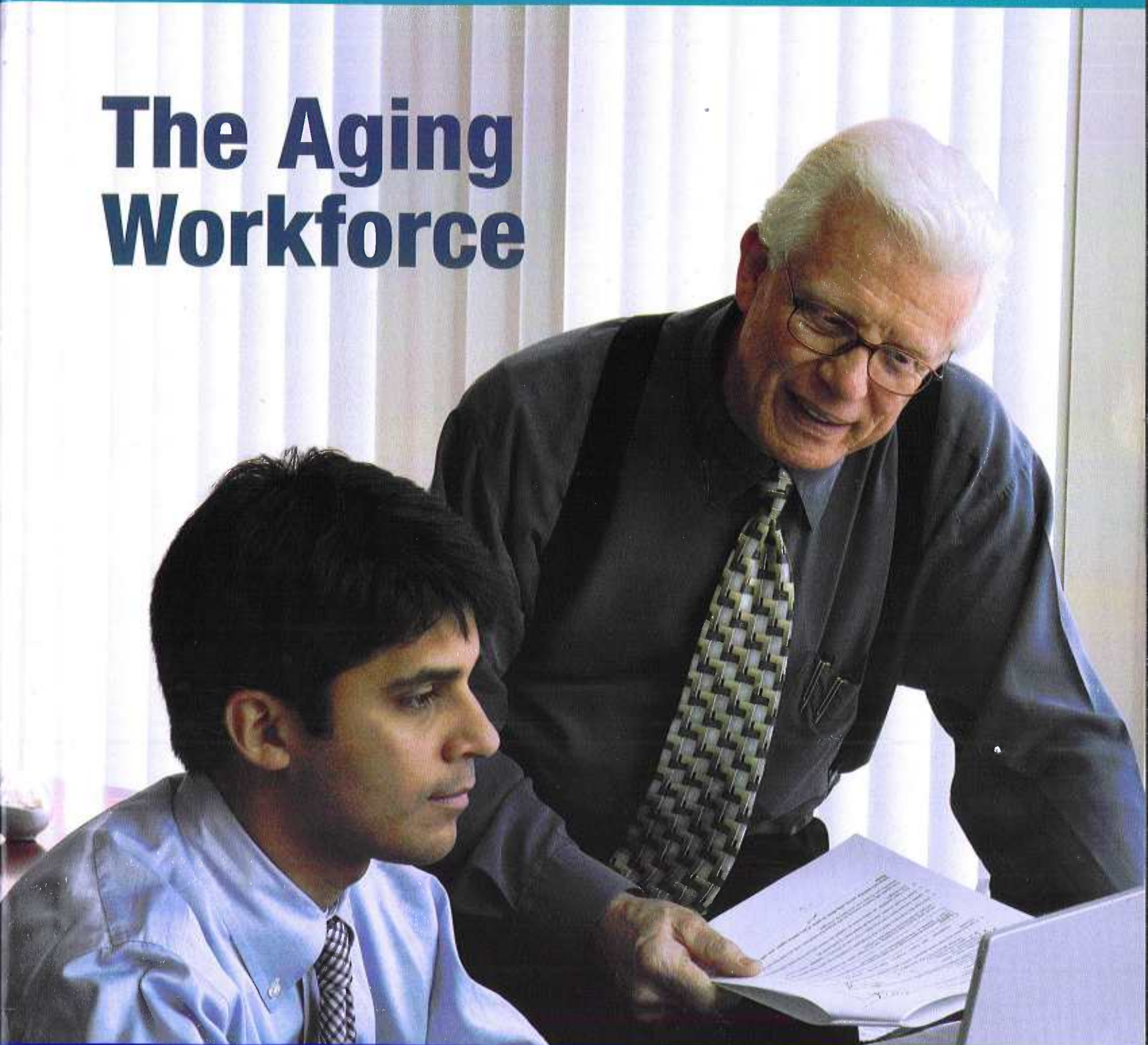


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The magazine of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association

VOL. 35 NO. 1 • 1ST QUARTER 2005

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New Strategies for Older Workers



Maria Hartley

by Maria Hartley, LEAP

Raise your hand if you are what is now called a “mature worker,” which, according to some articles I’ve read, means an employee over 45. If you raised your hand, you’re in good company.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates there were 61 million Americans aged 45 to 64 in 2000. By 2010 there will be 79 million, an increase of 30 percent, though the number of Americans over 16 is projected to grow just 11 percent. Roughly one in three working-age Americans will soon be “mature.”

Many of these aging employees will want to remain in the workforce, for a variety of reasons—to keep earning money, to interact socially with co-workers, or to maintain their self-esteem, which may be tied to having a job and career. Whatever the reason, the challenge they face is to maintain their level of performance and remain competitive in a work environment that often favors younger employees with new and different skill sets.

Exacerbating this challenge are misconceptions that many supervisors harbor about older workers. Managers often view aging employees as inflexible, averse to using technology and unable or unwilling to work alongside younger colleagues. They may also believe training is wasted on older workers and squanders resources that would be better spent nurturing younger employees.

True, older workers do have some disadvantages relative to younger workers. They typically cost more in salaries and benefits, are not as strong physically, tire more easily, and are more likely to suffer from vision or hearing loss or other conditions related to aging. They also may lack the easy familiarity with technology that younger workers take

for granted.

On the other hand, older workers also offer employers some distinct advantages over their younger colleagues. They provide businesses with an institutional memory, something many companies (especially those that shed middle managers during the recessions of the past two decades) lack. They are repositories of experience and knowledge, assets that are acquired only with age. And they are loyal—much more so, studies show, than their younger counterparts.

Employers would do well to ponder how to capitalize on the potential these older workers represent, since demographic trends suggest younger workers will be in short supply in coming years, especially if the economy heats up. To date, however, few companies have developed strategies for attracting and retaining older workers. These strategies must take into account the special needs and wants of older workers and the resources necessary to help them continue performing at high levels.

If it is our mission as employee assistance professionals to promote workplace effectiveness and productivity, then partnering with our customers to develop strategies for maximizing the contributions of older workers is a value proposition we can and must deliver. We cannot afford to let more and more able workers leave the workforce and not expect to see a negative impact on overall workplace effectiveness.

This issue of the *Journal* contains four articles that will help employee assistance professionals understand how their employer clients can best harness the many talents that older workers offer. I hope you find these articles helpful in your day-to-day practice.

Finally, I want to share with you the themes for the remaining editions of the *Journal* in 2005. These themes were selected by the Communications Advisory Subcommittee at the EAPA Annual Conference in San Francisco.

- In the second quarter we will cover disaster preparedness for EAPs, including a look at EAPA’s Preparedness Committee and HIPAA.
- In the third quarter we will look at EAP roles and boundaries with respect to substance abuse, both in the United States and abroad.
- In the last quarter we will delve into health and productivity to look at the interface between traditional EAP services, medical offerings, and wellness.

I encourage you to contact me or another member of the subcommittee if you want to contribute an article that relates to one of the themes. ■

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Making Employee Communication Work

Recognizing employees as a core constituency within work organizations is central to creating and maintaining open communication and helping regain the trust and credibility of line employees and supervisors.

by John E. Guiniven, Ph.D.

