

Encore! Encore! One more time - supporting 50+ workers in their job search

Perceptions – are they aligned with reality?

CHALLENGES/STEREOTYPES FACING MATURE WORKERS

- Over qualified
- Age bias – too old to learn new things or ways of doing things
- Difficulty working with a younger boss/team mate
- Less comfortable with technology
- Less open to change
- Less open to diversity
- Haven't looked for work in a long time – job search strategies have changed
- Lack of energy or have health issues
- Too expensive to hire
- Taking up space or killing time waiting for retirement
- Don't need the money so taking jobs away from younger people that do

ADVANTAGES OF THE MATURE WORKER¹

- Experience from a lifetime of work
- Knowledge attained over the years from a variety of sources
- Vast network developed over time
- Motivated to work
- Maturity
- Problem solvers based on the experience of previous hurdles encountered
- Tend to be loyal with a strong work ethic
- Stay in positions longer
- Market research shows that customers usually prefer dealing with staff their own age. Since the population is aging, more customers are getting older, too.
- When dealing with difficult issues or workplace conflicts they tend to be less likely to find technology as an acceptable medium of communication
- Considered to be hard workers who respect authority, reliable, work well in a team and don't need close supervision.

¹ http://www.conferenceboard.ca/temp/b9429c68-4af6-49d4-ba50-80aabd3e214c/10-070-cancompete_generationwars.pdf

Resources:

- 1) Winning the “Generation Wars” Making the most of the generational differences and similarities in the workplace is a Conference Board of Canada report from November 2009. This report examines the generational differences and similarities among Canadian workers.
http://www.aqesss.qc.ca/docs/pdf/i-media/20091126/ConferenceBoard_Compete_Generation_Wars.pdf
- 2) Job Scan website allows job seekers to see how well they have matched their resume to the job posting using key words. It is a chance for them to think about how they can present their information in a way to be seen as a match to the position.
<https://www.jobscan.co/>
- 3) This is a chart that highlights generational differences but not too sure of the validity but interesting to see what is listed.
<http://www.wmfc.org/uploads/GenerationalDifferencesChart.pdf>
- 4) Research completed by Earnest Young about generational shift in the US workplace
<http://www.ey.com/US/en/Issues/Talent-management/Talent-Survey-The-generational-management-shift>
- 5) The Globe and Mail did a series of articles on Baby Boomers. They are listed on the link
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-investor/retirement/all-the-stories-you-may-have-missed-from-the-globes-boomer-series/article27248527/>

Below are the responses of the session participants, who were invited to share their knowledge and advice with the group under the following categories:

- 1) Age Myths and how to debunk them
- 2) How Baby Boomers could increase their success using job search strategies/tools.

LESS COMFORTABLE WITH TECHNOLOGY

- Need to make sure that they are up to speed on whatever the latest technology or software is within their field.
- Demonstrate their competence by using technology in their daily lives and for job search

LACK OF ENERGY OR HAVE HEALTH ISSUES

- Less sick time than younger workers (i.e. Parent with younger children can have more sick time)
- Very disciplined, can check previous employment record (not many sick days)
- Very responsible
- Boomers are living longer, healthier and more active
- Also develop positive attitude
- Talk about your focus on a healthy lifestyle
- Work from home- efficient, dependable, committed
- Young, bright ideas “fresh breath of air”
- Share the latest books, classes, hobbies, activities and what they have done to maintain and increase their skills – show they are indeed active!
- Don’t share any health problems that they are encountering
- Take care of physical self – get an updated hair style, get some stylish clothes for interviewing, shine their shoes, smile and project confidence in the language used. Eg. Don’t say ‘old’ use the word ‘experienced’.

LESS OPEN TO CHANGE

- Keeping up with technology is one way to show openness to change
- Actions speak louder than words
- Think of all of the changes they have encountered during their life in so many different facets and how they have coped with it.
- Look forward to challenge and embrace change
- Wait when they are ready, they will come
- Use interview, resume to demonstrate how you have managed change in the past
- STARS
- Have family members who introduced me to new technology (i.e. Nephews, etc.) → became more open to new technologies (give an example)
- Life-long learning
- Start small
- Talk about “how” you have adapted using your “accomplishment” stories

DIFFICULTY WORKING WITH A YOUNGER BOSS/TEAM MATE

- If you can believe that the person is in that position for a reason and that it is going to be possible to learn from them this will not be a problem.
- Validate their contributions

- Listen and affirm - give them respect
- Listen to their ideas, offer feedback in a non-threatening way
- Be open to their opinions
- Be receptive to change
- Collaborate, communicate
- Try it on, there is a beginning on everything
- Find out a bit about them, what do they like to do outside of work
- We can always learn something new no matter age and experience level
- Identify a “young” mentor, listen and learn → to be open to looking at things differently

