

DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR MANAGING AN AGEING WORKFORCE

H. De Cieri¹, Christina Costa², Trisha Pettit³ and Donna Buttigieg⁴

¹ Australian Centre for Research in Employment and Work, Department of Management, Monash University, PO Box 197 Caulfield East Victoria Australia 3145
Tel: +613 9903 2013 Fax: +613 9903 2718 Email: helen.decieri@buseco.monash.edu.au

² McKINNA *et al.*, Rear 131 Victoria Avenue, Albert Park Victoria Australia 3206

³ Australian Centre for Research in Employment and Work, Department of Management, Monash University, PO Box 197 Caulfield East Victoria Australia 3145

⁴ School of Business and Economics, Monash University, Gippsland Campus, Churchill Victoria Australia 3842

ABSTRACT

As is the case in many developed countries around the world, Australia is experiencing the ageing of its population. The increasing number of older workers in Australia and many other industrialised nations presents an unprecedented challenge for employers, the economy, and for individual workers. The human resource management (HRM) challenges related to attracting and retaining older workers have received the attention of researchers, policy-makers and managers. However, many employers have been slow to respond to these challenges and research has suggested that national policy in Australia has not fully addressed the needs of an ageing workforce nor encouraged the retention of older workers. The focus of our research is at the organizational level. Drawing on the assumption of value-in-diversity, we propose that the ageing workforce should be managed at the organizational level as part of strategic HRM.

We conducted semi-structured interviews with managers in 16 large organizations in Australia to identify policies and practices relevant to the ageing workforce. We also conducted semi-structured interviews with 11 subject-matter experts, to identify macro policy issues, organizational issues and individual issues related to the ageing workforce. Our thematic analysis identified a range of issues and strategies that have implications for organizational decision makers and individual workers, with regard to the needs of the ageing workforce. Although some Australian corporations have been leaders in developing diversity programs, there is much progress yet to be made with regard to a strategic approach to managing the ageing workforce. Consistent with previous research in the field of strategic HRM, we suggest that the roles and responsibilities adopted by all managers (executives, line managers and HR managers) will be important influences on the way in which the ageing workforce is managed. A major implication of this research is that HR professionals can play an important role in strategic and cultural changes in organizations, with regard to the ageing workforce.

INTRODUCTION

As is the case in many developed countries around the world, Australia is experiencing the ageing of its population. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2008a) has indicated that the ageing of the population is the most noteworthy population change likely to occur over the next 50 years. Driving this change are declining fertility rates, increases in life expectancy, and shifts in the level and composition of migration. Evidence of these trends has grown over the past decade and the human resource management (HRM) challenges related to attracting and retaining older workers have received the attention of researchers, policy-makers and managers (Naegele & Walker 2006; Schramm 2006). However, many employers have been slow to respond to these challenges (Arnone 2006) and research has suggested that Australian national policy has not fully addressed the needs of an ageing population and workforce (Ranzijn, Carson, Winefield & Price 2006).

The ageing of the Australian population has substantial implications for the Australian workforce. Between 1987 and 2007, the proportion of people in Australia aged 65 years and over increased from 10.7% to 13.1%; during the same period, the proportion of the total population aged 85 years and over doubled from 0.8% to 1.6% (ABS 2007a). The Australian Bureau of Statistics defines 'older workers' as those who are 55 years and older (ABS 2007b), and a range of statistics show the need for attention to issues of concern to older workers and the need for employment practices that manage the generational diversity of the workforce, retain this older cohort in the workplace and facilitate employees' life transitions (ABS 2008a, 2008b).

In this paper, we propose that the ageing workforce should be viewed as part of diversity management and a strategic approach to human resource management. To explore whether there is evidence of a strategic approach to management of the ageing workforce, we present the findings of interviews with managers and experts in Australian organizations. Our thematic analysis identifies a range of issues and strategies that have implications for organizational decision makers and individual workers, with regard to the needs of the ageing workforce.

Workforce Diversity

Age can be viewed as one aspect of workforce diversity, along with sex, religion, ethnicity, and other forms of diversity. Each form of diversity may influence an individual's attitudes, values and behaviours at work (Cox 2001; Kirton & Greene 2009). However, a largely neglected aspect of diversity management is the challenge of managing a widening age range of employees with vast experiential and attitudinal differences. Such diversity creates an imperative for flexible and inclusive management strategies.

