

Recruitment and Retention Forum

Overview

4 June, 2008



SETTING THE SCENE

Stephen Kobelke, CEO of Aged and Community Services put the case for industry concern about critical workforce shortages.

Caring for people is the principal focus within the aged and community services industry and despite the pressures facing providers; it is simply not possible to cut back operations or services.

While both tiers of government have increased workforce funding in the general health field, this has come at the detriment to the aged and community sector.

A taskforce on this issue, the Workforce Action Review (WAR) comprising industry professionals and the corporate sector, has been taking up the case, findings and action are planned for the second half of 2008.

BUSTED BY STRESS

Jean Rothschild gave a candid view of her 30 hours under the microscope by the ABC television documentary series "Stress Busters" all of which accounted for 30 minutes of reality television to entertain the masses.

The program didn't accurately reflect the enormous success SwanCare Group (and therefore Jean and her staff) have achieved with recruiting and retaining staff while delivering quality care to its residents at Waminda.



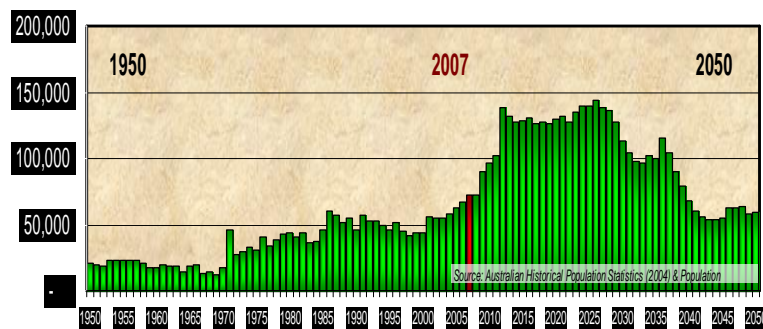
Jean pointed to the stunning success that the Take 30 Lifestyle Program has been within her organisation since its introduction. Take 30 allows staff to access neck and shoulder massages, healthy heart checks, hand reflexology and other wellness opportunities to her staff, once every month.

“Reducing stress related issues for all concerned is finding the right staff, if you need to, pay that extra dollar to get the right person”, states Jean. However she warns that if the conversation starts with “what’s the hourly rate?” then you may not be talking to an experience, dedicated and committed and caring staff member.

DON'T BLAME THE MINING BOOM...STAFF SHORTAGES ARE HERE TO STAY!



Peter Fahey from Anson Partners didn't paint a positive outlook for the future in terms of potential employees. His graphs said it all. The number of available workers is diminishing meanwhile the number of retirees (see graph below) is growing, alarmingly. Peter believes this is an opportunity.



Unlike the generation born in the early part of the 20th century, who think “Cash is King”, they only pay for what they can afford, baby boomers and younger spend now and pay later. Peter said that these hedonists who would like to retire at 55 can't, they've got too much debt to service. Given this scenario, they are likely targets for working part-time or “graduated part-time” or even “phased retirement”.

Peter explains that flexibility in the workforce is paramount, including allowing carers to bring their kids to their workplace after school (particularly in residential care). Naturally, this may not be possible or suitable in every work situation, however if the opportunity exists, then getting carers and staff to work after school hours may be achievable.

Research has revealed that recruiting new staff is really costly, so it's important to keep the ones you already have. The greatest turnover of staff is usually a new recruit who, if not happy with the working environment or other external factors impact on the new job, will quit within that timeframe. This can be extremely costly and very disruptive to any organisation, however crucial to small providers.



WHAT ABOUT GETTING A TEMP?

Clinical One's General Manager, Megan Warrin believes organisations look to use agency staff to fill the gaps.

She states that the workers crisis in WA isn't going to get any better, ABS unemployment figures place WA at 3.5% while full employment is considered 4.2%. This means that WA gets the honours for candidate placement in Australia.

In 2008, current research reveals that more employees are leaving the workforce than entering it. By 2012, the prediction is that 12% of the population will be aged 45 or less.

So if there aren't many workers to choose from where can you get your staff from?

Megan said initially Agency!

Why? According to Megan, that's where the educated, committed and qualified staff choose to register.

The reason that staff choose to work for an agency instead of applying directly to employees revolves around issues of CHOICE.

Megan's research demonstrates that employees want a work-life balance; as such they may choose part-time, casual or contract work. Agency staff also like challenges in their job. They like to move from one organisation to another, because it gives the Agency staff an idea of "try before you buy", does this organisation fit my needs and/or suit my culture?

Clinical One have up to 25,000 registered staff on their books. While efforts have been made to attract overseas workers, conditions surrounding the 457 legislation are making things difficult to achieve an affordable workforce for the aged and community services sector.

Megan's tips for recruiters:

Check documents and references, as she has found people forge documents and commit fraud. Obtaining Agency staff as a stop gap, there are guarantees provided for the staff employed and as she explains, you do have access to more local and overseas candidates.

A clever organisation has the opportunity to poach an Agency worker if they sell their organisation and engage the Agency staffer.

Magnetic People?

