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The untapped value older workers bring to the multigenerational workforce

New AARP-LinkedIn Report Shows Americans Age 50-plus Closing Gaps in Tech Skills, Providing Stability, Contributing to Workplace Savvy and More to Support Business's Bottom Line

Workplaces of years ago are hardly comparable to those of today — and what employers need from the people they hire has changed, too. Businesses in 2025 are navigating a labor force defined by new types of economic pressure, rapid technological change and shifting employee expectations. Despite these growing pains, there are bright spots that suggest workers 50 and older can enrich multigenerational workforces to benefit employers now and in the years to come.

Workers 50 and older can enrich multigenerational workforces





Growing workforce trends and culture shifts

Nearly half of employers say acquiring high-quality talent is a top priority¹ for their businesses and yet many candidates may lack workplace readiness. Businesses report challenges with employee work ethic and low motivation.²

Workplace culture is also under strain. Employees want clarity, purpose, and recognition. When those drop, so does retention.³ One in five workers who quit a job did so because of poor workplace culture⁴ and 40% say poor management drives their stress level up,⁵ making strong leadership a critical asset. The stakes are high: Just 26% of employees feel engaged at work, and only 22% expect to remain in their jobs a year from now.⁶

On top of this, artificial intelligence (AI) and automation are accelerating change, but integrating these tools without disrupting culture or displacing workers is a delicate balance. The opportunity lies in using AI to enhance — not replace⁷ — human capabilities, while investing in reskilling and upskilling.

New LinkedIn data reveals bright spots for businesses with older workers

To address these challenges, LinkedIn and AARP analyzed LinkedIn platform data⁸ to explore how multigenerational teams — where older and younger workers collaborate — can help drive business success. The findings show that workers 50 and older bring stability, leadership and adaptability — making them uniquely positioned to strengthen mixed-age teams, complement the skills of younger workers and address today's complex challenges. This research shows that employers reap the rewards when workplaces are composed of employees of all ages.

Multigenerational teams drive retention and reduce costs

Retention isn't just a metric — it's a financial strategy. Among those hired in June 2024, LinkedIn data shows 85.4% of workers 50 and older remained with their employer one year later, compared to 70.6% of younger hires. Average retention for all hires over that same period was 74.5%. In fact, first-year turnover costs employers more than other turnover due not only to the costs of hiring, but also the time it takes a worker to reach productivity in an organization.⁹

When an employee leaves, companies face direct costs like recruiting and onboarding, plus hidden costs such as lost productivity and team disruption. Studies estimate that turnover costs U.S. businesses up to \$1 trillion annually.¹⁰ Other research estimates that replacing an employee typically costs 50 to 75% of annual compensation.¹¹ For senior or hard-to-fill roles, replacement costs can reach one to two years' salary.

The good news is that when older and younger workers collaborate on teams or specific projects, their increased knowledge-sharing directly and positively influences job satisfaction,¹² a key component influencing retention. Having a mix of age groups in the workforce means that employers avoid costly churn, stabilize teams and protect institutional knowledge.

Chart 1. Firm retention rates one year later for new hires
Among LinkedIn members in the US



Note: Averaged across July 2024 – June 2025



Experience combined with fresh perspective delivers business value

Older workers bring significant work experience to the table — on average, 15 additional years compared to their younger peers, or 2.3 times more overall career experience. This depth spans many types of jobs and firms over their work-lives, giving employers access to institutional insights and proven practices that drive performance. The more complex and nuanced the work is, the more teams benefit from a mix of ages.

LinkedIn data shows older workers have spent on average 2.2 times more time at their current firm than younger workers. That kind of tenure matters: Research confirms that longer individual and managerial tenure positively impacts team outcomes, including operational effectiveness.¹³

Leadership experience is another strength. Workers over 50 have 2.4 times more years in leadership roles, averaging 18.5 years versus 7.7 years for younger professionals. This difference is unsurprising given the time it takes to ascend to leadership positions.



