

5 Tips for Fighting Age Discrimination in Your Job Search

September 28, 2016 By [Randall S. Hansen](#)

Age discrimination during the job search can be very hard to identify. If you're an older job seeker, it can be almost impossible to prevent. Don't let this obstacle stand in the way of your career goals, and keep these tips in mind.

Unscrupulous, uneducated, or inexperienced hiring managers often allow certain forms of bias to slip into their hiring practices. These unchecked biases consequently undermine both the candidate and the company. The candidate gets turned away, but the employer also suffers by losing talented applicants who may later accept positions with the company's competitors. The bottom line: Discrimination is a sword that cuts both ways. Smart employers recognize this problem and work to eliminate it from their staffing programs.

But among all forms of discrimination (based on race, religion, gender and other factors), age bias can be one of the most difficult to identify and prevent. Employers often make acts of age discrimination impossible to trace. Candidates who are overlooked because of their age often have little recourse when it comes to fighting back. So if you're an older job seeker facing a tough marketplace and you suspect your age may be playing a role, what steps can you take to overcome this obstacle? Here are a few suggestions.

Don't share your age up front.

As far as possible, keep your resume free of age-markers that can let biased employers rule you out before the interview stage. Don't include your graduation dates, and share only the last ten years of relevant positions in your job history. Don't declare your age or birthdate anywhere in your resume, application, or cover letter.

Counter concerns with positives.

If you're concerned that your employers will dismiss your application due to your age, ask yourself why. Does this job involve a component that makes youth attractive? Does the role require physical stamina, a passion for social media, or a keen understanding of the teenage consumer marketplace? If so, you'll need to counter potential concerns with reassurance. You may or may not have these skills, but you can offer the benefits that come with experience, such as leadership and in-depth industry knowledge. Show off your assets while downplaying what might be considered deficits.

Don't generate problems where none exist.

You may find more resistance if you expect to find resistance. Going into the job search apologetically or expecting your employers to raise questions about your age may, ironically, invite them to do so. But if it never occurs to you to see your age as an obstacle, your attitude may shift your demeanor and word choices in subtle ways. Redirect your own focus—and that of your employers—away from your age and back to your skills and credentials.

Be ready to fight back.

Know your rights. Recognize when an employer uses certain terms or actions that clearly signal acts of discrimination and be ready to call out this behavior. This may require some legal knowledge or guidance from an HR expert or career counselor.

Be patient.

As a result of both subtle and overt age bias, your job search may be a little longer and more wearying than it might be otherwise. You may be facing a slightly uphill road, so don't lose patience or become discouraged if you don't experience immediate success. Just keep moving forward, keep your standards high, and stay focused on what you have to offer. For help, turn to the resume and cover letter creation tools available at [LiveCareer](#).