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WHAT MAKES A WORKPLACE
A "GREAT" PLACE

PG. 8

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...and much more!

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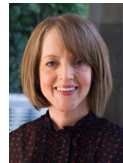
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A Strong and Committed Workforce

This issue of *Engage Magazine* focuses on Workforce – issues which providers of senior care navigate through daily. How to reduce turnover, how to find and retain quality staff, how to provide pathways to professional development – and how to dispel outdated, ageist stereotypes and misperceptions about working in the aging services field.

We reached out to some LeadingAge California members to find out what they're doing to combat these hurdles, and they shared their stories, resources and practical advice. Our feature article comes to us from Covia, who recently received recognition and certification by Great Place to Work, producers of the annual FORTUNE “100 Best Companies to Work For.” They detail the “five dimensions of trust” as the key to successful relationships and to creating a standout culture in the workplace.

NRC Health discusses how mentoring programs can help dramatically reduce staff turnover and offers three secrets to making your own program a success. Tuan Nguyen with Relation Insurance also offers sound advice on how to maximize your employee benefits program for employee retention.

Also, in this quarter's Dear Brenda column, Brenda Klütz discusses ways to measure staff sufficiency and ways to encourage and assist staff to advance in their careers. Finally, we round out this edition with an interview with Harold Urman, President of Vital Research, LLC. Harold reviews some of the findings from LeadingAge California's recently conducted Workforce Survey and discusses some of factors that really influence whether someone leaves or stays with an organization.

We hope you enjoy this issue. And, as always, we like to hear your feedback and thoughts for future articles. Please contact me at any time at rdouglas@leadingageca.org.

Happy 2019!

Robin Douglas
Editor-in-Chief

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Robin Douglas

Editor-in-Chief

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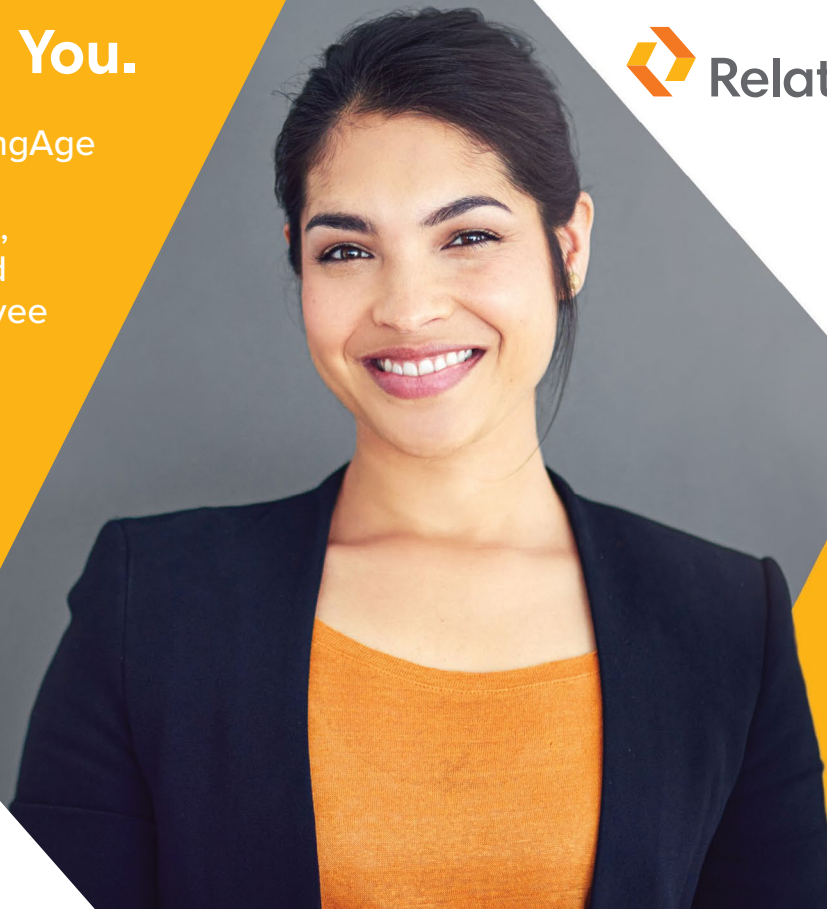
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New Pathways for Workforce Solutions

According to a Deloitte analysis, organizations that *embrace the workforce ecosystem and are using different types of work arrangements can help gain the experiences needed to increase attractiveness in the employment market.*¹ So how exactly do we apply this and other trends to the workforce of life plan, housing, and health care communities, as well as home and community-based services? LeadingAge California has integrated workforce into our Strategic Plan 2019-2021. **Our Initiative #3: Grow the Workforce** will bring attention to the current workforce crisis in our field, and create new pathways for workforce solutions, including consideration of ‘technology as workforce.’ The workforce initiative kicks off this spring with a ‘Workforce Situation Room.’ We are inviting a small group of Executive leaders from within and outside our membership to explore and collaborate on workforce solutions.

