

LEARNING OUTCOME 5 Do you agree with the argument that benefits for time not worked are those most readily available to reduce employer costs? Explain.

LEARNING OUTCOME 6 Prior to 1979, all employers could prescribe a mandatory retirement age—usually 65 years. What would you think are the advantages and disadvantages of a mandatory retirement age? What factors might affect an individual's decision to retire at a particular time, and what factors might affect his or her ability to adjust to retirement?

LEARNING OUTCOME 7 Describe 401(k) pension plans, listing their advantages and disadvantages. As an employee, would you want control over the investment decisions of your 401(k) plan? Explain.

LEARNING OUTCOME 8 Working in teams of three or four, assume your team was hired as a benefits consultant to a small business having fifty to sixty employees. What benefits do you believe this employer should offer, given limited resources? Justify your reasons for offering these benefits.

On the Job: Video Cases



Benefits at Bright Horizons

Bright Horizons' chief operating officer, chief HR officer, and a teacher discuss the philosophy and specific benefits offered by the organization. The importance of investing in employees and being responsive to their needs is discussed. The problems in trying to balance the increasing costs of mandated benefits and the increasing expectations from employees are also presented.

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- Bright Horizons offers tuition reimbursement for education. What are two positive aspects and two concerns about tuition aid?
- The video mentions that Bright Horizons offers some unique benefits such as pet care.

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What to Watch for and Ask Yourself

- Describe how you think Bright Horizons' benefits create and maintain a competitive advantage for the

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- The video mentions that Bright Horizons offers some unique benefits such as pet care and tuition advising services. What are some other unique benefits that might be attractive to employees of Bright Horizons? How would you determine the return on investment for these benefits?

Case Study

1

Adobe's Family-Friendly Benefits: An Unexpected Backlash

Adobe Consulting Services (ACS), a provider of HR software application systems, prides itself on the variety of benefits it offers employees. In addition to health care, pension, and vacation benefits, the company also offers an attractive family-friendly benefits package including flexible schedules, child and elder care assistance, counseling services, adoption assistance, and extended parental leave. Unfortunately, in recent months, the company's progressive work/life policy has experienced a backlash from several employees, as the following case illustrates.

In March 2011, Teresa Wheatly was hired by Adobe as a software accounts manager. With excellent administrative and technical skills, plus four years of experience at Adaptable Software, Adobe's main competitor, Teresa became a valued addition to the company's marketing team. As a single mother with two grade-school children,

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Teresa received permission to take Fridays off. She was also allowed to leave work early or come in late to meet the demands of her children. Teresa is one of eleven software account managers at Adobe.

The problem for Adobe, and particularly for Janis Blancero, director of marketing, began in the fall of 2011. On September 15, Dorothy McShee, citing “personal reasons”—which she refused to discuss—requested a four-day workweek for which she was willing to take a 20 percent cut in pay. When Dorothy asked for the reduced work schedule, she sarcastically quipped, “I hope I don’t have to have kids to get this time off.” On October 3, Juan Batista, a world-class marathon runner, requested a flexible work hours arrangement in order to accommodate his morning and afternoon training schedule. Juan is registered to run the London, England, marathon in May 2013. Just prior to Juan’s request, Susan Woolf asked for and was granted an extended maternity leave to begin after the birth of her first child in December.

If these unexpected requests are not enough, Blancero has heard comments from senior account managers about how some employees seem to get “special privileges,” while the managers work long hours that often require them to meet around-the-clock customer demands. Janis has adequate reason to believe that there is hidden tension over the company’s flexible work hours program. Currently, Adobe has no formal policy on flexible schedules. Furthermore, with the company’s growth in business combined with the increasing workload of software account managers and the constant service demands of some customers, Blancero realizes that she simply cannot grant all the time-off requests of her employees.

Questions

1. Do managers like Janis Blancero face a more complicated decision when evaluating the personal requests of employees versus evaluating employees' individual work performance? Explain.
2. a. Should Adobe establish a policy for granting flexible work schedules? Explain.
b. If you answered yes, what might that policy contain?
3. If you were Janis Blancero, how would you resolve this dilemma? Explain.

Case Study

2

What is the quality of the work/life environment in your company? The following survey provided by the Work and Family Connection will help provide a "case analysis" of the climate in your organization. Answers to the twenty questions will provide clear insights about your company's position in the work/life area.

Agree or Disagree with the Following Statements:

1. My manager/supervisor treats my work/life needs with sensitivity.
2. It is usually easy for me to manage the demands of both work and home life.
3. My career path at this company is limited because of the pressure of home life demands.
4. My job at this company keeps me from maintaining the quality of life I want.

Evaluate the Work/Life Climate in Your Company