

Exemplar Employer Case Study

Helping older workers through greater flexibility

Lauren, Recruitment Manager,
Caremark

Image Credits: Darren Cool Images

Caremark is an established care provider offering personal support and home help across the UK. The franchise has two offices delivering services along the West Sussex coast. We sat down with Lauren Demetriou, Owner and Recruitment Manager for Caremark Worthing and Chichester, to discuss the importance of age neutrality in the care sector.

Our ageing population means employees can reasonably expect to be working up to and beyond traditional retirement age – so how can employers benefit from this growing pool of experienced workers?

Lauren told us, 'there was a stage when we were specifically targeting our job adverts at people of retirement age...' people who 'might not be in full-time work anymore, but feel they

have a lot to contribute.' Mature workers, she continued 'tend to be flexible and can have invaluable life experience.'

Flexibility within the care sector is a great strength. Lauren explained, 'staff can work as much or as little as they want... carers tell us what they are able to do, and we book work based on that'. This adaptable approach works particularly well for one staff member in her 70s who told us 'I am very part-time and that suits me', but in return, 'you have to be flexible too – if someone is ill, I'll do my best to fill in'.

A flexible team isn't the only benefit of Caremark's age diverse workforce. Lauren keenly highlighted the influence that life experience brings to the job, saying 'carers who are a bit older bring a certain perspective on life'. Caremark employees agree – one carer shared that having an affinity with the older generation has helped them to transition to a new later-life career within the sector.



Employing mature workers doesn't only benefit businesses; often the lives of staff are enriched by working in later life. There are many reasons why people continue to work or return to work post-retirement. One Caremark team member told us:

'As you get older, you don't necessarily want a full-time job. You want to do something that gives back to society or people. You want to feel that you're working for a company that cares for the client and worker.'

What advice would Caremark give to employers who are keen to encourage age diversity?



"Don't disregard anyone based on age; interview candidates, because they often have amazing stories and reasons why they want to work."

"Keep job adverts clear and to the point. Advertise roles without including too much detail, making them open to all."

- Lauren Demetriou

78% older workers would like more flexible hours, and **73%** want to see more part-time positions offered
(Ageing Society Grand Challenge: Saga poll on behalf of BEIS, 2018.)



Best Practice Case Study

Nurture your staff, nurture your business

David, Commercial Manager, ETI

Image Credits: Darren Cool Images

Electronic Temperature Instruments Ltd. (ETI) is an award-winning digital thermometer manufacturer based in Worthing. Founded in 1983 by Miriam and Peter Webb, ETI has grown significantly but has always maintained the values of a family-run business. The company now has around 190 staff from 16 year old apprentices to established team members in their 70s. We wanted to find out more about how the company looks after its age-diverse workforce.

Research by Forbes suggests that businesses that have diverse and inclusive workforces are generally more productive, and that decision making improves as diversity increases. This said, it is clear why companies like ETI work hard to attract and retain a broad range of staff.

Supporting employees of all ages is important for retaining experienced and valued members of the workforce.



This is something that ETI has always done well. Staff are able to work flexible hours, which David describes as a, *very useful aspect that lets people have more control over their lives.*

Flexible working, in particular for older workers, empowers staff to incorporate changes in their lives, such as taking on caring responsibilities, or spending time with extended family.

David Carter, Commercial Manager, has been with ETI for 24 years, and is the oldest member of staff. He believes one factor that makes ETI such a great workplace is the family ethos that has remained at the heart of the business through its journey.

David told us, *'When I joined the company, we were 50 strong. The family feel is still here, even with 190 people, and that's very important.'*

ETI works hard to treat all members of staff as individuals. Regular newsletters, department meetings and a HR team trained in mental health, give workers the opportunity to be heard and to feel valued.

In recent years, the business has been able to offer phased retirement to David. As retirement age approached, the management team recognised that phased retirement could bring many benefits to both David and ETI. These included the retention of a highly-valued and experienced team member, and the transfer of knowledge to younger workers.



The company recruited to the managerial position that David was previously in, allowing him to take on the new role of Commercial Manager. David said,

'The position is really interesting because it covers the company as a whole! He continues 'it has allowed me to reduce my hours, and to be flexible with that over time.'

Identifying new opportunities for employees considering retirement or a career change, can enable experienced staff to stay in the workplace for longer. ETI recognise that in nurturing their staff, they nurture their business.

Companies with more diverse management teams have 19% higher revenue due to innovation.

