

# DEMAND FOR GOOD CHOCOLATE REQUIRES GOOD STAFF SURGES

MICHAEL WALSH, WORKFORCE ARCHITECT AND FACILITATOR, ARUSPEX, EMAIL: MICHAEL\_WALSH@ARUSPEX.COM.AU

**The popular press has been engaged with questions raised by an ageing population for the last few years but the impact on your organisation and the confectionery industry may not be that clear.**

Are you asking yourself how this impacts you, how it impacts your business? Some of the serious indicators for your industry were presented at *ConBiz* and published in the November version of the Confectionery eNews. These included the shortages of engineers for the building and design of your plants and manufacturing lines through to the turnover and difficulty in recruiting at the process worker level. At *ConBiz* participants also raised questions about contract labour supply that can easily disappear as labour shortages have become so widespread.

Some of the questions you need to be asking (and developing strategies for answers) are:

- Who is going to be there to work on your shop factory floor five years from now?
- How difficult will it be to staff your retail outlets in the year 2015?
- How can you anticipate changes to your workforce?
- What do you do in terms of retention and redeployment?
- How do I make the confectionery industry workplace an attractive option for new recruits when all of Australian industry will be seducing them?

The level and complexity of the challenge means that these are not issues line managers or human resources can address themselves. You as an executive can take the lead to ensure your organisation takes these resource questions seriously and build a set of strategies to protect and ensure the growth of your business.

The squeeze on the supply of new employees has already begun but watching the rapid decline in the number of workforce entrants means the supply stream is going to get much tighter. Planning and foresight are needed to deal with these contingencies, a plan designed for your geography, your business model and your strategy.

The needs of a marketing and distribution based organisation are markedly different from a major manufacturer, however all organisations

have looming threats to their workforce supply and planning is essential to building the best defence.

To the organisations that I work with I would recommend some first steps, including mapping out the capabilities that your future business will rely on. It is essential for you to list and categorise the roles, jobs and skills that define your success. Determine which roles are strategically critical and which are currently difficult to recruit. It is critical to determine where the knowledge of how to get the job done stored? What if she leaves?

From a planning point of view it comes down to looking at critical skill and labour resources for your operations to continue to succeed. With highly skilled positions, the issues include the lead time to train staff in the capabilities necessary for your operations. With all organisations there are the ongoing

efforts to recruit and retain good staff in a potentially very tight labour market. Then you would need to watch your own organisation's demographics, their plans including retirement and trends in length of service of your current staff. Your business does not exist in a vacuum and clearly workforce needs are impacted directly by the business and

consumer environments that they exist within.

All successful businesses rely on strategy. Workforce planning is a key element of this strategy and in the

current environment it is crucial to an organisation's future health.

CMA members that are interested in learning more about building a Strategic Workforce Planning framework should visit Aruspex's website at [www.aruspex.com.au](http://www.aruspex.com.au) or contact Michael Walsh, email [michael\\_walsh@aruspex.com.au](mailto:michael_walsh@aruspex.com.au) or telephone 0438 214 641. ❖

