

NAM

HUMAN RELATIONS
PERSONNEL POLICIES
HEALTH AND SAFETY
LABOR-MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

Employee Relations Department

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MANUFACTURERS • 2 EAST 48th STREET • NEW YORK 17, N. Y.

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Older workers (1957)

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The NAM Urges Broader Acceptance of Older Job Seekers

Over many years past the National Association of Manufacturers has been engaged in continuous promotional activities to highlight the worth of mature individuals as employees.

Some idea of the progress being made -- so far as acceptance of the older worker is concerned -- is indicated by comparing two NAM membership surveys, as conducted in 1939 and 1951. In both instances employers were asked to rate their older employees as superior, equal, or not equal to younger employees on the basis of Work Performance, Attendance, Safety and Work Attitude. The 1939 survey had 40 years as the dividing line between younger and older workers. In the 1951 study the dividing line was advanced to 45 years, in view of prevailing practice -- a fact significant in itself. The 1939 study covered some 2500 companies; the 1951 survey, about 3600 companies.

Briefly, the comparison indicated that in work performance, while 84.6% of employers in 1939 considered the older worker was equal or better, the figure had advanced to 92.7% by 1951.

The improvement in attendance was even more marked. In 1939, 82.5% of employers rated the older employees as equal or better than the entire group, while in 1951, 98.1% said that the oldsters were as regular or more regular in coming to work.

As for safety, 86.2% of the 1939 employers gave their older people an equal or better status in avoiding accidents. Twelve years later this figure had risen to 97.4%. In summary:

Older Workers Compared With Younger Workers

| <u>Factor</u> | <u>Equal or Superior %</u> | | <u>Not Equal %</u> | |
|------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | <u>1939</u> | <u>1951</u> | <u>1939</u> | <u>1951</u> |
| Work Performance | 84.6 | 92.7 | 15.4 | 7.3 |
| Attendance | 82.5 | 98.1 | 17.5 | 1.9 |
| Safety Records | 86.2 | 97.4 | 13.8 | 2.6 |
| Work Attitude | 94.8 | 99.2 | 5.2 | 0.8 |

The foregoing facts find policy support in NAM's official position on "Employment Practices for Older Workers."

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"Older workers represent countless years of rich and seasoned experience, judgment and stability, and constitute an immensely valuable asset in the nation's work force.

Employers are urged to observe voluntary hiring practices which give consideration to skills and abilities rather than to any arbitrary age factor. The problem of determining proper retirement ages requires continuing study since conditions vary with companies, jobs and individuals."