HELPING EXPERIENCED WORKERS MAKE THE LEAP:
A VALUE-ADDED PROPOSITION

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FOREWORD

In the spring of 2011, the Comité sectoriel de main-d’œuvre de l’économie sociale et de l’action communautaire (CSMO-ÉSAC) conducted a study designed to determine whether experienced workers, managers, coordinators and younger employees in the sector were interested in keeping people over 50 on the job or helping them return to work.

CSMO-ÉSAC also documented the issue of returning to work and integrating experienced workers from the public and private employment sectors into the workforce.

In the fall of 2011, CSMO-ÉSAC organized a day-long session for workers from all age categories and backgrounds as a follow-up for those who had participated in the study.

These reflections have guided us as we put together this handbook for managers in the sector. We hope that members of Boards of Directors will also think about issues raised here as they consider how to keep the 50-plus segment of the workforce on the job or help them to return to work.

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INTRODUCTION

Until very recently, the challenge of the aging workforce was seen from an individual viewpoint. Today, it has become imperative to consider the issue in the collective sense. We need to plan for the impact this phenomenon will have on organizational productivity and working conditions – not only for the aging workforce, but for other workers as well.

More and more managers are putting in place effective mechanisms for management planning of human resources to deal with this new reality. Further challenges include work organization, managing a range of ages, managing human resources, labour relations and training.

This document suggests some factors to consider and possible pathways to help managers in the social economy and community action employment sector keep, attract and integrate experienced workers. We also provide various resources on the topic.

So much to think about...

DID YOU KNOW?

Our society is aging and the growth rate is slowing – in fact, the 15-to-64 age group, said to be of “working age,” will begin to decline in 2012. This will mean that workers are harder and harder to find in the future – and they will be older.

People between the ages of 55 and 64, who constituted 9% of the working population in 1996, now represent 14%. That proportion is expected to rise to about 20% by 2020. This is not a transient phenomenon – it will continue for at least another decade. The shortage of qualified workers to ensure economic development, along with strong pressure on the public purse, is of increasing concern to experts and public decision-makers. After glorifying “Freedom 55” and early retirement to make way for young workers, as was the case in the 1980s and the early 1990s, we are now hearing more frequent calls to keep experienced workers on the job.

WHAT DOES MANAGEMENT PLANNING MEAN?

Management planning for jobs and skills involves planning the organization’s human resource needs by considering workers who are leaving for retirement or other reasons, new hires and changes in required skills, and analyzing changes in the organization, the workforce, technology and available training courses.
**MAKE THE CHOICE TO DIVERSIFY YOUR HUMAN RESOURCES**

Management planning of the workforce raises concerns for all sorts of organizations in Quebec—private, public, cooperative and not-for-profit organizations alike. And the issue is of concern not only to employers, but also to the four generations of workers who are rubbing shoulders in the workplace. The aging workforce and the growing need for qualified workers are the new realities of the labour market. Everyone in the Quebec labour market is now being obliged to adapt to new realities, including an available workforce that is older and is being refreshed at a slower rate, as the fertility rate is below the replacement threshold.

“There will be [...] major potential for employment in Quebec over the next few years for people who wish to enter the workforce. And there will be enough workers entering the labour market to fill these jobs. [...] In other words, there will be no widespread manpower shortages between now and 2020 (there will still be about 230,000 unemployed workers in Quebec in 2020). [That being said], some professions, sectors and regions may be more seriously affected by manpower shortages. [Besides], in 2020, with the unemployment rate around 5.2%, the lowest rate observed since 1967 and approaching what economists call the ‘full employment unemployment rate,’ manpower will become harder to find. This situation should benefit young graduates, the unemployed, older workers who want to stay active and immigrants who want to enter the labour market.

“[More specifically], over the next 10 years, the Quebec labour market will need 316,000 workers in response to growth in employment. The market will also require more than 1 million people just to take over from those who are retiring. All told, about 1.4 million people will need to enter or return to the labour market to fill market requirements, which is more than one-third of the number of people in the market in 2010. Who will fill those positions?”

As in other employment sectors, the social economy and community action sector will have many challenges to face. Among those challenges: trying to predict the number of people who will be retiring in the medium and long terms and preparing workers to replace them through the transfer of knowledge from experienced workers. On a day-to-day basis, managers in this sector will have to deal with:

- The attractiveness of this sector of employment and the 27 activity sectors it includes;
- Recognizing trades and professions related to the employment sector;
- Cementing the loyalty of salaried workers and maintaining good working conditions for them;
- Refreshing the ranks of salaried workers and managers;
- Transmitting knowledge from retiring workers;
- Meeting growing social demand (provision of services);
- Improving salaries and working conditions.

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In the social economy and community action sector, a strong majority (70%) of managers anticipate keeping their employees in the 50-plus age group on the job. Twenty percent of them already have strategies in place to make sure this happens, while 17% do not. Only 2% of managers do not anticipate keeping their 50-plus employees on the job (4% of managers were not in a position to answer the question and 24% declined to answer).

More than one-quarter (27%) of managers do not anticipate hiring experienced workers, whatever sector of employment they come from. More than one-quarter (28%) say they are ready to hire 50-plus workers from the social economy and community action sector, 20% are ready to hire experienced workers from the private sector, and 18% are ready to hire experienced workers from the public sector (42% of managers were not in a position to answer the question).


THE NEW FACE OF RETIREMENT

In a working world where the aging workforce and the growing need for qualified workers are the new realities of the labour market, experienced workers are expected to be in more and more demand in organizations. In fact, one-third of employment growth between 2006 and 2016 will be due to people in the 65-and-over age group.

