

Over 40 Questionnaire

Appearance

Outdated clothes and hair along with poor grooming can make a negative impression on a current or future employer. To make sure you're up-to-date, ask yourself these questions:

- Is your wardrobe polished, professional, current and projecting confidence?
- Is your hair giving away your age? When was the last time you had it cut, styled or possibly even colored to keep up with the times?
- Do you keep your facial hair shaved and/or trimmed?
- Do you look like you take care of yourself? Could stained teeth or bitten nails be detracting from your total package?

Resume

You've been working for awhile, and your experience is a plus to potential employers. But don't let your resume date you -- use it to show off your assets. Ask yourself these questions:

- Have you removed older, irrelevant experience and degrees?
- Have you played up your most relevant recent experience?
- Have you emphasized current technical skills, such as familiarity with the latest computer programs?
- Did you leave off potential discrimination points like age, weight and marital status?
- Have you played down inflated job titles, if necessary -- like vice president -- in order to avoid appearing overqualified (AKA too expensive)?

Interview

So they like your resume and called you in for an interview. Ready to show them what you've got? Ask yourself these questions:

- Are you comfortable with the fact someone younger may be interviewing you?
- Have you kept up with current industry terms as well as the potential employer's place in the industry?
- Have you prepared examples of past accomplishments that illustrate your flexibility, loyalty, patience and willingness to be a team player -- all important assets of older workers?
- How's your attitude? Do you project confidence (but not overconfidence), positive energy and unflappability?
- Are you prepared for surprises, such as a group interview?

Know Your Competition

Good coaches know their players. Experts tell us that this next generation of workers has the following characteristics, more so than any generation of workers in history:

- more independent and demanding than previous generations, expecting more from their jobs than a paycheck
- likely to expect more freedom and autonomy
- more media-savvy
- more family-focused
- more self-centered
- less likely to be team players.

You can enable them to see you as experienced and wise, not old and in the way.

It's a matter of perception. You need to appear young-ish -- with an emphasis on the "ish." Don't suddenly layer on contemporary lingo or drop the names of rappers who drive you nuts when your kids play them in the house. Any good supervisor can smell out a poseur in a flash.

On the other hand, you have to know what they know -- and then some. **Experience and team play are value-added elements. They enhance your other assets.**

For example, you may need a crash course in contemporary gadgetry, but you have to know about twittering and other apps for phones and computers. On the other hand, it's equally prudent not to be so down with the latest gizmo, since the more time you are tweeting your friends, the less time you have to devote to work. It is likely that most of your job requires more than 140 characters of text.

You need to look your age. You never want to look like those old men who dress punk or sk8r to seem hip. Dress well and appropriately. If you're going gray, leverage that too. While plenty of guys look good with their hair colored, one way to show some experience without looking over the hill is to leave some gray around the temples. A little gray makes you look distinguished and announces you are experienced.

You prove yourself indispensable by nurturing and mentoring younger guys, not pretending to be one.