

Getting the Job You Want After 50

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

Learn to:

- Showcase the value you have to offer a potential employer
- Perfect your résumé and interview skills
- Negotiate for what you want
- Snag your dream job in the age of social media
- Launch a whole new career or business

Kerry Hannon



***Getting the
Job You Want
After 50***

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

***Getting the
Job You Want
After 50***

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

by Kerry Hannon

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

Getting the Job You Want After 50 For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2015 by AARP. All rights reserved. AARP is a registered trademark.

Media and software compilation copyright © 2015 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved.

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc., and may not be used without written permission. AARP is a registered trademark of AARP, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: WHILE THE PUBLISHER, AARP, AND THE AUTHOR HAVE USED THEIR BEST EFFORTS IN PREPARING THIS BOOK, THEY MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES REPRESENTATIVES OR WRITTEN SALES MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR YOUR SITUATION. YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH A PROFESSIONAL WHERE APPROPRIATE. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. THE PUBLISHER, AARP, AND THE AUTHOR SHALL NOT BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE PUBLISHER, AARP, OR THE AUTHOR ENDORSE THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

This and other AARP books are available in print and e-formats at AARP's online bookstore, www.aarp.org/bookstore, and through local and online bookstores.

Portions of this material originally appeared in *Forbes*, *Love Your Job: The New Rules for Career Happiness*, *What's Next? Finding Your Passion and Your Dream Job in Your Forties, Fifties and Beyond* and *Great Jobs for Everyone 50+* and on NextAvenue.org and AARP.org. Reprinted with permission.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2015945226

ISBN 978-1-119-02284-8 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-119-02286-2 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-119-02285-5 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: Getting Started with Finding a Job After 50</i>	5
Chapter 1: Scoping Out Your Prospects	7
Chapter 2: Using Skills to Your Advantage	31
Chapter 3: Harnessing the Power of Other People	47
Chapter 4: Tackling Common Financial Issues	69
<i>Part II: Launching Your Job Search</i>	85
Chapter 5: Scoping Out Promising Job Markets	87
Chapter 6: Joining the Growing Ranks of the Self-Employed	115
Chapter 7: Dealing with Special Circumstances	141
<i>Part III: Marketing Yourself</i>	155
Chapter 8: Rehabbing Your Résumé and Cover Letter	157
Chapter 9: Creating a Strong Online Presence	179
Chapter 10: Marketing Yourself on LinkedIn	205
Chapter 11: Clearing the Application Hurdle	229
<i>Part IV: Taking the Stage: The Interview and Its Aftermath</i>	241
Chapter 12: Prepping for a Job Interview	243
Chapter 13: Acing Your Job Interview	263
Chapter 14: Negotiating for What You Want	279
<i>Part V: The Part of Tens</i>	299
Chapter 15: Ten Great Jobs for Workers Over 50	301
Chapter 16: Ten Common Interview Questions Answered	307
Chapter 17: Ten Steps for Career Changers	313
<i>Index</i>	321

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	1
About This Book	1
Foolish Assumptions	2
Icons Used in This Book	2
Beyond the Book	3
Where to Go from Here	4
<i>Part 1: Getting Started with Finding a Job After 50</i>	5
Chapter 1: Scoping Out Your Prospects	7
Recognizing the Need for and Value of Experienced Workers	7
Noting a change in the current workforce	8
Seeing experienced workers as an affordable option	8
Capitalizing on lower turnover	9
Harnessing the power of highly engaged workers	10
Reaping additional benefits	11
Tallying the Benefits of Staying in the Workforce	11
Reorienting Yourself to Today's Job-Search Realities	12
Deciding What (Else) You Want Out of Work	13
Pursuing Your Passion and Finding Purpose	15
Considering other careers	15
Checking out fast-growing job markets	16
Taking the first steps in pursuing your passion	19
Putting Proven Success Strategies into Practice	21
Starting sooner rather than later	21
Giving yourself a full-body makeover	21
Using the most effective means to get a job	22
Broadening your job search	23
Considering a patchwork approach to your career	25
Navigating a career change	25
Getting the training you need	26
Seeking help	26
Dealing with Ageism	27
Knowing what employers are so worried about	27
Laying their worries to rest	28
Chapter 2: Using Skills to Your Advantage	31
Recognizing the Skills Employers Value	31
Finding out which hard skills are required	31
Recognizing the soft skills employers value	32

