

THE DEMOGRAPHICS AND THE EFFECT ON STRATEGIC RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ~ AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ~

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In the new economy, competition is global, capital is abundant, ideas are developed quickly and cheaply and people are willing to change jobs often. In that kind of environment all that matters is talent. Talent wins –Ed Michaels McKinsey & Co¹)

Strategic recruitment isn't just playing with the numbers of staff hiring and wastage rates and reading resumes. The reality is if you want to develop a strategic recruitment strategy you have to go back to some of the basics of Human Resource Management.

The University of Adelaide is one of Australia's leading universities and in recent years we have become very much aware that if we want to maintain our position, we need to pay closer attention to the way we not only attract but also how we retain staff.

One of the main reasons for this is quite simply- demographics. Australia, like much of the world, has an ageing workforce. Compounding the issue for my university is the fact that within our country, university academics are the oldest employment group outside of farmers.

Figure 1 overlays the age structure of Australia's academic workforce with that of the total Australian workforce and three things are striking:

- The academic workforce is older than the total workforce.
- It is concentrated in a few age groups in a pattern known by demographers as age heaping.
- Males outnumber females, especially in the older age groups.

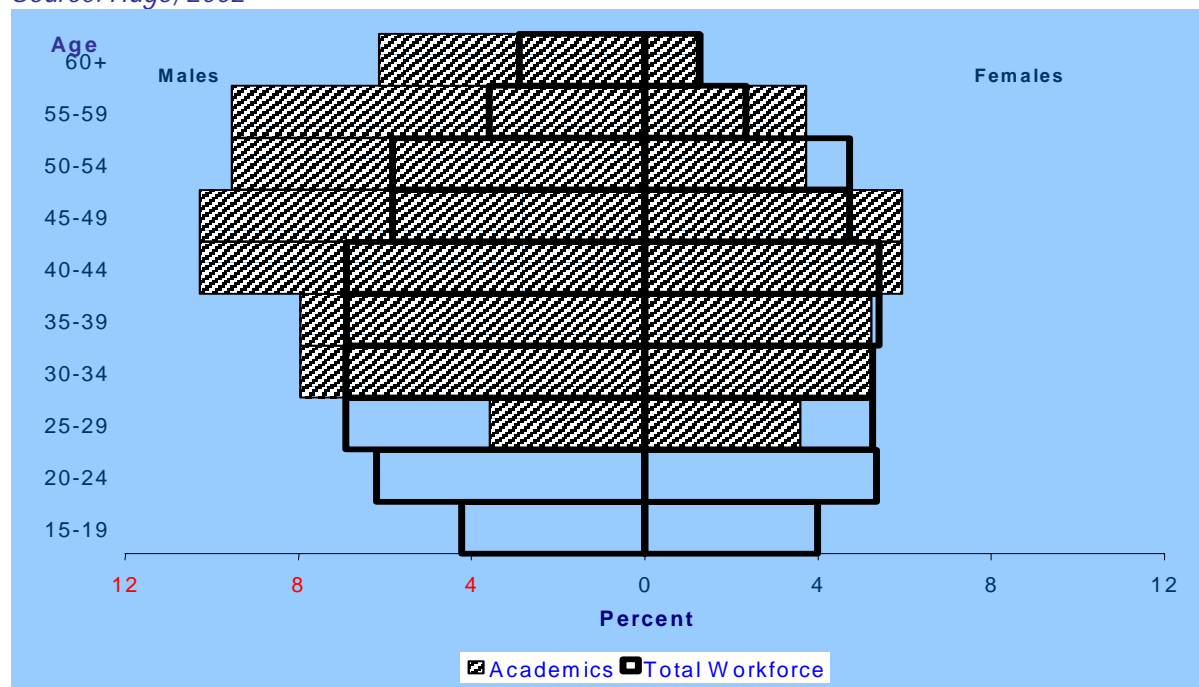
The older age structure is a function of the fact that Australian universities underwent massive growth of academic staff in the 1960s and 1970s due to the passage of the large post-war baby-boom cohorts through the late teens and early twenties age groups over that period.

¹ Michaels, E., as reported by Fishman, C., in The War for Talent, Fastcompany Newsletter #16.

However, not only is the age structure of the academic workforce certainly old, but it has become older over the last few years.

Figure 1: Age-Sex Structure of Total Academic Staff and the Total Australian Workforce, 2000

Source: Hugo, 2002



The University of Adelaide is typical of Australian universities in that its academic workforce has a mature age structure. Table 1 shows that the Academic Staff in 2000 had a median age of 47.1 and more than a third of the staff were aged 50 and over.

Table 1: Selected Australian Universities: Age Distribution, 2000

Source Hugo

	Percent Aged Less Than 40	Percent Aged 50 and Over	Median Age
Curtin University of Technology	27.2	38.9	46.7
Edith Cowan University	17.8	45.1	48.7
Monash University	38.3	30.5	43.8
Murdoch University	30.3	34.4	45.6
Australian National University	31.4	35.6	45.6
University of Adelaide	29.7	38.2	47.1
University of Melbourne	38.1	29.5	43.7
University of NSW	30.8	35.7	48.7
University of Queensland	39.8	29.7	43.4
University of Sydney	31.1	38.0	46.1
University of WA	35.9	30.2	44.2

However, as many of you would know, the academic labour pool draws from a global market and like many Australian universities, we recruit staff from overseas. When we look at global higher education figures, the situation gets worse.

The proportion of academics aged 55 and over is rising in all the developed English-speaking countries. In Australia in 2002 it was 36 per cent, in Canada 30 per cent, in New Zealand 35 per cent and in the United States 30 per cent. The UK is slightly lower.²

A prediction from Roderick Floud, President of Universities UK, is that in the next decade an estimated 230,000 new academic staff will need to be recruited in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom (MacLeod 2002). Most of these would be in the American universities that employ 85 per cent of the 1.1 million academics in the developed English speaking countries.³

These figures will, of course, be in addition to the new jobs that are expected to be created across the sector as the number of students increase.

Now some of you may be sitting back at this stage saying “well this is all *academic* and what has it got to do with us?” The truth is that the effects of ageing are a worldwide phenomenon that will have a huge impact not only on all of our economies but also in our individual roles of procurers of human talent for our respective organisations.

In 15 years there will be 155,000 fewer Americans in the 35 to 45 year old age group. At the same time the US economy is likely to grow at a rate of 3-4% per year. So over the period the demand for bright talented 35-45 year olds will increase by 255,000 at a time when supply will be going down by 15%.

Charles Fishman⁴

It is clear that the next few decades will see an increase in the demand for scientists, technologists and academics in More Developed Countries (MDCs). However, this is occurring at a time when:

- (a) There is an increasing realisation that increasing the quantity of national human resources is absolutely crucial for improvements in national prosperity.
- (b) Retirements will reach unprecedentedly high levels as the baby boom generation begins to enter their 60s.
- (c) New entrants to the academic and scientific workforces are at low levels due to reductions in fertility and students being diverted into non-research/academic careers.

This is not only the case in MDCs but also in many Less Developed Countries (LDCs) where the added problem of brain drain has had an impact. Accordingly, many countries will face challenges with respect to recruiting high-level professional and scientific staff over the next few decades. In the first instance this paper explores the demography behind these challenges firstly by reviewing impending demographic change in a cross-section of countries.

² Report on the higher education workforce 2005 published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

³ Keynote speech by Professor Roderick Floud to UK annual conference at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. September 12, 2002, as reported by Donald Macleod in The Guardian, 17 Sept 2002.

⁴ Fishman, C., The War for Talent Fastcompany Newsletter #16.

THE AGEING POPULATION

Every country in the world is ageing in the sense that the proportion of its population aged 65 years and above is anticipated to increase over the next three decades (United Nations, 2003). Table 2 shows that in MDCs the number of persons aged 60+ already outnumbers those aged less than 15 and will be double that number in 2050. However, Table 2 also indicates that in LDCs the aged population is increasing faster than the youth population so that by 2050 they will be more or less equal in number. Table 3 shows that in all areas of the world the aged population will not only grow faster than the number of children but also than the number in the workforce ages.

