

Gray Matters:

BRANDING

and Marketing the
Over-50 Executive





If you are over 50, you are certainly not nearing the end of your career. You have many more productive working years yet ahead of you.

You know it and I know it. But we all know that convincing a potential employer is another story.

Age discrimination, especially for the over-50 set, is an undeniable problem for older members of the workforce. And there are plenty of them. According to ExecuNet's 2012 *Executive Job Market Intelligence Report (EJMIR)*, 92 percent of search firms said executives plan to work well into their 60s. That's an increase from 86 percent in 2011.

Many over-50 workers have seen and will likely continue to see age discrimination. According to the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), charges of age discrimination increased from 23,264 in fiscal year 2010 to 23,465 in fiscal year 2011. Total charges tallied by the EEOC increased slightly from 99,922 in fiscal year 2010 to 99,947 in fiscal year 2011.

But you don't have to be a victim. There are many strategies over-50 executives can put in place to ensure age is not a factor in the workforce, especially when searching for a new job opportunity. ExecuNet offers many solutions from a wealth of experts.

In this white paper, we share insights from those experts as well as strategies you can put into use to ensure age is not a disadvantage to you in your job search.

Your age and your experience are valuable assets to any employer. Learn how to position them in that way.

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THE AGE ISSUE: A REAL CONCERN

In the workforce, employees over age 50 typically find that they are thought of in the following ways: overqualified, want too high a salary, won't be able to work for a younger boss, waiting for retirement, and changing industries. Jean Erickson Walker, author of *The Age Advantage: Making the Most of Your Midlife Career Transition* and an ExecuNet networking meeting facilitator, says that she hears these concerns from many people. "These are the perceptions. But if believe your age is an advantage, it probably is," she says.

Still, the concerns are widely held and must be faced. According to ExecuNet's 2012 *Executive Job Market Intelligence Report* (EJMIR), 71 percent of respondents aged 56 to 65 said they felt their age would negatively affect their ability to land their next position. Seventy-seven percent of respondents aged 65 and over felt their age would be a negative factor.

"You are your greatest asset or your biggest handicap in career transition," says Walker. "It's all about attitude. You have to believe in the product or service" because you're selling yourself. It's a matter of educating the public that whether you're 40 or 70, the marketplace needs your breadth and depth of experience. "Sell that age and experience."

Walker discusses the perceptions and challenges and how to overcome them in *Over 50 and On the Move*, an ExecuNet webinar presentation.

According to EJMIR data collected from recruiters or search firms, older executives will most likely need to sell that age and experience longer than ever. In 2012, 92 percent of search firms strongly agree that executives they work with are planning to work in leadership roles well beyond age 60. This is up from 86 percent in 2011.

Search firms surveyed in EJMIR said they felt age becomes a significant factor in a hiring decision by age 57. The good news is that the "age of concern" has gradually increased every year since 2004, when it was 51.2.

