

[6 Easy Ways to Beat Negative Stereotypes as an Older Worker](#)

Despite legislation prohibiting it, age is a common factor in hiring decisions. This is especially true for *older workers* who must combat a number of negative stereotypes, specifically that they are less energetic, enthusiastic and creative. Recruiting managers have confirmed that companies often will note that they would prefer a younger candidate. What is a *mature job seeker* to do in the face of this reticence? Last year, the BBC ran an informative article with practical job search suggestions for the *middle aged job seekers* with seven key tips paraphrased below.

1. Know the stereotype and confront it

Stereotypes exist for workers of all ages. Generally speaking, younger workers are considered:

- Physically more able and healthy
- Easier to supervise
- Lower salary expectations
- Willing to use new technology
- Creative
- Energetic

While mature workers are considered:

- Experienced
- Reliable
- Stable
- Loyal
- Have good practical knowledge
- Mature

You might think that the best strategy is to accentuate the positive qualities associated with your age group. According to the experts cited in the BBC article, this is the worst possible strategy. Prospective employers will already assume that you offer loyalty, stability, etc. and saying so will just reinforce the negative biases as well. What employers don't know (unless you tell them) is that you are creative, energetic, comfortable with new technology, etc. These "young" qualities are exactly the types of things you will want to emphasize.

2. Don't stereotype yourself

Whether you are in or out of *work*, push to receive training to keep up with important trends. Technology has become a critical element of almost every industry. If there is something you are not comfortable with then get comfortable with it--even if it means asking your kids!

3. Try something new

Don't feel that you must stay in the same industry you just left. While it's true that your relationships and experience are most applicable to the same industry, if your industry is contracting you might be forced to look outward. Odds are you have skills that are transferable to other industries and industries that are growing are more apt to hire from outside.

4. Look after yourself

While your focus will be on finding a new **job**, this is a particularly important time to be looking after yourself. You will want to present an image of being "healthy, motivated and confident" and the best way to do this is to be these. You should be eating well, exercising, and keeping in touch with contacts and friends. Now is the time to be networking even more than when you were employed. (LifeTwo recommends the book "Never Eat Alone" for networking tips).

5. Appearance matters

Appearance really does matter in *job interviews*. For **mature workers** you will want to once again confront the stereotype of being an older person. This doesn't mean dressing to look young, but instead looking up-to-date and modern. The BBC article also emphasizes the importance of not coming off as condescending if interviewed by a younger person and make sure the interviewer walks away with the feeling that you are at ease working with people of all ages.

6. Don't let the process get to you

Make no mistake about it, looking for a **job** (regardless of your age) is a grind. Make the best of it and understand that it is numbers game. The more resumes you put in the hands of qualified people and the more interviews you go on, the higher the likelihood you will *get a job*.

Source: BBC <http://lifetwo.com/production/node/20070621-what-s-happening-with-employment-opportunities-for-the-older-worker>