

The difficulties faced by older applicants are best understood when they are reviewed in the context of where and why the older employee is preferred.

This chart lists the qualities most frequently indicated on the interview checklist by survey respondents as favoring the employed older worker. Also, it compares them with those factors most frequently cited as favoring the younger employee.

EMPLOYEE QUALITIES MOST FREQUENTLY IDENTIFIED*

POSITIVE FOR THE OLDER EMPLOYEE

<u>Qualities</u>	<u>Number of Times Identified</u>
Stability, dependability	35
Judgment	35
Absenteeism	30
Attitude toward work	29
The necessary skill or training to perform the work available	26

POSITIVE FOR THE YOUNGER EMPLOYEE

<u>Qualities</u>	<u>Number of Times Identified</u>
Physical strength	32
Flexibility; adaptability to working conditions, supervision, etc.	31
Speed in production operation; the ability to keep up; volume and pace	30
Manual dexterity	30
Speed of learning	26

*Source: Checklists completed by union and employer respondents.

Not surprisingly, most of the qualities favoring older employees--stability and dependability, attitude and judgment, experience and skill--connote maturity while the factors favoring younger employees--physical strength, flexibility, speed in production, manual dexterity, and speed of learning--identify the physical attributes of youth and an ability to master change.

Unfortunately, the older applicant cannot necessarily capitalize on the recognized attributes of the older employed worker. In the first place, and possibly through no fault of his own, he may get little credit for stability: his position is hardly stable while he is unemployed. Further, his judgment, experience and skill have necessarily been gained elsewhere and, under certain circumstances, will have less or little value for a new employer. The devaluation of these qualities is particularly true where the older applicant is seeking to change his vocation. Finally, his attitude toward work may have been excellent in familiar surroundings but