

# UP Front

**“Airbus is in the worst shape it has ever been [in].... This is not a level playing field.”**

—Louis Gallois, CEO of Airbus, pleading at the Paris Air Show for more government funding from Germany, France, Spain, and Britain, citing the U.S.’s \$800 million in annual aid to rival Boeing for research, as reported in The Financial Times.

EDITED BY DEBORAH STEAD

WHEN I'M 65

## Golden Paychecks

**I**N AN ECONOMY obsessed with new technology and youth, guess who's getting the biggest raises? Older folks. The **Bureau of Labor Statistics** recently began posting pay data by age on its Web site, and the numbers are surprising. Over the past five years, full-time workers 55 and older have seen healthy pay gains after adjustment for inflation, while those under 55 have suffered losses (chart).

In particular, the pay increases for those 65 and older help explain why seniors' labor force participation is rising. In the past 12 months, more than 30% of people 65 to 69 were either working or actively looking for jobs, up from just over 25% five years earlier. In the world of labor force stats, that's a big change. Participation rates were roughly flat for 25-to-54-year-olds—and fell more than 3 percentage points for those 16 to 24.

Companies “are finding a way to use some of the elder statesmen who otherwise might retire to the golf course,” says 65-year-old William



**JACKSON** The golf course isn't the given it once was

Jackson, an executive coach at Pittsburgh-based recruiter **Development Dimensions International**. He should know. Ready to bail out of corporate life, Jackson instead accepted a deal from DDI that allows him to work out of the lakeside home he built in northern Minnesota. CEO William Byham says DDI didn't want to lose Jackson's wealth of customer contacts and experience.

Much of the hiring of older workers is coming from industries at risk for mass retirements—electric utilities, oil companies, and aerospace and defense contractors, for instance. Such sectors are the “canaries in the coal mine,” says human capital researcher Eric Lesser, an associate partner at **IBM's Institute for Business Value**, who predicts the demand for older workers is likely to spread across the economy. Thomas Darrow, a principal at **Talent Connections**, an Atlanta-based recruiting firm, echoes that thought. “It's evolving to be one of the biggest trends in recruiting,” he says.

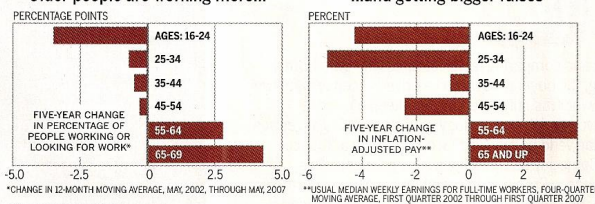
To be sure, not everybody is trying to hang on to their vintage employees. A 2006 survey by the **Society of Human Resource Management** found that while small and midsize companies are most concerned about retaining older workers, big companies worry most about keeping younger ones. Still, it seems that America's vacuum-tube veterans have a place in the YouTube economy after all.

—Peter Coy

### THE WAVE OF OLDER WORKERS

Older people are working more...

...and getting bigger raises



NELS NORQUIST; CHART BY ROGER KENNY