

How to keep baby boomers on board: 4 keys



Sixty-five percent of baby boomers plan to keep working past age 65 or don't plan to retire at all. Slightly more than half (52%) plan to continue working after they retire.

They feel they must, according to a new study by the nonprofit Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies (TCRS). It found that 62% of boomers who plan to keep working after age 65 say they need the income and health benefits their jobs provide.

Get ready for an experienced cadre of workers who just won't leave. Aside from occupations where safety laws require it, few employees can be forced to retire when they reach a certain age. Workers 65 and up regularly win age-discrimination lawsuits.

For many, retirement is no longer a point in time when work suddenly stops. It's a transition that may involve shifting from full-time to part-time work or taking on a job that is more satisfying or less demanding.

"This vision of a flexible, phased transition to retirement cannot be accomplished without employers having programs and employment practices in place to facilitate it," said Catherine Collinson, president of TCRS.

Among the steps TCRS urges employers to take to make the most of this age-defying workforce:

- 1. Facilitate flexible transitions into retirement.** Take a fresh look at succession planning processes. Consider training and mentoring roles for older workers so they can pass along their expertise and experience. Explore job sharing and part-time work options.
- 2. Foster an age-friendly work environment.** Communicate your commitment to age diversity. Only 48% of diversity statements address age, according to TCRS.
- 3. Offer back-up benefits.** Illness can derail the work plans of even the most dogged older employee. TCRS found that few employers offer optional disability, long-term care and cancer insurance. All are highly valued by baby boomers.
- 4. Ease the financial transition to retirement.** Older workers face complex financial decisions about retirement-plan catch-up provisions, required yearly distributions and Social Security benefits. Work with retirement plan providers to offer transition-oriented resources and tools. Explore extending plan eligibility for part-time boomers so they can continue saving.