

## Put on those shoes and dance

Written by Julie Desmond • Plan Your Career  
Friday, 26 March 2010 11:12

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Seasoned workers, you know who you are. You are the people who remember video cassettes, and life without them. You are the people who still polish your own shoes and iron your own jeans. You are the people who did things in the 70s that you are no longer proud of. You are experienced, knowledgeable, reliable and hire-able, and the reality is, you are unlikely to retire any time soon.

When the competition for positions is fierce, and your opponents are seemingly younger, apparently more tech-savvy, possibly more educated on paper, and updated in all kinds of ways, older-than-you- were workers find discouragement a constant companion. But hold on to that rocking chair and think about it. To many hiring managers, youth matters far less than people might think. If you have been thrust into the chaos of a job search after ten or more years of successful work experience, be aware that your most profound competition is probably... yourself.

I asked Eli, a self-proclaimed seasoned person, how she got past the stigma of experience in order to find new work. She said, "I had to put on the shoes and dance." She said she made a list of her strengths and woke up every morning thinking about the value she could add to any organization. She filled her mind with possibilities and her own potential, and left no room for self-doubt. "Telling myself that I am capable, which I am," she said, "makes it easier to convince other people that I am capable." Every day, mentally gearing up for interviews and conversations, she puts on those metaphorical shoes and dances.

In a world where people-skills matter as much as technical skills, and where consistency is hard to come by, many hiring managers are begging to bring aboard people whom they know they can count on. Companies running on less lack the excess staff to conduct training. They want to hire people who know how to communicate, are willing to lead and who understand how to navigate a new dance floor. If you found your first job by filling out a paper application, whenever that was, then you've probably done some navigating in your lifetime. Remind yourself that, these days, dance is a loosely defined term. If you can add real value, good companies will want to partner up with you. Get out there and dance.

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