

As part of F·E·G·S's 70th Anniversary, we will be sharing a series of historical perspectives that relate to the development, achievements and growth of the Agency.



experience

loyalty

skill

1948

THE OLDER WORKER

Creative Solutions to Combatting Age Discrimination

One of the most prominent trends to emerge after World War II was the realization that America's population was aging. Thanks to medical advances, people were living longer and were becoming a larger percentage of the population. It was a trend that has continued to the present day.

Workers over 45 years of age had been vital to the victory effort, but with the war's end, they found many avenues of employment closed to them.

The New York City job market remained uncertain, with three to four hundred thousand people unemployed. FES noted an immediate trend away from the employment of mature persons.

FES mounted a massive public education campaign to stimulate awareness of the positive aspects of hiring middle aged and older workers. Its theme was *Experience, Loyalty, Skill . . . Come with Age!* The results were outstanding.

The New York City Council passed a resolution of support. Stories were

featured in trade publications ranging from *Women's Wear Daily* to the *Law Journal* to *National Jeweler*. Every New York radio station carried announcements. National publications such as *Look* magazine and *Business Week* featured the campaign. New York's major daily newspapers ran editorials. Major radio personalities of the era such as Mary Margaret McBride, Arthur Godfrey, Kate Smith, and others gave the campaign national exposure.

FES created a penny postcard campaign highlighting the benefits of hiring the older worker. These cards were mailed to tens of thousands of employers throughout New York.

The immediate impact of the campaign was a **68 percent increase** in job placements of older workers by FES—hundreds of additional older workers found jobs.

FES published a report—which received nationwide distribution—that made extensive recommendations on ways that government, business, labor, and vocational organizations could create partnerships to deal with the long-range implications of an aging workforce and a society in which an ever-increasing proportion of its citizens would be older.

Another major result was a national discussion that began to re-examine and challenge the definitions and preconceptions of age. In 1860, there were only 860,000 persons over age 65 in the United States. By 1900 the number had grown to 4.1 million, about four percent of the population. In 1948, when the FES campaign was launched, the number of persons over age 65 had reached 10 million (eight percent of the population). FES declared "our present concept of 'age' is outmoded." (Current day projections estimate that by the year 2030, one out every five persons in the U.S. will be over age 65.)

The National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce organized a program in the interest of older workers. The Veterans Administration wrote:

Reports indicate a willingness on the part of employers to relax their age requirements. This campaign . . . has started a movement, the effects and ramifications of which will add to our productive capacity and richness as a nation."

FES had indeed shown that *Experience, Loyalty, Skill . . . Come with Age!*

© F·E·G·S 5.05

F·E·G·S
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SYSTEM

EXECUTIVE OFFICES:
315 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10013
TEL: 212.366.8400 FAX: 212.366.8441
E-MAIL: fegs-execoffice@fegs.org

F·E·G·S LONG ISLAND SERVICES:
6900 Jericho Turnpike, Syosset, NY 11791
TEL: 516.496.7550 FAX: 516.496.9156
E-MAIL: fegs-li@fegs.org

A beneficiary of
UJA Federation
of New York

You can become a part of our 70th Anniversary Celebration with a contribution to F·E·G·S. Your tax deductible gift can help change the lives of the more than 100,000 individuals we serve each year. For more information call Gail Magaliff at 212.366.8551.

A copy of the latest annual report of F·E·G·S can be obtained from F·E·G·S by contacting our Executive Office at 315 Hudson Street, NY, NY 10013 or from the Office of the Agency General by writing to the Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.