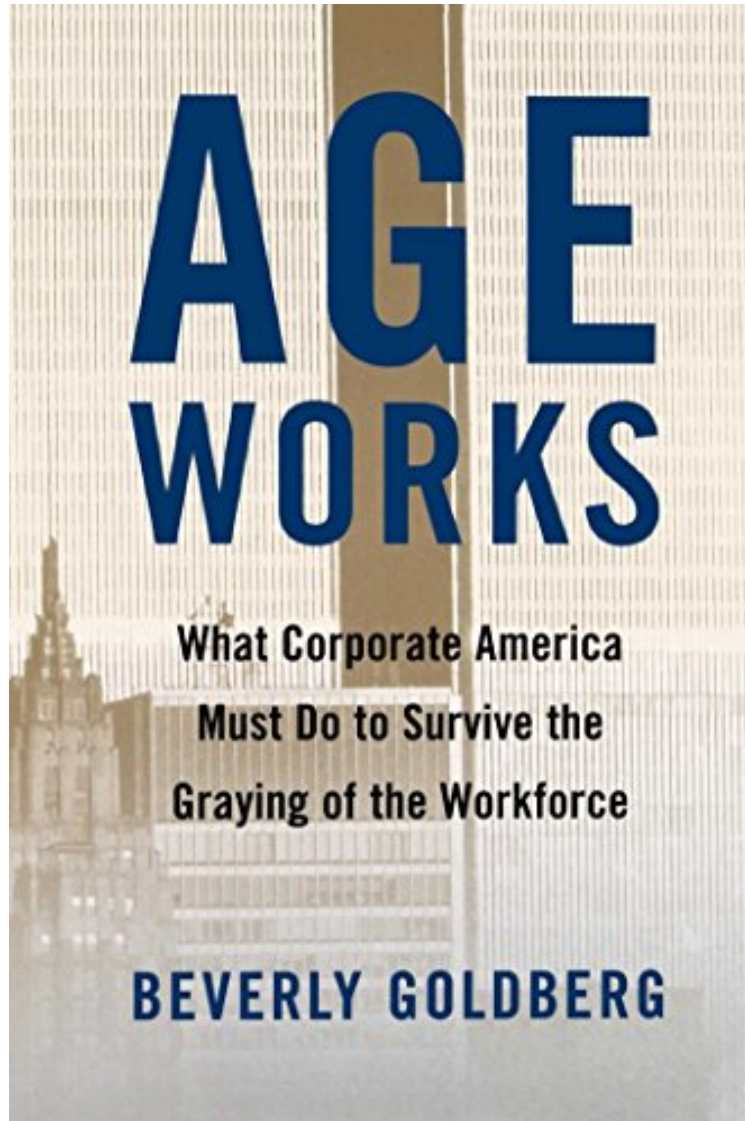


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# Age Works: What Corporate America Must Do to Survive the Gray

*Beverly Goldberg*

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**Beverly Goldberg : Age Works: What Corporate America Must Do to Survive the Gray** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Age Works: What Corporate America Must Do to Survive the Gray:

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Where Have All the Workers Gone?By Jonathan LehrichWorkers these days are like snow shovels in a South Carolina blizzard - not enough to go around. Some of the causes are simple statistics: economy up, unemployment down, working-age population falling, employers' demand outstripping supply. But others are cultural. Large corporations, the traditional source of jobs, are often perceived as uncaring engines of depletion, exhaustion, and downsizing. The young are choosing options, from lifestyle to stock, while workplace