TOO EXPENSIVE TO HIRE

- Sharing that they want to work and contribute that money is a secondary consideration at this time. (if it is)
- Willing to work reduced hours (resulting in less pay)
- Show willingness to start at best fit
- Talk about budget
- May be willing to work for less than previously made
- Can be more efficient at work with years of experience and knowledge
- What skills and mentorship can you bring to the table
- Act as consultant
- Work fewer hours
- Freelance → become independent
- Mentorship for free
- Fee for service
- Don't underact yourself but don't be unrealistic

AGEISM

- Network face-to-face to overcome age “myths”
- Good posture shows energy and confidence
- Don't shuffle, walk a bit faster
- Be confident! Smile!
- “fake it till you make it”
- Get new haircut and suit
- Learn lingo
- Hang out with younger generation
- Talk fun courses
- Teach ESL

- Always keep in mind that age is not a limitation for the contrary → is wisdom acquired by experience
- Age is just a number, what do you have to offer
- Do more cold calls to employers
- Build relationship first before presenting resume
- Treat every person the same, all the same respect
- Can begin to produce from the first day of work depending on the experience they bring
- Have experience they can draw on to solve problems

OVER QUALIFIED

- Use “myths” of mentoring, winding down, wealth of experience as added “return on investment”
- Show the value you bring
- Generation of loyalty and tenure
- Address the ‘elephant in the room’ and tell your story. Why is this a position that fits?
- Show your open to new learning even with years of experience
- Connect transferable skills as added value
- How are you qualified?
- Focus on how you can solve their problem. Use statements like ‘I do have a lot of experience so this means you will have someone that has done this before, who understands what it takes to be successful’. Or ‘I am overqualified for this job but here are the reasons why I want this job....’

NETWORKING

- Define “networking” i.e. what is it and why network?
- The single most important activity to support job search is networking. The job seeker can identify former coworkers, alumni from school and courses, friends of friends or family who may work in the companies or the industries/sectors the job seeker is interested in. These individuals can be helpful in gaining information.
- While they can use the Internet and other tools to identify resources, 50+ job seekers need to do their networking in person whenever possible. Having a real conversation is invaluable.
- Let people know you are searching for a job. Tell them what you are looking for and ask if they know of anyone or have heard of anything that would be related. Offer assistance to others.
- Your friends have friends, and they have friends...you don’t know who knows someone that you need to talk to. Research shows people find work through people connected to

their inner circle not their inner circle directly.

(https://sociology.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/the_strength_of_weak_ties_and_exch_w-gans.pdf)

- Conduct informational interviews to learn about the company, the culture and roles within the company. Their goal is to meet as many people as possible to help support their efforts. Networking is a two way street so encourage them to identify how they can help their supporters as well.
- Joining groups both online (such as LinkedIn) and face to face www.Meetup.com, professional associations, community groups, churches and sports groups, and other social/professional settings is a great way to broaden their network.
- Attend networking events- community events, join clubs or groups and follow up with the people you met
- Share their story-don't be afraid to ask for help
- Prof. Associations, service groups more likely to provide job leads (Chamber of Commerce, Kindmen, etc.)
- LinkedIn – Join groups with your wheelhouse
- Identify new networks
- Informational interviewing, attend and offering to conduct them
- Coffee chats
- Connect with political figures you elected
- Meet ups online
- Small biz orgs
- Offer to mentor
- Attend a program for 50+ individuals such as TIOW-Targeted Initiative for Older Workers.
- Meet new people who share the same situation
- Visit service providers

CAREER PLANNING

- Self-assessments “Just do it”
- Update with professional development and short term training course. Stay current.
- Know your interests and abilities, match them with parallel job
- Be honest about your limitations when focusing on your employment target (realistic job target)
- Opportunity to start a new direction → re-engage with something different and exciting
- Opportunity to re-train → upgrade skills
- Update relevant safety tickets, and obtain other certification.

