

Managing the Multigenerational Workforce – Part 2 & More

Waldthausen & Associates, Inc. is a Retained Executive Search firm with the focus on recruiting managers that influence a company's result and earnings. The firm focuses on recruiting professional managers for US subsidiaries with parent companies located in central Europe.

Managing Multiple Generations

How does an employer keep workers of different generations from strangling each other? Or as Armendariz put it, "How do you build communities with this complexity?"

First of all, understanding each group's predilections is fundamental, experts agree. While the various generations may grate on each other's nerves, they can be amazingly productive when working in teams, Armendariz says.

Some suggestions for getting the most out of a multigenerational workforce include building cross-generational project teams, letting Xers and Millennials mentor boomers and traditionals on technology and having older generations instill younger employees with a sense of living history of an organization, according to Armendariz.

All communication should be made without generational assumptions, Wendover says. For example, a boomer managing a clothing store may define himself by his job and obsess about making everything perfect and winning sales awards, while a Millennial he hires as a sales clerk may not even realize that if a garment falls off the rack, part of his job is to pick it up and re-hang it, Wendover says. "They just don't think of that," he says.

The challenge in managing the younger generations in the workforce is to maintain their engagement, says Giselle Kovary and Adwoa Buahene, managing partners in Toronto-based n-gen People Performance Inc., which specializes in multigenerational performance management.

Engagement has been found in many studies to track productivity and can keep an Xer or Millennial with an employer despite the current deterioration of worker loyalty, Kovary says.

Still companies run by traditionalists and boomers may fail to understand the "what's - in - it - for - me" mindset of younger workers and consequently make uninformed decisions about how to engage younger workers, Kovary says.

For example, Buahene says a bank client recently told her that their reward for employees staying a year with the company was a letter from the bank chairman and a tie clip with the corporate logo on it, a reward that might have appealed to the World War II generation, but not younger workers.

"My jaw just frankly hit the table," she says.

Meanwhile, Raines says that familiarity with the vernacular of generational differences can assist HR and individual managers in distinguishing between generational conflicts and personal animosity.

"The key thing is to get people to accept that these differences are OK," she says. "Generational analysis gives us new clues about human behavior, but it doesn't let us off the hook on understanding people as individuals."

(Bureau of National Affairs)

Access to Employer-Provided Health Promotion Benefits is Increasing

The proportion of US private sector workers with access to employer-provided health promotion benefits has increased substantially over the past six years, according to the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

According to a recent BLS analysis, access rates for all three categories of health promotion benefits – employee assistance programs (EAPs), wellness programs, and fitness centers – increased from 1999 to 2005.

"In recent years, concern for preventive healthcare measures, such as smoking cessation and a more active lifestyle, has given rise to greater employee access to health promotion benefits," says BLS economist Eli Stoltzfus.

EAPs were available to 40 percent of all workers in 2005, up from 33 percent in 1999. EAPs include access to referral or counseling services for problems such as alcohol and drug abuse and financial and legal difficulties, and are the most prevalent health promotion benefits available to workers according to the BLS.

Access to wellness programs increased from 17 percent of workers in 1999 to 23 percent in 2005, offering help in areas such as stress management, nutrition education, and smoking cessation, according to the report.

Access to fitness centers, including both onsite facilities and employer-subsidized health club memberships, increased from nine percent of employees in 1999 to 13 percent in 2005.

(Bureau of National Affairs)

PUBLISHED BY:

WALDTHAUSEN & ASSOCIATES, INC., 1910 ABBOTT STREET, SUITE 201, CHARLOTTE, NC 28203, T: 704-372-2172

FIND MORE NEWS ON OUR WEBSITE: www.waldthauseninc.com