All of our initiatives are equally important and will span the three year period: **Lead Public Policy, Advance 21st Century Leadership & Education, Grow the Workforce, Foster Innovation, and Elevate Public Awareness.** See our full Strategic Plan 2019-2021 by [clicking here](#). Our overall goal is to help you Navigate the Future through our convening, collaborating and partnering efforts.



Age On. Rage On.TM Our microsite www.AgeOnRage.com launched on January 11 this year to rave reviews. Read the stories, invite your residents to share their stories on the interactive stories site, and encourage everyone to take the pledge and help our site go viral! Join us on Facebook: @AgeOnRageOn, Twitter: @AgeOnRageOn, Instagram: #AgeOnRageOn. Thank you to so many who have donated time, talent, and resources to helping making Age On. Rage On.TM a reality.

Jeannie Parker Martin

President and CEO

¹ [*The workforce ecosystem: Managing beyond the enterprise. 2018 Global Human Capital Trends. Deloitte.com/insights. March 28, 2018.*](#)



Have **YOU** Heard?

Front Porch Communities' Davis Park from the Center for Innovation and Wellbeing was interviewed and live-streamed by WMVAI of [The Future of Voice](#), on the future of #voicefirst for older adults.

PEP Housing's Mary Stompe authored an op-ed in February for the *Marin Independent Journal* titled, "[California needs more 'pure vanilla housing' for seniors.](#)"

Eskaton Village Carmichael received a [Caring Star Award](#) from Caring.com, a senior living and referral website.

Openhouse and OnLok are featured in an interview with Tim Johnston of SAGE, in ASA's Newsletter, *Aging Today*, in an article titled, "[Partnership by Design: New Project Aims to Improve LGBTQ Elders' Lives.](#)"

HumanGood's Rotary Terrace officially opened its doors. The [81-unit residence](#) for low-income seniors, located in South San Francisco, was developed in partnership with the South San Francisco Rotary Club.



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WHAT MAKES A WORKPLACE A "GREAT" PLACE

In December 2018, Sandra Crowder, Environmental Services Tech, was named Los Gatos Meadows Employee of the Quarter.

The Covia community shared on Facebook that "Sandra's positivity and attention to detail inspires all who cross her path. She holds herself to very high standards and strives to provide excellence to residents, team members, and guests."

For her part, Sandra says, "One of my goals at work is to make people smile and feel cared, for which is easy at Los Gatos Meadows." She adds, "Also I have a wonderful supervisor and I feel appreciated by my boss and the management."

But which came first: Sandra's high standards, or the appreciation of the management?

“What we find across all industries across all countries is that people want the same thing,” says Jacquelyn Kung, CEO of Activated Insights, the senior care research company behind Great Place to Work. “And it comes down to trust.”

Great Place to Work has been studying the elements of trust in the workplace for over 30 years. They have found five key elements: Respect, Credibility, Fairness, Camaraderie, and Pride. Together, these comprise the Trust Index – a measure that is tied to increased organizational performance.

According to Kung, the first three measures – Respect (I feel respected by my employer), Credibility (I can believe what my employer is telling me), and Fairness (I feel that decisions and policies are fair) establish a relationship built in trust. “What really elevates it even more is Camaraderie with my coworkers, and then Pride in what I do,” she says.

For the first time this year, Great Place to Work has offered a list of [Best Places to Work in Aging Services](#). Covia, a LeadingAge California member based in Walnut Creek, placed 29th overall.

The Trust Index has been shown to have a causal effect on improving the workplace. “You improve the Trust Index score, and your performance as an organization improves. In public companies, the best companies outperform the stock market index by a factor of 200 to 300 percent,” says Kung. “In our industry, higher Trust Index score, lower employee turnover. Higher Trust Index score, happier residents and families. Higher Trust Index score, better occupancy.”

Of the five dimensions of Trust, Covia rated highest in Pride and lowest in Fairness – a typical result for the aging services industry, according to Kung. “Our industry compared to other industries really stands out for that reason – pride and purpose – and it’s the organizations that highlight and inculcate that best that seem to do best,” says Kung. “And of course they also are high in respect, credibility, fairness, camaraderie.”