TOP COMPANIES REPORT HIGHER AGE DISPERSION

LinkedIn Top Companies recognizes the best workplaces for career growth based on several metrics of career progression, including how employees are upskilling, getting promoted while at the company and more. In comparing these firms, Top Companies are 92.1% aligned with the age distribution of the U.S. workforce, compared to 87.0% aligned for non-Top Companies — a 6% higher alignment. Additionally, all Top Companies have three or more generations with at least 5% representation.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/linkedin-top-companies-2025-50-best-large-employers-grow-usrme/>

AARP research shows that these seasoned leaders bring strategic thinking, decision-making skills, and the ability to mentor others. While traditionally viewed as a one-way exchange, mentorship is increasingly valued by both the mentor and the mentee. It bolsters key workplace climate indicators, creates empathy, and leads to skills transfer, including tech and AI skills.¹⁴ Older workers with these skills can help prepare the next generation of leaders, while at the same time learning new applications of existing approaches from their younger counterparts. Mixed-age teams foster bidirectional learning.



Powerful networks boost business performance

Older workers bring more than experience — they bring strong professional networks. LinkedIn data show that workers 50 and older have networks that are 20.4% larger and more senior than those of younger workers, resulting in a 4% higher network strength score compared to their younger peers. According to Baird et al.,¹⁵ stronger networks correlate with increased recruiter engagement and higher mobility into senior roles.

These networks aren't just personal assets — they're strategic resources employers can tap. Employees with broad external connections serve as conduits for benchmarking, sharing best practices, and bringing fresh ideas into the organization. Their relationships with other professionals and industry leaders can directly enhance company performance.¹⁶

In short, connected workers act as brand ambassadors and knowledge bridges, helping employers stay competitive, connected, and informed. Beyond that, they also allow workers of all ages to benefit from these connections to other professionals, benefits that are seen even when the network ties are weak.¹⁷

Older Workers are closing the tech skills gap

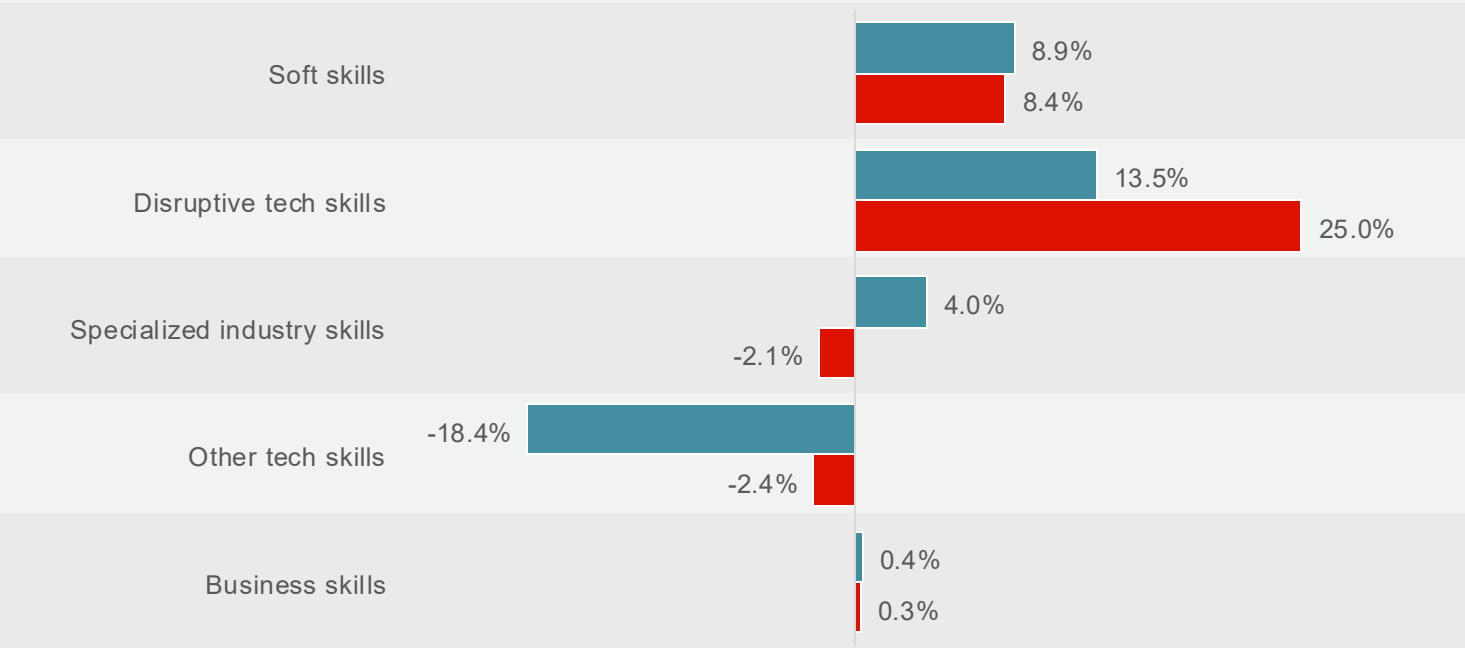
LinkedIn profile data show older workers possess a broad set of high-value skills — management, leadership, strategic planning, project management and communication — many of which are difficult to automate and are widely applicable across roles. These skills reflect a depth of experience that is critical to business performance.

