

THE BRIGHTON GROUP

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JOB-SEARCH ADVICE FOR PEOPLE OVER 40

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Bellevue – March 1, 2010 – Older job seekers today need to learn some new tactics in order to overcome reluctance to hire them. These strategies include communicating about and packaging themselves in different ways, brushing up on their interviewing techniques, and networking and mentoring in reverse, according to OI Partners-The Brighton Group (Bellevue), a leading global talent management firm.

One-third (32%) of unemployed people are age 45 and older, and the unemployment rate for this age group is double what it was at the start of the recession two years ago, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

- The unemployment rate for those ages 45-54 was 7.6% in January, more than twice as high as the 3.5% unemployment rate for this age group in December 2007.
- The unemployment rate for those ages 55 and over was 6.8% in January, more than double the 3.2% unemployment rate for this age group two years ago.

"Not only are there more people over 40 out of work, but their job searches are taking longer. These are the peak earning years of a person's career, and there are fewer job opportunities for more experienced people with higher salaries," said Christopher J. Ihrig, managing partner of OI Partners-The Brighton Group (Bellevue) (www.oipartners.net).

Consultants from OI Partners-The Brighton Group recommend that people over age 40 follow these guidelines:

- Use younger terms when referring to yourself: "When presenting yourself, use positive terms that are generally associated with younger workers, such as high-energy, able to learn new systems and methods, good technology skills, flexibility, and willingness to learn new things," said Ihrig.

- Accentuate the advantages of experience: "However, still emphasize the benefits that older, more skilled employees can bring to a job. These qualities include experience, maturity, work ethic, productivity, and ability to understand the 'big picture.' Translate your experience into skills and accomplishments that are relevant to the particular targeted opportunity and which will contribute to your success in the job," said Ihrig.
- Learn new interviewing techniques: "Interview procedures and questions are much different today than when some older employees may have last interviewed for a job. The questions are more demanding and probing. Behavioral interviews ask for examples from your career that apply to specific situations to uncover whether you have the skills an employer has identified as being critical to succeeding in the job, such as decision-making, problem-solving, leadership, and motivating others. Be prepared to have these examples ready when needed," said Ihrig.
- Use the right key words on your résumé and in online job postings: "Your résumé should contain job-specific key words that highlight your skills which will be picked up when your résumé is scanned electronically. Detail each particular area in which you are proficient, such as marketing, accounting, public relations, budgeting forecasting, and inventory management. Also, name each software product in which you are proficient. Use industry terms and buzzwords that are relevant to the opportunity so your résumé will score well," said Ihrig.
- Network in reverse: "With reverse networking, job-seekers begin with jobs that are posted on the websites of companies, and then they use their networks to get closer to decision-makers at these employers," said Ihrig. Applying for jobs directly on company websites was the second biggest source of external hires in 2009, accounting for 22% of people hired from outside the company, next only to referrals from employees (which comprised 49%), according to survey by CareerXroads, a staffing strategy consulting firm.
- Use reverse mentoring: "Older job-seekers can mentor younger job-seekers, exchanging guidance in developing their careers and rounding out their résumés for advice in how to build their online presences and use social networking to play a more active role in their job searches," said Ihrig.
- Explore flexible work arrangements: "Be open to alternative employment arrangements such as interim, freelance, contract, and consulting work, which may lead to a full-time job. The temporary help market is very busy right now, which means many employers are adding temporary or project workers before deciding to hire full-time staff. If a potential employer says they don't have a position at present, find out what they do need to get done - and negotiate to do that for them," said Ihrig.

About OI Partners

OI Partners is a leading global talent management firm that helps individuals find new careers and employers to improve the performance of their employees and organizations. OI Partners is comprised of certified career management professionals who specialize in executive and group outplacement, executive coaching, leadership development, workforce planning, and talent management. The company was established in 1987 and is now located in 200 locally-owned offices in 27 countries with more than 100 U.S. offices. Please visit www.oipartners.net or call 800-232-5285.