

“I’M TOO OLD” JUST DOESN’T RING TRUE

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There are many myths that ease their way into our lives. They include dragons under the bed when we were kids all the way to modern myths that impact on our job-hunting capabilities when we are older.

Most of us outgrow the dragons, but many executives embrace the many myths about job hunting and become self-fulfilling expectations.

As the President of a career marketing firm, I often hear the tone of surrender in clients who have given up hope of finding meaningful employment due, they believe, to their age. Normal concerns for job satisfaction, compensation, or location are pushed aside by what some seasoned managers perceive to be a far more pressing concern. From some executives I hear “At my age, how will I get a job?” or “I’m too old to change jobs!”

These comments come from some executives who are not old, some are in their 40s, those who use the age factor as an excuse to avoid the efforts required to mount a successful job campaign, or those who are truly older and scared.

Age can become of great concern to many talented and qualified managers. Age, as a prejudicial factor, has been around longer than most people realize and it is not just in the job market. In many parts of our society, age is a determinant in forming opinions and making choices.

If we focus strictly on the job marketplace, there is no doubt that that perceived age does play a part in many employment decisions made by some employers. These employers are concerned about whether the older job candidate will relate well to a younger supervisor, whether he will be able to adapt to “new-fangled” ideas or whether his health will hold up.

There is no simply answer to this problem and it is one that cannot be legislated away. However, the following thoughts will ease some of your concerns.

The fact that you are worried about obstacles to a job change indicates that you are probably ready to make that change. You should go for it! You will probably discover a whole new you and a fresher outlook on life if you are exposed to new challenges, new business associates, a new environment, and/or new products, services, processes.

“Ah,” you say, “How am I to go about this transition? After all, haven’t you joist said that age is a deterring factor?” Attitude is a great place to start. Accepting an invitation to an interview when you know you “don’t stand a chance” is a poor beginning. Be positive, radiate energy, avoid lecturing the interviewer on how things where when you were younger. Keep in mind that the worker who is 50 years old is only two-thirds of the way through his productive career life span.

Also keep in mind there are definite advantages to being older than the other candidates for a job. You have more experience, more mature judgment, and the ability to discover fresh new ways to handle problems. You have developed successful work habits and your personal life is probably more settled than that of your younger competition. From this more realistic perspective, you age is now an asset.

Now that you believe you CAN do it, don’t forget to incorporate these ideas into your resume and cover letters. Don’t advertise your age by concentrating on a year-to-year chronological presentation of your experience. Instead, emphasize your achievements how you analyzed and solved problems. Stress “I did it before, I can do it again!”

There is a role for the employer also. Avoid falling prey to stereotypes and preconceptions. If your job as an employer is to make a profit, utilize experienced veterans, these valuable, available assets who will contribute to your profits.



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