Thanks to overall improvements in public health, with life expectancy now hovering around 80, people are able to remain actively employed for longer than they were in the past. Retirement was among the core issues addressed in the Quebec government’s budget for 2011, with new parameters established for the Régie des rentes du Québec (the Quebec pension board, or RRQ). According to a recent survey, the new measures are giving one in three Quebec workers grounds to consider postponing retirement. When we compare the intentions of respondents who are reconsidering their retirement plans, the average age of retirement planned by workers – which was 63 before the new measures took effect – now stands at 66.7, an increase of nearly four years. Of the respondents who hope to remain actively employed over a longer period, 26% noted that they now plan to retire after the age of 70, though only 9% had been considering such late retirement before the new measures were announced. Among those whose annual revenue is less than $40,000, 38% say they are prepared to make that choice. Among workers who are 55 or older, 35% are inclined to anticipate retiring between the ages of 66 and 69. Only 6% of the workers in the survey now plan to retire before the age of 65, though that figure stood at 45% before the measures were announced. And 20% of respondents to the survey say that they are considering their options – a rate that rises to 26% for female respondents.

On February 13, 2012, the Régie des rentes du Québec formed a committee of experts who are slated to complete their work by the end of 2012. The committee’s mandate is part of an in-depth reflection process the government of Quebec has instituted around the pension system. The committee will be considering how to improve the performance of the Quebec pension system to make it more viable, while at the same time pondering the new economic and demographic realities.

In the Quebec budget handed down on March 17, 2011, Raymond Bachand, Minister of Finance and Minister of Revenue, announced some measures designed to change the Quebec Pension Plan. The proposed changes, which will be introduced gradually over the next few years, will improve the funding of the plan, maintain intergenerational equity and encourage experienced workers to stay on the job.

http://www.rrq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/regie/salle_presse/2012/Pages/20120213.aspx

Régie des rentes
Québec


http://www.radio-canada.ca/nouvelles/Economie/2011/03/30/001-retraite-sondage-quebec.shtml

*CROP survey conducted for the Ordre des conseillers en ressources humaines agréés. The survey was conducted online between March 23 and 25, 2011, and involved 501 respondents who were actively employed. The margin of error is not available.
The face of retirement is also changing in the rest of Canada. A 2012 survey released by Sun Life Financial revealed that only 30% of Canadians expect to be fully retired at age 66. Another growing trend: 48% of Canadians plan to phase in retirement by working part-time or freelance. Of those who expect to work past the age of 65, 61% say they’ll keep working because they need to, with only 39% saying they’ll keep working because they want to.

The survey further notes that many Canadians are increasingly concerned about the current situation of the economy and wonder whether they’ll be able to save enough money for retirement. While 47% of respondents worry about the economy, 44% say that paying down debt is their number one financial priority. Canadians in the survey also expressed concern about growing indebtedness, rising health-care costs, longer life expectancy, and lack of planning for retirement. Only 20% mentioned saving for retirement as a priority.

For many Canadians, retirement has become a gradual period of transition, with people planning to work in some capacity for at least a few years after they retire from their primary occupation. This shows that workers no longer view retirement as a fixed point in time; instead, they see it as a gradual period of transition from working full-time to exploring other employment arrangements and options.

It's time to take concrete steps

The aging of the population provides an opportunity to showcase the experience and skills of older workers and offer them a more varied range of employment possibilities. The federal government has changed many policies to encourage older workers to boost their participation in the active workforce and reduce obstacles to keeping them in the labour market.

Changes to be made include the following:

→ Eliminating the criterion to have stopped working, a measure that will enable individuals who are still active participants in the labour market to take their pension would having to stop work temporarily or reduce their income;

→ Boosting benefits for those who delay registering for the pension plan;

→ Making adjustments so that people who take their pension before the age of 70 but are still earning money can contribute to the Canada Pension Plan and increase their benefits.

“Many experienced workers plan to phase in retirement by working part-time…”


This section draws upon the report produced by the National Seniors Council (2011). Report on the Labour Force Participation of Seniors and Near Seniors, and Intergenerational Relations, which may be downloaded from: http://www.seniorscouncil.gc.ca/eng/research_publications/labour_force/page00.shtml

Working towards management planning of jobs and skills

Management planning of jobs and skills is a major aspect to consider when it comes to refreshing your human resources. HR planning must be open to employees from all sorts of backgrounds and across the generation span.

The aging of the workforce means that it is time to organize various forms of intervention in the workplace, but they must respect the choices made by individuals and their willingness to continue working, move back into the workplace or move on to pre-retirement or retirement.

DID YOU KNOW?

For someone who turns 65 today, life expectancy now stands at 83 for men and 87 for women. At the age of 65, men have 18 more years of life ahead of them, and women have at least 22 years.

Some useful recommendations in this regard have been made by the National Seniors Council (2011). Report on the Labour Force Participation of Seniors and Near Seniors, and Intergenerational Relations.

Online at: http://www.seniorscouncil.gc.ca/eng/research_publications/labour_force/page00.shtml

A report called Présâges, prepared by the Fondation Berthiaume-du-Tremblay, was presented to the Commission nationale sur la participation au marché du travail des travailleuses et travailleurs expérimentés de 55 ans et plus, February 10, 2012.

Are you planning to put some practices in place to attract and retain employees? Are you developing a succession plan for your organization? Are you concerned about knowledge transfer issues? The Guide ressources à l’intention des gestionnaires du secteur d’emploi de l’économie sociale et de l’action communautaire provides more than a dozen useful tools and resources that can help you with your HR planning.

Find it online [in French only] at: www.cscoesac.qc.ca
WHY RECRUIT EXPERIENCED WORKERS?

