

Employers see 50+ workers as golden asset

THE DENVER POST 

By Doug McPherson

Being 50 and older can be nifty, if you're looking for a job.

"They bring experience, and with that comes better judgment, better productivity and better customer service, said Stephanie Klein, president of The Boomer Group. "What company doesn't need those attributes?"

Her Denver recruitment and placement agency focuses on baby boomer-age workers, born after World War II and before the Vietnam War (1946 to 1964).

They are among the four generations at work in today's labor market. "That's never happened before, and I think older workers will be needed even more. We're expecting a short-age of 10 million workers by 2010, said Colorado Human Resources Association President Kathleen Winsor-Grimes. She owns The Winsor Group, a coaching and executive search firm in Denver.

While she sees less age discrimi-

nation now, she urges experienced, retired or senior job-hunters to brush up their skills and appearance to "not make it look like you peaked 10 years ago.

"Workers need to focus on the problems they solved, and how they either made or saved money for a former employer, she said.

"Document accomplishments, and continually update your skills with classes and certifications.

What won't appeal to recruiters and silver workers "dressed like it's 1982 and their tactics are 1982 and they're angry and have a chip on their shoulder, Klein said.

"The fact that they're not getting a job has much less to do with their age and more with who they are and how they come across, she said. "Practice interviewing and regularly check you attitude. Be vibrant and energetic.

Here is more advice for 50+ plus workers from Tim Wollerman, manager of work force resources for the American Association of

Retired Persons in Washington, D.C.:

- Adopt a positive attitude
- Leverage experience to match career objectives
- Network, and not just with those in your own age group
- Use online job boards and create an electronic copy of your resume

Avoid these job-hunting mistakes:

- Underestimating your value
- Not recognizing your transferable skills
- Not doing enough research and
- Not using online resources

Wollerman said job-seekers at any age should tailor their resumes to specific jobs and limit their work history to the last 10 or 15 years of relevant experience. "It is okay to leave off some dates in certain situations. But, don't hide your experience.

Smart and spirited senior workers with results-packed resumes will stand above routine job-hunters who simply want a job for its medical and other benefits.

"That's becoming a big issue, said

Anne Gottlieb Angerman, owner of Career Matters consulting.

"If you want to switch careers, soul-search and find something that's really satisfying, she said. "I'm seeing a lot of people choose careers in social work, teaching, coaching, and starting businesses as event planners, personal shoppers and personal gardeners.

That advice extended and enhanced the work life of job-hunter Mary "Mippy Kreutzer, 68, of Lakewood. A fund-raiser for nonprofits, after age 55, she had trouble finding employers who would let her advance.

So she contemplated what she was passionate about and identified it: helping others with their health. That led her to open her business selling health products. Kreutzer loves it.

"You can find better jobs, she said. "It's just a matter of getting out there and working at it.

Doug McPherson is a freelance writer in Centennial.