

Essay about Concerns of Contingent Workers

Changes in the employment arena in the recent past brought about a need for a new category of workers. Changes like; stagnating wages, outsourcing, globalization (opening of borders) and rising costs of doing business, prompted the need for contingent workers (Dietz, 2012). Their role not only lowers the operating costs, but also augments the manpower as the need arises.

Temporary employees only work seasonally; until the completion of an undertaking. They also function as **temporary replacements** for other workers who could be incapacitated. They are seasonal, employed when the need for their services arises. In some instances, temporary workers fill definite roles by bringing in special expertise (Dixon, 2009). The nature of the employer-employee relationship determines how both parties interact and hence, benefit from each other. Because of the temporary nature of these engagements and the need for employment, certain misfortunes befall contingent workers.

Their job tenure is shaky this makes their positions unsecure and unstable. The intermittent basis, from casual, fixed-term or temporary agency workers; result in physical and psychological stress. Emotional and financial concern plague contingent workers; putting down a deposit for fixed assets such as homes proves difficult. Thus, long-term planning is often inconceivable.

Contingent workers' job descriptions are at times risky. Injury to permanent employees results in **lawsuits and high settlements**, therefore, temporary contractors undertake such risks instead. Lack of safety training and protective gear expose them to hazardous situations.

According to (Dixon, 2009), contingent workers earned 67% of the average hourly rate of permanent employees. Despite the working hours and risk involved, they receive a fraction of their counterparts. Poor wages are especially evident in temporary blue-collar workers **in production and transportation**, who earn 20-30% less than permanent employees.

Contingent workers are slaves to varying working hours. Their schedule changes depending on the employer's decision; from how long to which days of the week. Planning for anything in advance is an exercise in futility for temporary workers.

Temporary workers miss out on benefits. Health insurance, bonuses, paid leave and employer sponsored training are not available to them, only a small percentage; Dixon, 2009, puts it at 18%. Lack of time-off leaves them exhausted while lack of training makes them uncompetitive in the job market.

It is beneficial to companies relying on contingent workers for one thing or another to **address these issues**; which will translate to increased quality and productivity from satisfied employees. Employers have several avenues of addressing these issues.

Allowing temporary workers to join unions enables them to air out their issues through the Collective Bargaining process. Orderly representation of their grievances and the willingness of employers to listen results in a mutually beneficial outcome. Items such as workers' compensation for those injured on the job ensure a fall back net for temporary workers. Creating a non-retaliatory environment for speaking up, eases tension; employees can voice their dissatisfaction (Schnitzler & Krupman, 2000).

Equal pay for equal work; whether permanent or not, if people do the same job then they **deserve the same pay**. Adoption of this policy strengthens the relations between employers and contingent workers. On the job training programs and regular rotations will further reduce complacency at the workplace and provide temporary employees **with needed skills**.

The relationship between temporary worker and their employer need not be imbalanced. Both parties have the capacity to meet each other's' expectations, resulting in a legally binding mutually symbiotic engagement.

References

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