



1959

A Survey of the Validity of Age Discrimination in Employment

Charles Martin Wiltfang
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A SURVEY OF THE VALIDITY OF AGE DISCRIMINATION
IN EMPLOYMENT

by

Charles Martin Wiltfang

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Institute of
Industrial Relations of Loyola University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Social and Industrial
Relations

June
1959

LIFE

Charles Martin Wiltfang was born in Oak Park, Illinois, December 2, 1928.

He was graduated from Proviso Township High School, Maywood, Illinois, June, 1948, and from North Central College, June, 1950, with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

From 1950 to 1951 the author taught English and speech at Cornell Community High School, Cornell, Illinois. He then went into the Marine Corps, and from 1951 to 1953 helped to set up an education program for illiterate recruits. He was aided by the Adult Education Program of San Diego, California. He served as Chief Instructor for the program until his discharge in October, 1953. From November, 1953 to June, 1955 he taught English at Woodruff High School, Peoria, Illinois. From September, 1955 to June, 1956 he taught English at Barrington Consolidated High School, Barrington, Illinois. He then left teaching and went to The Kane Service, Chicago, Illinois, where he is now Assistant Personnel Manager. He began his graduate studies at Loyola University in September, 1956.

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PREFACE

It is most often thought that older workers are the male and female members of the labor force who have reached some chronological age such as 45 years or older. Actually, there is no fixed age at which a worker is too old to be a desirable employee: it has been found to vary with his occupation, locality, and the general condition of the labor market.

Age restrictions are set up (in actual practice) by individual employers and are usually applied well in advance of any consideration of the individual job seeker's qualifications.

Artificial age barriers to employment are becoming more noticeable and are creating a problem which grows more serious because of the greater life span and the aging composition of the nation's population.

The purpose of this thesis is twofold:

I. The first research was done to determine whether or not refusal of employers to hire over the age of 45 is justified by management's experience with older workers. This was accomplished by extensive study of published materials--covering all areas of employment to obtain a clear and accurate picture of the universe.

II. Secondly, a questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of one hundred (100) men who are employed as industrial guards by The Kane Service, Chicago, Illinois. Only employees who came to

The Kane Service at or after the age of 45 were approached. The questionnaire was worded carefully to find out what their work life history had been, and their experience with discrimination in employment. Seventy-one (71) questionnaires were returned.

The Kane Service, in business since 1910, employs approximately twelve-hundred (1200) men. All men are carefully selected, thoroughly investigated, and fingerprinted before being assigned to a plant as an industrial guard. It is also necessary that they pass a polygraph test. The company meets government security clearance requirements.

Employment backgrounds are varied and interesting, ranging from industrial chemist to machinist. Seniority lists show employment from twenty-five years plus to five years with the company. Turn-over is most prevalent in the first year of employment. Those that remain over this period tend to stay.

Guard service is provided throughout all of Chicago and the surrounding suburbs. Outstanding among hundreds of accounts are Sunbeam Corporation, Automatic Electric, Sylvania, Webcor, Merchandise National Bank, First National Bank of Chicago, Northwest National Bank of Chicago, Bank of Chicago, Continental Can Company, and West Suburban Hospital. Other services include: Industrial investigations, complete Polygraph services, Convention and Trade Show services, and Janitor service.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. The Increase of the Life Span

The year 1900 gave promise to a man who had reached the age of 40 of possibly living to the ripe old age of 68. Now, a child born in 1958 can expect to live to the age of 71. This life expectancy is due largely to the availability of a higher level of nutrition, to greater and better medical care and to the tremendous progress in new medical advances in the early diagnosis and treatment of chronic diseases.

Life expectancy for people in middle age has increased, but an interesting fact is that the average period of working life for middle-aged men has barely changed during the half-century. The remaining work-life of a 40-year-old man in 1900 was 24.5 years. This is compared with the 24.9 years expectancy for a man of the same age in 1950.¹

The Nation has aged! The 45-and-over population is growing much more rapidly than the total population. The number in the 45 to 64 age group tripled, and the 65-and-over group quadrupled from 1900 to 1955.

There are three major causes for these changes in the age

¹United States Department of Labor and Bureau of Employment Security, Older Worker Adjustment to Labor Market Practices, (September, 1956), BES No. R151, p.5

structure of the population: They are: (1) the striking decline in the birth rate between the two World Wars, and (2) increased life expectancy, and (3) a decline of immigration since the first World War. These have had the effect of reducing the proportion of younger individuals in the total population.

It is thought that growth among the older and the younger age groups will continue to advance more rapidly than will that of the intermediate groups for a period of time. The estimates of population from 1955 to 1975 shows that the age group of 25 to 44 will increase only 13 percent. The 45-and-over will increase 34 percent and those under 25 years-of-age 58 percent. The lower percentage of increase for the intermediate group is due mainly to the low birth rate of the depression decade of the 1930's. The heavy growth in the proportion of younger workers poses a problem for the rapidly increasing group of older workers.²

The U.S. Bureau of the Census projections by age groups through 1975 indicate that employment must be found during the next fifteen years for approximately 7.2 million persons age 45-and-over. The Bureau has estimated that there will be 360,000 additional workers, age 45-and-over, in the labor force each year from 1955 until 1975.

At the same time the under-25 age group will be increasing at

²United States Department of Labor, BLS No. R151, p.7

the rate of almost a million a year. The employment of this rapidly growing labor force will then depend mainly on two things: (1) a net expansion in industry to absorb total manpower at the rate of about 1,000,000 jobs a year, and (2) a lessening of age restrictions in hiring in order to provide jobs for this annual increase in older workers.³

B. Protecting Older Workers

This problem is causing the States and the Federal Government deep concern. Laws barring discrimination in hiring older workers have been passed by four states: Massachusetts, Louisiana, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania.⁴ Rhode Island, the third state to pass such anti-discriminatory legislation, enacted its law in 1956 to prohibit employers from refusing to hire applicants, and from firing their employees, solely because they are between 45 and 65 years-of-age.

Secretary of Labor, James Mitchell, in 1956, said in a broadcast to the nation:

"Studies clearly show that older workers need more and better services and that job counseling, job development, and intensive

³Ibid

⁴P-H Survey: Employing the Older Worker, Personnel and Practices Report, (New York, 1955), P231, p.299

placement services pay off for the employer as well as the older job applicant."⁵

Accordingly, during August, 1956 the U.S. Department of Labor made available almost \$450,000 to the State Employment Offices for the purpose of hiring older-work specialists and for developing programs that would overcome the age barriers which seem to have been created through misunderstanding. An active nationwide program for the placement of older workers has been developed in the Federal-State employment service system. Older worker specialists have been added in all State offices and in local employment offices in the larger cities. Individual older workers receive special attention in all public employment offices, including counseling, (of employment) job solicitation and placement. Sustained efforts are made to eliminate or reduce artificial age barriers. As a result, increasing numbers of older workers are being aided in solving their employment problems and being placed in suitable jobs.

The Federal Department of Labor, through its research and publications programs is aiding workers in the age group 45 to 64, as well as those past retirement age who need or wish to continue in employment. An attempt is being made to reduce age discrimination through information and education.

⁵ Ibid, p.297

The Labor Department's published studies have demonstrated that older workers have favorable records with respect to productivity, dependability, absenteeism, safety, and adaptability.

C. Employment Trends of Older Workers

Occupational trends of older workers, between 1940 and 1950, are shown in the report issued by the Census Bureau in 1956.

