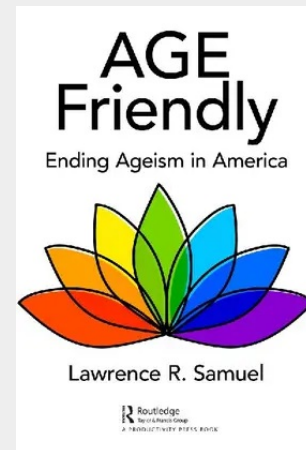


Age Friendly

Ending Ageism in America

Age Friendly: Ending Ageism in America is a rallying call to make the United States a more equitable and just nation in terms of age. "Age friendliness" means being inclusive towards older people as workers, consumers, and citizens, something that can't be said to exist today. The United States and, especially, Big Business, are notoriously age-unfriendly places, a result of our obsession with youth. Virtually all aspects of everyday life in America will be impacted by the doubling or tripling of the number of older people over the next two decades, more reason to adopt age friendliness as a cause. Age Friendly shows how large companies are in an ideal position to address the aging of America and, in the process, benefit from making their organizations more age friendly. Because of its economic power and commitment to diversity in the workplace, Big Business—specifically the Fortune 1000—has the opportunity and responsibility to take a leadership role in changing the narrative of aging in America. The book shows that age friendliness offers the possibility of bridging gaps not just between younger and older people, but those based on income, class, race, gender, politics, and geography. More than anything else, Age Friendly presents a bold and counterintuitive idea—aging is a positive thing for businesses, individuals, and society as a whole—and we should embrace it rather than fear it. While ageism is a pervasive force in America that, like racism and gender discrimination, runs contrary to our democratic ideals, there is some good news. An age friendly movement is spreading in America and around the world as a growing number of cities and towns strive to better meet the needs of their older residents. As well, a concerted effort is being made to convince Big Business that an intergenerational workforce is in the best interests of not just older employees but the companies themselves. Age brings experience, perspective, and wisdom—just the right skill set for both short- and long-term decision-making. The aging of America also presents major implications for businesses in terms of marketing to older consumers. Baby boomers are still the key to the economy despite marketers' focus on youth, much in part to their collective wealth and propensity to consume. Age friendly marketing thus makes much sense due to "the longevity economy," i.e., the billions of dollars that older consumers spend each year and the goldmine that looms in the future as they become an even bigger percentage of the population. Finally, Age Friendly discusses how more corporations are pursuing social responsibility in addition to maximizing profits—an ideal opportunity for corporations to demonstrate good citizenship by supporting age friendliness on a local, state, or national level.

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