While older professionals list tech skills less frequently than younger workers, they’re closing the gap. Both younger and older workers have seen large increases in the share of skills considered disruptive tech, with a 25% increase and 13.5% increase across the last five years for older and younger workers respectively (see Chart 2). When we look at all tech skills (comprised of both disruptive and other tech skills), older workers increased their share by 1.4% while younger workers showed a decrease (-12.6%), primarily in favor of a higher share of their skills being specialized industry skills and soft skills.¹⁸

As older workers grow their tech skill sets and connect those with soft skills built over decades of work, they are positioned to shift into AI-resilient roles, challenge outdated assumptions and show they’re ready to lead in a digitally evolving workplace.

Chart 2. Percent change in share of skills in past five years
Among LinkedIn members in the US

■ <50 ■ 50+



Multigenerational teams provide value in an AI workforce

Experienced professionals are more likely to hold roles insulated from generative AI (GAI) disruption — 49.4% of older workers, compared to 42.2% of younger ones. These roles rely on human-centric skills like leadership, judgment and collaboration, which AI cannot easily replicate. This is yet another area where mentorship and mixed-age teams bring positive gains — younger workers share tech and AI skills more often and older workers share expertise and institutional knowledge to get the most out of AI implementation. With the rise of AI, soft skills are becoming increasingly valued — nearly two-thirds of workers recognized their growing importance in 2024.¹⁹

Recent Stanford University research²⁰ confirms this advantage: Experienced workers are more likely to be insulated from the effects of AI automation and still experience growth, even in the jobs where more AI automation is happening. In fact, they are more likely to experience continued growth, particularly in jobs where AI serves to augment instead of automate job tasks. Their depth of experience and soft skills enable them to integrate AI tools effectively, making them ideal contributors in a tech-enabled workplace.



Growth mindset persists across generations

Older workers are eager to learn and adapt, especially when it comes to technology. AARP research shows that 60% would upskill or reskill if asked by their employer, and their top reason for training is personal interest in gaining new skills (34%), far exceeding employer requirements (11%).²¹

LinkedIn Learning data reflect this growth mindset. While younger workers historically were more likely to participate in trainings, the gap has narrowed dramatically: In 2022, younger workers were 13.5% more likely to engage in LinkedIn Learning than older workers, but by 2025, that difference had dropped to just 1.6% (see Chart 3).

Older professionals are also shifting toward tech-focused learning. Between 2022 and 2025, the share of LinkedIn Learning²² sessions for technology topics grew faster for older workers — rising from 19.5% of their trainings to 26.6% — shrinking the age gap in tech engagement from 31.1% to 10.7% (see Chart 4).

