

# Workforce Trends in the Construction Industry

October 2013 – January 2016

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Absence, Health & Productivity Services

**Risk Engineering**



# Top five specialty trades with expected skilled labor shortages



- Carpentry and Millwork
- Electrical
- HVAC / Boilermaker
- Concrete Finisher / Cement Mason
- Ironwork-Steel Erection / Fabrication / Welding

*Source: McGraw-Hill Construction 2012*

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# Assess workforces demographics



- Understand the demographic make-up of the company's workforce
- Anticipate future needs and skills for the organization
- Develop succession plans
- Develop a process to capture and transfer institutional memory / knowledge
- Identify competency sets of current employees
- Project retirement rates
- Employee career plans
- Work preferences

# Impact of employee tenure on lost time claim frequency

## Construction Business Unit

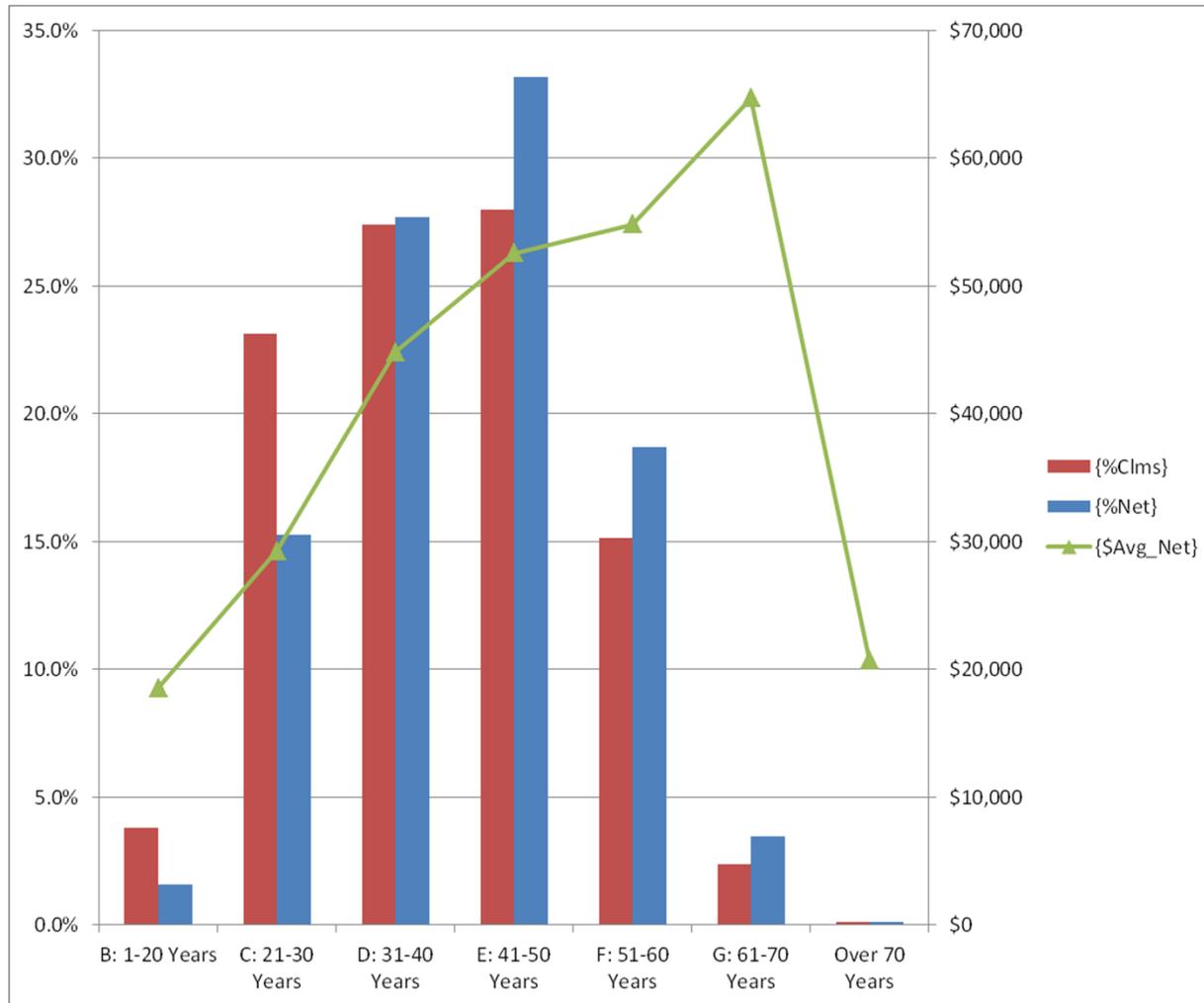
Tenure	% Claims	% Loss Cost
Less than 1 year	51%	53%
1 to 5 years	29%	28%
Over 5 years	20%	19%

## All Business Units

Tenure	% Claims	% Loss Cost
Less than 1 year	37%	36%
1 to 5 years	33%	33%
Over 5 years	30%	31%

