

Career planning was once regarded as a tool only for high-potential younger workers. Employers would focus on cultivating the skills, strengths and development needs of the young employee so they would be equipped for future senior management roles. Career planning was driven by the needs of a business and career paths were clearly defined.

However, businesses are now faced with a large number of baby boomers competing for fewer senior positions and impatient younger workers who may leave because there are less opportunities for promotion.

The focus of career planning efforts have now moved to how it might be used as a strategy for maintaining motivation and commitment and helping all employees identify other sources of career satisfaction beyond immediate promotion.

Even more recently, employers have begun to emphasise employability by offering employees opportunities to keep their skills current and by providing career planning that assists employees to manage their own careers both inside and outside their current job.

If you implement career planning and support programs and associated skills training you will encourage and assist both your young and mature-age employees to become more career resilient in the changing work environment.

See '*Training Needs Analysis*' and '*Work and Lifestyle Planning*' on this CD.

Skills Development

When introducing an age-balanced skills development program consider the following:

- Promoting training opportunities to all workers, including incentives.
- Ensuring that trainers understand the learning needs of staff, some people may require more time to adapt to a formal training course.
- Implementing training programs for workers that provide a friendly supportive environment and allow participants to build on past experiences.
- Modifying training for employees with special needs.
- Reviewing induction processes to identify any barriers that exist for older recruits. For example, an older worker may have the skills required but may not be familiar with the latest technology.
- Training managers in managing work teams of different age groups.
- Introducing a buddy system to support older recruits (especially if these older workers are leading the way in changing workplace attitudes towards a more age-balanced profile). Buddies provide advice, guidance and practical assistance.
- Introducing mentoring and coaching to allow skill transfer between younger and older workers. Mentoring is a one-on-one relationship in which someone supports and encourages another person, and it can benefit older and younger workers (See *Mentoring* on this CD).
- Review your training and development policies to ensure they contain a clear statement supporting equal participation in training across all age groups.
- Conduct a skills audit of all employees and invest equally in new skills for older and younger staff.

Source: Department of Employment and Industrial Relations 'A Guide for the Queensland Public Service: Managing an Ageing Workforce' and 'Valuing Older Workers'