

# People Matters

Issue 11, October 2005

Welcome to our October People Matters. This month we focus on some of the difficulties of employing people of different ages (or generations).

The November issue will look at the fast approaching 'silly season' and how to protect your business from a sexual harassment claim.

## Mental Health Policy

As identified in our April issue the OH&S legislation has been broadened to include psychological health. This means your employees need to be protected from issues such as work related stress and work place bullying.

Under the legislation any person who manages, owns or controls the workplace is responsible for eliminating or reducing risks.

This means having a combination of policies and training but also managing to those policies.

Mental health issues in the workplace are still not well understood with a stigma often attached to sufferers of mental health conditions. This can be detrimental not only to their own well-being, but also to their performance on the job.

We are currently developing a Mental Health Policy. If you have any enquiries about mental health issues at work, or about developing a Mental Health Policy for your organisation, don't hesitate to contact Carolyn or Laura.

Do you have a question you would like answered? Let us know - your suggestions for topics are welcome.

## Generation Y

Creating an environment where people of different ages work together effectively is often a challenge. There is a lot of discussion currently about how to manage and retain 'Gen Y' workers.

There are around 4.5 million 'Gen Y's' in the Australian population, and they will have an average of 29 jobs in 5 industries over their lifetime.

This presents a challenge to managers who worry about retention, and older staff who place a higher value on loyalty and, in many cases, time served. Only 21% of organisations think they are managing this challenge well.

For managers, it is important to create a harmonious environment – particularly in a mixed-age workplace. An effective means of doing this is communication - open and often.

To get the most out of your Gen Y's, challenge them, set clear expectations, listen to their input and provide regular feedback.

As they are unlikely to stay with you forever ensure that their knowledge doesn't leave with them. Keeping in touch after they leave may also mean they come back later – if they see your past treatment of them as fair, and your current proposition fits their interest, they can be happy to return.

If someone else in your business would be interested in People Matters let us know and we will forward a copy to them.