Table 2: Changes in Proportion of Population Aged Less Than 15 and 60+, 1950-2050
Source: United Nations, 2003, 16-17

	Percent Aged 0-14			Percent Aged 60+		
	1950	2000	2050	1950	2000	2050
World	34	30	20	8	10	21
MDCs	27	18	16	12	19	32
LDCs	38	33	21	6	8	20

Table 3: Average Annual Growth Rates of the Total Population and the Population in Broad Age Groups, by Major Area, 2000-2050 (Medium Variant) (Percentage)
Source: United Nations, 2003

Major Area	Age Group				Total Population
	0-14	15-59	60+	80+	
World	-0.04	0.72	2.29	3.39	0.77
More developed regions	-0.26	-0.32	1.06	2.24	0.04
Less developed regions	-0.01	0.92	2.79	4.20	0.91
Least developed countries	0.99	2.19	3.24	3.90	1.84
Africa	0.78	1.98	3.03	3.85	1.64
Asia	-0.28	0.63	2.61	4.06	0.70
Latin America and the Caribbean	-0.36	0.70	2.98	4.09	0.78
Europe	-0.62	-0.71	0.81	2.08	-0.28
North America	0.30	0.49	1.65	2.39	0.70
Oceania	0.06	0.66	2.02	2.83	0.78

It is useful to examine the outlook for a range of different countries with respect to ageing. Table 4 shows a range of countries and the proportions of their population aged 65 years and over. In the developed nations, 2050 will see over a quarter of the population aged 65+ while in LDCs the current levels previously in MDCs will apply in 2050. All nations are going to experience an ageing of their population and it is in LDCs that the highest rates of growth of the aged population will occur.

Table 4: Selected Countries: Percent of Population Aged 65+, 1995, 2000 and Projected 2050

Source: United Nations, 2004

Country	1995	2000	2050
PNG	2.4	2.3	7.9
India	4.5	4.9	14.8
Malaysia	3.9	4.1	16.1
Indonesia	4.3	4.9	17.4
China	6.1	6.8	23.6
New Zealand	11.7	11.9	23.6
USA	12.4	12.3	20.6
Canada	12.0	12.6	25.6
Sweden	17.5	17.3	24.7
UK	15.9	15.9	23.2
Australia	11.5	12.1	23.8
Switzerland	14.5	15.0	27.7
Netherlands	13.2	13.6	25.4
Japan	14.6	17.2	35.9
Greece	15.2	16.8	30.2
Italy	16.6	18.2	35.5
Hong Kong	9.7	10.7	29.6
Afghanistan	2.8	2.7	4.0
Pakistan	3.5	3.7	10.2

In the following section the changes in the age distribution of a number of countries over the 2000-2020 period will be examined. It is important to point out that the trends depicted are almost certainly likely to occur. This is particularly true of the ageing trend since the aged population of 2020 has already been born – they are just not all aged yet. We can readily predict the numbers who will move into the older ages from examining the current number of people aged in their 40s and 50s in the countries.

Figure 2 depicts the age structure of several developed countries in 2000 and the anticipated structure in 2020. It can be readily seen that there is a substantial redistribution likely to occur between the working age and older age groups over the next twenty years. The pattern is especially marked in Hong Kong where fertility is low and there is little net immigration. Also, in South Africa the fertility differences between the three main groups in the population have resulted in a younger age structure than the other countries in Figure 2. Nevertheless, it is clear that significant ageing will occur in South Africa.

Figure 3 depicts the likely shifts in the age structure in the USA. Note the sharp reduction in the 35 to 45 year old age group mentioned in the quote from Charles Fisherman previously.

Figure 2: Age-Sex Composition of the Population of Australia, Canada, United Kingdom, Hong Kong, South Africa and New Zealand, 2000 and Projected 2020

Source: *United Nations, 2003*

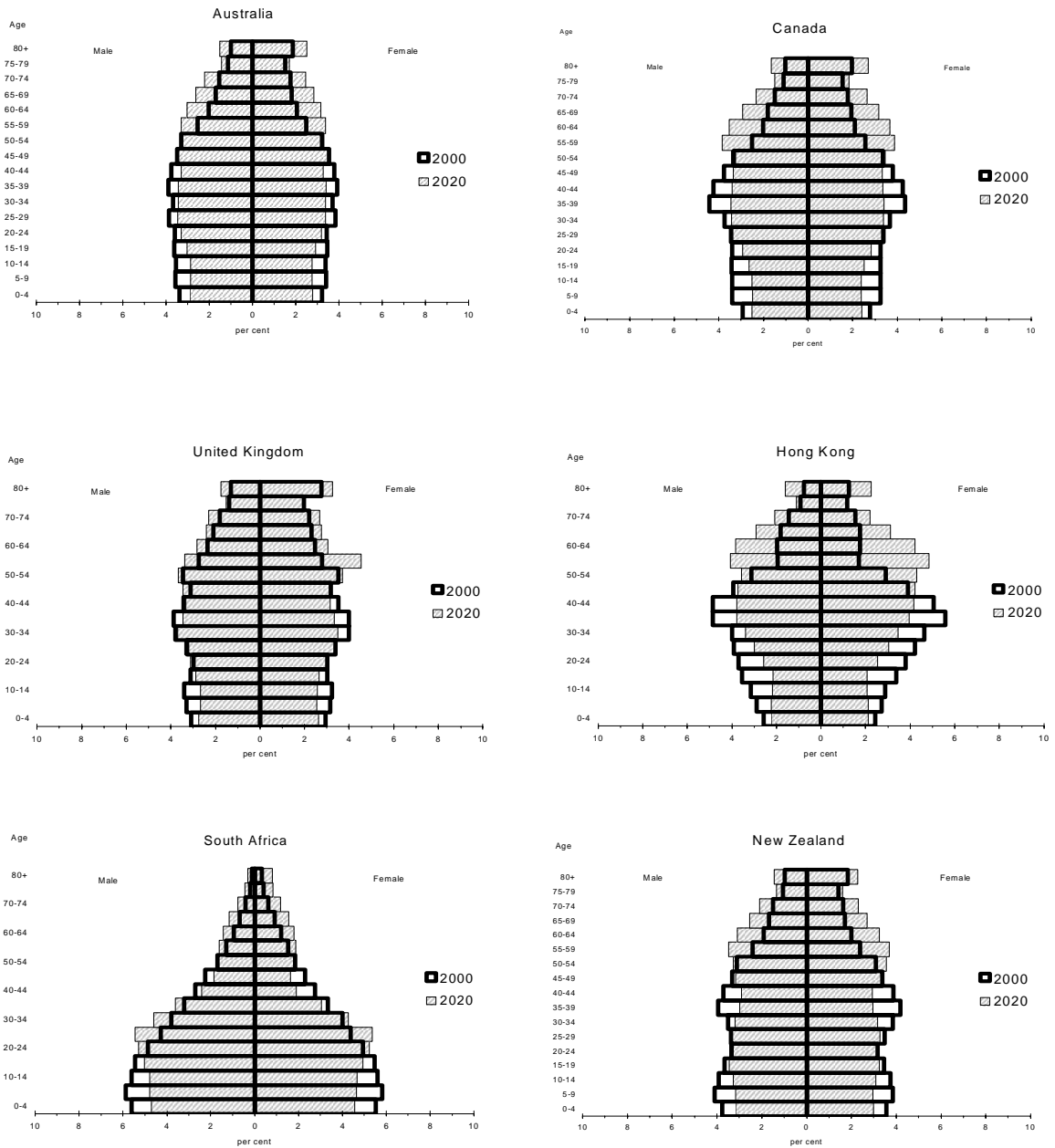
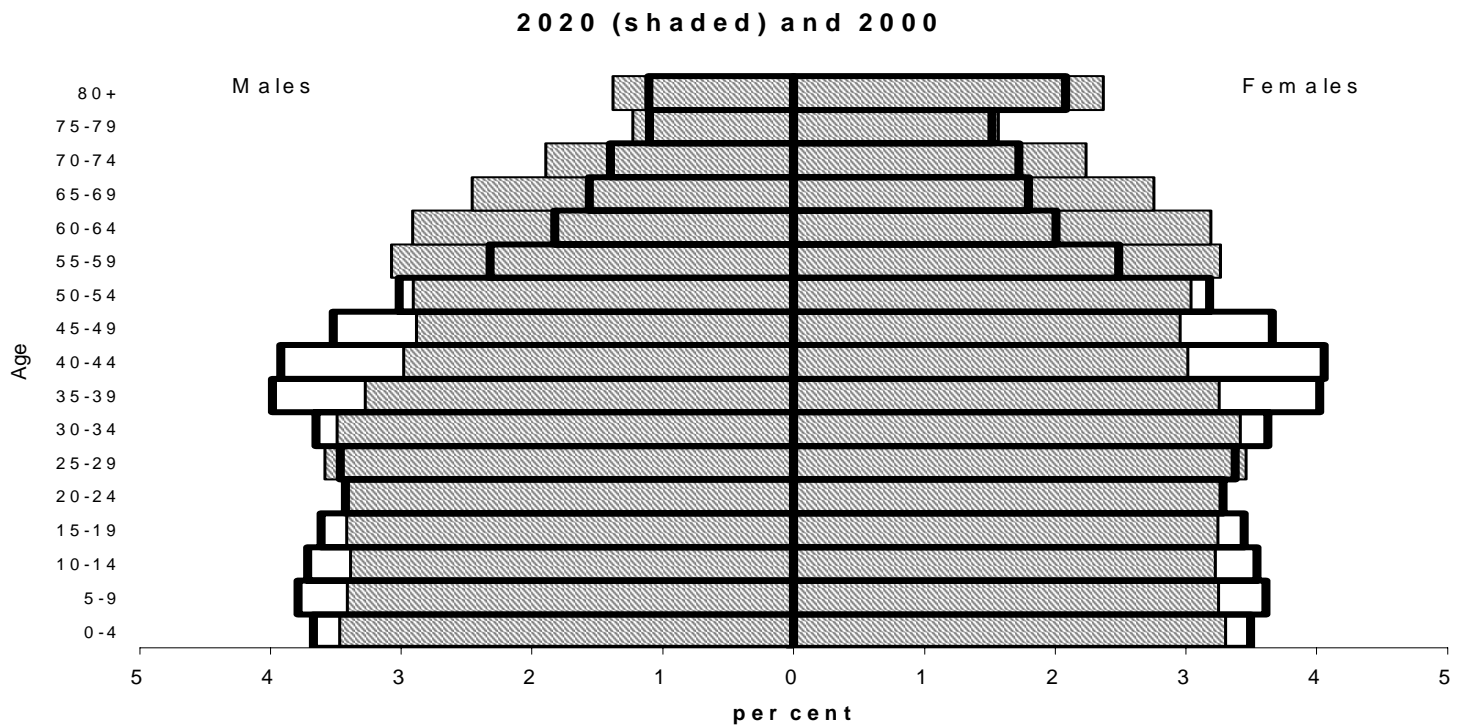


