The Aging Workforce: Challenges and Opportunities for Providers and Employers

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Presentation Overview

• Statistics on the aging workforce
• The correlation between aging and disability,
• ADA charges by age and disability
• Workplace issues and consideration
• Myths and facts about aging workers
• Strategies for keeping aging workers employed
• Special programs and resources
Workers over age 55 in the Labor Force as a Proportion of all workers, projected 1950 to 2030

The Aging Workforce

- 76 million baby boomers
- 30.8 million in the workforce
- 85% plan to continue working after retirement
- 70% prefer to work full time
- 7 in 10 plan on working at 65
- Nearly half plan on working into their 70s and 80s
- According to NOD (2001) those 55-64 have a 21.9% chance developing a disability
- 42% of 65+ reported functional limitations (2005)
The Aging Workforce (continued)

- A. Bell registered a patent at 75
- G. Verdi composed Ave Maria at 85
- M. Graham danced at 75, choreographed at 95
- President Reagan took office at 69
- Former Fed Chairman resigned at 80
- Redstone, Executive Chairman of Viacom is 89
  - Warren Buffet CEO of Berkshire Hathaway is 81
  - Betty White started new sitcom at 90
The Aging Workforce (continued)

- Average age of US CEOs is 56
- Average age of US Senators is 60
- Average age of Supreme Court Justices is 68
- 47% of physicians are 50+
- Fastest growing cohort – 80 and older

America's Outstanding Oldest Worker 2011
Dr. Hedda Bolgar Bekker, psychotherapist is 102
Mazerine Wingate, custodian USPO is 101
Why is the workforce aging?

- Increased longevity and function
- Declining pool of younger workers
- Enjoy working and being productive
- Delayed retirement due to financial need
  - Insufficient retirement savings
  - Health care costs
- Need to support other family members
- Lack of confidence in finances
Prevalence = $4.5715 \times 10^{-0.0383 \times \text{Age}}$

$R^2 = 0.9881$

Source: NIDRR Demographics and Statistics RRTC at Cornell University’s Employment and Disability Institute, calculations from 2003 ACS PUMS file performed by Robert Weathers, 2005.
Impairments Most Often Cited in Charges

- Other Disability: 25.9%
- Retaliation: 13.1%
- Structural Back Impairment: 12.3%
- Nonparalytic Orthopedic Impairment: 9.8%
- Depression: 7.6%
- Diabetes: 5.8%
- Other Psychiatric Disorders: 3.7%
- Heart/Cardiovascular: 3.6%
- Hearing Impairment: 3.6%
- Other: 3.0%
Employment Processes Most Often Cited

- Discharge: 55.3%
- Reasonable...: 24.7%
- Terms/Conditions: 18.8%
- Harassment: 12.2%
- Hiring: 8.2%
- Other: 6.0%
- Discipline: 5.2%
- Constructive Discharge: 3.7%
- Promotion: 3.5%
- Layoff: 3.2%
Workplace Issues and Consideration

- Likely increase for accommodations, but will result in retention of valuable, experienced human capital
- Age discrimination claims are the fastest growing category of discrimination cases
- Understanding relationship between aging and disability can minimize claims
- Review of charges may identify where problems could occur that can be remedied proactively
- Recognition of the importance of workplace culture, social capital, and employee engagement
What Aging Workers Want?

- Viable work options and meaningful employment
- Respect for abilities and experience
- Inclusion rather than tokenism
- Equal access to skill acquisition
- Equity in mobility and promotions
- Reasonable accommodations
- Flexible work schedules
The Aging Workforce: Myths and Facts

- Long-standing myths:
  - Afraid of change
  - Technologically inept
  - Slow to learn
  - Lack creativity
  - Perform at lower level
  - Less motivated
  - Less flexible and adaptable
Myths and Facts (continued)

- Concerns about:
  - Costs – higher pay, medical insurance
  - Performance – strength, endurance, reflexes
  - Investment in training
Myths and Facts (continued)

These are the facts:

- Low turnover rate
- Commitment to quality
- Good attendance and punctuality
- Few on-the-job accidents
- High motivation and engagement
- Strong work ethic and experience
- Loyalty and reliability
- Availability for various schedules
- Diversity of thought and experiences
Best Practices to Avoid Discrimination Complaints

1. *Data collection policies.* Employers should not collect information about age and should not stereotype employees based on age.

2. *Job descriptions and evaluations.* Employers must carefully craft fact-specific job descriptions and include measurable expectations for every position. Employees should be evaluated at regular intervals and the results should be well documented.

3. Layoffs, terminations, and advancements. Decisions about layoffs, terminations, or advancement in the organization should be based upon the objective evidence in personnel records. Any employer who conducts a layoff should evaluate its impact on protected groups, including older workers. Employers should periodically collect and analyze data regarding the impact of employment conditions upon older and younger workers.

4. Reducing compensation and benefits. Employers should explore whether they can retain older workers whose salaries and/or benefits are more consistent with those paid to younger workers to avoid adversely affecting older workers because of expense.

5. Employment decisions based upon subjective criteria. Employers should strive to maintain accurate and comprehensive records of factors considered in the decision-making process since the employer may need to provide such records as proof that the factor was justified (i.e., not age related).

Strategies for Keeping Aging Workers Employed

- Workplace flexibility: work from home, work from more than a single location, snowbird programs
- Work hour flexibility: part time employment, job sharing
- Work schedule flexibility: flex schedule, compressed week
- Career flexibility: on/off ramps, leaves, reduced responsibilities, job changes
- Benefit flexibility: phased retirement, cafeteria plans
- Flexibility in employment relationships: project work, consultation, independent contracts
- Training to upgrade skills for current or new job
- Provision of reasonable accommodations
Does Working Longer make People Healthier and Happier?

Positive physical and psychological effects due to:

• Maintaining identity and sense of purpose
• Sustaining productive engagement
• Physically demanding jobs and their contribution to physical health for those 65 and over
• Social interaction and connectivity
• Value of job related rewards

Source: Center for Retirement Research at Boston College
Special Programs for Aging Workers

- Renaissance Program – Adecco
- Your Encore – P & G, Eli Lilly, Boeing
- Snowbird Program – CVS, The Home Depot
- Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) operated by the USDOL
- *FedExperience* pilot program operated by the Partnership for Public Service
Specialized Job Boards

- www.retiredbrains.com
- www.Retiredworkforce.com
- www.quintcareers.com
- www.jobsover50.com
- www.workforce50.com
- www.foundation.aarp.org
- www.experienceworks.org
- www.Retirementjobs.com
- www.seniors4hire.org
- www.Seniorjobbank.com
- www.seniorserviceamerica.org
Further Related Resources

• American Association of Retired Persons – www.aarp.org
• AARP Workforce Assessment Tool, www.aarpworkforceassessment.org
• Searchable Database -- www.AskEARN.org
• TA e-mail support -- EARN@AskEARN.org
• Job Accommodation Network -- http://askjan.org/
• HR (human resources) Tips -- www.hrtips.org
• Online disability statistics and U.S. and state specific Disability Status Reports -- www.disabilitystatistics.org
• Sloan Center on Aging & Work www.bc.edu/research/agingandwork/
• NTAR Leadership Center -- www.ntarcenter.org
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