→ Because the shortage of qualified staff is of increasing concern, in Quebec and elsewhere. Organizations will need to cope by retaining experienced workers as long as possible. They also need to attract this segment of the workforce - people who are not planning to retire or take full retirement.

→ Because, although the social economy and community action employment sector hires young graduates, that labour pool is less and less significant in size and will not meet manpower needs in all 27 sectors of activity. In fact, the age pyramid has turned upside down as of July 2011. There are now more people 65 and over than there are young people 15 and under. Hiring top-quality workers will be one of the major challenges organizations have to face.

→ Because the social economy and community action sector has to compete, notably with the public and parapublic sectors, when it comes to recruiting qualified manpower for professions related to the health and social service sector.

→ Because retired people want to work! Hoping to discover a new place to work, they often take on a second career while juggling family, work, retirement and personal life. Offering ways of reconciling family and work and keeping salaried workers happy constitute competitive advantages for organizations in the social economy and community action employment sector.

MAKE EXPERIENCED WORKERS PART OF YOUR RECRUITMENT STRATEGY!

Choosing experienced applicants means choosing experience, maturity, stability, confidence and savoir-faire, skills and creativity.

DID YOU KNOW?

Retired people who go back to work often do so for social reasons.

So make the most of it and remember to sell them on your mission and your values!

10 REASONS WHY RETIRED PEOPLE WANT TO WORK

1 For intellectual stimulation and to keep on learning.
2 To do something important.
3 To go back to forgotten projects.
4 To find a balance between fun and work.
5 To earn money doing work I like.
6 To stay in good physical and mental shape.
7 To find a new vocation.
8 To remain productive members of society.
9 To make a difference for others.
10 To stay connected and tuned in.


What do workers from this employment sector have to say about attracting and retaining 50-plus workers? [In French only]

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkhehOuXa5I&feature=related

Footnote:
WHY NOT OFFER A CAREER IN THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY ACTION SECTOR?

In Quebec, one in three managers refuse to even consider applicants of a certain age. Myths about experienced workers are a real challenge in the hiring process. [Translation] “We need to change the culture in the area of manpower and employment. Workers who are growing older must stop being perceived as no longer having the necessary abilities to hold a job. They should be part of the labour market just like younger workers.”

Today, the concept of diversity in human resource management is increasingly complex. Whether it’s a matter of age, gender, culture, religion or something else, there are many fundamental differences between members of the same team.

That being said, hiring experienced workers could solve recruitment problems, at least in part. As a result, work teams in organizations will become more multigenerational.

GENERATIONS ON THE LABOUR MARKET IN 2012

Baby-boomers: born between 1946 and 1962, now 48 to 64 years old
Generation X: born between 1962 and 1980, now 30 to 48 years old
Generation Y: born between 1980 and 1990, now 20 to 30 years old
Generation c: born after 1990, now under the age of 22

What do workers in the employment sector have to say about job retention and keeping 50-plus employees loyal? [In French only]
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTWI9eFY_mM&list=UUaknzFl2PQIqeEc0-SWT1YQ&index=4&feature=plcp

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KEEPPING 50-PLUS EMPLOYEES ON THE JOB: A WIN-WIN SCENARIO

Concentrating on experienced workers should prove helpful in retaining competent staff and overcoming the shortage of qualified manpower. Organizations will need to review their human resources policies and practices by make succession plans. Although some tensions may emerge between employees who come from different generations, there can also be many advantages. Organizations should start by choosing to keep experienced workers on the job. Managers also need to keep recruitment and training costs in mind.

Bear in mind that when experienced and qualified staff leave the workplace, that can lead to a loss of knowledge and organizational memory. Problems with transmitting the corporate culture, departure costs partially assumed by the organization, pressure on the remaining workers to be more productive, employee demotivation and an imbalance in the age pyramid are negative effects that organizations should anticipate whenever experienced people are allowed to go.

Recruiting experienced workers

Fifty-plus workers may be a solution for managers who want to refresh their workforce, but there are many prejudices against these workers. Some of this can be explained by misunderstanding, as many employers attribute negative characteristics to experienced people or seniors when it comes to individual skills and qualities.

AGEISM

Ageism refers to all forms of age-based discrimination, segregation and distrust.
(Observatoire de l’âgisme)

To find out more about various aspects of ageism and the Agisme, Parlons-en!
(Ageism – let’s talk about it) campaign:

www.aqg-quebec.org

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly 45% of newly retired people in Quebec are under the age of 60. This is quite a contrast with the situation observed elsewhere in Canada, e.g. in Western Canada and Ontario, where slightly over 25% and 33% respectively of newly retired people are in that age category. www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/publications/remuneration/pdf2011/capsule_jan11.pdf
Some myths that need to be dispelled:

→ Experienced workers’ salary demands are too high.
→ It can be difficult to recoup investments in training because experienced workers are resistant to change, unable to master new technologies and too old to learn.
→ The productivity of experienced workers declines with age and they think of nothing but retirement.
→ Experienced workers have a high rate of absenteeism and workplace accidents.
→ Experienced workers have a hard time taking directions from younger workers or working as part of an intergenerational team.

There is a substantial body of research to disprove the myths associated with this group of workers. In fact, experienced workers:

→ Are more likely than younger workers to stay in their jobs.
→ Recognize the necessity of: “recycling” themselves, although they don’t learn in the same ways as young people.
→ Are more productive thanks to their experience.
→ Are more concerned about the quality of products and services.

We need to fight existing prejudices against experienced workers. We need to get new glasses – we need to rely on experience, as we are doing.

Participant in the CSMO-ÉSAC discussion group, Fall 2011
Many employers take a positive view of older workers, especially when they have trouble hiring staff. Older workers who are motivated to stay in the labour market form an attractive pool for meeting human resource needs and filling knowledge gaps.