These trends show that older workers are not only willing to upskill or reskill — they’re actively doing so. Their increasing focus on technology topics reflects both aptitude and alignment with employer needs, dramatically shrinking age gaps in training generally, and in technology specifically. Companies investing in continuous learning benefit from the enthusiasm and adaptability of all generations.

Chart 3. Percent gap in LinkedIn learning participation, younger LinkedIn members compared to older LinkedIn members
Among LinkedIn members in the US

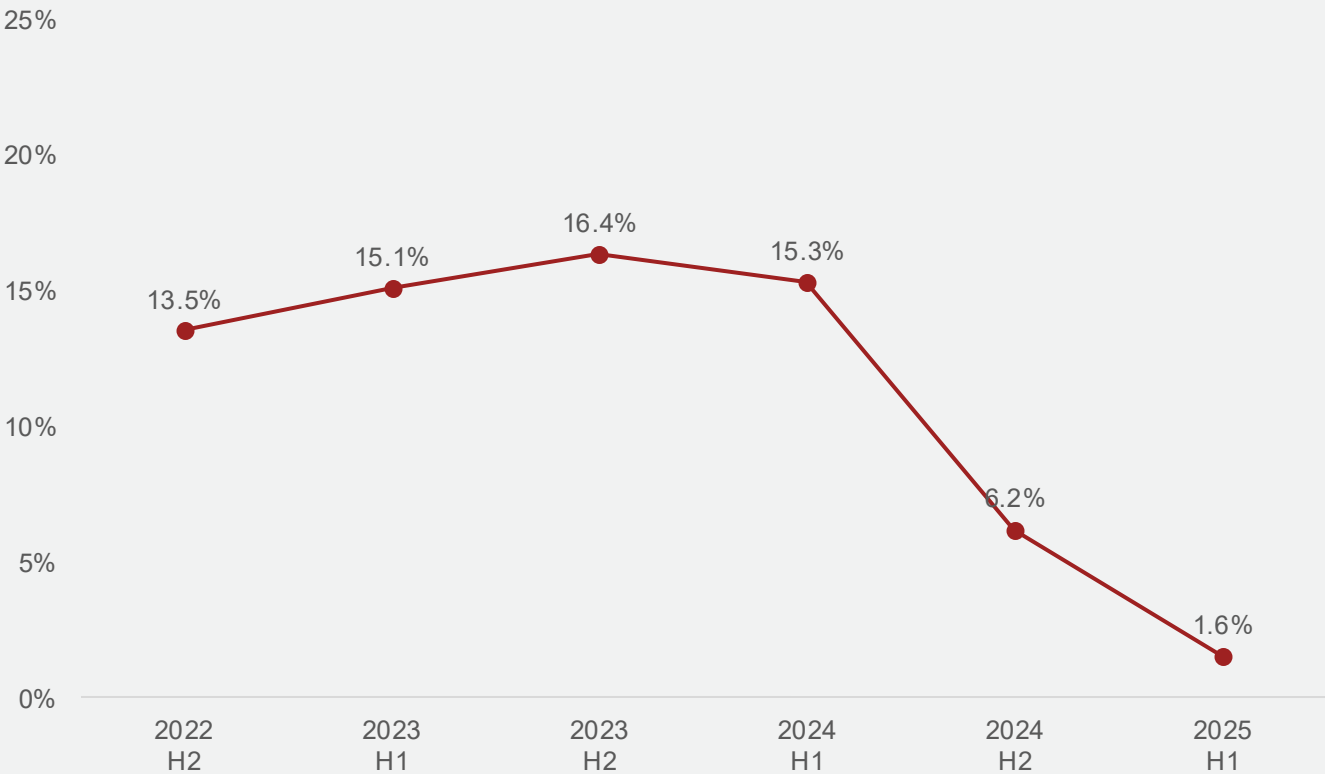
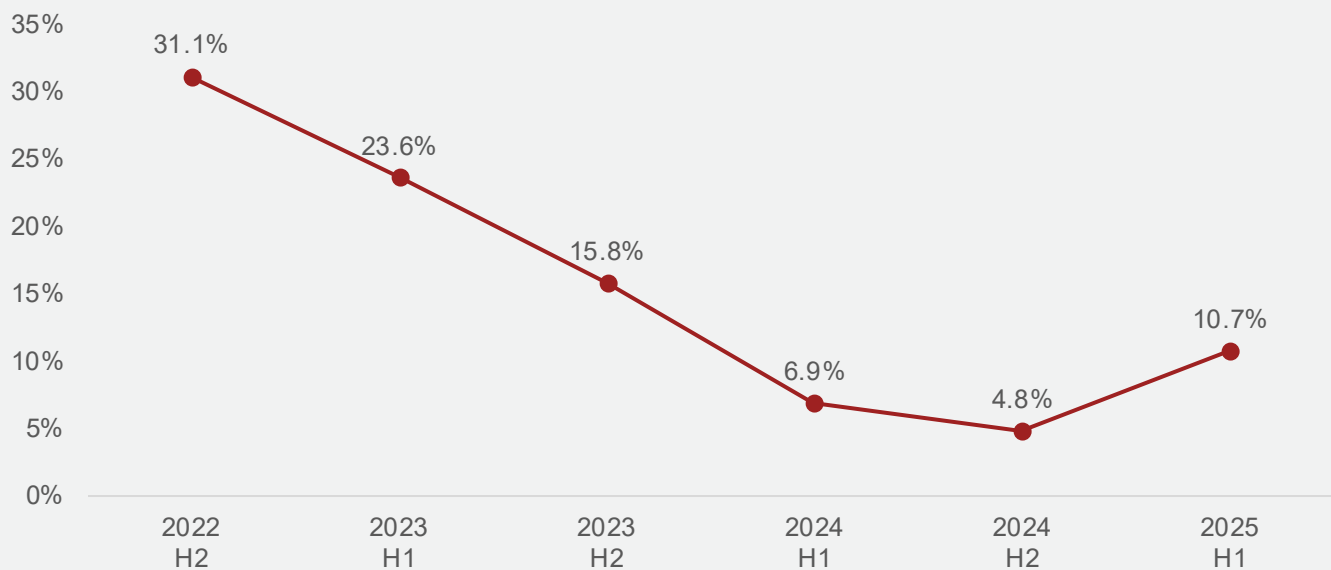


