

Zumtobel

The image shows a large, modern interior space, likely a museum or gallery. The ceiling is high and features a series of glass railings or walkways. The walls are white and minimalist. In the foreground, there is a large, red, modular sofa. To the right, there is a white, angular reception desk or counter. The floor is a dark, polished material. The overall atmosphere is clean, modern, and sophisticated.

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/>



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Company

Zumtobel Group AG

Sector

Secondary: lighting production

Specialization

The Zumtobel Group is a manufacturer of lighting and lighting management systems.

While the Zumtobel Group is headquartered in Dornbirn, Austria, it has offices in over 90 countries and 13 plants on four continents. With its core brands, Zumtobel, Thorn and Tridonic, the Group offers its customers around the world a comprehensive portfolio of products and services. This international strength provides the company with a strategic presence in every major global market, and also contributes to its cultural diversity.

Age management dimension

Comprehensive approaches:

- an emphasis on preventing age management problems;
- a focus on the entire working life and all age groups, not just older workers;
- a holistic approach that encompasses all dimensions of age management;

Expected result

Like many companies, Zumtobel recognizes that it needs to consider the issues arising from the ageing of its workforce. Following an analysis of the age structure of its workforce, the 'Health and Age Department' developed a comprehensive concept for health management targeting work ability and retention of younger and older age groups.

Zumtobel established a new Health and Age Department specifically to investigate and manage challenges associated with the ageing of its workforce through comprehensive analyses and solutions to improve company policies and practice.

An initial evaluation found that the largest group of employees in the company was in the 40-49 age range. The work ability assessment found that the work ability of 25 % of employees was either critical or only modest. In addition, Zumtobel had very few employees aged over 62.

The new department sought solutions for the following issues:

- How can the work ability of the largest group of employees (40-49 years) be maintained and improved?
- How can the company keep young workers?
- How can the company retain older employees (50-59 years) for longer?

Main motives for the decision to implement the age management measures

Based on the results of the analysis, the company aimed at implementing such measures that would provide appropriate care for all age groups to lower the fluctuation of employees.

The interest for the proper management of the employability of the older workers in the ZUMTOBEL group was aroused by the raising of the statutory age for retirement.

Our way towards the age management

To address these issues, the department planned and implemented changes to its policies and practices aimed at ensuring that employees were both physically able to continue working and willing to remain in the workforce for longer. It required management commitment, with the main goal being maintaining work ability, improving wellbeing for everyone through work organisation that enables healthy and active ageing, including skills management, training and coaching. The six areas requiring action identified by the department included:

- statutory workplace safety — ergonomic changes were made to workstations to ensure that workspaces were age appropriate;
- presence management — preventive and corrective support was introduced;
- workplace health promotion — employees were encouraged to exercise and this was supported by investing in electric bicycles to lease to employees, providing yoga classes and running a series of talks on fitness for work;
- leadership style and behaviour — training was introduced for team leaders that emphasized employee well-being, appreciation and recognition;
- occupational reintegration management — a procedure for the return to work of staff after long periods of absence was established, supporting staff through the transition back to work;
- generation management — measures were taken to remove any stigma from the term 'ageing' within the company, and the benefits of cooperation between young and old were emphasized.
- We attach great importance to individual career planning. That's why we give our employees the opportunity to choose flexible working time models.

Strengths and weaknesses of our approach

Strengths

- Great independence in time management is very much welcomed by the employees
- Stronger employee loyalty to the company
- Reintegration after long sick leave would not have been possible before
- The treatment of older colleagues is explicitly rated positively

Weaknesses

- High time and persuasive work in advance
- The individual employees want more feedback (positive as well as negative)
- The flow of information is sometimes very tough

"Aha" moment

The HR Central Division is responsible for the development and coordination of group-wide personnel activities, talent promotion or filling of key positions. These diverse tasks were not recognized by employees as a service or promotion of their situation in the workplace.

Several Shared Service and Competence Centers were therefore established in order to make personnel-related activities at the individual locations more visible and to be able to implement them.

Activities to sustain this initiative

The Shared Service Competence Centers are an integral part of the company system and ensure, that the issues of age management are not lost sight of.

In addition, an in-house digital learning management system with the title "myCAMPUS" was launched in 2018. This is available to all employees, regardless of age or gender.

In its annual report, the ZUMTOBEL Group regularly reports on measures to support age or generational management, as well as on the diversity of the staff structure.

Monitoring system of the effects

The company is committed to an extensive code of conduct. This covers all divisions and is available on the website.

The ZUMTOBEL Group is committed to complying with the core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In order to verify compliance with these standards, a comprehensive consultation is carried out annually with the directors of all subsidiaries worldwide, in which compliance must be confirmed. Other contents of the query include human rights, social services, health and safety of employees and many more. Many subsidiaries provide various voluntary social benefits, depending on the needs of local employees,

including grants or company offers for health, accident or life insurance. A separate whistleblowing system has been set up for breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The company is also committed to individual Sustainable Development Goals, such as SDG 3 "Health and Wellbeing", SDG 4 "High Quality Education", SDG 8 "Decent Work and Economic Growth" and some more. These are mentioned in detail on the website.

ZUMTOBEL also participates in the NESTOR^{GOLD} program of the Austrian Federal Government.

In the course of the NESTOR^{GOLD} process, companies and organizations receive instructions for dealing with challenges such as demographic change and digitalization. In addition, NESTOR^{GOLD} provides support for quality assurance and the promotion of a continuous process of improvement of intergenerational management as well as the public recognition of activities and programs for age and intergenerational justice. This seal of quality is checked every other year.

Beneficial effects of the initiative

All changes made to company practice were based on a comprehensive analysis by the Health and Age Department, ensuring that they were efficient and based on the company's real needs.

- All affected employees have been successfully reintegrated to the company since 2015 following extended periods of absence, in most cases following treatment for mental illness or cancer.
- Return-to-work meetings were introduced after periods of sickness to identify measures that the company could take to prevent further absences.
- Goals for optimum company-wide demographic development were defined for the business year 2016/17 and are currently being implemented.

Personal recommendation

We are an international lighting group and a leading supplier of innovative lighting solutions, lighting components and associated services. With our employees around the world, we design the future of lighting in an environment of creativity and technology. Our areas of expertise are very diverse and we all share the same passion.

We curiously discover new fields of work while tackling challenging tasks and responsibilities together. Every one of us makes an impact. Whatever career path you have in mind, we are sure that you will be able to live your fullest potential with us.

Quote:

Our employees represent our greatest potential. We want to acquire the right talents by offering more than just a job.

— Stefan Rauth, SVP Global Human Resources Zumtobel Group

Based on:

- the company web-page
- the annual report 2019
- the publication: Maintaining and improving work ability and retaining workers in manufacturing, Healthy Workplaces Good Practice Awards 2016-2017, **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2017**

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