

The age of opportunity: Five things you can do to retain older talent



In its '[Time for Some New Age Thinking](#)' report, the IPA identified ageism in the advertising industry as pervasive and harmful. It was based on the shocking stat that just 8% of UK ad agency employees are over 51 (vs 33% of the working population).

We can all take steps to make our workplaces more age-inclusive. This guide will help you recognise ageism in the workplace and take practical steps towards retaining experienced talent.

"In the end, advertising is a talent game, pure and simple. We should all want more brilliant brains for longer"

Xavier Rees,
Group CEO, AMV Group



1. Notice stereotypes and question them

It's easy to equate youth with relevance – an assumption that has become so normalised we often don't spot it. But talent of all ages can develop brilliant ideas and bring fresh perspectives. Try questioning your assumptions.

- Do you assume someone is 'out of touch' or 'less adaptable' because of their age?
- Are younger team members seen as more creative, innovative or culturally aware?
- Are you judging ideas on their merit, or the age of the person suggesting them?



2. Start conversations about age - don't let it become taboo

Many workplaces talk about diversity but rarely discuss age, even though ageism intersects with other forms of bias. Small signs matter - people notice what is valued and what is ignored.

- Celebrate contributions from people at different career stages.
- Avoid age-related jokes or comments, even when intended as harmless banter.
- Encourage team members of all ages to share different perspectives and experiences.



3. Support learning at every career stage

Development isn't just for younger employees. Workers aged over 50 are less likely than other age groups to receive on-the-job training ([DWP](#)). Why should experience be a barrier to growth?

- Ensure training and development opportunities are encouraged for all ages.
- Have meaningful career conversations. Don't assume someone's goals based on age.
- Give opportunities to develop new skills, including AI and emerging technologies.



4. Build intergenerational teams

Multigenerational teams are more productive and innovative ([OECD](#)). The best ideas come from combining perspectives, with age-diverse teams creating work that resonates with broader audiences.

- Consider mixing ages across project teams.
- Encourage knowledge sharing and mentoring between generations.
- Bring together different lived experiences at briefing and review stages.



5. Keep your experienced talent

Many experienced professionals leave the industry because workplace practices don't fit their lives. Retaining experienced talent is often easier - and much less costly - than replacing it.

- Be open to flexible working arrangements and career pathways that value expertise.
- Recognise that caring responsibilities occur at different life stages.
- Have regular conversations about what support people need to thrive.



Keep the conversation going:

Learn more about creating an age-friendly workplace: [Age-friendly Employer Pledge culture toolkit](#).

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