

Loss

Control



FARMERS

Information Bulletin

Lack of Available Workers

The lack of an available worker pool exists from time to time in almost every industry. Some industries are observing a declining worker base due to the skills required or the consumer demand for their products or services. Others are in business markets that are extremely competitive and there are just not enough workers to fill all of the available positions. Some businesses in geographic territories where there is a declining population experience a significant problem with obtaining workers needed to meet production demands.

Regardless of the cause for a lack of available workers, a business in need of quality workers faces operational and safety challenges when there are not enough workers available to fill all vacancies.

The solutions to this problem can create additional problems for your business unless carefully thought out and an effective solution is implemented.

Methods of attempting to solve the problem could include paying higher wages for new hires and existing employees, out-sourcing the production to other companies, importing and utilizing foreign labor in your domestic operations, or automating your workplace.

Paying Higher Wages

Paying higher wages could attract a larger potential employee pool but the costs could exceed those of your competition and reduce your ability to compete. Selectively paying higher wages for positions where talent and skills will assist with attracting the right potential applicants while retaining the pay structure for positions where applicant skill is not a driving factor.

Out-Sourcing Production

Using foreign markets to supplement your production needs can reduce your need for domestic labor. It is important for management to carefully assess their customer base's impression and/or reaction to the utilization of out-sourced production. There may be a need to only out-source the production of specialty components or those requiring highly skilled labor for production.

Importing Foreign Labor

Immigration laws allow for the use of foreign workers when there is a business need and insufficient domestic applicants are available. Consult with legal counsel regarding the specific rules applicable to your business.

Management must consider the added costs of training and supervising these workers due to the potential language barrier. The language barrier could also increase potential workplace accidents or incidents. Careful consideration needs to be given before using foreign laborers when there is a lack of available workers.

Automating the Workplace

Automation can reduce the need for workers. While requiring a smaller number of employees, the costs associated with automation of the workplace can be significant. It can increase potential workplace accidents or incidents by workers not being familiar with the processes or the maintenance requirements for this equipment.

Whatever solution is chosen by management to attempt to address the problem of a lack of available workers, consideration must be given to the potential impact on workplace safety and the resulting costs associated with accidents or incidents.