

Boosting Aging Workforce Productivity in Hospitality Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study highlights the impact of ageing and analyzes manpower demand and supply in service industry. It is an attempt to analyze whether old work force is a liability or not. Analysis of working agendas can optimize productivity. Research identifies the value and benefits of employing older workers, the fact that older workers generally have experience. Age diverse workforce is like a cocktail with right blend of people to achieve corporate goals.

Keywords: aging, liability, productivity, workforce

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INTRODUCTION

There should be a systematic hiring process in a hotel, keeping in mind the retirement cycle. The senior staff may be accorded more back hand jobs like reservation office, house-keeping, control desk, hotel consultancy, project planning etc. The work load should be in sync with age of the employee and accordingly the job description may be assigned. Hazard analysis of job should be done keeping in mind age of staff task may be assigned. Housekeeping has 50% risk, food production 11%, food and beverage service 10%, public areas 8% and front desk only 4%.

What Is an Aging Workforce?

The actual definition of the aging varies and greatly depends upon the source. Legally an aging worker is 45 or older age.

(The Age Discrimination Employment Act 1967)

Other agencies consider an aging employee to be 50 years or older.

(The Committee of Economic Development)

And the survey of human professional revealed that management varies greatly in their opinion with age ranging being between 40–70 years.

(Society of Human Resource Management June 2003)

AGING WORKFORCE TRENDS

There are basically two trends of aging workforce:

- [1] Baby Boomers
- [2] Generation X

BABY BOOMERS

Baby Boomers (born between 1946–1964) comprise almost 46% of the workforce and they are rapidly approaching to retirement [1].

Those born in 1946 have revealed the age of 60 in 2006, with an expected significance wave of retirement starting from 2006 onwards.

GENERATION X

The Generation X includes those workers who were born between 1965–1983 and they would naturally be called as the replace of baby boomers.

The Generation X workforce comprises almost 30 % of the workforce, the result is that there are not going to be enough workers to meet labor force requirements. The population trends regarding generation X are fairly certain at this time, is whether the baby boomers will be swift or gradual.

Opportunity Generalizing in Hotel

The opportunity for people in the new segment and the new work force are also getting less chance in the process due to the older management and this minimizes new talent and makes further upbringing late and slower [2]. The older work force is in fact working with the older values and ethics with no new change evidence indicates that retiring older workers early and to release jobs for younger workers has no positive effect.

Flexible Working Agendas

Flexible working options can help employers to retain skilled and experienced staff. It can also help employers to manage the flow of work, whether on a day to day basis or over the longer-term. Employees can often be wary about asking what options either flexible or part time working may be possible. Evidence indicates that many older employees don't know how to raise the issue with their employer or discuss alternative options.

Are the Old Workers A Liability to The Company?

Effectively managing the health and safety of your whole workforce can generally pay dividends by helping to maintain the productivity of your workers in the short term and over the longer term as they age. A health and safety risk assessment is an important step in protecting your workers and your business, as well as complying with the law. Ensure you use your regular formal or informal discussions to engage

with employees openly about any health and safety issues they may have.

Diminishing Physical Attributes

Strength is an individual matter; some older workers can be more physically able than their younger colleagues. Age is not generally an indication of capability and does not tend to determine an employee's physical ability to do a job. Poor workplace design and inflexible working practices are more likely to prevent staff from being fully effective.

The hospitality workplace has unique characteristics:

- Seasonal work
- Part time/flexible working options
- Customer facing
- Demand for high levels of customer service/importance of brand
- Retention challenges
- These unique characteristics support the recruitment of older workers who may be looking for flexible working arrangements and have good inter-personal skills.

Value of older workers

- Research recognizes the esteem and advantages of utilizing more seasoned specialists, the way that more established laborers are utilized by and large.
- Bringing down levels of turnover fundamentally lessening enlistment costs are solid in relationship building abilities and client benefit, considering years of life encounter.
- Have an expansive scope of aptitudes and experience, offering chances to coach newcomers.
- Bring down levels of here and now ailment and less mishaps.
- Are similarly as adaptable as more youthful laborers and may contribute helpful thoughts considering their background.

- Are great at overseeing and adapting to pressure.

TRAINING OLDER WORKERS

As the workforce and customers age it will become more important to attract and retain older workers.

In the absence of the default retirement age (DRA), performance management and ongoing training will become critical in ensuring your workforce remains engaged, productive and meets your business needs.

In most jobs these days, where older workers receive the same level of training as younger workers, older worker productivity does not usually decline.

Some employers are much less likely to provide training to older workers if they are assumed to be within two to three years of possible retirement; yet the risk of an employee leaving the company after receiving training is the same across all age groups. Research on 35 years age group shows that younger workers have a higher turnover rate than older workers of 36 years and most training returns an investment within a year, so age is not a good indicator of return on training investment at 37 years.

With an age diverse workforce, you can also make the most of the range of skills and experience brought by people of different ages. Many employers draw on the skills and experience of their older workers to help bring on other staff.