Source: Zurich Workers' Compensation Closed Claims, Lost Time Claims 2003-2013

# Impact of employee tenure on lost time claim frequency



Source: Zurich Workers' Compensation Closed Claims, Lost Time Claims 2003-2013

# What changes occur as we age?

## Psychosocial

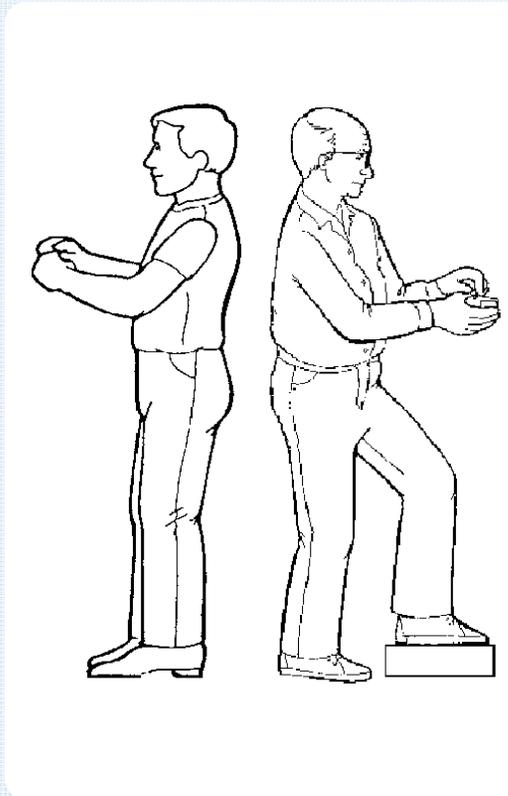
- **Shift preferences** – All shifts
- **Training and learning** – High speed problem-solving
- **Disenfranchisement and disengagement** – Less likely

## Physiological

- **O<sub>2</sub> exchange** – Maximum at 25-35 years
- **Respiratory** – Maximum at 25-35 years
- **Cardiovascular** – Maximum at 25-35 years
- **Blood pressure** – Best when younger
- **Fatigue** – Occurs less rapidly
- **Heat and cold** – Less challenging

## Physical

- **Strength** – Maximum at 25-35 years
- **Flexibility** – Maximum at 25-35 years
- **Balance** – Few problems
- **Sight** – Best when younger
- **Reaction time and speed** – Maximum, multi-taskers
- **Hearing** – Few problems
- **Manual dexterity and tactile feedback** – Higher when younger
- **Body fat** – Least when younger



## Psychosocial

- **Shift preferences** – Mornings, less shiftwork
- **Training and learning** – Structured training and education
- **Disenfranchisement and disengagement** – More likely

