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According to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), there are currently 20 million people aged 50 and over in the UK and this figure is set to reach 27 million by 2030.

Can older workers help tackle skills shortages?

Age discrimination legislation to ensure that older workers are not discriminated against in the workplace, is due to come in force in 2006. Whilst the legislation applies to all age groups, organisations should not discriminate in favour of older workers, but the reality is that the working population is getting older.

Organisations must challenge their own stereotypical views of older workers and start to make the changes that will be required to their recruitment policies. The learning and development needs should also be assessed and adjusted to start appealing to the over 40's.

Organisations may find that the Customer Services areas would benefit from employing older workers, as they bring with them a genuine feel for the customer and have a broad cross-section of life experiences that younger workers have not yet acquired. They are perhaps more flexible to working shift patterns as they have different family or caring responsibilities than those of younger workers.

You can download the ACAS leaflet Employing Older Workers, free of charge from www.ecacas.co.uk



How To Retain the Best Agents

1. Pre-Start Date: Keep up communication and help staff get excited about joining you.
2. Day One: Agents will be nervous and excited about starting their new job and seeking reassurance, so look after them. Help them to go home feeling welcomed and enthused.
3. Induction: Assign a buddy to new members to help them settle in.
4. Develop their skills: invest time in coaching and show them that they are valued.

BE HONEST

When was the last time really negotiated for a better price?

Many people wrongly assume that nothing is negotiable unless the other party indicates that this is the case, a more realistic view is that everything is negotiable.

The complexity of the negotiating process will vary according to the size and complexity of the proposed deal, as well as the attitudes adopted by the parties involved. Each approach needs to be tailored to suit the needs of each particular negotiation and the time and effort you put in should reflect the potential benefit that can be gained from them.

Let's get back basics and take a look at the four most common phases of negotiation.

The price you pay doesn't always have to be what's printed on the ticket

On your last purchase, what did you really do?

- *Just happily paid the price that was on the ticket – it was on special offer already!*
- *Haggled with the salesperson and then quickly accept the discount that was offered - just in case they changed their minds*
- *Gathered information and then made a negotiation plan to follow*

Preparation, this involves information gathering, knowing the state of the market, being aware of the supply and demand status and being aware of current discounts and special offers.

Opening, this part of the negotiation involves both parties presenting their starting positions to one another. This phase represent the single most important opportunity to influence the other side.

In the **Bargaining** phase your aim is to narrow the initial gap between the two positions and to

persuade the other side that your case is so strong that they must accept less than they had planned. In order to do this you must use clearly thought out, planned and logical debate.

The **Closing** phase of the negotiation represents the opportunity to capitalise on all the work done in the earlier phases. The work that you have done in preparation phase combined with the all of the information you have gained since should guide you in the closing phase

COFFEE BREAK WORKSHOP TELEPHONE TECHNIQUES



- ✧ Be prepared for every call you make. It really does make a difference.
- ✧ Use your customers' name often in conversation. Make them feel important.
- ✧ Be positive and upbeat when speaking with customers.
- ✧ Search for new ways to improve your own performance.
- ✧ Take a customer's complaint seriously. Respond with speed and efficiency.
- ✧ Use empathy and let the customer know you care.
- ✧ Confidence, or the lack of it, is conveyed to customers through our speech and attitude.
- ✧ Avoid condescension, don't ask, "Do you understand?" use "Is there anything I should go over again?"