

subdivided clerical routines so as to reduce the training expense that heavy turnover would otherwise generate.

b. Higher Salary Demands Militate Against the Older Applicant

Wage or salary costs are considerations which contribute directly to an employer's disinclination to hire older persons even for tasks which older employees do well. Excluding certain organized trades, older employees command generally higher salaries in return for the experience and maturity upon which they draw in performing their work. However, a portion of the older employee's experience and maturity is of value only because it has been gained within the company concerned. As a result, experienced older applicants usually do not have as high a value for the employer as their employed contemporaries, and inexperienced older applicants are at a far greater disadvantage. This devaluation of experience becomes more acute when seniority practices or promotion-from-within policies have the effect of opening only the more junior positions to applicants. In such situations, the greater experience of the older applicant has virtually no immediate value for the employer.

Since employers are seldom if ever willing to pay for age alone, the salaries offered older applicants are usually lower than their previous earnings. Where the applicant's background has little if any value at the time of hiring, the difference can be great. Applicants are naturally reluctant to accept reduction in earning power and status. Further, although the sentiment was never stated directly, it is believed that offering a low salary to an experienced applicant is sufficiently distasteful to the employer, that he may prefer to avoid the situation altogether by simply not considering the older applicant for work in which the latter's experience cannot be fully utilized. Both the applicant's reluctance and the employer's desire to avoid a mutually embarrassing situation have the effect of shutting off opportunities for the older applicant.

This problem has another aspect. Nearly all companies in the survey indicated that they would feel "uncomfortable" in hiring an older person at a salary well below his previous earnings level because they would suspect that acceptance of the lower salary pointed to an undetected weakness in the person's background.

The only exception to this concern over mating an older applicant to a lower salary occurs when the applicant reveals some other source of income. Retired military