

■ WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

# Why you should invest to train experienced employees

**Y**ou've worked hard to build a business that is rich with culture, practices high ethical standards and provides a place where people of all skills can come to work and climb the "corporate ladder."

Entry-level employees have developed advanced skills over time, providing your company with an experienced management staff to guide your business toward success.

You have respect for your employees and are committed to hiring people who exemplify all the reasons your company is great. Employees consider you to be the Gandhi of today's business, and the respect is not unno-



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ted by your customers.

Like any other 21st century business person, you have surely realized the undeniable need to integrate new resources into your organization. Dependable, efficient new technologies offer the potential to help your business compete for nearly

half the cost of operation.

But while the possibilities for your company's newest assets should be all positive, this new contributor is perceived as a devious threat to the job security of other employees.

The balance in culture is shifting, and your organization may be left with a devoted staff that has all the wrong qualifications. Your highly regarded organization is starting to look like a high-powered blender working without a top.

The integration of technology poses a complex question for your organization. What is your company's role in helping employees adapt? You value the

people who have provided years of dedication to your company and do not want to turn them out to society as displaced workers. Also, you may find that the new systems require support that you may not already have the skills for — and who better to invest in than the employees you have come to know and trust with your business?

Employers and frontline employees must take proactive steps to ensure their skills are up to par with the latest in technology. For decades, the least educated workers have been hit hard by inability to keep up with technology. Now the "middle-class" is fighting the

same battle, and no one seems to know what to do with the displaced workers.

Retraining displaced workers to service and support the very technologies that replaced them is only part of the solution. Most computer classes do not recognize that higher-level thinking, creativity and advanced communications skills are needed to flourish in today's workforce. Many "retrained" workers who focus only on technology end up in low-paying or part-time jobs or with no jobs at all.

We all know that technical skills are only part of the qualifications we managers seek. Industry knowledge,

experience and intellectual aptitude are just as important, if not more critical, to the success of our businesses.

So how do you curb your organization's changing environment and ensure that new technology strengthens your solid foundation, rather than tear down the building blocks of your business?

Your next strategic move needs to address how you can incorporate efficiency through technology and outstage the competition through continued development of one of your most valuable resource: your employees.

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