Figure 3: Age-Sex Composition of the Population of United States of America 2000 and Projected 2020

Source: United Nations, 2003



In Figure 4 China's profile clearly shows a declining birth rate and ageing population.

Figure 4: Age-Sex Composition of the Population of China 2000 and Projected 2020
Source: United Nations, 2003

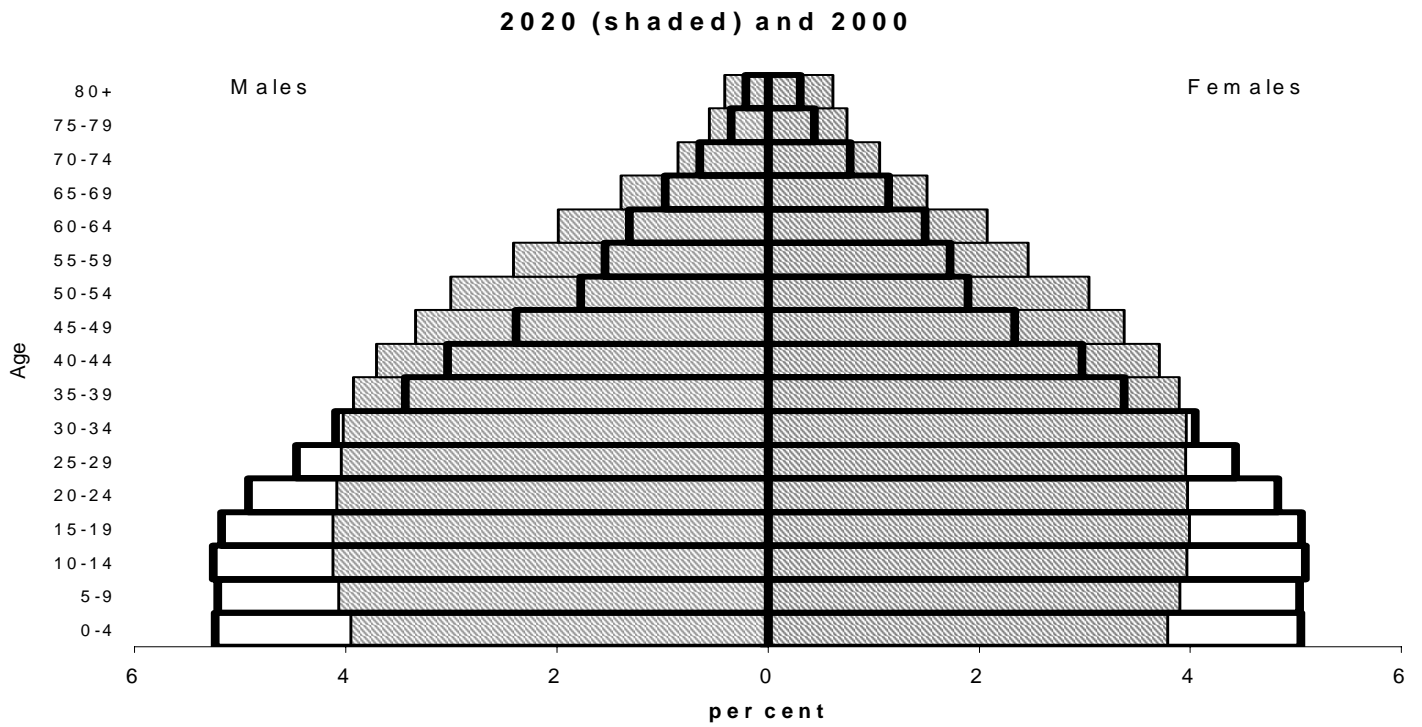


Figure 5 shows that India, the second largest nation in the world with 1/6 of the population will clearly have significant growth in the proportion of the population who are working and in the older ages at the expense of children. Similar patterns are evident in Malaysia and Bangladesh

Figure 5: Age-Sex Composition of the Population of India, Bangladesh and Malaysia, 2000 and Projected 2020