Employment of men 45-and-over in the United States increased in April, 1950 to 15,200,000 as compared to 11,800,000 in April, 1940. The change was due, among other things, to generally fuller employment as well as to the increasing population. The proportion of older workers to all employees rose from 35% in 1940 to 37% in 1950.⁶

Thirty-five percent of all men employed in 1940 were in the 45-to-64 age group. In 1950 this proportion was 37%.⁷ The proportion of the 45-64 male population who reported themselves unemployed decreased more in the decade (from 12.3% to 8.4%) than did the percentage unemployed for all age groups above 14 combined (which went down from 11.7% to 4.7%).⁸

⁶ State of New York Department of Labor, Division of Research and Statistics, Occupational Patterns of Older Workers-1940 and 1950, (December, 1955), Publication No. B-82, p.55

⁷ See Table I, p. 9

⁸ State of New York Department of Labor, Publication No. B-82, p. 55

The December, 1955 New York Department of Labor study indicates that the number of men 45-or-older employed at the time of the study was 12.5% greater than the number working in 1940.

The increase, of 38% since 1940, in the number of women workers over 45 in the United States is even more striking.⁹

The number of male factory laborers who were 65 or older in 1950 was 85% greater than the number working in 1940.

⁹ Ibid. p.56

TABLE I
PER CENT OF EMPLOYED MEN AND WOMEN IN MAJOR AGE GROUPS
UNITED STATES
1940-1955¹⁰

Age Group	Men			Women		
	1955	1950	1940	1955	1950	1940
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
14-44 years.....	60.7	62.6	65.0	63.6	70.0	77.6
45-64 years	33.3	31.8	30.1	32.2	27.0	19.9
65 and over	5.7	5.6	4.2	4.2	3.0	2.3

Source: Data for 1940 and 1950 are based on the Censuses of Population. The 1955 data are from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports: Labor Force, Series P-57, No. 154, May 1955. The 1955 data are for April. They are roughly comparable to those for 1940 and 1950.

¹⁰ State of New York Department of Labor, Publication No. B-82, p.55

The author includes Table II to illustrate the percent change in employment in major age groups between 1940 and 1950. This also shows the contribution of older age groups to the total change, by occupation group and sex in the United States. For example, the number of employed males of all ages (Line 1) was 20.0 percent or 6,760,300 larger in 1950 than in 1940. The age group under 45 contributed 50.2 percent of this rise, the group 45-64 contributed 40.3 percent and the group 65 and over 9.5 percent. The number of male farmers (Line 3) fell 16.1 percent or 801,880.¹¹

One can see from the percentages given that employment is on the increase. The willingness of employers to hire and retain older people in times of greater industrial activity seems quite apparent.

¹¹See Table II, p.11

TABLE II

11

Per Cent Change in Employment in Major Age Groups Between 1940 & 1950 and Contribution of Older Age Groups to the Total Change, by Occupation Group and Sex -- United States ¹².

Occupation Group:	Per Cent Change in Employment				Contribution	
	Total	14-44	45-64	65 & over	45-64	65 & over
MALE						
Total.....	+20.0	+15.5	+26.8	+39.1	+40.3	+9.5
Professional, technical & kindred workers.....	+42.3	+40.9	+45.1	+46.4	+30.5	+5.2
Farmers & farm managers.....	-16.1	-12.8	-27.6	+11.8	-54.6	-8.6
Managers, officials & proprietors, except farm...	+34.6	+33.7	+35.8	+33.4	+43.8	+6.3
Clerical & kindred workers.....	+28.8	+16.6	+60.9	+111.3	+47.1	+9.5
Sales workers.....	+14.2	+9.5	+20.9	+57.7	+38.4	+14.7
Craftsmen, foremen & kindred workers.....	+49.6	+51.6	+43.8	+73.8	+32.0	+5.6
Operatives & kindred workers.....	+35.4	+27.6	+56.3	+105.7	+35.4	+5.3
Private household workers.....	-37.2	-52.9	-13.0	+7.6	-10.2	+1.4
Service workers, except private household.....	+20.9	+4.4	+37.9	+89.4	+61.2	+26.1
Farm laborers & foremen.....	-29.9	-35.9	-9.5	+41.7	-4.3	+3.8
Laborers, except farm & mine.....	+9.6	+1.9	+22.2	+81.7	+60.0	+25.8
FEMALE						
Total.....	+41.1	+26.8	+91.6	+88.5	+44.3	+4.9
Professional, technical & kindred workers.....	+30.4	+13.0	+88.7	+93.0	+60.8	+6.2
Farmers & farm managers.....	-23.4	-7.7	-30.6	-27.9	-70.4	-19.7
Managers, officials & proprietors, except farm...	+69.6	+66.0	+72.9	+77.8	+44.7	+6.0
Clerical & kindred workers.....	+81.5	+65.8	+202.5	+236.2	+26.8	+1.6
Sales workers.....	+65.8	+43.2	+146.7	+234.0	+43.2	+4.7
Craftsmen, foremen & kindred workers.....	+108.2	+94.3	+139.4	+143.3	+36.1	+3.5
Operatives & kindred workers.....	+48.7	+29.3	+138.2	+161.7	+46.2	+4.2
Private household workers.....	-32.3	-45.1	-2.8	+28.5	-2.1	+3.2
Service workers, except private household.....	+56.3	+40.5	+94.7	+118.1	+42.0	+6.1
Farm laborers & foremen.....	+40.1	+18.4	+142.4	+160.0	+55.2	+6.8
Laborers, except farm & mine.....	+24.8	+4.9	+132.6	+191.7	+74.2	+9.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1950, Vol. II, "Characteristics of the Population", Part I, United States Summary, Table 127; and U.S. Census of Population: 1940, Vol. III, "The Labor Force", Part I, United States Summary, Table 65.

¹²

State of New York Department of Labor, Publication No. B-82, p. 58.

D. Limitations of Older Workers

The Small Business Administration, Washington D.C. states that there are certain limitations which must be kept in mind if older workers are to be best utilized. The three major limitations which they list are: (1) Physical strength (2) Speed (3) Memory and Learning ability.¹³

(1) Physical Strength

For many years this ranked high on the list of limiting factors. However, because industry today has more power-operated equipment, it is becoming less important to employers as a factor. This special equipment now makes what used to be a purely physical job a lightened task. The bone of contention here is that the older worker cannot stand up as well as a younger worker under continued exertion. This has been found to be true even when the work is not unusually heavy.

(2) Speed

It has long been accepted that older workers are sometimes rather slow. They cannot keep up well in positions involving mass production and high speed. Jobs in which high pressure exists usually are too much for them to handle and they do much better in situations in which little or no tension exists.

¹³Rosen, John, C., Utilizing Older Workers in Small Industry, Small Business Administration, (Washington D.C., 1957), p.2

(3) Memory and Learning Ability

A persons quickness in the ability to learn and a persons memory can very definitely be affected by his age. A training problem that exists and must be realized in the future utilization of older workers is that this group may be somewhat more difficult to train than the younger worker.

E. Age Restrictions for Certain Occupations

It is apparent that regardless of how pressing the need may be for the employment of the older worker that there are definite age restrictions which must be recognized. It does not take a great stretch of the imagination to understand that a good risk for a steeplejack's job would not be a sixty-year-old man. A study made of the hiring policies of one hundred companies¹⁴ asked: "Do you have an age limit that applies to all permanent positions?" Eighty percent stated that they do not have a firm or written policy--that age is not necessarily the major consideration. The other twenty percent had age limits ranging from 40 to 65 years.

Some of the remarks given by respondents to the Dartnell Survey show general attitude to the older worker:

A trucking company said, "We are reluctant to hire workers over 40." "Our age limit is 65," Robert R. Tobias, administrative

¹⁴ Dartnell Survey: Hiring Older and Physically Handicapped Employees, A Survey of 100 companies, Dartnell File P-11

co-ordinator, Farm Bureau Insurance Company, Lansing, Michigan replied. He further stated: "We are usually interested in older employees due to our need for leadership experience. Our company is seven years old so we have a very young age level."

