

Rocky Mountain Conference on Aging Aging in the Workplace

Aging Trends and the World of Work

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Presentation Date and Time: Wednesday October 24, 2007. 2-3pm

Mrs. Shulster started her talk “Aging trends & the World of Work”, with an exercise on who would you remove from a life- craft if there was only 4 places on the boat and 6 people. There was no right or wrong answer however it brought up the questions on ones values and perspective on age and character. The most important function for employers in an organization is to know: -who you are, -where you are going, - what you believe in (values/motivators).

Highlights:

1. Workforce trends

The change in the workforce has become *multigenerational* with grandparents, parents and children all working at the same place. The varied households have increased by the number of single parents. The average median age is now 40 years old, and anyone over 40 is considered older and over 65 called elder. *Diversity* in the workforce has seen skill training become more important. *Trust, respect and ethics* in the workforce are important for a person finding meaning in their work.

2. Career trends

A career is no longer a linear path; a career has become multifactorial, life long and flexible. A person has many roles that change throughout life, and life roles are called careers. Employers are no longer loyal to their employees, they look at what the employee can offer, and the employee also questions if the job is a good fit, and how the employee can bring value to the job.

3. Employer role

The employer needs to have a strong mission and strong values with a direction for the future. They need to understand and develop a strong culture, and understand the employee motivators. It is important to embrace the individual strengths; what comes naturally, what they have done well in other jobs, and strategic planning. It goes back to the frame work of knowing who you are, where you are going and what you believe in (values/motivators)

4. Employee role

The role of the employee is to understand the organizational purpose; to understand why she/he is being paid, how to exceed expectations and adhere to company policies and ethics. The employee needs to have self-awareness and know what strengths, skills, values and motivators and interest they have to offer.

5. So what? Employers;

Need to find out how older workers will fit into the organization. They need to plan how the company will attract older workers, and how will they meet the older persons varied needs. Will the employer be able to offer flexible hours?

So what? Employees;

How will the employee add value to the job, how will they be able to take advantage of and /or create opportunities, and how will they choose to live the next chapter of their life. Going back to the fact that work/career is not a linear pathway.

Submitted by: Blu Jacobs, University: University of Northern Colorado, October 25, 2007