



## **Older, Wiser and Employed: Five Tips for Capitalizing on Your Experience**

A new trend is emerging in today's workplace that could favor experienced older workers.

David DeLong, author of *Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Aging Workforce*, says, "Despite the current frustrating job picture for many older workers, opportunities are going to open up in the years ahead as a huge wave of boomers leave the workforce." By 2008, 40 percent of workers will be 45 or older. William D. Novelli, AARP Chief Executive Officer, says this is not just a labor shortage. "It's a knowledge drain. Often, the institutional knowledge that retiring workers take with them is irreplaceable."

As the workplace shifts in favor of more mature workers, what can employees who are older do to capitalize on their experience? Get started with these five suggestions.

1. **Fight aging stereotypes.** Carolyn Martin is a consultant with Rainmaker Thinking in New Haven, CT. Martin suggests contradicting the stereotype that older workers are just looking toward retirement or looking for part-time work. "Show that you can add value immediately . . . say, 'Here's how I can fit into the team.'" Demonstrating your willingness to work with others will ease the common fear that older workers are bossy.
2. **Emphasize accomplishments.** John Rossheim of monster.com suggests highlighting only recent accomplishments that are relevant to the job: "Another common mistake is to brag about depth of experience as a virtue unto itself." Jan Cannon of Cannon Career Development in Boston suggests quantifying your accomplishments. How many people have you supervised? How much money did you generate for the company? How many trainings did you conduct? This makes your experience tangible and relevant.
3. **Keep learning.** According to the Society of Human Resource Management, the greatest concern employers have about hiring older workers is that they won't keep up with

technology. Whether you want to keep your job or are trying to find a new one, one of the most important things you can do is continually update your skills. This may include

obtaining specific certifications, attending professional development seminars or learning new computer programs.

4. **Look for the right fit.** Transition Consulting in Dallas is a corporate recruiting firm that runs workshops for midlife job seekers. John McDorman, managing partner, recommends looking for companies that value wisdom. His advice? Look for newer and smaller companies, which tend to hire more mature workers. Check out *AARP's Best Employers for Workers Over 50* and use these companies as models for your job search or as roadmaps for helping your current employer adapt.
5. **Pass it on.** Find a way to impart your institutional and industry knowledge to the next generation. This might include training co-workers or finding ways to apply your experience through volunteering. Looking ahead and passing on your particular wisdom will help you value your experience. Employers may eventually take notice, too.

**For more information, visit:**

- [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com) and their *Careers at 50+* section for more information on avoiding age bias in the workplace.
- [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) to see the companies on the list of *Best Employers for Workers Over 50*.

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Cathy Rosebaugh is a Certified Senior Advisor and Seniors Real Estate Specialist with Alterna Home Solutions. If you have questions about this article, please contact Cathy at 919-460-1061.