"This is a matter of individual plant policy and extremely flexible"--is the opinion of L. J. Dunman, director of employee relations, The Mengel Company, Louisville, Kentucky.

"Our age limit is 50-- to make all personnel eligible for the company retirement plan," is the reason given by Marion L. Jones, personnel assistant, Iowa Electric Light and Power Company.

A survey conducted by American Business magazine, a Dartnell publication, showed that companies that have pension plans with length of service requirements before workers reach retirement age sometimes restrict the hiring age to 50. This is with the proviso that an employee, in writing, acknowledges that he realizes that he cannot apply for retirement until he has been with the company around fifteen years. The applicant is also asked to acknowledge whatever the company has set as the retirement age and agree willingly to sever his services upon reaching that age.

Age restrictions must then be narrowed down for certain occupations. About 22% of the companies of the Dartnell survey state that age limits are set on heavier jobs. The spokesman for a Chicago cosmetic company said "We do not believe the fact that we

have preferred age ranges for certain occupations based on the present age of the work group involved." It was found by Dartnell that limits range from 30 to 50 years.

John Ewing, personnel director, H. W. Lay and Company, Inc., Chamblee, Georgia, stated: "Line production employees must not exceed the age of 30 unless actively employed in a similar situation when making application to our company for employment."

F.M. Rogers, personnel manager, Commerce Trust Company, Kansas City, Missouri, stated, "For operation of bookkeeping and IBM proof machines, older people do not have the stamina, nor, in the long run, the preference for this type of work." Age thirty is the maximum for the electrical and mechanical inspectors of the Television Associates, Michigan City, Indiana.

Fifty percent of the companies that joined in the exchange of experience said that in the case of administrative employees they place an age limit on trainees, usually 30 to 35 years. A minority reported that they do not employ executives over forty.¹⁵

Dartnell then found that there are factors that determine age restriction. The following is a tabulation of the responses of executives participating in the development of this report:¹⁶

¹⁵Dartnell Survey File P-11,p.2

¹⁶Ibid, p.3

Company policy	--	10 per cent
Department head or supervisor decides	--	10 per cent
Personnel department decides	--	3 per cent
Set by company insurance program	--	22 per cent
No reply	--	55 per cent

CHAPTER II

EVIDENCES OF EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS TO THE OLDER WORKER

A. Some Management Misconceptions of the Older Worker

There are many reasons given by employers for not employing older workers. Some of these are greater absenteeism, greater accident rate, old-fashioned attitudes, less productivity. The Small Business Administration, Washington, D.C. study presents definite facts which prove these reasons to be far from accurate.¹⁷

(1) Absenteeism

In the survey conducted by the Small Business Administration it was found that the absentee rate decreased consistently as a person becomes older. This research covered 18,000 employees in over 100 companies. It was definitely shown that older workers, as a group, were not on the jobs fewer days per year than were the younger worker.¹⁸

(2) Accident Rate

Research, of course, has been continuous in accident rates. It has been found that employees tend to be more safety conscious as they increase in age. A lower injury rate is shown. It must, however, be kept in mind that when an older worker does have an accident that the period of disability tends to be much longer than for the younger worker.¹⁹

¹⁷Small Business Administration, p.1

¹⁸Ibid

¹⁹Ibid, p.2

(3) Productivity

The author finds that little research has been done regarding the relationship between productivity and age. It appears that what has been completed shows that output remains about the same in most individuals through about age 55. About that time productivity starts to fall off. The author wishes to stress that it must be remembered that there are stronger individual differences within the same age group than between different age groups. In other words, you may find many older workers who are capable of producing more than the average for the younger worker group.²⁰

(4) Old-fashioned Attitudes

The Small Business Administration states that it is often thought by management that chronological age should be the main consideration in determining the attitudes of a worker. It has been thought that perhaps more healthy thinking would be in terms of a "functional" age or in other words, the way a worker regards the duties that he is expected to perform. Some individuals could easily be physically and mentally worn out at 40, others are still strong, forward looking, and completely "young" at 75.²¹

²⁰Ibid

²¹Ibid

Interesting attitudes and practices were reported by the United States Department of Labor in 1956.²² The staff members reported that from their daily contacts with employers and with applicants, they found that the following attitudes and practices on the part of employers seemed to contribute most to the employment problems of older workers:

- "a. Older workers are often laid off and told it was because of lack of work. Very often they are not called back, the employer hiring younger workers in their place. This 'shaking-out' process is difficult to detect in the early stages, particularly among applicants from seasonally slack industries, and is one of the complicating factors in determining the need for and getting the older applicant to accept special services.
- b. Too often employers specify unnecessarily high physical requirements for the job and hire younger workers, when the job could just as well be handled by an older person. Thus, even if there is no age discrimination, unrealistic or uniformly high physical restrictions can be used to block many older workers from employment."

Regarding allegations that older workers lack physical stamina and are less productive than other workers, one office reported:

"Not a single employer in the area reported having reliable statistical data or records to substantiate his experience or opinion in this regard. The opinion is doubtless based on

²²United States Department of Labor and Bureau of Employment Security, Counseling and Placement Services For Older Workers, (September, 1956), BES No. E152, p.42

sound experience with certain individuals but may not justify arbitrary conclusions as applied to maximum hiring ages."

- "c. Employers often hesitate to hire an older worker at a lower skill level and at a lower pay rate than he had in his last employment, even though the applicant is interested in accepting such employment. This is an effective barrier to employment of older workers, since the results of placement services and personal search for employment indicate that almost half of the older workers who got new jobs had to accept lower pay.
- d. Many employers reassign their own older workers to jobs requiring less physical stamina and refuse to hire older persons from the outside on the premise that they are taking care of their own.
- e. Hiring practices with respect to older workers are not always consistent with officially stated policies. In many cases, while employers state officially that they will hire qualified workers regardless of age, in actual practice it is difficult to place with them qualified older persons.
- f. While some employers will hire skilled workers regardless of age, they prefer younger persons for semi-skilled and unskilled openings.
- g. Among office and clerical workers, if the employer has a majority of the group in a certain age bracket, he will not usually hire workers who are older. This is particularly true in large firms where entire sections of clerical workers are between the ages of 18 to 25."

This study then comes to the conclusion that lack of enlightenment on the part of employers is the most critical factor in the

older individual finding discrimination in employment. Employers have not been adequately shown how full employment can lower taxes, produce sales, move goods, and generally, promote an expanding economy without which their own survival is as precarious as that of the older workers whom they continually beat away from their door!

The Bureau of Employment Security study lists attitudes and practices on the part of the older worker himself which do not aid his obtaining employment. It would not be fair to make it appear as if employers are solely responsible for the older worker finding it difficult to obtain employment. It has been found that sometimes he is his own worst enemy. The United States Department of Labor study lists seven "bad" habits of the older interviewee for a position.²³ They are:

- "a. He too often has a defeatist attitude, and therefore, cannot impress an employer favorably.
- b. Too many older workers sense that they are slowing down and are too prone to talk about it when being interviewed by employers. On the other hand, some cover up their physical shortcomings to their disadvantage in finding a suitable new job or in getting corrective services which would enhance their employability.

²³Ibid, p.45

- c. Older workers with lengthy work experience with one employer do not know how to go about looking for a job when out of work and lack salesmanship.
- d. Many older workers dislike to accept a change in occupation, industry, or even place of employment even though there are few or no openings in their previous type of work.
- e. Many older workers lack a realistic evaluation of their own limitations. They tend to make unrealistic demands as to wages, location, work conditions, and the like.
- f. Many older workers have a sense of personal pride, and this prestige factor operates to prevent them from taking work of lesser skill or paying lower wages.
- g. Some older workers, on the other hand, tend to undersell themselves and fail to impress employers favorably."

