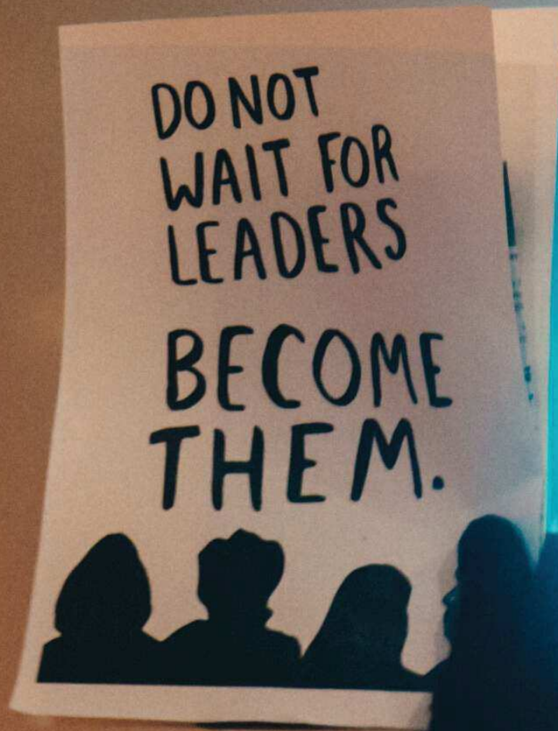


Berner



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/>



© 2021 Age Management Masterclass

Company

Berner Ltd

Mehiläinen (Berner Ltd's current occupational health care provider)

Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Company

Sector

Secondary: manufacturer of hygiene products, detergents and plant protection products as well as ethanol and solvent-based products.

Specialization

Berner Ltd, established in 1883, is a manufacturer of hygiene products, detergents and plant protection products as well as ethanol and solvent-based products. In addition, the company acts as a wholesaler of branded products into the Finnish market. In Finland, the company employs 380 people, with an average age of 44 years. Eighty-three employees are over 55 years old, with 54 of these over 58 years. This group is engaged in tasks ranging from office work to shift work in a manufacturing plant as well as work in logistics.

As it is a family-owned business, good management and the wellbeing of staff have always been key concerns. The company has a history of best practice in this area, from its inaugural profit-sharing scheme in 1946, to the provision of shorter working weeks, longer maternity leave and comprehensive healthcare for its workers. Berner created a structured age management programme in 2010. This came from the identification of its ageing workforce, as well as the wide retirement age range in Finland, 63–68 years. As well as continuing its tradition of employee wellbeing, the programme allowed better prediction of and planning for changes in staff resources.

Berner Ltd's age management programme forms part of its general wellbeing policy for all employees. Its activities complement more traditional health and safety activities such as risk assessment and prevention measures.

Age management dimension

Health protection and promotion, and workplace design

- ergonomic workplace (re)design

Learning, training and lifelong learning

- using older employees and their particular qualifications both as facilitators of further education for older and younger employees, and as an organizational 'knowledge' - silent knowledge

Comprehensive approaches

- an emphasis on preventing age management problems

Expected result

Berner Ltd's age management programme aims to improve the working environment and retain older workers. The programme applies to employees aged 55 years or more. Specific programme objectives are:

- to develop and promote age management through increasing age-related expertise at management level;
- to reinforce a positive approach to age and ageing at individual and community levels;
- to ensure that the experience of senior employees is transferred to successors;
- to maintain the working and functional capacity, resources and motivation of senior employees;
- to value the experience, expertise and commitment of senior employees; and
- to reduce company retirement costs by reducing the number of employees retiring early on grounds of incapacity.

Main motives for the decision to implement the age management measures

Because of the age structure within the organisation, the city expects approximately 3–4% of its staff to move into retirement every year. With the older generation outnumbering the younger, the city sought to offset the potential future worker shortage by improving its age management practices. From 2003, the city has implemented an age management programme.

Our way towards the age management

The company steering group, HR KESU, began to develop the senior programme in 2009, as an integral part of the overall management strategy of the company.