At this age, the work dynamic changes, moving towards career reorientation or gradual retirement. Some people who seek to slow the pace try to find more flexible, easier working conditions in terms of schedules, stress and physical demands. Many experienced workers are interested in coaching younger workers, who in turn show a strong interest in intergenerational learning and knowledge transfer.

I’m a manager and I’m 68. I hired a new therapist last year – she’s 58. These days, I think we need to realize that we’re in better shape, we live longer and we need to stay involved in society.

There is also the reality that most citizens continue to work so they can enjoy a [decent] quality of life. I believe it’s essential to revise the rules on employment to make that happen.

Pauline Lacroix, Director, Hébergement L’Entre-Deux

The FADOQ Network launched its “Défi Travail 50+” (50+ Work Challenge) to make employers aware of the wealth of experience possessed by 50-plus workers, whose contributions are essential to meet manpower needs. Various awareness tools were produced as part of the campaign, designed to showcase the advantages of experienced workers. If you are an employer who would like to retain your experienced workers and train workers waiting in the wings, go to [in French only]: http://www.fadoq.ca/fr/Defense-des-droits/Travailleurs-d-experience/Defi-travail-50/ and take the challenge.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most people in Quebec plan to work after retirement, and many of them will stay active on the labour market out of necessity. According to a recent survey conducted by Harris/Decima for Scotiabank, 64% of Quebecers who plan to retire intend to hold a job during this period in their lives, mainly to remain active mentally and socially. However, about one-third of Quebecers plan to work after retirement simply to make ends meet.
To recruit experienced workers, try HR marketing

When manpower is in short supply, keeping staff on the job and securing their loyalty become crucial issues for organizations in the social economy and community action employment sector.

The shortage of qualified manpower, greater job mobility, increased demands made by workers and intergenerational management are just some of the challenges managers have to deal with today.

These days, attracting and retaining manpower and securing their loyalty to the organization are crucial for continuity in organizations. Human resources policy needs to be marketing-based... and vice versa.

Ressources

CSMO-ÉSAC offers a workshop on HR marketing. For further details, go to www.csmoesac.qc.ca

Attracting applicants

This refers to helping potential applicants to recognize the organization as a pleasant place to work by showing a positive attitude to the organization and willingness to get involved and invest effort in the organization.

Securing staff loyalty

This refers to a set of practices designed to create an emotional involvement between the employee and the organization.

“Make yourself visible! It’s important to get information out there, using a range of recruitment tools.”
Creating your brand image as an employer

Positioning yourself as an employer (creating an organizational brand image) is a great technique for setting your organization apart from the competition, i.e. other employers, and attracting notice from your target audience, i.e. people who are looking for a job.

Positioning is a key determining aspect of your strategy for communications and attracting manpower to your organization.

Identifying your added value as an employer on the job market is the first step in applying a range of staff attraction and retention strategies or reviewing practices for recruiting qualified staff. Know your strengths.

Make yourself visible! Raise your profile to getting information out there, using a range of recruitment tools (specialized job sites, social media, newspapers, etc.).

Attracting more applications not only provides more possibilities for filling positions, but also means that organizations can be more selective when it comes to the quality of applicants (profile, values, etc.), since applications will present the profile you’re looking for.

Some questions to ask yourself:

→ How do you want to be perceived on the employers’ market?

→ What added value (e.g. offering four weeks of vacation, flexible schedules, etc.) can you offer that would help you attract the manpower you’re looking for?

→ What is your image as an employer? What’s your positioning as an employer – for example, exceptional programs that help employees juggle family and work?

→ What do potential applicants and employees think of your organization?

→ Can you compete with other organizations in the employment market that are seeking the same employee profiles?

→ How can you raise your profile with people who are looking for jobs and set yourself apart from your competitors?
Here are a few examples of how employers position themselves in the employment sector.

Work and life balance. Some companies talk about it, at MEC we live it. After all, our core purpose is to help people achieve the benefit of wilderness-oriented recreation.

“To have a company that shares my values, especially around the environment, is really important to me.” — Ursula

“Take any and all opportunities the Co-op throws at you because there will be a lot.” — Matt

http://www.mec.ca/Main/content_text.jsp?FOLDER%3C%3Efolder_id=1408474396039427&FOLDER%3C%3EbrowserPath=1408474396039427#

Equiterre helps build a social movement by encouraging individuals, organizations and governments to make ecological and equitable choices, in a spirit of solidarity.

We see the everyday choices we all make - food, transportation, housing, gardening, shopping - as an opportunity to change the world, one step at a time.

Our consulting, awareness-raising and research projects offer concrete solutions to promote human and environmental health, social justice and community development at home and abroad. We also advocate publicly on environmental and social issues, encouraging decision makers to adopt laws and practices that will contribute to a society that is sustainable and fair.

Since the beginning, Equiterre has relied on a dedicated team of specialists from a variety of fields. With the help of citizens, organizations and governments, it develops projects in agriculture, transportation, fair trade, energy, responsible consumption and climate change.

http://www.equiterre.org/en/about
HOW TO ATTRACT EXPERIENCED WORKERS

If you’re hoping to “refresh” your team, you’ll need to make your employment sector look attractive as you seek new resources.

If you’re interested in recruiting experienced staff and you’re putting together a job posting, be sure to make it clear you’re open to older workers. Be visible and position yourself as an employer with job seekers and other target audiences.

→ Make it clear in all your communications and advertising that you are interested in experienced workers. State clearly that you welcome applications from people of all ages, including those in the 50-plus category.

→ Don’t rule out older workers by using statements like “Start your career with us,” which implies that the position is intended for younger workers.

→ Circulate your job postings to professional groups and employability organizations\(^{11}\) that offer services designed to help experienced workers find jobs. Post your job ads in publications that will reach your target audience.

