

WHAT'S New



POLL

62

The percentage of people 45 through 59 who say drivers should be required to retake a road test once they turn 65

Source: Marist Poll

Trends

Retail Redo

Hey, 50+ shoppers: More stores want to make you happy

BY CHRISTINA IANZITO

ILLUSTRATION BY CHRIS LYONS

Christine McCleary is tired of peering at small print when she shops. “Companies need to redesign things because so much of the population is older,” says the 59-year-old Incline Village, Nevada, resident, after her recent struggles at a local store. And corporate America, believe it or not, is starting to agree: With boomers now turning 65 in huge waves—about 7,000 will turn 65 every day this year—and shoppers 50-plus owning the vast majority of U.S. wealth, retailers are making changes to accommodate their wants.

Updates are especially visible in drugstores and phar-

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL SLOAN; ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY LESLIE QUANDER WOODBRIDGE

macies. For instance, CVS now hangs magnifying glasses from shelves and uncovers windows to feature brighter, natural light. Store layouts are also improving: Walgreens (along with CVS) has lowered shelving and reorganized products so older consumers don't have to reach too high or bend too low for popular items. Target has increased the font size on pharmacy labels. And drugstores are selling more consumable products (such as salads) in single-serve packages, which can appeal to older shoppers who live alone.

"These are new trends we're seeing," says Steve Perlowski, vice president of industry affairs for the National Association of Chain Drug Stores. He adds that companies have implemented changes for older clients after years of planning: "They've done it to make stores more shoppable and more visually appealing."

Retailers aren't the only ones scrambling to make you happy. San Francisco-based First Republic Bank has replaced heavy doors with automatic ones and added higher chairs with firm cushions, after employees noticed that some older clients had trouble rising from plush sofas. "It's a big shift," says Lori Bitter, president of Continuum Crew, a communications firm focused on older consumers. "We're starting to see that designing better for older people is better for everybody."

Trends

Don't Get Hurt at Work

Daily tasks can lead to devastating injuries

Older workers are the fastest-growing segment of the employed population—and now they're also injured more often. U.S. postal employee Jerome Garrett, then 51, broke his neck (and later had a massive seizure) when a 70-pound box fell on his head from a conveyor belt. Two years later the Decatur, Georgia, resident lives with a brain injury and constant pain.

Garrett's story is extreme but hardly unusual. Workers 55-plus made up 17 percent of nonfatal injuries on the job in 2009—up from 12 percent in 2003—according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Most suffered "acute traumatic injuries" such as fractures and sprains. And when older workers get hurt, they face added hurdles: "It takes them longer to return to work once they recover, and their injuries are more severe," says Dawn Castillo of the CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

So is your workplace a hazard? Watch for problems such as unsecured cords and objects, Castillo says. Clean up spills, and wear sturdy shoes and other appropriate attire. If you have vision trouble (which can lead to tripping), talk to your doctor. And report safety issues to your employer. —Leslie Quander Wooldridge



CAUSES OF INJURY

Falls on the same level (like tripping)

Overexertion

Contact with objects, equipment

Falls to a lower level

Source: CDC

FROM TOP: ILLUSTRATION BY KAGAN McLEOD; ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN UELAND; CIVICS SOURCE: NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS



Ah, youth! (SOMETIMES WE DON'T MISS IT)

CIVIC SLACKERS ➤ Today's kids may know more about supreme pizza than the Supreme Court: A new federal report finds only 7 percent of 8th graders can describe the three branches of government, and only 27 percent of 4th graders, 22 percent of 8th graders, and 24 percent of 12th graders are "proficient" in civics. Uh-oh. Guess there's always Google. —L.Q.W.