- What does work mean to you?
- Update skills based on goal
- Be up to date on changes in workplace by reviewing information on job market online

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Contracting with companies/friends in your field
- Consider their hobbies as a means of creating work
- What problems can you solve for others? Who/what companies have those problems
- Bus. Dev. Bank can help with business plan
- Multi-task→combine a variety of experiences, roles
- Small projects, contracts, consulting, free training at community futures
- Be prepared to take risk
- Labour market research- is there a niche market?
- What do you have to sell?
- Get coaching on managing your finances
- Senior preneurship

VOLUNTEERING

- Volunteering→ meet new people while contributing to a cause
- Volunteering on a consistent basis is a great way to keep skills fresh or develop new skills, while expand their network to enhance the job seekers' resume.
- Helpful if related to the position you are applying for
- Adds value
- Invested in your community
- Reframe how "volunteering" is a job search strategy to gain skills and network
- Take hobbies and interests and use them to enhance and meet others
- Market-highlight or resume various skills/aptitudes that are transferable skills for many job opportunities (ie.deck building, handyman skills, etc.)
- Great way to try something new and is low risk
- Consider/try an entry to not for profit sector
- Great opportunity to network and expand your network
- Feeling productive in unpaid role helps raise confidence and self-efficacy
- Always helpful
- Shows you are willing to give your time and yourself for the community that you live in
- THIS IS HUGE

RESUME WRITING

- A resume should be tailored for each job so creating a marketing resume that sells their skills and talents is vital.
 - *What* they can do for an employer
 - Exactly *why* they can do this for an employer
 - Highlighting their relevant skills and experience as far up on the page as possible
- Leave only the best, most impressive stats
- Edit it for each job you are applying to
- Marketing tool/professional profile
- Detach from resume as “obituary”
- Highlight accomplishments
- Ask a millennial to do the resume
- Include link to linked in profile
- Brand yourself
- Re-purpose, re-tool
- Keep dates relevant
- Skip dates
- Use the “T” evaluator to match what you have to what the employer needs
- Some positions like >25 years
- Do not go over 15+ years even though you may have 30+ years experience
- Highlight various learned/applied transferable skills to assist in transition to “new” job fields
- Experience over 20+ years should only be displayed if relevant to the position
- Encourage the 50+ job seeker to create an “obituary a “master” style resume to start including all of their work experience. Remind them this is not the final resume, but simply a library of skills and accomplishments to be used in their targeted resume.
- Due to the depth of work experience the 50+ job seeker has, they are prone to creating resumes of several pages. Help them understand they don’t need to list and describe every single position held. They should choose only the positions that are relevant to the job they are applying for, generally going back 10 to 15 years.
- Highlight *only* the skills that are needed for the position applying for. They need to be ruthless in editing their resume. Focusing on accomplishments and skills to illustrate how they brought value to the employer...saving time, money or making money will set them apart.
- The 50+ job seeker can leave dates off their education from many years ago.
- Using a professional email from a service provider or Gmail rather than hotmail or yahoo will make them appear more up-to-date.

- Include a cell number where they can be reached and their URL for LinkedIn to show they are connected.
- Have a 'Previous Employment' section if the job titles of older jobs pertain to the new position. Dates and duties are not required. They can share more information during the interview if asked.
- In order to “youthinize” their resume, include active words. Certain words convey energy such as enthusiastic, enjoy, self-motivating, motivated to succeed, dynamic change agent, or transformed.
- Over 50+ job seekers should not include an Objective statement as they are outdated. They should include a strong professional summary that gives an overview of their experience and what they have to offer the employer.
- To show their ability to learn they could include a section for professional training and development. Include activities that are current and relevant to the targeted job: credit and non-credit classes; company-sponsored training; conferences and workshops, e-learning modules—even industry journals to which they subscribe or industry recognized authors whose books they have read.
- The statement References Available upon Request is obsolete and dated.

COVER LETTER

- If the 50+ job seeker is looking at applying for a lower level position, convey their desire to downshift in a cover letter.
- Emphasize how they can make a positive contribution such as mentoring others, or providing practical business knowledge based on the years of experience illustrated in the resume or requires less training.

INTERVIEW

- Practice, practice, practice.
- Dress appropriately – up-to-date and stylish.
- Use the STAR method as a way to frame answers so they don't go off topic. STAR format – focus on achievement. What is the question looking for and how can you demonstrate
- Develop 6 to 8 success stories to demonstrate skills required for the target position.
- They need to tell the truth 100% of the time but they don't have to tell 100% of the truth

