

JOB HUNTING OVER 50; HOW LAID-OFF OLDER WORKERS CAN BOOST THEIR CHANCES IN THE COVID-19 MARKET (AND YES, YOU WILL NEED LINKEDIN)

Marantos, Jeanette . Los Angeles Times ; Los Angeles, Calif. [Los Angeles, Calif]15 Aug 2020: F.7.

[ProQuest document link](#)

FULL TEXT

Hey, boomers, it's not your imagination. Finding a job in today's COVID economy is harder than ever, especially for "older Americans," i.e. workers 55 and older.

Let's start with the grim statistics (just to get them over with).

According to the "Older Workers Report" released Aug. 5 by the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis Retirement Equity Lab (ReLab), nearly 3 million workers ages 55 to 70 – about 7% of workers in that age group – have left the labor force since mid-March. And an additional million "older workers" could be out of a job before the end of the year.

The sobering prognosis? More than half of unemployed older workers are at risk of "involuntary retirement" due to the pandemic because they can't find a new job, according to the report, and that spells bad news for all of American society moving forward.

"A total of 4 million people potentially pushed into retirement before they are ready will increase old-age poverty and exacerbate the recession," the report said, concluding that "Congress should increase and extend unemployment benefits for older workers, discourage withdrawals from 401(k)s and IRAs, lower Medicare eligibility to 50 and create a Federal Older Workers Bureau."

Nice suggestions, but since Congress has been preoccupied lately with TikTok and deadlocks, maybe it's best for unemployed older workers to move to Plan B: Improve your chances of getting rehired.

Author, speaker and personal finance expert Kerry Hannon can't do much about congressional action, but she has plenty to say about how the older crowd can improve their chances in the job market.

The author of "Great Jobs for Everyone 50+," "Never Too Old To Get Rich," and the soon-to-be-released "Great Pajama Jobs," believes older workers ("I like to say experienced") have taken a bigger hit in COVID-19 furloughs and layoffs in part because they usually have higher pay and beefier benefits than their younger counterparts.

The good news? When the economy starts recovering, older workers might have an advantage with employers because they will require little or no training and can hit the ground running, Hannon said.

Unfortunately, it's also likely those experienced workers will be hired at a lower wage than their previous jobs, Hannon said.

So what's an older worker to do? Plenty, Hannon said. Older workers can play up their demonstrated work ethic, time management skills and maturity.

No question the challenges are greater for older workers who have lost a job. Employers may worry about their higher healthcare costs, their ability to work with younger colleagues and whether their tech skills are up to date. But Hannon thinks those issues can be overcome with preparation. Here are her 11 tips for success:

–

1. CONSIDER YOUR SKILL SET

A layoff is a good time to consider whether you want to try something new, Hannon said. Look at your skills, make

a list of your interests and strengths – ask friends and family for suggestions if you aren't sure – and then look at what jobs might fit the bill. "So often in this age group, people flat-line intellectually," she said. "They really need to think about how to take their past experience and transfer it to something new."

–

2. SELF-EVALUATE AND GROW

Do not devolve into a panicked state, sending out the same stale resume to dozens of companies and despairing when no one responds. This is the time to beef up your skills, take a few classes and start volunteering with an organization you really care about, so when prospective employers ask what you've been doing, you can show them you've been busy honing your skills and saving the world.

–

3. JOIN LINKEDIN

Potential employers are likely to look for a LinkedIn profile. "You need to have a really sharp LinkedIn profile because it really shows who you are," Hannon said. Use a current photo and include videos, articles or presentations – anything that can help employers learn about you and your personality.

–

4. CUSTOMIZE YOUR RESUME

"Your resume is not your obituary; it's an advertisement," Hannon said. "Put your skills at the top and stick to the last 10 years." Include a relatively recent CAR story. That stands for a situation that lays out "your challenge, your action and the result" you achieved, ideally a challenge that addresses a problem your prospective employer might face. "You need to customize your resume for whatever jobs you apply for and be very shrewd," she said, adding: "Use the words they use in the job description on your resume."

