

Paid Time Off - A New Idea? - by Anne Howard

It is easy to say that the new focus on providing workers with more paid time off is the consequence of two converging forces. The first force; the aging baby boomers whose priorities are shifting and, the second and more significant force; the incredible impact of technology on how, where, and when work is and can be done. In reality, the push for paid time off has been there since the beginning of the industrial era.

When it comes to paid time off, the idea that employees are capable of making decisions that are good for the organization for which they work as well as for themselves may be taking root. The conservative approach - traditional vacation statutory holiday, casual sick time and personal days off policies are getting rolled into Paid Time Off banks, creating flexibility for when and how time can be taken. They also transfer responsibility for how the defined amount of Paid Time Off is used to the employee.

The more radical approach is to turn the responsibility for the amount of Paid Time Off employees take over to the employee. For this approach to work there are some key attributes that must exist both organizationally and individually.

On the organizational level there has to be:

- A culture of mutual respect and trust;
- A real belief that rested people with balanced work and rejuvenation time are the most productive people;
- A type of work that is not sequential task based work;
- The workplace must really encourage and support people taking the time off they need – not just say it and;
- Leaders who are true role models.

On the individual level there has to be:

- An understanding of the importance of the contribution the individual makes to company success;
- Understanding of the impact of one's actions on others;
- A strong commitment to the work and results the individual delivers to customers/clients;
- A high degree of personal responsibility and accountability.

