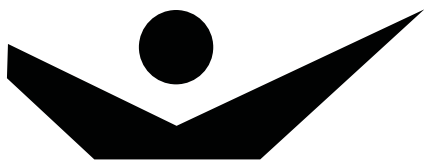


# Staffing Decisions™



## High Desert Staffing

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## Starting a New Hire Off Right

**S**tarting a new employee off right can be as important as picking the right candidate. Appropriate onboarding, starting from an employee's first day on the job, can make the difference between a long-term, effective employee and an ineffective slacker who makes you wonder why you made the hiring choice you did.

Here are some essentials:

### Focus on Individual Needs

A new hire doing the same type of work and using the same tools as in his or her last job may not need much more than orientation. But a newbie who has never specifically done this type of work before will need more-formal training.

Therefore, the first step is evaluation. Where are employees in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities? Where should they be? Training should focus on filling that gap.

### Create a Desire to Learn

Motivated employees learn better. Help instill this desire to learn by:

- Listening to employees' concerns;
- Providing specific examples of ways the training will help them;
- Involving employees in establishing objectives, time frames and methods;
- Focusing on development, not remediation.



### Make Learning Fun

Learning doesn't have to be tedious. Create a learning environment that incorporates many elements, from removing trainees from their daily responsibilities so they can focus on training, to building enough variety into the training to keep it interesting.

### Find the 'Right' Method

Some people read the instructions first. Others refer to the instructions only after trying to figure it out on their own. Some prefer theory, others hands-on application. Some can sit in front of a computer and follow a CBT course, others need live instruction to learn effectively. Find out how your trainees learn best and tailor your program accordingly.

### Apply Learning to the Job

Memorizing concepts without under-

standing how those concepts are applied on the job is a waste of training time and money.

### Conduct Ongoing Evaluations

Never train for the sake of training. Make sure that you have some method in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the training. These include:

- Pre- and post-training test;
- An evaluation done three to six months after the training;
- An evaluation of performance by supervisors and peers.

### Follow Up

Training should be an ongoing process, not a one-time event that is soon forgotten. Don't assume that once you've trained an employee, your job is done. Evaluate periodically to see if more training is needed. ▲

### Hot on the Inside

#### Employing Seniors . . . . . 2

With an aging boomer population, you may find it advantageous to get serious about hiring and motivating older employees.

#### When An Employee Dies . . . . . 3

Death is a fact of life, and you need to be ready to deal with it.

#### Institutional Wisdom . . . . . 4

How do you preserve institutional knowledge in times of high turnover?

### For More Information:

#### The 10 Commandments of Employee Onboarding

[http://www.careerbuilder.com/jobposter/small-business/article.aspx?articleid=ATL\\_0192ONBOARDINGTIPS\\_s](http://www.careerbuilder.com/jobposter/small-business/article.aspx?articleid=ATL_0192ONBOARDINGTIPS_s)

#### Building an Onboarding Plan

<http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/04/building-an-onboarding-plan.html>

# Attracting a Senior Work Force

Sixty-five used to be the standard age for employees to start commuting to the golf course instead of the office. No more. These days, employees work well into their late 60s, 70s or even 80s, many returning to the workplace on a temporary or contractor basis, even after they've officially "retired."

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics claims that between 2004 and 2014 the percentage of workers ages 55–64 is expected to grow 42%, compared to a 5% increase in workers age 45–54 and an 8% decline in workers age 35–44. At the same time, the percentage of workers over age 65 is expected to grow 74%.

This can create both opportunities and challenges for HR professionals. As the business environment grows increasingly competitive and the availability of skilled employees continues to shrink, employers who can manage older workers and take advantage of their knowledge and experience will find themselves with a distinct competitive advantage.

## Creative Solutions

A sound business model balances the need to retain older workers and the need to transfer knowledge to younger workers. A study, *Searching for the Silver Bullet: Leading Edge Solutions for Leveraging an Aging Workforce*, from the MetLife Mature Market Institute, suggests that employers rehire retirees on a project basis when pension restrictions prevent direct re-employment, hire retirees with special expertise for critical projects and make a significant effort to tap the expanding pool of older people seeking employment.

The key to retaining older workers is listening to their ideas and suggestions, and recognizing their contributions when their ideas are implemented — the same expectations employees of any age have.

An added benefit of employing

older workers is their ability to mentor younger staffers. But mentoring can work both ways. For example, younger colleagues can teach technology-averse mature coworkers the newest trends in technology.