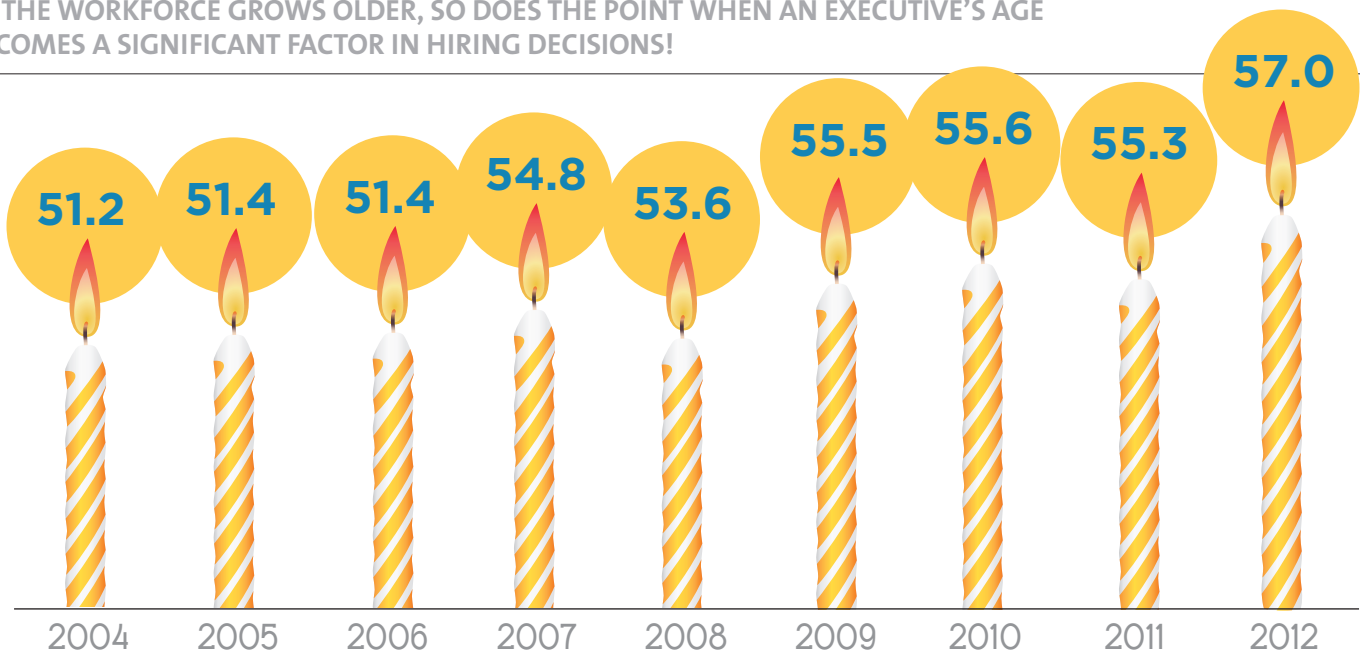
In EJMIR, corporate recruiters listed the following as advantages to hiring people over age 50: depth and breadth of experience, business knowledge, credibility in the field, politically savvy/influential, good judgment, work ethic, decision-making ability, wide range of contacts, people skills, emotional stability, commitment to organization goals, customer service perspective. Still, it's a challenge to communicate these advantages to hiring managers. To overcome the challenge, it has to start with you.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR CAREER PATH

While you can't change your age, you can change how it impacts your preparation and marketability for a new job. Walker notes how important it is to know yourself. "You are who you are. You are not going to change," she says. "At the same time, over-50 executives need to understand the

GOOD NEWS FROM SEARCH FIRMS!

AS THE WORKFORCE GROWS OLDER, SO DOES THE POINT WHEN AN EXECUTIVE'S AGE BECOMES A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN HIRING DECISIONS!



THE GOOD AND BAD OF THE OVER-50 SET

Older, more experienced workers bring many strengths, as well as perceived weaknesses, to the hiring table.

HIRING ADVANTAGES

- Depth and breadth of experience
- Good judgment
- People skills
- Work ethics
- Commitment to company goals
- Credibility with stakeholders
- Political savvy
- Historical knowledge

HIRING DISADVANTAGES

- Inflexible
- Lack technological skills
- Locked in the past
- Corporate mentality
- Too high salary
- Ingrained prejudices
- Waiting for retirement
- No energy
- Intolerant
- Won't work well with younger people

current marketplace and know what is happening in the global marketplace. "You should be reading a book a week," says Walker. "You should be current."

Identify your market niche, advises Walker, and determine what differentiates you from the competition. Create a marketing plan and determine where your next step should be. "Then create a plan to get there," says Walker.

According to EJMIR data, the over-50 executive is not close to being ready to create that plan. The survey revealed that only 36 percent of respondents aged 65 years and older felt their résumé was ready to send to a recruiter "right now." Twenty-four percent of those respondents said they felt ready and prepared to successfully embark on a search for a new job; 33 percent of respondents aged 56 to 65 years old felt ready for a job search.

HOW MARKETABLE ARE YOU?