We all know the parlor game where one person whispers a message into the ear of a second person, who then whispers what he or she heard into the ear of a third person. The game continues in this manner until the last person speaks the message aloud to all the players, who generally howl with laughter because the final message is so totally different from the one that was first conveyed.

The same sort of thing is happening every day at organizations throughout the United States, only it is not a game and it is not funny.

Lack of communication and ineffective communication are contributing to problems in the workplace, where Carl Kaysen (1996) found "sullen, uncooperative workforces," Lester Thurow (1996) said "growing cynicism, mistrust and anxiety [exist] even among those entering the workforce with MBAs," and Roger D'Aprix (1996) painted a picture of employees who have "little or no loyalty to employers." Harris Interactive, part of the Harris Poll, found that only a third of workers have "a clear understanding" of what their organization is trying to accomplish, only 20 percent have a clear "line of sight" between their

tasks and their organization's strategic goals, and just 17 percent feel their organization "fosters open communication" (Covey 2004).

There is a disconnect between those at the top and those at the bottom, leading to disengaged workers who cost U.S. businesses between \$290 and \$350 billion annually. Perhaps more disturbing, the disconnect also exists between those at the top and those in the middle, between the policy-setters and the supervisors and middle managers charged with turning policy into reality. These supervisors and middle managers are the frontline communicators—nearly a third of workers' decisions are based on communications from their supervisors, compared to just 5 percent on directives from the CEO or other top management. Supervisors and middle managers also feel abandoned, to the point where, increasingly, they are identifying with workers and their complaints rather than with executives and organizational goals (Lukaszewski 2004).

The system is broken, and the purpose here is to explain how it got that way and offer suggestions to fix it. A central point is that human resources professionals need to get involved, strategically and managerially, in employee communications.

THE BREAKDOWN

Martin Gannon (1999) and his team identified three eras of human resources management; in earlier research, C. J. Dover (1964) identified a like number of eras in employee communications. They paralleled each other for a while, and then a break occurred that has caused human resources management and

employee communication to be out of sync for the past several years.

In 1911, Frederick Taylor wrote *The Principles of Scientific Management* and ushered in the man-as-ox era, where the prevailing thought was that inherently lazy workers had to be coerced into doing an honest day's work. That approach lasted into the 1950s, the post-war boom period in which workers had leverage and it was hard to intimidate men who had just come back from war. Employers adopted a behavioral approach, and a kinder, gentler workplace existed into the 1970s.

Then, human resources management became economic-based. Pension plans started exercising their considerable muscle, individuals began entering the stock market in droves (largely through 401(k) and other retirement programs), and executive compensation became tied to the performance of the company's stock. These developments forced businesses to put shareholders first. In addition, global competition began to take root, which meant companies also had to be keenly aware of the need to cut costs to keep prices low and satisfy customers. Employees thus became seen as a cost. Downsizings, out-sourcings, part-time workforces—all are manifestations of the economic approach to human resources management.

The first internal communications programs, meanwhile, were launched in the 1940s, which Dover called the entertainment era. Basically, company newsletters published the "three Bs"—bowling, birthdays, and babies—in an attempt to help human resources policies move away from the man-as-ox era.

In the 1950s, the entertainment era



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Newhouse School. He spent 25 years as a public relations executive with International Paper and Chrysler before entering the field of teaching. He can be reached at jguiniven@elon.edu.

gave way to the information era, in which companies began to recognize employees as intelligent beings and generally sought and welcomed their input. Employers went a step further in the 1960s, enlisting their employees to help respond to consumer protests and increasing government regulations.

The break occurred during the next decade, the 1970s. Human resources management became economics-based; internal communications, on the other hand, stayed mired in an era that no longer existed. In the face of massive layoffs, internal communications stayed with a behavioral approach, continuing to describe a family atmosphere in the workplace. Supervisors and middle managers who avoided the budget-cutters' axe saw their spans of control doubling and tripling because so many of their colleagues did not survive. Their frustration with top management grew to where it matched that of the overall workforce, and their effectiveness as prime communicators was lost.

Thus evolved the situation described by Kaysen, Thurow, and D'Aprix and detailed by the Harris Poll. I found the same thing in 18 focus groups I conducted with 287 supervisors and managers at nine disparate companies over the past five years.

Vince, for example, is a 53-year-old supervisor at an automotive parts manufacturer. When I asked him to describe communications at his company, he slapped his palms down on the table in front of him and said, "I don't believe half what they tell me, and the other half's irrelevant." Then, almost to himself, he added, "I just wish they'd tell me the things my team needs to know."

SUGGESTIONS FOR A FIX

Most top managers want effective communication; in fact, most probably think they have effective systems in place. They don't, so here are some steps worth considering:

- 1. Take internal communications out of the hands of public relations, if that's where it resides, and put the responsibility in human resources.** Since the 1970s, shareholders and customers have become higher-priori-

ty publics for many organizations than their own employees. Most PR departments are focused on those groups, which means announcements are written to address their concerns first and employees' concerns second, if at all.

For instance, I studied internal announcements from 22 firms that downsized. Each one linked its personnel cuts to the need to improve productivity, meet global competition, or keep costs and prices down—eco-

Only professionals who recognize employees as a core constituency can ensure that communication between all layers of an organization goes back and forth ungarbled.

nomie reasons, perfect for communicating with shareholders and customers. But for employees, downsizing is not economic; it's highly personal, akin to a death in the family. To ignore that is to invite further erosion of trust and commitment and lose many employees you want to keep. (EA professionals will be interested to know that all 22 companies provided counseling for employees being laid off, but none provided it for those left behind, who needed it to deal with the guilt and grief that accompanied their survival.)

- 2. Make sure every communication program is two-way.** Companies put up suggestion boxes and schedule town hall meetings and think they've covered the bases, but participants at my focus groups considered suggestion boxes a joke. Most suggestions were never acknowledged, they said,

and those that were often were answered with form letters. Town hall meetings, on the other hand, frequently became major productions at which attendance was "expected" (which means required) and where executives sat on a stage and, after delivering speeches, took a handful of questions from employees.

Recognize at the outset that these programs take time, people, and money to operate. In the absence of a total commitment from top management, it is better not to start them—or, if they are limping along half-heartedly, to throw them out.

Instead, consider instituting drop-by meetings, where a top executive is simply available in a common room far removed from the executive suite and where the atmosphere is conducive to give-and-take. Little time is required, since the assignment rotates among top executives. Employees will know which executives are there out of obligation and which are enthusiastic about talking to employees. Attendance will reflect the difference, and everyone in the organization will know it. (Ideally, top executives should eat in the same cafeterias as the workers, but I have made that suggestion at American-owned companies and never been invited back. Instead, push for the best possible alternative.)

- 3. Communicate what employees want to hear in a way they want to hear it.** Studies show that video and corporate TV, both labor-intensive media, are ineffective tools, especially when the message is about mission statements, long-term plans, complicated financial information, and the like. These are one-way communication tools and are useful only if trust and credibility already exist; if not, two-way methods are needed to establish them.

If you have to communicate using print and video tools, make it interesting. Years ago, one company produced a children's coloring book based on its annual report and business plan, then offered it to employ-

ees to take home to their young children. The purpose, of course, was to reach the employees themselves, who were reluctant to admit (as most of us are) that they didn't fully understand the annual report.

