

## Job Hunting After 50

*Carol Silvis*

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**Carol Silvis : Job Hunting After 50** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Job Hunting After 50:

18 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Many older job seekers will find nothing new hereBy Knits in TardisAt it's core, "Job Hunting After 50" sends a decidedly discouraging message. On the one hand, the author stresses (repeatedly) how critical it is for the older job seeker to keep a positive attitude; on the other, referencing the admittedly sorry state of 2011's job market, she persistently suggests job seekers lower their expectations, particularly salary expectations.Certainly, there's no getting around the fact that a lot of U.S. workers are having to make tough decisions, including accepting lower wages, but a job search manual should have more to offer than a resigned "accept

less". (How about some strategies for not bidding down one's own starting salary? A discouraged worker is just as much at risk of undercutting their own chances there than of holding out for an unrealistic amount.) And that's just the start of where this book falls short. For the post-50 job seeker, some of whom haven't been in the position of being "between jobs" frequently, if ever, there's a potential minefield of job scams out there, as well as considerations such as "is that health care plan with the new job (if it exists) sufficient to cover anything more than basic preventative?", or "will that temp-to-perm job actually go perm?" (the ranks of the permanently temp-status are growing), or even "will I have to consider relocation to stay in my profession?" These questions are all beyond the scope of this book, and some of them really shouldn't be. One sadly proliferating industry is that of pseudo headhunter/job coaches who purport to take on unemployed professionals as "clients", for a fee, but actually offer the barest of "motivational" services, maybe going to far as to mail around a client's resume. These get no mention here, nor the identity thieves and other shady characters who collect personal info anonymously from hungry job candidates, online. While Ms. Silvis touches on the benefits of technology to one's job search, she doesn't get into the pitfalls, or just what to expect on the job hunt that you wouldn't have encountered 10 years ago. There's useful information in this book, but much of it matches what can be found on job search websites or even "handy hints" articles from Yahoo.com or the newspapers. There's no "insider content" here, certainly, to give a job seeker an edge, and in fact the book seems better suited to a candidate willing to consider basically any job within their capacity to perform (Can you teach crafts? Can you tutor, or start a business?), rather than to an experience worker/professional who is targeting a specific job or industry, or looking to repurpose specific professional skills. One of my frustrations with this book is that I can't identify an agenda or point of view on the author's part other than that of general "interview coach". What might the author have been able to share as regards her own experiences as a professional in the field of adult education, that could give the job candidate an actual advantage in their search? It does seem to me that the author's efforts with this book were restricted to collecting useful information -- not necessarily acquired first hand -- and then organizing it in her writing. She did not go on to add anything from her own observations or experiences, and thus relegated herself to that status of "invisible" narrator in this book, never referencing herself or even citing "case studies" of actual job seekers she has met. Similarly, the author doesn't really give concrete examples of how to tool up the resume, with "before" and "after" examples. She strongly suggests mature job seekers not to list every job or educational experience, date of graduation, etc., but considering that the mature worker is often quite proud of his or her decades of accomplishments and reticent to "cut" any accomplishments, it would have been very helpful to show a number of "before" and "after" resumes, with annotations to show how the hard choices were made and how the resume was strengthened. Nada. In some ways, I think this book might better be titled "How not to turn off or waste the time of an HR screener or interviewer." For those facing their first serious job hunt in years, if not decades, that's a triage solution inadequate to the scope of their questions. 17 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Discouraging, impersonal, and spotty. By Customer. If you're over 50 (like me) and looking for a job (like me) and you're either having a difficult time finding something suitable or are worried that your age might be a problem, you could consider turning to Carol Silvis' "Job Hunting After 50" for assistance and advice. My advice is: don't. Before I explain my reasons, let's start with an overview of what the book holds: Most of it consists of generic job search tips and guidelines: how to identify your skills and job-relevant personal characteristics (Ch. 1), what to put in resumes and cover letters (Ch. 2), how to use the web to search for job openings and investigate employers (Ch. 3), how to enlarge your personal network (Ch. 4), how to present yourself in an employment interview (Ch. 5), how to identify the most promising industries and occupations (Ch. 7), and how to organize and document your search (Ch. 8). Although only one chapter is devoted solely to the problems of older job seekers-- "Mistakes Job Seekers Over 50 Make" (Ch. 6)--all of the chapters feature tips and advice specifically for older workers; e.g., the chapter on conducting an online job search identifies sites that cater to the over-50 crowd, and the chapter on resume writing highlights recent changes in what employers expect to see in resumes. That overview may sound promising to you, but here's the rub: it's not done very well. How so? First, this is the most negative and discouraging job search/career guidance book I've ever seen -- and I've read several and skimmed a number of others. The book focuses throughout on older workers' "shortcomings" (p. 20) and "mistakes" (Ch. 6). The book reads as if the author believed that all of older workers' skills are outdated and worthless, that they are computer illiterate, that their attitudes are antiquated, that they're depressed and pessimistic, and that they have no career aspirations worth mentioning. It has almost nothing positive to say about older workers, their years of experience, their maturity, their advanced skills, or their well-developed social networks. Furthermore, the book makes addressing weaknesses sound more like punishment than personal development. Even the advice to "be happy" gets turned into a burden; the reason you should be happy is so that you can "turn a negative attitude into a positive one" (p. 17), helping you to "display a positive attitude" (p. 105). Second, the book is written in the kind of sterile, impersonal style characteristic of textbooks. (This is not surprising because the book is, in fact, published by a textbook company.) Silvis has nothing to say about her experiences with older workers, what motivated her to write this book, or why she takes the approach that she does. She never (overtly) offers opinions based on experience, and never says "I gave this advice to an older adult and it worked like a charm." In fact, the word "I" does not appear at all in the book. This would be unremarkable in an academic textbook presenting the results of other people's research, but this is a self-help book that doesn't cite a