The characteristics that will determine your appeal:

MOST IMPORTANT

- Values/beliefs
- Focus/priorities
- Generation stereotypes
- Communication style
- Decision-making style
- Leadership style
- Professional presence
- Future focus/strategic
- Trust factor
- Network/brand image
- Current learning

LEAST IMPORTANT

- Titles
- Years of experience
- Functional area
- Industry
- Past degrees/certifications
- Skills/tactical
- Technical knowledge
- Past accomplishments

SELLING YOURSELF: DON'T HIDE IN THE RÉSUMÉ

When preparing your résumé, don't leave out key dates and experience in an attempt to hide your age from hiring managers and human resource professionals. "Don't play games with your résumé by leaving out dates or including only the last 10 years of your experience. That's a dead giveaway," says Walker. Walker notes how a powerful résumé tells the story of your career, and it should focus on accomplishments. Tell the whole story. Use the CAROT model when constructing your story: Challenge, Action, Results, Overcome, Transferables.

She said the length of a résumé is not as relevant as the quality. Engage the reader. If the résumé is boring, no one will read it. "Make it interesting." Credibility, integrity and ethics are expected.

It's important the résumé illustrates how the candidate relates to people. Demonstrating softer skills can often be what sets you apart from other equally qualified candidates. Examples of volunteer leadership and education are also important components to include.

CREATE YOUR MARKET STATEMENTS

Also key in the job search process is creating market statements to sell yourself to potential employers and differentiate yourself

THE AGE ADVANTAGE

- **Problem Solving:** There are few challenges you have not faced or solved. You can solve problems faster.
- **People Management:** You can quickly assess who can stay and make those who stay even better.
- **Judgment:** You just make better decisions because you have faced more. It takes time to develop the acumen to be right on these decisions.
- **Leadership:** It takes time to develop. Very few are born with it.

from the competition. Walker explains how differentiating statements are outcome based, begin with an action word and have a visual image and “man on the bus” language. They are also compelling and reality based.

Job candidates should also provide examples of success through stories and scenarios of their work experience. The marketing statement provides an overview of career experience and expertise. It includes relevant company and industry identification. It also describes an individual’s management and leadership style. “Talk about the outcome and give an example,” suggests Walker.

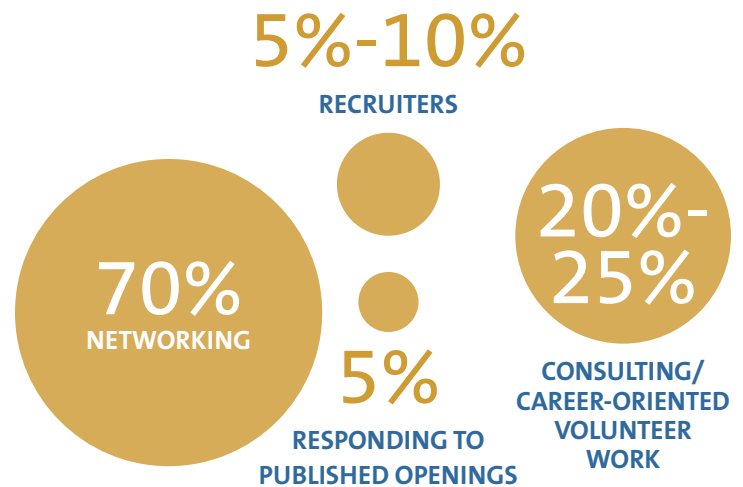
Creating a marketing plan is another important step. Identify your market niche, update social media profiles and engage your network. Walker also suggests networking in regular groups and professional associations. Volunteering can also be a helpful networking strategy.

Tucker Mays agrees that networking is an important component. In fact, Mays, principal, co-founder and executive career coach with OptiMarket LLC, says a change in strategy is necessary to shorten the time of a job search. He believes executives make the mistake of spending too much time doing the wrong things. Mays suggests relying less on recruiters and published job openings. “It’s something you must do, but do it selectively.” Instead, executives should focus more on “cold” network contacts. He notes how 80 percent of jobs are gained from people not known when a job search begins.