Employees are most interested in issues such as health care and prospects for their continued employment. They care about the organization's survival, to be sure, but their care is centered in self-interest—the same motivation present in top executives. These topics can be used as hooks or segues into other subjects at meetings or other discussion groups.

Whenever possible, allow supervisors to play starring roles in these forums. There is a need to re-establish their credibility with workers and with the supervisors themselves.

4. Don't shy away from negative news.

For instance, if your organization is being criticized, share that criticism in your internal communications. Employees have several information sources, and ignoring negative news in official channels merely hurts an organization's credibility. Plus, nothing rallies internal forces or re-engages disengaged colleagues faster than attacks from the outside. Just ask former President Clinton, who during the Monica Lewinsky scandal received much-needed support from Democrats only after Republicans attacked him.

On the corporate side, Mobil delighted in telling its employees about the external forces trying to bring down the oil giant in the 1970s and 1980s. DuPont even gave super-critic Ralph Nader a page in its employee magazine to criticize the company. There's a likelihood that hearing more criticisms from outside could decrease the discordant notes from inside.

Finally, a reiteration: None of these changes can be made, or be successful, without people trained in human resources disciplines being intimately involved. Only professionals who recognize employees as a core constituency can ensure that communication between

all layers of an organization goes back and forth ungarbled. ■

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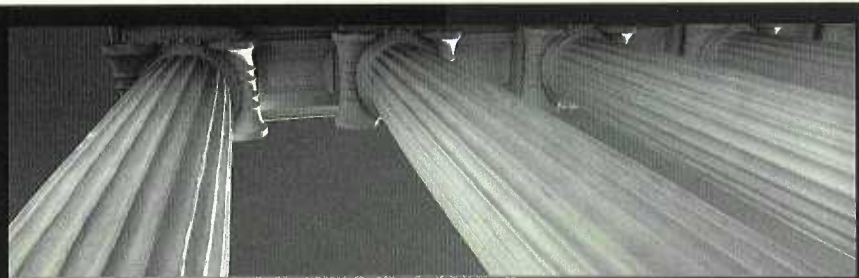
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To Party or Not to Party

Holiday parties and other social activities can contribute to building community in the workplace, but only if they reflect the values the company espouses during the week and its leaders model through their behavior.

by George Manning, Ph.D.

As I write this article, the Christmas/Hannukah/Kwanzaa/New Year's holidays are fast approaching. Many workplaces will celebrate these holidays with social activities, typically luncheons or after-hours parties. Attendance at these parties often is mandatory—either spoken or unspoken—and may also involve the giving of gifts (again, mandatory) to co-workers.

There's nothing wrong with work organizations conducting holiday parties and luncheons. Done right, they can play a strong role in building community in the workplace. By "done right," I mean the organization has to stay true to the values it espouses and works by all week long. Whether it's respect for the individual or respecting differences, the value system that drives the work needs to drive the social activities as well.

Let's say an organization holds a company picnic each spring. If the company's values are respect for every person and social tolerance, it has to live those values at the picnic. It has to be okay if the Smiths don't attend or if Bob in the Accounting Department comes alone, without his wife and children. If it's the other way around—if people talk about the Smiths or wonder why Bob's alone—the company's values are missing from this social activity, and maybe the picnic shouldn't be held.

*George Manning is a professor of psychology and business at Northern Kentucky University, a consultant to business and government agencies, and the author of 11 books, including *The Art of Leadership and Building Community: The Human Side of Work*. He can be reached by calling 859-572-5443 or by sending an e-mail to manning@nku.edu.*

IMPETUS FROM THE TOP

While holiday parties and other formal social events can contribute to building workplace community, an organization that doesn't hold them can be equally strong and healthy. Employees may participate in spontaneous socializing, whereby two or three colleagues will go to lunch together or several people will go out together after work. Friendships that develop day to day and week to week can do as much to contribute to team building and a sense of community as holiday parties and company picnics.

Building community means creating a sense of shared goals and values. Ultimately, the impetus has to come from the top. Leaders role model everything—they role model commitment, they role model humility, they role model fairness. By "leaders," I don't mean just the very top person, I mean the entire leadership pyramid. Leaders at all levels are critical to developing a healthy workplace community.

Building community pays off in many ways, not least in terms of bottom-line performance results. In a free society and a free-enterprise economy, where people can work wherever they want to work, organizations with a sense of community are the ones that attract and retain the best people. When good people work well together, they can accomplish great things.

So, how does a work organization build a healthy community, and how does it know if it has one? A good way is to use the Gallup Organization's Q12 scale, so called because it consists of 12 questions designed to measure employee engagement and loyalty. If employees answer "yes" to all or most of the ques-

tions, they will stay at their jobs, not just physically but mentally. If they answer no to most of them, they'll leave—physically if they can, mentally if they can't.

Note that none of the questions pertain to money; for the most part, they address how people feel they're being treated. One question in particular, #10, relates to community building and social activities. It asks if you have a good friend at work—in other words, someone who shares your interests, like fly-fishing or cooking or bowling.

That particular question is extremely important for young people. If an organization wants to attract workers of all ages, including young people, it has to pay attention to question #10. Young people want to have some fun in what they do, and what's fun to them is friends. Whether they work at Starbucks or a car dealership, they have to connect with some friends there, or that workplace won't be a magnet for them.

FLAVORFUL PERSONALITIES

Even in a healthy workplace, some workers will have a greater need for community than others. There are different styles of interpersonal relations: some people are traditional, some are participative, and some are individualistic. In the American workplace, roughly 60 percent of people are participative and care greatly about being involved in community processes and activities, including social events. The other 40 percent might not be inclined to participate personally, but they may still appreciate the need to build, sustain, and nourish community in the workplace.

Just as individuals are traditional, participative, and individualistic, entire

societies are as well. Old World cultures—Germany, Spain, England, and so on—tend to be more traditional. “Melting pot” societies like the United States tend to be participative, and some societies celebrate the individual first, foremost, and always, like Greece.

When I conduct seminars and presentations for business groups, I talk about flavorful personalities—chocolate,

The Gallup Q12 Survey

Do I know what is expected of me at work?

Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my best work right?

At work, do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?

In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for doing good work?

Does my supervisor, or someone at work, seem to care about me as a person?

Is there someone at work who encourages my development?

At work, do my opinions seem to count?

Does the mission of my organization make me feel like my work is important?

Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?

Do I have a good friend at work?

In the last six months, have I talked with someone about my progress?

At work, have I had opportunities to learn and grow?

SOURCE: The Gallup Organization, 2004.

vanilla, and strawberry. The vanillas are participative. They believe in sharing their opinions with others and reaching a consensus that serves the interests of the group. Annual social events like the company picnic and the holiday party appeal primarily to the vanillas.

The people who generally value these events the least are the individualists, who I call strawberries. They may appreciate the fact that the organization conducts these events and they may support them because others enjoy them, but they derive personal and professional satisfaction primarily from within.

They see themselves as separate from others and march to the beat of their own drummer.

The chocolates are traditionalists. They prefer structure and authority and are most comfortable working within well-established social parameters. They believe that each person has a role within the workplace and that the organization will grow and prosper if each person follows the established order.

