



agefriendly
EDMONTON

Employing Older Workers

Promising Practices

EMPLOYER BENEFITS OF HIRING OLDER WORKERS

Older workers (55 and over) contribute significantly to the productivity of the labour force and are a critical resource to Canadian employers. In times of labour shortage, when skills and experience are at a premium, employers who have policies and practices in place to hire older workers will be at an advantage.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

- ✓ Employers retain skills and corporate knowledge.
- ✓ Employers can attract the best talent during skill shortages.
- ✓ Employers enjoy lower recruitment and training costs.
- ✓ Employers enjoy long-term benefit from their investment in training.
- ✓ Employers enjoy the benefits of a diverse workplace.
- ✓ Employers are reflective of and benefit from having first-hand knowledge of all customer age profiles.

UNDERSTAND WHAT OLDER WORKERS WANT

Older workers continue to work or choose to re-enter the workforce for many different reasons. Employers, who understand the different motivations of older workers, will be more successful at developing appropriate attraction and retention strategies.

APPEAL TO THE MOTIVATIONS OF OLDER WORKERS

- ✓ Offer pay structures that recognize:
 - Pay for performance
 - Bonus, incentive and recognition schemes
 - Service related benefits.
- ✓ Offer flexible pension options:
 - Deferred pensions
 - Draw pension while working
 - Continue contributions after retirement.
- ✓ Offer wellness and risk benefits:
 - Medical and critical illness insurance
 - Flexible choice in benefits
 - Alternative leave arrangements
 - Flexible working arrangements.
- ✓ Create worthwhile, meaningful jobs.
- ✓ Promote a participative and friendly culture.
- ✓ Encourage a social environment at work.

BECOME AN AGE-FRIENDLY EMPLOYER

Employers who create policies, programs and initiatives to leverage and accommodate the interests and expectations of older workers will be much more successful at attracting and retaining these

workers, than employers who do not have a focused recruitment and retention strategy. The following chart identifies promising practices in four key strategic areas; recruitment, engagement, flexibility, and accommodation.

RECRUITMENT

- Remove age barriers from all job advertisements and position description descriptions.
- Advertise age-neutral job postings by welcoming mature and experienced candidates.
- Advertise jobs in places commonly accessed by seniors; 50-plus publications (online and print), senior focused job-boards or senior's organizations.
- Review interview processes to ensure they are neutral and unbiased.
- Represent people of different ages on interview panels.
- When outsourcing recruitment, use recruiters who are age-friendly or specify that suitable older workers are not to be excluded.

FLEXIBILITY

- Create hours of work policies that accommodate flexible hours of work.
- Support job sharing opportunities that retain older workers on a flexible schedule while maintaining critical skills sets as an employer.
- Offer compressed work week hours to accommodate the lifestyle interests of older workers.
- Enable teleworking as a way to create a more flexible work environment for older workers.
- Provide options for full-time, part-time or contractual employment can engage older workers with a variety of interests.
- Offer unpaid short- and long-term leave options may be considered attractive for older workers balancing changing life patterns.
- Institute phased retirement options to retain older workers.

ENGAGEMENT

- Invest in education and development opportunities for older workers. Enable and empower them to build on existing skills and remain current in their profession.
- Involve older workers in formal mentorship opportunities. This strategy will retain corporate know-how and improve the abilities of younger workers.
- Create project-based assignments with limited scope and time frames. This will enable older workers to contribute their skills without the commit of long term employment.
- Maintain a roster of skilled older workers who are interested in filling needs on a part-time, full-time or project basis when needs arise.

ACCOMMODATION

- Mandate a culture of respect and accommodation that encourages older workers to articulate their need(s).
- Offer a comprehensive benefit package that includes critical illness insurance coverage.
- Invest in wellness programs that enhance standard benefit programs.
- Identify risks and hazards for older workers on the job. Implement strategies to control hazards.
- Create physically accessible workplaces including; accessible washrooms, adequate workspace lighting, large print materials and large screen computer monitors and flexible workspaces such as sit-stand workstations.

CONCLUSION

The demographics of Canada's workforce are changing rapidly. Projections show the number of workers in the labour market is decreasing and, in many industries demand for skilled labour will outstrip supply. In this environment, the most successful employers will be those who attract the most skilled workers, many of whom may be older workers. Employers who attract and accommodate older workers will be more competitive because of the experience and skills sets these workers possess.