



# IT'S NOT INCLUSION, IT'S STRATEGY!

By *Daniela Campos*

The importance of the demographic changes that are taking place in Brazil and in the world and the social, cultural, professional and economic impacts of what was coined as the longevity revolution entered our agendas with everything. For this reason, starting with this edition, we will dedicate this column to sharing reflections, best practices and paths to follow in the strategic and tactical management of the subject in companies.

Although age does not define the universe of mature or senior people and the 50+ range is too broad to represent all the generational

diversity that each decade of this stage of life contains, let's use this cut to talk about the oldest old.

But why has the subject become so strategic in recent times?

With the worldwide phenomenon of aging and the inversion of the age pyramid, the senior population gained enormous demographic and economic relevance and brought new perspectives and challenges. If we look inside organizations, half of the workforce in Brazil will be over 50 years old by 2040, according to Ipea projections. If we look outside, we are talking about an economic segment that moves, in Brazil alone,

R\$ 2 trillion per year in consumption of products and services – the so-called silver economy (the name carries the bias of gray hair, but let's leave that aside for now).

Some brands have a public of 50+ as their majority consumer, but not only for these brands is the topic essential: it is estimated that it already represents a third of the customer base in all sectors. Having a "senior-centric" strategy is therefore a matter of business sustainability. It is clear, however, that companies need to review their deliveries and the way they relate, because despite the relevance, the public feels

excluded by brands, poorly served by products and services and made invisible and stereotyped in campaigns and in the media.

Challenge and also opportunity. As Stephen Johnston, co-founder of Aging2.0, a global network that fosters innovation for longevity, said, "It's an untouched market right under our noses; the next big economy". And it will only grow.

Are those welcome to consume, also welcome to work? No, but they must be, not only for the sake of reciprocity, but of systemic vision and strategic management of people.

Maturity is the high point of developing emotional intelligence, time of consolidated skills and a large repertoire of experiences that lead to better decisions. Expanding the presence of mature professionals within organizations means incorporating resilience, engagement, good interpersonal relationships, responsibility, collaboration, a comprehensive view of scenarios and risks, the ability to better deal with adversity and knowledge.

In this phase of life, characterized by the achievement of a powerful evolutionary and productive state, it is time to accelerate the career and development and not to slow down, however companies seem to go against the grain with their selection and retention practices, training, contract models and compulsory retirement policies.

We have seen movements opening affirmative vacancies for people over 50, but at the same time, these are the professionals most affected by unemployment. Paradoxes of a culture that acts punctually because of market demand and not because it has a consistent vision and strategy in relation to the subject. On the contrary, they are cultures guided by ageism (or ageism, or ageism), a reality rooted in the leaders themselves, including the senior majority. Another paradox. When a 50+ leader looks at himself, he values his experience and recognizes the attributes that justify him occupying a certain position, but when he looks at



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others, he thinks the opposite. A mirror without reflection. Obsolescence, end of cycle, declining vitality, diminished capacity, stagnation - proper translations of ageism, prejudice that uses age to categorize people in a way that causes harm, disadvantages and injustices. Many well-meaning programs are geared towards including the 50+, 60+, seniors in the workforce. See how far this concept is from what we have explored so far. It is not about including the oldest old, but the longevity of the business. Therefore, this is not just a matter for HR, but for the boards of companies and other areas. We need this multigenerational experience spread across the organization to actually deliver value. If as consumers they are poorly attended, it is necessary to internalize

this knowledge. We need mature professionals who understand the real needs and behavior of the senior public, participate in the design of products or services, establish empathetic communication, calibrate the tone of language, build a good face-to-face or digital experience. If they don't identify themselves or don't feel represented, it's because we are failing with the responsibility of deconstructing stereotypes and to change that we need reflective mirrors, in both senses: professionals willing to act from this reflection and capable of seeing the reflected image without distort it.