You do not put yourself in a favorable position by responding to job postings or sending something in cold – where they don’t know who you are. “It is far better to develop and nurture your network than to apply and hope,” says ExecuNet’s Founder Dave Opton.

A TIME MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE

IT CAN BE CHALLENGING TO KNOW HOW MUCH TIME TO FOCUS ON EACH COMPONENT OF THE JOB SEARCH. MAYS AND SLOANE OFFER THESE GUIDELINES:



Develop a target list of organizations in which you have a real interest, and once you have it, start to do in-depth research in terms of their market and the issues they face.

When you're ready, have a mutual contact introduce you to the hiring manager at your targeted company. He will be much more receptive to you if a trusted friend vouches for you than he would be if you initiated contact yourself. At this point, it's up to you to demonstrate how much you know about the issues they face, and the fact that you have indeed solved these issues. That doesn't mean that it will get you over the hump every time, but at least it gives you more than a fighting chance.

By focusing on identifying issues within an organization so that you can network your way into it and demonstrate how you can specifically help them, somewhere along the way, you will be seen for exactly what you want to be seen as – an aspirin for their headache.

It's also best to target smaller companies. They are less concerned if job candidates are older or unemployed. They also make faster hiring decisions. It's also a good idea to search for interim/consulting opportunities – which can lead to full-time work up to 40 percent of the time.

THE KEY TO POWER INTERVIEWING

Once the networking pays off, the next step is to prepare for the interview. When interviewing, it's important to look like a

TIPS TO OVERCOMING AGE BIAS

If you feel you have experienced age bias in the workforce – especially during the job search – there are several ways in which to combat them. Tucker Mays and Bob Sloane, principals, co-founders and executive career coaches with OptiMarket LLC, offer many suggestions. They are the authors of *Fired at 50: How to Overcome the Greatest Executive Job Search Challenge*, and presented an ExecuNet webinar of the same name.

First of all, Mays and Sloane advise over-50 job seekers to remain positive. There are many job opportunities; it just takes time to find the right one. Mays and Sloane also suggest staying in shape. They note how it can improve a person’s mood, cognitive ability and appearance. Just 30 minutes each day can help, and if someone asks what you do for exercise, you will be able to confidently answer.

Volunteer networking can also be helpful, as it can give executives an opportunity to help others and build their own network in the process.

Mays and Sloane suggest showing how your management style is flexible and that you can also work well with a younger boss. It’s a benefit to be able to showcase examples of how successful your relationship with that boss was, how you were able to help you both achieve company goals.

Don’t talk about retirement. Instead, focus on the fact that you welcome new career challenges and provide examples of recent successes. Being a bit flexible on salary requirements can also help.

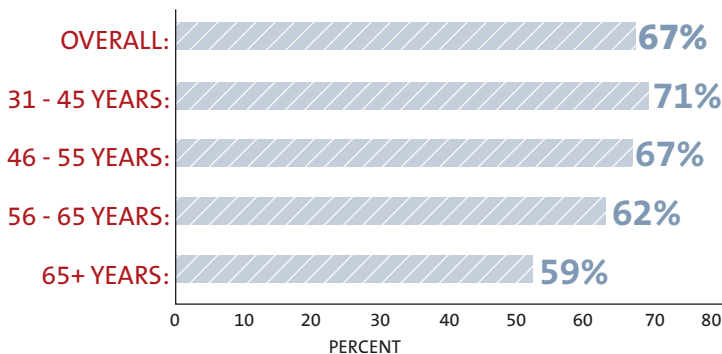
Focusing on other areas of experience can be beneficial, such as non-corporate experience; working with a small staff within tight budgetary guidelines. At the same time, it’s important to keep developing technology skills by taking classes at the local library or YMCA.

leader. Walker notes the importance of being prepared. That includes researching the company, its industry, its competition and its leadership. Have a persuasive cover letter, dress for success and engage the interviewer(s). She also suggests using consultative selling techniques and advises against discussing compensation or benefits. Finally, make a point to ask pertinent and thoughtful questions, which demonstrate that you have done your research on the company.

