CGM Software

Age
Management
Masterclass

Have a look at 28 good practice examples that have been collected from various EU countries and take an inspiration for your work.

Examples are suitable for human resource managers implementing age management measures in their companies.

Examples may also serve as a training tool for teachers, trainers and lecturers at various educational facilities.

All case studies are available at: https://www.amm-project.eu/

Age Management Masterclass

Organization

CGM Software Romania

Interview with Mr. Alexandru Cobjuc, manager of CGM Software Romania in the general headquarters of Iasi offices.

Sector

Quaternary: knowledge-based part of the economy (information technology)

Specialization

CGM Software Romania is part of the global eHealth CompuGroup Medical SE, a provider with a comprehensive portfolio of cutting-edge IT solutions for the healthcare industry. They support all types of medical and organizational activities in doctors' offices, pharmacies, laboratories and hospitals. CGM helps these organizations improve efficiency, optimize care and increase patient satisfaction while also improving profitability. Thus, the company puts itself entirely at the service of the healthcare providers, physicians, pharmacists, laboratories, and hospitals. The vision: to make their work increasingly easy and enriching.

Iasi office employs approx. 200 employees.

Web-site

https://www.cgm.com

Main motives for the decision to implement the age management measures

All the measures mentioned (such as continuous training, the flexible program, the teambuilding program … and many more!) are belonging to the IT industry itself. Consider the fact that this is a new industry that came up with a new approach on work and on how to stimulate the employee to remain committed, productive and satisfied with the work. Of course, money is important but these other measures are actually now making the difference between companies. In IT there is a high level of competition for the best human resource recruitment and the market is very dynamic. Therefore, we had to come up with additional features of the working package. These features are – on one hand, demanded by the employees themselves and others are part of our organisational culture and policy in approaching work and business.

I think that these measures are motivating our employees as they can compare them with other offers or previous jobs they had.

We also consider that the IT industry is dynamic in workforce flow – employees are used to change their working places and to continuously hunt or be hunted by other IT companies; that is why they are well informed about other offers on the market and they can actually choose the benefits that fit most with their needs.

We cannot speak about seniors working in our company but the age range increased from 25 to around 30 – this means that the needs of our employees are different than those of a younger age. Most of our employees had added other social roles to their status: they have families, a first or second child – this year many of our employees celebrated having their second!

Age management dimension

Learning, training and lifelong learning:

- special efforts to motivate learners, establish methodologies and provide support;
- systematic evaluation;
- specific provisions in providing leave;

- analysing the skills needs of the organisation, matching these with the available skills and individual educational status of older employees and utilising them in the methodology and contents of training;
- continual monitoring of an employee's educational status;
- defining training opportunities as being an integral part of career planning and not solely as job.

Flexible work time practices:

- the adjustment of shift schedules.

Comprehensive approaches:

- an emphasis on preventing age management problems (Team Building Program).

Health protection&promotion:

- regular health checks;
- training supervisors and key workers in health management techniques;
- ergonomic workplace (re)design.

Our way towards the age management

Our management is organised in sectors – in programming we have front-end, back-end and QA, plus several smaller sectors. The budget is distributed per employee and each sector has a total budget corresponding to the number of the employees. Leaders of these sectors are making the annual evaluation of each employee (it's happening at the beginning of each year, till April). Evaluations will give information on the training needs of each employee, what they need to grow and become more and more proficient. The company pays for the professional certifications; the employee only has to invest time in order to learn. It's a win-win situation.

Personal development includes both technical skills and soft skills. On soft skills, most demanded are: communication, leadership, languages (English, German, and Italian). We were not so successful with the German courses but of course, English is mandatory because the working teams are mixed, we work together with Germans, Austrians, Americans, Italians, Dutch and they all have to speak in English.

The flexible working time is based on the monthly working hours and not considering at all a daily schedule. There are employees who come at work very early in the morning, at 6.30 – 7.00 a.m. and there are other employees who come later, at 10.00 or 11.00. During the day, the most important and mandatory are the meetings with the working teams – which are programmed in advance but require mandatory attendance. For the rest of the time, the program is as flexible as it can be. Employees can take a shorter or longer lunch break (even 1 – 2 hours, if they want). The only important thing is that by the end of the month, those 160 working hours are covered. Another add-on to this program is the 2 days per month of work from home. If you have a situation (such as a sick child or some other emergency), you announce to the company that you will stay home and this is all. You will attend the mandatory meetings using the video. We have a very positive feed-back on this feature and there are more and more employees wanting more days of working from home. The IT market is also encouraging this, it's a trend. We will see in time how this will evolve.

For students working with us (and we have a good number of students employees) we have part-time working jobs for 4-6 hours and they can use the flexible working time for reaching courses and labs at the faculties. Also, they can ask for one month of vacation when they need it to have final exams at the universities they study.

The internship program includes 30 people each year. The program lasts 3 months, plus 1 month and a half of theory and practice then they can choose to stay with the company as employees.

