JOBS

To Get a Job in Your 50s, Maintain Friendships in Your 40s.

We hear it all the time: People who are over 50 take longer to find jobs than younger people. Connie Wanberg, a professor at the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota, had long heard **gloom-and-doom** stories to that effect, but she wondered how strong the data was to support them.

Very, as it turned out. According to a study by Professor Wanberg and others, job seekers over 50 were unemployed 5.8 weeks longer than those from the ages of 30 to 49. That number rose to 10.6 weeks when the comparison group was from 20 to 29. Professor Wanberg and three other researchers — Darla J. Hamann, Ruth Kanfer and Zhen Zhang — arrived at those numbers by analyzing and synthesizing hundreds of studies by economists, 10 sociologists and psychologists.

But it is important not to jump to conclusions about the cause, Professor Wanberg said. "It's not very unusual for everybody to think that the reason for the difficulty in finding jobs at 50s is discrimination," she said. That can sometimes be the case, but the reality is that the behavior required to find work does not play to many older people's strengths. Once they become aware of this, they can act to compensate.

In **their** study, the researchers found that older people on average had smaller social networks than younger people, Professor Wanberg said. This is not necessarily bad — as we age, many of us find that the quality of our relationships is more important than the quantity. But in the job search process, the number of connections we maintain in our professional and personal networks is often **critical**.

As people age, they also tend to stay in the same job longer, consistent with a pattern of wanting to put down roots. During that time, the skills people have learned and the job search strategies they once used may become outdated — especially as technology evolves ever more quickly.

The cure for **these drawbacks** is fairly straightforward. Once you hit your early 40s, even if you are not looking for a job, work to learn new skills and stretch yourself, Professor Wanberg said. Also, keep your networks strong by staying in touch with former colleagues and classmates, along with current co-workers and clients whom you don't see regularly, she said.

Finding a job after 50 doesn't have to be as discouraging as it is often portrayed to be, Professor Wanberg said. Just recognize that some of the obstacles you face are inherent to the aging process, she said. She stressed that her findings reflected only averages and that individual behavior varies greatly. Certainly, many older people maintain wide social circles and often learn skills. But in general, older job seekers must take more steps to find employment than younger ones, she said.

Once older workers do find a new employer, they can use their, knowledge, wisdom and emotional intelligence - qualities that older people often possess in abundance - to thrive in their new positions.

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Question 11 According to the study, which age group has the least unemployed time?
A. less than 20
B. from 20 to 29
C. from 30 to 49
D. over 50

Question 12 The word "gloom-and-doom" in the first paragraph could be best replaced by _____.
A. hopeless
B. interesting
C. cheerful
D. strange

Question 13 In paragraph 3, what best paraphrases the sentence "It's not very unusual for everybody to think that the reason for the difficulty in finding jobs at 50s is discrimination"?
A. People do not usually think about the cause of discrimination in finding jobs at 50s.
B. People do not usually think that discrimination is the reason for the difficulty at 50s.
C. People commonly believe that finding jobs at 50s causes discrimination.
D. People commonly believe that discrimination makes finding jobs at 50s difficult.

Question 14 The word "their" in paragraph 4 refers to _____.
A. the researchers
B. older people
C. social networks
D. younger people

Question 15 The word "critical" in paragraph 4 could be best replaced by
A. huge
B. demanding
C. trivial
D. important

Question 16 What advice does Professor Wanberg give to over 50-year-old job seekers when they are still at early 40s?
A. maintaining small but strong social networks
B. becoming aware of their strengths
C. learning new skills and keeping wide social circles
D. staying in the same job longer.

Question 17 The word "these drawbacks" in paragraph 6 refers to
A. outdated skills and job search strategies
B. small numbers of connection networks

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C. lost social circles with co-workers and clients
D. low quality and small quantity of relationships

Question 18 What of the following statements is not true according to the passage?
A. Finding a job after 50 is not at all hopeless
B. Older people hardly learn new skills and maintain wide social networks
C. Older people often have many good qualities
D. Findings of the study does not hold true for all older people.

Question 19 Which of the following would best describe Professor Wanberg's attitude towards finding a job after 50?
A. hopeless
B. frustrated
C. optimistic
D. discouraging

Question 20 What is the purpose of this passage?
A. To report the difficulties of finding jobs at 50s.
B. To discuss the advantages and disadvantages of 50-year-old job seekers.
C. To warn people against skipping jobs at later ages.
D. To raise awareness on the importance of maintaining social connections and learning new skills at early stages.

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