Diversity management initiatives are specific activities, programs, policies, and any other formal processes designed to improve management of diversity via communication, education and training, employee-involvement, career management, accountability and cultural change. For example, diversity initiatives may include practices such as training programs to reduce stereotyping and to improve interpersonal communication and skills (Cox 2001). Overall, diversity management places emphasis on the development of organizational strategies and cultures that are not only tolerant of diversity but actively encourage flexibility and inclusion (Childs 2005).

The assumption of 'value-in-diversity' suggests that diversity in work-groups will enhance effectiveness and performance (Cox 1993, 2001). On the other hand, there are recognized costs associated with managing diversity poorly. When organizations do not manage diversity well, there is increased likelihood of turnover and absenteeism among minority groups. In addition, organizations that do not manage diversity well may be in breach of legislation and may incur associated costs. There are also indirect costs, such as the loss of organizational reputation and inability to attract high-quality employees to the organization (Childs 2005). Several researchers have explored 'value-in-diversity' approach and investigated factors that moderate the relationship between diversity and performance (e.g., Richard 2000). Richard (2000: 174) concluded that diversity does add value to a firm but the effects of diversity "are likely to be determined by the strategies a firm pursues and by how organization leaders and participants respond to and manage diversity".

The Ageing Workforce, Diversity Management and Strategic HRM

Management of an ageing workforce requires new approaches for employment practices and in terms of social and economic policy. This includes involvement of many parties, including managers and employers, policy makers, employees, and the general community (see Hedge, Borman & Lammlein 2006; HRSCHA 2005; Naegele & Walker, 2006).

The main focus in this research is on the perspectives of managers in large private and public sector organizations, in recognition of the important leadership role that such employers can play. For example, "enlightened employers and HR professionals" played an important role in anti-discrimination legislation in employment (Naegele & Walker 2006: 2). There are two major organizational drivers of strategic management of a diverse workforce that includes older workers.

First, there is a recognised need to build and maintain the skills and knowledge base of the organization; for example, retaining older workers via phased retirement or re-employment can provide intergenerational knowledge retention and transfer (Armstrong-Stassen & Templer 2006; Shacklock, Fulop & Hort 2007). Second, there is an ongoing need for an efficient and effective HR strategy and practices that best suit the organization's and employees' needs and responds to the dynamic economic context and changing labour market (Armstrong-Stassen & Templer 2006).

We propose that a viable approach to managing an ageing workforce would be to view these as part of diversity management, embedded in a strategic approach to HRM (Armstrong-Stassen & Templer 2006). It is widely accepted amongst HRM researchers and managers (e.g., Boselie, Dietz & Boon 2005) that employers will benefit from developing an HRM strategy and establishing broad policy for the management of employees across all HRM activities.

Drawing on research in the field of HRM, we suggest that diversity management has three core elements. First, CEO and top management support for diversity initiatives is essential. Research over the past two decades has shown that CEO and top management support for HR initiatives, such as those that will assist diversity management, has an important influence; HR initiatives are more likely to contribute to employee and organizational performance when there is top management support (Sheehan, Cooper, Holland & De Cieri 2007). Second, acceptance and adoption of HR and diversity initiatives by other managers across the organization is important, as the attitudes and behaviours of managers and supervisors are crucial components of any successful attempts to create an organizational culture that supports a diverse workforce. It is necessary for diversity specialists to work with line managers, who have direct and frequent contact with employees and a capacity to communicate with and respond quickly to employees (Currie & Proctor 2001).

Gaining the acceptance and support of executives and managers relies on a demonstration of competency to deliver diversity initiatives and evidence that the initiatives will add value. A recent U.S. study has suggested that the growth in diversity initiatives in American corporations is leading to "diversity fatigue" amongst senior executives and middle management. This fatigue, or scepticism about the effectiveness of diversity initiatives, is argued to be due to a failure to demonstrate tangible results, in turn based on ineffective methods, poor implementation and lack of measurement (Felton-O'Brien 2008). Hence, the third key element of diversity management is the competent delivery of a set of coherent and consistent diversity policy and practices, which must be bias-free, promoting knowledge and acceptance of differences, ensuring involvement in education both within and outside the company and dealing with employees' resistance to diversity (Cox 2001). Conversely, a lack of preparation and planning for diversity management may hinder the ability of organizations to retain older workers (McVittie, McKinlay & Widdicombe 2003; Oka & Kimura 2003).

