

Bridging the work age gap: Tips for young managers to handle mature workers

Many of the young managers have older subordinates, some old enough to be their parents.

As we are based in a society that has been brought up to respect elders, it can be a challenge for young or new managers when it comes to managing these workers - they have to be supervise them without being seen as disrespectful.

To avoid awkward and unpleasant encounters, some managers simply hire younger and inexperienced staff and provide them with training in the hope of improving their job performance.

Unfortunately, this short-term solution is not sustainable due to an aging labour force. Young managers need to learn how to manage and motivate this pool of experienced mature workers.

Set Aside All Stereotype

Stereotypes are on of the most common problems faced by mature workers. Often they are perceived to be slow in learning new technology and resistant to change.

Young managers should bear in mind that these workers may be experienced in the field and can contribute and add value to the organisation.

Mutual Respect

Mature workers may suffer from low self-esteem when they feel that they are not respected by their co-workers.

Young managers then need to be sensitive to the situation and acknowledge that mutual respect is the key to better management skills.

Recognise Their Experience

Many young managers fail to see that it is in their interests to make the most of the knowledge and experience that mature workers possess.

These workers compensate what they lack in academic qualifications with the technical know-how they have accumulated over the years.

One way to make mature workers feel valued is to let them mentor young and new employees. This mentorship scheme could help young fresh graduates to learn faster.

Most importantly, the knowledge is kept within the organisation.

Training Opportunities

Companies should not deny older workers of the chance to upgrade their skills. With an appropriate amount of training, mature workers are capable of grasping new concepts and contribute to the company's success.

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Understand Them Better

Communicating with mature workers may require a different set of skills as they may have a different set of perspectives. Clear communication helps to manage differing views points. Furthermore, it builds trust and strengthens the relationship.

At the end of the day, young managers must realise that a true leader is one who is able to discover the strengths of his staff.