For fairness, perception is key, and a lot of the perception is based on day-to-day activities, such as scheduling. “Scheduling is really important for this industry. If you’re not getting what you requested and you see someone else and you don’t know why, then it’s perceived as not fair.” One way to improve the perception is to make sure employees understand why something is the way it is.

Another common area of perceived unfairness is compensation. “Our industry does not do a good job communicating how compensation is determined,” notes Kung. “And compensation includes, of course, the pay itself, but also benefits, and having some sort of share in success.”

For Covia, which had been evaluating employee satisfaction through other surveys since 2010, the choice to partner with Great Place to Work made sense.

“Quite honestly, it’s a great recruiting tool,” says Prab Brinton, Covia’s Vice President of Human Resources. “The minute that you say, ‘We’re a great place to work,’ the candidate instinctively paints a picture of what that looks like for them.”

“I think the designation is also a good reminder for our current workforce,” she adds. “It reminds them, ‘Oh, wait a minute. We are a pretty good place to work because here’s what all of my peers are saying. Here are all the great things my employer offers me.’ It’s a great reminder, just from a retention perspective.”

“Another great aspect of this tool is being able to tie our employee feedback to the resident experience,” says Brinton. With other surveys, “We got lots of great information, but how do you tie it into the resident experience? With Great Place to Work, we provided that information and they were able to correlate that for us.”

And of course, the Great Place to Work survey gave Covia information on where it can grow and improve, both overall as an organization as well as at a community or departmental level.



One area where Brinton feels Covia has room to improve is in building stronger relationships with employees, rather than spending the bulk of the time in bureaucratic tasks. “We have systems to handle day to day tasks. These systems help us move employee conversations from ‘did you fill out your benefits paperwork’ to ‘let’s talk about what would be the best benefit choice for you and your family.’ Or if you know that there’s a rising star within your community – the conversation turns to “I know you’re getting ready to graduate from school, what are you planning to do?” Have you considered this kind of position with us?’ We should be turning it more into that kind of relationship. We spend a lot of time building those relationships with our residents; we need to do the same with our employees.” In her one-on-one meetings with her direct reports, Brinton focuses on four areas: the status of current

projects; any roadblocks or concerns; current successes; and ongoing career development needs and desires. “I do think that a lot of times in many organizations, HR falls into the role of ‘managing’ employees through their tenure. The true role of HR should be to create an environment where employees can come in and do a great job every day and feel pride in the job that they are doing. We’re also here to educate and help employees along their career path.”

And if the original career path doesn’t work, there may be other ways to utilize a talented employee’s skills. Gina Secchi, Marketing Coordinator at St. Paul’s Towers in Oakland, started her career at Covia as the Catering Manager at San Francisco Towers. “I loved the event planning and the San Francisco Towers residents and felt mentored by [Director of Dining Services] Larry Brooks,” says Secchi. “Unfortunately, the commute was too much and I wasn’t going to be able to stay. When I mentioned this to Larry, he was instrumental in me coming to St. Paul’s Towers. He knew my strengths and suggested to [Executive Director] Melody Mitchell and [HR Director] Donna Tendler that I work at St. Paul’s as the marketing coordinator and they all helped me to do so. Larry made me feel very respected because he said, ‘I wish you could stay here but I would rather have you work for Covia than have the company lose you.’” Secchi is now considering getting a degree in Marketing. “I know that Covia has a program that [assists with going back to school](#) and I am looking into participating in this program.”

“My advice to other aging services companies would be: figure out ways to make your employees feel connected to the organization, to the management teams, to the other employees. I think that goes a long way,” says Brinton. “If you don’t feel connected to your spouse or partner, you say, ‘OK, I need to find greener pastures.’ It’s the same thing with employment. If employees don’t feel connected then they’ll ask themselves, ‘Why should I keep coming here? You don’t value anything that I bring to you.’ It’s really being able to harness the connection between employer and employee.”

"Covia believes that every single employee is essential and vital to our team. Our management staff works hard to communicate this and to be sure everyone is treated that way," says Ron Schaefer, Chief Operating Officer. "Covia is also a great place to work because of the important work we do: supporting older people to live well and age well."

"There are always the usual things: you have pay, you have benefits," says Brinton. "I think more importantly are the people you work with, believing in the mission of the organization, and being surrounded by a bunch of people who are driven by that same thing. I think that makes Covia a great place to work."