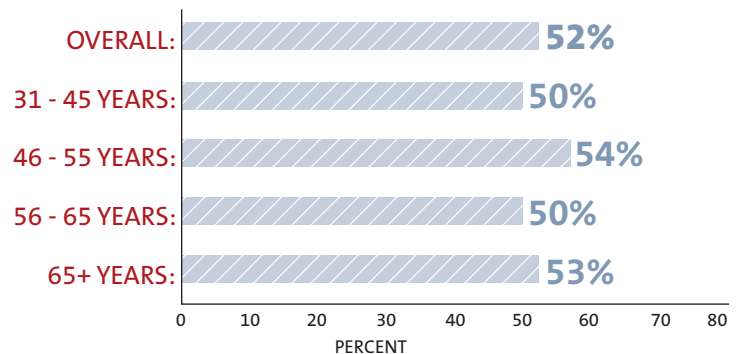
Over-50 executives must also be prepared to answer age-related questions that will most likely be posed by hiring managers and human resource professionals. Experts agree it’s best to not dodge the age questions. “Answer the question that’s implied, not necessarily the one that’s asked,” says Walker.

At the same time, show that any age-related “issues” are not negative factors. Instead, work to illustrate how your age and

I HAVE ACTIVELY WORKED TO BECOME MORE VISIBLE ONLINE:



MY CURRENT RÉSUMÉ REFLECTS MY BRAND VALUE:



TOUGH AGE BIAS QUESTIONS

Over-50 job seekers face some tough questions related to their age during the job search process. Jean Erickson Walker outlines them below and suggests that job seekers prepare answers to these questions before they are asked during the interview process.

1. Aren't you over qualified for this job?
2. Why are you willing to take a lower position?
3. When did you graduate from college?
4. When do you plan to retire?
5. How much work have you missed due to illness?
6. Are you still able to travel?
7. Why haven't you advanced further in your career?
8. How do you feel about working for a younger boss?
9. Do you use social media?
10. Tell me about yourself.

experience are assets. With the short tenure of executives these days, employers should not be worried about the energy level a candidate will bring to the table in 10 years. What they'll bring to the company in the next three years is the priority.

"The best defense is always a good offense," says Walker. "Think of things you bring to the table." For instance, she says, over-50 executives can discuss how they "wear multiple hats, are free to travel and have credibility with customers." For the most part, people feel a sense of security when they see some gray hairs, believing someone with experience won't make rash decisions, has seen it all before and knows what needs to be done. They also have large networks, built upon years of work experience.

BE POSITIVE, AND USE AGE AS A POSITIVE

Finally, remain positive and that positive attitude will show. And continue to show how your age and experience can help organizations achieve their goals.

JEAN ERICKSON WALKER'S 12 RULES FOR A SUCCESSFUL SEARCH

1. Your age IS an issue – make it an advantage.
2. Become the CEO of You, Inc. and build brand value.
3. When changing industries, expect an extended search. "Most careers happen by accident. At midlife, but you can decide to make it intentional."
4. Evaluate and improve your communication style. Recognize that you will be interacting with people of all ages, and be aware of cross-generational language.
5. Don't drag the past with you.
6. Learn the job search process.
7. Pick your battles. Don't target companies with a known youth culture.
8. Update your computer skills.
9. Know yourself.
10. Learn the current language of the marketplace.
11. Create a project plan.
12. Create a network.

"As a recruiter, there were always things I wanted to know, one of which was the age of a person. You need to utilize age as a positive," says ExecuNet member Bruce Steiger in an ExecuNet Roundtable discussion about age discrimination. "You have gained a tremendous amount of experience through the years that younger applicants can't have. Of course, there are always going to be employers out there who are trying to cut corners and salaries, but there are also the smart ones who will realize the gem they are getting in a more experienced person."

