

Done with retirement, back to work

It's good for firms seeking to tap their skills and experience, say recruiters

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PETALING JAYA: He was in his 70s when he landed a job in retail sales at a high-end outlet in Damansara Heights. And, as luck would have it, the clients needed a model.

He stepped up and made a success of it.

Age after all is just a number, especially when it comes to work.

More retirees are looking to return to the workforce, a trend which recruiters say is good for companies seeking to tap their skills and experience.

Most of them – about 80% – are aged between 50 and 60.

While there are those in their 40s still looking for jobs, there are also people in their early 70s who want to work, says recruitment director Yap Siew Eng of Hire.Seniors.

"The oldest person we have placed so far is a 76-year-old gentleman in administrative work.

"We also placed the mid-70-year-old man in retail sales before he

"Retired persons can help fill the shortage of workers."

Datuk Dr Syed Hussain
Syed Husman

became a model," she said.

Hire.Seniors is a recruitment portal that connects seniors and retirees to companies in need of experienced and skilled resources.

Yap said there was an estimated 25% growth each year in the number of seniors looking for jobs.

Retirees, she said, often want jobs in administration, human resources, finance, accounts and marketing on an advisory basis or part-time. Some even work full time.

Employers, too, were receptive of

these seniors as they were keen to tap on their skills and experience, she said.

"We have seen companies hiring seniors to help them with specific jobs that relied on their skill and experience and to train younger workers," Yap added.

National Association of Human Resources Malaysia (Pusma) president Zarina Ismail said job applications for individuals aged 48 to 65 had increased more than 20% after the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions.

Most applied for old jobs they had done before, like in human resources and are not picky in terms of salaries.

She said many wanted to work to help sustain their families due to the rising cost of living.

During pre-pandemic times, she said many elderly people preferred to retire early.

Data from the Statistics Department showed that in the first quarter of 2022, senior citizens aged between 55 and 64 constituted 7.7% of the job market.

JobStreet Malaysia managing

director Vic Sithasanan said based on various studies conducted, seniors never truly retire in this era, and often return to work, sometimes on a contractual basis.

"Most successful companies have a combination of youth, who tend to be more enthusiastic, 'hungry' and senior employees who are more experienced and with greater expertise.

"Employers tend to prioritise productivity and skills regardless of age although they tend to structure remuneration based on a 'contract' basis," he said.

Vic said retirees returned to the workforce for a number of reasons, including the desire to be financially independent, putting spare time to good use and avoiding boredom.

Currently, about 3% to 5% of seniors aged between 55 and 64 are seeking to change jobs on JobStreet Malaysia.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said more senior citizens were looking to work beyond their retirement to

supplement their income to pay for their expenses and meet the rising cost of living.

He said jobs available to older workers varied according to goals, capabilities and health, with vacancies largely for consultant, writer, teacher or in sales and marketing.

"Retired persons can help fill the shortage of workers but not all jobs may be suitable for them due to age, health conditions and physical demands of the jobs," he said.

Employers too shared their willingness to hire seniors for their expertise.

SME Association of Malaysia (SME Malaysia) president Ding Hoig Sing said SMEs were keen to hire senior citizens especially for administrative roles.

Raymond Gan, Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia's (ACCCIM) Human Resources Committee deputy chairman, said hiring retirees for management positions was feasible while non-management positions with light duties could be considered as well.