Brinton adds, "I think something that makes us unique over numerous other industries outside of senior living is the employees get to feel like they have an extended family outside of your work family. You have these great seniors or elderly people that you are interacting with on a day to

day basis. One, they're very grateful that you're there helping them. But two, just think about all the stories you get and the added knowledge or learning. You just feel connected."

This connection is clearly felt by Sandra Crowder at Los Gatos Meadows. "I truly give my all to Covia and the residents," she says. "I also receive a lot of joy from the residents in return."



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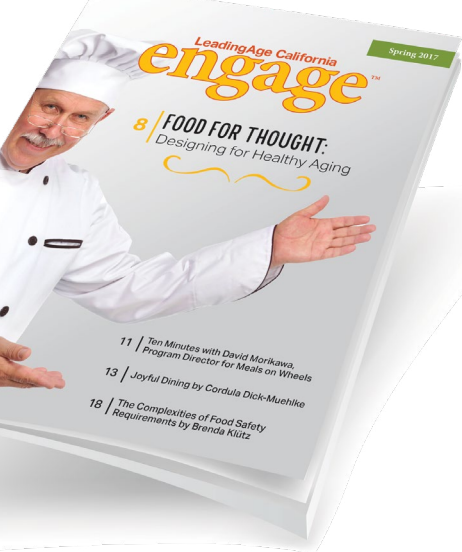
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Slash turnover in half: NRC Health shares three secrets to a successful employee mentor program



Jalene Carpenter is the Director of Customer Success at NRC Health. Not too long ago, as an operations coordinator for a long-term care organization in the Midwest, employee turnover fell to just 18 percent on her watch, and 88 percent of employees reported high job satisfaction. In a field where annual turnover can reach 40 percent, that's a remarkable achievement.

Carpenter's secret? "It was the employee mentor program that brought it all together," she says.

Mentors were veteran employees who took responsibility for onboarding new hires. They integrated newcomers into the community, and bolstered morale by creating a winning culture for employees.

It might sound simple enough. But as Carpenter will be the first to say, it wasn't easy.

Here are three hard-won lessons she shares about making an employee mentor program work for any community.

Jalene Carpenter,
Director of Customer
Success, NRC Health



1. SET HIGH STANDARDS

From the beginning, Carpenter made clear that she expected a lot from her mentors.

The position came with a pay bump to underscore new expectations; the application process was rigorous, requiring two letters of recommendation; and during selection, Carpenter and her team went beyond the ordinary institutional rules.

"When you're considering who could be a good mentor in your community, disregard title, disregard their role," she says. "Look for passion. Look for leadership. Look for patience. Remember, you're looking for guides and teachers."

These tactics worked. Only high-caliber employees, people that other staff looked up to, applied to be mentors - which is exactly what Carpenter wanted.

2. DON'T JUST COMMUNICATE— OVER-COMMUNICATE

Here, though, Carpenter had to be careful.

To avoid rancor among staff who weren't selected, she and her team had to select mentors according to strict, transparent, and fair criteria - and then they had to make sure that everyone knew just what those criteria were.

"I call it over-communicating," Carpenter says. "We took two solid months to teach our mentor standards before we made any picks. That way, when we made

our choices, our staff understood the rationale behind them."

This preempted any accusations of unfairness in the mentor program and secured buy-in from the entire community.

3. INVOLVE MENTORS IN PROGRAM DESIGN

Finally, Carpenter's careful to say that it wasn't her efforts alone that made the mentor program a success. A transformative initiative like this, she believes, can never be achieved simply from the top down.

From the beginning, she elicited ideas from her mentor team in monthly meetings, and together they brainstormed ideas to make the program work. One idea was particularly fruitful. It was a simple, cheap, elegant way to help mentors stand out in a community: special purple nametags.

"Those nametags were as good as gold," Carpenter says. "Mentors wore them like badges of honor. They felt conspicuous as leaders, and they wanted to live up to that. I never would've had this idea if I wasn't listening to my mentors."

Carpenter points out that if leaders follow the previous two tips, mentors will be some of the most enthusiastic, invested, and thoughtful people in any organization. Leaders shouldn't let that energy go to waste.

KEEP IT GOING

Finally, Carpenter emphasizes that none of this can be a one-off effort.

"The single most important factor boils down to one word," she says. "Consistency."

It takes a continuous commitment to shift a community's culture, to make employees feel like they're part of a family, not just workers at a job. But creating that family feeling is well worth the effort.