Despite their differences, each personality “flavor” can make a positive contribution to organizational success. A hallmark of a healthy community is that individual needs and individual situations are respected. You have to instill an attitude of tolerance toward individuals who prefer to work independently as well as toward individuals who are more comfortable following the details of a policy manual than interacting with co-workers at the holiday party.


HUMAN SIDE OF WORK

Some people may feel the need to participate in workplace social events out of

concern they’ll miss out on “office talk.” What’s important is that these people not feel they *have* to attend such events. In a healthy family, a healthy workplace, a healthy tribe, a healthy nation—you name it—there’s room for people who respond to different motivations.

Organizations whose value orientations are social but are tolerant of others will become known as workplaces of choice. Their reputations get around; they become known for having a true sense of community in the workplace. They recognize that just holding a social activity doesn’t do it.

This is the bottom-line message that employee assistance professionals need to impart to their organizational clients. They have to emphasize to employers that nurturing shared values and goals is essential to building community and critical to paving the way for successful social activities. Otherwise, the annual holiday party will be a waste of time for those who organize it and downright painful for those who attend. ■



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Promoting Healthy Weight

Developing messages that encourage maintaining a healthy weight and using motivational interviewing to help workers commit to changing their behavior are essential to successful interventions with overweight and obese workers.

by Kathy Greco, CSW, Rich Paul, ACSW, CEAP, and Brent Pawlecki, M.D.

This is the second of two articles on promoting healthy lifestyles in the workplace. The previous article discussed how EAPs can help workers maintain a healthy weight and assist employers in keeping their healthcare costs under control.

Nearly 65 percent of the U.S. adult population, or two out of three adults, is overweight or obese.¹ Obesity leads to at least 300,000 deaths annually² and places individuals at greater risk for diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, musculoskeletal conditions, stroke, some cancers, and depression. The effects of obesity and being overweight affect health care expenditures and productivity more

than smoking and alcohol use.³

Overweight and obese employees can have a dramatic impact on a work organization's bottom line. The total cost of obesity to U.S. companies is estimated at \$13 billion per year, as follows: \$8 billion in healthcare costs, \$2.4 billion in paid sick leave, \$1.8 billion in life insurance, and \$1 billion in disability insurance.⁴ Obesity is associated with 30 million lost workdays, 239 million restricted activity days, 90 million bed days, and 63 million physician visits annually.⁵

The human and financial toll of obesity on workplaces is the basis on which EAPs should position themselves to address this issue. The EA field's focus on prevention, education, and referral to appropriate resources offers natural synergies to meet employers' needs to minimize risks associated with obesity.

AN EAP RESPONSE

To address the workplace performance issues related to overweight and obese employees, ValueOptions, a national provider of behavioral health and EAP services, created a Healthy Weight Task Force as part of its EAP. The task force, which comprised EA professionals, representatives of organizational clients, medical personnel, and human resources staff, identified several key focal points, including the behavioral health considerations that negatively affect weight (such as stress) and those that encourage healthy weight maintenance (e.g., stress management skills).

The task force then framed positive messages around the concept of healthy weight rather than negatively focusing on weight and obesity. The key message was, "A balanced diet, regular physical

activity and stress relief can help you stay healthy for life." The task force developed strategies to convey this message to three audiences: the work organization, the individual employee, and the EA professional community.

To support the work organization, the EAP held an employer summit to review the scope and impact of obesity on such factors as job attendance and productivity and corporate healthcare expenditures. In addition, the task force distributed a CD-ROM to each employer customer describing the costs, causes, and consequences of weight gain and obesity. The CD-ROM included a detailed communication strategy as well as an implementation plan of low-cost and no-cost activities that worksites can use to support individuals in reaching and/or maintaining a healthy weight. The materials included a timeline to help walk organizations through a series of events and activities that can be used to promote a healthy workplace.

To support the needs of the EA community, ValueOptions sponsored trainings for intake staff and EA professionals. These trainings highlighted the behavioral link between weight and psychological health using the Transtheoretical Model of Change developed by Prochaska and DiClemente.^{6,7,8} The training facilitators explained that the most successful intervention strategies are those that focus on the behavioral issues associated with making a lifestyle change and include action activities as well as constant reminders and reinforcements. This strategy is based on the theory that individuals learn 10 percent of what they read, 20 percent of what they hear, 30



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percent of what they see, 50 percent of what they see and hear, 70 percent of what they discuss with others, and 80 percent of what they use and do in day-to-day life.⁹

The facilitators devoted particular attention to the cultural, ethnic, gender, age- and income-related issues associated with weight gain and obesity. They provided participants with a series of interview questions and interventions matched to the appropriate stage of behavior change. They also provided information on the physical health issues associated with being overweight and obese.

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS

To support the individual employee, three worksite trainings were created to assist efforts toward maintaining a healthy weight and encourage employees to contact the EAP for assistance with making a healthy lifestyle change. "Stress Management and Healthy Well-Being" and "Healthy Eating and Stress Management" focused on the connection between managing stress and living a healthy lifestyle and helped raise employee awareness of the impact that unmanaged stress and behavioral issues have on physical health and, in particular, weight. "Advances in Our Understanding about Obesity and Overeating" was designed to offer participants a better appreciation of risk factors, medical, social and psychological consequences, and treatment and prevention strategies.

In addition to creating the trainings, the EAP distributed communication materials to workplaces, targeting managers and supervisors as well as the general workforce. These materials included tip sheets, posters, newsletters, e-mails, and educational seminars that built upon positive key messages, including the following:

- Making even moderate changes in eating and physical activity can significantly improve your health and well-being;
- Expect setbacks and forgive yourself, as making a change is a process, not an event; and
- A balanced diet, regular physical activity, and stress relief can help you

The Transtheoretical (Stages of Change) Model is aptly suited to healthy weight service delivery.

stay healthy for life.

Advancing these messages, the EAP began working with individual employees to overcome the behavioral barriers to making healthy lifestyle changes. The EAP set the following intervention goals:

- Enable participants who are at risk of health problems due to being overweight or obese to contact the EAP for assessment, referral, follow-up, and ongoing support;
- Minimize risk factors for weight gain and obesity; and
- Reinforce the concepts of stress man-


agement, healthy eating, and regular physical activity, thereby reducing the health risks associated with weight gain and obesity.

FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK

To meet these goals, the EAP adopted the Transtheoretical (Stages of Change) Model, which is aptly suited to healthy weight service delivery. The Transtheoretical Model is ideal for EAP use, as it is flexible enough to meet the needs of all participants and has multiple measures built into its processes to evaluate outcomes.

The Transtheoretical Model offers a flexible framework of five stages through which the participant passes in making changes. Change is viewed as a process in which a participant enters and exits a stage at any point. In this model, relapse is defined as a return to a previous stage. The five stages are as follows:

- **Precontemplation.** The client does not acknowledge the problem or see a need to change his/her behavior. Employees in this stage need to be



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made aware of the consequences of the issue or problem and offered the opportunity to express their feelings about the consequences.

- **Contemplation.** The client is thinking about changing his/her behavior within six months. EA professionals should help clients assess the pros and cons of their behavior, address their ambivalence, and encourage them to identify the benefits of the change.

the left. We know, however, that jerking the wheel in the opposite direction of a slide only increases sliding and makes it much more difficult to regain control of the vehicle. Similarly, pushing clients to follow our recommendations to ease their distress may well have the same effect—they will move further and further away from easing their distress or solving their problems.

