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Re Issues Specific to workers

over 45 YEARS OF AGE

Seeking employment

ESTABLISHING A BUSINESS

FOLLOWING UNEMPLOYMENT

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Dear Sir, Madam

Though I see the terms of the specific committee relate to all workers over 45, my particular submission will refer to men over 45 and too my own particular experience which encompassed a number of experiences I will relate.

I must congratulate the minister firstly for looking at the matter which I believe is more than just an issue of the committee's terms of references but, philosophical, historical and legislative and political.

To look at this issue just in respect to work place structural and economical change is, in my opinion blatantly wrong. It is certainly true that rapid technology aided by organisations bent on trimming those staff who aren't multi functional has mainly impacted on those over 45.

This has been true of government and many multi-corporations. The amalgamation of large companies, floats of government corporations and the almost universal disintegration of middle management has been aided by government services being gradually sold off or contracted out. I suppose the late 1980's would have been about the peak of it where men in particular were made redundant in their thousands from public services, local councils and all types of service industries. Many were managers, tradesmen with long term skills but probably lacking the types of business and computer skills coming into high demand.

apart from skilled workers were also dealing with philosophical and political changes in the workplace such as discrimination procedures equal opportunity and legislation & help for women to help break the traditional male domination of management and board representation of government departments and large corporations. This type of legislation which seems to give an advantage of women over men in the guise of preference over competition in some cases, is open to conjecture, where the market place had previously set its own agendas. In other words women or later women and the workplace would have necessarily found each other because of a needs basis.

My own situation developed much along the basis of political change and the structural elements of it. I worked in a prison and everyone was made redundant regardless of skills seniority or anything else. The prison system was made a Commission thus cutting many employees off applying for public service jobs. This was compounded by those taking redundancy not being able to apply for government jobs for 12 months. This was back in 1989 where you were given access to the CES no training and virtually had to start again whatever your skills. I remember vividly the frustration of going to the CES, the lack of training funds and the bias exhibited because of your age being ex public service looking for private enterprise jobs. Didn't make it easier.

many of the problems experienced by the CES at the time was dealing with a surplus of skills not usually seen by them. I used to talk with all sorts of men with high trade and management skills totally frustrated as much by the sudden drop in self esteem by not having a job compounded by too much time on their hands. I often wondered why all these skills were not fed into a central databank. All these people could have been farmed into community organizations, schools anywhere to keep up their skills. Many probably did go to voluntary organizations after months of frustration. All I know is that you see the frustration and hopelessness that develops in those not used to having so much leisure time. I was about 45 when I was given redundancy. I worked as a counsellor. Even though I went and done further university training I never worked full time again.

I think the set up in those days to get these men re employed was hopeless because of the lack of funding available for retraining. Many would have also drifted into other forms of work or business which was a natural transition after failing to find work in their own skills. I suppose the loss of many of their old skills was a tragedy because the bottom line always was where do you go next? The private employment organizations guarded what they had jealously. Today they are trying to address that. I'm not sure though having so many organizations vying for jobs and relying on government money to do it is the best way to develop healthy competition, skills or training. retraining.

Many of the over 45's had little hope in
government exams or computer tests because of
their lack of logical skills and the generation gaps.

many of these groups are threatened by computers
fearing their control and not wanting to be placed in
a competitive box. Quite frankly we seem to be
returning to specialist type cottage craftsmen
in many instances of the pre industrial age.

The building, computer and farming out of services
rather than relearning seems to be the go. I have
grave doubts when the first things corporations do
when the annual profit comes up is to reduce staff

where I last worked it was a disaster where
philosophical banners rather than experience
often determined employment. For some one to do
their job without the correct attitude or who
questioned ^{anything} were often the first to go. One wonders
how did monarchial advocates of belated Question
ponder or ask the reason "why" this or that is happening.
For mine, the loss to Australia during the late 80's
and mine would reveal the advances in technology.
work place agreements above all recognize skill
as a prerequisite for advancement and work conditions
very little passes onto loyalty to the employer these
days. This has probably been the greatest tragedy
for those over 45 who were displaced by a system
that saw the need to replace them with more
up to date skills. So entrepreneurship and how you
sold yourself and fitted in become a more
predominant necessity than loyalty to your job or firm.

I wonder sometimes if perhaps the creation of a part time basis for jobs threatened by multiskilling with a built in component of relearning for those that want to stay employed isn't the answer. This could be sanctioned/funded by government and employers and contracted with those who are interested (chosen) naturally success could mean you return (apply to the employer for full time work. The use of incentives like tax deductions (voluntary work placements could also be induced/encouraged, when you are dealing with people used to full time employment suddenly redundant, you are dealing with lives, which in many cases their employers governments didn't used to think much about. When it happens it affects self esteem, social and family life. The financial effects can often be disastrous, marriages break up, buds effected and then the flow on to government welfare services and agencies.

I believe that governments, particularly in relation to large numbers of redundancies need to be notified (advised by law. Not as a matter of interfering with the process but preparing the way in conjunction with the corporation concerned sometime before it happens. When these things happen suddenly it is usually government services, who will bear the brunt. Though it appears better than when I got made redundant 10 years ago.

If you have the time for preparation for these matters in the long run government services would be stretched at least initially to find positions and take up the slack in other areas. The loss of skills could easily be address^{ed} for those who want to go interstate or elsewhere for short terms. It happened in the depression years and today mobility is often a prerequisite for keeping a job.

I though I believe government agencies already do this through employment agencies to some extent. Employment agencies would need to be contracted by employers/government to handle large numbers of redundancies. My experience of it was secrecy, union bitterness and preference of some over others for jobs. Better notification to employees, better preparation by the government and the employer to retrain/relocate staff would alleviate many problems. The family of those made redundant should be taken into consideration in decision making where possible. After all they will bear the brunt along with government services of short term decision making.

Inevitably no one can stop change but it can be controlled a lot better than it has in the past. It all boils down to trust, rather than using some sort of across the board notice, though it happens quite regularly. The bottom line is time incurred and how long you are unemployed before being reemployed.

yours sincerely,
John

→ A/S

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whilst it may appear sexist or whatever word
you use. Many men over 45 were used
to management from the top and not in the round
as it is today. It has been my experience that
many younger personell officers many of them
women have very little understanding of
mens issues, particularly older men who have
been in management or have skills that
were previously in demand. If you deal with
people of this age group they should be
seen by people of similar age (men or women)
who understand their generation and the
type of work environment they used to work in.
I dealt with by older people I believe they
might accept the need to look at change
more easily. Many of this group dont
accept readily the implementation of work
practices today accepted by younger people.
Because they were used to life time full
employment against the young today
often accepting anything for employment.

over to you

Sorry I didnt have time to type this