

# 7 Workplace Ageism Trends

While older employees are often some of the most knowledgeable and experienced, employers often overlook them in favor of younger workers with less experience. Despite laws designed to protect older workers, such as the Age Discrimination in Employment Act, many workers over age 40 have more difficulty finding employment, keeping their jobs or advancing in the workplace than younger workers. However, employers who hire or retain older employees may gain a competitive edge in today's tight labor market because of these employees' extensive backgrounds and knowledge.

## What Is Ageism?

Ageism refers to the stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination toward individuals based on age. In the workplace, this occurs when an applicant or employee is treated less favorably because of their age.

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The following are seven ageism trends in the workplace:

### 1 Delayed Retirement Leads to an Older Workforce

Many Americans delay retirement because of changes in retirement benefits and cost-of-living increases. As a result, workers over the age of 65 are the fastest-growing workforce segment, which is increasing instances of ageism in the workplace.

### 2 Ageism Remains a Major Workplace Issue

Despite federal, state and local legal protections for older workers, ageism continues to be common in the workplace. Ageist actions cost the U.S. economy an estimated \$850 billion, according to a report by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the Economist Intelligence Unit.

### 3 Workers Over 65 Have Fewer Opportunities

While workers over age 55 make up nearly a quarter of the U.S. workforce, labor force participation drops to 26.6% once workers reach age 65, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

### 4 Women File More Age Complaints Than Men

Men filed twice as many age complaints as women in 1990, but starting in 2010, women began filing more complaints and continue to do so today, according to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

### 5 Ageism Leads to Longer Job Searches

According to the AARP, 76% of older workers believe their job search will last longer than three months due to ageism. After the Great Recession, it took older workers twice as long to find a new job than younger workers, according to a study by the Urban Institute.

### 6 Ageism May Add Billions to Health Costs

According to a Yale School of Public Health study, ageism costs the U.S. economy \$63 billion per year in health care by creating greater stress, which can impact many health outcomes and lead to serious health events, such as stroke or heart attack.

### 7 Age Discrimination Is More Subtle Than Other Forms of Workplace Discrimination

Age discrimination tends to be more subtle than other forms of workplace discrimination, which makes it more difficult to prove and root out.

Awareness of these trends can help employers develop strategies to better integrate older workers into their workforce, which can expand talent pools and decrease the risks of violating legal protections for older employees.

Contact us for more information.