Source: United Nations, 2003

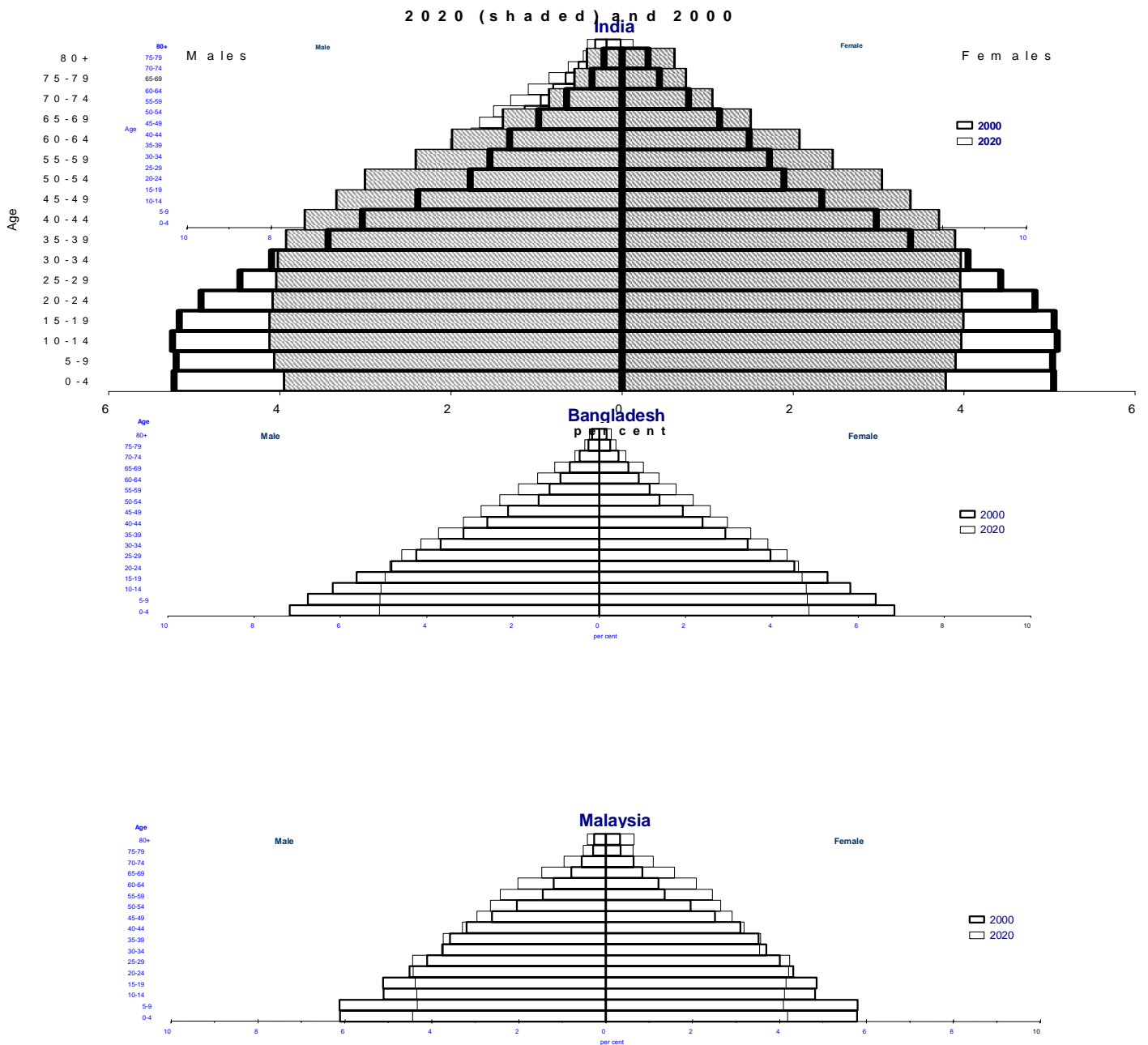
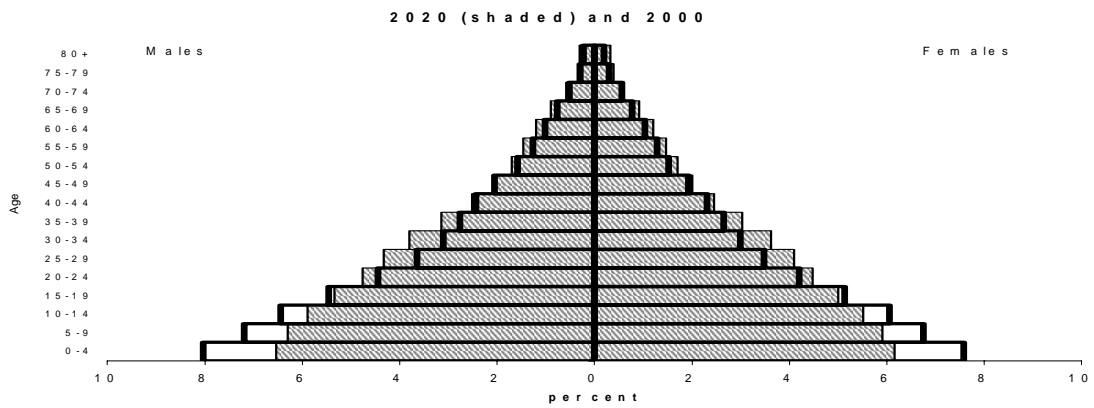


Figure 6 shows that Pakistan is not affected to the same degree as some of the other countries but nevertheless there are signs of a declining birth rate and ageing population.

Figure 6: Age-Sex Composition of the Population of Pakistan 2000 and Projected 2020
Source: United Nations, 2003



HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The search for talented professional and research staff is a global market. Therefore regardless of the demographic profile within your region, your organisations are not going to be immune from the effects of the ageing population in the MDC's.

The patterns outlined above present a number of human resources challenges.

The remainder of the paper outlines some of these challenges and the relationship they have to becoming an employer of choice. Where appropriate I will relate it to some of the things that we are doing or intend doing at my own university.

The fact is it is not rocket science. It does, however, require a substantial effort in both time and resources.

STEP ONE

Ensure your Human Resource Plan is linked to where you want to go.

- Before the Human Resource Plan is formulated, an organisation must be clear on what path it is pursuing in seeking competitive advantage, i.e. low cost or differentiation.

The five main components of a company's competitive advantage are:

Capital: is accessible for good ideas and good projects;

Ideas: that can be copied;

Strategies: that can be copied;

Technology: The half-life of which is growing shorter.

Talented people in the right culture are what give you the edge.⁵

Human resource management affects competitive advantage in any firm through its role in determining:

- The skill and motivation of employees;
- The cost of hiring and training.⁶

STEP TWO

Develop a Human Resource Plan.

The cost of not having a human resource plan is:

- loss of efficiency
- substantial cost to the organisation through:
 - (i) unstaffed vacancies
 - (ii) expensive replacement training
 - (iii) over hiring
 - (iv) fragmented career management
 - (v) expensive retrenchment programs⁷

⁵ Fisherman C, The War for Talent Fast Company Issue #16

⁶ Picket L and Porter M. *Operations Overwhelm Strategy*, HR Monthly Page 21.

⁷ Nankervis A, Compton R, McCarthy T, *Strategic Human Resource Management* Page 79.

An effective human resource plan translates the organisation's objectives into terms of the workers needed to meet the objectives.

In developing the plan, the following questions need to be considered:

- What are the skills that your organisation currently requires to meet its business needs?
- How will these skills change over the next 5 years/10 years?
- How will these skills change under alternative scenarios?
- What are the most critical skills currently required?
- Given the scenarios will these skills continue to be critical?
- Are these skills readily available in the organisation at present?
- If the skills aren't available, will you develop them in-house or through external recruitment?
- Does the structure of your organisation reflect its strategic intentions and equip it to be able to respond to changes in the operating environment?
- Do you have the structures that give you the flexibility and interrelationships that the strategy direction requires (e.g. within a University, a traditional compartmentalised structure may make it difficult to run a Masters degree across several disciplines)?
- If you are developing flatter structures, do you have the culture and the policies that empower individuals?

STEP THREE

Human Resource Management System (HRMS)

Collecting of workforce data is not the challenge, but rather using it to inspire more creative and flexible work practices.

Maureen Fastenau⁸

Underpinning any Human Resource Plan is the need to have quality data that will provide the statistical and qualitative information for effective decision-making. A system needs to be in place to capture data on:

- The staffing profile, segmented by different disciplines and career stages of staff. As an example, in a university context this would account for the changing characteristics of academic staffing within disciplines, age groups and qualifications.
- A needs analysis of different categories of staff in terms of likely trends in customer/product demand.
- A microanalysis of the nature of tasks to get a better sense of what staff do and what the balance is of different tasks performed.⁹
- Wastage rates.

⁸ Keen S., Work in Progress HR Monthly February 2005, Page 20.

⁹ Kogan M, Moses I and El-Khawas E. Staffing Higher Education Page 120.

- The effectiveness of training and development versus the cost of recruitment and what method produces the best results.

At my university, due to concerns regarding what we perceived as a crisis looming in the attraction and retention of staff in an increasingly competitive environment, we undertook a staff-profiling project with the following objectives:

Anticipate age, gender and classification distributions of staff by 2008, based on previous trends and if no major interventions are implemented by management.

Assist Faculty and Division program and staff planning by disaggregating this information to the School and Division level, where there is sufficient staff for the model to be applied.

Identify the HR issues from the changing profile, highlighting areas of risk and identifying potential interventions at University and Faculty level.

Pilot the application of staff planning to address the implications of the demographic model on critical roles to assist human resources planning and policy in 3 schools of one faculty in The University of Adelaide.

*An abbreviated summary of this analysis is at **Attachment 1**.*

STEP FOUR

Development of Policies and Procedures

HR is no longer the domain of HR professionals, however you can't expect to transfer day-to-day accountability for staff management to line-managers without a vibrant, contemporary and competitive set of HR Policies that are understood.

