

TJSN

TACTICS AND STRATEGIES FOR MATURE ADULTS (50+) Part 1

Part 1: ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

The purpose of these workshops is to help mature adults more effectively interface with 30-something hiring managers.

The first thing we (50's) must come to grips with is that the dynamic has turned 180°. In the "Good Ole Days" younger people were (almost) always interviewed and worked for older people- it was the natural order of things... Now it's the reverse!

We have to overcome our ego and with it a sense of resentment. We may not all have it, but if we do, it'll come through during an interview. This will make the 30 more apprehensive about hiring/supervising an older worker/manager.

Bear in mind that this isn't personal- its business! If we agree that this is not only key, but the 1st step in effectively interfacing with 30's we can move to specifics.

We have to manage the fear/ apprehension/concern/whatever-that the 30 may have about hiring a 50+. They include but are not exclusive to:

- S/he may take my job
- S/he won't be technical enough
- S/he won't have the physical energy to keep up/ can't learn new things (mental acuity)
- S/he won't fit in
- S/he made drive up my insurance cost
- I don't feel comfortable having my "dad" report to me
- S/he may want to 'coast'
- You name it

Whether these perceptions are **true** or not the current information suggests that it is REAL! We need to look it in the face and address as it is. We'll address some approaches to the above in part 1 through written and open discussion. Part 2 will be mock interviews, open discussion and feedback.

The future buries the past, not the reverse

Some stats:

20% of employed adults are older than their bosses

75 % of older workers said they relate well to their bosses

But, only 56% of younger bosses said they relate well to older people

And 77% of younger workers don't seek advice from older people
DISCUSSION FROM GROUP ON EACH POINT

S/he may take my job: One way to address this is to create a picture where your skills compliment, but doesn't repeat theirs. Another is to acknowledge their supremacy in their particular area- again pointing out how your combined skills will work to the companies' benefit. Accentuate your positives without negating theirs! **Don't try to repeat their skills- they can get that in another 30**

Some of your positives may be:

Able to bridge generations

Able to bridge techno and operations

Able to bridge techno and financial

Able to bridge different cultures (some culture may be obvious, buy some may not, for example the small rural town may be very different that the culture of a large city –in the same state {Charlotte-Reidsville}). This can be valuable if the company has or will have satellite offices/plants.

Able to use diplomacy

Bridge other functions

Put “gray hair” into high value projects (stability, experience, etc.)

Mentor

These should be marketed on TOP of the job requirements – as way to add value

S/he not technical enough: This is an easy one. Technology is a learned skill and it's so broad even the kids can't keep up with all of it (geeks can, but most 30's while technically savvy are not geeks), so you need to know only the most prevalent. If you're researching the company (and you always should) you can stream line your focus for the interview (many companies list their Systems, IT, Lean, Quality, etc., initiatives on their web site.

Can't keep up. If asked about hobbies mention one that communicates vigor. Find a way to discuss work ethic in general and specifically mention that you've only missed X days in the last X years to illness. Mention hobbies that are timely or timeless. Mention tech hobbies or exposure. Mention any that relate to position, company or hiring manager.

“Can't keep up” is mental as well as physical, so if you have intellectual hobbies or interests - mention them. Talk about new areas/ continuing education.

Won't fit in: This work shop should help in that regard, but researching the company and manager should prepare you. Also have a relevant success story ready to share. Be prepared to diplomatically parry questions about pop music, culture, etc. openly (truthfully) embrace the companies' culture.

Insurance cost: This is illegal- but it happens. See “can’t keep up”.

Coast: One way to address this concern to intimate long term goals, you can subtly tie these to the companies’ long term challenges/goals.

Dad reporting to me: Remember the wheel has turned. It’s up to you to put him at ease. Each case would be different, but you sense uneasiness and you can pinpoint the cause (everyone in the office is 20/30), you might take the direct approach: “I notice that you have a young office. I been very effective interfacing with younger people in my career. I found that we benefit by sharing experiences and I’ve always learned from their techno savvy.”

Whatever: If the hiring manager has a bias there’s nothing you can do. Why try- would you want to work for them anyway? However, I think 30 hiring managers are no different than 50 hiring managers- they want people that will fit and add value.

Be aware of different perspectives/ mores:

30’S	50’S
Technology- highly tech oriented	Low- mid tech oriented
Believes upward mobility depends on results, merit, performance	Longevity, loyalty (I don’t agree with this in total, but that’s the 30’s perception)
Telecommute- don’t care so long as work gets done	Office culture- don’t trust ‘em if I can’t see’em
Nomad. Will move quickly and often. Values- Family time. Fun at work	Organizational Man. Company loyalty, etc. Often put work before family time (not family!) Maslow
Social connections- MySpace.FaceBook.YouTube. Cyber cafes	Person to person. Clubs. Golf

DON’T: Age yourself by using ageisms; Good ole days; Back in the day; When I was your age; You’re young; Kiddo; At my age; Your/my generation; etc. Negative references to music, dress, work habitat / ethic, etc. will not endear you.

Remember- people hire people they like. It’s important to remember that technology and social interface (behavior) has changed, but human nature has not... WE ALL LIKE TO BE VALUED, APPRECIATED & PRAISED.

DO: Research the company, managers, culture and especially the interviewer. Also ‘scope the room’ when you enter his/her office.

Use Trios or other mechanism to Practice, Practice, Practice!

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH: Establish differences head-on