

# ENGAGING THE MATURE WORKFORCE

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MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT OLDER WORKERS

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING WORKERS AGE 50+

CREATE A WORKPLACE THAT CELEBRATES ALL AGE GROUPS

## *Connecting to workers age 50+*

In a 2021 EMSI report, [\*The Demographic Drought; How the approaching pandemic will transform the labor market for the rest of our lives\*](#), we find some rather daunting statistics shaping our workforce today and into the future. According to the report, talent shortages across the globe are being driven by multiple factors. One key driver is an aging population in nearly all industrialized nations.

“As Japan has discovered, weathering a talent drought requires businesses to obsess about retaining especially their older employees. As people live longer and jobs in the developed world require less physical exertion, older adults could work well past the current retirement age. In many cases, they must. To keep their aging economy from collapse, the Labor Force Participation rate in Japan for people over age 65 has risen to 25%.

In the years ahead, the US will need to move toward similar integration of older workers. In less than 15 years, the number of adults aged 65+ is projected to surpass the number of children under 18 in the US. This presents challenges for HR and recruitment—especially at a time when health concerns have driven older workers into early retirement.”

Finding and keeping workers remains an issue for employers in all industry sectors. As our workforce ages and fewer children are born, meeting workplace needs poses challenges. How do talent and acquisition teams approach recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and retaining workers who are over the age of 50? The Chamber recently sat down with four experts on employing older adults during the Experience Series Engaging The Mature Workforce.

T.J. Johnson with Tra'Bian Enterprises, Jami Phillips with New Directions Career Center, Reina Sims with AARP Ohio, and Carol Ventresca with Looking Forward Our Way joined the conversation.

# Misconceptions About Older Workers

- **Less productive than their younger coworkers** in a recent article published by AARP, studies indicate the opposite is actually true. “When comparing younger adults (age 20–31) with older adults (age 65–80) on 12 tasks, researchers found the latter group to be consistently more productive and reliable. They attribute this to the older adults having learned strategies to solve the task, a constantly high motivation level as well as a balanced daily routine and stable mood.”
- **Lack the skills to keep up with technology** from the same AARP article: “Although this may once have been true, recent surveys by the Pew Research Center have found that among those 65-plus, two-thirds use the internet (and 75 percent of them use it daily), 37 percent use at least one form of social media, and 42 percent own a smartphone.”
- **More expensive to hire** older workers bring a lot of experience to the workplace, and it’s value they’re bringing, that is commanding the higher salary, not their age. They may produce results earlier than someone who lacks the years of experience.
- **Resistant to change** is another misread of workers over the age of 50. Today’s older workers may have started a career before the internet and expanded global competition; however, they have been here for those changes and learned to adapt as the world’s economy has evolved.



Reina Sims, Associate State Director Outreach and Advocacy, AARP Ohio

*“One of the biggest misconceptions about our aging population is that we slow down as we get older. That could not be further from the truth. We have a lifetime of experience behind us and we can choose what we want to focus on next. It is not about slowing down. People need to understand that.”*

Jami Phillips, Employment Specialist New Direction Career Center



*“A key to remember is many older adults cannot financially afford to retire and stay home. Some are still responsible for their adult children and even grandchildren. Working is a necessity for them.”*

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