Training Good Practice

- Don't use minimum or maximum age restrictions for training.
- Make sure older employees know that training and development is relevant to them and encourage them to take up opportunities. Older workers are not always aware of the opportunities that

are open to them or assume they are for younger workers.

- Use regular discussions to talk to individuals about their training and promotion options. This will help both you and the individual to plan and keep meeting both business and individual needs.
- Monitor take-up of training by employee age to ensure all staff are benefiting from available opportunities. Talk to people who don't attend or refuse training to find out why.
- Monitor outcomes from promotion exercises to ensure age bias has not occurred. Remember it is unlawful to rule someone out for promotions on the grounds of age unless it can be objectively justified.
- Do not assume older workers will not take-up training or a new post. Age is not a good indicator of return on investment and employers need to maximize the productive contribution of all its workers, regardless of age.
- Encourage mentoring and sharing of skills within your business. Experienced older workers can support and train new recruits and less-experienced employees.

Meeting older workers' training needs

- Recognize the sheer diversity found in the older working population and the need to be responsive to older workers' needs and experience on an individual basis
- Prioritize on skill utilization rather than skill acquisition value experience and create a culture of collegiality and mutual respect that will facilitate the bringing forth and sharing of older workers' many resources.
- Training and development interventions for older workers should, on the most part, concentrate on team building, skill utilization within

collaborative practices and encourage self-directed learning.

- The ‘revolving door’ approach to training, where every employee attends standardized courses to comply with basic legislative requirements or company policy, may not always be appropriate to the needs of the more experienced worker, who may require a much more customized approach to learning based upon the recognition of their prior experience and work roles. This means taking a more learner-centered approach to training [3].

Poor performing older workers

Many employers find that managing employee performance without fixed retirement ages is not a problem; they use fair dismissal procedures and performance discussions for all their workers.

Leaving someone to perform poorly in the years running up towards retirement and then letting them finally retire can be costly to the business. Line managers and supervisors need to be able to assess employees of all ages on their performance and ability and take appropriate action.

If a worker is no longer able to do their current job, or an alternative job, then a change in their hours or responsibilities might help them to cope better and enable you to retain valuable skills and experience.

Where an employee develops a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010, an employer may need to make reasonable adjustments to enable them to continue to do their job.

If performance can’t be improved, use the same fair dismissal procedures as for workers of any age. Ignoring shortfalls in performance because it is assumed that an employee is near retirement may be discriminatory, particularly if the

performance of younger workers is handled differently.

Generally, employees know when they are no longer able to carry on and self-select to leave or ‘retire’ [4].

Good Age Practice

It is already unlawful to discriminate against workers because of age. Employers should ensure they have policies in place which prevent discrimination in:

- Recruitment and selection
- Pay
- Training and development
- Selection for promotion
- Discipline and grievances
- Bully and harassment.

Recruiting and Retaining Older Workers

Think about these simple, practical steps on managing age positively:

Recruitment

Avoid ageist language in adverts. Focus on job needs. Publicize your vacancies in ways most likely to attract responses from a range of age groups. Try to separate personal details such as date of birth when shifting applications. Do not make assumptions. Monitor the number of candidates of different age groups.

Training and Development

Ensure promotion opportunities are available to all. Ask managers to encourage older and younger workers to take part in training. Make certain younger managers confident about positively managing workers older than themselves.

Flexible Working

Consider what forms of flexible or part-time working you can offer. Tell workers of all ages you are open to requests to work flexibly and how they can discuss their options.

Performance Management

Have performance discussions with all your workers. Where performance does not meet the business needs consider whether training, or a change in hours, working pattern, or job, can help the individual cope better.

Redundancy

Do not lose skills relevant to your business needs. Consider alternatives to redundancy. Use job-related criteria. Do not target specific age groups.

Retirement

Make sure your workers know that you are open to discussions about working on and options for flexible or full retirement. Ensure line managers and supervisors understand how to support these discussions; and that employee benefits and pensions are reviewed and support employees after normal pension age.

Culture

Challenge ageist attitudes; demonstrate there is no place for age discrimination in your workplace.

Government Policy

A scope of measures has been acquainted over ongoing years which encourage and delay business including: age segregation enactment, raised state pension ages, an augmentation of adaptable working controls to vocations, annuity change, and welfare change with an increased emphasis on capacity combined with in-work financial incentives. Both demand and supply side factors associated with labour market outcomes have been targeted. The government has been working closely with employers, has produced good practice guides and posts [5]. The following initiatives represent the key policy levers designed to extend working lives, improve opportunities and equalize treatment regardless of age:

Older workers block opportunities for younger workers

There is no evidence of older workers blocking opportunities for younger workers over the longer term.

Some employers believe removing older workers to 'make way' for younger can be damaging to productivity, as it can fail to maximize existing skills and experience. It can increase staff turnover and the costs of training and recruiting new workers. It can constrain business effectiveness. Instead many employers retain experienced workers to maximize productivity and to help mentor and train up new recruits.

There is no guarantee that young workers won't move to a different employer in any case.