HR policies must be congruent with the strategic and human resource management plans. Particularly, they must be consistent in recognising the level of risk taking and flexibility the prevailing culture allows through an appropriate level of delegation.

In broad terms, this means that if an organisation is following a strategy of cost leadership, the HR policies underlying this approach must facilitate a culture of frugality, discipline and attention to detail. Alternatively, a strategy of differentiation requires HR policies that encourage innovation, individuality and risk taking.

Importantly, levels of delegation must also be supported with relevant training and staff development so that responsibility is not divorced from accountability. Policy development must also be done with full consultation of staff so that they not only understand the reason for the policy but also accept some ownership of the policy outcomes.

The University of Adelaide has moved to a process where the actual policy is short and succinct and is supported by guidelines and tool kits. This format gives managers empowerment through devolved delegations, flexibility as a result of guidelines and through the tool kits, a framework for decision-making.

STEP FIVE

Development of an effective recruitment strategy.

The recruitment strategy must have the following elements:

- selection criteria must be accurately defined, not necessarily in terms of current roles but in terms of future demand;
- be capable of identifying the best available talent;
- allow quick and efficient action to secure that talent;
- attractive remuneration packages incorporating financial and non-financial benefits to attract the best staff;
- incorporate best practice in terms of removal and relocation services including customised arrangements for the appointee's personal and family circumstances.
- Ensure the process exposes the candidate to the value and the culture of the organisation

In many ways recruiting is like selling. To achieve the best results you need to know:

1. Who is your competition?
 - What salary benefits are offered?
 - What do they do so well?
 - If graduate recruitment, where else are your applicants being interviewed?
2. Who are your company's key customers?
 - Have you talked to one lately?
 - Do you know what challenges they face?
3. Who are you?
 - What does your organisation do well, not so well?
 - What will be your workforce of tomorrow?¹⁰
4. What are the underlying characteristics of the demographics that you are recruiting to?
As an example graduates now entering the workforce are characterised by:
 - Having increased debt (due to the cost of education)
 - A higher percentage being women
 - Value lifestyle above income
 - More interested in job sharing or less than full-time positions
 - Benefits assuming greater importance
(continuing education, moving expenses, loan repayments)

¹⁰ Anthony J Rucci Executive Vice president at Cardinal Health Inc. as reported by Keith H Hammonds Why We hate HR fastcompany Issue #97

- Valuing such things as learning opportunities, professional growth, type of work, autonomy at work and intellectual stimulation rather than remuneration.¹¹

In-house vs. Recruitment Firms

Another decision is whether you conduct your recruitment using in-house personnel or whether you use a consulting firm.

The issue with recruiting firms is getting the right one. In many instances, the reward system used by many firms is commission. This places significant pressure to make the sale often at the expense of quality outcomes. To win contracts and preferred supplier agreements, fees are cut dramatically thus placing significant pressure on profit margins. As a result, recruiters are doing less and less to pre-qualify candidates in an effort to minimise operation costs (e.g. reducing # of interviews and tests a candidate goes through). Ask the question: do they reward their consultants on achieving quality outcomes or for achieving sales? Ascertain the tools they use to evaluate candidates.¹²

That said, a well-trained professional brings a level of proficiency not normally available in an organisation. Assess them on the basis of their competence and consistent quality and some understanding of the “hidden” workload associated with each assignment.

Clearly you need to give them a good brief but also they should:

- Share the same values and have a similar culture to your organisation
- Understand both your organisation and the sector on a global basis (e.g. one of the academic recruiting firms that we deal with do not spend a lot of time attempting to source senior academic staff from Canada because they are aware the Canadian Government have created 20,000 professorial positions in recent years to counter act the brain drain in academia).
- Be proactive in asking the question in relation to your organisation (e.g. for the University of Adelaide we would expect them to know :
 - What students come here?
 - What do people say about the University?
- Know the answers to questions the candidate will ask.

At the end of the process ask the candidates what they think of the consultants.

Advertising

Advertising is probably the most significant cost in the recruitment process. However there is increasing evidence that placing advertisements through the print media isn't the most effective form of advertising. The University of Adelaide's current advertising budget for recruitment purposes is approximately \$800k per year. A large proportion of this budget is spent in the recruitment section of the local newspaper. The advertisements are fairly traditional in terms of containing a reasonable amount of information. Notwithstanding that in a recent survey we did of staff recruited by the university over the preceding 12 months, we found that by far the

¹¹ Clancy A, Andre A, Human Performance Stemming the Tide Outlook Journal 2001

¹² Penna G Recruitment Firms – Are They Delivering HR Monthly Dec 2002, Pages 34-35.

majority of staff found out about the position through word-of-mouth both in terms of recruiting locally or by targeting an overseas market. Full details of our survey are at Attachment 2

E-Recruitment

It's important to clarify what e-recruiting means. To some it indicates using web based tools for recruitment, to others it means using their own corporate website. For our purposes, I have not made a differentiation and have included the findings for all forms of electronic recruiting here.

The IES (the Institute for Employment Studies) in the UK found that when examining the changing roles of recruitment intermediaries, the use of commercial online job advertising has grown from 15% in 2002 to 40% in 2003. However, the report found that employers reported the use of e-recruiting as being frustrating due to the ease of access for candidates to submit their applications easily, which in turn results in organisations having to sort through a vast amount of inappropriate applications. Some of the challenges surrounding e-recruiting were about insufficient screening processes, and an inability to accurately match individuals with both the job description and the organisational culture.

Overall the report found that whilst e-recruiting is popular, it still needs to be managed carefully. Users of e-recruitment have not always found the savings they expected due to the increased use of their own HR resources.

Websites like jobs.ac.uk however, claim that organisations are moving away from traditional print media, like the Scientist, Nature etc. to websites like their own.

Statistics indicate that in 1989 Warwick University recruited over 80% of their academic and research staff through combined efforts of the Guardian, THES, Nature and New Scientist. In 2002, this combination of media titles was responsible for less than 10% of all such appointments at Warwick, with 55% of their appointments going through jobs.ac.uk and 21% through their own website. It must be noted however that the jobs.ac.uk website originated at Warwick University, so these statistics are likely to be slightly more inflated than at other universities.

In Australia, In Pinpoint HRM have released an e-recruitment study with the following findings:

- 58% of the Australasian 500 now list jobs on their website, up from 10% in 2001.
- The number of jobs posted on the careers sites has increased 50% from an average of 12 in 2002 to an average of 18 in 2004
- Australia is more than 4 years behind the Fortune 500, 3 years behind the Euro 500, and around 2 years behind the Canadian 100
- 263% growth over 2 years in the public job board postings (eg www.seek.com) but still only 52% of the Australian 500 use them, which however is
- Up from 30% in 2002
- 34% of the Australasian 500 utilise some form of e-Recruitment system, representing a 62% increase over the past 2 years

In summary it is clear that

- e-recruiting generally is the way of the future, particularly for Generation Y, who are pushing for this.

- It can offer some significant advantages to recruiters/employers in terms of reduced cost and broader access to pool of candidates.
- If the systems are not well organised, the major downsides are the large volume of irrelevant applications that employers need to sift through.
- E-recruiting will largely be taking its slice from the print advertising markets and is still generally geared around more junior positions, rather than senior and executive positions, where headhunting is still proving to be the preferred and most effective method.¹³

In Australia, several universities are developing their web sites to achieve competitive advantage by actively canvassing job vacancies through their own candidate pool that they have developed through their web interface. One university claims to have a job applicant pool of over 50,000 sourced from across the globe, which they can segment for specific jobs.

My own university is considering a three pronged approach using third party providers, while we develop our own in-house e-recruiting expertise through our web page. Furthermore, in relation to the print media, it is proposed that a smaller but higher profiled advertisement will be situated in the main part of the newspaper. The university will purchase this space for a 12-month period at a cost of approximately \$60K so that even casual readers will know where to look for positions. This advertisement will only contain basic information with the underlying assumption being that potential staff in a learning environment will be comfortable with looking up additional information on the web. However the remainder of the space will be used to develop our own "branding" by sending strong messages about the university being a good place to work by profiling achievements of existing staff.