"Cast the negatives including age aside and march forward with your experience as your trump card coupled with a dynamic resume outlining your wealth of experience and the solution you will bring," adds Martin Buckland, principal of Elite Résumé and an ExecuNet networking meeting facilitator. "Follow this and age factors will diminish. Thoughts of your age inhibit you from achieving success and landing that next appointment." ■

10 RULES FOR RÉSUMÉS WITH AGE ADVANTAGE SUMMARY STATEMENTS

The summary statement in the résumé can help older applicant effectively document real-world experience. In her book, *The Age Advantage, Making The Most of Your Midlife Career Transition*, Jean Erickson Walker, suggests 10 basic rules for “age advantage” summary statements. They are:

1. Do not begin your summary with “twenty-four years experience in...” The number of years you’ve worked in a particular field is not important in and of itself. It is what you have done in these years that is critical.
2. Managers should clearly communicate their style of management: the “how” and “why” of their success. At your age, you should have a defined style that your experience proves works. Show you know what you are doing!
3. Focus on three to five major points; don’t try to list everything you’ve ever done. Highlight areas where you have demonstrated expertise.
4. Underline major points and use bullets to make the statement quick and easy to read. NO long paragraphs!
5. Avoid clichéd words: “seasoned” is better applied to meat loaf than people. We assume you’re “dependable,” “reliable” and “conscientious” and certainly wouldn’t expect you to tell us if you weren’t! “People skills” and “communications skills” are meaningless terms. Does communication refer to sales, arbitrating, giving orders, public speaking, writing reports or managing people? People skills may mean you are very persuasive, congenial, and noncontroversial, or it could mean you are an effective supervisor or negotiator. If terms like “detail-oriented,” “big-picture thinker,” or “results-oriented” really do reflect your style, try to find a more interesting way to say it, as these terms are so overused that they don’t paint a clear picture of your one of a kind professional identity.
6. Use power words, but be sure they reflect the way you really speak.
7. Be ready to support every claim with specific examples. The summary makes bold claims about your skills, and they will be the first things challenged in the interview, providing your first opportunity to show why your age is an advantage.
8. Keep sentences short so that the reader can quickly absorb the material. Studies show the average résumé receives only twenty seconds of attention, so get your points across quickly.
9. Identify your professional level and expertise, but be careful not to describe yourself in a way that limits you.
10. Choose terms precisely: “comprehensive experience” and “in-depth experience” are excellent terms to describe the background of an older applicant, but they mean two different things. “Comprehensive” implies a wide range of experience in your field. It means you have perspective that would be valuable in positions where strategic, big-picture thinking is important. You identify problems quickly but probably rely on others to do the hands-on work. “In-depth experience” means you have a number of years of experience in one specific area and are probably an expert in the field, so you would do well in tactical situations, rooting out the problem and doing the hands-on work yourself.



The Wall Street Journal interviewed ExecuNet's Don Weintraub on the topic of résumés and job search. We have included the entire interview here, as it will be useful information for anyone in job search.

Selling Yourself in 45 Seconds or Less

BY RACHEL LOUISE ENSIGN

Crafting a good résumé for a job search is difficult enough. Doing so in later life – when issues like age discrimination potentially come into play – is tougher yet.

To get a better idea of how job seekers age 50-plus should approach this task, we spoke with Don Weintraub, managing director of performance improvement and career services at ExecuNet. Here are edited excerpts of that discussion:

Q WSJ: WHAT SHOULD OLDER JOB SEEKERS KEEP IN MIND WHEN WRITING OR REVISING A RÉSUMÉ?

MR. WEINTRAUB: A résumé has become a document that's intended to brand, package, market and pre-sell. And so, folks need to think about this as their personal marketing brochure.

Our research shows that you have less than 45 seconds to capture the attention of the reader. What's most critical is the top half of the first page. You should have four or five accomplishments with metrics, literally spelling out what you did. Up on top [you need] about 12 to 15 core competencies, like "strategic planning" or "mergers and acquisitions."

If I'm doing a search [to fill a position], I tell the software to go out and find me candidates who have certain keywords in their résumé. The software ... searches [résumés], looking for these keywords.

WSJ: WHO NEEDS A RÉSUMÉ? IS IT NECESSARY FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS REACHED THE TOP OF HIS OR HER INDUSTRY?