Motivational interviewing allows the EA professional to determine, with the

Confrontation is to be avoided at the risk of encouraging entrenchment in problem behaviors.

- **Preparation.** The client is creating a plan to make a change and/or solve a problem within one month. The EA professional should verify the client's commitment and assess the plan.
- **Action.** The client is implementing a plan to change a behavior and/or solve a problem. The EA professional should offer positive feedback and encourage the use of self-rewards.
- **Maintenance.** The client is continuing to change his or her behavior and/or solve the problem. The EA professional should monitor the client's progress and continue to offer positive feedback.

The use of motivational interviewing is helpful in moving clients from one stage to another. Empathy and reflection are key skills. Confrontation is to be avoided at the risk of encouraging entrenchment in problem behaviors. In motivational interviewing, the goal is not to get the client to do what appears to the counselor as the right or logical course of action, but rather to determine what the client is motivated to do.

Miller and Rollnick¹⁰ compare the counselor's role in facilitating change to a driver's role in managing an icy roadway. While veering right on an icy road, our instinct is to jerk the steering wheel to

client, what the client wants to change and what s/he is willing to do to make that change. The interview leads the client to describe the change that is necessary to ease distress.

Ideally, the EAP intervention supports the client's concern about weight issues, offers information that increases awareness, and directs the client to the next step in exploring the problem. A successful intervention with an individual does the following:

- Considers the impact of concerns about weight on the individual's physical and social environment;
- Acknowledges the psychological aspects of being overweight or obese, including rejecting peers, being the target of possible job discrimination, and experiencing feelings of failure, low self-esteem, and depression due to difficulty finding clothing, shoes, and furniture;
- Focuses on the client's perception of self, with and without problems with weight;
- Establishes individual belief in oneself based on previous life accomplishments and successes; and
- Plans for the environmental and psychological barriers to a successful lifestyle change

MULTIFACETED APPROACH

Because the issues associated with being overweight and obese are complex, tackling this problem requires a multifaceted approach, including the use of behavioral health techniques. Employers will experience greater success when they focus on the behavioral issues associated with making a lifestyle change and deploy the EAP to be an additional resource that can be used to support and promote a healthy workplace.

EAPs have demonstrated that they are well positioned to be responsive to organizational needs. With their strong focus on prevention, education, assessment, referral, and follow-up, they can effectively address one of our nation's fastest-growing public health concerns. ■

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Internet Addiction Prevention and Education

Preventive education training can reduce problematic Internet use in the workplace and help employers create a work environment that encourages identification and treatment of addictive online behaviors.

by Kimberly S. Young, Psy.D.

This is the second of two articles exploring Internet addiction and the workplace; the first discussed how employee assistance professionals can help workers understand the factors underlying their online habits and reintegrate former activities into their lives.

Over the past decade, employee Internet abuse has become a growing business problem. Employees who play online games, chat with online friends, or look at online pornography during work hours not only cut into corporate productivity but also diminish profits.

Most alarming for employers is the growing legitimacy of Internet addiction as a clinical disorder, thereby investing firms with significant liability under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Under the ADA, fired workers have sued their former employers for wrongful termination, claiming that they suffer from a mental disorder and holding the company responsible for providing access to the "digital drug." While such claims seem frivolous and even ludicrous to employers, more cases are being seen in court each year.

While managers may recognize and acknowledge the costs associated with

employees who misuse and abuse the Internet during work hours, many do not yet realize how problematic online use can easily turn into a psychological addiction. EA professionals can use their clinical knowledge to help educate business leaders to effectively address Internet addiction in the workplace.

STAYING CURRENT

Companies have long relied upon written policies to convey the importance of appropriate Internet use within the workplace, but studies reveal that employee Internet abuse is on the rise despite the development and implementation of such policies. Companies are also having difficulty updating policies to stay current with new technologies.

Assume, for example, that a firm moves from Intranet-based e-mail access to a wireless system and supplies its employees with Blackberry devices that can access online accounts. The firm must then modify its Internet use policy to incorporate these new applications. Unfortunately, companies often upgrade workplace technologies without updating the accompanying use policies, leaving themselves at legal risk if an employee abuses the new technologies and no specific policies are in place to warn against it.

Corporate training that targets employee Internet use and its potential for addiction is an effective way to communicate Internet use policies and aid in preventing suspected cases of online abuse. In most cases, however, employers limit Internet training to teaching workers how to use the Internet. If addiction problems emerge, employees are unaware of how to cope and often

are reluctant to seek help.

EA professionals can utilize educational programming to present key job training issues that teach employees how to effectively integrate computer technology into organizational settings. Research has found that educational training programs on Internet addiction have proven effective in preventing new cases and improving employee satisfaction and cohesion with new technologies.

Studies also have shown the benefits of prevention and education programs in helping employees better understand written Internet use policies and reinforcing their message. Employee education helps improve compliance with written policies that mandate employee accountability and ethical integrity when online. In addition, education enhances employees' responsibility when using workplace technologies, improving overall organizational efficiency and performance.

EA professionals can play a significant role as change agents by being at the forefront of implementing educational programs. Like sensitivity training for sexual harassment or cultural diversity issues, prevention and education programs on Internet addiction can reduce the occurrence of future incidents and decrease corporate liability and risk. Such training should address key issues such as early detection, online time management, risk factors for abuse, co-worker involvement, and creating a corporate culture that supports treatment and recovery.

PROMOTING EARLY DETECTION

In the past, supervisors worried if sudden changes in personnel performance



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signaled alcoholism or drug dependence. Today, poor performance may mean an employee is addicted to the Internet. Internet abuse, however, is often disguised as necessary online use for work. Outside the workplace, an employee may be addicted to online use through his or her home computer, creating a productivity drain through frequent tardiness and increased absenteeism.

Similar to substance abuse prevention programs aimed at creating drug-free workplaces, specialized training can educate employees about the warning signs of online addiction to assist in early detection. Research has documented serious consequences of using the Internet in an addictive manner—social isolation, depression, marital discord, divorce, job loss, and financial debt as a result of obsessive online gambling, shopping, or gaming.

In an age where computers are an essential part of our work and even home lives, raising awareness of the warning signs of addictive online behavior is essential to reducing the potential risks of abuse. Warning signs include the following:

- Staying online longer than intended;
- Feeling preoccupied with online use, often to the point of daydreaming and anticipating the next online session;
- Inability to control online use;
- Feeling restless, moody, depressed, or irritable when attempting to restrict or stop Internet use;
- Jeopardizing relationships or career endeavors because of excessive Internet use;
- Lying to family members or friends to conceal the extent of involvement with the Internet; and
- Using the Internet as a way of escaping from problems.

ONLINE TIME MANAGEMENT

Employee education should also address what constitutes appropriate use of the Internet. It is commonly understood that downloading online pornography, engaging in instant messaging with friends, or gambling online are inappropriate behaviors in the workplace, but these activities also serve as gateways for more

serious problems.

Certain online applications are more likely to trigger compulsions, such as viewing or downloading pornography, participating in sex chat rooms, and gambling, shopping, or gaming. Even addictions to online auction services such as eBay have been documented. Internet training should address ways to help employees self-monitor their online use without abusing it.