veterans opt for the dignity of early retirement over the desolation of forced termination. Employers' alternatives are stark: expand their supply, increase their appeal, or prepare for shortfalls and belt-tightening. Recruitment, retention, recession - remorse. Were companies to examine their own assumptions on hiring and firing, they would find a pervasive and self-destructive premise: old is bad. But as Beverly Goldberg argues in *Age Works*, employers - indeed, society as a whole - have built this premise on an ill-considered, ill-defined congeries of prejudices and presuppositions. Believe it or not, Americans age 55 and above take fewer sick days, adapt to new technologies successfully, and are more loyal to their employer than are their colleagues thirty years younger. And perhaps more importantly, they may be the only untapped workforce available. As hidebound organizations throw fortunes at untested youth, others more far-seeing (including Travelers, GTE, and Baxter Health Care) actively recruit, train, and depend upon senior workers. In a shrinking labor market, corporations and their HR departments may find a surprising competitive advantage in coaxing older employees away from the brink of an often sterile and impoverished retirement. Eager to dismiss this challenge to their standard practices, naysayers and doomsayers will demand proof. Fortunately *Age Works* reads more like a position paper than a business book, and like any good position paper, it's loaded with facts. *Age Works* is the ideal volume for anyone itching for a statistical analysis of the American workforce 1950-2050, in all its hues and strata. Arguably Goldberg's love of statistics verges on addiction, but in the pharmacy of authorial dependence, statistics are a pretty benign habit. More distracting, although again less than fatal, is the book's policy-wonk style. Goldberg stands foursquare in the school of tell-'em-what-you're-going-to-tell-'em, tell-'em-, tell-'em-what-you-told-'em, and *Age Works* sometimes reads like an executive summary that cannot bear to end. Nonetheless, *Age Works* is a cogent, serious, undeniably well-supported piece. Even those who resist the proposed solutions (admittedly the book's weakest section) will find the diagnosis difficult to dispute. Like it or not, America's workforce will continue to grow smaller and grayer over the next twenty years. And by the time the population bounces back, corporations' hiring practices will have appealed to all ages - or to none.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. good numbers, good advice, thoughtful ideas for the future  
By A Customer  
I read the book because of my interest in the aging of the workforce, and it's worth it for the info and practical advice on retaining and managing older workers. An added bonus is her account of the sources of today's disaffection in the workplace for workers of all ages; two decades of mergers, downsizing, outsourcing, firing and rehiring with lower wages and fewer benefits, etc. have turned many workers from career-minded employees who identify with their jobs to disillusioned individuals who feel less and less connected to what they do and who they work for. The book is easy to read and free of jargon.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Age Works -- A Great Work  
By T. L. Brown  
We've all heard how the population is getting older. So what? So read Beverly Goldberg's book to find out. Containing well-researched chapters, the book avoids any tone of panic while it carefully demonstrates some of the stark realities confronting society in the future. In short, companies and managers are going to have to change. They won't be able to shun older workers because of an "ageism" bias (which happens frequently now!) and they won't be able to ignore the needs of older workers (work hours, special training, ergonomics) because they falsely believe "they're expendable." But the book is more than a primer on old-age workers; it is also a challenge to what we think are the rules for "retirement." Goldberg shows that there is a silver lining to a graying population. She shows both workers and corporations that there are other ways to retire than abandoning the workforce. Read her prescriptions for new flexible work arrangements and you'll even start to re-think your own plans for retiring. Whether digging into the policy dimensions -- or the personal ones -- Goldberg's book is a shake-up call for anyone getting older or managing people who are getting older. Look in the mirror and you'll quickly note that the book was written for people just like you!

In ten years, the massive baby-boom generation will begin to reach retirement age, but few companies have paid attention to the fact that there are not enough younger workers to replace them. The challenge to corporate America, as Beverly Goldberg argues in *Age Works*, is to reinvent the workplace to make it better fit the needs of all employees, especially the older workers it must retain in order to thrive.

.com The aging of the baby boomers could cause a severe labor shortage--an "economic catastrophe"--and many businesses are unprepared, according to Beverly Goldberg. In *Age Works*, Goldberg says there are not enough younger workers to replace the mass of retiring baby boomers in the coming decades. If businesses are to succeed amid "this demographic shock wave," they need to adopt a "new social contract" with workers, especially skilled ones. A lot of older workers are currently retiring early because of downsizing and age discrimination, writes Goldberg, vice president of the Century Foundation, a New York think tank. She writes: "Corporate America will be forced to create a work environment that will turn a graying, disillusioned workforce into eager workers. This challenge is enormous." Goldberg points to corporations such as McDonald's and Days Inn that are already creating the sorts of flexible, part-time jobs with benefits and promotion opportunities that attract retirees back to work. She details how Oracle and GTE fill technology jobs with innovative training programs for older workers. *Age Works* is intriguing reading for business leaders worried about their future staffing needs, as well as for anyone interested in the far-reaching effects of aging

baby boomers on the economy as a whole. --Dan Ring David A. Tierno Chief Human Resource Officer, Consulting Services, Ernst Young LLP Age Works presents an astute evaluation of the problems facing businesses as the workforce grows older. Beverly Goldberg offers concrete solutions for overcoming the desire of older workers for early retirement and the reluctance of younger workers to seek employment at large organizations. Her analysis of these critical issues belongs on the desk of everyone charged with the recruitment and retention of workers. About the Author Beverly Goldberg is Vice President of The Century Foundation, a New York-based think tank. Cofounder and principal of Siberg Associates, a management consulting firm, she is the author of three previous books on business and technology, and she is a frequent contributor to management Journals and newspaper opinion pages. She lives in New York City.