Learn more about how NRC Health is helping senior-living organizations elevate employee experiences at nrchealth.com. Or contact Jalene Carpenter at jcarpenter@nrchealth.com or (800) 388-4264.



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Dear Brenda

Brenda Klütz has 30 years of experience in California state service; with over eight years of working in the Legislature as a consultant on Aging and Long-Term Care issues and 15 years with the Department of Health Services serving as the Assistant Deputy Director and Deputy Director. Currently, she provides LeadingAge California members technical support on issues related to reimbursement, licensing, and regulation interpretation.

Regardless of the setting in which care and services are provided, our staffs serve as the foundation and give structure to our communities. We can act only through our employees. Unending efforts to recruit, train and retain sufficient, qualified and competent staff are a daily part of community operations.

In addition to the constant effort of maintaining our workforce, staffing is measured in some way, shape or form by federal and state entities, residents, families, friends and advocates. We are measured by minimum levels of staffing, checks on staffing levels using payroll data, and are required to submit staffing data as a part of OSHPD financial reports.

Often, this is not just a matter of meeting a numerical minimum, but rather how resident quality of care and quality of life is supported. Numbers do not precisely guarantee quality care.

SNFs are measured by minimum staffing levels, and RCFEs have some related standards; but, how do you measure sufficiency, quality and competency of staff? CMS has had various Critical Pathway tools prepared for surveyors to measure staff sufficiency in SNFs. RCFEs can benefit from much of the information in this tool, which can be found at leadingageca.org/engage-magazine

Our communities are deeply vested in making sure staff have the social skills and competency to provide quality care and services. Once our communities have sufficient numbers of qualified and competent staff, additional efforts are needed to retain those valuable staff members. Elsewhere in this edition, there will be examples of how communities can maintain staff and be the best places to work.

Encouraging and assisting staff to advance their healthcare careers can be both an incentive to remain with a community, and create a culture where staffs feel personally supported. California has some options for healthcare career ladders, but there is considerable room for improvement. We've prepared a simple chart to highlight the ways in which staff can progress to the next professional level.

Visit leadingageca.org/engage-magazine to download.

During the RISE Summit in Sacramento, we will be hearing directly from state agencies on their efforts to grow the healthcare workforce. LeadingAge California is also sponsoring legislation to bring equity to some aspects of professional certification/licensure – so, stay tuned for more information about this exciting proposal!

***Please contact Brenda Klütz if you have any questions or seek additional information:
BKlutz@leadingageca.org or (916) 469-3377.***



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LeadingAge Workforce Innovators Podcast

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<https://leadingage.org/workforce-podcasts>



Research:

UC San Francisco: Entry and Exit of Workers in Long-Term Care

LeadingAge CAST explores the uses/benefits of social connectedness and engagement technologies.

https://healthworkforce.ucsf.edu/sites/healthworkforce.ucsf.edu/files/Report-Entry_and_Exit_of_Workers_in_Long-Term_Care.pdf



Blog:

McKnight's: The Key to Reducing Turnover in Long-Term Care

<https://www.mcknights.com/blogs/the-world-according-to-dr-el/the-keys-to-reducing-turnover-in-long-term-care>

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Unique Partnership Teaches Pharmacy Students Communication Skills and Breaks through Generational Stereotypes

By Robin Douglas, Director of Communications, LeadingAge California

When pharmacy student Sirun Gasparyan met Mt. San Antonio Gardens resident Harvey King, she admits she had some preconceived notions about older adults. “I thought they would all be difficult to talk to. My generation is used to communicating through the computer, Facebook, social media,” she said. “His generation just enjoys that face to face contact.” She also assumed he wouldn’t be technologically savvy, but that wasn’t the case. “Harvey actually knew a lot.”

A pharmacist must interact with people across the spectrum of age, culture and care needs,

sometimes in a very hurried environment, so strong communication skills are critical on many levels. Teaching a more person-centered approach to care is the goal of the TARGET Program (To Achieve Reachable Goals and Effective Treatment), part of a unique partnership between Mt. San Antonio Gardens Retirement Community and KECK Graduate School of Pharmacy in southern California. Over a ten-week period, students are paired with volunteer residents, meeting for five two-hour sessions to teach the residents about their medications, discuss side effects, drug interactions, and any questions they may have. The residents

are then presented with a personalized Medication Action Plan.

