

How to get a job

Employment expert Kathryn MacMillan offers tips to get you the job you want

In your teens

Troublesome teens

In your teens, you're often keen to start a new job and earn some money to finance your social life. You are also keen to work so you become independent from your parents.

Problems faced

Mainly age and lack of experience. With no job history to back you up, an employer will find it hard to know if you're suitable for the job. Many employers will assume that because you're young you may be unreliable and can't be depended on.

Solution

When attending interviews or preparing your CV, focus on activities you've been involved in for a long time. Think about sports clubs you've belonged to. Also talk about extracurricular activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, arts and drama classes, etc. As you may not have any previous work history to demonstrate, you need to build on your quality of character and involvement in school, sporting and other positive activities.

Keeping your job

Prove you are reliable and enthusiastic. Show up to work on time and demonstrate a keen and helpful attitude. Try to be proactive and look for things to do at work before you're asked. Your employer is not your mum!

20s

Turbulent 20s

Your 20s is a time of uncertainty when you may be embarking on your first job after university or other tertiary study. Others may still be deciding on their initial career path and are unsure what sort of role to start with.

Problems faced

You don't know how or where to begin on your career path and have little or no experience in any field anyway. Employers may think you will not stay in your job as long as someone with more years' experience and you may be less focused at work due to social and relationship issues.

Solution

Look for work in areas that interest you or that would be a good grounding for your eventual career path. While you may be short on experience, focus on your new and current skills, particularly in IT, which could help improve a business.

It's also important to demonstrate to a prospective employer your desire to learn and grow with their business.

Keeping your job

Become an involved and active member of the team and work at developing cross-generational relationships with your colleagues. Utilise and demonstrate your new-found skills and up-to-date information from your studies. Keep your personal life at home and wow the workplace with your IT skills!

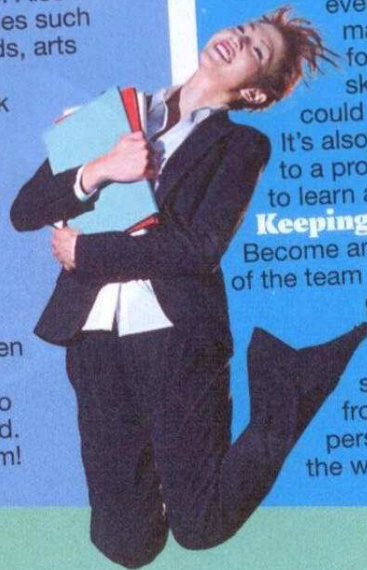
30s

Focused 30s

By now you've most probably been working in your chosen career and can offer a fair amount of background experience and skills. You may also be looking to spend more time at home with the family.

Problems faced

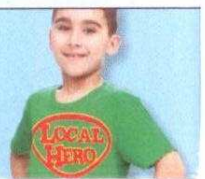
Depending on how you moulded your career in your 20s, you may be competing with people who had more clearly defined work paths and consequently have more experience to bring to the table in a given area. Your priorities now will be looking for financial security as you consider your future and perhaps start looking into investments



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Job at any age and keep it

30s

For long-term relationships. You may have children and not be able to work full-time.

Solution
Focus on the breadth of your experience and remember that skills are transferable from one industry to another. Look for roles with companies showing growth and a strong history.

Part-time work options should be considered if necessary, along with some part-time or correspondence studies to keep you current while having time off for family.

Keeping your job
Be an active member of the team and demonstrate a proactive approach. Communicate well with your superiors and try to carve a niche for yourself, where you are relied upon for certain tasks. Ensure your quality of work is at the highest standard.

40s

Fretful 40s

You could be returning to work after a career break or looking to change careers. Often people in their 40s face their first redundancy. You've had 20 years in the work force so employers would expect to see some strong career progression over this time.

Problems faced

Your career may have stagnated a little, and you are not where you thought you would be at 40. You could be starting again after redundancy or a break for family needs, or may not be able to work full-time any more with the needs of the family.

Solution

If you are starting again, refresh and update your skills – take a TAFE course or do some short-term career-related courses. If your CV has a large gap where you were bringing up children, focus on other things you did like management of sporting teams or positions held in voluntary committees.

Keeping your job

Don't become complacent in a role just because you've been there for years. Instead, take up professional development. If you're part time, do a good job on the days you are in so people wish you were there full-time.

50s

Fearful 50-plus

You may be looking to downsize your job to allow for more work-life balance, have been made redundant or wanting to change careers. You have a vast amount of work experience but may feel threatened by your younger co-workers.

Problems faced

Employers may wrongly believe that you will be a slower and less effective worker and that your IT skills may not be up to scratch. They may consider that your attitude to work is old-fashioned and that you may not fit in with a younger working environment.

Solution

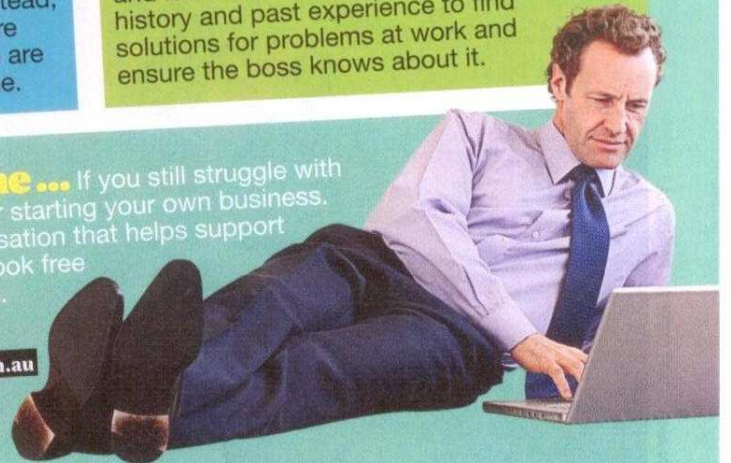
Demonstrate your youthful and proactive attitude by talking about your love of work, how you constantly challenge yourself and how active you are outside work with sport and leisure activities. Don't focus on your age – treat it as unimportant; what is important is your attitude.

Keeping your job

Work well with the younger generations and learn from them. Use your work history and past experience to find solutions for problems at work and ensure the boss knows about it.

If all else fails, go it alone ... If you still struggle with finding a job you may want to consider starting your own business. BEC Australia is a not-for-profit organisation that helps support people starting a business. You can book free mentoring sessions with their advisers. Go to www.becaustalia.org.au.

Kathryn is the founder of www.nine2three.com.au and author of *Kick Start Your Career ... Again*.



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