



GUIDANCE FOR RECRUITING OLDER WORKERS

Why Should Job Adverts be Age-Friendly?

It is estimated that there will be an additional one million workers over the age of 50 by 2025 and research indicates that 2.5 million people over 50 are interested in moving into the hospitality industry. By making job adverts and roles more attractive to older workers, employers are significantly increasing the number of individuals likely to apply for their roles.

However, many older workers are already concerned that employers will overlook them – research by the Centre for Ageing Better indicated that nearly half of over 50s feel their age will disadvantage them when applying for jobs.¹

There are many benefits to employing older workers. On average, older workers report higher levels of job satisfaction and are less likely to switch jobs, reducing the need to replace staff regularly. Their experience and knowledge can also support businesses to tackle difficult challenges and can provide younger employees positive role models who they can learn from. Many over 50s recognise the value of good interpersonal skills and can provide the quality of service needed to impress customers, something that is key in the hospitality sector.

Writing Job Adverts Attractive to Older Workers

Research conducted by the Centre for Ageing Better has indicated that including certain features in job advertisements can either increase or decrease the likelihood of an older jobseeker applying to them.

Appealing to Older Workers

Older workers react more positively to adverts highlighting benefits, development opportunities and roles which would benefit from their experience. For example:

- Adverts including the benefits “flexible working opportunities”, “paid annual leave entitlement” and “generous pension contributions”.
- References to “training and development opportunities at all career levels”.
- Candidate specifications looking for those who are “knowledgeable”.

¹ “Good Recruitment For Older Workers”, Oct 2021 <https://ageing-better.org.uk/sites/default/files/2021-10/GROW-guide.pdf>

- The inclusion of a short diversity statement can increase both older applicants' likelihood of applying and their understanding of how well they will fit in.

Unappealing to Older Workers

Older workers are more likely to be put off by language and imagery which appears targeted at younger workers. For example:

- Candidate specifications looking for those who are "Technologically savvy".
- Language such as "adaptable", "ambitious" and "innovative".
- Imagery only promoting the presence of young people in the business.

What Attracts Older Workers to a Job?

- Meaningful work that is interesting, stretches them and makes full use of their skills and experience.
- Work which is varied and that they consider worthwhile.
- Opportunities to work in teams, collaborate with colleagues or have a lot of contact with clients or members of the public.
- Open and fair access to career development including informal or vocational training and promotion opportunities. They want to learn and develop skills (including technological ones such as the use of restaurant tableside ordering systems), use existing skills in new ways, and share their knowledge and experience with others.
- An application process accessible to all workers. For instance, standardised application forms that ask for details like full working history can disadvantage older workers. They can be very time-consuming to fill in and often will give an indication of someone's age without any age being explicitly given. Instead try;
 - Removing any non-essential details on application forms that might indicate someone's age. For example, ask for 'relevant work history' as opposed to an entire working history.
 - Allowing the applicant to list their previous roles in terms of the number of years of experience rather than the dates of that experience on a CV.
 - Removing newer types of qualifications/experience that have only existed recently from any essential criteria for the role.

What Incentives Can Attract Older Workers?

- Full and equal access to occupational health and wellbeing support as well as appropriate physical adjustments and equipment. This could be anything from providing a headset or adjustable desk to supporting scheduled breaks, all of which will enable people to manage health conditions, which are more common as people get older.
- Flexible working arrangements, reduced hours or the ability to adjust the start time of work are fundamental to making work more age-friendly. Many older workers have caring responsibilities and require a schedule which can take this into account.

- The offer of career guidance tailored towards the priorities of older workers. This may include support with horizontal career progression or retirement planning.

What More Can I Do to be an Age-Inclusive Employer?

Employers can commit to signing the Age-Friendly Pledge. This is a nationwide programme for employers who recognise the importance and value of older workers. Employers commit to improving work for people in their 50s and 60s and taking the necessary action to help them flourish in a multigenerational workforce. Signatories commit to the following:

- Identifying a senior sponsor for age-inclusion in their workforce - and publicly stating their commitment to the Pledge.
- Ensuring that age is specifically named within their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies.
- Take action to improve the recruitment, retention and development of workers over 50 from one of the following areas:
 - Create an age-friendly culture
 - Hire age-positively
 - Be flexible about flexible working
 - Encourage career development at all ages
 - Ensure everyone has the health support they need

To learn more and commit to the Pledge, please click [here](#).

BBPA

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