Making the Most of What You Have	35
Auditing your skills	35
Taking note of transferrable skills	36
Reframing your experience and skills	37
Beefing Up Your Skill Set	38
Asking yourself some strategic questions to get started	39
Checking out community colleges	40
Enrolling in a Massively Open Online Course (MOOC)	40
Taking an educational vacation	41
Pursuing a degree or certification online	42
Acquiring on-the-job training on-the-cheap	42
Getting tech savvy	45
Chapter 3: Harnessing the Power of Other People	47
Networking Your Way to Your Next Job	47
Starting with the people you know	48
Networking online	49
Overcoming introversion	54
Revisiting Your College Career Center	55
Working with a Mentor	56
Finding a mentor	56
Considering reverse mentoring	57
Hiring a virtual mentor	57
Connecting with a Career Coach	59
Getting Discovered: Busting Recruiter Myths	60
Myth #1: Recruiters find you from industry colleagues	61
Myth #2: Recruiters find you, not vice versa	61
Myth #3: The recruiter works for you	62
Myth #4: Recruiters know what the best job fit is for you	62
Myth #5: If you don't get the job, they'll stay in touch	63
Myth #6: Recruiters are résumé wizards	63
Myth #7: The recruiter negotiates your salary with the employer	64
Checking Out Job Fairs	64
Brick-and-mortar career fairs	64
Virtual career fairs	65
Chapter 4: Tackling Common Financial Issues	69
Filing for Unemployment Benefits	70
Getting Your Financial House in Order	70
Motivating yourself to get started	70
Focusing on the fundamentals	71
Tapping your financial resources	73
Financing Any Additional Education and Training	73
Paying for your education	74
Avoiding additional debt	76
Applying for student financial aid	76

Applying for grants and scholarships.....	78
Leveraging tax breaks to lower costs.....	78
Writing Off Your Job-Hunt Expenses.....	79
Accounting for Social Security Benefits Reductions When You Work ...	80
Taking Advantage of Additional Public Benefits	81
Providing Benefits for Yourself.....	82
Planning for retirement.....	82
Getting health insurance.....	83

Part II: Launching Your Job Search..... 85

Chapter 5: Scoping Out Promising Job Markets 87

Exploring the Possibilities and Gathering Ideas via Job Boards.....	87
Checking out the big boards	88
Combing niche job boards.....	90
Digging up more niche job boards	91
Exploring job boards for people 50 and older	92
Looking into government jobs	93
Going to college . . . to find a job.....	95
Harnessing the power of apps and websites.....	96
Taking extra precautions with online job postings.....	97
Investigating Opportunities by Category	98
Focusing on the hottest industries.....	98
Narrowing your focus to the hottest occupations	100
Considering positions you may have overlooked	101
Contemplating part-time jobs	102
Pounding the pavement for seasonal jobs	102
Finding holiday jobs	104
Going green with eco-friendly work	105
Taking your job search on the road	106
Feeling at home with home-based jobs.....	106
Barking up the right tree: Jobs for animal lovers	109
Furthering Your Research.....	110
Digging Up Leads in Lesser-Known Markets	111
Seeking jobs in small businesses	111
Finding openings at start-ups.....	112
Pursuing positions with nonprofits.....	113

Chapter 6: Joining the Growing Ranks of the Self-Employed 115

Working on Contract.....	116
Getting sold on the idea.....	116
Lining up contract gigs.....	117
Running your contracting operation as a business.....	118
Avoiding common pitfalls.....	119



- Launching Your Own Business 120
 - Managing your expectations 121
 - Coming up with a business idea 122
 - Getting help 125
 - Writing a solid business plan 127
 - Financing your enterprise..... 128
- Becoming a Social Entrepreneur 131
 - Making a nonprofit start-up to-do list 132
 - Getting help: Organizations that support social entrepreneurs..... 134
- Exploring Franchising Opportunities 135
 - Don't rush in 136
 - Do a self-assessment 136
 - Accept that you don't call the shots 137
 - Do your due diligence 137
 - Be sure you have enough money..... 138
 - Consider getting a loan 139
 - Check out additional resources 139

Chapter 7: Dealing with Special Circumstances 141

- Looking for Civilian Work as a Veteran 141
 - Getting help through American Corporate Partners..... 142
 - Checking out job sites for veterans 143
 - Confronting the unique challenges of a female veteran 144
 - Knowing where to look 144
- Looking for Work When You Have a Disability..... 145
 - Tracking down assistance 146
 - Considering how employment may affect your disability benefits..... 148
- Relaunching a Career Placed on Hold..... 149
- Working Abroad in Retirement 151