SELECTION

The relationship that organisations develop with potential applicants is probably the defining criteria in the development of an effective recruitment strategy. Despite this a recent survey found that:

- ¾ of people participating in the survey believed that they were asked inappropriate questions at interview
- 1/3 of people interviewed believe their current job was sold under false pretences – being told it was better than it was meant to be.

(Source: HR Monthly March 2005)

From my own observations, too often too little time is spent on preparing for the interview itself.

Job interviews are not just about selecting people to work at your company. They are an opportunity to get companies interested in them by making the interview process interesting – they will tell others.

¹³ S recorded notes from a discussion with the author

Whichever way you look at it, your organisation's capacity to attract and retain the right calibre of staff is going to be one of the major factors in maintaining your competitive advantage. For this reason alone, having identified the need, type and characteristics of the position required, don't blow it at the last hurdle. The list below may or may not apply to your own circumstances, but nevertheless if you're not doing these things, ensure that your competitors aren't either!!

- Get your act together before you start recruiting – no mixed messages.
- Determine the selection criteria and make sure it is both relevant to the job at present AND how the job might develop in the immediate future.
- Respond at applicant's convenience, not yours.
- Have a toll free number.
- Respond promptly - others might be interested in your candidate.
- Clear your schedule.
- Screen by telephone.
- Determine whether to interview or not.
- Develop itinerary and send to candidate in advance.
- Pick candidate up at airport.
- Have a rental car available at hotel.
- Have a disposable camera for family.
- Have a gourmet food basket.
- Don't be cheap! Pay for as many items as possible.
- Make applicant (s) available to key people.
- Train your interview panels.
- Find out who the applicant is talking to help them make the decision - you might be able to address their concerns as well.
- Recruit the entire family – push community and lifestyle.
- Don't neglect the spouse/ family – find out what they want to do.
- Have help on hand for housing/schools/special needs – allow candidates time to see housing as this will help them picture what life will be like.
- Consider a signing up bonus (golden hello!!).
- Don't be afraid to ask the question "If we make the offer will you accept?"
- Ensure if doing referee checking that the person is skilled in this art – often it is what people don't say rather than what they say.
- Determine the offer, be ready to make the offer or extend it (have letter of intent ready).
- Consider a retention bonus to be payable in the future (golden handcuff!!)

RETENTION

Management often believe that money is the Universal motivator

While a reasonable level of turnover is healthy in any part of the business sector, having attracted what we hope is competent staff, most organisations have to consider ways to develop and retain them as the war for talent increases.

As HR professionals, one of our major tasks is that we create an environment that is conducive to individuals wanting to not only stay with the company but also to grow in their personal development and to increase both their own and the company's intellectual capacity. In simple terms this means having the right people in the right place at the right time, who are motivated to perform.

The modern workforce requires increased flexibility. As global communities become more integrated, the diversity that confronts us in terms of social, economic and cultural norms means that our workforce will no longer have generic needs. Of course there will still be an expectation of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work but increasingly staff are interested in a broader interpretation of reward and recognition and also in work/life balance.

In the first instance, as HR professionals we are not going to retain our staff unless we have policies and procedures that provide the flexibilities so that our workforce is no longer treated as a homogenous entity but is recognised as complex and heterogeneous.

This involves having:

- Remuneration policies that value high performing employees and focuses on developing, rewarding and retaining them.
- Flexible employment arrangements that support work/life balance.

The nature of work in Australian universities mean that work life balance is given high prominence in the sector and by many is seen as one of its key attractions. In particular, these provisions are offered to attract and retain female academics who are under-represented in terms of the gender balance in the overall population. That said, I would be one of the first to admit that the intent is not always transformed into practice and the issue of high workloads is seen as one of the major concerns to address across the higher education sector.

Nevertheless these are the types of provisions that we provide:

- 26 weeks paid maternity leave /adoption leave on full pay with the option of converting leave after 14 weeks to assist in return to the workforce following leave e.g. for a study leave tour, to pay a casual lecturer to cover for teaching while concentrate on re-establishing their research.
- Two weeks paternity leave (one week paid).
- Fractional time appointments for up to 10 years for care of children.
- Fractional time appointment for up to 2 years before review for care of a family member.
- Five days paid leave for care of family member deducted from sick leave or special leave credits

¹⁴ Clancy T. Andre, A. – Human Performance Stemming the Tide Accenture Page 2.

- Long Service Leave – e.g. 3 months' paid leave after 10 years of service.
- Flexi time provisions (i.e. variable working hours, capacity to build up time and take off at a later date).
- Childcare facilities on Campus.
- Gymnasium on campus.
- Some capacity to work from home dependant on duties.
- 48/52-payment provision.
- 10% loading on acceptance of pre-retirement contracts.

An area that is getting increasing attention is the retention of the mature age worker. The reason that the mature- aged worker is so important is that they represent the only remaining segment of the workforce in which participation rates can be increased. Female participation rates have increased steadily over the past 40 years and appear to have reached a plateau. Short of returning to the days of child labour, the mature-aged worker must become a more critical part of the economy if we are to maintain a standard of living.¹⁵ Notwithstanding this, there are a range of assumptions about mature-aged workers, many of them negative, that need to be addressed. There is evidence that mature-aged workers have been disproportionately affected by workplace restructuring over the past decade in spite of data that shows older workers to be more skilled, possess a better work attitude, lower turnover and better punctuality.¹⁶ Research undertaken internationally suggests older workers:

Take less time off due to injury and illness. Many businesses have reported marked reductions in absenteeism when they have recruited older workers.

Older workers have fewer accidents per employee hour.

Strength of judgment and ability for critical thinking increases with age.

There is no serious decline in memory or intelligence until 90 years or over. Life expectancy is now around 81 years in many societies.

Older workers are often more engaged by task and work to improve their mastery.

Productivity levels increase as people age.

In simulated managerial tasks, both younger and older workers arrived at the right answers but did so by different processes. While older workers took longer to process information, they sought more information before making a decision, were more scrupulous in the use of information and were better able to accurately evaluate.

The over 50s age group has been found to have the greatest take up of Internet usage. Myths about older workers' adaptability to new technology are no longer valid.¹⁷

In the university sector, lecturers in business management might be older than 50 but still relatively new to academia because of time spent in the business world. A predominantly older academic profile has a different meaning in a field such as mathematics, where the most original work is done early in one's career, than philosophy or other disciplines where senior members of the profession make the strongest contribution. The balance between older and younger academics matters more in rapidly changing disciplines (e.g. high energy physics, cellular biology and IT).¹⁸

¹⁵ Hudson report: Employment and HR Trends, Australia Jan/March 2004.

¹⁶ Gordon. C., 1995, Continuous Employability: Mature Workers in the New Workplace, Management, May Pages 5-7.

¹⁷ Achieving an Age Balance in the Workforce – The Australian Employers Convention

¹⁸ Kogan, M., Moses, I., El-Khawas, Staffing Higher Education Page 98.

Human Resources issues to consider in relation to older workers include:

Education about misconceptions about ageing.
Promote health, work and family balance.
Managing increased health risk in relation to older workers.
Ensure that training procedures cater for varying individual learning styles and needs.
Restructuring work roles to enable staff, who might be prepared to work part time or to undertake part of their role, to remain in the workforce (e.g. creation of teaching only positions).
Support mentoring and skills transfer from older to younger workers.
Encourage both life long learning and flexibility and adaptability.
Phased retirement.
Flexible work patterns and changes in classification subsidized by subsidiary superannuation (e.g. allow staff who are not ready to retire and have valuable knowledge, to step down a classification to undertake less stressful work, while keeping their superannuation at the higher level).
Pre-retirement contracts (these provide some certainty as to when an academic will leave the workforce and allows for career planning and succession management).
Stop encouraging early retirement through early retirement schemes.