→ Get involved in activities organized by the FADOQ network in your region. [http://www.fadoq.ca/](http://www.fadoq.ca/).

→ Show your interesting 50-plus workers and when you’re participating in recruitment activities.

→ Make sure the photos of employees on your website represent a range of ages. If you only show young workers, experienced people will logically conclude that you’re only interested in recruiting from that pool.

→ Flexibility and life balance programs are important for this category of workers. Spell out your programs if you’re hoping to gain a reputation as an active recruiter and a good employer for experienced workers.

→ Be proactive. Don’t just wait for CVs to be sent in – check out less obvious places. Put up your job posters in places where experienced workers are likely to see them – libraries, community centres, recreation centres, etc.

A recent study tapped the pulse of Canadians on recruiting late career employees (those who are already working in the public or non-profit sectors or have recently retired from these sectors). The study showed that 57% of respondents plan to look for work after retirement, 64% would consider a new job or career in the community (non-profit) sector. In fact, 66% of participants hadn’t thought of working in the non-profit sector before they responded to the survey. Respondents replied along these lines:

“I think the non-profit sector should target retiring civil servants.” “I feel re-energized when I think about the possibility of retiring and working for the community with a non-profit organization - that would really be an opportunity to give back to the community.”

Some 77% of respondents believed that these jobs contribute to the community - working for a cause; 74% stated that the work is stimulating and interesting; nearly 69% feel that the work corresponds to their personal values; 65% noted that people work in teams in this sector; nearly 59% mentioned flexible working conditions; 51% said they believe that the organizations are smaller and more straightforward; and 50% said that managers and colleagues enjoy good working relationships.

SELECTING AND HIRING THE RIGHT CANDIDATE: BEYOND THE CURRICULUM VITÆ

Sitting on your desk in front of you is the curriculum vitae of an experienced worker who has never worked in the social economy and community action sector before. Would it be too risky to hire this person? Not necessarily, because many skills are transferable.

In fact, if the experienced applicant’s professional experience can be reinvested in a job in the social economy and community action sector, so can that person’s life experience. Social activities, hobbies, values and passions are all indicators to the type of job that’s likely to interest the person. You also need to figure out the personal motivation and interests of this newly retired person – which takes much more than looking at a CV. Time for a face-to-face interview!

Some examples of cross-cutting skills

Elaine recently took early retirement after working as a secretary at a university for 38 years. She enjoys meeting people and sharing what she knows. She adores cooking and would like to do more in her community.

Elaine is now working part-time in a social economy company that sells organic fruit and vegetables.

Simone used to be a teacher at the elementary level. Now she’d like to teach adults.

Simone is now working with a community organization in the literacy sector. She helps people learn to read and supports the other staff members, often dipping into the bag of tricks she’s learned over the years.

Richard used to be a reporter with a large daily newspaper. He enjoys communicating and spreading information.

Today Richard is working as a journalist at a community radio station.

William recently retired from his job as a community worker at a local social service centre.

Now William works as the coordinator of a family centre in the region where he was born.

Victor, a former school principal, enjoys challenging himself and getting concrete results.

Victor now manages a company that helps young people rejoin mainstream society and re-enter the labour market.

Philip was a communications project officer in the civil service. He also volunteered for environmental organizations for many years.

Today Philip is an event organizer with a company that works in the environmental sector.
Preparing for an Interview

Sitting across from you is a mature person with a great deal of work experience. Initiate a frank discussion of the similarities and differences between the position you have to fill and the applicant’s experience – professional or personal – such as:

- Ask the applicant about his or her interests and hobbies, and why he or she decided to apply for the job. You may get some surprising answers. Don’t take it for granted that the applicant is overqualified;

- If you’re afraid the physical requirements of the job could be too demanding, ask the applicant! Many mature workers are in good shape and would like to stay that way at least partly through their work;

- While you’re asking the applicant what he or she expects in terms of working hours, spell out your working conditions;

- The interview also provides an opportunity to position your company as a prime employer. In attention to flexibility, ou probably have a lot to offer: a value-based mission, active democratic governance, a convivial atmosphere, contact with the public, an interesting work environment, etc.

Looking for some tips on interviewing? HR Learning offers a series of online training sessions on human resource management.

HR Learning is a comprehensive resource site designed to help managers, staff and Board members to fully understand, approach and manage HR issues in community organizations. Whether you’re look for advice on the hiring process, information on workplace legislation of HR policy models to download, you’ll find what you’re looking for on HR Learning, with intuitive navigation, clear language and a variety of tools and models. For an overview, go to http://www.hrlearning.ca/en/

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GGE9iEPcvig&list=UUTLaCk8SkXY9Fcz0xMcAHk w&index=1&feature=plcp [In French Only]
HOW TO KEEP YOUR 50-PLUS EMPLOYEES ON THE JOB AND LOYAL TO YOUR COMPANY

Be an employer of choice

A new employee’s first few months on the job play a key role in reassuring your new staff member and forming long-lasting relationships. A personal welcome, transmitting the values of your organization, structured training and the active involvement of other staff members during the integration process are important values. You’ll also convey to your employees that you really want to make them part of your team and ensure they’re on board with the mission of the organization.

Extending employees’ professional life

It’s crucial for employees to keep employees who have acquired expertise over the years that is difficult to replace. There are two ways of surmounting this problem. The first solution is to delay the departure of employees who have reached retirement age, using a late-career plan and customized HR practices. A second solution is to create an environment conducive to the sharing of knowledge between different generations of employees.

Drawing up a late-career plan reinforces the value of work done by the experienced employee so that the last stage of his or her professional path is an enriching experience from the personal and organization points of view. This plan is intended to reconcile the expectations of the employee whose career is coming to an end with the needs of the organization.