Effective diversity management is based on HR policy and practices. For example, it is important to ensure that tests used to select employees are not biased against groups such as older workers; also, all employees need to be made aware of the benefits of inclusive work practices and potential damaging effects of stereotypes. Of particular importance, flexible work arrangements are a critical success factor in the management of a diverse workforce (Sheridan & Conway 2001). We suggest that the most successful organizations in the future will be those that reorient both their organization and workplace strategies to take advantage of a diverse workforce, including older workers. Hence, our research seeks to address the following broad research question: *Is there evidence of a strategic approach to management of the ageing workforce?*

RESEARCH METHOD

This project aims to investigate ageing workforce issues from the perspectives of employers, diversity managers, human resource practitioners, and expert informants. The main focus in this research is on the perspectives of managers in large private and public sector organizations. We conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with managers in 16 large employers to identify policies and practices relevant to the ageing workforce. The participating organizations represent a range of industries. The organizations have a mix of metropolitan, regional and rural locations within Australia; several are global firms with operations outside Australia. The interviewees included 3 General

Managers, 4 HR Directors (with most senior responsibility for HRM), and 9 HR Managers or specialists (e.g., those directly responsible for diversity management). Most of these employer representatives reported that they have at least one third of their workforce aged over 45 years, consistent with national statistics (ABS 2008a). We also conducted interviews with 11 subject-matter experts, including representatives from: industry and professional associations, advisory bodies, service providers and independent consultants. Where possible, interviews were conducted face-to-face; in some circumstances, interviews were conducted by telephone. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim; data were coded and subjected to thematic analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

While some employers have been leaders in developing diversity programs, much progress remains to be made with regard to developing a strategic approach to managing the ageing workforce.

Strategic Approach to Managing an Ageing Workforce

Most of the employers participating in this study have identified the ageing workforce as an issue or concern. However, the extent to which they have taken action to address this concern varies considerably. We found differences between organizations and industries in their level of activity related to the ageing workforce. Many employers in our study are facing the impact of an ageing workforce and the majority of these employers have not really dealt with the potential impact of the ageing workforce:

"...next year for the first time ever we'll have more exits than entrants to the work force. That's going to be the tipping point of when this starts to bite us. I think we've still got maybe another couple of years up our sleeve, maybe another two to five years before this really starts to bite."
(HR Manager, Manufacturing).

Overall, the managers and experts recommended moving from a focus on defining a specific age range towards developing an inclusive organizational culture that recognises and encourages workforce diversity.

They leave at 55 but those decisions happen before that and the damage that keeps them out of the workforce at 55 happens before that, so we need to be protecting people well back into their life span and that's where 45 is when we really should start thinking about people
(Advisory Body).

This practical approach fits well with our argument that the ageing workforce should be managed as part of diversity management and strategic HRM. In many organizations, the HR function carries major responsibility for managing diversity initiatives such as those related to an ageing workforce. A strategic approach to HRM has three core elements: CEO and top management support for HR (including diversity) initiatives, acceptance and adoption of these initiatives by other managers across the organization, and a configuration of coherent and consistent HR practices (Sheehan *et al.* 2007). We discuss each of these elements, as they apply to managing an ageing workforce, below.

Support and direction from the CEO and top management team is essential. When the top management team demonstrate support for and commitment to practices such as flexible work arrangements, there are recognised benefits, for individuals and employers.

My boss talks about in the 80s and the 90s, employees had to be flexible for companies. We are now in a stage where companies are going to be flexible for employees... That is the world we are in. It is a dramatic shift because it will free up the mature age space. I haven't got a doubt it will allow people to stay in the workforce (HR Manager, Finance).

In contrast, a lack of role modelling by executive and their failure to demonstrate support for diversity initiatives undermines the organization's capability to manage the needs of a diverse workforce.

I think that people at the top generally speaking don't understand work-life balance very well... The role modelling isn't there (General Manager, Defence).

To change attitudes amongst senior managers, the senior HR representative needs to participate in strategic decision making; the earlier that the HRM representative is involved in the decision-making process, the greater will be their impact (Buyens & De Vos 2001). Further, the HR function plays a critical role in educating senior executives.

The second core element in a successful HRM strategy is acceptance and adoption of HR initiatives by other managers across the organization. To achieve *line managers' buy-in* to diversity management, a change of focus from policies to a shared mindset, or organizational culture that endorses diversity and inclusion, is viewed by leading employers as a key performance indicator.