MR. WEINTRAUB: I think sometimes the person at the top really needs a document of this type more so than perhaps less senior folks. In the past, people came after them. Now they're finding that the phone isn't ringing.

Q WSJ: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST MISTAKES THAT OLDER JOB SEEKERS MAKE?

MR. WEINTRAUB: They use words like "seasoned," or start out with "over 35 years of experience." You're immediately playing the age card.

I eliminate dates of education. You don't want to put that in at all. List the schools; list the degrees – [but] no dates. Never go back more than 20 years [unless] you did something really interesting and/or you worked for a company that has real impact in the marketplace like General Electric.

WSJ: MOST RÉSUMÉS TODAY ARE SUBMITTED ONLINE. IS THERE ANY NEED FOR A PAPER COPY OF A RÉSUMÉ?

MR. WEINTRAUB: There are two schools of thought. One is that it may help get the attention of the reader if they get something in the mail. But at most companies [an application] has to go through the résumé database system. Even if you sent a paper copy to someone, they would more than likely ask you to repeat the process [online]. They need to have it on file in a common system.

WHAT RÉSUMÉ READERS WANT

- Your "Executive Brand Statement"
- Your "Value Proposition"
- Four or five accomplishments with metrics
- Twelve to fifteen competencies/key words
- A career objective
- Chronological career history:
 - Company name and what the company does
 - Job title and responsibilities
 - Why you were hired, the need you filled
 - Your achievements with measurable results

WSJ: WHERE DOES THE COVER LETTER FIT INTO THIS?

MR. WEINTRAUB: The question is, will it be read? When I was a recruiter, I would skip the letter and go straight to the résumé. But if it was someone whose résumé really captured my attention, I'd go back and read the letter. Experienced applicants are more likely to have skills relevant to the companies doing the hiring. They have an advantage in the cover letter. If they match up their experience and accomplishments, they're more likely to have stuff to say.

WSJ: WHAT MISTAKES ARE MADE WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING A RÉSUMÉ INTO THE RIGHT HANDS?

MR. WEINTRAUB: They assume, "I'll go out and look at job postings, do a little networking and ask my buddies if they know of any jobs." The higher up you go in terms of role and salary, the less likely it is that the job will be posted anywhere. If you aren't making it easy to be found, like being on LinkedIn or ExecuNet or one of the other executive-level sites, you're eliminating 92 percent of the job possibilities. ■

WHAT MEMBERS SAY ABOUT THE PLUS 50 JOB SEARCH

I don't blame age discrimination per se. I think perhaps the most at fault are this new breed of applicant tracking systems where a piece of software is literally deciding who makes the short list and who gets interviewed at all. By removing the human element from the equation, I think employers are missing out on some truly great candidates!

— VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING, BUSINESS SERVICES



Have a short statement prepared and memorized to respond to age questions in a direct and positive way as soon as they are asked. Use your instincts from the interviewer's body language, etc., as a cue for when it is appropriate to launch the "diffusion" statement. Make it non-combative, non-hostile, non-defiant – perhaps mention that the average executive stays in a position only 2.5 years anyway, so longevity is probably not the interviewer's real concern. Ask, in a non-challenging way, why he/she wants to know your age. In other words, try to dig up the real concern to the interviewer that is relevant to the job, and shift the focus to relevant matters. I have always preferred a direct but non-combative approach that goes directly to the heart of the real issues.

— SCHOOL OF ELECTRONICS CHAIR, EDUCATION



To potential employers, my response is that I bring a lot of talent, skills and enthusiasm to the position such that most of the time, it is hard for others to keep up (and I am 62!). I also tell them that I bring enough of those, plus the experience to do the job with enough margin left over to contribute to the larger goals of the company if my skills and abilities are needed there as well. That seems to satisfy those who are open-minded (which is a minority).

— VICE PRESIDENT, GREEN ENERGY



I asked an attorney friend and he explained that in fact a recruiter (and employer) may indeed ask questions regarding any and all "dates" in order to establish career continuity. In practice, they are not supposed to then discriminate.