***Part III: Marketing Yourself* 155**

Chapter 8: Rehabbing Your Résumé and Cover Letter 157

- Constructing a Winning Résumé 157
 - Covering the six essential qualities of a promising candidate..... 158
 - Revealing the seven secrets to making your résumé pop 160
 - Avoiding the top seven résumé turnoffs..... 165
 - Airbrushing your résumé..... 167
 - Tailoring your résumé to specific openings and circumstances 168
 - Filming a video résumé 170
 - Knowing where to go for résumé-writing help..... 172

Writing a Killer Cover Letter	172
Drafting your cover letter	173
Fine-tuning your cover letter.....	174
Avoiding common mistakes	175
Lining Up Your References in Advance	176

Chapter 9: Creating a Strong Online Presence 179

Recognizing the Importance of Building a Personal Brand.....	180
Launching Your Own Website	181
Setting a goal	182
Choosing a domain name.....	183
Registering your domain and choosing a hosting provider.....	184
Building your website/blog.....	185
Fine-tuning your site.....	186
Obtaining a Branded Email Address	187
Acquiring Social Media Street Smarts.....	188
Creating a profile.....	189
Practicing online etiquette	189
Following companies you're interested in.....	190
Protecting and repairing your online reputation.....	191
Protecting your privacy	193
Engaging with the community.....	194
Harnessing the Power of Search Engines	194
Tweeting Your Way to Your Next Job.....	195
Registering for a Twitter account	195
Building an attractive profile.....	196
Brushing up on Twitter etiquette	196
Focusing on industries, companies, or professions.....	197
Plugging into job feeds	197
Following the right Twitter users	198
Tapping the Power and Reach of Facebook.....	199
Creating a Facebook account	200
Editing your Facebook profile	200
Checking your privacy settings.....	201
Following the organizations that interest you	202
Posting status updates and comments	202
Enhancing Facebook with specialized apps	203

Chapter 10: Marketing Yourself on LinkedIn 205

Knowing How LinkedIn Can Help You in Your Job Search	206
Putting Yourself on LinkedIn.....	207
Building an irresistible LinkedIn profile.....	208
Checking and adjusting your privacy settings.....	218
Getting Connected on LinkedIn	219
Connecting with people you know	220

Giving and getting recommendations and endorsements.....	221
Getting involved in LinkedIn Groups.....	223
Following companies and individuals.....	225
Requesting a LinkedIn introduction.....	225
Finding Job Postings on LinkedIn.....	227

Chapter 11: Clearing the Application Hurdle 229

Taking a Selective Approach.....	230
Submitting Applications Online and Off.....	231
Reading and following directions.....	232
Handling salary boxes.....	233
Sneaking your application past screening technologies.....	234
Acing federal job applications.....	234
Mastering alternative ways to apply.....	236
Applying at hiring kiosks.....	237
Following Up after Submitting Your Application.....	238
Thinking before you speak.....	238
Making the call.....	239
Composing a follow-up email.....	240

Part IV: Taking the Stage: The Interview and Its Aftermath..... 241

Chapter 12: Prepping for a Job Interview 243

Knowing What Interviewers Are Looking For.....	243
Doing Your Homework Before the Interview.....	246
Researching the company.....	246
Preparing and rehearsing your story.....	248
Getting in character: Thinking like an expert or consultant.....	250
Forgetting about your age.....	251
Mentioning any mentoring you've done.....	251
Preparing to Answer and Ask Questions.....	252
Answering general questions.....	252
Responding to tough questions for people over 50.....	255
Thinking over career and industry questions.....	256
Answering the salary question.....	257
Preparing a few questions of your own.....	258
Getting Comfortable in Your Own Skin.....	261
Practicing toward perfection.....	261
Exploring other ways to hone your interview skills.....	262

Chapter 13: Acing Your Job Interview 263

Making a Positive Impression.....	263
Feeling your best.....	264
Getting groomed and dressed.....	264

Arriving early.....	265
Pumping yourself up just prior to the interview	265
Beginning the interview at the door.....	265
Fine-tuning your delivery.....	266
Shaping up with posture and body language.....	267
Interviewing with a younger hiring manager	268
Avoiding the Most Serious Missteps.....	269
Managing Alternative Interview Formats	270
Acing the telephone interview	270
Exceling in Skype or video interviews.....	272
Shining in automated interviews	274
Following Up Post Interview	275
Sending a thank-you note.....	275
Checking in when you haven't heard a thing.....	276
Rejected? Conducting a Postmortem.....	277