One interviewer summarized his experience with regard to negative attitudes most adequately:

"They fear the adventure of a new job. They want a job, but not a new job. They want the one they were laid off from. That is, the job with the familiar faces and routines. They could be happier on the old job. The thought of a new job with strange faces, strange routines, not knowing where they stand, frightens them. As a defense against this frightening experience, they are almost happy when no referral is available. If one is available, they offer many and sundry excuses as to why they shouldn't go on the new job. Although this condition exists more frequently in those over 60, the competitive spirit seems to be gone among many of them and the fear of the unknown is almost insurmountable."²⁴

CHAPTER III

FURTHER EVIDENCES OF DISCRIMINATION

A. Hiring, Retention and Job Termination Problems

1. Hiring - - Management has improved its attitude in the last fifteen years in realizing that the older worker is not "useless". However, the older worker still has more difficulty than a younger man in finding a new position once they are unemployed. The older worker, it seems, fills the need when companies face local manpower shortages, or when a company is expanding.²⁵

It must be remembered that the hiring of new employees is mainly a prerogative of management. It was found by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in a 1956 study of 1,687 major agreements, covering workers, that the right of management to establish hiring policies--to set an age limit if it so chooses--has not been altered materially by union agreement. The following is an example of a union agreement which best illustrates this point:

"The right to hire, promote, transfer, discharge, or discipline, and to maintain discipline and efficiency of employees and the orderly operation of its plants is the sole responsibility of the company, subject to provisions of this agreement. In addition, the products to be manufactured, the schedules of production, the methods and processes or means of manufacturing, the direction of the working force, including its composition and number, are solely and exclusively the responsibility of the company."

²⁵United States Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Older Workers Under Collective Bargaining, Part I, (September, 1956), Bulletin No. 1199-1, p.5

This does not mean that unions do not influence decisions. The Bureau of Labor Statistics study showed that out of the 1,687 agreements, however, that only 76 showed provisions that required or encouraged the hiring of older workers.

There are certain types of clauses included in agreements which protect the older worker:

Ratio Clauses specifically required the employer to hire older workers. Such a clause provides that a certain ratio of the work force must be men who have reached middle-age.

Wage Adjustment and Transfer Clauses are sometimes utilized in union agreements to make special wage concessions to influence employers to place older men. Of course, these clauses are not limited to hiring situations. They also refer to workers who have grown old while employed by a company.

The study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that a number of agreements bore evidence that both management and the union at least attempted to eliminate age limits in hiring or discrimination against applicants on the basis of age alone. This type of clause was found in 26 of the 1,687 agreements studied by the Bureau.

Eighteen clauses were found which stipulated a ban on maximum hiring ages. These companies agreed that there would be no set maximum age limit in hiring. Ten agreements with this type of

clause were negotiated by the International Association of Machinists. Seven of them were in the West Coast aircraft industry. General statements were found in other agreements that age would not be used as a factor in discriminating against an applicant.

Generally the agreements did not suggest a specific hiring age. Unions and management do not agree, on a formal basis, to restrict workers beyond a certain age from obtaining employment with a company. However, specific age limits are oftentimes incorporated into clauses defining entrance requirements for a specific job. This is especially true for apprenticeship.

Medical examinations for new employees are often an integral part of hiring procedure. This was found by the Bureau to be a definite right of management and that management would be the sole judge as to an applicant's physical fitness. Out of the 1,687 agreements studied only six agreements contained clear understanding that there would be strict prohibition of physical examinations. Interestingly enough, all of these were found to contain no-age-limit clauses.

Prentice-Hall in 1956 found through a Personnel and Practices study that only about one out of every four employers polled place any age ceiling on the recruiting of new employees. This "ceiling" seemed to be most common among employers having 500 to

1,000 employees. Age limitations varied from 40 to 55 for manual workers, and 45 to 60 for white collar workers.²⁶

2. Retention - - Job, wage, and health protection is needed to provide the older worker with the opportunity of adding years to his working life. Also to aid him in maintaining his efficiency. This protection is, of course, available to young and older workers alike. However, many provisions in union contracts are of special importance to the older worker in this respect.

We now have the almost universal practice of providing for paid vacations and paid holidays, the two-day weekend, the deterrent effects of premium-pay requirements for the scheduling of overtime, weekend and holiday work to reduce the number of consecutive working days and, consequently, to help combat fatigue. Paid rest period, paid allowances for wash-up and clothes-changing are also factors which seem to reduce daily working pressures. The author wishes to stress at this point that under no circumstances are these practices restricted to workers who fall under collective bargaining agreements.

²⁶ See Table III, p.28

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF COMPANIES WITHIN VARIOUS SIZE GROUPS THAT
PLACE AGE CEILINGS ON THE RECRUITING OF NEW WORKERS²⁷

<u>SIZE OF COMPANY</u> NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	<u>PLANT WORKERS</u>		<u>OFFICE WORKERS</u>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1 to 500.....	24%	14%	34%	36%
501 to 1,000.....	44	45	53	55
Over 1,000.....	23	20	23	25

Note: The P-H article does not disclose the size of the sample. The author includes it, however, for its interest value.

²⁷ P-H Survey: Personnel and Practices Report, P231, p.298

However, it must be granted that collective bargaining agreements apparently have provided numerous types of wage and job protection for the older worker. Discrimination because of age is eliminated when agreements state that the setting of rates will be based on the job and not on the basis of age.²⁸

When an employer finds that a worker who is already in his employ is starting to slow down and cannot keep pace with his job--very often he wonders whether he should fire him or ignore it and make the most of a bad situation. Neither, the Bureau of Labor Statistics points out, is necessary. Usually the first one to realize that he can no longer keep up the pace is the worker himself. Employers should then realize that the older worker would prefer to accept a less demanding job. This might well be at reduced pay, rather than to continue at a poor standard of performance. It can well be appreciated that the worker would prefer a cut in responsibility and salary rather than be cut off completely. The Bureau proposes a straight forward approach on the part of the employer: a suggestion that he might be better off with some adjustment. That would certainly help a valuable and loyal employee as well as helping the overall productivity of the plant.²⁹

²⁸Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics,
Publication No. 1199-1, p.11

²⁹Ibid, p.21

It is suggested by the Small Business Administration that there are four possibilities for management to consider when they are faced with an older worker in their employ:³⁰ (1) Reassignment, (2) Reduction of job duties, (3) Part-time work, and (4) Utilization in a reserve-labor pool.

Reassignment and reduction of job duties has already been discussed by the author. Part-time work has been found by some companies to be a great aid to the older worker. Usually the older worker maintains the same job, but works fewer hours and accepts a smaller take-home pay. In a reserve-labor pool situation the older workers are shifted around to meet certain needs. These might be anything from rush hours to filling in for regulars who are sick or on vacation.

3. Job Termination - - Older workers leave their jobs for many reasons. These may be voluntary or involuntary. They may leave to take another job, they may retire, or they may be sick or unable to work. There might be a lay-off involved, this could be with the expectation of being called back when business "picks up again". However, there is the very unfortunate situation of lay-off through no fault of the older worker on a permanent basis.³¹ This is where definite discrimination rears its ugly head.

³⁰ Ibid, p.27

³¹ Ibid

Effective collective bargaining has aided in the elimination of this practice by certain employers. Except in the case of the older worker who quits, union and management agreements have been designed to protect the worker from (1) arbitrary action, (2) to cushion the worker and his dependents, and (3) to provide for an orderly and more secure retirement.³²

There are provisions which define the reasons for which an employee can be dismissed. Agreements do not permit discharge for reasons of age alone. They are inserted to stop arbitrary and discriminatory action on the part of the employer. Unions regard the increasingly appearance of these clauses in agreements as one of their biggest achievements. They realize that these safeguards would be almost useless if there were no provisions for protesting or appealing discharges--to an arbitrator. The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that most agreements establish definite procedures through which grievances may be resolved.