In conclusion I started this presentation with a quote from Ed Michaels from McKinsey and Co. McKinsey and Co are one of the larger consulting firms in the USA. Although they had a multitude of clients one in particular adopted their philosophy on the value of talent to the extreme. They engaged McKinsey extensively to attract the best. As an example during the '90's this company was hiring 250 MBA's per year. They pampered them, promoted them without regard to seniority or experience and rewarded them handsomely. One of their executives said: "The only thing that differentiates our company is talent."¹⁹

That company was Enron. On 16 October 2001, Enron was forced to disclose \$1 billion in losses. This began a change of events that would drive Enron's stock prices into the dirt and force the company into bankruptcy wiping out thousands of jobs and tens of billions of dollars in savings. Subsequent investigations showed it had accumulated 50 energy plants in 15 countries, virtually none of which were profitable. Although there are a range of issues that led to the Enron failure one thing was certain, although talent can certainly give you the edge it has to be supported by the right systems and processes and leadership which allows for innovation but also provides the necessary checks and balances.

I leave you with this thought:

If you are always looking for people who had the talent to think outside the box, perhaps it is the box that needs fixing – i.e. a good management system, good lines of communication, clear delegations, a culture that allows learning – mistakes can be tolerated.²⁰

¹⁹ The Fall of Enron, The Washing Post July 28 – August 1 2001

²⁰ Gladwell, M., The Talent Myth – Are People Overrated? The New Yorker Fact

ATTACHMENT 1

The study sought to anticipate the changes in the academic workforce over the next five years taking into account two categories of staff as follows:

*Academic tenured (564 persons in 2003- 72.7% males)
Academic contract (474 persons in 2003- 63.9% males)*

A cohort component projection technique was used. Male and female staff by age were "aged" forward 5 years for each category, taking into account rates of attrition, to establish what the likely loss of staff will be over that period as a basis for assessing the recruitment challenge to the university. The methodology employed was as follows:

*Divide the 2003 staff in the four groups into five-year age-sex groupings.
Establish the age-sex specific rates of attrition in recent years (averaged over three years 2000-2002) excluding redundancy packages offered to staff.
Apply these attrition rates annually to the existing age-sex structures for the 5-year period 2003-2008.
Sum the projected age-sex groups to provide totals for each year.*

The overall results indicated a decline in academic tenured staff. For academic contract staff there was a more gradual decline.

- Examining the academic tenured staff overall it was evident that there would be a reduction of 25% over the next 5 years if current attrition rates are maintained.
- This is made up of 106 males and 35 females, representing a reduction of 25.8% of males and 22.7% of females.
- For those on fixed term contracts there was a more substantial decrease from 474 to 279 persons, a decline of over 40% made up of 122 males (a 40.3% reduction) and 74 females (a 43.3% reduction).
- In 2003 some 46% of academic staff were aged over 50 with only 18% aged under 40.
- With an ageing of the workforce forward to 2008, it is likely that there will be an even greater concentration in the 50+ age group, a high 66.8% with only 6% aged under 40.
- It was apparent that the academic contract staff is substantially younger than the tenured staff, as would be expected from the practice of offering fixed- term contracts on the basis of recent funding availability.
- In 2003, only 21% were aged over 50 with a high 45% under 40, the age-sex profiles for both academic contract and tenured staff are significantly male dominated and are expected to stay that way in 2008.
- The rates of attrition are relatively high among the small number of young tenured staff, most notably for females.

Applying current rates of attrition to each faculty there are anticipated to be losses of between 27% and 50.8% in the faculties. It will be noted that the university faces a substantial recruitment task over the next few years.

CONCLUSION

This extent of recruitment will be one of the largest that the university has faced over the post-war period. It represents both a challenge and an opportunity. It clearly offers a chance to restructure and phase out programs that may not be required any more and bring in new areas considered to be needed. It means a significant change can be achieved without a program of forced redundancy. On the other hand it is a real challenge in an increasingly competitive recruitment situation.

ATTACHMENT 2

SURVEY OF STAFF RECRUITED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE DURING 2004

As part of a major review of recruitment at The University of Adelaide, the Human Resources Branch sent a survey to staff who were appointed during 2004 in order to gain a better understanding of their experiences during the recruitment process and in their initial stages of employment.

The survey was sent to 287 people and was sent irrespective of whether they were new to the University or had taken up a new position. There were 74 respondents to the survey, which is 25.7% of all potential respondents. 33 respondents were men and 40 were women and one person did not disclose this information. 40 of the respondents were aged less than 40 years and 30 respondents were aged over 40 years with 3 respondents not disclosing this information. A design flaw of the survey was not to include a question on academic or general staff status but it was never intended to ask respondents to disclose their classification level for reasons of confidentiality. Respondents have been assured of confidentiality and care has been taken to ensure that this is the case.

The following table provides respondents by sex and age:

Sex	Under 40	Over 40	Age unknown	Sex Unknown	Total
Male	16	15	2	1	33
Female	24	15	1		40

Question: Were you recruited from?

Sex	Adelaide	Interstate capital	Rural SA	Interstate rural area	Overseas	Other UoA pos
M	15	4		2	9	3
F	28	1		1	2	5
Unknown	1					
Total	44	5	0	3	11	8

Most of the respondents were already living in Adelaide and of the 11 staff who were recruited from overseas, 9 were male and 2 were female with 15 men relocating to Adelaide to take up their position compared to 4 women.

Question: How did you find out about the position you were recruited for at The University of Adelaide?

	The Advertiser	W End Aust	Wed Aust	Consultant	Colleague	www	Electronic job board	Campus Review	Inside Adelaide
M	7	1	1	2	15	4	2		
F	8		1		12	12	4		1
	15	1	2	2	28	16	6	0	1

The category that had the highest response to the question *How did you find out about the position?* was by word of mouth or through a colleague with 28 respondents indicating this applied to them. Of these 28 respondents, 15 were male and 12 were female. Of the 15 males, 7 were less than 40 years old and 7 of the 12 females were less than 40 years old. The next highest category was those respondents who found out about the position through the web. The Australian Newspaper on Wednesday or Saturday attracted 3 new employees and no new employee was recruited through Campus Review newspaper.

Question: What attracted you to Adelaide?

Already resident	Lifestyle	Family	Partner's employment	Adelaide links	Job	Cost of living	Climate
40	4	8	6	5	14	2	0

The information in the above table is self-explanatory and of the 14 people who were attracted to Adelaide because of the job, 6 were from overseas.

Question: What attracted you to The University of Adelaide?

Research profile	Employment conditions	National reputation	Discipline strength	Already an employee	Other
18	21	12	4	7	8

The following list is male staff responses to *Other*:

- The lab I am working in is one of the best worldwide and the experience here is valuable to my personal career. At the same time, Adelaide is a wonderful place to spend a year or so to stay with my family.
- New migrant.
- External sponsorship.
- Greater opportunities for doing research and a little less teaching than I had at another university.

The following list is female staff responses to *Other*:

- Studying at The University of Adelaide.
- Research project and excellent reputation of my boss.
- Job sounded interesting with lots of variety and people contact.
- Inside advertisement.

Question: Did the University website contain information that was useful in helping you to decide whether or not to apply for the position?

- 40 agreed or strongly agreed.
- 26 were neutral.
- 2 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

All 3 staff who disagreed with this statement were male and aged under 40 years with 2 of them being recruited from overseas and the other being a local resident.

Question: What other information would have been useful that was not easily available?

Information provided by respondents to this question fell into a number of categories with:

- 2 respondents wanting information regarding the format of application (addressing selection criteria etc).
- 5 respondents wanting clearer information on the position, salary and workplace entitlements including assistance with relocation costs and policies on flexi time and working from home.
- 5 respondents wanting clearer information on the organisation structure, career paths and workplace culture.
- 6 respondents saying that the website could be improved by including information about research and providing a direct link from job description page to the area's website and suggested that staff CVs and publication lists should be available on the web.

Question: If you were recruited through the services of a consultant did you find the quality of information and liaison that they provided to be excellent?

68 staff responded that this question was not relevant to them. Of the 5 people who responded to this question, 2 agreed with the comment, 1 was neutral and 2 strongly disagreed.

Question: During the recruitment process did you have a clear understanding of who was the primary point of contact e.g. Head of School, Business Manager, Recruitment Consultant, HR Consultant?

50 staff replied Yes to this question and 8 said No. Of those who said No, comments included that there was confusion between the Faculty Head, School head and Discipline; they were also unsure about whether advice could be sought from HR.

Question: How long was the length of time from application to being told that you were short-listed for the position?