Chapter 14: Negotiating for What You Want 279

Evaluating Monetary Compensation: Salary and Benefits.....	280
Researching salaries.....	280
Paying special attention to starting pay	281
Assessing health insurance coverage	282
Comparing retirement plans	283
Counting vacation and sick days	283
Considering bonuses.....	284
Prospecting for other perks	285
Exploring Flexible Work Options.....	286
Taking a look at telecommuting.....	288
Focusing on flextime.....	289
Considering a compressed schedule	290
Jumping into job sharing	290
Seeking more flexible jobs	290
Negotiating a flexible arrangement.....	291
Avoiding common drawbacks.....	292
Looking at Special Considerations for Women.....	293
Settling on a Starting Date.....	295
Honing Your Negotiating Skills and Strategies	296

***Part V: The Part of Tens* 299**

Chapter 15: Ten Great Jobs for Workers Over 50 301

Patient Advocate	302
Translator/Interpreter	302
Certified Financial Planner	302
Home Modification Pro	303

Fitness Trainer	303
Massage Therapist	304
Eco-Landscaper	304
Independent Contractor	305
Accountant/Financial Manager	305
Dietitian/Nutritionist	306
Chapter 16: Ten Common Interview Questions Answered	307
What Are Your Weaknesses?	307
Why Should We Hire You?	308
Why Do You Want to Work Here?	308
What Are Your Goals?	309
Why Did You Leave, or Do You Want to Leave, Your Current Job?.....	309
When Were You Happiest at Your Job?	310
What Can You Do for Us That Someone Else Can't?	310
What Are Three Positives Things Your Previous Bosses Would Say About You?	311
What Are Your Salary Requirements?	312
Are You a Team Player?	312
Chapter 17: Ten Steps for Career Changers.	313
Understand What's Behind Your Desire for a Change.....	314
Get Your Life in Order.....	315
Dream Big, but Be Practical	315
Volunteer or Moonlight	316
Find a Mentor	316
Keep Your Hand Out of the Cookie Jar	316
Be Prepared for Setbacks	317
Do Your Homework.....	317
Don't Lock Yourself into a Must-Have Salary.....	318
Do Something Every Day to Work Toward Your Goal	318
<i>Index</i>	321

Introduction

Welcome to *Getting the Job You Want After 50 For Dummies*, your guide to finding rewarding employment when you're over 50. This book supplies you with what you need to know to find a job today. From building an online presence to revitalizing your résumé to negotiating a salary, this book has you covered, from cover to cover!

Many reasons may have brought you to this book. Perhaps you are just coming back into the workforce or have been laid off and need to find work. You could be looking to make a career change or want to pursue your passion and find more meaning in your work. You may be relocating, or want a job that gives you more flexibility.

The fact that people are living longer, healthier lives opens the doors to possibilities of a variety of work you may want to pursue. Think of it as a bonus chapter of your life. It's a time when, perhaps, the big-ticket items are behind you — paying for children's educations maybe, or a mortgage — and you're free to seek work that's more meaningful and, if you're lucky, not so focused on the size of the paycheck.

Whatever your reason, you want a job, and you want it now.

About This Book

The job market has changed considerably since your first job-hunt, as has the process for finding and landing a job. In the past, you filled out paper applications, printed and sent résumés and cover letters, and networked over the phone and in person to find the right job. Those things are all still necessary — no matter what type of job you're seeking. But mostly they're now done online, thus requiring some technology know-how. In addition, your ego could feel the sting of having to prove yourself to employers who may be half your age and not nearly as qualified as you.

This book provides information on things you may not have a lot of practice in (such as online applications) or things you may need help updating (like interviewing skills). I'm over 50. I get it. It's tough out there. But, with some guidance, you can attain your goals.

Think of this book as your road map to get to where you want to be. You hold in your hands all the direction and resources to help you find and land the job you want, along with instructions on how to use the latest technologies to your advantage. I explain everything from how to bring your résumé into the 21st century to how to network and market yourself online so you're an attractive target for recruiters and employers nationwide.

Within this book, you may note that I followed certain conventions. I often use **boldface** text to label bullet items and other content, so you can easily skim for the information you need. *Italicized* words and phrases represent unfamiliar terminology I define in context. Some website addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an e-book, you've got it easy — just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

Foolish Assumptions

The fact that you're reading this book tells me that you either don't have a job or don't have the job you want. Perhaps you're struggling to figure out where and how to look for jobs and how to make yourself an attractive candidate. Other assumptions I've made about you include the following:

- ✔ You're discouraged or getting discouraged that employers and recruiters aren't beating a path to your door and leaving job offers on your voicemail.
- ✔ You think employers are reticent to hire someone your age.
- ✔ You haven't updated your résumé since the last time you landed a job. You have skills and experience you don't even realize you have; worse yet, they're not listed on your résumé!
- ✔ You could use some help using Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social media and networking tools to optimize your job search.
- ✔ Your job interview skills are rusty, and you really need a refresher course, especially in how to deal with Skype and other new video interview formats.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, icons in the margins highlight different types of information that call out for your attention. Here are the icons you'll see and a brief description of each.



