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## *Neutralizing Age Discrimination*

If you are 55, 48, or even 40 and looking for a job, you are probably wondering if age discrimination will affect you during the hiring process. According to ExecuNet, 84% of executives say that age discrimination is a serious problem, and 65% have encountered it in a job search (an increase of 7% just since 2001). Is there anything you can do?

Some people turn to cosmetic procedures to give them a younger appearance. They might have hair replacement. They might go to a professional for clothes or makeup tips. But there are critical career-based strategies you can use to minimize the impact of age discrimination when you look for a job.

**Resume Strategy:** Do not list more than the last 10 or 15 years of experience. Avoid listing college and graduate school graduation dates. Make those 10-15 years count by stressing quantifiable accomplishments and concrete solutions that you developed. These indicators answer the question: "What can you do for me?" Age is not a background issue when what you have to offer meets a business need or "relieves the pain" an executive is experiencing.

**Interview Preparation:** Do the research on the company, so that you can intelligently talk about the company's current challenges and initiatives. Use your specific knowledge to suggest the ways in which you can benefit the company going forward.

**Body Language In The Interview:** When you go in for an interview, present yourself as vigorous and energetic. Avoid leaning back and looking too relaxed (or tired).

**Interview Strategy Related To Age:** Although legal considerations will probably prevent an interviewer from asking your age, S/he may well be thinking about it. So stress the value-added benefits you offer as an experienced professional. Give examples of how you used your experience to avoid costly errors and false starts. Give examples of cases in which your judgment and experience have made money, saved money or solved problems.

**Long-Term Personal Brand Building:** Begin to build your personal brand in your industry or profession. The more robust your image is among industry players, the more you will be viewed as having value to offer. Make sure that all your communications reinforce your personal brand.

**Networking:** Network on an ongoing basis with peers, former colleagues, former bosses, and members of online or offline industry organizations. When the time comes, someone who knows you and your work will be in a good position to recommend you for a job. Their recommendation will do a lot to neutralize the power of age concerns. Ultimately, considerations of age will take a back seat if there are other compelling reasons to bring a candidate on board. Your job is to let hiring authorities know loud and clear about how they will benefit from hiring YOU. These 6 tips will help you do that.

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