I think success for us will be when managers move past policies and they customise offerings to individuals... So we're trying to transition from [the policies] to generate a cultural change. I think most organizations in this country are being basically unsuccessful in just putting out policies and getting uptake (HR Director, Finance).

To influence executives and line managers, senior HR executives need to have credibility and influence. This requires *HR competencies*, such as business acumen, influence skills, networking, and project management, to be nurtured within the HR function (Sheehan *et al.* 2007). Further, it is important for the HR function to communicate their strategies to the whole organization:

We have many, many things that we do, that we in HR know about but no-one else knows about and it's not because we're deliberately not telling them, it's just that we're not good at marketing ourselves, we're not good at communicating this (HR Manager, Manufacturing).

A *configuration of HR policy and practices* is fundamental to diversity management. All of our manager-interviewees reported a range of relevant policies and practices including recruitment, training and development, performance management, remuneration, and working arrangements. We found a high level of activity in the HR function with regard to reviewing, revising, and developing new HR initiatives. Organizations that could be described as more advanced or sophisticated reported having a broad strategy, such as an age management strategy or a diversity strategy, integrated with other platforms such as leadership development and employee value propositions.

Attraction and retention of employees relies to some extent upon HR policies and practices. Research consistently shows that employees who perceive their work conditions to include aspects such as opportunities to use and develop their skills, greater job responsibilities, flexible work arrangements, a fair promotion system, and a trustworthy manager who represents the employee's best interests, are more committed to their companies (Fulmer, Gerhart & Scott 2003). In the following sections, we discuss our findings with regard to HR policy and practices.

Workforce planning and HR metrics. Effective workforce planning is an aspect of HRM that is integral to organizational strategic planning; workforce planning is the process through which organizational goals are translated into human resource goals (De Cieri *et al.* 2008). Most of the employers in our study have conducted some workforce planning or data analysis of their workforce age profile. Several of the HR managers viewed workforce planning and data analysis as fundamental to management of the ageing workforce; several employers have conducted age audits of their workforce and utilise a series of HR metrics (Boudreau & Ramstad 2007).

the key question is whether or not the aging labour force is going to stay and for how long. So there's a workforce planning issue there (HR Manager, State Govt Dept).

In a small number of organizations, interviewees recognised that the ageing workforce was an emerging concern, yet were having difficulty capturing the attention of executives on this issue. While a few organizations have done a substantial workforce analyses, the majority indicated that they could do more work in this area, particularly with respect to succession planning.

Job design. While good quality job design is an important factor in attracting and retaining any employees, Nichols (2001) has reported that job design is an important factor specifically for older workers. There are numerous ways in which job design can incorporate flexibility to accommodate older workers, particularly reducing the physically demanding aspects of jobs, and promoting flexible work arrangements.

We get isolated cases where some people, as they get a bit older, aren't able to cope with the demands and that creates a performance issue but I would have said that that's in the minority (HR Director, Health).

Flexible work arrangements. All managers recognised and emphasised the importance of flexibility for managing a diverse and ageing workforce:

Flexibility, flexibility, flexibility. ... Flexibility underpinned by mutual benefit so it's not just about one side or the other (HR Manager, Communication & Distribution).

Flexible work arrangements may address a wide range of employee needs and preferences, and include policy and practices such as: flexible work hours (e.g., job-sharing; part-time work; work from home); leave options (e.g., career breaks, study leave, elder care leave); and life options (e.g., phased retirement; health and well-being programs; alumni relations).

Many of our interviewees are already implementing a comprehensive suite of flexible work arrangements. The consensus is that flexible work arrangements are a critical success factor in managing a diverse workforce and should be built into the overall HR configuration such that flexibility becomes part of the organizational culture. Examples of the approaches taken for flexible work arrangements include:

- Adopting flexible work arrangements as part of a talent retention strategy (with CEO endorsement, a major program for talent management and flexibility);
- Adopting flexible work arrangements (e.g., flexible scheduling, telecommuting, phased retirement) as part of a diversity management strategy;
- Communication to managers and the workforce about flexible work arrangements (e.g. sharing success stories);
- Education for managers and the workforce about flexible work arrangements (e.g., a program to change the mindset of senior managers);
- Expanding existing flexibility programs to be accessible to a broader spectrum of the workforce (eg broadening availability of part-time or job-sharing roles); and
- Designing targeted programs for specific workforce segments (eg, pre-retirement programs, part-time work; designing work around projects that can be done in flexible ways).