I want you to remember everything you read in this book, but if you can't quite do that, then remember the important points flagged with this icon.



Tips provide insider insight. When you're looking for a better, faster way to do something, check out these tips.



"Whoa!" This icon appears when you need to hit the brakes and think twice before moving forward.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the abundance of information and guidance on finding a job, acing your job interviews, and negotiating a salary and benefits that have you whistling on your way to work, which happens to be in your home, because you negotiated a telecommuting arrangement, you also get access to even more help and information at Dummies.com (www.dummies.com). Go to www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/gettingthejobyouwantafter50 for a free cheat sheet that accompanies this book. It brings you up-to-speed on job-search fundamentals, job interview guidelines, negotiating tips, and much more. Think of it as this book in a nutshell.

You can also head to www.dummies.com/extras/gettingthejobyouwantafter50 for a few free additional articles that I think you'll find helpful as you begin your journey to the job you want. Here, you find out how to garner contract work through social media, write a knock-out cover letter, identify interview tricks and traps, and discover ten personal branding best practices.

When you're ready to begin your search, start with www.aarp.org/work, with the information and tools you need to help you stay current, competitive, and connected in today's workplace. Features include these and much more:

- ✓ A job board
- ✓ A list of 285+ employers who have signed a pledge committing to value and hire experienced workers
- ✓ Résumé models and tips
- ✓ Webinars with experts on technology skills for the workplace
- ✓ 21st-century job search
- ✓ Guidance on what to do when you lose your job

To explore all kinds of new possibilities that make the most of your interests and expertise, check out AARP's Life Reimagined (www.lifereimagined.org), a personalized, interactive website.

Also look for my books *What's Next? Finding Your Passion and Your Dream Job in Your Forties, Fifties, and Beyond* (Berkley Trade/AARP) and *Great Jobs for Everyone 50+: Finding Work That Keeps You Happy and Healthy . . . And Pays the Bills* (Wiley/AARP) to further help put you on the path to finding your next job.

Where to Go from Here

I structured this book so you could use it in a couple of ways. To get the most out of it, read it from cover to cover, so you don't miss out on any valuable information and insight. You may also use it as a job seeker's desk reference; when you need to know something about a specific job-search topic, simply look it up in the Table of Contents or the Index and flip to the designated page to find the answer.

I do recommend, however, that you read Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 5 from start to finish or at least skim them, so you know what's covered in those chapters for future reference. Chapter 1 opens your mind to the possibilities. Chapter 2 helps you inventory your skills and experience and plug gaps that may be holding you back. And Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of networking. Chapter 5 introduces you to a gaggle of job-search websites where you can start your search. Of course, the other chapters are useful, too, but these serve as a good springboard for starting your search.

As you embark on your journey to find the right job for you, keep in mind that you're a unique individual with skills, experience, and insight that nobody else on the planet has. There's a place for you in all of this — a job that you're uniquely qualified to perform. You simply need to discover it within yourself and in the workplace.

Part I

Getting Started with Finding a Job After 50

getting started
with

**finding a
job after
50**



Visit www.dummies.com for free content that helps you learn more and do more.

In this part . . .

- ✔ Figure out what you really want out of a job, in addition to a paycheck and bennies, set a course to get from point A to point B, and discover proven strategies for finding and landing the job you want.
- ✔ Recognize the skills that employers value most, take inventory of the skills you have, and discover free and affordable ways to build the skills you're missing.
- ✔ Network your way to your next job by leveraging the power of your personal and professional networks to find jobs, get the scoop about prospective employers, and perhaps even find an inside track to the job you want.
- ✔ Deal with the financial issues that commonly accompany unemployment and job searches, write off job-hunt expenses on your taxes, maximize your social security benefits, bankroll your own benefits package, and more.

Chapter 1

Scoping Out Your Prospects

In This Chapter

- ▶ Understanding current workplace realities
 - ▶ Figuring out what you want . . . and want to do
 - ▶ Finding your place in the workplace
 - ▶ Retooling your job search strategies for the 21st century
-

Welcome jobseekers! Finding a job, at any age, takes work and dedication. Some older jobseekers assume that employers would rather outsource jobs to cheaper workers overseas or hire younger, less experienced workers for lower wages. Although these suspicions are confirmed by the hiring practices of some organizations, current studies show that employers are increasingly willing to consider older candidates and that age alone isn't necessarily the reason some employers are unwilling to consider older candidates.

