Aging Workforce
Strategies

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Aging Workforce Humor
Why? Dramatic Increase in Life Expectancy

Average Life Expectancy at Birth in the U.S.

Source: U.S. Social Security Administration
Growing Shortage of U.S. Workers

Expected Labor Force and Labor Force Demand

Source: Employment Policy Foundation analysis and projections of Census/BLS and BEA data.
Screeching to a Halt: Growth in the Working-Age Population

Source: Deloitte Research/UN Population Division (http://esa.un.org/unpp/)

It's 2008: Do You Know Where Your Talent Is? Why Acquisition and Retention Strategies Don't Work, p.6
Aging Workforce Increase

Percent of U.S. Workforce Aged 55+

Source: U.S. BLS
Baby Boomers Percent of Labor Force

Percent of labor force

Age group

- 16 to 24 years
- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 years and older

Comparison between 2004 (green) and 2014 (yellow)
Are Employers Ready?

60% of CEOs indicate their companies do not account for workforce aging in their long-term business plans.

"What we are looking for is somebody about twenty-five with forty years' experience."
National Center for Productive Aging and Work (NCPAW)

- Safety, Health & Well being from the first day of work to the last.
Perceptions of the Older Worker

Positive Perceptions

- Experience
- Work Habits/Ethic
- Knowledge
- Attitudes
- Punctuality, Respect for Authority, Loyalty & Commitment to Quality

Negative Perceptions

- Inflexibility
- Unwillingness or Inability to Adapt to New Technology
- Resistance to Change
- Complacency
- Presence of physical limitations that increase the cost of health insurance
Reduced Functions With Age

- Aerobic Capacity
- Cardiac Function
- Balance-fall risk
- Lean Body Mass
- Immune Response
- Thermoregulation
- Glucose Tolerance
- Wound healing
- Inflammatory Response
- Pain Sensitivity
- Eye Function-Bus Drivers, aerial lifts
- Kidney Function
- Gastrointestinal Function
More to Look Forward to…

- Decreased Strength—muscle fibers shrink with age—less ability to lift and transfer heavy objects
- Muscle mass reduces by 20% from age 30 to age 70
- Reduced fitness level and aerobic capacity—body fat doubles from age 25 to age 75
- Poorer Visual Acuity—pupils at age 60 are 1/3 the size as in the 20’s, lenses lose flexibility, decreased peripheral vision
- Poorer Auditory Acuity—1/3 of those ages 65-70 have significant hearing loss, do not accurately hear instructions & alarms
- Slower cognitive speed and function
Wellness Program Savings

A three year study conducted at a health system in Minneapolis found that health risks decreased after the implementation of a comprehensive worksite wellness program. This led to increased savings due to reduced health care costs, absenteeism, and workers’ compensation claims each year of the program.

Source: Fairview Alive Program Evaluation (StayWell, 2004)
General Best Practices

- Wellness Programming
- Provide health promotion and lifestyle interventions
- Flexibility giving additional control over work schedules, work conditions which benefit workers of all ages
- Partial Retirement
- Invest in training and skills-building at all age levels
- Proactively manage reasonable accommodations and the transitional return to work programs
Avoid Sedentary Work

- Avoid prolonged, sedentary work
- It is a problem for all employees at every age. Consider sit/stand workstations for employees who traditionally sit all day. Provide onsite physical activity opportunities.
Ergonomics

- Just Standing is a Compression Force on the Feet, Ankles, Knees, and Lower Back from the Mass of Your Body and Gravity. Footwear Reduces the Compression Forces to the Areas Mentioned below.
Your Footbone's Connected to your Backbone

- Choose shoes of leather or fabric
- End of toe should be a thumb’s width away from the end of the shoe
- Measure both feet
- If uncomfortable in the store – don’t buy them.
- Consider using shock-absorbing insoles where the job requires walking or standing on hard floors.
“Rather than seeking permission to exercise, you should have to get permission to be sedentary”

Look at job descriptions and weight limits. Between age 50 & 60, most people can produce only about 75% to 85% as much strength.
Ergonomic Friendly

- Friendly work environments such as workstations, tools, floor surfaces, adjustable seating, better illumination where needed, and screens and surfaces with less glare.
- Ergonomic Mats
- “Don’t work above Chest Level”
Slips/Trip/Falls Hazards

- Slip Resistant Shoes
- Slip Resistant Surfaces
- According to CDC, More than 1/3 of adults age 65 and older fall each year.
Proper Lighting

- Lighting on staircases, boiler rooms, maintenance areas, food service, theater, mezzanines and classrooms.
Teamwork

- Utilize teams and teamwork strategies for aging-associated problem solving.
- Workers closest to the problem are often best equipped to find the solution.
- Invest in training and building worker’s skills and competencies at all age levels. Help older employees adapt to new technologies, often a concern for employers and older workers.
Thank You for your Time!

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