The length of time varied widely from as short as immediately or a few days to 7 months. 7 respondents indicated that their appointment took 3 months or longer, 20 respondents indicated that their appointment was confirmed within a week and the others ranged between 2 weeks and 2 months. Of the 7 respondents who indicated that their recruitment took several months, 4 were from overseas, 1 was from an interstate capital city and 2 were from an interstate rural area.

Question: Do you consider that the length of time referred to in Q9 was reasonable?

52 staff replied Yes to this question and 12 said No.

The next table provides information on experiences during the interview process.

Question	SA	A	N	D	SD
(a) The letter telling me that I was short listed for the position gave me sufficient information	12	29	10	1	2
(b) Sufficient notice was given for the interview	28	33	3	2	0

Question	SA	A	N	D	SD
(c) The interview time was convenient	32	27	4	3	0
(d) The interview location was satisfactory	31	28	4	2	1
(e) The interview questions were straightforward	29	29	5	3	1
(f) I understood what was being asked during the interview.	30	33	1	2	0
(g) I was put at ease during the interview	33	30	1	2	0

Employees were asked whether or not they felt disadvantaged during the interview process based on their sex, cultural or linguistic background or disability. None of the respondents believed that they were disadvantaged during the interview although 10 people neither agreed nor disagreed with this comment.

The next table provides information in relation to the written letter of offer of employment.

Question	SA	A	N	D	SD	NA
(a) Job details	15	47	7	1	1	1
(b) Remuneration	21	42	5	2	0	1
(c) Probation	26	39	3	2	0	2
(d) Super	17	30	15	6	1	2
(e) Medical cover	16	19	20	7	2	8
(f) Childcare	9	14	14	8	2	19
(g) Workplace entitlements	14	20	22	8	2	2
(h) First day	14	16	16	18	3	5
(i) Salary sacrificing/	12	17	22	12	3	4

The next table provides information in relation to relocation to Adelaide.

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Travel arrangements	2	7	6	4	1
(b) Immigration requirements	2	8	2	3	1
(c) Entitlements for my partner	2	5	6	4	0
(d) Local schools	2	0	4	5	1
(e) The Adelaide environs	4	6	4	5	0

Question: When you relocated to Adelaide, were you satisfied with the relocation process?

- 13 strongly agreed or agreed.
- 3 were neutral.
- 4 disagreed or strongly disagreed, one being relocated to Adelaide from overseas.

Question: Can you suggest services that would have enhanced your relocation to Adelaide?

4 respondents provided positive or neutral comments. There were 9 suggestions for enhanced services, which ranged from slightly to very negative and included:

- Better compensation for temporary expenses such as car hire, accommodation, and finding permanent accommodation.
- Providing some cheap options for the first few weeks of living and more information on local real estate renting and assistance with the inspection and signing of the contract.
- Better information on visas.
- Greater clarification of partner relocation would have been helpful for me at the interview stage.
- The current group arranging the relocation were completely incompetent. The funds supplied for relocation were inadequate. There was no support for finding accommodation.

Question: Have you subsequently found that Adelaide was undersold as a destination?

One respondent agreed with this statement, 7 believed it was true to some extent, nobody responded that this was true to a great extent and 16 said No.

Question: Were you provided with enough information to enable you to make an informed decision when the position was offered?

- 54 respondents agreed or strongly agreed.
- 4 were neutral.
- 2 disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Question: Are you able to suggest other information that would have enhanced your decision-making?

- 4 respondents said they wanted more information on faculties and equipment availability.
- 2 respondents wanted better information on salary sacrificing options and career paths.

Question: If the University were able to offer more extensive salary packaging opportunities, what would you like to see as part of your package?

- From 10 responses to this question it is clear that there needs to be better transparency about what is able to be included in salary packaging or that it needs to be explained more clearly as many new employees listed items or conditions that were already possible.
- 2 respondents were seeking additional benefits that could have been delivered under the Attraction and Retention scheme.

- One respondent would have liked to have the opportunity to have relief for childcare in centres other than university run and another wanted after-school care and vacation care arrangements for children.
- Twelve respondents wanted to package mortgages, car repayments and mobile phone accounts.

Other suggestions included:

- An additional salary for a full-time assistant, travel credit cards, memberships, total relocation costs for partner.

Question: What do you consider went well in the recruitment process?

- 17 respondents commented very positively on the way that they were put at ease during the interview process.
- 10 respondents commented favourably on the smoothness of the process and the friendliness and helpfulness of staff involved in the process.
- 9 respondents commented favourably on the speed of the process and the way that they were kept informed of the status of their application and progress.
- 3 respondents were extremely positive about the relocation service.
- 1 respondent stated that it took a while to receive a formal letter after being offered the position. This made it difficult to resign in time to start on the required date.

Question: Do you have suggestions for improvement in the recruitment process?

- The following 3 statements are representative of comments made by 14 respondents:
 - Speed up the process. Taking months from close of applications to getting round to short listing and interviewing makes the university look other than a world-class research institution.
 - Send a written confirmation out in the first day or so of the position being accepted THEN send out all the other information (super, bank details etc).
 - My contract wasn't confirmed until several days after starting, as the relevant forms took too long to arrive.
- 2 respondents commented that they wanted more information about the organisational structure.
- 4 commented that they needed more clarity in information provided on a number of issues including salary packaging and quicker access to IT resources; also visa requirements.

The next table provides information in relation to the induction process.

Question	SA	A	N	D	SD
(a) Induction material allowed me to understand where my position fitted into the organisational structure.	12	35	12	10	0
(b) I found the on line OH&S course useful.	12	28	20	3	3
(c) I completed the OH&S course.	24	36	3	1	3
(d) My supervisor checked that I completed the OH&S course.	24	25	8	7	3
(e) I found the on-line Equity and Diversity course useful.	13	29	17	5	3
(f) I completed the Equity and Diversity course.	25	28	7	5	2

Question	SA	A	N	D	SD
(g) My supervisor checked that I completed the Equity and Diversity course.	23	20	14	8	3
(h) I was provided with the opportunity to meet key staff relevant to my position.	32	32	4	1	0

Question: Were you assigned an induction buddy?

14 respondents indicated that they were assigned an Induction Buddy and 56 said No. Of those who said No 18 indicated that they would have liked one and 37 said No.

Question: What do you consider went well in the induction process?

- 9 respondents commented favourably on the framework and structure provided by the checklist.
- 12 respondents commented that they found the on-line training courses to be informative and appreciated the convenience of the course being on-line and able to be done in the workplace at a time that was convenient to them.
- 4 respondents commented favourably on the efficiency of preparations prior to their arrival, e.g. business cards, access to IT resources.
- 7 respondents commented that they were provided with good information about the organisational structure and the place of their position within that structure as well as the details of their position.
- 6 people commented on the general friendliness of staff and the welcoming atmosphere of their area.

Question: Do you have suggestions for improvement in the induction process?

- 13 respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with induction at the local level and with their managers' apparent lack of knowledge of the role they should play in Induction.
- 8 respondents commented on difficulties in getting access to the online Induction courses and 5 other commented that they found the content of the course to be dull and time consuming and would have preferred a face to face session.
- 4 respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with access to the IT environment and other resources such as access cards.

Question: In taking up your position at The University of Adelaide, what aspects have exceeded your expectations?

- 25 respondents commented very positively on the friendliness of staff and the collegial culture.
- 9 respondents commented that they appreciated the freedom and creativity possible in their position.
- 9 respondents commented on the excellent quality of resources and the physical environment at The University of Adelaide.
- 4 respondents were impressed by administrative systems and structures.
- 3 respondents commented favourably on employment conditions at University of Adelaide.

Question: In taking up your position at The University of Adelaide, what aspects have disappointed you?

Information provided by respondents to this question fell into a number of categories. There were many criticisms of the IT environment, which were threaded through responses to this question as well as in other parts of the questionnaire.

- 4 respondents commented that resources, age of equipment and level of IT support staff was unsatisfactory.
- 5 respondents commented that the workload is extremely high and this restricts research and project activity.
- 4 respondents commented on the rudeness of some staff and the academic/ general staff divide.
- 11 respondents commented on administrative inefficiencies, poor communication and slowness caused by excessive bureaucracy.
- 3 respondents commented on lack of consistency, transparency and understanding across the university in terms of processes and procedures.
- 7 respondents commented on the management of poor performance and also poor management performance including lack of leadership qualities.

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