EA professionals can help employees establish clear time management practices surrounding their computer

EA professionals can explain how employees can safely intervene if they believe a co-worker has a problem with addiction.

use. Ask employees to keep time logs of their computer use to improve their accountability when online. Encourage them to get up, walk around the office, stretch, do breathing exercises, meditate—anything to take a short “vision break” from their computers. A quick time out not only helps disrupt unhealthy patterns of online use, but can help employees feel more refreshed and better able to tackle their next job task.

RISK FACTORS FOR ABUSE

In more serious cases, risk factors such as loneliness, stress, depression, anxiety, and prior substance abuse may trigger an addiction to the Internet. For instance, an employee who has shown exemplary performance in the past but is dealing with a new problem—a recent divorce, a death of a loved one, or problems at home—may turn to the Internet as an escape. This employee may become overly involved in online relationships to avoid dealing with the lone-

liness and social isolation in his or her life. EA professionals can encourage workers to seek treatment when problems emerge and help them identify ways they may be using the Internet to escape underlying issues in their lives.

According to addiction theorists, addictions accomplish something for the person, however illusory or momentary the benefits. Because of the mental pleasure people receive from their addictions, they begin to behave more intensely about them. Feelings of excitement, euphoria, and exhilaration accompany online behavior, which in turn reinforces compulsivity. Thus, the driving force for many online addicts is the relief gained by engaging in the Internet. And because addictions serve a useful purpose to the addict, the attachment or sensation may grow to such proportions that it damages a person's life.

Educating employees about the dynamics of addiction can help them understand how they may be using the Internet as a tonic to cope with missing or unfulfilled needs that arise from unpleasant feelings or situations in their lives. Used in this manner, the Internet serves to block out sensations of pain, uncertainty, or discomfort that distract from a person's focus and absorb his or her attention. It is this perceived benefit that explains why someone will keep repeating the addictive behavior. Training can offer employees a non-threatening way to learn how to break unhealthy patterns of online behavior and come to terms with how they may be using the Internet as a means to escape or run away from underlying problems in their lives.

INVOLVING CO-WORKERS

Most employees care about co-workers or family members who may be struggling with addiction, but have no idea how to help. EA professionals can explain how employees can safely intervene if they believe a co-worker has a problem with addiction.

For example, describe some typical scenarios and possible steps that a concerned co-worker could safely take. Given the relative newness of online addiction, each employer may have a

preferred method of addressing online addiction in the workplace. It is important for EA professionals to tailor their training to the policies of the employer, especially in regard to reporting incidents and following the procedures for doing so.

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE CULTURE

In general, training can help erase the stigma of addiction in the workplace. The training should urge employees who are abusing the Internet to seek help at the earliest possible stage and persuade employers to create a safe environment that encourages workers to intervene with their co-workers rather than ignore the signs of addiction. Training also should provide support for workgroups—supervisors, co-workers, employees, and support staff—who may be dealing with an employee's addiction, reassuring them that they did the right thing to get involved and help facilitate an intervention.

Addicted employees often are afraid to take advantage of treatment resources, so consider giving employees access to an anonymous, independently run helpline through your EAP. For employees in need of treatment, a growing number of employers have started to initiate referrals to EAPs to help addicted employees, further reducing the need to take drastic actions such as termination. By exploring new approaches to handling employee online abuse, employers open the door to using the Internet to increase performance without risking productivity losses under the guise of necessary Internet use.

Ultimately, workplace training offers a proactive response to Internet addiction and aids in teaching employees how to use technology responsibly. In the near future, prevention programs for online abuse may be encouraged and even initiated by human resources managers to keep costs down as the incidence of employee Internet abuse and addiction rises. EA professionals can play a key role in developing and implementing employee training and prevention programs to address problem use of the Internet in the workplace. ■

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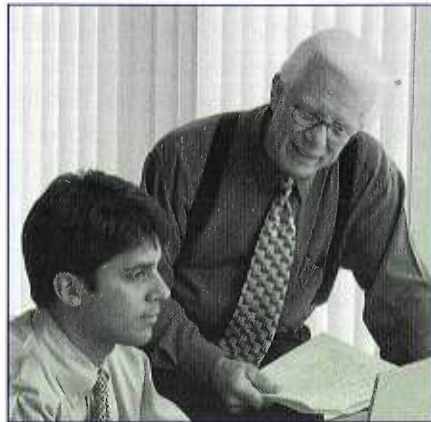
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The Aging Workforce



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by Cathy Leibow, B.S., M.B.A.

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Benefits Strategies for Aging Workers

Older workers will become more valuable to employers in coming years, and EAPs that offer services to meet aging employees' special needs will be better positioned to help firms attract and retain these workers.

by Cathy Leibow, B.S., M.B.A.

“Will you still need me, will you still feed me, when I'm 64?”

These lyrics from Paul McCartney and John Lennon were very meaningful when they were written back in 1967. Today, we would need to change the age from 64 to 94 for the question to be relevant. Americans today are living longer than ever and staying in the workforce longer as well. What does that mean for our society and the workplace?

Currently, 14 percent of the workforce is 55 and older; by 2012, that share will rise to 19 percent. Because there are not enough younger workers to replace these “mature” employees as they begin to retire, a labor shortage is sure to occur. For the first time in U.S. history, the number of younger workers entering the labor market will not replace those leaving. It is predicted that within the next five years, employers will have difficulty finding qualified workers as the first of the baby boomers start to retire.

Where will employers find replacement workers? Many firms may well seek to recruit aging workers and try to retain those they already have; older women will be a particularly attractive

labor pool. To be successful in this effort, however, U.S. employers will need to adjust their hiring, training, and benefits programs to appeal to older employees.

What re-training will older workers need to perform their jobs effectively? How will older workers fit into new workplace cultures? Will their managers know how to effectively motivate and supervise them? Will employers' benefits programs meet their needs?

Following are a few examples of benefits programs that are especially appealing to older workers:

Flexible work arrangements.

Flextime, part-time work, and job sharing are desirable benefits for an aging workforce. These arrangements allow mature workers to choose flexible hours and delay their retirement. Employers need to look at their current work arrangement policies and see if they can make adjustments to suit older workers. Obviously, not all jobs can be made “flexible,” but it's surprisingly easy to accommodate flextime requests. Employers also need to train their managers to be proactive in dealing with individual needs.

Employee assistance and work-life programs. To be fully productive, older workers need access to services that can assist them with personal and work-related issues. EAP and work-life services, especially eldercare resource and referral, are critical to this segment of the workforce. Employees can use these services for themselves or any family member, saving them considerable time and greatly reducing their stress levels.

Geriatric care management. This service is a relatively new program and

can be offered to employees as a voluntary paid benefit. It provides access to a network of geriatric care managers who visit an elderly person's home and conduct in-depth assessments of the individual's activities of daily living (ADLs) and related social, safety, health, and financial issues. The manager develops a care plan that outlines all the issues facing the individual and proposes possible solutions, including a list of local resources. The care manager can coordinate services and conduct ongoing monitoring, if desired.

Providing eldercare assessment services enables older workers to better focus on their jobs. As workers age, their loved ones do so as well. Eldercare services provide peace of mind and reduce employee stress levels, especially in long-distance caregiving situations.

