

6 Magic Words for Candidates Over 40

Dean Tracy - Recruiter, Coach, Speaker

As a recruiter and career coach, working with and supporting candidates at a National level, there is a consistent self-induced impression that if you are over 40 years old and in a job search mode, that “*I’m probably too old to work for any company at this point.*” Snap out of it!

In addressing these categorical opinions among the candidates, my question to them is always the same – “*Why do you allow your age to hold you captive to success in the job market?*”

The only person that needs to claim responsibility for the way that your age comes across to the Hiring Manager or Recruiter, is you. You must be the *champion*, not the *casualty* in defining success in/with/to your search strategy.

The six points below serve as a checklist of ways to serve up your age in a way that elevates your confidence, instead of using your age as an obstacle in your search.

1. Experienced vs. Veteran

Your next employer is looking for someone who is a natural leader and knows the benefits of success, so the way that you market your experience must reflect your energy and commitment to the company or the team.

Promoting your background as “experienced” is defining a level of excellence that the hiring company will want. It also represents a degree of actionable, hands-on contributions in your background, demonstrating your trait as someone who is making an investment in the team as opposed to simply participating in a specific task.

2. Proof vs. Claims

Showcase your evidence-based background in your resume, not your claims. Nearly everyone will claim that they can be successful in a specific role however, once you are able to identify your tangible results, you instantly become memorable and of higher caliber and value to your prospective company or role.

Professional maturity is a critical element when showing your interest in a position. To be considered as a suitable candidate with any company or corporate culture, you must be able to *demonstrate* your capability, drive and excellence in everything that you do.

3. Polish vs. Dust

Your “professional curb appeal” is critical when applying to any position. Be sure to take intentional steps towards presenting yourself in a way to your next employer that will demonstrate your relevance to their corporate culture.

Recognize that you may have to make some upgrades to your wardrobe, and you must dress for the job you want, not the job you have. Have your suit cleaned and get it altered if necessary to make sure it fits you properly. Polish your shoes don’t just dust them off. Make sure that your personal presentation is the best that it can possibly be!

4. Wisdom vs. Well-Versed

Companies in today's saturated market are looking for professional leaders, not amateur followers. A great leader is one that runs to conflicts, not from them. Having said this, it's also true that great leaders are filled with lots of insight and wisdom.

Having insight and wisdom to articulate challenges and solutions in your next company will prove instrumental in driving your success. A person who is well-versed on the company or the methodologies may not necessarily have the forethought or capabilities to effectively manage roadblocks and obstacles that may be put in front of them. However, the person who possesses the insight and wisdom in being mindful of potential hiccups will be better served in managing proactive measures to overcome them!

5. Experience vs. Age

First impressions are critical, and you never want to guide the discussion around the topic of your age. You can't change your age, so it's imperative that you use it to your advantage!

Remind your next employer that you possess the experience to drive results in your job while maintaining the depth of knowledge to hit the ground running, and the capacity to be scalable in developing a long-term sustainable organization.

We all know that your age in the interview or selection process can be the game-changer along the way, but if you represent yourself as a "Solution Provider" for their company, you will be much better positioned to engage as a key contributor to their success. Be sure to remind them that you foster a calming influence in the workplace, while injecting professional maturity into what can sometimes be a very stressful and chaotic environment.

6. Hands-On vs. Pointing

Today, hiring companies are looking for candidates who have solid hands-on experience in their professional discipline. They are not interested in someone who sits in a high-back leather chair, with their feet on the desk and the phone in their ear while pointing and shouting tasks and duties to their team.

Hiring Managers want to know that you are a trusted advisor on their team, and that your hands-on capabilities will serve them well in meeting their goals. They need to know that you are not entirely dependant upon someone else to get the job done and in a pinch, you aren't afraid to jump in and become part of the solution. This also demonstrates your teaming philosophy, which is always a winning attribute to have!

Go get 'em!

Dean Tracy is a professional recruiter, public speaker and career coach based in Northern California with an emphasis on placing and coaching professionals at a national level. He is the Founder of the National Leadership & Career Management Advisory Group and also serves on the Leadership Team for Job Connections, which is recognized as one of Northern California's largest and most reputable professional networking groups.