

BNAC

BRITISH-NORTH AMERICAN COMMITTEE

Member Survey on Employment Practices Related to an Older Workforce

30 March 2001

As part of its project on “Aging Populations and the Workforce: Challenges for Business,” the British-North American Committee (BNAC) is surveying companies and organizations with which its members are associated.

The survey’s purposes are:

- < to see how companies and other organizations have adapted, or intend to adapt, to respond to an aging workforce;
- < to discover practices that may be useful to other members, or of more general interest; and
- < to better understand the remaining business and public policy challenges to deploying an older workforce happily and productively.

The survey is designed to be completed by senior executives with knowledge of or responsibility for human-resource activities. Please return completed surveys by fax to:

William Robson
Vice President and Director of Research
C.D. Howe Institute, Toronto, Canada
Fax number: (001) 416-865-1866

Selected results of this survey will be included in a BNAC publication in late 2001.¹ No respondent who wishes his/her information kept confidential will be identified. In view of the additional weight identification provides, however, the BNAC encourages respondents to go “on the record.” All identified respondents will have the opportunity to review the relevant passages before publication.²

The survey has been kept brief to limit the burden of completing it. The BNAC would be grateful for any additional information respondents provide, and for references to — and, if possible, copies of — documents describing their organizations’ activities in this area. The Committee thanks respondents in advance for their help in promoting understanding of the challenge of an aging workforce, and in sharing information that can help businesses and policymakers alike in confronting it.

¹ The author of the publication is William Robson, Vice-President and Director of Research at the C.D. Howe Institute, Toronto, Canada, and the BNAC’s Canadian Liaison Officer (e-mail: w_robson@cdhowe.org). The chairman of the BNAC working group overseeing the study is Claude Lamoureux, Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Teachers Pension Plan Board, Toronto, Canada.

² The October 2000 draft of the BNAC's working paper on this topic, and copies of this survey, can be downloaded from www.cdhowe.org/english/profile/committee.html.

1. Please rate the importance of the following issues with respect to the management of human resources in your organization, using a scale from 0 to 5, where 0 is “not applicable at all”, 1 is “not important”, 2 is “somewhat important”, 3 is “important”, 4 is “very important”, and 5 is “crucial”.

- a) reducing labor costs _____
- b) increasing employee skills _____
- c) increasing workforce flexibility _____
- d) redesigning work processes _____
- e) recruiting able employees _____
- f) retaining able employees _____
- g) enhancing labor-management cooperation _____
- h) decentralizing decision-making _____
- i) increasing the diversity of the workforce _____
- j) managing workforce aging _____

2. Does your organization monitor the age-profile of its workforce? Yes_____ No_____

If your answer was “no”, please proceed to the next question.

If your answer was “yes,” please indicate how, if at all, this information affects recruitment and retention practices.

3. Does your organization actively recruit members of specific demographic groups? Yes ___ No ___

If your answer was “no”, please proceed to the next question.

If your answer was “yes”, does your organization actively recruit older workers? Yes ___ No ___

a) If your organization does actively recruit older workers, please indicate:

< the principal age-group(s) it targets (e.g. 55-65, 65+) _____

< the main reasons for doing so (e.g. lack of younger workers, specific skills, better match with demographics of customers)

< the principal method(s) used and, if applicable, the method(s) that appear most effective and/or promising.

b) If it does not, please indicate with check marks which of the following reasons for not recruiting older workers applies:

< no compelling business purpose _____

< more pressing need for young blood _____

< greater affordability of younger workers _____

< abundant supply of workers under current arrangements _____

< actual _____ and/or anticipated _____ opposition from workers and/or managers

< legal obstacles _____

< have not considered it _____

c) What legal, regulatory, or other public policy changes, if any, would allow a better match of business and employee needs in this area?

4. Does your organization have policies the main goal of which is employee retention? Yes____ No____

If your answer was “no”, please proceed to the next question

If your answer was “yes”, are any of these policies specifically targeted at retaining older workers?

Yes____ No____

a) If your organization does have policies specifically targeted at retaining older workers, please:

< indicate which age-range (e.g. 45-54, 45+, 65+) is their principal target ____

< list the main reasons for doing so (e.g. retention of skills, maintenance of relations with customers).

< outline the principal method(s) used and, if applicable, the method(s) that appear most effective and/or promising.

b) If it does not, please indicate with check marks which of the following reasons for not targeting older workers for retention applies:

< no compelling business purpose ____

< retention of all workers is of equal importance ____

< more pressing need for young blood ____

< greater affordability of younger workers ____

< abundant supply of workers under current arrangements ____

< actual ____ and/or anticipated ____ opposition from workers and/or managers

< legal obstacles ____

< have not considered it ____

c) What legal, regulatory, or other public policy changes, if any, would allow a better match of business and employee needs in this area?