- They can write a handwritten thank-you note to each interviewer as a way to show their enthusiasm for the job as well as appreciation for their time. It makes them memorable in a positive way.
- A Harvard research study has proven using the word “because” makes people significantly more likely to agree and align with the speaker. Why? Because they are given a reason to care. For example “I raised \$20,000 for a community project” is less effective than “I’m really proud of the fact that I was able to raise \$20,000 for this project because it meant we were going to be able to provide programs in the communities that needed them the most.”
- DO NOT talk about health issues
- Own your story- share your skills and passions
- NOT to focus on years of experience but focus on what you can do for the organizations “accomplishments”
- Break those “myths” in answering their questions and sell yourself at the end of the interview
- Use “thank you” letters after the interview to “resell” yourself
- Teach client to disclose/share any health issues in a positive way
- Get a good nights sleep
- Be prepared
- Be yourself
- Stick to your past work experience and education/training
- Establish rapport – smile, make eye contact and shake hands
- Do not think about age when being on an interview
- You are never aware of all of your abilities or work duties/experience and capabilities in the past if you don’t look at everything
- Transferable skills
- Build confidence- I do this by focusing on all that they have to offer
- Focus on skills, SKILLS SKILLS SKILLS
- Highlight experience
- Focus on related skills and what they are looking for.
- Don’t go back 20 years
- Do lots of prep
- Research the company

LINKED IN/SOCIAL MEDIA/FACEBOOK/TWITTER

Linkedin is one of the most powerful tools to get connected although research shows that 50+ job seekers prefer the face to face interactions

- Polish their LinkedIn profile – they need to understand that their profile is similar to an advertisement for them.
- They should evaluate their headline. Use descriptive words in the title rather than a job title, especially if they are looking for work. Such as a statement of a brand...What do they do? What problems do they solve? Why are they unique? Who are they and what do they want? This may be particularly difficult if someone has held an occupation for a long period of time.
- Don't use 'Looking for a new opportunity' as the tag line –employers do not search those key words looking for an employee.
- The 50+ job seeker may need to rewrite their summary especially if they are changing careers or sectors. Checking job listing to see what terms the potential employer uses to describe the job is helpful so they can use these same terms to describe themselves. Checking out the buzzwords and skills for each type of position is a good use of their time.
- Their job history needs to be edited so they shouldn't upload their entire resume to LinkedIn. Summarize...hit highlights, use the right buzzwords and quantify accomplishments.
- Some 50+ job seekers are reluctant to post a photo on their LinkedIn as this is not an accepted practice for the resume. An up-to-date head photo is the accepted practice. Some groups require individuals to have photos in order to join, plus many people will not connect with a request if there isn't a photo.
- Solicit some recommendations, notably from currently employed people and write one for someone else.
- Join groups-post updates/articles
- Get profile
- Make sure your endorsements are from people who make difference (i.e. VP HR→ not just your admin asst)
- Offer to help someone- before you ask for something from them
- Download for FREE
- Send simple step by step to begin
- Give them stats 89% of AB people get hired on LI
- Update your profile
- Take workshop if not comfortable with tool
- Highlight your accomplishments rather than your job duties
- Necessary not optional to be competitive
- Learn communication strategies
- Personal branding key for career transitions

- Approach a family member of a younger generation to assist in building and monitoring profile

CHANGE/TRANSITION

- Keep it simple
- Hobbies, places you shop, stores that the client likes
- Remind them of the success they have had with previous changed and what their “roots” and “anchors” are
- Re-brand
- Re-market
- Skill, flexibility, easy to train, knowledge, adaptable, less orientation, work independently etc.
- Explore accomplishments through career
- Identify transferable skills
- Consider consulting in your area of expertise
- Teach them job search skills
- Take time to reflect, reevaluate – don’t rush
- Employers can encourage older workers to share ideas for positive changes, as well as asking younger workers to assist in “upgrading” older workers

ATTITUDE

- A positive attitude is one of the most important tools a client can bring to job search. This is how they present themselves on paper, during their search (networking etc), and in the job interview.
- Is their attitude “I have something to offer and I am looking for new challenges” Or is it “I wish I could retire but I cannot afford to so I will put in more time”?
- If the 50+ job seeker perceives something as a barrier to landing a job (such as their age), the potential employer will have the same perception.
- In this present economic downturn many 50+ job seekers are finding it takes longer to find work. They need to avoid desperation. Encourage them to take some time off and do something different. Break the cycle and focus on other things for a change.
- Treat job search like a job – bring structure to the day and don’t allow it to be 24/7. Thinking about what they want from this new phase of work, and whether they are realistic in their goal, is a valuable way to step back to reflect on what is working and what isn’t.
- Some 50+ job seekers are opposed to anything that is not a full-time job. A change in mindset may be helpful. Part time work, freelancing, and ‘entrepreneurship by

necessity' are great options. These boost; skills, resume depth, portfolio quality, ones' professional network, real income, and confidence.

DIFFICULTY IN LEARNING NEW THINGS - SKILLS DEVELOPMENT/UPGRADING

- Keep up-to-date on technology: There are so many options for free or low cost courses on software programs and other applications.
- Take advantage of numerous free resources online, including tutorials, e-books, and how-to videos to learn or increase other skills.