

MANAGING TALENT IN THE FLUCTUATING WORKFORCE

In Dave Carvajal's book "Hire Smart from the Start," Carvajal warns about hiring clones: "People who share values such as authenticity, integrity, and ambition may have wildly different personalities....In the absence of a clearly defined culture, organizations may default to hiring people who seem [to reflect] their leaders and will never challenge their policies and strategies." Carvajal explains why diversity is helpful: "Diverse personalities can create positive friction. Diverse backgrounds can create synergistic perspectives.... As long as values are shared and aligned with the company's mission, entrepreneurial enterprises can and should accommodate this diversity."

Retaining and Attracting Talent

Given the recognized benefits of a diverse workforce, it is essential for companies to consider how they retain and attract talent. Some companies continue to cater to older workers, doing things the way "they have always been done" without much consideration for the motivations and interests of younger workers. Companies may ignore training opportunities or development opportunities that their older employees have eschewed. These may be the very opportunities their younger workers seek and desire. For example, when asked about receiving feedback, younger workers typically expect and appreciate feedback on a regular basis.

Provide Mentoring and Guidance

Companies should also consider obstacles incoming talent create for themselves. As Karen Dybis observed in her article that appeared in the Corp! July/August 2018 issue, the newest generation of workers may require more training on how to conduct themselves in the office and "may need more mentoring and guidance when it comes to collaboration." While some believe that this new generation requires additional help because of its reliance on technology, being unfamiliar with workplace norms

is not unique to Generation Z. However, as the age gap widens between those charged with hiring decisions and the incoming talent, less understanding and patience may exist. Therefore, hiring coordinators must be mindful that less experienced workers, while just as capable and hardworking as older generations, may require mentoring and guidance.

Younger workers are not the only ones that employers should be concerned about losing. In a September 2017 study conducted by AARP, 61 percent of respondents (adults over 45 years old) said they had seen or experienced age discrimination. Indeed, earlier this year, the Acting Chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) released a report in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Age Discrimination in Employment Act going into effect, which revealed that age discrimination is still very common. As the Acting Chair observed, "[t]oday's experienced workers are healthier, more educated, and working and living longer than previous generations. Age-diverse teams and workforces can improve employee engagement, performance, and productivity." Companies must not forget about their more experienced employees when considering employee retention.

In terms of recruiting new workers, employers should be cautious about how they advertise opportunities because job postings may inadvertently discourage qualified candidates from applying. For example, the EEOC has warned against placing ads seeking "recent college grads," as they may suggest that only 20-somethings apply. These advertisements may also suggest that someone with more experience would not be right for the position. Similarly, while there have been no judgments suggesting that on-campus recruiting is unlawful, older job candidates have brought claims against companies with on-campus recruiting programs.

Finally, companies must also consider what motivates incoming talent and

not rely on generational stereotypes. While there may be the expectation that certain workers care more about work-life balance than others, this expectation is not specific to any generation. Generous leave policies and benefits are attractive to all candidates.

Older workers may need flexibility as they care for their aging parents. Younger workers may require similar flexibility to respond to sick children. Scheduling late afternoon meetings or planning company outings on the weekends have the potential to drive workers with familial obligations out the door. Even the EEOC has warned about company policies that disparately affect workers with caregiver responsibilities.

Attracting and retaining a hardworking and dedicated workforce is a complicated and time-consuming process. However, by recognizing the different values each generation of workers brings to work and harnessing their motivations, companies can retain one of their greatest investments: talent.



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