In this chapter, I help you shift your attitude about job hunting from one of apprehension to one of hope and possibility and show you a few simple ways to rev up your job-search mojo to today's new workplace reality for 50-plus jobseekers.

Recognizing the Need for and Value of Experienced Workers

The times really are a-changin' and that's good news for your job-hunting prospects. Whether you want to work in an office job, teach yoga, or head up a company, more employers are starting to realize that hiring workers age 50 and older is good for business. More and more employers are discovering the value of experienced workers. Unfortunately for 50-plus job seekers, the fact that demand for experienced workers is on the rise is a well-kept secret. Realizing that employers need you is an important first step in the process of finding and landing the job you want. It gives you the enthusiasm and

confidence to set out on what may be a long and arduous journey. In this section, I reveal the reasons the demand for 50-plus workers is rising to invigorate you for the journey ahead and remind you of just how valuable you are to employers who need your skills, talents, and experience.



The job search can be disheartening for anyone, regardless of age. And if that's what you're feeling, never show it to a prospective employer. Always highlight the value you have to offer in every job search communiqué you send out. If you need a confidence lift, take some time and review all your previous achievements.

Noting a change in the current workforce

Many CEOs are increasingly aware that they need to have 50-plus workers on board. As the population ages, the workforce is aging right along with it. U.S. employees 65 and older now outnumber teenagers in the workforce for the first time since 1948. In 2002, workers 50 and older comprised 24.6 percent of the workforce. By 2012, they represented 32.3 percent. And by 2022, they're projected to be 35.4 percent of the total workforce.

This emerging trend isn't likely to change anytime soon. More than one in three workers age 45 and older expects to retire at age 66 or older, compared to just over one in five ten years ago. Moreover, 72 percent of workers ages 45 to 74 envision working in retirement.

Employers are getting worried about their future workforce. In a recent survey by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), one-third of HR professionals predicted that the loss of talent resulting from retirements or departures of workers age 55 and older would be either a problem or a crisis for their organization in the next six to ten years. The Manpower Group 2014 Talent Shortage Survey found that 40 percent of U.S. employers reported difficulty in filling jobs.

Seeing experienced workers as an affordable option

The old concerns that hiring someone our age would probably be too pricey are being debunked. Contrary to common perception, workers age 50-plus don't cost significantly more than younger workers, according to the report "A Business Case for Workers Age 50+: A Look at the Value of Experience 2015," commissioned by AARP and conducted by Aon Hewitt.

Shifting trends in reward and benefit programs mean that adding more age 50-plus talent to a workforce results in only minimal increases in hard dollar total labor costs. These trends include a broad move by large employers to performance-based versus tenure-based compensation, the decline in traditional benefit pension plans, and the fact that healthcare costs are increasing at a slower rate for older workers compared to younger workers.

Meanwhile, in today's global and fast-paced workplace, firms often don't have the time to squander while a younger worker ramps up skills and knowledge. Companies are slowly realizing that to stay competitive, it's smarter to seek out and hire experienced workers. Trust me, you're on the cutting edge of a sweeping change in the demographics of the workplace. And it's being led by the boomer generation.

You may think I'm just looking through rose-colored glasses. But recent surveys show that companies are realizing that it's strategically smart to pay more attention to recruiting and retaining workers age 50 and older. When organizations need someone to step in and do the job right now and solve an existing problem, it's the experienced worker they're eager to hire.

That's what the AARP report unveiled. Findings from a 2014 SHRM survey of HR professionals also back up that trend. SHRM's *The Aging Workforce* survey also found that two-thirds of HR executives canvassed reported that their organization employed older workers who retired from other organizations or careers before joining their organization. Gold stars all around.

The *Aging Workforce* survey, part of a three-year national Aging Workforce Initiative by SHRM and the SHRM Foundation and funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, also found that 61 percent of the 1,900 randomly selected SHRM HR professionals indicated their organization had attempted to capitalize on and incorporate the experience of older workers in recruitment and retention strategies. (Kudos to them.) The top advantages of older workers were having more work experience (cited by 77 percent of respondents), being more mature/professional (71 percent), and having a stronger work ethic (70 percent). (But, of course.)

Capitalizing on lower turnover

Employers find that workers age 50 and older are more loyal and aren't as likely as younger workers to job jump. And that lower staff turnover benefits the bottom line. The costs of high turnover are tangible. Finding, hiring, and training a new employee is a costly venture, and it becomes even more costly when that well-trained employee decides to jump ship and work for a competitor.

Retaining older workers pays dividends, too!

