

ADAPTING TO AN AGING WORKFORCE

The need for age diversity in the workplace

In Canada, workers 55 years and older will make up approximately 24% of the labour force by 2021, according to the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety. This represents the highest proportion for this demographic on record. In our area, according to the Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie, the labour force is shrinking while the number of available jobs is growing. And in the skilled trades areas, specifically qualified machinists, millwrights and electricians, employers report job vacancies that are proving difficult to fill. So what does this mean to employers as you plan staffing needs for today and the near future?



One key message is that older workers represent an under-utilized talent pool for companies looking to hire. Another message is that employers may want to address the needs of their older workers to ensure they do not make early retirement decisions, further exacerbating the anticipated labour and skills shortage in the local marketplace. What strategies can be adopted by employers to act on these messages that will become so important in the coming years?

Attracting the under-utilized talent pool of older workers back into the workplace may require strategies to make training and skills upgrading easy and affordable for older workers. Accommodating the needs of older workers is another way to attract from the pool of older workers and also to retain those already on your staff. Accommodating older workers may include (1) offering part-time options, or (2) flexible work arrangements. Consider the workplace environment and match specific job tasks to the needs of the individuals. And of course, this discussion IN NO WAY suggests that you consider older workers at the expense of developing and attracting younger workers; younger workers bring many valuable attributes to the workforce including strength, enthusiasm, new skills, comfort with technology, and continuity. Workforce diversification and integration strategies give a Company the best of both demographic groups. The next section contains recommendations from the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety on how you can accommodate older workers in your environment.

Embracing younger and older workers and their skills



Consider the pro's and con's of adopting this workforce growth strategy; while some accommodation may need to be built into your plans, studies show that older workers have experience and knowledge, turnover is lower, they have positive work values and are dedicated. While work may take them a little longer to complete at the task level, their work tends to be more accurate. Older workers also tend to have fewer injuries although those injuries can take longer to heal. Younger workers tend towards eye and hand injuries, while older workers tend towards back injuries and musculoskeletal injuries. This pattern happens because older workers may not be as flexible or able to lift and carry the same loads as younger workers. Consider the following:

- Workplace accommodation including workstation design and task management (such as lifting) can offset some of the risk of injury to older workers.
- Review lighting, heat, and ergonomics that impact older workers and consider ways to make the environment more comfortable.
- Job sharing, flex hours, part-time work options are all methods of reducing scheduling that will appeal to the responsibilities and needs of older workers.

Consider and design education and training options that help older workers learn new materials; understand that older workers may take longer to learn and may need more practice than younger workers but, once a skill is mastered, there generally is no difference in skill levels between the two age groups.

Keep older workers interested by encouraging them to mentor younger workers, or assist with training programs for older staff in the workplace.

Additional information and resources:

- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety \(CCOHS\)](#)
- [The Workforce Planning Board of Grand Erie](#)
- Download PDF "[Forging Skills for Today and Tomorrow, Update 2016](#)"

MAINTAINING ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

Motor Fault Conditions

Motor system failures fall under two basic types:

1. Passive failure: insulation breaks down leading to winding contamination, and the rotor fractures or voids. While the motor is running, these problems may not be obvious until the fault becomes more active.
2. Active fault: occurs when the motor stops operating, indicated by stalling or complete failure of some system component.



A motor management program that uses diagnostics and system tests to monitor equipment can help predict time to failure, eliminate most unplanned failures and should be employed to identify any systems degradation. Even with a good motor management program, unplanned failures will still occur, such as lightning strikes or improper operation, but these risks are not as high as the simple fact that all systems wear out gradually over time and resistance to failure increases with age of equipment.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Don't miss this year's event



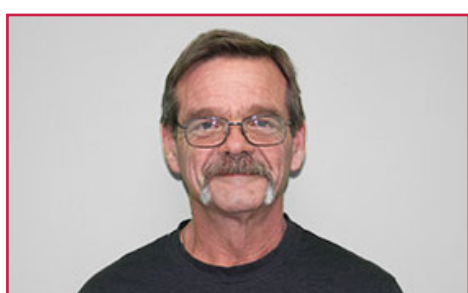
Annual Gilbert-McEachern BBQ and Supplier Trade Show

May 25, 2017 from 11 am to 2 pm

Mark this popular event on your calendars and we look forward to seeing you join us for lunch on May 25th.

NEW FACES AT GILBERT-MCEACHERN

Meet the new additions to our team!



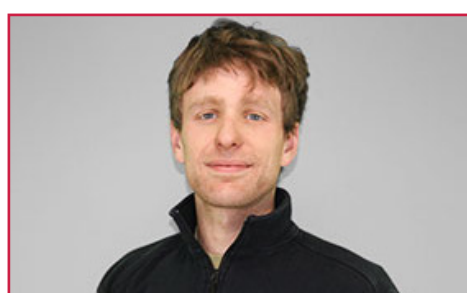
Mike Winter

Mike joins us as a Technician, specializing in pump repair and specialising his skills as a Licensed Millwright.



Brock McEachern

Brock has joined the GME team as a resource in electric motor diagnosis and repair. Brock is a Licensed Journeyman Electrician.



Matt Farkas

Matt will handle larger mechanical and motor repairs, and will assist in pump repairs and welding requirements as needed. Matt is a Licensed Journeyman Millwright.