The programme was planned and developed by HR KESU with the help of the Ilmarinen Mutual Pension Insurance Company. After the programme had been designed, mid-level management, senior employees, employee representatives and safety representatives helped to launch the programme through online and direct communication. Managers and senior employees were given information on the contents of the programme and senior workers were encouraged to take part in it.

Berner Ltd's age management programme comprises four distinct elements:

Management activities

The programme includes the following management activities:

- preparing a plan for inducting potential successors to managerial positions;
- preparing a career plan for ageing workers as part of their annual performance review;
- training managers on successful age management; and
- arranging mentoring/tutoring of younger employees by older employees to ensure knowledge transfer (including 'tacit knowledge', that gained from experience). Perhaps the biggest challenge in this area is for individual employees to identify the tacit knowledge that they carry, and to learn how to impart that knowledge to younger successors. Training of managers in general age management skills has helped in meeting this challenge.

Work community and work environment

Work community and work environment activities include:

- promoting awareness of age-related issues in departmental meetings as well as collective consultation days;
- distributing regular questionnaires to gain staff feedback;
- arranging tailored training sessions to ensure older employees remain up to date, for example in information technology and systems-related work;
- preparing a plan for inducting potential successors to older workers; and
- organising a seniors event on an annual basis to promote awareness of benefits available under the senior programme.

Individual work ability

The programme enhances and maintains the work ability of older workers in the following ways:

- making special working time arrangements where necessary, including the adoption of part-time retirement;
- making adjustments to job descriptions where necessary (for example replacing physically demanding tasks, such as lifting heavy objects, with lighter work tasks, or alternatively changing to another job position);
- providing staff who have reached 58 years, and who are committed to improving their health through physical activities, with the option of having the occupational healthcare provider prepare an individually tailored fitness programme (including annual fitness tests), biennial health checks and ergonomic workplace assessments;
- providing full-time staff who have reached 58 years, and who take part in the individual fitness programme (including the submission of a progress diary to their manager), the option to accumulate senior leave days on a sliding scale from 5 to 8 days depending on age; and

- o organising retirement training days together with the pension insurance company Ilmarinen and the occupational healthcare provider to raise awareness of the consequences of retirement and ageing, the accrual of pension with a longer career, and lifestyle strategies to offset ill-health and reduced functional ability.

The labour reserve

The labour reserve is a register of retired Berner Ltd employees who, at the time of their retirement, indicated their interest in being contacted for availability to participate in short-term assignments. These specific-purpose assignments include, for example, covering absence or during regular staff training. The register is updated on an ongoing basis and currently has 10 names on it.

Strengths and weaknesses of our approach

The following factors were significant contributors to the ongoing success of the programme:

- o Legal basis: legislation and policy in Finland promoting age management and sustainable employment;
- o Coordination of stakeholders and involvement of managers: consultative approach between management and workers, with awareness-raising and specific training for mid-level managers;
- o Management focus: age management as a key aspect of effective workplace resource management, particularly succession planning;
- o Motivation of staff: high level of participation by all staff in company-organised activities/schemes/training, thanks to the attractive measures implemented;
- o Diversity of measures: taking a systematic approach and adopting a range of measures at management, work station and individual levels;
- o External support: support from the external occupational health provider and pension insurer;
- o Culture of equality: mentoring programmes to ensure the transfer of knowledge that help younger workers to value the experience of their older colleagues.

Activities to sustain this initiative

Berner provides its employees with sport and cultural benefits and commuting benefits via the ePassi platform. (ePassi is a Finnish Payments system established in 2007. It's purpose is to support employee well-being. Instead of distributing sports vouchers, there was an idea of a payment system built around mobile phones. ePassi is the leading mobile payment solution for subsidized employee benefits.)

Monitoring system of the effects

Mehiläinen (Berner Ltd's current occupational health care provider) uses digital health and wellbeing survey tool integrated into a patient information system in the market that allows for generating valuable information about the wellbeing, health and work ability of the personnel to the management of a company. The data of the survey provides a framework for the management of working ability and occupational wellbeing.

The electronic occupational health survey is integrated into the patient information system, which can be used to provide valuable information to the individual and, at the group level, to the company's management, e.g. staff lifestyles, health status, mental well-being from work, work community, management of well-being at work, ability to work, workload, job satisfaction and work motivation.