Depending on your position and industry, the total cost of replacing you can range from thousands of dollars to as much as one-and-a-half times your annual salary. Retaining older workers reduces the one-time costs of turnover, which range from \$7,400 to \$31,700 or

more per employee, according to AARP's most recent survey. This cost includes the time and money that go hand-in-hand with recruiting and advertising your job, bringing people in for an interview, and training a new hire.

Plus, it's hard to put a price on the institutional knowledge that goes out the door with a departing employee. Now tack on the stress that managers and coworkers must shoulder to make up for the work that falls between the cracks when an employee leaves. And, finally, toss in the toll of lost morale that accompanies the departure of a valued team member. Now the employer has a serious problem. And that's clearly a big incentive for hiring a worker over 50. Older workers often anchor a team.

Harnessing the power of highly engaged workers

Aon Hewitt data show that older workers, in general, *love* their jobs more than younger workers do. Yes, we're more engaged than our younger counterparts. Perhaps we're grateful for the jobs in a way that someone new to the workforce has yet to learn to value and appreciate.

For example, 65 percent of employees ages 55 and up in large companies are "engaged," compared to fewer than 60 percent of employees under age 45. Although this gap may seem small, it represents a statistically significant difference in engagement that can have a noticeable impact on business outcomes, according to the AARP report.

In addition to being the most highly engaged age group in the labor force, workers age 55 and older are also the most motivated. A whopping 81 percent of workers age 55 and up are "motivated" — meaning they say that they exert extra effort and contribute more than is normally required in their job — compared to 76 percent of their age 25 to 34 peers. Talk about selling points for older workers on the job hunt!

Reaping additional benefits

In addition to all those wonderful attributes I've already mentioned, older workers typically have the following:

- ✔ An ability to make quick decisions and solve problems
- ✔ Greater maturity and professionalism
- ✔ Superior communication skills, both written and oral
- ✔ The ability to serve as mentors
- ✔ The critical qualities of reliability and dependability
- ✔ More knowledge, wisdom, and overall life experience

Shoulders back. You're valued. Put all this positive jujitsu in your back pocket and never forget how much you have to offer on the job.

Tallying the Benefits of Staying in the Workforce

To get you even more fired up about your job search, let me remind you of five money-wise reasons to stay in the workforce as long as you can:

- ✔ **The more years you contribute to your retirement plans, the better off you'll be down the road.** You'll be able to delay taking Social Security, which will dramatically boost your eventual payout. Start collecting at age 70, and your monthly check will be 32 percent higher than if you begin benefits at 66 and 76 percent more than if you start taking benefits at 62 (when most people do).
- ✔ **The longer you work, the longer you delay tapping retirement funds, which can continue to grow.**
- ✔ **Working longer provides income to pay for health insurance until you're eligible for Medicare at 65.** Fewer employers are offering their retired workers medical benefits, and those who do are ramping up the amount retirees must contribute to the cost of coverage. Even better, you may find a job that offers you access to a health plan.
- ✔ **Money aside, you may want to keep working to maintain a sense of well-being.** For people over 50, being engaged, not just involved, is important, according to a report by The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College. Similarly, when asked about their life and careers,

75 percent of people in their forties and fifties said they want to make their life more meaningful, while 82 percent said they want to give back more, according to a study commissioned by Life Reimagined, which was created by AARP to help people with midlife transitions. Nearly 30 percent plan to make a career change in the next five years; top reasons include having the opportunity to learn more and giving more back to the community. Work gives you a sense of purpose and of feeling connected and needed. It makes you feel relevant. Pinning a dollar figure to that is difficult, but it's real.

- ✔ **Work sharpens the mind.** Researchers from the RAND Center for the Study of Aging and the University of Michigan published a study showing that cognitive performance levels decline faster in countries that have younger retirement ages. What? Brain cells dying from lack of use? You bet. It's the old "Use it or lose it" axiom. Many aging experts say that to stay healthy, older adults have to learn new things, stay active socially, and exercise.

Bottom line: We're living longer, healthier lives. As a result, we're staying longer in the workforce because we can and often because we need to, in order to have a financially secure retirement.

Reorienting Yourself to Today's Job-Search Realities

What's new since your last job hunt? If it's been a while, you'll quickly find that technology has made job searching easier in some ways but more complex than ever in others. Although the Internet has improved access to openings, it has also increased competition for those same openings. Typically, an average of more than 250 résumés are submitted for every job posting, and the first résumé appears within 200 seconds (just over 3 minutes) of the posting "going live," according to online job-search expert Susan P. Joyce, publisher of WorkCoachCafe.com.

