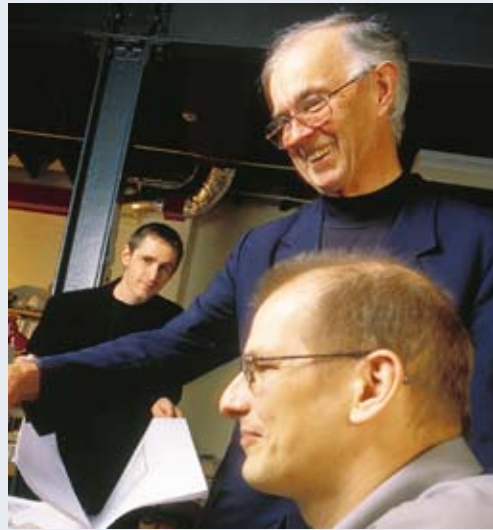


Checklist for employers

As a way of getting started, check if any of the following statements describe your business:

- My employees have the option of flexible work. I know they'll get the work done.
- I'm open to considering different employment options that suit my employees and my business, such as part time work and job sharing.
- I'm flexible about the reasons my employees take leave and how they take it.
- My employees approach me for help when they need to meet out-of-work commitments.
- My employees know that when considering their requests I try to strike a fair balance between their needs and those of the business.
- I ensure that staff selection is based on skills and experience, not age.
- I try to acknowledge and value experience and life skills in the workplace.

Congratulations, you have started the process of improving your chances of attracting and retaining mature age workers.



Photographs courtesy of the Small Business Development Corporation.



www.worklife.wa.gov.au

Labour Relations Division
Wageline 1300 655 266
(for the cost of a local call statewide)
8.30 – 5.00 weekdays

Dumas House
3rd Floor 2 Havelock Street
West Perth Western Australia 6005

Telephone: (08) 9222 7700
Facsimile: (08) 9222 7777

Building Industry and Special Projects Inspectorate: 1800 306 002

Website: www.worklife.wa.gov.au
Email: labourrelations@docep.wa.gov.au

Regional offices

Eastern Goldfields	(08) 9021 5966
Great Southern	(08) 9842 8366
Kimberley	(08) 9169 2811
Mid-West	(08) 9964 5644
North-West Pilbara	(08) 9185 0900
South-West	(08) 9722 2888

Small business staffing solutions



Don't rule out mature age workers

Staff solutions

Current labour and skills shortages mean many small businesses are finding it difficult to attract and retain workers.

Employing mature age workers can reduce the impact of these shortages. They are vital to the Western Australian workforce and bring a wealth of skills, experience and wisdom.

Contrary to some popular myths, research shows that mature age workers have many positive attributes including:

- > life and work experience;
- > strong work ethic;
- > above average commitment to their workplaces;
- > lower absenteeism; and
- > reliability and stability.

Over the next decade, more people will leave the workforce than enter it. So it makes sense to retain employees who want to keep working beyond the traditional retirement age.

Retention is the most cost effective and vital strategy for your business. Without retaining mature age workers the implications are lost experience, knowledge, productivity and diversity in your workforce.

Key initiatives

One way to attract and retain mature age workers is to provide workplace flexibility options. Mature age workers may desire greater flexibility in their working arrangements due to family responsibilities, health issues or a desire for a different work and lifestyle balance.

Flexible working arrangements can be structured to meet both the needs of the business and the needs and desires of mature age workers. Flexible working arrangements include:

- > flexible hours;
- > part time employment;
- > job sharing;
- > working from home;
- > flexible leave arrangements; and
- > phased retirement options.

Don't rule out mature age workers

Case study

An Albany flower farm employs a diverse group of workers, some of whom are long term mature age employees. The owner believes that one of the major reasons for his success in retaining these skilled and experienced workers was to offer flexible working arrangements, in particular, flexible hours and/or part time employment.

Importantly, the arrangements have met the needs of his business and provided other substantial benefits. Aside from reducing the costs of recruitment and training, the strong work ethic and commitment of the workers are major contributors to the success of the business.

Another initiative is to offer alternative working arrangements or job opportunities such as:

- > a new and/or challenging role;
- > reducing workloads and/or work responsibilities;
- > a training or mentoring role to pass on knowledge and skills to other workers; and
- > a less onerous, stressful or labour intensive job.

Further information about mature age employment, including implementing flexible work arrangements, case studies and publications is available on our website at www.worklife.wa.gov.au