

7. JOB ATTITUDE -- several studies have shown the past-50 age group to be more cheerful, cooperative, and conscientious than the younger employees. Other studies indicate that there is no appreciable difference in the job attitudes of the age groups.
8. FLEXIBILITY -- the idea that you can't teach an old dog new tricks doesn't necessarily apply to the older worker. Dr. Leland P. Bradford, Director of the National Training Laboratories states, "Learning ability for adults does not fall off to any marked degree -- except speed of learning. By and large, a properly motivated older employee can learn anything as well as an equivalent younger person." Older persons can and do learn new techniques. In a rate performance task by age groups, it was found that some persons in their 50's and 60's required more trials, made more errors, and required more time to complete the task than did persons in their 20's. However, significant variations occurred between individuals in the higher age groups. Some of the 50- and 60-year-olds were learning just as readily as the majority in the younger age ranges. Although some of the older people were slower to grasp, once they did, they followed up better and were more reliable.
9. FRINGE BENEFITS -- some authorities claim that many employees have an exaggerated idea of the cost of fringe benefits in relation to the older worker. According to one insurance expert, premiums for group life insurance and medical coverage are likely to be higher for a group of 25-year-old workers than for a group of 45-year-olds. While life insurance rates naturally go up with age, the heavy maternity benefits paid many younger workers lift their medical claims above those of workers in their midforties. Even for a group of employees 55 years old, an age when medical bills are beginning to rise again, premium costs run only 20 per cent or so above those for a work force of 25-year-olds. In 1956, the Secretary of Labor invited a group of experts from the pension and insurance fields to participate in a series of discussions to clarify the issue of pension and insurance costs on hiring policy and practice. In its report, the committee stated, "It is abundantly clear that pension and insurance costs need not stand in the way of the traditionally sound personnel policy of hiring on the ability to do the job, regardless of age or other nonperformance specifications."
10. HEALTH -- although older workers usually find it more difficult to meet an employer's physical requirements, we must realize that a number of older people are quite fit physically. It is important to consider the physical demands of each particular job in relation to the health of the employee being considered. High inflexible standards should not be required of all workers for all jobs.

RECENT TRENDS IN EMPLOYING THE AGED

As reported in the February 1963 issue of Management Review, Labor Department studies underscore the wider acceptance of older employees. In 1956, a study of job openings in five U. S. cities showed that