5. Does your organization have flexible hours provisions? Yes____ No____

If your answer was “no”, please proceed to the next question.

If your answer was “yes”, are any of these provisions specifically designed to accommodate older workers? Yes____ No____

a) If some of these provisions are specifically designed to accommodate older workers,

< do those provisions differ from those available to younger workers? Yes____ No____
(if “yes,” at what age do the provisions become available? ____)

< please indicate the types of workers (e.g., production, clerical, management) to which these provisions apply

< please describe the relevant provisions and, if applicable, those that appear most effective and/or most promising.

b) If none of these provisions is specifically designed to accommodate older workers, please indicate with check marks which of the following reasons for not designing such provisions applies:

< no compelling business purpose ____

< general provisions are suitable for older workers ____

< no demand from employees ____

< actual ____ and/or anticipated ____ opposition from workers and/or managers

< legal obstacles ____

< have not considered it ____

c) What legal, regulatory, or other public policy changes, if any, would allow a better match of business and employee needs in this area?

6. Does your organization have flexible retirement plans (e.g. part-time for a specified period before normal retirement age; part-time after normal retirement age)? Yes____ No____

a) If your answer was “yes”, please:

< indicate the categories of workers for which such plans are available

< describe the relevant provisions and, if applicable, those that appear effective and/or most promising.

b) If your answer was “no”, please indicate with check marks which of the following reasons for not having such programs applies:

< no compelling business purpose ____

< no demand from employees ____

< actual ____ and/or anticipated ____ opposition from workers and/or managers

< legal obstacles ____

< have not considered it ____

c) What legal, regulatory, or other public policy changes, if any, would allow a better match of business and employee needs in this area?

7. Does your organization provide training specifically targeted at older workers? Yes____ No____

a) If your answer was “yes”, please

< indicate which age-range (e.g. 45-54, 45+, 65+) is its principal focus _____

< indicate the types of workers (e.g., production, clerical, management) to which such training is available

< describe the relevant provisions and, if applicable, those that appear most effective and/or most promising.

b) If your answer was “no”, please indicate with check marks which of the following reasons for not providing such specifically targeted training applies:

< no compelling business purpose _____

< generally available training is suitable for older workers _____

< no demand from employees _____

< actual _____ or anticipated _____ opposition from workers and/or managers

< legal obstacles _____

< have not considered it _____

c) What legal, regulatory, or other public policy changes, if any, would allow a better match of business and employee needs in this area?

8. Has workforce aging prompted your organization to alter its compensation and promotion practices?
Yes _____ No _____

a) If your answer was “yes”, please indicate what alterations were made.

b) If your answer was “no”, please indicate with check marks which of the following reasons for not having such programs applies:

< no compelling business purpose _____

< no demand from employees _____

< actual ___ or anticipated ___ opposition from workers and/or managers

< legal obstacles _____

< have not considered it _____

c) What legal, regulatory, or other public policy changes, if any, would allow a better match of business and employee needs in this area?

9. Does your organization encourage older workers to take on special duties (eg., consulting, mentoring, participation in not-for-profit activities)? Yes____ No____

a) If your answer was “yes”, please provide examples of such duties.

b) If your answer was “no”, is this something you have contemplated doing? Yes____ No____

10. Has your organization adapted its workplace to facilitate the performance of duties by older workers (eg. safety procedures, ergonomic equipment)? Yes____ No____

a) If your answer was “yes”, please provide examples of such adaptations.

b) If your answer was “no”, is this something you have contemplated doing? Yes____ No____

11. Has your organization changed the organization and/or location of work in response to the requirements of older workers (eg. telecommuting or locating operations closer to workers’ residences)? Yes____ No____

a) If your answer was “yes”, please provide examples of such changes.

b) If your answer was “no”, is this something you have contemplated doing? Yes____ No____

12. With regard to your operations in the United States:

a) What measures did the abolition of mandatory retirement require your organization to take?

b) On a scale of 0 to 5, where 0 represents “strongly negative” and 5 represents “strongly positive,” what was the combined impact of mandatory retirement’s abolition and your organization’s response to it on the efficiency and (if applicable) profitability of your U.S. operations? _____

13. Do you have any additional comments or information?

14. Please provide the following information about yourself and your organization

Your Name: _____

Your Telephone Number: _____

Your e-mail Address _____

Your Mailing Address _____

Company Name: _____

Industry or Sector: _____

Annual Revenue: _____

Number of Employees: _____

Country of Headquarters: _____