A worker (older or otherwise) who is being discharged may then invoke the general grievance and arbitration machinery of the agreement. Or, the union may act for the worker.

The burden of proof seems to be the responsibility of the employer. He must prove to the union representatives or the arbitrator that an employee was discharged properly under definite terms of the contract.

³²Ibid, p.28

B. Retirement, Pension, and Insurance Problems

1. Retirement - - Some companies actually would like to use more older workers, but they feel that a definite policy regarding them is almost impossible to administer. Progress in this regard has been slow because they still wonder, "How can we arrange to continue to use the older worker who is capable, and still retire those who are not physically able to keep up as they should?" It is suggested by the Small Business Administration that one solution would depend upon setting a specific time for the retirement of all workers. It states that a formal break is needed first. After this is accomplished then a company could re-employ selected workers as new, temporary employees. The advantage of the "temporary" classification would be that re-employed older workers do not continue to receive seniority rights. Thus, such a retirement program would allow the company to continue to use experienced, capable employees. By the same token, it would allow a company to reduce the cost of its pension plan.³³ Most companies do not provide retirement privileges as long as a worker is on the active payroll. Actually, in many instances, the utilization of older workers can save thousands of dollars each year. The law now allows a person under 72 to earn up to \$2400.00 a year and still be eligible for Social Security Benefits.

³³

Small Business Administration, p. 4

2. Pension - - Approximately 13 million workers in the United States are covered by private pension programs that supplement the survivors' insurance and old-age programs of the Federal government,³⁴ thus giving older people greater economic security on retirement. It has been found that about 60 percent are participants under a collective bargaining situation.

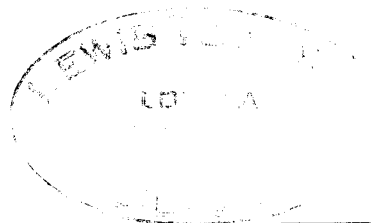
However, pension plans also pose problems for the older worker. When he seeks a job the company's pension plan often is an obstacle to his employment because a hiring-age limitation, based on pension cost considerations, is in force. If he is fortunate enough to obtain a position, he may find that he may not be able to work long enough to obtain full benefits. Pensions might also force a worker to retire who may not be financially or psychologically ready for retirement.³⁵

A possible solution is suggested by the Small Business Administration. If a pension plan is set up so that a worker with twenty years' service can retire at 65 years-of-age--then one who has been with the company for 10 years may obtain 10/20th or half the full pension.³⁶

³⁴ United States Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Older Workers Under Collective Bargaining, Part II, (October, 1956), Bulletin No. 1199-2, p. 15

³⁵ Ibid

³⁶ Small Business Administration, p. 4



3. Insurance - - Some companies seem to think that older workers increase their insurance rates. It has been found, however, that insurance companies do not take age into consideration as a sole factor in setting group insurance rates.³⁷ The Bureau of Labor Statistics has found that the treatment of workers under health and insurance plans is generally not differentiated on the basis of age. However, some plans have characteristics which do not favor the still active older worker, or the retired worker. Oftentimes the older worker faces restrictions which prohibit him from receiving benefits. Also benefits are discontinued at certain ages. Benefits have been found to be reduced because of aging during the course of employment. Such restrictions the Bureau points out affecting employed older workers are not common. However, many plans have failed to provide adequate coverage upon retirement: reducing the level of benefits, discontinuing dependents' coverage, or passing the burden of cost from the employer to the retired worker, who is permitted, however, to continue his group rate participation.

³⁷

Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics,
Bulletin No. 1199-2, p.3

CHAPTER IV

DISCRIMINATION AS EXPERIENCED BY OLDER WORKERS

A. A Survey of One-Hundred Employees (male) of The Kane Service, Chicago, Illinois

An attempt was made by the author to probe possible evidences of discrimination met by these men before they came into the employ of The Kane Service at 45-years-of-age. Seventy-one men out of the hundred approached by a mailed questionnaire responded.

Fifty-three out of the seventy-one respondents stated that they definitely thought that employers prefer to hire younger men. Fourteen stated that they thought this was not always true. Four had no comment.³⁸

1. Employers seem to prefer to hire younger men - - The four major reasons that employers prefer to hire younger men according to fifty-three positive respondents to Question 9 are:

- a. Their health is probably better.
- b. They are not as experienced, and therefore do not have to be paid as much.
- c. Better work is expected of younger workers.
- d. A company can usually count on a longer period of employment from a younger worker.

The four minor choices by the fifty-three favorable respondents are:

- a. Younger men are better educated and have more to offer a company in this respect.
- b. Younger men seem to be able to learn a job more quickly and the training period is not so costly.
- c. There is no insurance or pension problem connected with hiring the younger worker.
- d. It depends upon the type of employment.

³⁸See Table IV, p.36, 37

TABLE IV

DO YOU THINK THAT EMPLOYERS PREFER TO HIRE YOUNGER MEN, AND WHY?

YES.....	53
NO.....	14
NO ANSWER.....	4
TOTAL:	<u>71</u>

A. SUGGESTED REASONS: ("Yes" Respondents)	ORDER OF CHOICE				*TOTAL
	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	
Their health is probably better	20	15	11	2	48
They are not as experienced and therefore do not have to be paid as much	13	3	11	8	35
Younger men are more educated and have more to offer a company in this respect .	5	4	6	8	23
Younger men seem to be able to learn a job more quickly and the training period is not so costly	1	10	3	7	21
		TOTAL:			<u>127</u>

B. WRITE-IN REASONS:

Better work is expected of younger workers	29
A company can usually count on a longer period of employment from a younger worker	23
There are no insurance or pension problems connected with hiring the younger worker	12
Depends upon type of employment	5

C. NO REASON STATED: 16

*TOTAL 85

* Each of the 53 men who responded "yes" were responsible for four responses. The total response would be 212. Categories A-B-C total 212 responses.

TABLE IV (CONTINUED)

A. SUGGESTED REASONS ("No" Respondents)	ORDER OF CHOICE						*TOTAL
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	
Ability	9	0	0	4	1	0	14
Appearance	0	2	2	3	3	4	14
Health	2	0	2	3	4	3	14
Past Work Record	5	3	3	2	1	0	14
Honesty and Integrity	1	2	6	3	2	0	14
Education	2	3	1	2	2	4	14
*TOTAL							84

*Each of the 14 men who responded "no" were responsible for six responses, or total response of 84.

2. Age has no bearing on whether or not a man is hired - -

Fourteen respondents thought that age had no bearing on hiring and rated the factors listed in Question 10 on the questionnaire as almost equally important.

3. Who, or what causes the most discrimination against the "over-45" worker? - - It would appear from the seventy-one respondents to Question 12 that there are three causes of discrimination that they considered major:³⁹

- a. False propoganda about older workers accepted as true by management.
- b. Trend of the times.
- c. Younger employees.

Four areas of discrimination that appeared to them to be minor are:⁴⁰

- a. Personality factor of each individual superior.
- b. Middle Management.
- c. Top Executives.
- d. Bosses.

Many of the seventy-one respondents listed reasons as to why they thought they were discriminated against. For example:

"Young employees think that an older man is too slow. Bosses are led to believe that an older man cannot think or move fast enough."

"Everyone is inclined to believe that older folks cannot keep up with the younger workers."

"Insurance companies definitely frown upon companies hiring older men."

