



Is Lack of Seniors on Staff a Competitive Disadvantage to Your Organization?

Many believe having “seniors” on their payroll puts them at a competitive disadvantage. We have a media and publishing industry that glorifies youth. This brief note does not provide a “Ben Franklin” of the pros and cons, nor does it attempt to make a thorough and compelling case. But we will dare to say, you are a fool if you’re not taking advantage of some older guys and gals on your team.

There’s ample evidence that the “juice” can last well past 65...take a look at these examples:

- Warren Buffett, the sage investor, still investing at 92.
- Arthur Rubinstein, pianist into his 90s.
- Rolling Stones, performing in their 70s.
- Rod Steward, performing in his 80s.
- Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco Verdi, composer into his 80s.
- Martha Graham, dancer and then choreographer into her 90s.
- Madonna still being Madonna at 62.

The opportunity cost of not having senior team members is significant. Why? For most people, raw mental horsepower declines after the age of 30, but knowledge and expertise — the main predictors of job performance — keep increasing even beyond the age of 80. There is also ample evidence to assume that traits like drive and curiosity are catalysts for new skill acquisition, even during late adulthood.

Are you in an industry that’s constantly having to adapt? The seasoned pro has perspective that can help quickly cut through the clutter, to help spot trends and skip fads.

Are you in a field that’s hyper competitive? Having someone who has seen countless competitive scenarios with the ability to quickly, accurately and effectively outline the strategy needed for a win can be oh so valuable.

This perspective also makes the seasoned pro more adaptable. More capable. And this is before the work ethic of say the Baby Boomer generation is compared to later generations. And with all this, you likely will have found someone who has the maturity, the emotional IQ to build others, not needing to prove themselves. While still having immense drive.

Maybe some are saying, “oh but the Generation Z is facing hurdles like no other.” True, unique times to be sure. And how might that compare to someone who lived through 9/11, survived the internet changing everything, seen the other side of the financial meltdown of 2008, absorbed the crisis, agonies and losses that punctuate any life?

