

BY EUNICE NOELL-WAGGONER
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THE BOOMERS

employee's expense. The thinking goes something like this: "Well, he is out of work! He can accept our offer and go back to work, or he can pass on the offer and continue to stay home."

But this cost-savings strategy comes with a couple of pitfalls. First, if the candidate has an offer from another company, you can put your company in a position of losing out to the higher bidder. The second risk is that the candidate accepts your offer with mixed emotions. Having a candidate looking over her shoulder after accepting your offer—or using your company as a temporary landing spot while continuing her job search—is not a good omen for a long and happy tenure.

Well-thought-out interview questions and the proper due diligence can help employers determine if the low-hanging fruit that is the unemployed candidate is ripe—or just not right—for their company. After all, you want to make sure to hire the best person qualified, not just the best available candidate—and there's often a big difference.



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One look at the stock market and the housing market has many people who thought they would be retiring soon reconsidering that decision. Many Boomers have seen a decrease as great as 20 percent in the value of their 401(k) accounts, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute. Prospective retirees are also concerned that their health benefits might disappear. These are only a few factors which are keeping many older workers at their desks.

Luckily, there will be a need for them. The Census Bureau projects a serious labor shortage in the future, increasing the demand for older workers. Thus, all signs point to an influx of older workers who need accommodations in their lighting if they are to remain productive.

The predicted number of older workers is staggering. By 2030, 23 percent of the population in the U.S. will be over the age of 65. By 2016, workers aged 65 and over are expected to account for 6.1 percent of the total labor force. AARP predicts that by 2020, one in three workers will be older than 50.

DE-EMPHASIZE ENERGY

New lighting standards should be written to accommodate these older workers. Fortunately, most lighting industry personnel understand how to minimize the impact of age-related vision changes by improving the quantity and quality of light.

However, with the current emphasis on energy efficiency, new standards might reduce lighting levels, creating a huge handicap for older workers.

For example, the lighting power densities (LPD) established by ASHRAE/IES and enforced by energy codes were based on the illuminance values provided in the IES *Handbook*, 9th edition. They did not factor in the age of the user. As the new edition of the IES Handbook is being developed, we urge that age be factored into the standards. It should include a new quantitative model for the illuminance selection procedure that is based on research and addresses the needs of older people.

The green movement has also created hindrances for older people. The need for higher lighting levels for older people conflicts with the energy efficiency requirements of the USGBC's LEED program. Daily, more people join the green bandwagon, which is a good thing. Again, though, there needs to be an accommodation for the lighting needs of older people.

Daylighting is one aspect of green design that can come to the aid of older adults. Studies confirm that daylight improves health, mood and general well-

The huge influx of older workers should force the lighting industry to reconsider some of its basic philosophies

CAREERS + HIRING

being. However, access to daylight for office workers is often not available, even though LEED and other guidelines continue to stress its importance. As more research proves the benefits of a healthy work place, the need for daylighting will increase. One good sign is that as energy codes restrict the amount of electric lighting in commercial spaces, more daylighting will be needed, which will be helpful to older workers.

Daylighting should be required by code as a health benefit. This has happened in some countries and should be incorporated into our national energy policy. As Boomers work side-by-side with younger workers for many extra years, their need for increased lighting levels can be supplemented by providing daylighting as a critical piece of the energy puzzle. All ages will benefit from the growing energy needs.

Exterior lighting standards as set by LEED are another concern for older workers—especially the requirements for Site Credit 8 which deals with exterior lighting, both

on the building and in the landscape. The credit aims to reduce upward light by requiring most light not to leave a luminaire above 90 deg. This credit is difficult to achieve because of several factors including the use of decorative, building-mounted luminaires, aesthetic decisions by the design team and a reduced selection of site luminaires meeting the below-90-deg requirement. It's understandable that owners and design teams want their projects to stand out in the crowd and decorative luminaires help them do just that. However, a shielded luminaire often does not provide enough light, especially on dark sidewalks filled with older adults. Uplight is not a good solution for older walkers since it causes glare. Therefore, LEED should consider the burgeoning senior population and make accommodations for increased site lighting.

Older workers will continue to contribute to society. Their efforts will be improved if the lighting industry takes their special needs into account. It's simply good business: providing for the needs of older workers benefits everyone.



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