

## [Tips for finding a job after age 50: Here's the wisdom of the crowd](http://retirementrevised.com/column/tips-for-finding-a-job-after-age-50-heres-the-wisdom-of-the-crowd)

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Finding a job is challenging for anyone in tough economic times but it's harder if you're over age 50. It's illegal for employers to discriminate based on age, but any older job-seeker will tell you it happens every day.

That reality is colliding with the intent of baby boomers, most of whom hope—and need—to keep working past traditional retirement age. So, what are the best strategies for landing a job when you're over 50?

I posed that question via an informal survey of hundreds of business people who've been on both sides of the hiring desk—employers and job seekers. I did it by querying my network on LinkedIn, the online social network for business people. In just a few hours, I received nearly three dozen passionate, thoughtful responses. Clearly, this is a hot-button issue in the business world.

But my respondents weren't complaining about age discrimination. That's accepted as a fact of life. Instead, they were pushing 50-plus job seekers to adopt smart strategies for selling themselves, networking aggressively, and generally cleaning up their act when it comes to interviewing.

Summarizing the wisdom of the crowd: You can get this done—and here's how:

**It's not all about you.** “The most important thing in getting a job after 50 is to understand why anyone would hire you,” says Scott Kane, managing director of [Gray Hair Management](#), a career network and coaching organization for senior-level job seekers. “There's one common reason people get hired—when the hiring manager sees the candidate as the solution to their problem.”

Kane and others say older job seekers too often want to talk about themselves in job interviews—narrating their resumes in too much detail, and even showing off the battle scars inflicted by unjust employers of the past.

**Leave the history and attitude at the door.** Instead, go into interviews prepared to listen and understand your prospective employers current situation and issues. Research the company thoroughly in advance. You're there to find a way to match up the employer's problems with specific areas of your experience that make you the obvious solution.

“Don't whine about your last company, your financial situation, your health or your children,” says J.P. Stein, a career coach and human resources consultant. “The employer

really doesn't care. They are interested in earning more revenue, not in providing you with counseling.”

**Technology really matters.** Most baby boomers are comfortable with basic business technology—computers, the web, e-mail and mobile technology. Still, Luddites lurk in the applicant pool who want to get by on ignorance for the remainder of their working lives.

“You need to know how to use the basic programs on a computer and have an e-mail address that sounds business-like,” says Tim Driver, CEO of [Retirementjobs.com](http://Retirementjobs.com).

Adds Susan Ayers Walker, who writes about technology for AARP.org: “Know how to apply the latest technology to your prospective job. If you are applying for a sales job, know about mobile technology like smart phones and Web 2.0 applications, and how to find hotspots for your laptop. If you are applying for a marketing position, then know how to use (Microsoft) Powerpoint, Excel and Publisher and know how to start and/or post to a blog.”

**Make the cultural connection.** Show younger hiring managers that you're not stuck in the past. “Be brutally honest with yourself,” says executive recruiter Jim Stranberg. “Understand how you are perceived by others—the way you look, the words you use, the attitudes you hold. Clean up your act before you enter the market.”

**Network creatively.** If you haven't joined LinkedIn, do so immediately. It's free, and with a little investment of time you'll build a useful professional network that can help with your next professional move and build your knowledge. A LinkedIn profile also is a great way to show potential employers that you're up to speed on the web and social networking.

Rick Lopatin, a finance executive who was merged out of a job earlier this year, is a fan of LinkedIn but also focuses on non-virtual networking. He tries to attend as many industry and professional meetings and conferences as possible. He's also tapped into some less traditional networks. “I have attended my 8th grade reunion—a great resource for network expansion!”

## **Employment resources for 50+ workers**

There's no shortage of services that help 50+ and retired workers seek out employment. [This week's column](#) focuses on YourEncore, a specialized company that recruits scientists and engineers for consulting projects. But 50+ job services vary from very specialized services like YourEncore to general job boards such as Seniors4Hire.

Here's a partial list of 50+ employment services and resources;

[AARP list of top 50+ employers](#). S.C. Johnson came out on top this year; many of the listed organizations are in healthcare and the non-profit sector.

[DinosaurExchange](#). Short- and long-term job opportunities all over the world.

[Enрге.us](#). Stands for "The Employment Network for Retirement Government Experts." Helps retired government employees (federal, state, local) find new employment.

[Execunet](#). Network of senior-level retired executives puts you in touch with other professionals and recruiters.

[Gray Hair Management](#). Career coaching and networking resources for executives and senior managers, including monthly face-to-face networking sessions.

[Jobs4Point0.com](#). Employment service for the 40+ crowd.

[RetiredBrains](#). Job listings can be searched by state or industry; articles offering how-to guidance on employment in retirement.

[RetirementJobs.com](#). Identifies companies suited to older workers and matches them with employees.

[Seniors4Hire](#). Post your resume and what you're looking for; search for jobs.

[TAP-IN](#). Connects health professionals over age 55 with volunteer opportunities in free clinics caring for the uninsured. Operates in Virginia and North Carolina.

[WorkForce50.com](#). Screens companies listing jobs for employers actively seeking 50+ employees.

[YourEncore.com](#). Recruits retired scientists and engineers for innovation-related consulting assignments.

## **AARP offers career transition scholarships for 40+ women**

The AARP Foundation's Women's Leadership Circle will accept applications starting February 1st for its [2010 Women's Scholarship Program](#), which helps fund career training and education to women over age 40 who have limited economic resources.

AARP says the scholarships are awarded to “women who are entering 2-3 year technical or skills up-grading programs or in the final stages of their college experience.” Priority is given to women who are:

- Returning to the workforce after an extended absence.
- Underemployed (in a job with limited pay, limited growth opportunities and limited benefits).
- Raising another family member's child/children, such as grandparents raising grandchildren (with the ability to demonstrate significant financial responsibility for those child/children).

Scholarships range from \$500 to \$5,000, depending on economic need. The program doesn't fund graduate education.