–

5. START SLEUTHING

Once you've identified the companies where you'd like to work, go on LinkedIn and other sites to find out everything you can about the job and the people who work there. Specifically, you are trying to find someone you know or someone who can make an introduction. "I like to say, 'Networking' is just one letter away from 'not working,'" Hannon said.

–

6. MAKE A CONNECTION

Don't fret about appearing needy; now is the time to tell everybody you know that you're looking for work. One of Hannon's clients made dinner for his son and his son's friend, who asked him what he was doing these days. "I'm looking for a job," the dad said, and the friend replied, "You should talk to my mom." The mom introduced him to his future boss. "You just never know when somebody can help you," Hannon said.

–

7. UPDATE BUT DON'T OVERDO

"There's no question that ageism is alive and well," Hannon said, "and people do judge a book by its cover," so it makes sense to update your look with more stylish glasses and clothes but don't go overboard. Be sure your LinkedIn photo matches the new you and never make big changes just before an interview; too many things can go wrong.

–

8. GET PHYSICAL

The most important change you can make to your look is via exercise, Hannon said, even if it's just walking the dog for 20 minutes every day. When you're physically fit, it doesn't just improve your frame of mind. "It's subtle, but when you exercise, it does things to your attitude; it gives you a can-do spirit, where you want to be around that person. It's the best thing you can do to fight ageism."

–

9. KNOW THY INTERVIEWER

Once you get an interview, research your interviewer. Here's where LinkedIn can really help you again, because it lists personal interests as well as work backgrounds. These personal tidbits are particularly important today, when we can't meet in someone's office. Back then you could search around the room for clues -- a photo of children or a beautiful dog. Mention you love dogs too and, boom, you've made a connection. These "ice breakers" need to be authentic, Hannon said, "but anything you can do to enrich information about yourself can help future employers see whether you would fit into the workplace culture."

–

10. BE CURIOUS

Ask a lot of questions during an interview, Hannon said, and start with the phrase, "Something I'm really curious about" because curiosity is appealing. "It's the key to an active mind, and it goes a long way to fighting ageism," she said.

–

11. CONSIDER SALARY OPTIONS

It might be tough to get back to your old salary, but with a solid work history and skills, you can negotiate other options, such as flex time, extra vacation or the ability to work from home. Be open to new opportunities, Hannon said. "We need to make work a part of our lives, not our entire lives."

Caption: PHOTO: (no caption)

PHOTOGRAPHER: Ross May Los Angeles Times

Credit: BY JEANETTE MARANTOS

DETAILS

Subject:	Older workers; Employers; Unemployment; Job hunting; Coronaviruses; Employment; Employment interviews; Skills; COVID-19
Company / organization:	Name: LinkedIn Corp; NAICS: 518210; Name: Congress; NAICS: 921120
Identifier / keyword:	AGED JOB SEARCHING COVID 19 (VIRUS)
Publication title:	Los Angeles Times; Los Angeles, Calif.
Pages:	F.7
Publication year:	2020
Publication date:	Aug 15, 2020
Section:	Saturday; Part F; Features Desk
Publisher:	Los Angeles Times Communications LLC
Place of publication:	Los Angeles, Calif.
Country of publication:	United States, Los Angeles, Calif.
Publication subject:	General Interest Periodicals--United States
ISSN:	04583035

Source type: Newspapers

Language of publication: English

Document type: News

ProQuest document ID: 2434208470

Document URL: <https://search.proquest.com/docview/2434208470?accountid=44910>

Copyright: Copyright Los Angeles Times Aug 15, 2020

Last updated: 2020-08-15

Database: U.S. Major Dailies

Database copyright © 2020 ProQuest LLC. All rights reserved.

[Terms and Conditions](#) [Contact ProQuest](#)