

THE EXTRA POINT

BY JERRY ROBERTS



66 Guam's Workforce is Going to Get Older

Guam's workforce is likely going to get older. I'm Jerry Roberts and this is going to bring about changes. Let's chew on this today, on The Extra Point.

With an increasingly higher cost of living people today are working further into their lives and retiring later. This isn't going to be a short-term trend and Guam is included in that. Seniors on fixed incomes here are being hammered by essentials going up. Gasoline, food, utilities, health care, and more. Many who can work are being forced to do so.

According to the National Council on Aging, by 2019 over 40 percent of Americans 55 and over will be employed, making roughly one-fourth of the U.S. labor force.

We're going to see a lot more situations where someone in their 30s and even 20s will be put in a position of supervising people who are as old or older than their grandparents.

Older workers and their managers both must be aware of challenges that face each as our workforce gets older. It's natural for both sides to be apprehensive.

Common sense and understanding will help. Someone 65 or 70 isn't usually going to match the physical attributes or stamina of a 20 year-old. That said, their experience and maturity may more than make up for any physical deficiencies.

Managers should always be mindful that these older workers have spent decades of life in the workplace, and can be valuable resources to the organization. Remember this if someone takes a couple more sick days than normal.

Like all other manager-employee relationships, it's the manager's responsibility to initiate things and plant positive seeds. The senior

employee will be inclined to sit back and wait to see what kind of treatment they receive.

The key is for managers to generate and then maintain open communication, which will help to bridge gaps in age and get the focus where it should be, on the worker feeling valued and comfortable in their job — and on productivity.

Jenna Goudreau, who has written for Forbes and BusinessWeek, suggests that managers treat each employee as an expert and encourage them to contribute ideas, but don't be afraid to be the boss. Good advice. Seniors generally respect authority and if you're giving them respect, they're likely to return the favor.

Now the law. The federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) protects people 40 and over from discrimination. Simply, age has to be a nonfactor in how managers approach workers.

If older folks feel that younger coworkers are favored and they can support their claims with compelling evidence, your company could have labor problems.

If you're a manager in this situation get with your HR lead and know the law, then make the senior workers feel so good about working with you that nobody ever even thinks about it. If you're the senior worker with a young manager, and they're trying their best, give them a break. You know it's not easy.

That's The Extra Point. Get out there and make something good happen today. For 93.3, I'm Jerry Roberts.

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