Evidence indicates that retiring old workers early to release jobs for young workers has no positive effect. The number of younger people joining the labor market is also dropping and by 2020, about a third of the workforce will be aged 50 and over [6].

Without fixed retirement ages won't older workers have to resign to finally leave?

Older workers can still plan to retire positively in the absence of a fixed retirement age. As they are coming up to the point when they plan to retire, they would have to give their employer notice that they intend to leave work

Many older workers will want to consider their options for working on or retiring as they approach an age from which a pension may be payable, whether that's the State Pension, an of occupational pension or a privately arranged pension.

How do I get rid of poor performing older workers?

Many employers find that managing employee performance without fixed retirement ages is not a problem: they use

fair dismissal procedures and performance discussions for all their workers.

Leaving someone to perform poorly in the years running up towards retirement and then letting him or her finally retire can be costly to the business. Line managers and supervisors need to be able to assess employees of all ages on their performance and ability and take appropriate action. If a worker is no longer able to do their current job, or an alternative job, then a change in their hours or responsibilities might help them to cope better and enable you to retain valuable skills and experience.

Where an employee develops a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010, an employer may need to make reasonable adjustments to enable them to continue to do their job. If performance cannot be improved, use the same fair dismissal procedures as for workers of any age. Ignoring shortfalls in performance because it is assumed that an employee is near retirement may be discriminatory, particularly if the performance of younger workers is handled differently. Generally, employees know when they are no longer able to carry on and self-select to leave or 'retire'.

Rather than manage performance issues, isn't retiring someone more dignified than using performance management?

There is nothing dignified about letting someone continue under-performing, leaving them to think they are doing a good job. That's true of workers at any age. Employers are already successfully managing the performance of employees of all ages, through their formal or informal performance management discussions [7].

Where workers expect to be treated equally regardless of their age, the issue of 'loss of dignity' does not tend to arise

What has flexible working got to do with older workers?

Part-time or flexible working can be an important way of enabling employees of all ages to stay in work, or return to work, while meeting their wider personal needs. For many older employees flexible working is a popular option as it allows them to make a gradual transition between full-time work and retirement. 60 per cent of over 50s would like to continue working past State Pension age, but on a part-time basis half of people who recently retired would have considered working longer if they could have accessed flexible work.

Flexible working options can help employers to retain skilled and experienced staff. It can also help employers to manage the flow of work, whether on a day to day basis or over the longer-term. Benefits can include less downtime for machinery when 24-hour shifts can be covered, extending the hours that customers can access the business, or covering peak business periods.

Consider which flexible working options best suit the business, and ensure your managers and supervisors know how to consider requests fairly and as positively as possible. Employees can often be wary about asking what options for flexible or part-time working may be possible. Evidence indicates that many older employees do not know how to raise the issue with their employer or discuss alternative options as a result they may leave work altogether or take their skills and experience to a different employer [8].

Aren't older workers a health liability and more likely to have accidents at work?

Many employers report benefiting from the commitment and good attendance shown by their older workers. Older workers tend to have fewer accidents and lower levels of short-term sickness.

Effectively managing the health and safety of your whole workforce can generally pay dividends by helping to maintain the productivity of your workers in the short term and over the longer term as they age.

A health and safety risk assessment is an important step in protecting your workers and your business, as well as complying with the law.

Do older workers offer a poor return on training investment?

Research shows that older worker productivity does not usually decline at least up to the age of 70, where these workers have received the same level of training as younger colleagues.

The risk of an employee leaving a company after training or promotion can be the same across all age groups. Age, therefore, is not generally a good indication of return on training investment.

Encourage mentoring and sharing of skills within your business— draw on experienced workers to support and train new starters and other colleagues. Training can help businesses fill skills gaps, increase productivity and keep pace with change. It can support workforce motivation and retention across workers of all ages. Older workers are generally just as likely to successfully complete training [9].

Older workers don't want to take-up training

Older workers are not always aware of the opportunities that are open to them or assume they are for less experienced workers. Encourage workers of all ages to take up relevant training opportunities and ensure they understand the importance to your business and their own development. Older workers often do take-up training when it is made clear that the training is

relevant to them and they are encouraged to take it up.

Monitor the take-up of training by employee age to make sure all staff are benefiting from appropriate opportunities.

Training can help businesses fill skills gaps, increase productivity and keep pace with change. It can support workforce motivation and retention across workers of all ages [10].

CONCLUSION

The focus of this study has been on the employment preferences, experiences and prospects of older people aged 50–75. In addition, the study assessed the extent to which government objectives to extend working lives are in keeping with the aspirations of older people and the employment terms and conditions required to achieve this outcome. Increasing the duration of employment is seen as a key means to prevent poverty in older age, combat the fiscal imbalances associated with a shifting dependency ratio, retain skills in the economy and promote health in so far as work has been identified as being ‘good for us’. It is recognized, however, that for some individuals and occupational groups, extending working life may not meet preferences or promote health over the longer term.

Age is not generally an indication of capability and does not tend to determine an employee’s physical ability to do a job as every individual is unique.

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