Our findings support prior research showing that temporal flexibility and control over time worked can be major considerations for older workers with many interests and responsibilities outside of the workplace (Davey & Davies 2006). Practices such as phased retirement, part-time work and job sharing, can encourage older workers to consider remaining in the workforce rather than entering retirement (Armstrong-Stassen & Templer 2006).

Life-time transition management. Many organizations in Australia and elsewhere are seeking to address the demands of a diverse workforce by designing and implementing transition programs. These include programs to facilitate the transfer, re-entry, or extension of employees in their workforce. For example, retirement programs (also known as exit programs or phased retirement programs, seeking to extend the involvement of older workers in the workforce, via practices such as phased retirement or part-time work). While retirement programs are particularly relevant to older workers, we suggest that these be viewed as part of the overall approach to employees' life phases and transitions, as part of diversity management. Indeed, retirement programs may overlap with both green worker programs (attracting workers who have retired from other industries), and return-to work programs (attracting retirees back into the workforce).

HR practices are an important influence on employees' decisions about early retirement (Blekesaune & Solem 2005). Phased retirement is often arranged on informal terms and is quite popular, particularly in organizations with a suite of flexible work arrangements (Lim & Feldman 2003). HR practices are also important in influencing the decision of retirees to return to work. A study by Armstrong-Stassen (2008) suggests that retired people who may re-enter the workforce are drawn to organizations that provide HR practices tailored to the needs and desires of older workers. Retirement programs have a range of benefits for the organization, including enhancement of internal and external reputation, transfer of knowledge from retirees to their successors in the organization, and creation of a pool of people who may return to the workplace in future in case of staff shortages (Naegele & Walker 2006). Some employers have a sophisticated suite of strategies, tied in with flexibility and retention and comprehensive planning for employee wellbeing.

... you just take a career break and then you come back three months later and you may come back in a part-time role and so you just continue on. Where we have had our really good success stories is people ... able to become grandparents so they could spend time minding

grandchildren a day or two, still be in the workforce and it is a much better transition. We also introduced long service awards [recognising people for their service] (HR Manager, Finance).

Other employers are developing and implementing strategies to negotiate, discuss, and seek to retain where possible. In contrast, in some industries, phased retirement is not currently an option. Some managers do not seek to retain people who have decided to retire:

I think too that when someone initiates their retirement they've obviously thought about it for a long time, they know exactly what they want to do and therefore it's a done deal (HR Manager, Manufacturing).

Recruitment and selection. Our interviewees reported numerous challenges in addressing skill shortages and attracting employees to their organization. A small number of managers described their recruitment process as lacking a strategic link. Several problems were identified specific to the recruitment and selection processes. Some managers reported difficulties related to older workers who are unfamiliar with new technology. It has been found that age is a poor predictor of the capacity for learning new technologies; however, the perception exists that older workers are unable to or are slower to learn new skills (Reed, Doty & May 2005). A common theme reported amongst employers was that recruitment strategies need to be broad, to attract a more diverse range of potential employees.

Our view is that we want to open up that pool to include mature aged workers, mums coming back to work, sea changers, so therefore we have a bigger pool of people to choose from which we believe will then lessen the impact of the war for talent on us. So, I suppose we take a more holistic view of how do we broaden our labour pool to choose from (HR Director, Finance).

Training and development. Investment in training is an important factor to consider for any organization. Some evidence does exist that older workers may cost more to train; however, from a continuous improvement or innovation perspective all employees incur a similar cost in continued professional and skill development (Greller & Simpson 1999). Amongst the employers in our study, there was a consensus that training and development are important for the entire workforce, not only for older workers. Overall, managers interviewed expressed their keenness to attract and retain good staff. This supports previous research, which has found that the provision of training and development is of 'paramount' importance in the retention of skilled workers (Boxall, Macky & Rasmussen 2003). However, employers recognised that there may be a need for training targeted towards older workers. Training for older workers is viewed as an important element in a retention strategy for older workers, and research has found that it is critical for managers to have the appropriate levels of training and skill so that they can competently support older workers in their employment (Armstrong-Stassen & Templer 2006).

Career management and mentoring are two important themes raised by several interviewees as particularly important in managing a diverse workforce with skill shortages. In particular, reciprocal mentoring programs, to encourage knowledge sharing between senior employees and recent graduates, are recommended by several employers.

Particularly mentoring. We are very lean in supervising; the whole structure of organization is now managers don't have the time to mentor and support people. We are having to put back a whole lot of infrastructure around supporting people because middle management is so lean ... Yes so older people are just invaluable for younger grads [graduate employees] coming in and we have got a big grad program. We are doing reverse mentoring [too – younger workers mentoring senior executives] (HR Manager, Finance).