³⁹ See Table V, p. 39

⁴⁰ Ibid

TABLE V

WHO, OR WHAT CAUSES THE MOST DISCRIMINATION AGAINST
THE OVER-45 WORKER?

CHOICES	ORDER OF CHOICE				* TOTAL
	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	
<hr/>					
A. SUGGESTED REASONS:					
Younger employees	23	20	2	10	55
Top executives	6	6	11	17	40
Bosses	4	2	14	9	29
Middle management	8	10	5	1	25
				*TOTAL	<hr/> 148
B. WRITE-IN REASONS:					
Personality factor of each individual superior			12		
Trend of the times			38		
False propoganda about older workers accepted by superiors.....			46		
C. NO OPINION			40		
				*TOTAL	<hr/> 136

*Each of the 71 respondents were responsible for four responses.
The total responses are 284. Categories A-B-C total 284 responses.

"Many companies think they can get more work out of a younger man."

"Inasmuch as an older person usually holds a higher office or position--the younger employee would prefer to fill his shoes and leave the older worker without employment."

"Many companies want to hire younger men so they can be trained to their way of thinking."

"It is thought that younger men have more energy in the eyes of management."

"Management does not believe that an older man can keep up with today's progress."

"They look at the older man with two strikes on him already. They probably have had experience with several bad apples and figure all older people are poor risks."

"Younger people feel that the older worker has more experience than they do and are stopping them from moving ahead."

"Older people can't get jobs because it increases insurance costs for a company."

"Younger people fear the practical knowledge and skill held by older workers."

"Younger employees do not realize that experience is acquired through the years and resent older people because they have it."

"Too many people think that older people are set in their ways when this definitely is not true."

"The younger employee always is quick to agree with his boss. The older person sometimes has more knowledge than his foreman or bosses".

"Younger men can be hired more cheaply and they can train them according to the way they want things done."

"Employers seem to think that older workers are great injury risks."

"The younger employee resents the older employee for he feels and believes that his elder has more experience and will cheat him out of advancement."

"When employers can be choosy--when there is a lot of men available--they will take younger men first."

4. Do you consider yourself as reliable and efficient a worker as you were at 25 years-of-age? - - Twenty-seven of the 71 respondents think that they are just as reliable as they were as a young man (Question 11). Two thought this questionable.⁴¹ The two respondents that questioned their reliability were on the basis of health.

TABLE VI

DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF AS RELIABLE AND EFFICIENT
A WORKER AS YOU WERE AT 25 YEARS-OF-AGE?

CHOICE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
Just as reliable	27
More reliable	42
Questionable	<u>2</u>
TOTAL:	71

⁴¹See Table VI, p. 41

Some of the reasons stated for the opinion that they are now more reliable are:

"A man 45 years-of-age or older is more dependable because he has become more experienced in his line of work. He has overcome previous mistakes and poor judgements. He has a much greater sense of what his employer expects from him and is more prone to being patient."

"Older men are early-risers. They are more productive, more settled, and don't have as many home problems as a younger man."

"More settled and reliable."

"A man 45 years-of-age realizes that he is getting older and has to settle down, or he is out."

"An older worker has the interests of the company in mind."

"At this age one has more integrity. He has a sense of responsibility to management, the product, and the customer."

"Reliability is increased because a worker at this age wants to work, and good work improves his chances of being retained."

"There is a tendency at this age to show more interest in work and seeing that a job is well done."

"At this age the feeling that a company owes you a living is not as strong as when younger."

"More reliable because a man at this age is a much safer worker. He does not take so many chances. He does not require as much supervision on the job."

"A man of 45 has more responsibilities than a younger man usually. He cannot afford to take time off. He cannot afford to have an 'easy-come, easy-go' attitude. He tries to do everything to the best of his ability."

"More reliable because an older worker will not float from one job to another."

"A man over 45 is more sincere, dependable, and careful."

"The older person is more prone to understand the fact that is a company does not make profit that he will not have a job."

"More stable, takes less time off, and takes great pride in performing his duties well."

"More experience, more settled, more reserved, less rowdy, and less argumentative."

"More apt at this age to use common sense and good judgment towards any problem."

"More dependable now, and a company can use their experience to advantage in numerous ways."

"At this age you are more settled, more apt to work as a team, more prone to united effort."

"A man at this age is less apt to change jobs, and takes a much greater interest and pride in his work."

5. From what do you believe that complete job satisfaction stems? - - The three major causes for job satisfaction, according to the seventy-one respondents⁴² to Question 7 are:

- a. Security.
- b. Cooperation from a company.
- c. Advancement.

The reasons suggested by the author in the questionnaire seemed to be minor to the respondents.⁴³

⁴²See Table VII, p. 45

⁴³Ibid

6. Past work record of respondents - - It was found through response to Question 3 that forty-seven of the men left their longest period of employment after reaching the age of forty-one.⁴⁴ It was impossible for the author to tabulate any common reasons for leaving the job. The suggested reasons and the write-in reasons were many and varied. "Self-betterment financially" rated high, but was not selected by a high percentage of the respondents. Twenty-one of the respondents had less than ten years of seniority on the position they held before reaching the age of 45. Eighteen had twenty-plus years of seniority.

Regarding their shortest period of employment (Question 5) before reaching the age of 45, thirty-six stated that they stayed at a job for only one year. Three listed ten years-plus employment.

⁴⁴

See Table VIII, p. 46

TABLE VII

FROM WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE COMPLETE JOB SATISFACTION STEMS?

REASONS	ORDER OF CHOICE					*TOTAL
	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>	
<hr/>						
A. Suggested Reasons:						
How much money one earns ...	18	7	11	3	2	41
How many hours one has to work per week	1	7	4	11	6	29
A group of friendly people to work with	18	9	11	7	7	52
A boss who "sticks up" for his men	7	13	6	5	4	35
Good company benefits	6	13	8	4	11	42
				*TOTAL		<hr/> 199
B. Write-in Reasons:						
Cooperation from a company						33
Advancement						23
Security						34
The desire to work						5
Interesting work						16
C. No Reason Stated:						
						45
				*TOTAL		<hr/> 156

*Each of the 71 men were responsible for 5 responses. The total response would be 355. Categories A-B-C total 355 responses.

TABLE VIII

AT WHAT AGE DID YOU LEAVE YOUR LONGEST PERIOD OF
EMPLOYMENT BEFORE REACHING THE AGE OF 45?

AGE	RESPONDENTS
20-24	0
25-29	1
30-40	16
41-45	47
Did not answer question	7
	<hr/>
TOTAL:	71

Lay-off rated high, but again was not chosen by a high percentage of the respondents. "Wages too low" also was high, but not by a large percentage of the respondents.

7. What do you feel prevented your obtaining employment after you reached the age of 45? - - Most respondents felt that a man could get a job at this age if he was willing to accept certain concessions. (Question 16). It was felt that many older men are applying for jobs that they know themselves they have no chance of getting because they are no longer qualified.

The consensus was that many older men give up too quickly when applying for work. The respondents indicated that what one has to do is:

- a. Realize what you are capable of doing.
- b. Be satisfied that perhaps you cannot earn the higher salary of a younger man.
- c. Be willing to consider off-locations and off-hours.
- d. Plug experience and don't apologize for age.
- e. Be confident when applying.

Most respondents stated that the only thing that really stopped them from obtaining employment was personnel policies and practices that had set-hiring rules. Some of the statements by respondents regarding this are:

"Sometimes you apply for a job, but even though you know you can handle the job, you are told you are too old."

"My experience of sixteen years meant nothing when I applied for jobs--the first question and the last question always was 'How old are you'?"

"I was told that I was qualified, but most employees were 30 to 35 years old and they thought that an older person would not fit in."

The author could give many more such examples of statement from the respondents. They all come to the same conclusion:

"Jobs would be easy to get if employers would just hire on the basis of ability and not age!"

