

**Center for Retirement Research at Boston College  
Survey on Employer Attitudes towards Older Workers  
Survey #1  
1/14/2020**

**Introduction**

Hello, may I please speak to the Human Resources manager or officer for your organization?

**[WHEN APPROPRIATE PERSON IS ON THE PHONE]** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am calling on behalf of the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. We are conducting a brief survey on issues related to the employment of older workers. The survey will take about ten minutes and your answers are strictly confidential. This is not a sales call. If you choose to participate in this study, you will have the option to receive a summary of findings, once published.

**[REQUIRED INFORMED CONSENT SCRIPT]** This study is for research purposes only. Participation is voluntary and you may skip/decline to answer any question(s).

You are not required to provide contact information. Any personally identifiable information voluntarily supplied will remain strictly confidential and will be destroyed upon completion of the study. Report(s) produced using these survey data will not release or affiliate any findings with the name of any institution or individual.

There are no direct benefits of participating in this study beyond the personal satisfaction of contributing to the advancement of research on older workers. The main potential risk is personal discomfort caused by being asked about possibly discriminating behaviors and/or attitudes within your workplace.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study, please contact the Boston College Institutional Review Board at (617) 552-4778 or irb@bc.edu.

To start, I'd like to ask a few questions to see if you qualify for this study.

S1. First, are you either the sole or a shared decision-maker in your company regarding HR decisions such as hiring, job termination, and employee benefits?

	<u>Total</u> (n=401)
Yes .....	100%
No <b>[ASK FOR DECISION-MAKER; THANK &amp; TERMINATE]</b> .....	--
(VOL) Don't know/Refused <b>[THANK &amp; TERMINATE]</b> .....	--

S5. Are you employed by the company for which you are a decisionmaker, or are you employed by a third-party human resource company or a professional employer organization?

	<u>Total</u> (n=401)
Yes, employed by company .....	98%
No, employed by third-party organization .....	2
(VOL) Don't know/Refused <b>[THANK &amp; TERMINATE]</b> .....	--

\*Less than 0.5%

S2. Approximately how many full-time employees does your organization employ? Please include employees at all of your organization’s locations. [READ LIST]

	<u>Total</u> (n=401)
5 to 9 employees [QUOTA GROUP 1].....	5%
10 to 19 employees [QUOTA GROUP 1] .....	2
20 to 49 employees [QUOTA GROUP 1] .....	5
50 to 99 employees [QUOTA GROUP 2].....	12
100 to 499 employees [QUOTA GROUP 3] .....	25
500 to 999 employees [QUOTA GROUP 4] .....	25
1,000 or more employees [QUOTA GROUP 5].....	25
(VOL) Don't know/Refused [THANK AND TERMINATE] .....	--

<b>QUOTA GROUPS [EXCLUDE GOVERNMENT ENTITIES, POSTAL, AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS]</b>	
<b>GROUP 1:</b>	50 completes
<b>GROUP 2:</b>	50 completes
<b>GROUP 3:</b>	100 completes
<b>GROUP 4:</b>	100 completes
<b>GROUP 5:</b>	100 completes
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>400 completes</b>

S3. Which one of the following best describes your business? [READ LIST]

	<u>Total</u> (n=401)
For-profit.....	77%
Non-profit.....	23
Or Government agency or public school [THANK & TERMINATE] .....	--
(VOL) Don't know/Refused [THANK & TERMINATE] .....	--

<p><b>AS NEEDED</b> (in handout for interviewers -- for all questions)</p> <p>For the purposes of this study, we are grouping workers into 2 general categories: “professionals” and “support staff and production workers.”</p> <p>By “professionals”, we mean employees such as managers and executives, doctors, architects, lawyers, accountants, professional sales staff and other higher level, non-clerical office workers.</p> <p>By “support staff and production workers”, we mean clerical workers, tradesmen, like plumbers and electricians, and production, factory or food service workers.</p> <p><b>[UPON REQUEST]</b> The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College is conducting this study. For questions or comments, you may call Andy Eschtruth (pronounced ‘S-ch-truth’) at (617) 552-1729.</p>
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For the purposes of this study, we are grouping workers into 2 general categories: “professionals” and “support staff and production workers.”

S4a. By “professionals”, we mean employees such as managers and executives, and other higher level, non-clerical office workers.

Approximately, what percentage of your organization’s employees would you consider to be professionals?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Less than 10% .....	9%
10% to 19%.....	16
20% to 29%.....	16
30% to 39%.....	10
40% to 59%.....	15
60% to 79%.....	16
80% or more.....	8
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	9
Median.....	30 percent

S4b. By “support staff and production workers”, we mean clerical workers, tradesmen, and factory or food service workers.