One manager commented on the need to build a culture of trust so that employees will willingly share their knowledge without fear of job insecurity. A third theme in responses refers to the need for communication, education and training in inclusive work practices, to address issues such as generational differences in the workplace. These findings support recent research that has highlighted the benefits of validating generational differences in the workplace (Arsenault 2004).

Performance management. In a diverse workforce, performance management needs to be sensitive to the perspectives and needs of different employee segments. Many of our interviewees pointed out that performance is not related to age:

There are some things that you get better at as an older worker and there are some things that you get worse at. That's just the general trend. Everybody is different and the research shows that within a cohort, an aged cohort, there is more variability within an aged cohort than there are between aged cohorts (Advisory Body).

Remuneration, rewards and recognition. Several of the employers included in this study reported that they are implementing innovative reward and recognition programs as retention strategies for a diverse workforce. Some firms are implementing programs to reward and recognise all workforce segments.

Reward and recognition has become ... a point of difference between us and our competitors. I'm designing programs at the moment that we're looking to implement in 2008 and 2009 which is financial recognition and reward for [semi-skilled employees] which would never have happened in the past (HR Director, Hospitality).

While some employers are focusing efforts on specific reward and recognition strategies to attract and retain older workers, others are not targeting any particular segment of their workforce. Many employers offer non-monetary rewards and emphasise flexible work arrangements, recognising that their importance in employee attraction and retention:

I think the rewards are more likely to be around flexibility and the ability to work part time and that sort of thing rather than specific monetary rewards designed for the older worker (Recruitment Industry Service Provider).

A few organizations are seeking to emphasise intrinsic rewards, such as meaningful experiences via their employment:

[V]ery successful [people] over 50, are searching for meaning. ... So there is a lot of people who want to put back into the community ... I'm no longer needing to earn the huge income and everything. I want to make a difference." (HR Manager, Finance).

Other employers adopt the view that older workers are more likely to focus on superannuation.

Superannuation. Financial concerns are a major consideration, and often the paramount concern, of people entering the retirement phase (Patrickson & Ranzijn 2004; Salter 2003). Changes in superannuation legislation are a major topic of concern for employers and employees, reflecting substantial public debate and research (ABS 2008b). Workshops and financial counselling to educate and inform employees about superannuation was universally viewed as important amongst our interviewees, although not all employers provide them.

The biggest problem is right now it's the superannuation issues that make it less attractive for a person to come back into the workforce. So, I guess what we need to think about is how do we make it attractive for an aged worker to come back when there is enough money in superannuation elements of their retirement to live comfortably without having to come back (Recruitment Industry Service Provider).

Several interviewees identified problems faced by retirees who have inadequate superannuation. This may be particularly a concern for women, as national statistics show that men are more likely to have made contributions to a superannuation scheme than women (ABS 2008b).

Occupational health and safety. Occupational health and safety (OHS) management relies on improving conditions and preventing hazards (circumstances, procedures or environments that expose individuals to possible injury, illness, damage or loss) in the work context by implementing comprehensive HRM and organizational strategies (De Cieri *et al.* 2008). Managerial attitudes and behaviours are an important factor in safety culture and will influence employees' safety attitudes and behaviours. Effective health promotion has been shown to be associated with improved employee health status, quality of work, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as well as reduced rates of absenteeism and early retirement (Naegele & Walker 2006). OHS was mentioned by several interviewees as an area in which there may be perceived differences across age groups with regard to workplace injuries and incidents. Some interviewees identified occupational health and safety differences across employee age groups; others did not. There was no consensus with regard to older workers and occupational health and safety.

CONCLUSION

Overall, our findings show, in response to our research question, that there is some evidence of strategic approaches to managing an ageing workforce, but this is by no means uniform. While important progress has been made and there is evidence of sophisticated policy and practices in some areas, there remains much room for further advancement. We conclude that the roles and responsibilities adopted by all managers (executives, line managers and HR managers) will be important influences on the way in which strategic HRM, including diversity management, is developed and implemented. An implication of these ideas is that HR professionals may have to proactively assist the organization's leaders to understand and adjust their mindset, so that diversity management becomes a source of competitive advantage. Overall, the complexities and ongoing developments related to diversity management present many important challenges and opportunities for managing an ageing workforce.

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