CHAPTER V

THE UNSOUNDNESS OF DISCRIMINATION

A. Assets of Older Workers

The U. S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers found through a 1956 survey that there is less turnover among older workers than among the younger element. Older workers are more inclined to hold on to their jobs once they have them. Attitude surveys have shown that the older worker tends to be more satisfied with his job. They are more appreciative of what is being done for them, and are less demanding.⁴⁵

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that workers under 20 years-of-age are absent almost 6 days out of every 100. The 45-and-over group were found to be absent only three days out of every 100.⁴⁶

According to the Small Business Administration older workers excel in insight, judgment, etc. Greater experience on their jobs, and in adjusting themselves to their industrial surroundings is a distinct advantage of the older worker. A broader knowledge allows them to be more positive in handling assignments. It is obvious that these abilities do, in many instances, continue to improve with age and experience.

The Department of Labor points out that the older worker is more painstaking and accurate. What he lacks in speed is compen-

⁴⁵ Small Business Administration, p. 2

⁴⁶ Ibid

sated for by these attributes. Oftentimes quality is more important than quantity. Patience and mature judgment is then invaluable.

A Bureau of Labor Statistics study shows that older workers tend to take fewer risks; they are more careful. Comparative accident rates have substantiated this. Records show that over-45 workers have less than the average number of disabling injuries. The highest frequency rate in the non-disabling injuries is in the younger age grouping of 25-29. The lowest is in the 70-74 age bracket.⁴⁷

Prentice-Hall in a 1956 study found that the older employee that knows well his duties and responsibilities very often is found to need considerably less supervision than others;⁴⁸ that the older worker actually works best with little supervision, or in small groups. Continual supervision can be expensive, and this quality certainly stands out significantly in favor of the older group.

The Small Business Administration points out that industrial physicians have suggested that older persons usually have greater emotional balance. They have achieved a realistic acceptance of what they can or cannot do. World War II brought this fact clearly to mind.

⁴⁷United States Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, Job Performance and Age: A Study in Measurement, (September, 1956), Bulletin No. 1203, p. 40

⁴⁸SP-H Survey: Personnel and Practices Report, P231, p. 297

Companies found that the older worker during this national emergency stepped into the place of the younger worker most adequately and helped produce the desperately needed equipment and supplies. The ability of the older worker stood out at this time. The end of the conflict saw 3/4 of a million workers who were eligible to retire. This group was still holding the fort -- serving their companies in a manner beyond reproach.

B. How The Older Worker Performs

Dartnell in a survey of 100 companies, regarding hiring older employees, found that there were very few derogatory remarks by employers concerning the performance of older workers. Sixty percent described the work of oldsters as "good". Thirty percent responded "excellent", and only five percent stated "fair".⁴⁹ The remaining five percent answered with such statements as the following:

V. M. Helay, personnel manager, First Bancredit Corp., St. Paul, Minnesota

"Our experience has been good. Generally speaking, the older employees have had wonderful attendance records. They have been steady and loyal employees".

Dick H. Young, partner, Young Heating Co., Waterloo, Iowa

"We have four men over 65 who have been retired from larger companies. They are men who have always been busy and want to continue producing. They are very reliable employees."

⁴⁹ Dartnell Survey, p. 4

Compensation consultant, name withheld

"We do not have any age restrictions on hiring. I imagine we are guilty of the same kind of unconscious discrimination that many others share. If we faced choosing between two persons of equal qualifications, we would tend to hire the younger person. This tendency is probably more pronounced in the case of men."

Personnel manager, retail store

"We have one secretary 47 and one 52. Both are very efficient. If employing a new secretary, however, we select one under 30. One bookkeeper is 48 years of age, has been with us 26 years and is very efficient. If hiring a new one, we wouldn't hire one over 40."

C. Comparison With Younger Workers

The concensus is clearly, from the Dartnell Survey, that the older worker is as good--or better--than a younger worker. Prentice-Hall surveyed a cross section of concerns ranging in size from 100 to 50,000 employees. The overwhelming majority thought that older workers are superior to their juniors in such things as loyalty to employer, turn-over, dependability, etc. Other areas such as quality of work in clerical jobs, and morale, also showed that a majority of employers preferred the older worker. One important area prefers the younger worker, and that was in respect to the volume of manual work. However, it was found that most personnel men believe that the quality of manual work by the older worker was as good or better than that of the younger group.⁵⁰

The author includes Table IX, copyrighted in 1956 by Prentice-Hall to illustrate employer opinion of older workers compared with younger workers in important job characteristics. This Table does show favorable ratings for the older worker, and especially of their ability to meet job requirements.⁵¹

51

See Table IX, p. 54

TABLE IX

P-H SURVEY OF JOB CHARACTERISTICS OF OLDER WORKERS⁵²

Compared to Younger Workers

	<u>Same</u>	<u>Less</u>	<u>Greater</u>
1. Work volume (clerical job).....	60%	12%	28%
2. Work volume (manual job).....	38	53	9
3. Work quality (clerical job).....	45	3	52
4. Work quality (manual job).....	50	9	41
5. Getting along with others	62	13	25
6. Absenteeism (due to illness) ...	31	35	34
7. Absenteeism (deliberate	17	79	4
8. Accidents (on the job)	44	46	10
9. Recovery time (on-the-job injuries)	32	14	54
10. Lateness	30	68	2
11. Turnover	15	84	1
12. Company loyalty	32	2	66
13. Morale	36	9	55
14. Acceptance of new ideas	46	49	5
15. Submitting suggestions	49	35	16
16. General dependability	24	0	76
17. Need for supervision	42	38	20

Source: Prentice-Hall, Personnel and Practices Report,
P. 231

Size of sample not indicated.

⁵²

P-H Survey, Personnel and Practices Report, P231, p. 297

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Employment practices have seemingly failed to adjust to alarming population changes. Individuals who find themselves unemployed as they grow older are in an ever-more unfavorable position.

The population is aging noticeably. Between 1900 and 1955, while the total population had doubled, the number 45-64 tripled. Those who had reached the age of 56 quadrupled. Work-life expectancy has decreased, while life expectancy has increased. Studies show that by 1975 we may have an increase to 29 percent in the age group of over-45's. This is compared with the 18 percent of the U. S. population in 1955.

Society itself has created unnecessary discrimination against this age group. This prejudice has no factual basis or moral justification as the studies cited prove. Too much emphasis has been placed on youth. Perhaps this is due to the dynamic nature of our national development with its pioneering traditions.

Unfavorable generalizations and beliefs have been accepted by employers and have been causing restrictive policies and practices in hiring the older employee, principally because of age.

Older workers can be a bigger asset than many companies

realize. Millions are being used now, but more millions are available and are being overlooked. Misconceptions on the part of management concerning absenteeism, greater accident rates, less productivity, and that they harbor old-fashioned ideas are completely disputed. They have been found to be as good as, or better than their juniors. They are absent less, have fewer accidents, produce at comparable levels at least until the late fifties. They have been found to retain youthful, forward-looking attitudes.

The author would not argue that older workers do not have certain limitations. Physical strength, of course, decreases with age. Hand-in-hand with this, is the decrease in speed. However, it must be remembered that some jobs require neither. Careful selection and placement is the answer.

The older worker has been and continues to be aware that he is discriminated against. This is obvious by the cross-section of 71 men that responded to the questionnaire of the author. Unions have been aware of the situation and have and are continuing to make agreements with management which bar discrimination against the older workers.

Management has the primary function of eliminating discrimination. To improve the use of forty-plus workers there are three basic steps which they might follow:

(1) Hire on the basis of ability without regard to age - -

Traditional age limits must be set aside, and a complete new look must be taken of hiring policies and practices. The question must be asked, "Are they realistic under today's conditions?" Finding enough people to fill growing job needs isn't possible today without more adequate use of America's older workers.