single piece of research! Third, there are no instructive examples of real life people who have overcome employment barriers--a staple of every other job search/career guidance book I've ever encountered. When the book suggests that you, as an older job applicant, should "Convince the interviewer that the expertise that comes with your age will benefit her in a big way", (p. 151) it is NOT followed by the story of, say, 58-year-old Jenny, an MBA who was formerly the CFO of a national shoe store chain, and how she persuaded the executive director of a small local nonprofit that she was neither too old nor too snooty for the position of budget director. Even a plausible made-up example would be better than what Silvis supplies: nothing. Fourth, the book's treatment of key topics is often spotty and arbitrary. For example, in Chapter 1, "What Skills and Qualifications Set You Apart?", the section that actually deals with identifying your "personal assets" is barely more than 2 pages long (pp. 3-5). This is not a minor topic; Richard Bolles devotes half of a 90-page chapter in the classic job search/career guidance manual "What Color is Your Parachute?" to identifying skills and abilities. Yet, Silvis devotes nearly all of Chapter 1 to other topics: what employers want, how you can improve your skills by taking formal classes, why you should read widely, how you can improve your memory, and what employers fear about older workers. Another example of seemingly misplaced emphasis occurs in the chapter on older workers' job search "mistakes". The first "mistake", and the "mistake" to which the author devotes the most attention, is "failing to get along with other generations" (pp. 140-145). It's very possible that a hiring manager would ask an older job-seeker about their willingness to work under and/or alongside younger workers, and it's very sensible of Silvis to ask her readers to consider how they feel about the possibility. But does this "mistake" rate more attention than being seen as overqualified, asking for too high a salary, and being unprepared to work in a diverse workplace combined? I would probably have objected less to Silvis' take on this question if it didn't center on a heavily stereotyped introduction to post-WWII generations, including Boomers (they "respect authority"), Gen X (they grew up as "latchkey kids"), and Gen Y ("their attention span is about 20 minutes long" and "[t]hey are super comfortable using technology"). I have a number of other criticisms, but my bottom line is this: Every topic not having to do with older workers is handled in greater depth and/or nuance and with a more positive tone in standard job search/career guidance books, AND virtually everything this book has to say about older workers is handled more gracefully and in greater depth on the Internet (just search for "seeking work over 50") and in other books (see, e.g., the chapters on "How to Deal with Handicaps" and "Entering the World of 50+" in "What Color is Your Parachute?"). In other words, you don't need this book.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful.  
Genuine Tips for the Older Job Hunter  
By Happy Reader  
Realistically, a lot of job hunting tips are the same for younger folks as for older folks, but I thought this book does a good job of targeting specific tips for older job hunters. And this is no little thing. I have two friends over 50 who had successful careers, own their homes, pay their bills, etc., and were sideswiped by this recession's layoffs and long life. Every little bit of an edge has the possibility of being the difference between landing a job and not landing a job. To say the least, I'm loaning them this book. In the beginning, there are statements about companies who love senior employees, such as, "Many companies are especially senior friendly and actively recruit older employees." As no examples are given, whether specific names or specific industries, this came off like cheerleading. Especially since the only companies I've read about who like dependable senior employees are companies with huge employee turnover, like fast food restaurants and donut shops. However, don't let that discourage you from continuing to read this book. There is really a lot of good stuff in here. For example, it alerts you to websites that compile data on individual companies, with tips on how to use the websites. Research the industry you're interested in, research the specific company you're interested in. Job interviewers expect you to be enthusiastic enough to check out the company before your interview and tailoring resume cover letters can also be an edge. Incidentally, the first time I went job hunting, in the late '70's, the tip was how to write a good cover letter. The next time I went job hunting, in the late 90's, the tip was that cover letters were "out". Now, "Job Hunting After 50" says that "a cover letter is a MUST". I'd follow the book. It also lists three on-line employment sites, with some great tips, among them suggesting the on-line resume format (I'm talking stuff like "rich text" and PDF, not the font paragraph style!) as well as the art of keywords. Employers will sift through resumes by doing keyword searches. Make sure your resume comes up in their search. The book has a list of websites that specialize in over-50 job hunters, though generally it's information they offer (such as how to write a resume) rather than specific job leads. However, many of those sites also have user forums. Young people tend to be much more comfortable with user forums, and this is just one thing that the older job hunter needs to cultivate. Ask questions, ask advice, read what others write. You never know what will come up. Another thing that may have changed since you last looked for a job is the importance of computer networking, whether LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook. I know a newspaper editor, for example, who uses Facebook for personal and Twitter for work. What do you say if your job interviewer asks you to friend them on Facebook, not to be your "friend" but to look over how you handle yourself on-line? No, I'm not kidding, this happens. There's a chapter titled, "Mistakes Job Seekers Over 50 Make". Though the advice seems common sense, the truth is, a reminder doesn't hurt. For example, if the interviewer, who would be your boss, is twenty years younger than you, what are the mistakes you might make without even realizing it? The very first chapters have some interesting advice, such as, "improve your memory". I play a PC game called "Brain Spa" (available on ) which is absolutely wonderful for keeping my brain limber. I don't have the quick memory of my 17 year-old, but I have gotten