Chart 4: Percent gap in LinkedIn learning sessions in tech, younger LinkedIn members compared to older LinkedIn members
Among LinkedIn members in the US



Conclusion

The data are clear: Employers who embrace and support a multigenerational workforce unlock untapped value and drive better business outcomes. Older workers bring stability, deep experience and powerful networks, while younger workers can also contribute fresh perspectives and digital fluency. When these strengths are combined, all generations benefit, leading to higher retention, stronger teams and greater innovation.



DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START?

AARP offers a number of employer resources to help you manage your workforce and get the most out of mixed-age teams.

We can help with:

- Hiring a multigenerational workforce
- Managing mixed-age teams
- Creating age-friendly workplaces

Visit www.aarp.org/employers to learn more!



How employers can use these findings:

Recognize the value of older workers: Older employees offer expertise, leadership and adaptability that are essential for navigating change and mentoring the next generation.

Foster networking across generations: Encourage employees to build connections both online (using platforms like LinkedIn, online job fairs and Facebook Groups) and in person, leveraging industry groups and internal communities to share knowledge and opportunities.

Invest in continuous learning and skills development: Offer training for all employees, with a special focus on technology and digital skills. Older workers are eager to learn and are closing the tech skills gap — support their growth alongside younger colleagues.

Develop a technology vision for everyone: Create a clear plan for how technology will be used and how all employees will be upskilled, not just younger staff. This ensures everyone can contribute to digital transformation.