The teambuilding program is aiming to make the working team function better, to ease the communication and the cooperation in order that those teams become more and more productive. It is a highly valued program and it's entirely at the decision of the team leader how they manage this program. There is a monthly budget, aimed at financing joint lunches or other common activities. Teams can decide to spend that budget like this or to organise a week-end break each trimester, usually somewhere in Romania, where they can enjoy also visiting new places and discovering the countryside. It's completely up to each team to decide the way they organised these

team building programs, they are informal and they do not follow a precise structure, imposed by the company. It's a program for employees, designed by the employees themselves, according to their needs and interests.

Some other incentives to encourage fidelity and stability of our employees:

- Each employee gains 1 extra day of vacation for each working year with the company
- Employees get private pensions paying, after 3 years of work within the company

Strengths and weaknesses of our approach

Flexible working hours

Employees can work their own pace and this makes them feel more comfortable at work and increases efficiency, productivity and responsibility. The working from home policy is trending now too but for this we need to be a little cautious because sometimes the employees understand this concept in a different way so they must understand that work is work, even if they do it from home.

Continuous training

Improving competencies and skills in the IT industry is a must so encouraging people to continuous learning is very important and financing their achievements in competences makes them more professional and move from entry levels to senior levels. Of course, there is always the risk that after investing in people they leave for another company but the benefits of training people are higher than the risks of losing them.

The team building program

This program is bringing an important added value to the communication and cooperation within the working teams. We may not design these team building programs in a very strict and controlled way but precisely this liberty of each team to construct their own programs is the strongest point. The risk is that we may encourage creating small closed groups within the company but the main interest is that each working team functions smoothly and effectively.

"Aha" moment

Each office of CGM is functioning independently – activities, budgets, everything. At European level, for example, I attended several meetings of the Union and there were occasions when representatives from the other countries demanded certain benefits for employees. Each time the argument was that it is not a global issue, there are only issues of a global nature at European level and there are no individual issues or requirements discussed. Each unit makes a separate budget; they have sales, receipts and expenses.

Does that mean that the other branches don't think they should spend the budget for something like that?

They think they should, and they want to, but they depend on how the general manager designs the budget, that's exactly what the respective representatives of the employees demanded, more benefits, training, personal development budget, but it depends on each one.

How did CGM Romania get it?

We didn't get it… We created it! ... It was not a question of "this is what we want from you as management" but since we have increased from 3 employees to 200 today, we have organized our own budget as we thought it is appropriate. And it became a bit grounded, these are the expenses, this is the budget, once a year, of course we make that budget for the next year, and we include all these expenses for all our programs for the employees and the general management accepts it, of course, with adjustments. As long as we somehow make a profit at the end of the year, we manage our budget the way we consider it best fits with what we need here.

Activities to sustain this initiative

Each year all these programs are embedded in the budget and they are provisioned for the next year. Each office of CGM is functioning independently – activities, budgets, everything. Since we have increased from 3 employees to 200 today, we have organized our own budget as we thought it is appropriate. And it became a bit grounded, these are the expenses, this is the budget, once a year, of course we make that budget for the next year, and we include all these expenses for all our programs for the employees and the general management accepts it, of course, with adjustments. As long as we somehow make a profit at the end of the year, we manage our budget the way we consider it best fits with what we need here.

Monitoring system of the effects

We have annual evaluations of each employee – which are managed by each team leader. These evaluations offer us information on the needs of the employees and their performance within the company and they are also helpful to evaluate the continuous training program, the teambuilding program or the flexible working time. Direct feed-back is also highly valued from all our employees and we get it on each occasion we can.

The simple fact that we grew very much from a small team of 3 employees to almost 200 shows that we do a very good job and that we found our place as an important office for CGM global company and as a significant employer in the local IT market.

Beneficial effects of the initiative

Increased motivation and wellbeing of the employees is the main effect of the team building program. It's important for them to know that the company is interested in keeping them happy, satisfied and willing to do a good job! Also, the teambuilding program makes good marketing for the company – employees talk with other people – family, friends – and this is good to spread the word about CGM in the community. Thus, we become more attractive for potential employees, trainees and interns.

The continuous training program teaches important skills – both technical and soft skills – to our employees and increases the efficiency of the working teams. Compared with other colleagues in Europe, I can say that our members are skilful and determined to work well.

The flexible working time is actually increasing productivity – each employee works at their own pace and working from home helps them in being confident that if something happens (like an emergency situation in the family), they can stay home.

Personal recommendation

Caring for your employees is not easy and costs a lot of money. Beyond money, you need lots of patience and time to work with people. And I think that the most important aspect that made the difference is that I treated people as people and not as resources. Sometimes it's hard and frustrating, growing from few people to hundreds means that you must dedicate a large amount of time for those people. But without doing so, I am sure we would not be here now. I think that this made the difference.

So, just be human, nothing more!

Erasmus+: Age Management Masterclass
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