Talk to them! Ask your experienced worker when he or she plans to leave. See whether it might be possible to keep him or her on the job longer if you can offer various avenues such as flexible vacations, etc.

RESSOURCES

Check out the guide called Prolongation de la vie professionnelle, put together by the Regroupement des jeunes chambre de commerce with the participation of Emploi-Québec at [In French only]: www.rjccq.com
Keeping staff on the job

The Guide de rétention du personnel destiné aux entreprises du secteur des technologies de l’information suggests four major steps for implementing a staff retention program:

→ Analyze your current staff retention pattern;
→ Design a staff loyalty program;
→ Implement the program;
→ Evaluate the program and make the necessary adjustments.

There are 14 tools that go with the guide, as well as helpful tips and references to help managers keep their experienced workers.

At mid-life, we know a little more about what we want and what we don’t want. We’ve developed a better understanding of ourselves – what meets our needs. We also recognize our limitations.

It’s up to each of us to help make our job consistent with what gives meaning to our professional life. I believe we need to get involved in our workplace environment so that we can improve and maintain a quality atmosphere.

For a little while, I’ve been part of a new work team that makes me believe – because I’ve experienced it – that it is possible to feel happy and in harmony with your workplace.

Chantal Gagnon, employment counselor, Transition emploi

DID YOU KNOW?

Most of the experienced workers in this sector are not planning to take full retirement. This is due to their financial situation, the desire to remain active and still have a social life – and the fact that they feel their identity is strongly connected to holding a job.

When experienced workers decided to stay in their jobs, it’s because their employer recognizes the work they have done and shows interest in what experienced workers can do; because the worker develops a sense of belonging to the organization (an interest in continuity); and finally, because they are interested in the functions they perform within the organization.

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13 Published in French only by Technocompetences, available online at : http://www.technocompetences.qc.ca/guides/retention/Guide_Retention_web.pdf
IMPLEMENTING PRACTICES IN YOUR ORGANIZATION TO MAKE LATE-CAREER WORK A MORE ATTRACTIVE PROSPECT

The following practices can help facilitate the retention of experienced workers by making your workplace more attractive.

Energizing work

Make sure that your experienced workers have some degree of autonomy in performing their duties and that they feel their work is valued.

Customized training

Make it a priority to give everyone access to training and make sure that training methods are suitable for the target group. Experienced employees need to feel that they are competent in their work environment and that they have the skills they need to do their jobs efficiently.

Mobility

Some experienced workers may want to change the jobs they do, whether out of a desire to rise to new challenges or because they’ve always liked change and would like to keep moving around the way they’re used to. Make sure that everyone in your organization has fair access to mobility.

Managers need to make some compromises without jeopardizing the organization in any way. This means not asking experienced workers to do more than they have to give. You need to develop a culture of respect for your employees and fight ageism. In any case, managers need to consider all age groups.

Comment from a manager in the employment sector at one of the CSMO-ÉSAC discussion groups that took place in October 2011.

In my company, there aren’t really any incentives for keeping people on the job past retirement age. The Board of Directors needs to think about this soon and evaluate conditions or incentives to be put in place to make sure that the “changing of the guard” takes place under the best possible conditions.

Executive director of a company that provides household help
Juggling work and retirement

Whether it means enjoying their new role as grandparents, attending family events or going to medical appointments, people in the 50-plus age group really appreciate it when their employer considers their priorities and obligations. Offer as many options as you can: flex time, part-time work, job-sharing, extended vacations, gradual retirement, etc. Don’t forget measures intended for other workers, too.

The Quebec government has responded to the challenges of reconciling work and family demands by drawing up an official standard to cover these issues. The standard will serve more as an incentive – in other words, it will provide support for companies that wish to make such measures available to their staff. Based on the criteria, organizations will be able to obtain a certificate from the Bureau de normalisation du Québec. Measures leading to certification would include setting up a work-and-family committee, offering training to team members and putting in place innovative measures that go beyond the provisions of the Act respecting labour standards, such as offering employee assistance programs designed to help people who are finding it difficult to balance competing demands on their time. These types of measures should help reduce turnover, absenteeism and stress, enhance job satisfaction, and boost workplace productivity (BNQ, 2010).

http://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/Famille/travail-famille/norme/Pages/index.aspx

FLEXIBILITY: A STRENGTH IN THE SOCIAL ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY ACTION EMPLOYMENT SECTOR

Many experienced workers who still hold jobs or would like to re-enter the labour market don’t necessarily want full-time jobs or fixed schedules. They have wide-ranging expectations. You’ll certainly need to think about reorganizing the work flow.

Mid-career workers will want to have the flexibility to take care of their teens and parents and still have some down time for recreation. Giving your entire staff some degree of flexible working hours will gladden many hearts. The same goes for training and career development programs, forms of recognition, ways of organizing work that leave room for autonomy and initiative – all of which can only be beneficial to most of your staff, cementing their loyalty. Extending good practices to all employees avoids the risk of unfair treatment of individuals and evens out differences in workplaces where employees of various ages work together.

I’m 51 and I’ve been back in the labour market for the past eight years. I was lucky enough to have life and volunteer experience that suit working in the community milieu, so I didn’t have to take professional training. I believe that the community milieu works very well when it comes to welcoming and retaining workers in the 50-plus category.

There are quite a few part-time jobs, which I feel makes it easier for people to return to the labour market gradually. Personally, I plan to keep working till I’m 65, since I was out of the market for many years and haven’t contributed enough to my pension to take early retirement. However, I won’t keep working past the age of 65 unless I have financial problems.