Laurie Burns, General Manager People Services at Brightwater Care Group gave us an insight into the People Magnet Program that Brightwater have been developing and implementing over the past 18 months. After looking at how research on Magnet Organisations (e.g. American research on hospitals) could be used at Brightwater, they identified 7 key elements for the Group:

1. A positive Corporate Image and Reputation
2. Work Life Balance
3. Reward and Recognition
4. Environment
5. Supportive Systems
6. Growing People
7. Culture

Laurie told us that he feels Brightwater have achieved 7 'ticks' from their staff relating to their elements: by asking the questions from the perspective of prospective and existing staff: "will I be working in a trusting environment that provides for participation, inclusion and a sense of community?" – YES – TICK!

This process is not an overnight one though, as Brightwater identified 57 strategies to make them 'simply irresistible', it is going to take them some time to complete the journey, but they are well on their way, and Laurie's close may have been funny, but may also be a warning to those employers who do not take some of these things on board: "COME AND JOIN US!"



Penny Flett (CEO) and her band of clowns

Limited RNs = Innovation needed

This was the hottest issue of the day!

John Metaxas (Director), Selvarani Vermeulen (Supervisor) and Elpida Papakonstantinou (RN) gave us an engaging presentation from Hellenic Community Aged Care. John began the presentations by setting the scene in 2006, when they were struggling to find Registered Nurses and were frequently paying high agency rates to fill the four RN positions on each shift.

John decided that a new model would be the only way to get them out of their dire situation. With approval from the board, the Nurses Board and the Standards Agency, John developed at model of care with an RN on one shift per day as well as area managers (who are RNs) on call 24 hours. To support the RN, Hellenic developed a comprehensive training program

for selected carers who were promoted and up skilled to Supervisors: able to undertake roles previously the domain of the RNs.

Selvarani; as one of the up-skilled supervisors told us about the experience of the training and working in a newly created position and how valued it had made them feel. Elpida then gave us the perspective from the RNs' point of view, as they had been very apprehensive at first and had concerns for their own accountability with the Nurses Board. Elpida told us how their concerns were overcome as time went on, the Nurses Board gave their approval and the supervisors earned their respect and trust.

Change management is about seeing people's potential. This case study demonstrates even hesitancy and resistance can be overcome if it is managed well.

'Get with' the Gen XY if you want to 'get them'

After afternoon tea, Rebecca Mahony, Senior Psychologist from OSA group gave us a delightful presentation on the dynamics of the generation X and Y.

This generation wants fun and flexibility, they want the opportunity to have extended leave; further their education (perhaps with financial support); understand the bigger picture and understand how their work contributes to it. They want healthy working environments, leadership and development and TECHNOLOGY, TECHNOLOGY, TECHNOLOGY.

Of course Rebecca knows that there are no sweeping statements to cover all under 40's, but there are certain values that hold true for this generation, and if our sector want to 'tap into' this human resource market, we need to get smart about what they want and see if it is something we can give them.

To train or not to train, that is the question?

Take the lead... ***people join organisations but leave people.*** (workmates/ management etc) . Johanne Klap is a senior consultant from PRIMEXL and she has been a key instigator of a leadership development program with a large group in our Aged and Community sector. Having skilled leaders to retain and develop staff is vital. PRIMEXL have developed a 20 week (with a commitment of 2 hours per week) training program for leaders, to develop their skills and to recognise their importance to a smooth running operation. Without good leadership, the boat may not be able to ride the waves of a storm. This major commitment to learning and leadership development came at a cost: an initial cost and a large outlay. However, for those who squirm at the thought of such a big capital outlay, you will be reassured and possibly astounded to hear that the cost-benefit return was nearly 800%. What that means in dollar terms is that for every \$100 they spent on training, the organisation benefited to the tune of \$759. This figure is not one dreamed up by PRIMEXL in a cunning marketing ploy, but an independent audit compiled by the University of Western Australia. The process analysed staff completing their job tasks before and after the training, and calculated the cost to the organisation of their effectiveness and efficiency.

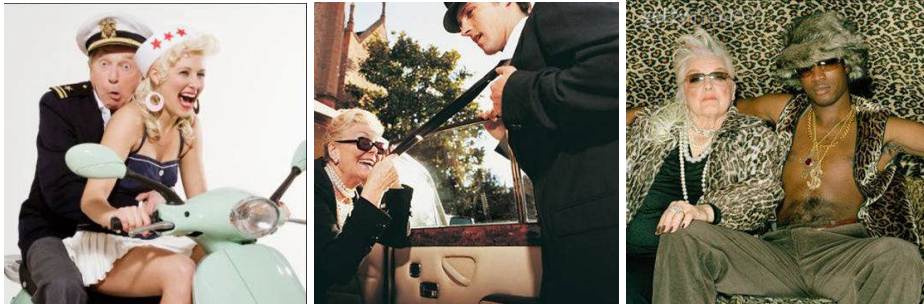
Improved leadership = improved engagement= staff retention

- No one-off wonder programs
- One size *does not* fit all



It is clear that money was well spent, and Johanne read us a quote from the CEO of the organisation, who stated that the program far exceeded her expectations and had in her mind proved a ten-fold return on her investment.

Boomers Babies? Joeys? An architect?



What a light-hearted end to a great day. Architect Todd Paterson, who designs and builds aged care facilities attended the ACSA national conference last year and made a passing comment in a taxi to the gala dinner "I have an idea for creating a network for young professionals in our sector". There are lots of professional networks but not for this sector. Todd got people motivated over a free wine and stale bread roll and from there the group is now set up on Facebook...They meet for drinks after dinner and they're still evolving. Todd and his professionals mates want to make aged care "sexy"...who doesn't!