

Career Planning Over 40: Do's & Dont's - Thirty (30) Hot Tips!

(Please Tell Me One More Time: "Yes, I can Get a Job After Age 40!")

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PROLOGUE

Aldous Huxley once said, "**The essence of genius is to carry the spirit of the child into old age, which means never losing your enthusiasm.**"

The greatest Teacher of all times said that wisdom lives in a little child. Did He not say, "**Except ye become as a little child, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.**" What Jesus probably had in mind when he uttered that statement was that a child never loses that touch of haunting wonder and mystery of life.

What do these philosophical statements have to do with job hunting? Frankly, quite a lot!

If the start of this article is nauseating to you, please **STOP** here and accept my sincerest apologies; go no further. Hit the **Delete** key! Quick! I can wait!

INSPIRATIONAL CASES

My neighboring office has John E., a robust 88-year-old architect. He is my inspiration. John is a survivor of Pearl Harbor and a Veteran of World War II. He has four grown children, all in the medical profession. He puts in an 8-10-hour day everyday, because he loves what he is doing. He discovered it very early in life. He is a great architect, and people are willing to wait weeks and months for his innovative plans. He tells me, when he puts the chisel-point pencil to the drawing paper, his creative juices flow every morning. He takes good care of himself through diet and exercise, has a strong religious faith, and does not hate or bear a grudge against anybody. Any question about his secret of success in work and life?

When my wife Elizabeth was in college in her 20's, several years ago, she had a perky Filipino woman in her classes, Angela P., 72 years old, also pursuing her Bachelor's degree. Angela rubbed shoulders with the 20 somethings, and did not want to be treated any differently. Her attitude was marvelous! I had the privilege of meeting her at Christmas parties, and because of her non-judgmental, non-interfering and friendly nature, her classmates treated her like a dear friend, and not like their mother. This left an indelible impression on me. Do you think a person with those attitudes would have trouble in finding a job? I don't think so.

.....Attitude, Attitude and Attitude.....

Tom V. was 75, and he traveled with me from Northern New Jersey to Philadelphia by Amtrak train for seven years to his job. He was an expert in the shipping business and his boss begged him to stay and not retire. It was not just his technical skills as a marine engineer, but his youthful exuberance and ability to get along with people of all races, young and old. He had formally retired at age 60, but they put him back into service at age 62. Isn't that terrific!

The CEO of a company I am acquainted with, Jeanne Z., born and raised in Europe, a medical doctor, came to the United States in his early 30's. He is 82 years old now. At 62, he quit his medical practice and started a new company, manufacturing medical devices, from ground zero. At age 80, he sold the company for \$300MM, and founded a not-for-profit organization for medical research. Absolutely amazing!

What am I saying here? The three most important attributes in job search after age 50 are **Attitude, Attitude** and **Attitude**. It automatically shapes behavior. Everything else comes second to a positive and optimistic attitude. Enthusiasm makes the difference!

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME (WIIFM)

Preparing and presenting yourself properly is the key in this battle of job search. Remember the following 30 tips:

1. People over age 50 already have the experience which is in demand, most of the time.
2. Enhance your experience by projecting youthful energy which is not that difficult to do!
3. Get the advice of an image consultant.
4. Obtain unbiased on-camera feedback.
5. Limit your resume to the last 10-15 years experience.
6. Leave out graduation dates and personal information from your resume. Why prevent yourself from being invited for an interview? You can always make a convincing case for hiring you when you see the interviewer in person.
7. Accept a contract position, if necessary, to prove yourself.
8. Project a charisma that you will contribute and learn and grow -- a lifelong learner.
9. Take relevant courses to update your skills, even if it means using your own time and money.
10. Beware of talking about the "**good old days years ago**". -- That will be your death knell!
11. If you are labeled as overqualified, tell the employer confidently that "**you can hit the ground running, doing the work of 2-3 people, in the shortest possible time, and bring credit to his/her placement**".
12. While negotiating higher compensation, tell the interviewer that the "**employer will get the biggest bang for their buck, because of multiple talents you have to offer, and no learning curve**".
13. It is better to underpromise and overdeliver, instead of the other way around.
14. Don't be a cop-out and hide behind age discrimination. Maybe it is salary discrimination because the company cannot truly afford you without causing discontent within their ranks.
15. Rely more on networking (professional friendship development) and telephone instead of resumes.

