

## **Rocky Mountain Conference on Aging Aging in the Workplace**

### **Successful Recruitment and Retention of Older Workers**

Presenter Name: Ellen Lake, Susan Schaefer, and Stanley Chapman

Presentation Date and Time: Thursday, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007, 12:30-1:30 pm

#### Overview

This presentation discussed successful strategies that top companies use to recruit and retain older workers. Three presenters shared how their company and others achieve the goal of being a positive work environment for older workers. Ellen Lakes shared the strategies used by companies recognized by AARP as the top in the country as employers for older workers. Susan Schaefer shared how Home Depot has teamed with AARP and with their employees to satisfy the needs of their older workers to keep them as part of their team. Stanley Chapman shared the six strategies that the Platte River Power Authority uses to recruit and accommodate older workers.

#### Key Highlights

1. AARP has rated the companies that are best to work for as an older individual. SC Johnson in Racine, WI; Mercy Health System in Janesville, WI; First Horizon National Corporation in Memphis, TN; Scripps Health in San Diego, CA; and Stanley Consultants in Muscatine, IA are the top five companies. The strategies they use include a combination of allowing compressed work schedules (four 10-hour days), paid sabbaticals, December holiday shut-down, free wellness center with no dues for retirees, free concierge program, paying for preventative screenings, financial consultation, full-benefits for part-time employees, HSAs, PTO, phased retirement, 401K programs, discounted health club memberships, and on-site training.
2. Home Depot has partnered with AARP to be a great employer for older adults. Older workers measure their job based on 'meaning,' rather than 'success.' Also, older workers want great benefits and training specifically tailored to them. There are many benefits to hiring older workers. Older workers have more stability, experience and knowledge, maturity, the ability to train and mentor others, have a more flexibly schedule, are loyal and understanding of change. Home Depot surveyed their older employees and discovered that older workers want competitive pay and benefits, recognition, flexible schedule, a company with a good reputation, rewarding work, enjoyable co-workers/management, and job security. Along with AARP, Home Depot has teamed up with job services, workforce centers, job fairs at senior centers, and Experience Works to recruit older workers.
3. Many of the engineers at the Platte River Power Authority are approaching retirement age and the company can't afford to lose all their employees. The six strategies that Platte River uses to retain their older workers are: 1. They are striving to truly be equal opportunity by addressing ageist behaviors and by making an effort to hire older workers. 2. They allow for flexible schedules such as four 10 hour days, allow early or late daily shifts, and reduced work weeks. 3. They have special assignments for older workers to be mentors and trainers. This keeps them motivated and excited about their job. 4. They offer a great benefit package and encourage their employees to keep working to maintain their benefits. 5. They allow for contract work by hiring retired employees for special assignments and when there are excessive workloads. 6. They keep in contact with retirees in case their situation changes and they want to come back to work.

Submitted by: Roseanne Bezdek, University of Northern Colorado, October 29, 2007