— COO, PACKAGED GOODS



Hiring is a discriminating process, and age discrimination is a reality. My response to the issue is to identify a short list of target companies and devise a strategy for each one. Networking is critical. Maybe offer consulting to solve a short-term problem they are facing. No matter the age, the hiring managers have to get to know you and like you.

—PRESIDENT, HIGH-TECH



I agree with finding a need in the company and how you can fill it. With everything, you need to show the value. That is the language that today's employer understands, and well they should. The economy has produced this.

I recently applied for a position that I was more than qualified for, and I received a response telling me that there were 1,569 people who have already responded for the same position. You know there were many qualified people in that total. So you see, you need to find a way to fill a need/value the company is looking for. Despite all the advice and comments out there, there is no easy answer. Just stay positive, which can be difficult, and you will find the right position.

—DIRECTOR OF SALES, PHARMACEUTICALS



After my last job interview, I told the agency that, if I don't get the call back, I'll be very surprised. When I followed up, the recruiter said: "They love your skills, but they don't think you're quite right for this position because you offer more than what they're looking for. They have you in mind for another opportunity in the coming weeks. But if you get another job offer before then take it as opposed to waiting on their job..."

After one month, I told the agency I was disappointed not to hear anything about this position that didn't exist. The real reason I didn't get the call-back to meet the regional manager is he would have put me in charge of the entire project, [over the man I met with]. The whole experience left a lot to be desired and demonstrated how, not only age discrimination, but experience discrimination exists as well.

—PROJECT MANAGER, INVESTMENT ADVISORY SERVICES



I think you've nailed one of the major reason for the post 50 hiring blues: hiring manager fear.

I would imagine in the IT field you are sitting across the table from folks that have parents about the same general age as you. And the idea of having "mom" or "dad" as a subordinate just "creeps" them out (just trying to get with the current slang).

Fortunately for me when I was faced with hiring someone my parents' age at several points in my career, I had great counseling from a boss that understood just how much I could learn from such a hire as my career progressed. Once I realized the person was not out to replace me, I relaxed and enjoyed having such wise counsel on my team.

Tailor your message in a way that the hiring manager will get a promotion out of having you on the team. Silly, I know, but WIIFM [What's in it for me?] rules motivations in such situations.

— VICE PRESIDENT, TRANSPORTATION



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I too have had the response back that “We love your skills, but are too senior for the job.” I guess I could take that two ways: that it is age or it is experience. I have had the opportunity to get debriefs from the hiring managers. Interestingly, offline they say that their biggest fear is that the candidate will “become bored with the job because of lack of challenge;” in other words, “the job is too easy for you.”

What I am learning is two parts of the equation. First is marketing yourself in a way that you get the interviews. For me, it was a professional head shot for LinkedIn, and reducing the résumé to a focused marketable candidate, hence age out, and credentials in. The second part is representation of self, in which I will not allow myself the luxury of self-discrimination because of age. I go in with an attitude that I am the best candidate and do not let age influence me nor allow it to be a distracter to the interviewer, rather I stay focused on what’s in it for the company, the hiring manager and myself.

— CLIENT EXECUTIVE, TELECOMMUNICATIONS

There is no hiding how old I am and no amount of slick phrasing by the interviewer is going to get around my being able to interpret them asking about it. I am neither abashed nor ashamed to be this age, and by bringing my energy to the discussion, I just might leave them with the impression that others, with less experience and enthusiasm will have a hard time keeping up.

There is something to be said about assessing people and the company you might work for. While all this jockeying is going on, do not set aside that you have power of decision. Do I really want to work in a place that I have to overcome such blatant or subtle discrimination? If the hiring manager is biased, what must the senior executives be like? Is it simply a case of the person conducting the interview acting on their own bias, or were they instructed on what to look for and how to ferret out certain people? Maybe this technique is out of style, but when I talked to potential employers, I made certain they know I am assessing them, just as much as they are assessing me – fit is critical, and the culture the company portrays has to sync.

—PRESIDENT, MEDICAL DEVICES



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