The work I’m doing now suits me really well. Flex time and long summer holidays are big benefits. The human dimension of the job is also very important. I work with a woman who’s 30 and we really complement each other. The age difference doesn’t seem to bother the young people I work with. On the contrary, when intergenerational groups work together with mutual respect, as in my situation, it’s really fruitful and creative.

Lise Loranger, Coordinator,
Association québécoise de défense des droits des personnes retraitées (AQDR) des Chenaux
DOES WORK NEED TO BE REORGANIZED TO ADAPT TO NEW EXPECTATIONS?

The working atmosphere heads the list of concerns for experienced people who currently hold a job or wish to re-enter the labour market. A good climate doesn’t just happen – it needs to be fostered. A flexible organization that emphasizes the strengths of team members, effective communication mechanisms and customized recognition – all of these add value and help to promote a pleasant work environment.

Reorganizing work

Fifty-plus workers generally prefer to be treated just like other employees working alongside them in the organization. To them, it’s simply a matter of fairness. Many organizations have seized the opportunity to reorganize work in a strategic manner. Some have harnessed the talents of older workers to act as mentors to younger workers, while others have established a dialogue between experienced and younger workers so that they share duties in ways that build on their respective strengths.

Many organizations operate with a small staff, each of whom plays a key role, so it’s important to foster a sense of loyalty among your employees. When “high-performance” staff leave the organization, you run the risk of not only sustaining a loss of “productivity” but also having to spend a lot to replace these people. Keeping morale high helps keep staff loyal to the organization. Effective communication is one of the best ways to do this. It’s essential for managers to maintain an ongoing dialogue with staff to keep them abreast of new developments in the organization, and provide encouragement and congratulations on their achievements.

Recognition and training: points to consider

Recognizing contributions made by employees is a time-honoured management practice. To make it an effective lever for mobilizing your staff, you need to follow a few basic rules that apply to the whole staff. The organization needs to be innovative – what is seen as a mark of recognition by a 20-year-old employee may be perceived quite differently by someone who is 50, so you need to tailor your recognition according to the recipient.

Carrefour jeunesse-emploi du comté Nicolet-Yamaska et MRC Bécancour wishes to congratulate Annie Richard, Executive Director, and Philip Powers, Youth Entrepreneurship Awareness Officer, on 15 years of loyal service. Both were treated to a day of “spoiling,” including an afternoon full of surprises (massage, treats, balloons, etc.). Bravo and thank you for being there since the very first year of our Carrefour jeunesse-emploi.

From the Carrefour jeunesse-emploi Facebook page
People expect to be recognized and thanked for the work they do. They aren’t necessarily looking for monetary recognition – quite the opposite, in fact: non-financial recognition can be powerful. Just saying “thank you”, “hello” and congratulating all the members of a work team – these simple things can make a big difference!

To encourage people who make significant contributions, recognition should take the form of feedback and be properly timed. Recognition practices are more effective when they are diversified and personalized for each category of workers.

**Who says you can’t learn anything new after the age of 50?**

The mere fact that a retired person decides to come back to work or take a different job from the one he or she has done for years already shows a certain degree of openness to learning. Training opportunities for experienced employees can take many different forms, from improving the quality of customer service to updating work procedures or mastering a new software program.

The whole staff benefits when the organization allots a certain amount of money so they can take training courses. A human resources committee set up by the Board of Directors was a great way for us to identify people in the organization who could hold key positions once others retire.

*Rayna Goldman*, Executive Director, Santropol Roulant

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

The ability to learn doesn’t fade away with age. In fact, lifelong learning is a fundamental right for everyone – women and men of all ages. It’s also a necessity these days – a badge of employability, really. Make the most of it!
MANAGING A RANGE OF AGES

An issue of concern to the social economy and community action employment sector is managing employees of different ages. In some sectors there is such an age pyramid that mass departures are anticipated, which will lead to problems with recruitment, integration, training new hires, problems with qualifications, etc.

Here are some sectors in which many human resources fall into the 50-plus category:
- Health and social services;
- Child care;
- Employment, social and professional integration;
- Recreation, sports and social tourism;
- Promotion and defence of rights;
- Volunteering;
- Culture.

COHABITATION BETWEEN THE GENERATIONS

Every generation has different ways of working and distinctive values when it comes to balancing their professional and personal lives. Managing differences and similarities between the generations has been shown to improve operational productivity and improve the work environment. Studies also suggest that multigenerational workplaces can benefit from management training sessions and workshops for employees in order to eliminate prejudices based on age and help managers to resolve intergenerational conflicts.

At the rate technology is moving today, sometimes it seems as though centuries separate the baby-boomers from Generation Y. These generations also have very different relationships with time and work. However, examples of successful cohabitation show that the anticipated shock can be avoided if particular attention is paid to the self-management skills (“savoir-être”) and know-how (“savoir-faire”) of each person. There needs to be consistent willingness to organize meetings that include all the generations, since knowledge is transmitted by people working together. Sharing a common project makes people feel useful.

Cohabitation is often easier in smaller organizations, where team members are closer to what’s going on, people feel like they’re “in the same boat,” what really matters is the result, trial and error is the natural way of doing things and everyone works on various tasks independently.

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WHAT DO YOUNG WORKERS FROM THE SECTOR HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE EXPERIENCED WORKERS FROM ÉSAC?

“Experienced workers are the memory of the organization. When they stay on the job, they can tell younger people about the history of the sector because they've been involved with the organization. They can guide the younger members of the team in the learning and adaptation process. In an intergenerational setting, we must be able to count on sharing information.”

Comments from young participants in the discussion groups held in the fall of 2011

In a working world that is constantly redefining itself, where baby-boomers, Gen Xers and other generations rub shoulders every day, “intergenerational” is an important term and a crucial concept. Learning to understand others’ values and expectations is a cornerstone of harmonious workplace relationships.

