

OLDER WORKERS IN THE WORKPLACE

Myths

vs.

Facts

Responsible, dependable, loyal, focused and organized – valuable qualities older workers can bring to the job. Employers – hesitant about hiring older workers? Jobseekers – not sure about starting a new career? Debunking the myths will get you thinking differently.

MYTH #1

Training older workers is a wasted investment because they will not stay on the job for long.



FACT: In 2013, more than one-third of Connecticut's workforce (nearly 663,000 people) included workers age 50+. The age of retirement is rising and the speed at which technology is changing has increased. This means that a 55-year-old employee receiving technical training will likely still be on the job when the technology is obsolete. Equipping mature workers with skill upgrades makes sense.

MYTH #2

Older workers are less flexible and adaptable.

FACT: While older workers are more likely to question change, they are equally adaptable once they realize the reason for the change. Older workers offer wisdom gained from their own life and work-related experiences.

MYTH #3

Older workers are not as productive as younger workers.



FACT: Productivity tends to rise as workers grow older, due to their increased experience, dependability and capacity for better judgment. Plus, the experience they bring often results in significant cost savings to a company.

MYTH #4

Older workers take off more sick days.



FACT: According to a recent study, workers over age 45 call in an average of 3.1 days per year, compared to workers aged 17-44, who take off an average of 3.8 days. Mature employees are also less likely to be injured on the job because they minimize risks.

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Helping jobseekers and employers with their workforce needs is our business. Visit us at www.ct.gov/dol for an overview of services or meet with a representative at your local American Job Center. Center locations can be found at www.ctdol.state.ct.us/ContactInfo/CTWorks/Directory.htm or contact *Infoline* at www.211ct.org or by dialing 2-1-1 (within Connecticut).

MYTH #5

Older workers don't learn new skills as quickly as their younger counterparts.

FACT: The cliché that “you can't teach an old dog new tricks” is just that: a stereotype. Many older adults apply their experience and wisdom to learn new skills quickly.

MYTH #6

Older workers take off more time for family responsibilities than younger people.

FACT: While some older adults have family care giving responsibilities, on average, younger adults request more time off for children's illnesses, appointments and school events.

MYTH #7

Older workers lack an attention to detail.



FACT: Older workers have a unique sense of pride in a job well done. This quality can be a rare commodity in the workplace where some employees simply want to put in their time at work and leave. An older worker's sense of pride in the final product often means they are willing to stay until the job is done, and focus on the details to ensure the highest quality.

MYTH #8

Older workers think that taking part in an Apprenticeship program is a path only open to younger people.



FACT: Apprenticeships are open to all age groups (post 18) and can be a beneficial career decision – even for an employee with years of experience. Regardless of a person's age, apprenticeship training will be fully funded by the sponsor and/or the sponsor will reimburse their apprentice.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Any company hesitant about hiring an older worker should consider these Myths vs. Facts. The unique skills and values – and the potential savings to a company in time and money – make hiring an older worker a good business decision. The next time employers need to make a hiring decision, consider the cost of high turnover often seen with a more youthful workforce and compare this to the benefits an experienced and mature older worker brings to the mix. Hiring older workers can help companies maintain a reliable, dedicated workforce that will positively impact the bottom line for years to come.



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