## Provide a Welcome Environment

Be sure that your work environment is welcoming and inclusive for older workers, says Steve Juetten, a personal financial coach and retirement guide in Bellevue, WA. He suggests that HR professionals:

- Begin to change corporate cultures to include older workers and the "working retired." For example, he says, "if you use employee photos in recruiting materials or benefits communications, make sure to include photos of older workers being active, not just the stereotypical 'happy' retiree."
- Train managers and supervisors in the unique challenges that older workers present, such as the dynamics of supervising employees the age of their parents.



- Develop alternative approaches to workforce planning, including changes in recruiting strategies and tactics, work schedules, work design, and wages and benefits. Flexibility is the key, says Juetten, who suggests companies consider a formal phased retirement program in which employees can work less than full time, but still be eligible for benefits.
- Create effective retirement-planning workshops for employees 50 and older. Many employees may not be able to afford to retire due to poor retirement planning. You can help by providing effective workshops early enough in their careers so they can plan a smooth transition to retirement. Showcase opportunities for future retirees to continue working for the organization part-time.
- Understand how Social Security and Medicare work. For example, know the rules about earned income when an employee is drawing Social Security. Be familiar with how Medicare and your health care programs are coordinated.
- Learn the laws about age and disability discrimination. There were more than 23,264 age-discrimination cases filed with the EEOC in 2010, and more are likely. Consider an age-discrimination audit of all your employee practices and then fix any discriminatory practices. Make sure your managers and supervisors keep current with these laws. ▲

## Temps Add Experience

One of the pluses of the current tough economic environment is that there are a lot of very well qualified, highly experienced temporary employees available. These savvy pros are not only good workers, but bring a wealth of experience to their work for you.

In fact, some of these workplace veterans may even function as "internal consultants," applying their hard-won experience to helping solve your problems.

## For More Information:

### Benefits of Hiring Seniors

<http://www.businessknowhow.com/manage/hire-seniors.htm>

### How Senior-Friendly is Your Office?

<http://www.medicalofficetoday.com/content.asp?article=5050>

# What to Do When An Employee Dies

**W**e don't like to think that the people we work with may suddenly die. But death is a fact of life, and in the American workplace, some 8 million people will be affected by the death of a fellow employee each year. This will be a devastating experience on both a personal and practical level; work will not go on as usual.

On the personal level, colleagues may suffer feelings of grief and loss, even survivor's guilt ("Why not me?" or, "I wish I had been nicer to him when he was alive."). On the practical level, there are issues to deal with, such as redistribution of work and payout of insurance benefits. The death of an employee can come as a sudden shock to the team, creating stress and uncertainty, and feelings of loss. Here are some practical guidelines for coping.

## Sharing the News

**Notify family members first**, expressing condolences. If you have an employee assistance plan, let family members know. Ask about funeral arrangements or memorial services. Ask what personal information they want released and schedule a time to retrieve personal effects.

**Tell fellow employees as quickly as is practical.** How you do it depends on the logistics of the workgroup. Is it possible to call the entire group together for a few minutes? Or is it more workable to talk to groups of three or four employees at a time? Either way, face-to-face contact is best.

**A follow-up memo** to all employees is a good way to deal with practical considerations and to address common questions employees are likely to have once the initial shock subsides, such as whether and where the memorial services will be held, if employees will be al-

lowed to take time from work to attend, availability of counseling, etc. There is no cookie-cutter approach. Your response should be based on common sense and your own sensitivity.

## Dealing With Grief

Everybody deals with grief differently. Managers need to be flexible and understanding in responding to employee emotions. Some will hardly be affected at all; others deeply. Acknowledging employees' feelings is important, as is allowing adequate time to grieve and move through the healing process. Look for opportunities to sit down with an employee to say, "How's it going?" It helps to get some of their thoughts and feelings into the open.

## Legal Matters

Check with your legal counsel. In some cases, there may be potential company liability; in all cases you have to deal with benefits and beneficiaries.

Notice of an employee's death needs to be given to various organizations: life insurance carriers, health insurers, pension plans, etc.

In some cases, you may need to deal with the media. If your company doesn't have a media policy and official spokesperson, you might have to become that spokesperson and formulate policy "on the fly." It would be much better to be proactive and create such a policy, with designated spokesperson, in advance.

