

Workforce of the Future

BY ALLISON MADISON



Monkey Business Images

Employees will seek employers who will allow them the opportunity to work from home to care for children and/or employers who provide on-site childcare.

The days of multi-generational households and home-towns where great-grand ma and grandpa grew up are as extinct as the dinosaurs. Today, it is not uncommon to have five siblings following their dreams to as many different states. In addition to their own career's calling, people often follow their spouse to bigger and better opportunities.

This highly transient workforce will reshape employee needs, expectations and employer strategies to find and retain employees. Projections for as soon as 2010 indicate that we will have 165 million jobs in the United States but only 145 million people to fill them! In the resulting battle for qualified employees those organizations who find ways to attract and retain their employees will win the war. The

key to every business' success is to develop an attraction and retention strategy now. Their arsenal must include more than just pay incentives. Research shows that attractive salaries are falling lower on the list of reasons why people work for and stay with their employer. Employers will need to be creative, flexible, and highly attuned to the individual needs of their workforce.

What kinds of perks will these transient employees be looking for? Employees will expect flexibility of time. For example, four-day work weeks to see family (and spouses) that may be across the country on the weekends, or flex-time to accommodate life-style and/or childcare arrangements. Since family will likely not live next door to help out with childcare,

employees will seek employers who will allow them the opportunity to work from home to care for children and/or employers who provide on-site childcare.

Employees of the not-so-distant future will also be looking for a familial-like support system in their new surroundings. Gen Y's in particular value relationships, they value individual leadership, they value loyalty to people not organizations. Companies that can foster camaraderie and commitment among their employees will likely retain those employees for the long term.

If employers want to retain their employees, they will need to provide a defined, articulated career path so their employees know they have a future with their current employer and don't have to keep an eye out for better opportunities-which will be abundant.

Another facet to creating an attractive culture is having a strong technological infrastructure and keeping up with technological innovations. Not only is it vital to facilitate the kind of flexibility the workforce will demand, it is also a great lure to attract tech-savvy new generations.

This transient workforce is not limited to the new generations. Boomers, who will not sit out their retirements quietly rocking in their chairs on the front porch, will also be on the move setting up second homes in warmer climes or perhaps closer to the grand-kids. They will be interested in "keeping busy" and employers who can manage to entice them with interesting work and flexibility will be rewarded with their enormous intellectual capital and experience.



Allison Madison is president of Madison Approach Staffing of White Plains.