. There are also sections for 'My caring profile', 'Checklist', and 'Medical Alert System'. A sidebar on the right contains a search filter for 'Nursing Home' and an advertisement for 'bipolar disorder'.

ing.com, launches this week and has attracted interest from advertisers.

"Baby boomers are really caught in the middle because many of us, myself included, are taking care of little kids and dealing with the fact our parents are getting older," said Lauren Essex, who runs corporate communications for Jitterbug, one of Caring.com's early advertisers. The company makes phones with as few as three buttons for a generation that

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grew up without technology and doesn't feel comfortable with it. She said Jitterbug is looking to reach both boomers and their parents who want a "simpler cell-phone experience."

Other advertisers include Quigley Corp., which makes Cold-eeze throat lozenges—a product that in addition to

easing colds also helps chemotherapy patients by getting rid of the zinc taste the treatment leaves in one's mouth.

"We're going to test out a new publication and a new opportunity," said Albert Piechotta, director-marketing communications, Quigley, which will have a call-to-action-based sampling campaign on the site. He suggests Caring.com has "significant potential in the way it's being targeted. There's a huge need."

As the expansive baby-boomer market ages, more media companies are going after it with sites focused on everything from Grandparents.com, which focuses on

the relationships between people in the boomer segment on up and their grandchildren, to TeeBeeDee.com, a social-networking site for the 40-plus set.



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To be sure, Caring.com's target audience is not the elderly but the baby boomers making many of the decisions about their parents' health, finances and legal affairs. Mr. Cohen said financial services, including investment banks looking to manage inheritance funds and re-

verse-mortgage lenders, and pharmaceutical marketers have shown interest in advertising on the site.

One of the traits that sets Mr. Cohen

apart from many other serial entrepreneurs is his marketing background. Prior to heading Quicken from Intuit, he was a brand manager at S.C. Johnson. Of the \$7 million Caring.com has raised in venture capital, "a couple million" will be spent marketing the site through search keywords and radio advertising in the coming year. He estimates the site will have 1 million monthly visitors by the end of 2008.

The company has lined up journalists and authors to provide the backbone of the content. Mr. Cohen said the site will be personalized so that when someone inputs a specific ailment his or her parent is dealing with, they'll see content targeted to that condition.

"Good social networking will come off of that, but there's good information that we want to share," he said.