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I. Who is the aging workforce?

II. Identify the effects an aging workforce will have on business growth and productivity.

III. Illustrate how an aging workforce and management can use available technology to retain its aging workforce.

IV. What are other businesses doing to keep older employees from retiring?

I. Who is the aging workforce?

a. Baby Boomers

\* Baby Boomers Defined: “ The 76 million Americans born between 1946 and 1964.” (Mosner, Spiezle, & Emerman, 2003, p. 1)

“ The makeup of the labor force has slowly changed over the past 50 years, and significant changes are coming. This demographic shift has been exacerbated by the trend of early retirement of the baby boom generation.” (Lockwood, 2003, p. 1)

Lockwood says during the 1950’s, there was seven working age people for every one elderly worker and by 2030 the number of working age people will be down to three. (p. 1)

II. Identify the effects of an aging workforce.

“ Companies recognize that a maturing workforce can positively impact customer satisfaction and profitability.” (The Conference Board, 2005, p. 1) Organization that do not comprehend the ramifications or acknowledge the opportunities associated with an aging workforce run the risk of not staying competitive. (p. 1)

a. Shortage of qualified skilled workers

i. Labor Force Breakdown (Chart 1)

“ Since 1980, the number of U. S. workers over the age of 40 has increased significantly. By 2010, more than 51 percent of the workforce is expected to be 40 or older, a 33 percent increase since 1980, while the portion of the workforce aged 25 to 39 will decline 5. 7 percent. At the same time, the median age of U. S. workers has continued to rise and is expected to increase by six years, from 34. 6 to 40. 6, by 2010. The number of workers aged 55 and older will grow from 13 percent of the labor force in 2000 to 20 percent in 2020. ” ( See Chart 1) (Mosner et al., 2003, p. 5)

ii. Statistics (Table 1)

“ The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that 25 million people will leave the workforce between 1998 and 2008; 22 million, or 88 percent, will be 45 or older. After 2008, as more workers reach retirement age, the impact of their retirements will continue to grow. Industries and occupations most affected include public administration, education and healthcare. In addition, more than 50 percent of all federal government workers will be eligible for retirement by 2005. ” (See Table I.) (Mosner et al., 2003, p. 5-6)

Chart I

Table I

III. Illustrate how an aging workforce and management can use available technology to retain its aging workforce.

It is common to find information workers in all economic sectors. Occupations range from air traffic controllers and financial analysts, to rank and file factory employees, field service representatives, rental car agents and delivery people who use wireless reporting and tracking devices. (Mosner et al., 2003, p. 9-10)

a. The Digital Workplace and the Information Worker

“ As the U. S. has become an information-dependent society, technology has rapidly become a common fixture in the workplace. More and more occupations are becoming information-based, opening new employment opportunities for many Americans. ” (Mosner et al., 2003, p. 9)

What are other businesses doing to keep older employees from retiring?

b. “ Recommended strategic ideas for management.

i. Identify potential gaps and knowledge transfer needs

ii. Broaden succession planning thinking

iii. Check communications mechanisms and messages for intergenerational approach

iv. Review training history

v. Capitalize on affinity groups

vi. Become an “ employer of choice” for all generations

vii. Encourage better financial planning among employees

viii. Build a retiree network

ix. Offer benefits of interest to mature workers such as long-term care insurance, pre-retirement planning, health and wellness programs, comprehensive medical coverage, including prescription drugs, health coverage for retirees and part-time workers, prorated benefits for employees on flexible work schedules.”

Some industries are more concerned with the exodus if the baby boomers from the workforce. Expressing major concerns, are the technology and pharmaceuticals industries, about the introduction of new products and services to forecast the loss of experienced engineers, key account sales representatives and senior managers. (The Conference Board, 2005, p. 2)

References

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