“We tell residents they can learn about their medications and be a mentor to other people who are becoming professionals,” says Andrea Tyck, Wellness Director. But the benefits of the program run much deeper. The opportunity for relationship-building helps students forge a deeper connection to their work and really see their clients as individuals, while the residents appreciate the extended meetings that allow room for a greater comfort level.

Resident Harvey King, 88, says his generation is more guarded and doesn't like to reveal personal details. But over time, Sirun, Harvey, and another student, Yelena Bagdagulyan, developed a strong friendship that included Harvey's wife Nancy. “It was an honor to get to know them,” said Yelena. “Youth may walk faster, but the elderly know the way.”

After ten weeks, the program concludes with the students presenting the Medication Action Plans to the residents and submitting a written reflection. “At the end [of the last class],” said Tyck, “I saw some amazing statements. ‘I used to be afraid of getting older and now I'm not.’ ‘Now I can really see that the residents are people.’” If even five people walk away with that change in their perception, Tyck says, they've accomplished their goal. The program will evolve, Tyck says, as they continue looking for opportunities to get residents and students connected. The next cycle of the program launches in February 2019.



Questions? Contact Andrea Tyck, Mt. San Antonio Gardens at atyck@the-gardens.com

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Harder for You.

by Tuan Nguyen, Relation Insurance

Cultivating talent and retaining quality employees is a challenge for every employer. Employment is growing, and wages are increasing, which leads to competitive job offers and difficulty for employers to staff and retain top talent. Most employers make up for this by providing comprehensive benefits programs for their employees.

Despite these efforts, the employee-retention rate is not where most companies would like it to be. According to Payscale's Compensation Best Practices Report, employee retention is a top concern across all sectors.

Fifty-nine percent of those surveyed worried about losing their best employees to competitors, and 67 percent were concerned about the difficulty of keeping skilled labor. These fears are not ill-founded: In the event a quality employee leaves, the cost to replace them can typically be 20 percent or more of their annual salary, not to mention the time it takes to find, train, and build institutional knowledge in a replacement employee.

To further complicate matters, three distinct generations who have significantly different needs and expectations (i.e., Baby Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Millennials) compose the majority of today's workforce. This multi-generational labor mix adds value to the work environment, but it also creates new demands when it comes to recruitment and retention.

All employees, regardless of their ages, are looking for increasing salaries, rich benefits, and subsidies for dependent coverage. Factoring in medical, dental, life, disability, 403(b), vacation pay, time off, and taxes, the total cost for association employers is substantial. This is a tough pill to swallow for companies trying to reduce costs year over year, while continuing to offer benefits that meet the differentiated needs of distinct age groups who will help bring in new employees and keep current employees on board.

Employee-benefits program is your next highest expense, second only to wages. That's a significant financial and administrative investment that could be a key variable in your efforts to both attract and retain quality team members - and get competitive advantage (if you know how to leverage it). One of the best ways to maximize your investment is to work with your broker to implement a

benefits-communication strategy to help employees fully understand and, more importantly, appreciate what you offer. Here are four ways your benefits program can help with recruitment and retention.

Prioritize Employee Retention Over Recruitment

You'll get more mileage from your benefits program if you work with your broker to focus on employee retention first, as this is ultimately where your greatest return on human-capital investment comes from, and recruitment second. Focusing on retention involves investing time, money, and effort into designing rich, yet affordable, benefits options, and secondly communicating these efforts with your employees to demonstrate your dedication to keeping them. When you subsequently shift your focus to recruiting, be sure to also emphasize to candidates just how great your benefits program is. Prioritizing the "who gets communicated with about our benefits program and when" in this order is more likely to help you reach your company objectives.

(Re-)Educate Employees about their Benefits Often at Various Touchpoints

It's easy for an employee to lose sight of the benefits package they're receiving after they've been onboarded—rather than appreciating the program's value with each paycheck, they simply see a hit on their net incomes. Whether they've just joined the company or are seasoned team members, employees must be educated and continually reminded of the value of their enrollment. Your broker can help you design a multi-touch educational campaign that includes communications tools such as benefit guides, wallet cards, and announcements, all of which can keep benefits top of mind for employees at every stage of their journey with you. Wellness/health fairs and campaigns throughout the year can also present multiple opportunities to educate employees and go beyond the standard annual open-enrollment meetings. Work with your broker to design the best communications

strategy that allows you to speak loudly and frequently to all the perks of working for your community. You stand to get the biggest payback on your benefits-program investment: satisfied employees who stay.