Long-term care insurance. Many employers offer group long-term care insurance (LTC) to their employees. These programs provide coverage for elderly people who need to be admitted to a nursing home or assisted living facility. Buying into these plans earlier in life is more cost-effective than buying into them later, so many employees are considering them for both themselves and their parents. The employee pays the cost of the insurance, but access to a group plan can save both time and money. The Families and Work Institute reported in 2001 that 9 percent of U.S. employers with more than 100 employees offered LTC insurance, and this percentage will certainly increase as the population ages.

Retirement and financial planning. With an older workforce, financial and retirement issues are critical. Bene-



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fits could include phased retirement policies, access to financial planners, onsite workshops, and career counseling/development opportunities.

Training and Internet resources.

Providing continuous training targeted toward older workers will keep them motivated and make them more valuable to the company. Employees can access these programs by attending onsite training programs or enrolling in workshops offered by outside vendors. Employers can also expand their intranets with information specifically geared to older workers.

Extended leaves of absence. Older workers are more likely to need to take a leave of absence than their younger colleagues due to caregiving responsibilities or a death in the family. Accommodating these requests will help solidify the relationship between employer and employee and makes good business sense—the cost of keeping a current employee far outweighs the cost of hiring and training a new one (it is estimated to cost 1.5 times an individual's salary to replace him/her). The use of Family and Maternity Leave Act (FMLA) provisions would need to be considered as well, based on the circumstances.

Onsite services. Seminars on eldercare topics or retirement planning, eldercare fairs, and support groups are all low-cost alternatives that can help support older employees. Providing videotapes, audiotapes, books, and other materials on aging workforce issues also educates employees and helps them become better able to make effective decisions. Another option is to provide onsite eldercare consultants and coaches who can assist employees with their personal and professional issues.

HOW CAN EAPS HELP?

Employee assistance professionals can help their employer clients better understand and respond to the concerns of aging workers by raising awareness of their special needs. Some industries, such as health care, are already being affected by a shortage of qualified workers—in this case, nurses—and are responding accordingly. Other employers have a general awareness of the topic but

may not know how to effectively address the issues.

EAPs can provide employers with plenty of information to support initiatives for aging workers. EA professionals should engage employers in conversations about which initiatives would best serve their needs and help them identify appropriate resources.

If your EAP currently offers programs that address older workers' needs, be sure to promote them to your employer clients. You can also repackage them to further emphasize this segment of the workforce. If your EAP does not offer such programs, identify which services you will need to add to appeal to employers, then determine whether you can provide these new programs internally or whether you'll need to find a vendor with which to partner. Specific areas you'll want to address include the following:

- Do you currently offer eldercare resource and referral and/or geriatric care management? If so, are the programs adequate to meet your clients' needs (i.e., national in scope)? The need for these services will continue to grow, so it's in your best interest to offer a comprehensive program.
- Enhance your management training programs to focus on helping supervisors effectively lead older workers. In addition, provide seminars and workshops geared to the unique needs of this population (for example, a series on retirement and financial planning).
- Provide information and resources that your employer clients can disseminate or post on their intranets. These could include timely articles, helpful tips, and links to useful Web sites. Keep in mind that May is Older Americans Month and October is National Caregivers' Month. Consider tying information to these and other local events (for instance, the city of Phoenix, Arizona, sponsored an "Older Worker Awareness Day" in May 2004).
- Make eldercare consultants available onsite and host elder support groups and elder resource fairs.

Eldercare will be one of the most critical workplace issues in the 21st century. EAPs that are responsive to these and other needs of aging workers will remain competitive and be well positioned to provide a full suite of services to their employer clients. Showing that you are knowledgeable about these issues will help solidify your relationship with employers and give you a competitive edge. ■

THE AGING WORKFORCE: What Some Employers Are Doing

Fannie Mae

Onsite care manager
Eldercare resource and referral
Seminars and toolkits

AT&T

Eldercare resource and referral
Employee support groups
Eldercare fairs
"Thriving After 55"
Accreditation for adult day care centers
FamilyCare fund
National scholarship program

JP Morgan

Eldercare facility assessments
Home visit assessments
Awareness campaigns

Baptist Health South Florida

Flextime
Job sharing
Telecommuting
Compressed work schedules
Mentoring program

Deloitte & Touche

Phased retirement plan
Senior Partner Legacy program

IBM

Eldercare resource and referral
Eldercare support groups and seminars
Meals on Wheels
Elder transportation assistance
Senior Net Centers
Intergenerational centers
Eldercare "Webinars" and on-line chats
Eldercare management module
On-line resources for retirees

Aging Workers, Changing Value

Employers that want to benefit from aging workers' changing value will need to show they are committed to their ongoing development and respectful of their unique needs.

by Barbara Jaworski, B.Sc., M.B.A.

The shrinking of the developed world's workforce is a frightening concept—and one that is quickly becoming a reality. As millions of aging baby boomers approach retirement and birth rates in North America, Europe, and other parts of the developed world decrease, the implications for work organizations in countries around the world are grim.

In the United States, for example, estimates indicate labor shortfalls of 5-10 million workers in the next ten years.¹ To the north, a shortage of nearly one million workers in Canada is predicted over the next 20 years.² In the European Union, populations are decreasing in one of every four countries; in fact, it would take an influx of 1 million immigrants a year into EU countries to make up the shortfall.³ In Asia, meanwhile, Japan's birth rate continues to fall, and researchers estimate that by 2020 there will only be two workers for each retiree.⁴

As a result of these looming demographic changes, global competition for skilled workers is increasing, and many countries are beginning to recognize the changing value of their aging workers. In the United Kingdom, the British government is looking at abolishing mandatory retirement ages, while in Asia the government of Singapore is considering extending the retirement age. Some Japanese employers are offering short-term contracts to former employees,

enabling them to meet specific needs without assuming the burden of a long-term commitment to new employees. Regulations proposed by the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service in the United States would allow for voluntary phased retirements, if approved.

SENSE OF SELF WORTH

Clearly, the perception of older workers is changing, and fast. Keeping older workers on the job longer is increasingly being viewed as beneficial to business productivity, employee retention, and corporate citizenship. Just as clearly, many of today's older workers want an opportunity to continue in their current careers or commit to another one. According to a 2003 study⁵ by the American Association of Retired Persons, the majority of workers between the ages of 50 and 70 say they intend to work during their "retirement" years or never retire at all. Highly educated workers, the study found, are far more likely than those with less schooling to want to remain in or return to the workplace.

One reason many "mature" employees want to continue working is that their sense of self worth is linked strongly to having a career. Many workers approaching retirement feel they still have much to offer and may be considering launching second careers, starting small businesses, or turning hobbies into contract jobs. They may feel they want to work on their own terms, or just slow down a bit.

Financial worries also are a consideration for many mature workers. Some aging workers still have dependents to support, and increasingly they are likely

to be caregivers for elderly parents. According to a recent survey, 20 percent of recently retired workers are struggling financially, while 41 percent are very concerned they'll outlive their assets.⁶

But simply because many aging employees are motivated to remain in the workplace does not mean that employers can take their skills, judgment, and institutional memory—not to mention loyalty—for granted. The value of the older worker goes beyond maturity and experience and includes the following:

- Experience and knowledge of an organization;
- Less need for supervision;
- A high level of commitment, dedication and energy, all of which make a huge impact on productivity;
- Organizational savvy and an understanding of workplace culture;
- The ability to mentor junior employees, which often results in higher retention and job satisfaction for all concerned; and
- Increased flexibility to meet business needs, including part-time and contract work.