The information produced by the survey, enriched with Mehiläinen's existing information and experience in various industries and the challenges typical of them, enables a comprehensive and cost-effective way to create a comprehensive view of the situation of all personnel.

The results of the survey are comprehensively reported to the individual and at the group level to company management and HR. On the basis of the current status definition created, a concrete plan can be created for needs-based services and their allocation to the entire staff, from managing work capacity risk to performance optimization.

Beneficial effects of the initiative

Berner Ltd's age management programme has proved successful.

Reduction in retirement costs: The number of persons retiring as a result of incapacity has been close to none in recent years, which, in turn, has kept retirement costs very low. The average retirement age has also increased to 64.5 years in 2012 from 63.5 in 2009 (compared with a 2012 national average of 60.9 years).

Reduced sick leave: Berner Ltd has a low rate of sick leave, 3%, with no great difference between leave taken by younger and older workers.

Programme participation: More than 90% of eligible staff make use of the individual fitness programme and annual fitness tests, which allows them to accrue senior leave days. Sixty-five percent of employees make use of the benefit of subsidised sports.

Employee satisfaction: The results of annual questionnaires on workplace wellbeing have indicated a high level of staff satisfaction in general, and with the age management programme in particular.

Recognition: In February 2013, Berner Ltd's programme won the National Working Life Award (Suomen työelämäpalkinto), a formal recognition presented every year to an organisation that has made an outstanding effort to improve working life and sets an example of best practice. The award is granted by the Fund for the National Working Life Award (Työelämäpalkinnon rahasto), which was set up by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra.

The company is continuing its commitment to improving the wellbeing of all of its staff. An age management programme for juniors (36 years and younger) was launched in 2013, with implementation scheduled for 2014.

Personal recommendation

The following aspects of the programme are transferable to other organisations of all sizes and sectors:


- career planning after the age of 55 as part of annual performance reviews;
- management training on age management;
- early succession planning and inductions;
- mentoring/tutoring of younger workers by older workers;
- job satisfaction questionnaires;
- targeted training of older employees;
- adjustable working arrangements (content and time);
- age awareness targeted at older employees as well as the wider working community.

Larger organisations would find it easy to adopt the subsidised sports activities, age-related individual fitness programmes, annual fitness tests, biannual health checks and senior leave days described here. Such measures, however, would be more difficult for small to medium-sized organisations to implement.

Based on:

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, Case study "Age management at Berner Ltd", 2016
Berner Ltd web page and image bank

Erasmus+: Age Management Masterclass
2018-1-CZ01-KA202-048133



Age Management Masterclass

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Die Unterstützung der Europäischen Kommission für die Erstellung dieser Publikation stellt keine Befürwortung des Inhalts dar und gibt nur die Meinung der Autoren wieder. Die Kommission haftet nicht für die weitere Verwendung der darin enthaltenen Informationen.

Această publicație a fost realizată cu sprijinul financiar al Comisiei Europene. Autorul este singurul responsabil pentru conținutul acestei publicații. Această publicație nu reprezintă punctul de vedere al Comisiei Europene, iar Comisia Europeană nu este responsabilă pentru utilizarea informațiilor conținute în ea.

Il sostegno della Commissione europea per la produzione di questa pubblicazione non costituisce un'approvazione del contenuto che riflette solo le opinioni degli autori, e la Commissione non può essere ritenuta responsabile per qualsiasi uso che può essere fatto delle informazioni contenute.

Tämä julkaisu on tuotettu Euroopan komission taloudellisella tuella. Kirjoittaja on yksin vastuussa tämän julkaisun sisällöstä. Tämä julkaisu ei edusta Euroopan komission näkemyksiä, eikä Euroopan komissio ole vastuussa sen sisältämien tietojen mahdollisesta käytöstä.

Tato publikace byla vytvořena za finanční podpory Evropské komise. Za obsah publikace odpovídá výlučně autor. Publikace nereprezentuje názory Evropské komise a Evropská komise neodpovídá za použití informací, jež jsou jejich obsahem.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union