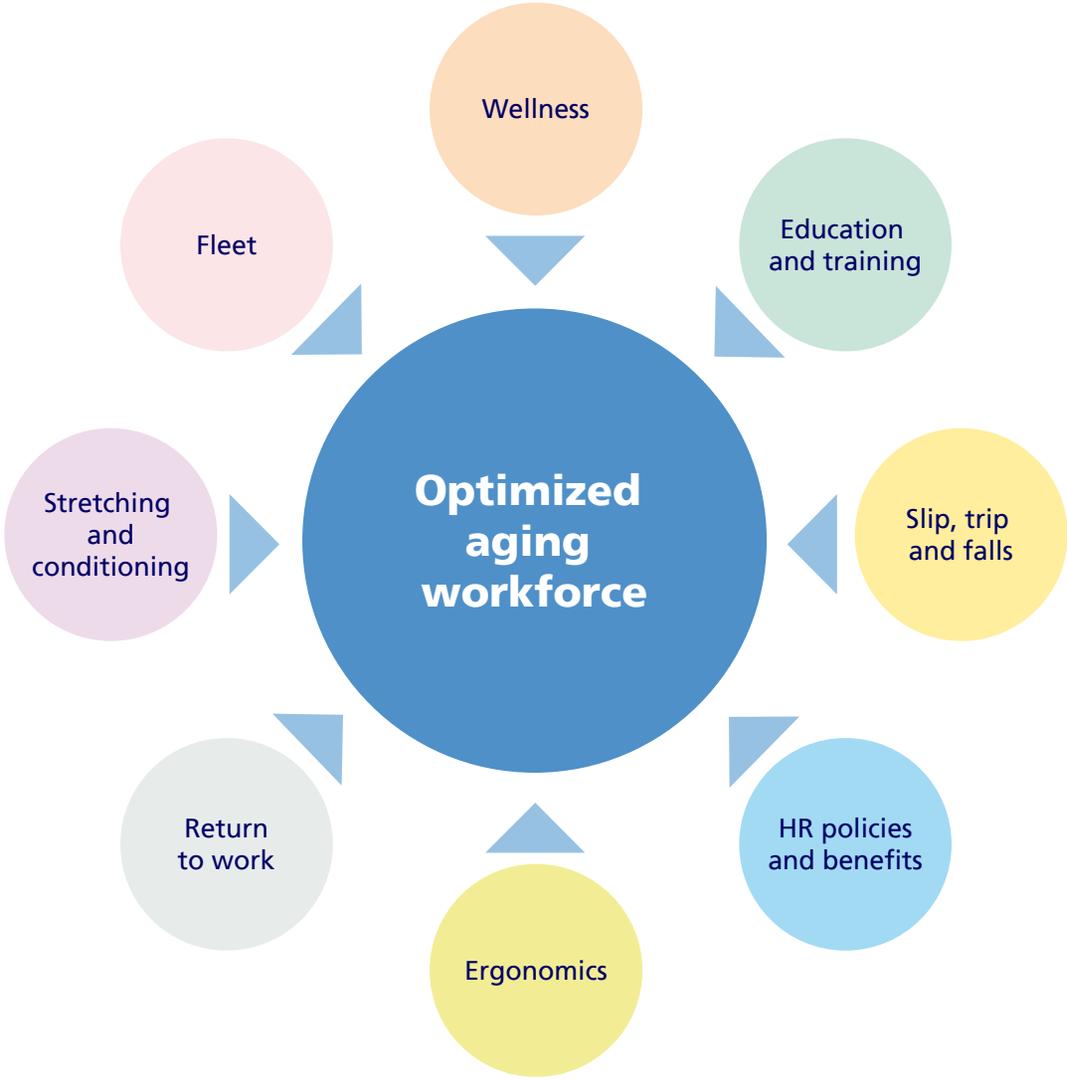
## Physiological

- **O<sub>2</sub> exchange** – 40% decrease at 65 years
- **Respiratory** – 25% less at 65 yrs, 50% less at 70 yrs
- **Cardiovascular** – 15-20% less at 65 yrs
- **Blood pressure** – increases
- **Fatigue** – Occurs more rapidly
- **Heat and cold** – More challenging

## Physical

- **Strength** – 25-30% decrease at 65 years
- **Flexibility** – 18-20% decrease at 65 years
- **Balance** – 1/3 of 65 years or older fall each year
- **Sight** – All aspects deteriorate
- **Reaction time and speed** – Decreases, low multi-tasking
- **Hearing** – 1/3 of 65-74 year olds have problems
- **Manual dexterity and tactile feedback** – Motor skills deteriorate
- **Body fat** – Increases

# Aging workforce strategies



# Hiring people fit for the job



- Use conditional offers combined with post-offer testing to help you validate applicant qualifications and assure successful job placement in compliance with employment law
    - e.g., drug and alcohol testing (be aware of specific federal and state laws), employee physicals, human performance evaluations, etc.
    - Not all post offer testing is the same
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# Stretching programs



## Why should we stretch?

- Construction involves a lot of physically intense labor – often performed by workers who are not in peak physical condition
- Construction workers should think of themselves as “industrial or construction athletes”
- The aging workforce is becoming a problem across all industries – pre-work stretching in order to help prepare the body for physical activity is one way to tackle this emerging issue

# Establish stretching routines

- Library (all-inclusive, master document)
- Leader's guides contain stretching routines (e.g., Monday – Friday)
- Each stretching routine contains a brief warm-up and 4-6 stretches
- Recommended that each stretch be held for a minimum of 15-30 seconds
- Ideally, stretching should take place before work begins in the morning, again after lunch before work resumes, and at the end of each workday as a "cool down", if possible
- Stretching sessions are best when led by designated, trained "stretching leaders"



## Return to Work Programs

### Example 1 – nonprofit placement

- Worker profile: Laborer, age 49, male
  - Diagnosis : Back strain
  - DOI: 8/8/2012
  - Restrictions: Lift / carry up to 15lbs, stand / walk 4-6 hours, sit 1-3 hours, occasional bending / squatting / twisting; cannot work more than 6 hours/day
  - Placement date: Scheduled for 11/6/2012
  - Placement opportunity: Ventures Unlimited – accepting and processing donations; small product assembly of valves and bird food items
  - Result: The injured worker showed for his assignment on the scheduled start date; 6 weeks later he was released from care with no restrictions and was able to return to his pre-injury position with his employer
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# Return to Work Programs

## Example 2 – nonprofit placement



- Worker profile: Asphalt truck driver, age 63, male
  - Diagnosis : Ruptured biceps and tendinitis
  - DOI: 9/6/2011
  - Restrictions: No lifting over 15lb with right arm
  - Placement date: Scheduled for 9/24/2012
  - Placement opportunity: Lighthouse of Oakland County – answer incoming telephone calls, greet visitors, other related duties within restrictions
  - Result: After not showing for his assignment Zurich rescheduled it and gave the employee another opportunity to comply; adjuster was able to stop indemnity benefits due to the employee turning down the alternative work assignment; total savings: \$23,667.66
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# Questions

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