(Forbes, Global Diversity and Inclusion: Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce 2017)



Best Practice Case Study

Mentoring – the value of experience

Mentors at Nordell Ltd.

Image Credits: Darren Cool Images

Nordell is a Worthing based plastic engineering manufacturer that has been in business for over 50 years. With so much expertise and experience behind them, and faced with growing skills gaps, Nordell established a mentorship scheme to pass on knowledge. We spoke to Nordell about this programme and the many benefits that it's bringing to the business and employees.

Managing Director, Paul Mason, told us, 'from an engineering perspective, we've identified the weakness in the UK skills gap. Whilst we can't make it disappear, we can do our bit towards removing that gap in the future.'

Nordell's workforce is made up of a diverse range of staff, from apprentices to retired engineers who have returned to the workplace. In retaining experienced workers, Nordell have found their own method of upskilling staff, through the process of mentoring.

How does mentoring work?



Me and the apprentice will work on a job together; you teach by showing them and then observing what they do. You've got to be frank – if you think they are doing it wrong, you have to tell them.

Commitment to the mentoring role is also hugely important, *'I'm here every day. You should be on site for anything you're responsible for, even if it's only an hour a day.'*

Paul continued, 'we started mentoring to improve the business, but didn't realise at the time how it joins together the generations.'

Nordell have a number of staff who act as mentors including John Overton. After running his own successful business for 20 years, John decided it was time to move on. Not yet ready to retire, he was able to join Nordell's tool room where he supports a number of apprentices. John told us, 'one of the purposes of me coming here was to pass on my experience, and whatever else I can help with, to bring the guys in the tool room up to speed.'

John found his new role as mentor has suited him perfectly, 'it was coming into the unknown; I haven't worked in a large company for around 30 years. It was a big change, but I found it very rewarding.'

The technical nature of Nordell's work means having mentors in place across a variety of departments is great for developing the business. Another mentor with 40 years' technical experience told us, 'I had been retired for 8 or 9 years and didn't know whether I wanted to do it initially, but it's probably one of the best things I've ever done.'



The benefits for both mentors and the business are clear. In closing, MD Paul told us, 'I think the scheme makes staff feel satisfied.' He says,

'Job satisfaction is important – do we feel we are actually learning and achieving something? Mentors feel like they are making a difference to the young people they work with and to the business.'

71% of Fortune 500 companies have mentoring programmes.



(Centre for Workplace Leadership, 2016).

Exemplar employer case study

All-age training and career development

Sushma, OD Consultant, WSCC

Image Credits: Darren Cool Images

Recent figures show that workers aged 65 and over will account for more than ½ of UK employment growth over the next ten years. As more of us will stay in the workplace for longer, it is important that employers consider how they can offer fruitful and meaningful careers to older workers. West Sussex County Council has been trialling a programme of Midlife Career Reviews, offering staff access to career advice and support. Leading the way on this work is Sushma Cheesbrough, Organisational Development Consultant.

The council introduced Midlife Career Reviews following an increase in employee requests for career coaching. This led Sushma to contact the Education Development Trust (EDT), a not-for-profit who provide employability and careers services. They were able to provide coaching as a pilot programme for nominated staff members.

The programme offered objective support to employees, with the sessions run by the EDT on a one to one basis. The conversations were kept open and were led by the employee. Sushma told us that the participants selected to take part, 'had established themselves in their career, and felt that they had come to a crossroads.'

The participants 'really welcomed the confidential service where they could just talk'. Whilst there were limited spaces on this pilot, the scheme has revealed an appetite for career coaching at any stage and level in a career.

“As more of us live longer, we need to act earlier in life to enable us to stay healthier, work for longer, and save more if we are to enjoy our later lives. People in mid-life could benefit from better access to information and advice to plan and prepare for their later lives”.

Patrick Thomson,
Senior Programme Manager,
Centre for Ageing Better



Workers aged 65 and older

will be responsible for more than ½ of all UK employment growth over the next 10 years, and almost 2/3 employment growth by 2060¹



The workplace is much more complicated and flexible than ever before. Careers are no longer linear, and so making advice and guidance available to older employees can bring opportunities to consider alternative pathways in the workplace. Sushma advises, 'give staff the opportunity to have a lattice career; the ability to flex and go sideways.'

An open discussion about an individual's plans for later working life can be a great way of developing and retaining experienced staff.

¹ Rest Less analysis of the seasonally adjusted ONS employment, unemployment and economic inactivity figures, 2019.