

## **Mature workers value flexibility**

One may think Gen Y workers are looking for flexibility in work. However, a study by the Employer Alliance (EA) has found that mature workers in Singapore prefer flexi-work arrangement as well because that would allow them to spend more time with their families and engage in leisure activities.

The "*Flexible Work Arrangements for Older Employees*" study found that older workers aged between 50 and 54 prefer spending time with their families and engaging in social activities over travelling for work or working late.

The same was true for those aged between 55 and 59. They said they wanted greater flexibility to take long periods of leave to enjoy leisure activities.

Singapore's work environment is still far from welcoming to mature workers. The EA survey found that only 5% to 15% of new positions here are made available to older people.

EA says companies should look at retaining older staff with flexi schemes so as to curb talent shortage in an ageing workforce. Singapore's proportion of population over the age of 60 is expected to more than double from 16% today to 36% by 2030. The median age of the resident workforce, according to the Ministry of Manpower's Labour Force Survey last year, is 41 years, up from 38 years in 1999.

Companies can redesign the job scope in question to ensure that it's a win-win for both the business and employee.

For example, SingPost introduced a job-sharing cum part-time scheme where mail sorting is carried out by part-time employees. Previously, postmen were required to do both mail sorting and mail delivery, which meant long hours as well as lower productivity.

Companies with sufficient staff strength may also consider establishing the role of an older employee 'relationship manager' (RM) in the workplace. The RM's duty will be to manage the pool of older employees, including identifying suitable HR initiatives such as flexible work arrangements.

Claire Chiang, chairman of the Employer Alliance said, "An organisation needs to be flexible in addressing their work-life integration needs and they need to start early. Employers who can find the right match and fit in their organisation for older employees will find themselves ahead of the competition as the population ages."

Published 19<sup>th</sup> October 2010 in the Human Capital Magazine site at

<http://www.hcamag.com/hc-international/newsletter/49962>