



# **Age management status of companies in Baltic Sea Region**

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## How age management was studied

### Facilitating partners

- ✓ GER: WAK & BWH
- ✓ FIN: Prizztech
- ✓ LAT: SSE Riga
- ✓ LIT: SCCIC, NRDA, KTU
- ✓ SWE: NLL

Responsible for the cooperation and interventions done with the lighthouse organisations

### Scientific partners

- ✓ FIN: Aalto University SBC
- ✓ POL: Gdansk University of Technology
- ✓ LAT: SSE Riga

Responsible for studying the age management status of lighthouse organisations before and after interventions among employees and managers + cost benefits of age management

### Advisory council

- ✓ FIN: Juhani Ilmarinen, Marjo Wallin
- ✓ SWE: Roland Kadefors
- ✓ NOR: Åsmund Lunde
- ✓ GER: Peter Domschke, Hans Manzke
- ✓ POL: Dariusz Gobis
- ✓ LAT: Anders Paalzow

Long term experience and expertise in age management, evaluation and support during project

## Age management studied during project

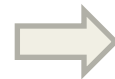
### Start situation

Employee  
Questionnaire

+

In depth  
interviews for  
management

= *information  
about age  
management  
areas that  
require  
strengthening*



### Interventions

Activities to  
improve age  
management  
practices

*External advisors  
kept diaries during  
change activities,  
organisational  
reactions etc.*



### Change

Employee  
questionnaire  
repeated

+

Management in  
depth interviews  
repeated

+

Cost benefit analysis

= *Did change occur  
as a result from  
interventions*

# Employee questionnaire

✓ 5 countries / 8 organisations / 864 respondents

✓ Themes:

Work engagement

Health and ability to function

Age management in your organisation

Questions about respondents and their organisation

Questions about retirement

Background data (age, gender, years at work etc.)

## Versatile response

✓ Equal gender ratio

women 53%, men 47%

✓ Equal age division

18-34yrs / 35-44yrs / 45-54yrs / 55yrs +

I

II

III

IV

23%

26%

22%

29%

✓ Superior responsible employees among respondents 13%

## Age management status before interventions

- ✓ Employees are motivated, generally happy with their work, aware of their own tasks, workload and wellbeing as well as skilled in giving feedback
- ✓ Weaknesses lie in personal health; nutrition as well as amount and quality of exercise
- ✓ Everyone challenged by turning theory into practice: employees aware of age management related procedures but application of those unclear

# Examples of results from 3 organisations

## Organisation 1

Start situation: general happiness with work, workload and wellbeing

After interventions: better evaluations of physical health, nutrition, sleep + employer's support in promoting healthy lifestyles and impact of health to workability and longer careers.

Intervention activities: **physical wellbeing, nutrition, active lifestyles and participation of employees to activities**



# Examples of results from 3 organisations

## Organisation 2

Start situation: High confidence in personal condition and health, but leaning age structure towards ageing – employees aware of the challenge

After interventions: personal wellbeing remained, but even stronger awareness of age structural challenge + decrease in work engagement + uncertain answers regarding aged and ageing employees

Intervention activities: age management education across organisation, strategies to allow ageing employees to work longer, shared responsibility over personal wellbeing

# Examples of results from 3 organisations

## Organisation 3

Start situation: moderate opinions over everything, no extreme differences of opinion, good knowledge over rehabilitation procedures

After interventions: changed assessments of personal health, more exercise, better nutrition, confusion about aged and ageing employees + difficulty to see changes in organisational level

Intervention activities: **age management & wellbeing at work education**, active dialogue about improving working environment, **communication about age management activities**

## Conclusions

- ✓ Basic things and requirements improved in work wellbeing: better nutrition, more exercise, amount of rest etc., but also awareness of own physical/mental condition increased
  
- ✓ Employees have difficulty in identifying everyday- related changes on employer/ manager- level
  - increased awareness of age management has increased expectations
  
- ✓ Middle management unsure when applying procedures into practice

## **In-depth interview with managers**

## Respondents

F		M		Total	
33	18	28	8	61	26

The interviews were conducted with managers representing different levels

- CEO, CFO, HR directors, project managers

**Average experience in management: app. 16 years**

## Interview scenario

- 18 open questions in 1st wave
- 10 open questions – in 2nd wave

Themes:

