

Tips on Skills Shortages

Develop the Employees You Have

Skills or employee development is a strategy that organizes activities to build the skills and knowledge of workers. Develop the employees you have.

- Start right with an effective orientation program. Follow up with on-the-job training and classroom instruction.
- Allow time for self direct learning. Put employees in control of their own learning. This allows for differences in learning styles and promotes ownership.
- Develop a regular coaching plan. This will improve the quality and quantity of work. A coaching plan offers an opportunity to set and reinforce clear standards. It also serves as follow up to previous coaching and training, allowing you to give positive feedback and constructive criticism.
- Promote from within wherever possible, making sure that the employee you promote has the skills and knowledge or the ability to learn them. This not only rewards good performance, but acts as a retention strategy. If people feel there is a future career opportunity they will stay.
- Increase employees' authority or responsibility within their current position, when they are ready. This also will increase retention.
- Job rotation or cross training builds a stronger team and a bank of resources for future needs.
- Lateral moves increases flexibility and communication among work units and, in small businesses with few opportunities for advancement, helps to retain valuable employees who might otherwise leave.
- Well-designed job aids are a supplement to training and build employee confidence. Also improves the speed and quality of training.

Employees have to buy into the training.

- Communicate - ask for employee input on training and coaching programs
- Make sure learning goals are set and achieved
- Use a variety of teaching methods, including adult learning principles