



aCE talentNET - Flexibility a winner

As the Executive Director of an Organisational Development consultancy with its major focus on the engagement of contractors and consultants for all stages of a project, Denise Hall is practically an expert on management consultant brokering and facilitating business relationships. It is refreshing, but perhaps not surprising, therefore, to see she is mastering the art of recruitment and retention within her own organisation, and everyone is a winner.

Tips from aCEtalentNET:

- older mothers can be highly effective in the workplace – just make sure the conditions are right for them.
- staff value flexibility and work-from-home opportunities

Attracting your employee of choice

One of the main recruitment strategies Denise, and her business partner Deirdre Grueters, has used to great effect has been a concerted effort to target a market all-too-often overlooked – women in their 40s and 50s. Denise affectionately refers to these as 'entrepreneurial mothers', those who seek the challenges, stimulation and remuneration offered by work, but only if it is accompanied by a level of flexibility that allows them to raise a family or pursue other life goals. Denise has structured her organisation to provide her staff with all of these incentives.

Part-time employees, long-term results

A remarkable feature of aCE talentNET's workforce is no employee works more than four days a week. This was a deliberate ploy, not only to attract the target candidates, but also to ensure their work was flexible enough for them to stay on in the long-term. Among the flexible options offered by Denise include the option to work from home, which is a hit with busy mothers who are committed to work but also have big family responsibilities to attend to. Of course, the work still needs to be done, but as long as the work is done, Denise is happy, regardless of where it is done. And that's one thing Denise has found – the work is done. 'Entrepreneurial mothers' are nothing if not reliable.

A focus on training

Employees are also often willing to take advantage of professional development and training opportunities. To illustrate, Denise's bookkeeper, although competent, wanted to hone her expertise in the popular accounting package, QuickBooks. She found a suitable course, enrolled in it and completed it, all of which aCE was happy to partially fund. As a result, her employee is happier and more comfortable with her position, and Denise, of course, benefits by having a better bookkeeper.

With a young daughter of her own, Denise Hall is a very successful 'entrepreneurial mother' in her own right. As a business-owner and manager, Denise says she would like to be known as a decision-maker, a calculated risk-taker, an enabler in terms of service delivery, and someone who improves the lives of her employees. If her HR policies mean anything, she is certainly on the right track.