



5 Myths About Workers 50+ and How to Respond

1

People over 50 are more expensive

Employers who say this are usually looking only at salary and benefit costs. When higher productivity, institutional knowledge, industry connections, and other advantages are included, there is typically a net gain. This also overlooks the possibility for redesigned jobs that reduce responsibility in trade for more flexibility.

2

People over 50 can't keep up and don't perform as well

Across almost every performance measure, older workers outperform younger ones. Not because they're smarter or better educated, but because their experience helps them see solutions and avoid mistakes. Older workers are more conscientious, have better social skills, and are more emotionally controlled.

3

People over 50 are not able to learn and stay current

There is no difference in older workers' ability to learn, though they may learn differently to connect existing knowledge. Curiosity and drive, basic to learning, do not change over one's life. This also applies to technology, which most older workers are adept at learning, having already lived through numerous tech changes.

4

People over 50 are less engaged and more likely to leave

Older workers are less absent, more loyal, more likely to know what they want in a job, and less likely to change employers than younger workers, who may still be exploring fit and possibility. A recent study found that the presence of older workers leads to greater engagement and stability of younger workers.

5

People over 50 are taking jobs away from younger workers

There is zero evidence for this. The job market continues to grow, creating opportunity across the age spectrum. Younger workers are seldom prepared to fill positions typically held by older workers. Older workers improve morale, learning, productivity, engagement, and tenure of younger workers.