Avoiding maximum hiring ages in advertising, job specifications, and in placing orders with employment agencies must be sought. These arbitrary age limits cheat employers out of excellent prospects before they even see them.

Physical specifications must fit the actual requirements of the job. A study of each job should be made for a more precise assessment of physical specifications. Many times a Samson is not needed.

(2) Make better use of older workers already on the payroll-

Reassign any middle-aged or older workers who can be more useful or effective at another job. This can be to supervisory and other jobs requiring judgment, knowledge and experience; to jobs requiring custom or quality work; jobs in which they train new employees; jobs off the production line; part-time jobs or work on a more desirable shift, or to inspection work or other light jobs. The employer would do well to realize that some unions have made studies of older worker problems and might be able to make some valuable suggestions.

(3) Hold on to older workers who are able and willing to work. Don't retire people prematurely - - - An adjustment of retirement and pension plans should be made to keep workers past the traditional retirement level. Plans must not be so restrictive. New policies must provide for part-time as well as full-time work.

Medical check-ups should be used as a measure of physical fitness. This would be the major factor in deciding whether a worker can continue or whether it is necessary to reduce his working schedule.

Unions should be consulted and will usually agree with reducing work schedules of selected older workers.

Training programs and group discussions for older people will prepare them for retirement, and in some cases will include part-time work.

The older worker himself must realize the poison of a negative attitude on his part. He must overcome any idea that he is worthless. As mentioned previously by the author, many people are their own worst enemies when it comes to employment. "A man is as old as he feels," is perhaps a good criteria for this age bracket to follow and practice. Desire to work is not enough, the older worker must be made to realize that he must sell himself to employers.

It is obvious that discrimination is more predominant in certain fields of work than in others. A more adequate study is needed to supply the answers as to why the older worker is not more active in these areas. Limitations of older workers and job limitations as suggested by the author certainly cannot be applicable or prohibitive to employment in all jobs which show utilization of the older worker as very low.

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APPENDIX I

January 14, 1959

Dear Mr.

You have been chosen to be a part of a very important survey! The enclosed questionnaire is one to which we hope you will give your immediate and careful consideration.

The Kane Service is in the type of business where the utilization of a man who is over 45 years-of-age has proved most effective. However, unfortunately, this attitude is apparently not shared by many employers.

I am working on my thesis at Loyola University in Chicago, and hope to receive my Master's Degree in June, 1959. In order to obtain accurate information for this thesis--I must rely upon you, my co-workers.

This questionnaire is being sent to one hundred (100) of our employees who came into our employ after reaching the age of 45. In this thesis, I wish to test the point that the older worker is a desirable employee. I shall also try to find out if most employers do realize this, as evidenced by their willingness to hire a man who has reached this age bracket.

If you sit down RIGHT NOW and complete this questionnaire--then mail it immediately--you are taking a step in helping me to determine whether or not there is discrimination against the older worker.

Please find enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope to return this questionnaire. REMEMBER! All information will be kept strictly confidential and your name will not be used in any way.

If you have any questions about completing the questionnaire, please feel free to call me at MOhawk 4-6181.

Sincerely yours,

THE KANE SERVICE

Charles M. Wiltfang
Assistant Personnel Manager

CMW-a
Enc: 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

NAME _____ HOME ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____ OCCUPATION _____

EMPLOYED BY _____ NUMBER OF YEARS EMPLOYED _____

~~TOP SECRET--NOFORN~~

Please remember that any information supplied on this questionnaire will be held strictly confidential and that your name will not be used in any way.

Question 1. What is your age? _____

Question 2. What is your longest period of employment before coming to The Kane Service?

A. What Company? _____

B. What job? _____

C. How many years were you employed at this company? _____

Question 3. At what age did you leave your longest place of employment? _____

Question 4. Number reasons for leaving your longest period of employment. Number first choice as "1"--second choice as "2", etc. until you have exhausted the reasons which apply to you.

A. Self-betterment financially _____

B. Work too difficult _____

C. Did not enjoy work _____

D. No chance for advancement _____

E. Did not like boss _____

F. Did not like co-workers _____

G. Working conditions poor _____

H. Other Reasons (list as briefly as possible) _____

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE TWO

QUESTIONNAIRE

Page Two

Question 5. What is your shortest period of employment? (Before coming to The Kane Service).

- A. What Company? _____
- B. Your job? _____
- C. How many years (or months) were you employed by this company? _____

Question 6. Why did you leave this company? (Check one, or as many reasons as apply to you).

- A. Wages too low _____
- B. Justified lay-off _____
- C. Fired _____ (if you check this space, please list below reasons for termination).

D. Other reasons: (list as briefly as possible) _____

Question 7. Do you believe that complete satisfaction from a job stems from: (Number reasons: Number first choice as "1"--second choice as "2", etc., until you have exhausted the suggested reasons).

- A. How much money one earns _____
- B. How many hours one has to work per week _____
- C. A group of friendly people to work with _____
- D. A boss who "sticks up" for his men _____
- E. Good company benefits _____
- F. Other reasons (list as briefly as possible) _____

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE THREE

QUESTIONNAIRE

Page Three

Question 8. Do you think that most employers prefer to hire younger men? (Check one): Yes _____ No _____

Question 9. If you answered "yes" to the above question, please answer this question. Young men are preferred by employers (men under 45) because: (Number reasons: Number your first choice as "1"--second choice as "2", etc., until you have exhausted the suggested reasons).

- A. Their health is probably better _____
- B. They are not experienced and therefore do not have to be paid as much _____
- C. Younger men these days are more educated and have more to offer a company in this respect _____
- D. Younger men seem to be able to learn a job more quickly and the training period is not so costly _____
- E. Other Reasons: (list as briefly as possible) _____

Question 10. If you answered "no" to Question 8 please answer this question. Age has no bearing on whether a man is hired--it is mainly based upon: (Number reasons: Number first choice as "1"--second choice as "2", etc., until you have exhausted the suggested reasons).

- A. His ability _____
- B. Appearance _____
- C. Health _____
- D. Past work record _____
- E. Honesty and Integrity _____
- F. Education _____
- G. Other Reasons (list as briefly as possible) _____

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Question 11. Do you consider yourself as reliable and efficient a worker as you were at 25 years-of-age? (Check one)

A. Just as reliable _____

B. More reliable _____

C. Questionable

(If you checked "More Reliable" or "Questionable" - please list below as briefly as possible your reasons:)

Question 12. Who do you think is most prejudiced against the "over-45" employee? (Number choices: number first choice as "1"--second choice as "2", etc., until you have exhausted the suggested choices).

A. Younger employees _____

C. Bosses

B. Top executives _____

D. Middle management _____

E. Other Factors (list briefly) _____

Question 13. Please list briefly below the reason or reasons that you believe the individual or individuals that you checked in Question #12 were prejudiced against hiring the older worker (over 45): _____

Question 14. List briefly your personal reasons as to why you believe the worker who is over 45 years-of-age is a valuable asset to any company. _____

Question 15. List the last job you had before reaching the age of 45:

Company _____

Position _____

How Long Were You Employed? _____

Reason For Leaving _____

Question 16. List below anything else which you feel prevented your obtainment of employment after you reached the age of 45 _____

Thank you most sincerely for your cooperation!

THE KANE SERVICE
Charles M. Wiltfang
Assistant Personnel Manager

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Charles Martin Wiltfang has been read and approved by three members of the faculty of the Institute of Social and Industrial Relations.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Social and Industrial Relations.

May 21, 1959
Date

Philomena Mullady
Signature of Advisor