

<http://www.giddylimits.co.uk/over_50s_work/who-will-hire-men-and-women-in-their-50s-and-60s.html>

**Who will hire men and women in their 50s and 60s?**

**By David Hiddleston**

A fast growing number of businesses will - due to the shrinking skilled labour pool in the UK today, many businesses are looking beyond their usual recruitment criteria and are turning to the more mature work pool for a wide variety of jobs.

In fact, recent legislation on age descrimination will force employers to consider older, experienced workers when recruiting. In their search for good staff enlightened employers have come to recognise the value older people can add to their business, bringing with them a wealth of experience, know how and skills. It makes good business sense to recruit people with these attributes - as well as getting conscientious and flexible workers, mature people are usually happy to pass on their knowledge and know-how or act as mentors for younger members of staff. Employers also appreciate having staff who are punctual, take less time off and who actually want to work!

**What sort of jobs are available to the over 50s and beyond?**

The jobs are as varied as those offered to younger candidates – sometimes even more varied. Often mature people have reached a stage in life when they want to work less hours, or full time but on a short to medium term contract, they may want less responsibility or go back to the work they did in a previous career. So, compared to their younger counterparts, they may well have more opportunities open to them.

Start up businesses and those in a fast growth period desperately seek experienced, skilled and flexible staff to support them as they launch or build their operations. They often need knowledgeable people with know-how gained from many years of business life - sometimes in a specialised field such as finance, marketing, sales or operations, sometimes just with general work and business experience from the school of life!

People with many years of practical, hard-won experience, who can help younger staff avoid repeating costly mistakes, are now being sought out by employers in a wide variety of industries, from banks to garden centres and call centres to engineering – and a variety of positions from directors to customer advisers.

Changing direction or starting a new career after fifty or sixty is no longer exceptional. Employers are recognising the positive attributes of age – good timekeeping, conscientiousness, willing to learn, reliability, general knowledge of business life – and are often willing to retrain older people.

**Baby Boomers get Older and Wiser**

In two years’ time one Baby Boomer will be reaching retirement age every 30 seconds but they won’t all be retiring from work. Whilst Baby Boomers, or older workers, have “been there, done that, got the t-shirt” they have gained a vast wealth of experience, an old fashioned work ethic and a realistic and often pragmatic view on life. They represent a rich seam of talent that can be of enormous value to employers. Experience counts!

Currently there are 7.6 million 55 to 64 year olds in the UK and half of them want to continue working out of choice. Some are already financially secure but feel that life could become a little dull without the motivation of a job. They enjoy the thrill of a new challenge, the work environment, even the stress, and they fully appreciate the added benefit of the monetary rewards they reap.

Over the years many myths have grown up about older, mature workers – but various studies and surveys have shown that ‘myths’ is exactly what they are.

**Myth:** training older workers is a poor investment as they will not stay long enough on the job.

**Reality**: the potential working life of over 50’s usually exceeds the life of new technology for which they are trained.

**Myth:** older workers are not as productive as younger staff.

**Reality**: overall productivity does not decline as a function of age. In fact productivity can actually rise because of greater worker accuracy, dependability and capacity to make better on the spot judgements

**Myth**: older workers take more time off work

**Reality:** surveys show that older workers have a better attendance record than younger workers. And because their families are off hand, they don’t need to take time off to look after young children, attend school events, or maternity leave.

**Myth**: older workers cannot accept change.

**Reality:** evaluations of older workers show that a high proportion are flexible in accepting change in occupation and earnings; they are just as adaptable once they understand the reason for changes.

**Why work beyond age 60?**

The fabric of Society has changed tremendously over the last few years. This is having a marked effect on the baby boomer generation: now fifty plus and facing a future that many didn’t contemplate.

No longer are jobs for life or pensions guaranteed. Even those who thought that they had made adequate pension provision are facing the stark reality that they simply do not have enough income to sustain a reasonable standard of living.

Inflation may be at an all time low – according to the Government – but anyone on a fixed income is going to struggle as Council Tax, Utilities and other necessities streak ahead of the headline rate.

Those reliant on savings are also suffering, as interest rates remain at historically low levels.

So it should not come as a surprise that, even if the Government does not mandatorily raise the retirement age, more and more people in their 50s, 60s and even 70s are going to carry on working in one form or another – be that in full time employment, part time work, home working, self employment or offering consultancy services.

However, the cards are currently stacked against them, because there is a perception among recruiters – who are mainly young – that older people are set in their ways, slow to learn and likely to have a lot of time off sick. Not true!

Mature, skilled people – be they managers or workers - with years of experience can be an asset to any business or organisation. They are conscientious, willing to learn, can provide mentoring to younger employees and, contrary to expectations, have an exemplary attendance record.

Whilst the Government has outlawed ageism with new legislation, current jobseekers with experience and skill will need to find appropriate ways of presenting their career history, skills and experience to potential employers.

One of the simplest ways is to seek out an on line recruitment organisation which specialises in matching mature people to employers who appreciate the value that they can bring to a business, organisation or even as a volunteer helping a charity.

By matching the skills, attributes and experience of individuals to job vacancies posted by employers, organisations like Skilled People.com will be able to help jobseekers aged fifty plus, jobseekers in their 60s, and even those in their 70s looking for paid employment, to find suitable positions.

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[**www.skilledpeople.com**](http://www.skilledpeople.com/)