



INTERVIEW TIPS FOR OLDER JOB SEEKERS

"I'm worried that the boss will hire someone far younger than me," is a statement often heard from older job hunters. In truth, chances are that younger candidates are in hot pursuit of that dream opportunity, and the issue of age in hiring practices is a real one.

In the face of this competition, here are a few tips to turn your years of experience to your advantage:

1. Demonstrate passion for what you do. Lean forward a little in your chair, speak in a clear but animated fashion, and explain how something specific in the role that you're discussing gets your juices flowing. Share a previous relevant experience, and how personally satisfying that work made you feel. Demonstrate your perspective by relating your role to something larger than just the daily responsibilities. For example, you might acknowledge how the company's products or services make people's lives better.

Your enthusiasm and passion for excellence will go a long way toward easing any employer's worry that you're seeking a paycheck to ease your way toward social security, rather than to have an opportunity to remain productive. What manager doesn't want to hire someone who brings a real sense of purpose and importance to what they do, day in and day out?

2. Know how you will respond to inappropriate questions. If the human resources department is doing its job, interviewers will be well coached in what questions or topics can't be broached in a job interview. Nonetheless, some ill-informed and prejudiced individuals still possess management roles. Don't go into the interview overly defensive, or with a chip on your shoulder.

There are any number of ways for an interviewer to misstep, and there is no "one right way" to respond. If something inappropriate such as age-related bias comes to the fore, try to turn the situation around. For example, if an interviewer begins to focus in on your age, you can speak calmly about how your knowledge, combined with your years of experience, prepares you to respond to situations with confidence, expertise, and without drama.

3. Don't assume that anyone else knows what you take for granted. Often, highly skilled and experienced people assume that everyone knows what they do, or that they do it the same way. Or, you may feel that the respect you have earned in the past should somehow transfer into a new

environment. Not so! With each new employer you're starting from square one. You need to demonstrate your character, abilities, what specifically you did, and how you did it.

Get ready for the interview by stepping back and breaking your work history down to its most basic elements. Think about who you interacted with, the size and scope of your work, plus all the steps it took to get from point A to point B. Turn this analysis into stories, each of which can highlight some aspect of your knowledge, skill set, and the value you bring with you to your next employer.

You have a track record, and it demonstrates your capacity to create further accomplishments if given the opportunity. When you share stories of your successes over the years, you turn your history to your advantage.

Your role as a job hunter is to educate your interviewer about what you did, how you did it, and the difference you made in your work place. When you do this well and with enthusiasm, your age becomes an asset that makes you an extremely attractive candidate.

May God bless you in your job search.