So, can we assume that the remaining [100-Sa response] percent are support staff and production workers?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Less than 20% .....	5%
20% to 29%.....	7
30% to 39%.....	7
40% to 59%.....	15
60% to 79%.....	21
80% to 89%.....	17
90% or more.....	18
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	9
Median.....	70 percent

Q1a. Approximately, what percentage of your professional workforce is over age 55?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Less than 5% .....	8%
5% to 9%.....	4
10% to 14%.....	8
15% to 19%.....	5
20% to 29%.....	19
30% to 39%.....	11
40% to 49%.....	7
50% or more.....	20

(VOL) Don't know/Refused ..... 16  
 Median.....25 percent

Q1b. And, what percentage of your support and production workforce is over age 55?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Less than 5% .....	7%
5% to 9% .....	4
10% to 14%.....	7
15% to 19%.....	12
20% to 29%.....	20
30% to 39%.....	10
40% to 49%.....	8
50% or more.....	12
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	19
Median.....	20 percent

[COMBINED PERCENTAGE OF OLDER WORKERS FOR ENTIRE ORGANIZATION]

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Less than 5% .....	6%
5% to 9% .....	5
10% to 14%.....	7
15% to 19%.....	11
20% to 24%.....	10
25% to 29%.....	8
30% to 39%.....	12
40% to 49%.....	8
50% or more.....	11
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	22
Median.....	25 percent

Q2a. To the best of your knowledge, what is the average tenure of employees in professional positions at your organization? [ASK OPEN-ENDED AND CODE]

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Under 2 years.....	*%
2 to 4 years .....	4
5 to 9 years .....	18
10 or more years.....	66
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	11

Q2b. And, what is the average tenure of employees in support and production positions? [ASK OPEN-ENDED AND CODE]

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Under 2 years.....	2%
2 to 4 years .....	13
5 to 9 years .....	22
10 or more years.....	50
(vol) Don't know/Refused .....	13

Q3a. When hiring for a professional position, how important is the promotion potential of the applicant? Would you say that it is...[READ LIST]?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Important .....	42%
Somewhat important.....	39
Not important.....	16
(vol) Don't know/Refused .....	2

Q3b. And, when hiring for a support and production position, how important is the promotion potential of the applicant? [READ LIST]

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Important .....	42%
Somewhat important.....	36
Not important.....	19
(vol) Don't know/Refused .....	2

For the purposes of this study, we are defining “older workers” as employees age 55 or older.

Q4a. Based on your experience, do you consider the overall cost of an “older worker” in a professional position to be higher or lower than that of a younger worker doing a similar job?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Higher than a younger worker .....	33%
(vol) The same as a younger worker.....	33
Lower than a younger worker .....	5
(vol) It depends .....	23
(vol) Don't know/Refused .....	6

Q4b. And, would you say that the overall cost of an “older worker” in a support and production position is generally higher or lower compared to a younger worker?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Higher than a younger worker .....	28%
(VOL) The same as a younger worker.....	37
Lower than a younger worker .....	4
(VOL) It depends .....	24
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	6

Thinking now about different types of employee compensation and employee benefits...

Q5. Does your organization offer employees a traditional defined benefit pension plan OR a 401(k) or other defined contribution plan?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Yes, offer Traditional Defined Benefit Pension Plan.....	19%
Yes, offer a 401(k) or other Defined Contribution Plan.....	66
No, do not offer either type of plan.....	6
(VOL) Both.....	6
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	3

Q6a. Does your organization pay for health insurance benefits for employees?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Yes .....	93%
No [SKIP TO Q7a] .....	6
(VOL) Don't know/Refused [SKIP TO Q7a] .....	1

Q6b. [IF Q6a=1] Do you consider your organization's health insurance benefit offerings to be...  
[READ LIST]?

	<b>Total</b> (n=373)
Generous.....	69%
Somewhat generous.....	28
Not generous.....	2
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	1

Still thinking of different types of employee compensation and benefits...

Q7a. Focusing only on those in professional positions, would you say that the cost of [READ LIST] for an older worker is generally higher or lower than for a younger worker?

		(VOL)		(VOL)	(VOL)
	<u>Higher</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Don't know/Refused</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
a. Salary and bonuses (n=401)	42%	47	2	6	2
b. [IF Q6a=1] Health insurance (n=373)	23%	68	2	5	2
c. [IF Q5=1,4] A Traditional Defined Benefit Pension (n=100)	22%	69	2	6	1

Q7b. And, for employees in support and production positions, would you say that the cost of [READ LIST] for an older worker is higher or lower than for younger workers?