- organization's demographic situation (actually and in 3-5 years) and its influence on its market position
- characteristics of candidates most important in recruitment process as well as contract's termination
- strengths of employees 55+ and it's utilization
- intergenerational knowledge transfer methods
- methods/forms of older employees potential usage
- solutions to motivate and encourage seniors to continue working longer

# Managers opinions before intervention

Age was not spontaneously mentioned as a factor taken into account during the recruitment process and contract's termination but **managers „think” about it while evaluating employee**

*If you need to have an employee with a lot of experience he/she can't be very young.*

*No, not important but I would think twice hiring a 60 years old*

*I would fire retirement-age persons first*

*Practice shows that better to keep older employee, who has been working many year in institution.*

**Managers are aware of the strengths of older workers, as well as recognize and assess them positively**

**Still, there are organizations which do not have any procedures to utilize those strengths**

*I do not know. Intentionally – not*

*Not in some special way*

*It is not sufficient, how the strengths are used*



**Managers are aware of age structure in their organizations, notice the possibility of losing key competencies because of older workers retirement**

**Still, there is a lack of solutions for encouraging and supporting older workers, as well as promoting their longer professional activity**

*I didn't notice any such solutions.*

*Bureaucratic obstacles don't allow for the implementation of such solutions.*

*I haven't heard about such solutions. On the contrary, I have heard that to reduce the costs, such personnel should retire and pass on the work to younger workers, as they are cheaper.*

**Does the intervention change anything in LO?**

## **Age and recruitment**

In both rounds of the research the vast majority of participating managers declared that age is not an important characteristic when choosing a candidate for a job. In the second round the percentage of such responses was higher (81% compared to 62% in the first round).

## **Age and employee assessment in the context of their dismissal**

In both rounds of the research the vast majority of managers declared that age is not an important characteristic when evaluating an employee in the context of the decision to terminate the contract of employment. In the second round the percentage of such responses was higher (86% compared to 67% in the first round).

## **Equality of employees on grounds of age**

In both rounds of the research the vast majority of the managers declared that ensuring equality among employees on grounds of age is important. In the second round the percentage of responses indicating the importance of this issue was higher (84% compared to 70% in the first round).

## **Ensuring equal treatment of workers on grounds of age in the Lighthouse Organizations**

In both rounds of the research half of the surveyed managers declared ensuring equal treatment on grounds of age in their organizations. In the second round the percentage of responses indicating such activity slightly decreased (52% compared to 56% in the first round).

## Awareness of the risk of losing the organization's key competencies

In both rounds of the research most managers pointed to the risk of losing the organization's key competences due to the retirements. In the second round the percentage of responses indicating the importance of this issue was higher (85% compared to 64% in the first round).

## The strengths of workers aged 55+

In both rounds of the research managers declared that they recognize the strengths of employees aged 55+ and assess them positively. The most commonly indicated main categories of the advantages cited in both rounds of the study were *competences and individual characteristics*.

## Sample of managers' answers before/after intervention

Q2C. Sometimes, in the case of staff reduction procedures, one of the characteristics taken into consideration is age. What do you think about it? Is age an important characteristic in that situation? Why?

*Yes. Can be, you might want to "save" a 30 year old employee instead of aged 60*

*No. The experience and competences are the most important*

Q11. Which areas of your company's special competence might be disappearing through retirements within the next 3-5 years?

*People are not irreplaceable. Retired employees will be replaced by others that are prepared in advance. So, those areas will continue to be developed*

*Yes, some of the skills and competences may disappear. Such as diligence, ability to work well for relatively lower salary, works thoroughness and punctuality*

## Final reflections from the research

The managers are not always aware of the ongoing demographic changes in the environment and their consequences, do not always have the knowledge related to the age management ideas, tools and methods associated with this concept – they may need professional, external assistance

The implementation of the idea of age management in an organization requires time – it's difficult to identify changes after short period of time but it does not mean nothing has changed

Solutions in the area of age management should be selected and adjusted according to the situation of the organization - engagement of employees and managers is required

The choice of approaches to age management and their effectiveness is affected by socio-economic conditions in the environment of the organization – difficulties in results comparison

**Thank you for your attention!**

**Further information:**

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