While job-search sites make finding jobs easier, online applications and automated screening technologies pose additional obstacles to getting past the gatekeepers. According to a study by job-match site TheLadders (www.theladders.com), many companies use talent-management software to screen résumés, weeding out up to 50 percent of applications before anyone ever looks at a résumé or cover letter.



Little wonder then that a recent CareerXroads survey shows that only 15 percent of positions were filled through online job boards. So visiting job boards and applying for jobs is probably not the best use of your time, even though you feel like you have to. Most jobs are either filled internally or through

referrals. Yes, the old-fashioned way. In fact, only about half of the roughly 5 million jobs now open in the United States are ever advertised publicly. Employers still prefer to hire people they know either directly or indirectly through a referral. In studies of many different employers going back to 2001, employee referrals are the top source of people hired into a company — not a job posting. In fact, employee referrals provided more than 55 percent of the hires in one of the studies.

In other words, employers want to hire someone who has already been vetted in some way, which can save a lot of hassle and cost of the hiring process and of replacing people who don't work out, even if they looked great on paper and interviewed like pros. Employers love it when someone who already works for the organization can vouch for the person. And the employee making the referral often has some skin in the game, so to speak. Many employers pop a bonus reward of up to \$1,000 or more for referring someone who's hired and does a good job in the first few months on the job.

Does this mean that applying for a job on job boards isn't worthwhile? Not at all! Scanning the boards gives you a sense of who's hiring, what types of openings are out there, and salary ranges. But it does mean that other approaches, such as networking and marketing yourself, may ultimately forge a better route to landing a job. For more about networking, see Chapter 3. In Part III, you find out how to market yourself and create your own personal brand.

Deciding What (Else) You Want Out of Work

For my book *AARP's Love Your Job: The New Rules for Career Happiness*, I interviewed hundreds of workers about what made them love their jobs. Interestingly, their paychecks aren't generally what get them juiced about going to work. Most people say they're motivated by the people they work with, the opportunity to keep learning and growing, or the mission or cause of their employer's services or the products it makes. Sometimes they say they love the travel opportunities. So don't get locked into a must-have salary. When searching for jobs and comparing offers, be sure to account for other benefits, including the following:

- ✔ **Flexible workday:** Being able to work from home or having flexible hours or a compressed schedule is a biggie. It comes down to being treated as a responsible adult and weaving work more seamlessly into the fabric of your life. And that may be getting easier to achieve. A Bank of America Merrill Lynch survey of 650 human resources executives recently found that half of employers are willing to offer flexible arrangements, such as working part-time or job sharing, to their most skilled and experienced workers.

- ✔ **A healthy work-life balance:** Three in five people interested in a second career midlife say it's very important that the job leaves free time for things they want to do, such as travel, education, or engagement in other activities they enjoy, according to a report by Encore.org, a non-profit organization that's building a movement to tap the skills and experience of those in midlife and beyond to improve communities. Indeed, many of those interested in encore careers appear eager to mix fewer hours of work per week with more years of work in total. Finding more flexibility may make working a few more years more palatable.
- ✔ **Meaningful work:** More than 25 million Americans 50 to 70 years old are eager to share their skills, passions, and expertise in encore careers that address social needs, typically in education, healthcare, human services, and the environment, according to a 2014 study by Encore.org and Penn Schoen Berland. Of those 25 million, more than 4.5 million are already working for social impact. Another 21 million are ready to join them within the next five years.
- ✔ **Opportunities to interact with others and stay productive:** Human beings are hard-wired to create, produce, and collaborate, and rewarding work provides opportunities to remain active and productive. A Pew Research Center survey found that working for non-financial reasons, such as job enjoyment or the desire to be productive, increases with age.
- ✔ **Competitive benefits:** A 2012 AARP/SHRM survey of workers age 50 and up suggested older workers place significance on having competitive benefits and flexible work arrangements. When these workers consider a job offer, health insurance, retirement savings plans, and paid time off benefits play an important role in their decisions. For example, approximately eight in ten workers age 50 and older consider the availability of benefits such as health insurance (82 percent); a pension, 401(k), or other retirement plan (77 percent); and paid time off (80 percent) to be "very" or "somewhat" important considerations in the decision to accept a job.
- ✔ **Learning opportunities:** Boomers tend to be curious, eager, and adventuresome. They're not geared to be couch potatoes passively absorbing entertainment. As such, they value learning opportunities both on the job and through employer-sponsored continuing education programs.

Employers are increasingly tuning into these incentives. So while they worry that they may not be able to meet your salary expectations, they're discovering that 50-plus workers are attracted to more than pay. So employers are increasingly offering such non-financial perks as flexible work schedules, telecommuting options, and training and education opportunities.