better and surprised people. I don't mean that you're going to play Memory Match with your job interviewer, but you do want to appear alert and nimble. Brain Spa is cool because, for the different styles of exercises, it tells you exactly what part of the brain you're exercising and why it's important. Brain Spa [Download]I recommend this book. Very useful, matter-of-fact advice.Happy Reader

The good news is that companies do hire mature workers. The bad news is that many baby boomer job seekers do not know how to carry out a modern job search or present themselves to employers in the way that best represents their background. Ineffective resumes, job searches, and interviews can derail anyone's job search, but they can completely shut out the mature job applicant. Job Hunting After 50 will prepare you with a plan of action to carry out an effective job search to get the job you want. It covers self-assessment of skills and qualifications, preparing a resume for today's market, dressing with style, using technology to find a job, identifying common mistakes made by job seekers over 50 and how to avoid them, and interviewing skills. Emphasis is placed on updating skills, improving energy level and attitude, and determining where the best jobs are for this age group. Commit the necessary time to finding a job, but work smarter by following the principles in Job Hunting After 50. Advice from the Author Top Ten Job Seeking Tips Network; tell everyone you know that you are job hunting. Use a modern resume format and make achievements stand out. Focus your resume on the job for which you are applying. Research companies you apply to; check their websites. Practice interviewing with a friend; be prepared. Focus on jobs appropriate for you. Continue to learn and grow professionally. Embrace technology. Work on keeping a healthy body and mind. Update your image; dress for success. Top Ten Job Seeking Mistakes Being unable to make a connection between your background and what the employer needs. Failing to get along with younger generations. Unwillingness to change. Avoiding new technology. Salary expectations that are too high. Lack of enthusiasm; low energy. Outdated hairstyle, makeup, clothing, or shoes. Unwillingness to reinvent yourself or update your skills. Coasting along; avoiding challenges and innovation. Being unprepared for the interview.

Introduction: Is There a Job After 50? 1. What Skills and Qualifications Set You Apart? 2. Resumes and Employment Letters. 3. Using Technology to Find Employment. 4. Networking. 5. Attitude, Energy, and Dressing for Success. 6. Mistakes Job Seekers Over 50 Make. 7. Where is the Demand for Over 50 Employees? 8. Create a Success Plan.About the AuthorCarol Silvis is the author of 101 Ways to Connect with Customers, Chiefs, and Co-Workers, Job Hunting After 50, 101 Ways to Make Yourself Indispensable at Work, and college textbooks 100% Externship Success and General Office Procedures. Other publications include "Time Management and Organization for Writers" (2012 Writers Market), a dozen creative non-fiction stories and inspirational pieces published in national magazines, and over 40 articles published in various newsletters. Ms. Silvis has a master's degree in education and has trained adults in how to get a job, keep and enjoy it, and advance on the job. She teaches part time at Penn State's New Kensington campus and leads workshops and seminars for schools, businesses, professional organizations, and libraries on job hunting, resume preparation, customer service, stress management, telephone techniques, human relations/teamwork, communication, writing, and time management/organization. She is the president of Pennwriters, a 400+- member writing group. She won the 2008 Meritorious Service Award, was past VP and Authors' Advocate, and was the 2005 and 2007 Conference Coordinator.