Take a Traditional and Forward-Looking Approach to Benefits Communication

Since different age groups have different needs when it comes to benefits communications, there are multiple communications technologies your broker should be making available for you, including the following:

- * Online enrollment
- * Benefit portals
- * Intranets
- * Mobile phone apps (becoming very prevalent with Millennials)
- * Webinars (livecast and on-demand)
- * Video (generally preferred by Millennials and Generation Z populations)

Your broker shouldn't discontinue administering the more traditional open-enrollment group meetings in favor of newer technologies though. In-person one-on-one meetings and answering employees' questions via Q&A sessions are employee-communications approaches that are still generally preferred by the Baby Boomer and Silent Generation populations. As the workforce continues to evolve, multiple means of communication that are both "old school" and more leading edge will be needed to communicate effectively across all demographic bands.

Communicate the Total Value of Your Benefits Package

Another way to demonstrate to employees how greatly you value them is to employ a total-compensation strategy to share with them the full scope of their benefits and compensation programs. Total-compensation statements go beyond standard paychecks to provide a greater overview that gives a quantitative value of your

benefits program.

Research shows that this transparency approach can help increase employee appreciation and satisfaction. Use your existing benefits-administration system to set this up, or ask your broker to help you provide this to employees. Total-compensation statements are also a valuable recruitment tool, as they can also be shown to potential candidates to demonstrate how well you treat employees.

If you want to retain your workforce and build employee morale, getting your management team behind the idea of communicating often and consistently throughout the year, using different communication vehicles, and providing total compensation statements can foster good will and improved productivity among your employees, which ultimately leads to a happier workforce and increased employee retention.



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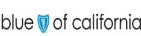





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SCENE



1 Staff from St. Paul's Towers visited the LeadingAge California office in January for a tour and overview of the Association. We enjoyed having them!

2 LeadingAge California President and CEO Jeanee Parker Martin chats with California Governor Gavin Newsom at his inauguration in January.

3 Photographer Susan Demarais received an Honorable Mention in Eskaton's "Age is Beautiful" photo contest.

4 The 2019 EMERGE Class met for Session III in the program, held at Moldaw Residences in Palo Alto.

5 Holiday region meeting – pictured (L-R): Cindy Scheublein, Bethany Home; Adam Hill, Eskaton; Penny Mallette, O'Connor Woods





2019 VIEW FROM THE CAPITOL

By Eric Dowdy, Chief Operating Officer, LeadingAge California

Forecasting the legislative year in early January is a lot like predicting the weather for the year; we know there is a storm coming but its intensity and duration are entirely unknown. This sense of ambiguity is even more palpable when contemplating how a new Governor and his administration will approach policy making.

Former Governor Brown was somewhat predictable particularly on his views regarding costs to the state for

any new or expanded programs. Brown also appeared to harbor a great antipathy toward many senior safety net services.

This is why we feel a great sense of hope for the incoming administration. In his nomination acceptance speech, Governor-Elect Newsom spoke of developing a Master Plan on Aging and appears fully knowledgeable of the demographic changes facing our state. We have new

leadership in the Legislature as well. Long-time allies and advocates as well as new figures in Sacramento promise to bring new attention to the needs of seniors in our state.

LeadingAge California is on the forefront of these discussions and will sponsor legislation this session that advances our policy agenda. We have a brand new three-year strategic plan that lays out a bold new direction for the association and will help us to address some of the most vexing challenges for our members, including addressing a chronic workforce shortage and the underfunding for affordable senior housing.

We are excited to add Former San Francisco Mayor and Assembly Speaker Willie Brown to our lineup of dynamic speakers at this March's RISE Conference. We hope you will join us in Sacramento for this important event. With all the changes in Sacramento this year, you will definitely want to participate in our Capitol Visits and get to know the new administration.

Our new "Age on. Rage On.™" campaign promises to elevate our call in Sacramento to construct a viable

financing system for long-term services and supports while also calling attention to the acute workforce crisis in the aging services sector.

LeadingAge California continues to be the trusted voice for aging in our state. Our association is growing and we continue to add depth to the membership with new provider members, business partners and an exciting new partnership with Lyft.

We hope you will join us in our work. Follow us on Facebook and on Twitter. Respond to our Legislative Action Alerts and participate in region and committee meetings. We are stronger together!



Questions?

Contact Eric Dowdy,
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It's Only Personal:

Insights from Employees in the Aging Services Field

In 2018, LeadingAge California, in partnership with Vital Research, LLC, created a Workforce Survey for LeadingAge California members to find out what brought them to the senior care field.

We sat down with Vital Research President Harold Urman to discuss the findings and how trust, communication and recognition are the linchpin of the relationship between employer and employees.



