



Enterprise

D.O.M.E

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It was about 15 years ago that I wrote about the concept of D.O.M.E. “Don’t Overlook Mature Expertise” when recruiting. I was in my 40’s then! With 15 years more experience, I’m staying on message. The Government is now offering incentives to employ mature people. It does seem to be more difficult for some people to obtain employment once past a “certain maturity”. However, people are all different and many mature aged workers have no trouble whatsoever in obtaining employment just as some people of any age have a challenge in finding employment. It’s not just about financial incentives although I’m sure they are welcome. It’s about common sense. Thousands of mature employees are, quite simply, great employees. Age really doesn’t come into it.

In business, the role of appointing and keeping staff is important to business success. It costs considerably to recruit, train and retrain staff in terms of time, money and energy. Getting it right the first time makes sense.

I know many “old” people in their 30’s and a lot of “younger” people in their 60’s and 70’s. It’s all about life’s experiences and attitude and the best person for the job is the best person for the job, regardless of age. Some people in their 20’s also have much more to offer an employer than other people much older. It’s about the person; not the age. I strongly recommend that small and medium business owners (the people who read Enterprise) remove their blinkers when it comes to who they should appoint. Be open. Don’t just do the obvious. Think about your decision. Be creative. Different people, different experiences, different attitude...and certainly consider people over 50.

In 1910 when the aged pension was first introduced for men, the average age for men to live was only 66! In reality now, after “normal” retirement age, men and women expect to live 20 or 30 years. Many are healthy, fit, happy individuals ready for their next productive role in society and part of that portfolio can be paid work.

For mature people under retirement age, there is often difficulty in gaining employment because of perceptions rather than reality.

No, they weren’t born with an iPhone in their mouth or technology running through their veins but research is showing that people over 50 are embracing new developments in technology as fast as younger people. You choose the right people, with the right attitude and experience, regardless of their age.

I once recruited for a company who wanted someone mature for their office – the manager was young and forward thinking and aware that the 19 – 25 year olds in the office needed some mature expertise when it came to communicating with clients, organising office systems, solving problems – someone in their 40’s or 50’s with life skills as well as work skills.

Another client recruited a semi-retired man to be a mentor and to handle the tasks that easily got left undone in a busy small business. It worked brilliantly – the 60 year old was vibrant, respected, liked and appreciated by the staff as well as the business owner and he brought to the business a solidness, heaps of common sense, great business skills and, over time, he also became a confidante to the owner.

Think of a dome. They’re rounded with a flat bottom. Now, I’m the first to admit that people with mature expertise don’t all have flat bottoms and they’re not all round in shape but I do know that they are well rounded in life and work experience - experienced in life’s ups and downs, a broad range of workplace and business skills as well as common sense. A dome can also be huge – think of a domed roofed sports stadium – the domed roof protects the people within. The mature employee can do that too by protecting staff from making obvious mistakes.

As people age, they are less concerned with their ego selves. They work and live from the essence of who they are – they’re less competitive and more collaborative. They don’t work just for the money; they work to make a difference. Mature employees can make a big, positive difference in your workplace. DOME – Don’t Overlook Mature Expertise when you next recruit.