New York City
Age Smart Employer Awards
A Strategy to Encourage Business to Hire and Retain Older Workers

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A New Time in the History of the World:

Young Children & Older People as a Percentage of Global Population
Projected Future Life Course

Bismark’s Life Course
The life of a person during the 1880s
The Age Smart Employer Awards

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMGB6kLre0c
Funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the Age Smart Employer Awards address the needs of both businesses and older workers by:

- Researching best practices of NYC employers, especially small businesses
- Identifying and honoring employers who value workers of all ages through an awards program
- Supporting businesses interested in hiring and retaining older workers
Methodology to Develop Resources for Employers

- Conducted qualitative interviews and site visits with 100 small business owners in NYC, and analyzed their experience.

- Conducted secondary research and evaluated policies and practices to hire and retain older workers.
Employer Problems

1. Skills shortage in manufacturing & health care
2. Costly and disruptive turnover (service industries)
3. Lack of institutional knowledge
4. Lack of interpersonal communication skills
Food Services: 10 Ways to Reduce Turnover and Retain the Workers You Need
https://www.mailman.columbia.edu/research/age-smart-employer/food-services

Manufacturing: 10 Tips from NYC Small Businesses to Retain and Train Industrial Workers

Non-Profits: 5 Ways Non-Profits are Managing for Succession
https://www.mailman.columbia.edu/research/age-smart-employer/non-profit-organizations

Family Business: 10 Ways Family-Owned Businesses Successfully Transition to the Next Generation of Ownership
https://www.mailman.columbia.edu/research/age-smart-employer/family-owned-business
Age Smart Compendium of Policies and Practices
https://www.mailman.columbia.edu/research/age-smart-employer/compendium

10 Advantages Retaining and Hiring Older Workers
https://www.mailman.columbia.edu/research/age-smart-employer/advantages-older-workers
Older workers are skilled and experienced
They stay in jobs longer and take fewer days off
They have a strong work ethic
They retain a business’s knowledge and networks
The perceived technology gap can be overcome
The best teams are multigenerational
Older workers play a critical role in training the next generation of workers.
They provide customers with consistency and personal attention
Older workers attract more business
Older workers are part of the business brand
Age Smart Policies & Practices:
Welcome experience in new hires
Age Smart Policies & Practices:
Clear paths to advancement/promotion from within
Age Smart Policies & Practices:
Cross-training and mentoring
Age Smart Policies & Practices: Access to training and life-long learning
Age Smart Policies & Practices:
Work hours and location are flexible
Age Smart Policies & Practices:
Workers have input into making a safe, healthy work place
Age Smart Policies & Practices:
Job restructuring to fit abilities of worker
Age Smart Policies & Practices:
Workers can retire in phases, gradually reducing work
Age Smart Policies & Practices:
Retirees can work part-time or as consultants
Age Smart Policies & Practices:
Comprehensive benefits & wellness plans
Age Smart Employer Awards: Process

- Create Age Smart Employer application from the policies and practices
- Outreach through business associations, businesses interviewed, employers who hire senior trainees, skilled crafts, referrals
- Panel of judges (leaders in business, workforce, occupational health, academe) evaluates the applications to select finalists.
- Employee survey (universal or random sample) is conducted for all finalists
- Judges select “Winners” from among finalists
Age Smart Employer Awards: Ceremony

- Award ceremony

  - Festive breakfast

  - Employers are invited to bring employees and other guests

  - Speakers: business leaders, policy-makers, awardees

  - Physical award
Age Smart Employer Awards Ceremony
Impact

- US Federal agency charged with worker safety (NIOSH) used policies and practices for their older workers’ website

- Promotion and recruitment of leadership from Award winners due to all their publicity.

- Other localities adopted (Montgomery County; Maryland; Portland, Oregon)

- Other localities considering adapting/adopting (Vermont; Ontario, Canada, YOU)

The Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging

Giving everyone an opportunity to age as well as anyone can.

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