Adopt skills-based and age-blind hiring: Focus on the skills and potential of candidates, regardless of age, to build a more inclusive and capable workforce. AARP's Guide to Hiring a Multigenerational Workforce provides research-backed best practices for doing this.²³

Employers need workers of all ages to get the best out of any workforce and to help all employees grow. By leveraging the strengths of each generation, employers can build resilient, high-performing teams ready for the future.

Citations

¹ [The 10 Biggest Challenges That Are Facing HR Executives Today](#)

² [1 in 6 Companies Are Hesitant To Hire Recent College Graduates - Intelligent](#)

³ [20 HR challenges in 2025 and how to solve them | Achievers](#)

⁴ [the-state-of-global-workplace-culture-2024.pdf](#)

⁵ [251574_Research_Mental Health Infographic_r7](#)

⁶ [20 HR challenges in 2025 and how to solve them | Achievers](#)

⁷ [The 10 Biggest Challenges That Are Facing HR Executives Today](#)

⁸ This report and the analysis of LinkedIn data are limited to LinkedIn members who have created a profile on the platform and is limited to what they enter as their experience and skills.

⁹ [2025 Retention Report - Employee Retention Truths in Today's Workplace.pdf](#)

¹⁰ [This Fixable Problem Costs U.S. Businesses \\$1 Trillion](#)

¹¹ [The Real Costs of Recruitment](#)

¹² <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/canadian-journal-on-aging-la-revue-canadienne-du-vieillessement/article/lets-work-together-assessing-the-impact-of-intergenerational-dynamics-on-young-workers-ageism-awareness-and-job-satisfaction/1249B79DB6F6C51D236EA744D6C1FE70>

¹³ <https://www.aarp.org/pri/topics/work-finances-retirement/employers-workforce/multigenerational-workforce-mentoring/>

¹⁴ <https://academic.oup.com/workar/article/8/2/208/6574297>

¹⁵ <https://economicgraph.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/economicgraph/en-us/PDF/network-strength-white-paper.pdf> The network score is a measure derived to understand how well a network aligns with and can positively impact one's career. It is created using four measures: information value, information bandwidth, information redundancy, and network size where a higher score is associated with more beneficial career outcomes.

¹⁶ <https://shorturl.at/luEHK>

¹⁷ [New Study Proves That Weak Ties Have Strong Employment Value - MIT Initiative on the Digital Economy](#)

¹⁸ Examples of skills in each category include: Soft skills: writing, leadership, collaboration. Disruptive tech skill: cybersecurity, data science, human computer interaction. Business skills: employee loyalty, consulting, procurement outsourcing. Specialized industry skills: wellness coaching, political intelligence, investment portfolio design. Tech skill: software engineering practices, Microsoft Excel, Agile methodologies.

¹⁹ <https://economicgraph.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/economicgraph/en-us/PDF/generative-ai-and-gender.pdf>

²⁰ [Canaries in the Coal Mine? Six Facts about the Recent Employment Effects of Artificial Intelligence.](#)

²¹ <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/research/topics/work-finances-retirement/employers-workforce/reskilling-workforce-trends-older-adults-annotated-questionnaire.doi.10.26419-2Fres.00543.001.pdf>

²² LinkedIn Learning is a digital education platform offering thousands of expert-led video courses across business, technology, and creative disciplines. It features on-demand access, personalized course recommendations tailored to professional interests, and completion certificates that can be added directly to LinkedIn profiles.

²³ <https://employerportal.aarp.org/hiring-tool-kit/>

About AARP

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to the 125 million Americans 50-plus and their families: health and financial security, and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest-circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org/about-aarp/, www.aarp.org/español or follow @AARP, @AARPLatino and @AARPadvocates on social media.

About LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network, and its vision is to create economic opportunity for every member of the global workforce. The Economic Graph Research Institute (EGRI) works in support of this vision, utilizing LinkedIn's unparalleled data to conduct research that brings us closer to this goal. Our greatest strength lies in the depth of our data, alongside our team of committed researchers who delve into pressing issues affecting the global workforce.

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