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16. Focus more on smaller companies.
17. Patience is a virtue, simply because the job search may take twice as long as expected.
18. Keep up-to-date on technology and industry jargon in your field; project computer literacy.
19. Take your transferable skills and sell them in another growing industry, if necessary.
20. Dress appropriately for the company audience, yielding on the conservative side in some cases and contemporary in others.
21. If you feel comfortable, dye your hair to your previous natural color or wear a high-quality wig; also, wear contact lenses instead of glasses, if you can. Perhaps it will improve your interviewing performance because of higher self-image and self-esteem.
22. Dispel the myth that older workers are sickly by mentioning activities like mountain climbing, hiking, etc.
23. **Learn to respect the feelings and opinions of younger workers, especially your supervisors. Tell them you will boost their professional standing within their company by doing a good job for them, without being a threat to them.**
24. Join professional associations and be proactive.
25. Volunteer in select organizations.
26. Get career coaching to minimize the scratchy elements of your personality.
27. Try to keep your weight under reasonable control, using whatever method suits you. Yes, there is discrimination against obese people, who are perceived as out of control.
28. Minimize the wrinkles on your face and bags under the eyes, faking which a charming smile will cover a multitude of sins.
29. It is important to remember people's names. If you don't, it shows a lack of interest in them. A person's name is the sweetest sound in the English language to him/her. Ask the correct pronunciations of their first and last names and make sure you repeat their first name frequently during all conversations.
30. **Tap into your spiritual experiences so that you can give something to people, other than eight hours on the job. Rejoice with people in their good fortunes and mourn with them in their sorrows; in other words, be an encourager.**

EPILOGUE

Several prominent executive recruiters have told me in confidence that modern day white-collar professionals are being discriminated against much more based on age rather than race! I say, "So what?" Age discrimination has always existed in Western societies, although much less so in Oriental ones. African culture, for example, recognizes the fact that older people have a lot of knowledge to share with the younger generation. There is an old African saying that ***when an old man or woman dies, the village loses a library, because of the wealth of knowledge and information that they were able to share.*** People will admire you when you break the paradigm and "step out of the box". ***Which side do you want to be on, the winners or the losers?***

Live your life and forget your age!

(Don Sutaria - CareerQuest)



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Don Sutaria is Founder & President of CareerQuest (formerly New Life Career Counseling), located in New York and New Jersey. CareerQuest is also mentioned in "**What Color is Your Parachute?**" He is a consultant to individuals and various corporations, offering executive coaching and career management services. He has developed unique methods for capturing jobs in the new millennium. He appeared on a Phil Donahue TV special on unorthodox methods of job hunting. Known as "**Career Doctor Don**", he has been quoted in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, *The Star-Ledger*, *The Union Leader*, *WorkingSmart*, *SmartMoney*, *Fortune*, and on WINS and WOR radio. He specializes in counseling of international professionals, Generation X (age 20-29), career changers, freelancers, consultants, mid-career executives and people over age 50. He really believes that your career is a pathway to your soul.

Mr. Sutaria has over forty years of diversified industrial and management experience, complemented by training in career development and hands-on experience in career advising. His most recent position was that of a Career Development Counselor at the Forty Plus Executives Club of New York and is also a former Certified Five O'Clock Club Career Counselor. He served as Crisis Prevention and Crisis Intervention Counselor at the Help-Line Telephone Center in New York. In addition, he served as moderator for many years at the Job Finding Forums of the Advertising Club of New York and the Sales Executives Club of New York.

Based on extensive travel and various studies, Don has acquired familiarity with cultures and sub-cultures of the Americas, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. He has trained American managers and their families for international assignments. He has won The Positive Thinkers Award and was also inducted into **International Who's Who of Professionals**. The author of a number of managerial articles for various journals, Mr. Sutaria also served on committees of several organizations, and conducted courses, seminars and symposiums, including Columbia University, New York University, Nyack College, Alliance Theological Seminary, and Rutgers. He is a member of the Association of Career Professionals International, Society for Human Resource Management, and Career Counselors Consortium.

He holds an MSIE degree in Industrial and Management Engineering from Kansas State

University (a Tata Scholar) and an IE (Professional) degree in International Management and Personnel Relations from Columbia University. Mr. Sutaria has continued his education through specialized courses offered by the American Management Association, Center for Professional Advancement, Dale Carnegie Institute, Pratt Institute, Advertising Club of New York, Forty Plus Club of New York, Teleministries USA, Sales Executives Club of New York, and has obtained New York University's postgraduate Certificate in Adult Career Planning and Development.

Don is involved in community affairs and an active participant in sports. He has volunteered his time in assisting several people at various organizations in making career transitions. He and his wife Elizabeth, a recreational therapist, reside in Union, NJ, and are the parents of two grown sons, Norman, a schoolteacher and Dale, an e-commerce entrepreneur.