

## Retire or Retain Older Workers?

Employers are facing a dilemma. Many of their experienced workers are facing retirement, and there aren't enough knowledgeable up-and-comers to fill the jobs. The organizational store of knowledge, experience, and contacts will be much emptier.

Older workers are facing a dilemma. Retirement age is fast approaching, but, for one reason or another, many don't want to retire.

Retaining the older workers could solve both challenges. Mandatory retirement has been abolished in many places. So, it would seem retention rather than retirement would benefit everyone involved.

Statistics Canada conducted a study with some surprising results. About one third of people who retired between 1992 and 2002 would have continued working if they could have reduced their work schedule in some way without their pensions being affected. That's a significant number.

Recently, John Mackey, CEO of Whole Foods Market, decided to work just for the joy of working, and has reduced his salary to \$1 per year. Many older workers feel this same joy, even if they need the money, too, and want to keep working for that feeling of fulfillment and a sense of purpose.

Many organizations have found success in welcoming older workers to stay on longer by finding creative ways to accommodate the older workers' changing needs. Two ideas are:

**"Retiree on call" programs** – retired workers are called in when their skill/experience is needed. Their earnings are reduced (a boon to the organization), and their hours are less (a boon to the individual easing into retirement). The knowledge and coaching expertise are still available to assist the other employees, and the schedule still allows for the "playtime" retirement can bring.

**Phased Retirement** – older workers can gradually lessen their work responsibilities, can focus on certain aspects of their work, and can reduce their hours. This accommodates their changing circumstances and personal responsibilities.

There are other programs that can be devised to encourage older workers to keep on working. With the looming labour shortage, why not tap into this growing pool of employees? Accommodating older workers in rearranging their work schedules will be a big plus for everyone.



## Quotes of the Month

"Retired is being twice tired, I've thought. First tired of working, Then tired of not."  
~Richard Armour~

"When you retire, think and act as if you were still working; when you're still working, think and act a bit as if you were already retired."  
~Author Unknown~

"If all the year were playing holidays, to sport would be as tedious as to work."  
~Shakespeare~

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## The "Bad Mood" Blues

So, you arrive at work, and there's this little dark cloud hovering over your head, following you around. You "got up on wrong side of bed" and *everyone* and *everything* is going to *bug the heck out of you all day!* What do you do?

Well, don't fake being cheery. It doesn't work and can be kind of scary to those who have to face you. Everyone will still know you're in a bad mood. Just acknowledge your mood, and warn your close co-workers so they'll know it isn't anything they've done. Then they can take cover until your mood passes.

Try to carry on with work, knowing this mood won't last forever. If there are some tasks you particularly like, do them. And, if you have to take a break for a walk or a bit of time alone, please, do it.

You could try singing your favourite song. This might improve your mood but could bring everyone else down – you'll have to judge whether this a good idea!



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