And in the midst of all these details, remember that corporate life goes on. Customers still have expectations that require fulfilling and other employees have the usual ongoing needs and problems. Remember that it's a sensitive time for everyone who knew the deceased; showing consideration for their feelings will pay off in the long run. ▲

## Things to Remember When a Colleague Passes Away

- Give your employees the opportunity to talk about what happened, regardless of how the employee died.
- Listen.
- Do not judge others' feelings or ways of dealing with grief.
- Bring in outside help through an employee assistance program or counselor.
- Be alert to the potential for increased injury or accidents because employees are preoccupied.
- Don't assume that everyone will react the same way.
- Don't expect grieving to stop immediately after the funeral services.
- Be flexible. Allow employees to attend funeral services and do anything else necessary to help employees deal with their grief.
- Recognize that you may not always be able to do or say "the right thing."
- Take care of your own emotions, too.

## For More Information:

### Dealing With Grief in the Workplace

<http://grief.com/grief-in-the-workplace/>

### What to Do When an Employee Dies on the Job

<http://hr.blr.com/HR-news/HR-Administration/Death-of-Employee/What-to-Do-When-an-Employee-Dies-on-the-Job/>

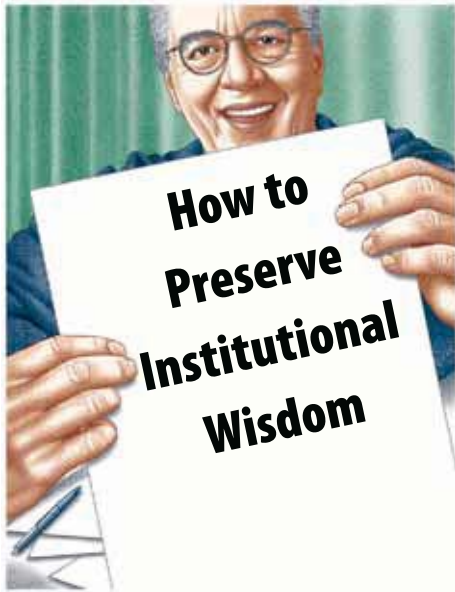
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If lightning strikes tomorrow, and your key employees vanish — to other jobs, to retirement, to forced layoffs — will the remaining staff retain the institutional knowledge needed to keep your business going successfully?

Perhaps not. According to a Knowledge Retention Survey conducted in 2007 by the Institute for Corporate Productivity, 30% of responding companies said they retain knowledge poorly or not at all when workers leave, while half (49%) think they're doing only "okay" at

preserving institutional knowhow. Just two in ten think they are doing well or very well in knowledge retention.

### All Your Eggs in One Basket?

A lot of companies don't know how critical certain employees are until they're gone. "Most senior executives don't have a clue about the critical knowledge their organizations are losing today," says David DeLong, author of *Lost Knowledge: Confronting the Threat of an Aging Workforce* (Oxford University Press, 2004). That's why you shouldn't put all your eggs in one basket when it comes to knowledge. It's important to assess what knowledge is critical, organize it to make it accessible to others, and manage the ongoing process.

### What's Critical?

Ask yourself what is critical:

- What makes you successful?
- What information will you need to keep achieving your goals?
- Where could you be using what you already know more effectively?
- What are your employees' core competencies?
- Are there employees who do something very well who could share that knowledge with colleagues?

- What are important, but infrequent, tasks?

### Maintain the Knowledge

Once you assemble critical knowledge, you need a database so other employees can take over job functions when key employees are absent. When selecting such a system, put a premium on how easy the technology is for employees to use. How easy is it to track needed information? Can you quickly access all types of information beyond company firewalls for compliance and financial issues that may arise? How will you safeguard against deleting critical information?

### Use a System

Maintaining institutional knowledge isn't a one-off project; it's ongoing. You need a system that continually selects, preserves and makes available the key knowledge you need and the right people to make sure the system continues to operate effectively.

Large organizations may have a Chief Knowledge Officer in place. In smaller organizations, there may be a team of individuals that fills that role.

DeLong advises starting small. "Don't start off with an organization-wide knowledge management strategy," he cautions. "That's a recipe for failure. Start with small projects that create value. Focus on producing results — short-term wins — in a particular area and demonstrate value. Then you'll get people on board over time and build support for what you're doing." ▲

### For More Information:

#### Enterprise Knowledge Management Planning

<http://www.liteea.com/knowledge.php?&blogid=21>

#### Oral Interviews to Preserve Knowledge

<http://www.ibiblio.org/riverat/conferences/sla2006/presentations/oralhist.pdf>



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