Companies with a strategic plan for continued growth will create workplaces that integrate and nurture this key demographic. Critical to such a plan are training, flexibility, and accommodation. Older workers need to perceive that their employer is committed to their ongoing professional development. As long as their job continues to be interesting and they feel they are making a valued contribution, mature employees will be likely to stay in the workplace.

To effectively manage the demographic changes to come and capitalize

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on the potential of an aging workforce, employers need to provide a work environment that recognizes and accommodates the unique needs of mature employees. Following are some practical recommendations for achieving these objectives:

- Provide flexible work arrangements or telework opportunities to assist those with caregiving responsibilities and those who need to arrange post-retirement responsibilities.
- Create career development and training opportunities for mature workers.
- Provide opportunities for mature workers to become mentors in the workplace to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills.
- Offer work-life services that help older workers proactively manage concerns via one-stop access to information and consultation.
- Develop a retiree relations program to create a pool of trained and motivated workers.
- Encourage a corporate culture that demonstrably values older workers. This could include offering training on older-worker issues for younger supervisors and managers.

INVESTING A LITTLE EXTRA

Companies that follow these and similar recommendations have been more successful in creating opportunities for aging workers and retirees. For example, Monsanto Co., a multinational chemical company based in St. Louis, Missouri, brings back retirees as temporary workers or part-timers to fill gaps and reduce costs. Monsanto's Retiree Resource Corps has more than 800 participating retirees who can work up to 999 hours per year—less than half-time. Monsanto estimates that it saves 12-15 percent by using retirees instead of traditional temps. The program also helps Monsanto transfer both corporate culture and technical knowledge to younger employees.⁷

Home Depot, the hardware store chain, hires many employees over the age of 50 because of their skills, work ethic, motivation, and maturity. This strategy has proven tremendously successful. Home Depot is very pleased

with the benefits that older workers bring to the workplace and continues to proactively recruit older employees.

In Canada, the "Best Employers for 50-Plus Canadians" award recognizes employers that value their mature workers. The common denominator among the winners is that they genuinely value older workers for their workplace attitudes, experience, and skills. They are creative and flexible in the way they

Finding and keeping "mature" talent should be a simple matter of following some golden rules.

deal with older workers and are willing to invest a little extra in their mature employees, knowing they stand to reap huge dividends. The winning companies all describe it as a win-win situation—their mature workers bring qualities to their work that both they and their customers value.⁸

One award winner, Avis Rent-a-Car, noticed that its retired part-time car shuttlers received fewer tickets for traffic violations and were much less likely to scrape, scratch, or bang up its rental cars. Avis began actively recruiting retired people by using some rather unorthodox and imaginative techniques, including handing out information about employment opportunities in the early mornings at shopping malls. The result was an increase in the number of older employees hired and a corresponding decrease in expenses, as traffic violations and accident rates tumbled.

Another award winner, the customer service center of a major national bank, keeps track of employees who are about to retire from other parts of the organization and then proactively recruits them, offering part-time, flexible hours. The bank benefits by "hiring" a knowledgeable employee who is already familiar with the corporate culture and by cutting down on recruiting costs. The employee, meanwhile, benefits from

being able to work hours that suit his/her lifestyle. The proof of the pudding is in the taste—in this case, an independent survey that showed the bank's customers appreciate the quality of service and information they get from the service center.

FOLLOWING GOLDEN RULES

One of the common characteristics of the winning companies in the Best Employers for 50-Plus Canadians competition is buy-in and support from senior management. Savvy corporate leaders recognize the potential advantages offered by mature workers and adjust their policies and procedures accordingly.

In the near future, many of their competitors will need to follow suit. A growing number of companies will face a shortage of skilled workers that will put their business operations at risk. Organizations should be asking older workers today what it will take to keep them in the workplace tomorrow and what will motivate them.

Ensuring an organizational understanding of the benefits and needs of older workers will lead to business success. Finding and keeping "mature" talent should be a simple matter of following some golden rules: focus on ability rather than age, offer phased or flexible retirement options where possible, invest in skills training, downsize responsibilities, and above all—be creative. ■

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A Preventive Approach to Retirement

To help head off the psychological, social, and family issues that arise during retirement, an employer teamed with its EAP provider to develop a preventive plan of action.

by Andrea Lardani and Raul Correa

A person who retires from work experiences a huge change in his/her life. Leaving one's job inevitably implies the modification of actions that often have been followed for many long years: awaking at a certain time, leaving home and traveling to a worksite, performing certain activities, interacting with co-workers and managers, leaving the worksite and returning home (perhaps at the same time each day, perhaps at varying times), and so on. These actions usually become habits after being performed for a long time.

The sudden interruption of these habits is not easy to accommodate. For some people, it may mean a great loss; for others, a huge satisfaction. But the truth is that it always results in the need to invest effort and energy in adapting to a new situation.

DEVELOPMENTAL CRISES

Several authors in the field of psychology consider retirement to be one of the many developmental crises people undergo in their lives. A crisis, according to Webster's dictionary, is "a stage at which a decisive change is imminent, for better or for worse." The typical developmental crises in a person's life include marriage, the birth of children—followed by their entry into school, reaching puberty, growing independence, and subsequent departure from home—gradual aging, and retirement

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from work.

These development crises are unavoidable and foreseeable. This means that at each developmental stage, a person will go through some sort of crisis. Each crisis will require not only the person but also his/her family to change and adjust to the new situation. If the family is flexible and has resources at its disposal, it will obtain some benefit from the crisis. But if the person or any member of his/her family tries to resist making changes, problems will appear.

Retirement may properly be considered a developmental crisis for both the retiree and his/her family.

Consider an employee who leaves work on a given day and becomes a retiree. What consequences may be in store for this person and any relatives living with him/her? Becoming a retiree usually affects four areas of a person's life, namely the psychological, social, family, and financial areas.

Psychological implications. Each person who retires will be affected differently, depending upon his/her particular situation. There are, however, certain common aspects that should be mentioned.

- Retiring from work implies saying

goodbye to a life stage to which the person probably will not return.

This is a loss that a retiree must accept and overcome.

- Modifying one's habits, especially after reaching the age of 65, usually exacts a high psychological cost.
- Retirement also marks the beginning of "old age," a life stage that is undervalued by society. This may result in anguish, sadness, rage, resentment, or other negative emotions.
- To be an actively working person is usually regarded as a virtue. To stop being such a person may have a negative impact on a retiree's emotional welfare.

Social implications. Retiring from work almost always causes a separation from friends and weakens relationships in the professional sphere. This loss may result in loneliness and anguish until the person manages to organize a new peer group.

Family implications. For persons who have worked many years outside their homes, sharing time and space with family members rather than co-workers for the bulk of the day will require time and effort, both from the family and from the retiree. For instance, if a husband has always worked outside the home and suddenly finds himself at home the whole day with his wife, both will have to make efforts to develop a new form of cohabitation to which they are not accustomed.

Financial implications. Retirement often significantly reduces a person's income, which affects the retiree's quality of life and that of his/her family. This reduction in life quality will negatively