

comparison to the younger applicant's, call for reliable corroboration or refutation. The attitudes of union and company respondents are based upon specific instances which constituted real problems for them. The effect of these doubts upon general opportunities for older applicants may be unfair, however. It is entirely possible, for instance, that older women might be able to learn electronics assembly skills easily if taught in a certain way. Similarly, a particular kind of indoctrination not attempted by the respondents may be required to acclimate older persons to an unfamiliar, rapid work pace.

Answers to these problems must come, we believe, from research conducted by experts under controlled conditions so that there can be no question as to the validity of the results. If such study indicates that there is no basic lack of mental flexibility among older applicants, appropriate programs should be developed to publicize that fact and to open employment opportunities now closed to older persons because they seem slow to adjust and to learn.

b. Investigate the General Sentiment That Older Applicants Are Somehow Less Capable

It is to be questioned whether the majority of older persons seeking work are in fact inferior to older employees doing the same work. Any objective evidence that could be developed to dispel employers' suspicions, by shedding additional light on why older persons seek new employment and how their capabilities compare to older employed persons, should improve opportunities for older applicants.

c. Study the Effect of Age Status Upon Opportunities for Older Applicants

As noted previously, problems that appear to result from the conflict between the inherent status of older age and the actual status of the job can be a major factor in the closing off of employment opportunities for older applicants. If basic social concepts of age do lie at the root of these problems, it is entirely possible that very broad educational programs for many elements of society may be required to correct the situation. It is possible, however, that a study in depth would identify some working situations in which conflicts resulting from mismatched age and work status are inevitable and other areas in which these conflicts can be either avoided or overcome. Such a study should be undertaken to clarify the situation and, hopefully, to improve employment opportunities for older applicants accordingly.