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Age Discrimination Alive at Top Ranks of Corporate America

Oct. 24, 2007—At a time when increasing numbers of baby boomers plan to work past traditional retirement ages, executives say age discrimination is alive and well in the workplace.

That's according to a study recently conducted by Gray Hair Management, Inc. Gray Hair Management, a career coaching, networking and job search resource for professionals with base salaries of \$75,000 to \$300,000-plus.

The Age Factor at Work

The survey found 77.5% of execs believe that age discrimination is severe to moderate in the workplace. At the same time, 21.8% believe that age discrimination is mild or almost never happens at work. Less than 1% believe it never happens at all.

Changing Jobs at 40 and older

The survey found 73.7% of executives believe they have lost a job opportunity because of their age. When asked at what point they believe age affects hiring decisions, 21.2% believe that age becomes a negative hiring factor before age 50; 42.5% believe it becomes a factor between 50 and 54; 23.7% believe it happens between 55-59; and 10.4% believe age does not become a factor in hiring until 60 and older. Only 2.2% of execs believe age is never an issue in hiring decisions.

The Age Advantage

At the same time, the survey found 62.4% of executives have

felt that their age was an asset in a hiring situation. Still, 63.3% admit that they have made adjustments to their resume to make their age less obvious.

"There has always been an element of age discrimination during the job search, but it appears to be more prevalent in today's post-9/11 era," said Scott Kane, founder and partner of Gray Hair Management Inc. "While there is no doubt that real age discrimination takes place, an equal threat to job seekers is their own potential age-defined mindset. The job seeker who believes that he or she is in the age discrimination range can subconsciously allow that to infiltrate their ability to conduct age-neutral interviews and networking," Kane explained. "We caution our clients to guard against this pitfall. After all, age really is just a number, and many companies are looking for experienced leaders who are, perhaps, a little gray behind the ears."

Gray Hair Management's "2007 Age at Work Survey" was conducted in October 2007 and included 548 senior level executives.

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