Harold, since starting Vital Research in 1982, you've leveraged your findings and research to provide insight to different clients.

What can you tell us about the impact an employee feedback survey can make? Why are they necessary?

It's important to hear the voice of staff members who can offer their honest opinions and beliefs about the culture of an organization, the work environment, their satisfaction, and their level of engagement. It is an opportunity to learn directly from staff what is working well and where opportunities for improvement exist.

As much as upper management believes that employees are open and honest with them, it's rarely the case that employees will express issues and concerns they have directly to management.

What would you say is the key component to a successful employee survey?

First, you must have buy-in from everyone in the organization that a survey is a valuable way to gather feedback. Second, you must communicate the importance and value of the survey in advance to staff. Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity are critical. Third, if possible, no one from the organization should be involved in the distribution and collection of the survey. Finally, you must communicate the results back to staff and inform them of where you are doing well, identify opportunities for improvement and action plans to address any areas of concern.

What were some of the findings the LeadingAge California Workforce Survey revealed?

In the Workforce Survey we recently conducted for LeadingAge California, we asked the question, "Have you ever thought about leaving this organization?" Nearly half of all employees said they had thought about leaving. We then followed up with, "What are some of the things that would have to happen for you to consider leaving?" We found that non-exempt employees tended to answer in more concrete ways, such as being disrespected by managers, poor communication, issues with co-workers, and disrespect towards residents as factors that would lead them to consider leaving their job.

But when analyzing the responses from exempt employees, their reasons for leaving tended to be a little less concrete and more cultural. This group indicated that changes in leadership or supervisor, unclear definitions of roles and responsibilities and feeling like they didn't have a voice in the organization could cause them to want to leave.

We also asked employees about their loyalty using the Net Promoter Score (NPS). The NPS is a single question that asks employees to rate how likely they would be to recommend an organization to a friend, family member or colleague. The rating scale ranges from 0 to 10 with a rating of zero equaling "not at all likely" to 10 equaling "extremely likely." Employees who give a rating of 9 or 10 are considered promoters and they are loyal and enthusiastic cheerleaders for the organization. A rating of six or less is considered a detractor. Detractors are unhappy customers and account for more than 80 percent of negative word-of-mouth. They often have high rates of defection and their bad attitudes discourage and demotivate employees. In the LeadingAge CA Workforce Survey we learned that 1 in 4 non-exempt employees (25 percent) were detractors compared to only 7 percent of exempt and 10 percent of managers and supervisors.

In the Workforce Survey, we also asked people why they went into this field in the first place, and more often than not, non-exempt employees would say, 'I wanted to help people,' or 'I've always had the heart for the elderly.' So you can see that this population that is providing direct care most of the time, such as CNAs, see this as their calling or as their direction in life. So what often causes line staff to leave isn't the opportunity for more money elsewhere. When you feel this passionate about wanting to help people, money is not going to make the difference. I think lack of respect for their job, not recognizing the work that they do, and the *hard* work they do, plays a stronger role in someone's decision to leave. People don't leave the organization, they leave their supervisor.

What should employers keep in mind to alleviate some of these issues as we head into the new year?

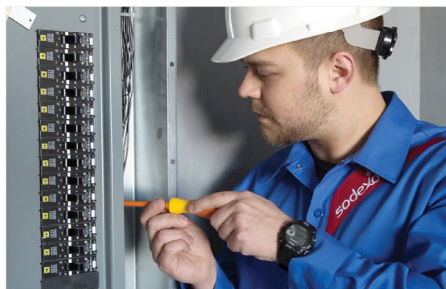
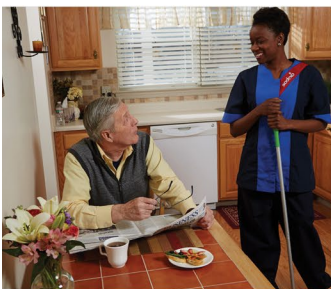
We've been looking at employee satisfaction and engagement in aging services for close to 20 years. And I have to say, that the issues being presented today are not that different from the issues that we saw back in the early 2000s. In the work that I do in just consumer satisfaction, all my years of experience have led me to believe that it's only personal. It's all based on relationships, on treating people the way you would want to be treated. Trust. Respect. Being open, transparent, trustworthy, and offering honest communication will result in a satisfied and engaged workforce that will remain in your organization for the right reasons.



For more information visit:

www.leadingageca.org/workforce-survey

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