

defensive. They apparently lack confidence and over-compensate for their feelings of inferiority. In the opinions of both employer and union respondents, this sense of defeatism also seems to cause older applicants to become careless of their appearance. Furthermore, many fail to display desirable mental alertness and physical vigor even though they may possess these qualities in abundance. As survey respondents agreed that they seek "50 years' experience at age 25", older applicants must apparently attempt to satisfy this need by emphasizing their capacities for mental and physical activity.

b. Older Applicants Fail to Carry Out Their Job Searches Properly

According to several respondents, older applicants frequently have not sought employment for many years and seem to have forgotten that the process is essentially a sales campaign. As a result, they do not inventory their strengths and then investigate and analyze prospective employers to determine where those strengths will be of maximum utility. This lack of preparation and strategy is most obvious to employers when older applicants being interviewed stress their need for employment and pay scant attention to exploring how their experience can be of value to the employer. In addition, three companies noted that older applicants seem not to realize that experience is their prime asset and that it will be thoroughly investigated. These companies have had some problem with older persons either failing to document their experience adequately or exaggerating their recitation of experience beyond the normal bias that employers have come to expect of any applicant.

c. Older Applicants Do Not Apply Their Strengths in the Proper Channels

The final weakness in the conduct of older applicants relates to their perception of their competitive position in comparison to younger applicants. As noted, the competitive advantages of older persons consist mainly of their stability, judgment, skill and experience. Even though his stability may seem compromised by the fact that he is an applicant, the older person can frequently achieve his goal by restricting his search to work where his judgment, skill and experience will be of full value. Several respondents commented, however, that older applicants seem too prone to change vocations. They thus seriously reduce their ability to capitalize on their major attributes and eliminate much if not all of their extra value to the employer.