

# OVER 50? NOT FULLY ENGAGED AT WORK? MAYBE IT'S PMD

NINE LIVES CONSULTING   
Career Navigator



**It's our observation, from providing Outplacement and Career Guidance to many different roles and disciplines across a wide range of industries, that there comes a time in the later stages of your career where things feel stale, possibly irritating and certainly less engaging.**

This phenomenon seems to be less prevalent in purely functional, practitioner types of roles but it is observed across the full spectrum of roles.

## **What is going on?**

### **For the organisation and its employees.**

While the older worker has many attributes and benefits to offer an organisation, these are often not appreciated by the other occupants and the younger cohort, especially those who often find the presence of older people less than attractive. They feel the presence of the older worker can convey an impression of the brand of being "outdated" and the workplace not particularly progressive or modern.

## They also find:

- Jargon and language differences are annoying
- Older people can be heard to say "been there, done that..."
- Older people more cynical about "bright new ideas" (seen it before).
- Younger folk want to escape their parents and do their own thing, older people nearby does not engender this "freedom".

**For the older Employee;** having established their career and know-how, they just want to do a good, useful job so that at the end of each day they feel they done something productive and satisfying. The other aspects of being an employee are becoming tedious, manifested by:

- A weariness of corporate games.
- Completing "busy work" to satisfy a system or a boss, which is not actually needed or productive.
- A desire to just do the things that they do well, get results, have a purpose and impact.
- Tired of jumping to other people's agendas that are not necessarily for the good of organisation.
- Impatient with endless meetings where younger people are trying to impress but the meeting achieves nothing.

In fact, these two diverging forces amount to you feeling unappreciated, unwelcome and uninvolved.

**What is happening is that the two cohorts are progressively and irreversibly disengaging. Progressive Mutual Disaffection (PMD) is in play. It is real, prevalent and powerful.**

**Progressive;** once started it doesn't abate.

**Mutual;** it is happening simultaneously in both the organisation and the individual, for different reasons.

**Disaffection;** loss of commitment on both sides.

## The solution?

There are several options.

1. Stay and wait or campaign for change. Low chance of success.
2. Stay and wait for a new CEO. Significant change occurs only with a change of CEO. It may or may not deliver what you want.
3. Seek a more functional role within the current employer.
4. Seek a new role in a new organisation that requires your transferable and inherent skills, rather than your specific industry or product knowledge.
5. Move to a similar role at a more suitable organisation where the older worker provides credibility, comfort and trust and are not seen as an embarrassment. NFP, Welfare and some Government organisations are more tolerant and even value mature workers and what they offer; reliability, experience, autonomy, dependability, focus on outcomes.
6. Become a Sole Trader offering your services on a contract basis where you focus on what your know-how, gained over the last 20 years or more, enables you to do well and enjoy.
7. Buy a business, franchise or establish a business that interests you and requires all your "transferable skills". This approach offers great rewards and enables you to develop new skills and achievements doing your work your way.
8. Retire and pursue your interests on your own terms.

To decide where to from here, you need to develop clarity about who you are, what you have to offer and what interests you.

**So , you need to articulate;**

- What you enjoy doing; what is your target type of work and role.
- Your most productive work environment to identify suitable work culture
- Your work style to identify suitable types of roles.
- Your goals for the next 10-15 years.

**If you act early, you can establish a new direction giving you peace and satisfaction for many more years, or you can wait in misery until someone makes the decision for you.**



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