		(VOL)		(VOL)	(VOL)
	<u>Higher</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Don't know/Refused</u>	<u>Not Applicable</u>
a. Salary and bonuses (n=401)	31%	55	4	7	2
b. [IF Q6a=1] Health insurance (n=373)	20%	70	2	5	2
c. [IF Q5=1,4] A Traditional Defined Benefit Pension (n=100)	21%	68	1	9	1

Q8a. Deleted in 2006

Q8b. Deleted in 2006

Next, I would like to ask you a little about how age, older or younger, affects productivity in the workplace.

Q9a. Overall, would you say that employees age 55 or older in professional positions are more or less productive than younger workers doing similar jobs?

	<u>Total</u>
	(n=401)
More productive than younger workers.....	33%
(VOL) Are equally as productive as younger workers.....	41
Less productive than younger workers .....	2
(VOL) It depends .....	21
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	4

Q9b. And, in support and production positions, are employees age 55 or older more or less productive than younger workers?

	<u>Total</u>
	(n=401)
More productive than younger workers.....	27%
(VOL) Are equally as productive as younger workers.....	42
Less productive than younger workers .....	6
(VOL) It depends .....	21
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	4

\*Less than 0.5%

Q10a. Thinking only of “older” employees in professional positions...

Would you say that [READ A-E] has a positive or negative impact on the productivity of employees age 55 or older?

[IF POSITIVE/NEGATIVE, ASK FOR EACH] Would you say very (positive/negative) or somewhat (positive/negative)?

		Very positive impact	Somewhat positive impact	(VOL) No impact	Somewhat negative impact	Very negative impact	(VOL) Don't know/Refused
(n=401)							
a.	Physical health and stamina	18%	23	39	10	*	9
b.	The ability to learn new tasks quickly	19%	21	46	7	*	7
c.	Knowledge of procedures and other aspects of the job	26%	22	43	2	*	6
d.	The ability to interact with customers	31%	21	40	1	--	7
e.	Expectations for how much longer they'll be working	20%	15	45	11	--	9

Q10b. And, for “older” employees in support and production positions...

Would you say that [READ A-E] has a positive or negative impact on the productivity of employees age 55 or older?

[IF POSITIVE/NEGATIVE, ASK FOR EACH] Would you say very (positive/negative) or somewhat (positive/negative)?

		Very positive impact	Somewhat positive impact	(VOL) No impact	Somewhat negative impact	Very negative impact	(VOL) Don't know/Refused
(n=401)							
a.	Physical health and stamina	22%	21	36	12	1	8
b.	The ability to learn new tasks quickly	20%	25	43	6	*	6
c.	Knowledge of procedures and other aspects of the job	23%	26	42	3	--	6
d.	The ability to interact with customers	26%	24	42	2	--	6
e.	Expectations for how much longer they'll be working	19%	17	44	11	*	8

Q11a. Taking everything into account, would you say an employee or prospect age 55 or older is generally more, the same, or less attractive compared with a younger person capable of the same job in a professional position?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
More attractive .....	16%
The same .....	49
Less attractive .....	3
(VOL) It depends .....	24
(VOL) Don't know/Refused .....	7

\*Less than 0.5%



Q11b. And, would you say an employee or prospect age 55 or older is generally more, the same, or less attractive compared with a younger person capable of the same job in a support and production position?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
More attractive .....	12%
The same .....	50
Less attractive .....	8
(vol) It depends .....	23
(vol) Don't know/Refused .....	7

Finally, I'd like to get some information about you and your organization.

D1. Which of the following best describes the location of your business? [READ LIST]

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Urban.....	23%
Suburban.....	20
Small city or town .....	34
Rural.....	15
Or something else.....	5
(vol) Don't know/Refused.....	2

D2. Which one of the following best describes your age? [READ LIST]

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Less than 35 years old.....	11%
35 to 44 .....	27
45 to 54 .....	32
55 to 64 .....	23
65 years old or older .....	2
(vol) Don't know/Refused.....	4

D3a. We'd like to send you an email with a summary of the findings from this survey as a token of our appreciation. Would you like to receive this summary?

	<b>Total</b> (n=401)
Yes .....	32%
No [SKIP TO D4a] .....	68

D3b. [IF D3a=1] What email address would you like us to use?

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Those are all of my questions. Thank you for your time.