

*Suggestions to employers...
in regard to*

HIRING OLDER WOMEN

*Older workers
(1951)*

✓
“Arbitrary age
limits deprive us
of some of our
best workers.”

Harry S. Truman.

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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

MAURICE J. TOBIN, *Secretary*

WOMEN'S BUREAU

FRIEDA S. MILLER, *Director*

Washington: 1951

Our Changing Population

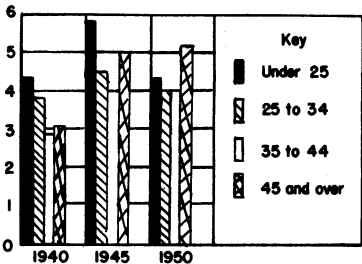
As a people, our Nation is steadily growing older. People are living longer. A larger proportion are 45 years of age and over.

The balance between men and women has also been changing. Among persons 45 and over, there are now nearly a million more women than men.

Our Changing Labor Force

Older women form a larger proportion of the total labor force than ever before. In all age groups women workers increased sharply during World War II. After the war, the total number of women workers and the proportion they formed of the total labor force began to drop; but the number of women workers 45 to 64 years of age continued to rise, and the proportion they formed of the total labor force was higher in 1950 than it was even during the peak of the war.

WOMEN WORKERS, BY AGE GROUP
(in millions)



Our Reservoir of Womanpower

Millions of older women, who could work and would like to work, are not now employed. In this vast reserve of womanpower are many women with various kinds and levels of training who were formerly employed and are now free to return to employment. In the broad age span 45 to 64 years, there are 10½ million women not now employed, among whom are

- women with recent work experience;*
- women with early work experience on which to build;*
- women, married or single, with dependents;*
- women whose children are grown up or in school;*
- women who want to increase the family income;*
- women with unutilized skills and abilities.*

They need what all new workers need:

- careful placement counseling.*

Jobs that do not require heavy lifting or constant standing are indicated.

- proper orientation and training.*

Instruction in safety, suitable clothing, work surroundings, and work relationships is important in orienting the worker.

Refresher training directed toward renewing old skills can aid the worker in resuming her former type of work.

Training in a new skill can provide the worker with ability to perform a specific job.

- economic security.*

Bringing older women workers into employee benefit plans is one way to strengthen their confidence in the future, and thus free their minds for work.

Information as to any social security benefits for which they are eligible, and how to qualify for them, is important—especially to women who lack seniority rights.

What Is Known About Older Workers in General

Stability, responsibility

Assets of older workers, both men and women, noted by Ross McFarland in the Harvard Business Review, include fewer industrial accidents, less job shifting, a keen sense of loyalty, stability, and an attitude of responsibility. Older workers do best in jobs that do not depend too much on speed or muscular strength. Once they are suitably placed, older workers tend to be more reliable and efficient, according to Joseph W. Willard, of the Department of National Health and Welfare, Ottawa, Canada. Loss of productive capacity with age is slight and is usually offset by other assets.

Learning ability

Throughout maturity people can learn nearly as rapidly as teen-agers; many older workers learn more selectively, more accurately, and with better grasp of relationships, points out Dr. Edward J. Stieglitz.

Competence

Arbitrary age limits are undesirable, says the National Association of Manufacturers. "... the only yardstick for getting and holding a job should be qualifications for the job and ability to perform it," comments John M. Convery of the NAM Industrial Relations Division. "Actually, the older workers are the cream of the crop."

What Is Known About Older Women Workers

Less absenteeism, illness

Workers 45 and over in 109 manufacturing plants studied by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, were absent less often than younger workers and had fewer injuries. The older workers, however, recovered more slowly from injuries. Among the 1,309 women workers in this study, the percentage of absence was lower for the small groups 50 years of age and over than for all ages. This held true both for absences from all causes and absences caused by illness.

Endurance

The woman worker who is mature and in good health "has great reserves of endurance and recovers rapidly from fatigue," finds Dr. Lydia G. Giberson, Chief Psychiatrist, Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., New York.

Special skills

Many mature women have skills and experience in special fields: For instance, in public relations, community organization, church work, public speaking, interior decorating, dress designing, household management, child guidance, nutrition, first aid, hand-crafts, group recreation.

Some have had experience in occupations such as nursing and clerical work where more workers are urgently needed. Others are well equipped for technical, administrative, or personnel work.

If You Are an Employer, You Can

—find out the facts for yourself.

Analyze your production records, by age group.

—study relative costs under various insurance and pension plans.

Under some recent pension plans, hiring older workers does not add to the employer's costs.

—keep an open mind.

An arbitrary upper age limit on hiring is unnecessary. Merit is what counts on the job.

—write to the Women's Bureau for further information:

have 1950 HANDBOOK OF FACTS FOR WOMEN WORKERS. Bulletin 237. 1950. 50 pp.

OLDER WOMEN WORKERS. 1951. 5 pp. Mimeo. D-1.

Five charts on older women workers. 1951. 8" x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

WOMEN'S JOBS—ADVANCE AND GROWTH. Bulletin 232. 1949. 88 pp.

WOMEN'S BUREAU

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