

idea corner

The Human Touch in Retirement

For the past 8 years, I've had the first-hand experience of being involved in retirement consultation with more than 100 Extension staff in Minnesota. In addition, my wife, Maureen, and I

have planned and conducted 5 retirement planning workshops in which more than 150 staff and spouses have participated.

The learning objectives of our workshop are for participants to:

1. Learn about and become aware of: retirement in our society, adult life stages and the aging process, retirement annuity and financial planning, health and well-being, post-retirement employment, and living location and arrangement.
2. Assess and analyze own situation on the topics presented.
3. Make plans and decisions in advance of retirement so retirement years will be as satisfying as possible.

The provision of retirement planning resources in our society is important because:

- 1, *The act of retirement is a significant life event which to some degree will cause anxiety and stress and will necessitate considerable adjustment in lifestyle and pattern of living.*
2. *Most people have ambivalent feelings about retirement that are generated from the many generalizations, and some myths, about retirement. So, one doesn't know if he/she should look forward with great anticipation to retirement or if it should be dreaded and avoided at all costs.*
3. *The term retirement, the act of retirement, and the period of life called retirement are all closely associated in our thoughts with the aging process. A successful transition into and adjustment to retirement requires knowledge*

about and acceptance of the aging process.

4. *Under the best of circumstances, coming to grips with the retirement decision is quite stressful and under the worst of circumstances can be almost immobilizing.*

Therefore, providing for retirement planning resources can be very helpful during this decision-making process and in maintaining the productivity of the employee during the final years of his/her career.

Also, providing retirement planning resources is too often limited to individual consultations and usually the consultations are limited to a computation of the retirement pension and the related benefits one can expect in retirement.

Our experience with planning, conducting, and evaluating retirement planning workshops (for staff members and spouses) has convinced us that group sessions are an essential part of a more complete package of retirement planning resources.

The objectives for a workshop can best be achieved if: (1) the opportunity to attend is available as early as age 45 or 50, (2) spouses are encouraged to attend, (3) the workshop is conducted in a relaxed setting such as a conference or resort hotel, (4) at least 2 days are used to provide time for the participants to become fully immersed in the topic, (5) the content includes a variety of retirement planning issues, and (6) a variety of teaching/learning methods are used.

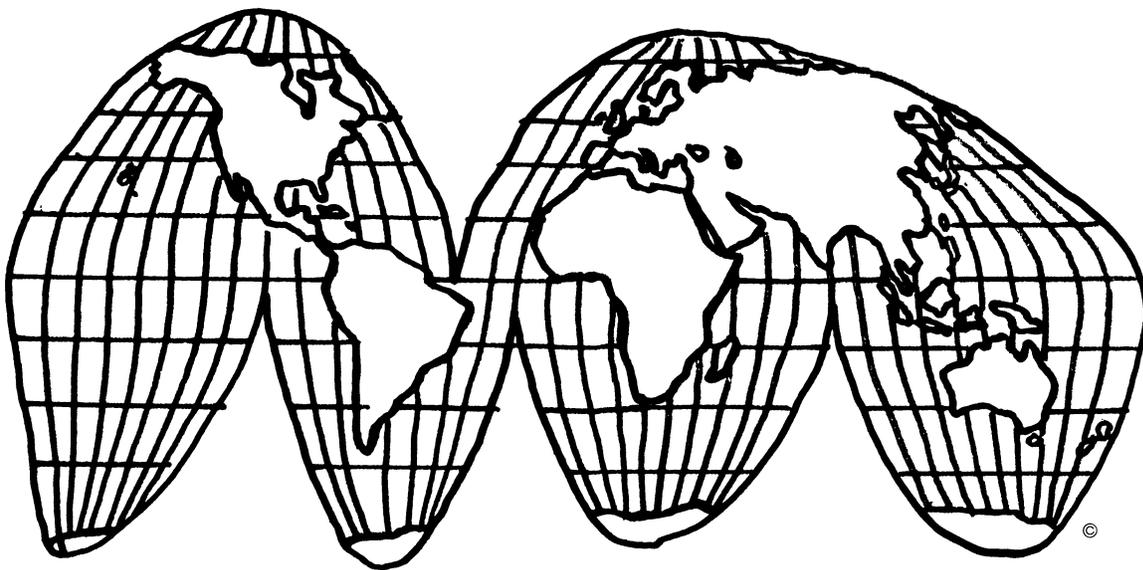
The expected outcomes of providing retirement planning resources are also important to keep in mind: (1) employees and their families have

the opportunity to make retirement plans and decisions from a more informed and realistic knowledge base and (2) excellence in job performance is more adequately maintained during the final years of employees' careers.

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