Chapter 10
A Practical Workforce Development Framework Using Strategies and Initiatives to Strengthen the Mature Workforce

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ABSTRACT

In today’s war for talent, as the demographic landscape has shifted, firms who are leveraging the advantages of a more mature workforce may have strategic advantages. Indeed, the aging workforce is being acknowledged as an organizational phenomenon yet present scholarship on key organizational domains is both narrow and inconclusive. Specific strategies and tactics that focus on developing and recruiting a mature workforce to provide new opportunities for employers need to be more fully explored. The field of workforce development provides an approach through which to explore the intersection of the domains of mature workers and the dynamic employment needs of organizations and industry. Key components of workforce development such as partnerships, innovative workforce planning and recruitment practices, education and training, and career pathways will be examined to propose a practical framework and to provide using strategies and initiatives to strengthen the mature workforce.

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INTRODUCTION

In today’s war for talent, as the demographic landscape has shifted, firms who are leveraging the advantages of a more mature workforce may have strategic advantages. Indeed, the aging workforce is being acknowledged as an organizational phenomenon yet present scholarship on key organizational domains is both narrow and inconclusive (North, 2019). Specific strategies and tactics need to be more fully explored which focus on developing and recruiting a mature workforce to provide new opportunities for employers. The field of workforce development provides an approach through which to explore the intersection of the domains of mature workers and the dynamic employment needs of organizations and industry.

Traditionally, workforce development systems have been defined as state and education systems “designed to provide the skilled workers employers need to thrive and the education and training individuals need to prosper in today’s labor market” (National Governors’ Association, 2018). However, when examining the complexity of implementing an organizational workforce development strategy, specifically built and designed for mature workers, many factors exceed the boundaries of this definition. A more comprehensive definition recognizes the importance of providing training and education but also addresses recruitment and retention, workforce planning, professional and career development, culture, and worker wellbeing (Roche & Pidd, 2010). Therefore, for this chapter, workforce development is defined as,

“...a multi-faceted approach which addresses the range of factors impacting the ability of the workforce to function with maximum effectiveness ... Workforce development should have a systems focus. Unlike traditional approaches, this is broad and comprehensive, targeting individual, organizational and structural factors, rather than just addressing education and training of individual mainstream workers” (Roche & Pidd, 2010, p. 2).

This definition aligns with other definitions of workforce development which recognize the importance of a focus on development of stronger public-private partnerships, cooperation, and collaboration (Jacobs & Hawley, 2009). Focusing on the systems component of the definition enables application of systems theory and thinking which has often been underutilized in practice yet has been identified as a critical component of research and practice (Swanson & Holton, 2001; Yawson, 2012). Viewing workforce development as a dynamic system provides an approach for studying the relationship between various parts to determine the behavior of the system within a complex social system and increases understanding of the importance and independencies of social systems (Jacobs, 2013; Yawson, 2012). An overview of mature workers in the workplace, specifically focusing on the interconnectedness
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