Sixteen out of our 18 staff members are 50 or older and it's all good... though we're quite happy to share our opinions with the “kids,” who are 44 and 46.

The members of my staff are devoted, motivated, autonomous, reliable, conscientious and so full of gratitude and loyalty! There's no turnover among our staff. The person who's been here longest has 17 years of seniority – and this organization was founded 17 years ago. Four others have 10, 9, 8 and 7 years of seniority, and the others, who arrived later (in 2007) with ICTA (the Initiative ciblée pour les travailleurs âgés), are still with us, despite service interruptions and stress every time an agreement comes to an end. They don't want to work anywhere else! I must say I've made a point of offering good working conditions, since our salaries can't compete with the public network. Flex time, part-time if needed, personal days, vacations that go up after 5 years, group insurance, group RRSPs, etc.

Most of all, I believe that the confidence I show in them and the recognition I give them, as well as the working atmosphere, are essential factors in retaining our human resources, our skills and our talents.

Hélène Béland, Executive Director, Service de transition en emploi emploi (a community employability organization for people 45 and older), President of the Comité consultatif des travailleurs et travailleuses de 45 ans et plus
SHARING KNOWLEDGE:
A WIN-WIN SCENARIO

Knowledge sharing provides an opportunity to:

→ Spend less on training;
→ Preserve expertise and keep the work flowing;
→ Reduce the shock of perceived differences between generations;
→ Improve intergenerational cohabitation and synergy.

Mentorship – inspiring and popular

Mentorship is based on a long-term professional relationship between a mentor and a less experienced person. The mentor responds to the mentee’s specific needs. The relationship focuses on objectives tied to the mentee’s personal and professional development.

Why should I consider mentorship in my organization?

Mentorship is an excellent way for an experienced mentor to transmit:

→ His or her knowledge and skills;
→ The values and mission of the organization (organizational culture);
→ Professional practices;
→ Efficient ways of working;
→ Details on the history of the organization.

Le mentorat : La croisée des chemins by the FADOQ is a guide in French only that can help you encourage experienced workers and people who are new in the labour market or learning a new job to talk about things at work.

http://www.fadoq.ca/fr/Defense-des-droits/Travailleurs-d-experience/Mentorat/

The site, which is also home to the Défi travail 50 + campaign, includes all sorts of useful tools.
Among other things, we changed the way work was organized because we could see that employees don’t just settle in all by themselves. We started to put together teams consisting of one senior and one junior worker. The new employees meet experienced workers who can tell them about the history of the organization and the position we occupy in the social economy movement.

Josée Gaudreault, Organizational Development Officer, Bâtir son quartier

Benefits of mentoring

→ Makes the organization more stable;
→ Boosts productivity;
→ Reduces staff turnover;
→ Boosts motivation;
→ Gives teams a greater sense of satisfaction;
→ Helps with planning staff retirements.

Mentoring lets organizations:

→ Assist new hires in acquiring the new knowledge or skills they need for their position;
→ Support career development.

IN BRIEF...

Keeping experienced workers on the job adds value to your organization. However, if you do need to do some hiring, here are some helpful hints:

Make new hires feel welcome

Newly hired employees really appreciate having a little help settling into their new workplace – for example, when you take the time to go over your mission, history and values. They’ll want to understand what their employer expects of them, how things work in terms of democracy, exactly what their job involves, policies on working conditions, etc.
Offer good working conditions

Employees appreciate it when the employer offers flex time and acknowledges that they may sometimes have other commitments. Spell out the conditions of their employment.

Set up an official staff recognition policy

The following initiatives can really help to foster a good working atmosphere:

→ Provide training and information for all your employees;
→ Provide general information on the organization, your mission, your products and services. Well informed staff will boost the performance of your organization;
→ Make sure knowledge is transferred among staff members;
→ Establish communications procedures and make sure you state clearly that the contributions made by your staff have an impact on the results the organization achieves;
→ Foster cohabitation among generations and productive exchanges between your employees.

We also try to encourage employees to challenge themselves within the organization – for example, by doing different jobs.

Édith Cyr, Executive Director, Bâtir son quartier

“Employees appreciate it when the employer offers flex time and acknowledges that they may sometimes have other commitments”
The current economic climate means that employers in every sector will face major challenges over the next few years in terms of managing employees across the age spectrum. This definitely provides an opportunity for the social economy and community action sector, which is having problems recruiting qualified new staff and retaining their current staff.

At the same time, managers in organizations in this sector face other challenges. Apart from HR management, improving working conditions, intergenerational cohabitation and HR marketing, the real challenge is to have the sector recognized as an attractive field where experienced workers can find jobs.

There is good reason to believe that while respecting individual choices, there will be room in the social economy and community action sector for experienced workers. This scenario can fill both kinds of needs: organizations’ needs in terms of finding staff, and the needs of experienced workers as well. Organizations need workers from various generations to make sure that they have qualified staff on board. This involves both new recruits (young and not-so-young workers) and experienced workers alike.

Reorganizing the way work is done and making the necessary adaptations in the workplace will inevitably be important tasks for managers, along with making sure that expertise is handed down from experienced workers to the new generation. Mentorship can play a defining role here – as much for young workers as for their mature counterparts. For the future of companies in this sector, as in other areas, it will also be important to maintain and develop the skills of workers in every age category.

Management practices that refresh an aging workforce will of necessity go through an adjustment period, when perceptions and attitudes may change. This is an issue that everyone needs to think about – employers, employees, unions and other partners in the sector.

“There is good reason to believe that while respecting individual choices, there will be room in the social economy and community action sector for experienced workers”