

A photograph of three women in conversation. The woman on the left is wearing a black hat and has her face in soft focus. The woman in the middle is wearing glasses and is also in soft focus. The woman on the right is in sharp focus, wearing a dark, textured sweater. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm lighting.

# Frauenberufszentrum Oberpullendorf

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

---

FBZ - Frauenberufszentrum Oberpullendorf (Women's Vocational Center)  
Private Association in a direct collaboration with the local AMS (Labour Market Service Austria)  
Interview with Mrs. Sabine Hoschopf, Assistant of the Managing Director

## Sector

---

Quaternary: Adult Education

## Specialization

---

**FBZ** is located in the most Eastern Austria area, in the center of Burgenland, along the Hungarian border. It has a regular staff of 6 employees, mostly women with higher education (university degrees, college-diploma, high school diploma) and additionally hires freelance-trainers. Around 150 people take part in the courses every year, about 800 individual cases of coaching and career counseling are carried out annually.

FBZ regularly offers clearing sessions, career guidance, and competence-workshops to women at all ages (about 18 to 75) in two centers in Oberpullendorf. All offers are free of charge.

The target groups are:

- unemployed women, needing information about qualification or job opportunities;
- women who are looking for better jobs or working conditions;
- women stepping back to the labour market after times of (parental) leave;
- women with low or no qualification, without sufficient literacy abilities;
- women who are interested in technical professions or studies;
- female migrants with low or insufficient qualification;
- girls (pupils) looking for orientation about jobs and/or education;
- men and women 50 + who are looking for basic ICT knowledge.

All activities are organized in various forms and schedules, workshops, courses, evening classes, head-to-head guidance, etc. To match all the needs of the clients a workshop series called „To know, what I want“ including 9 modules, was created: digital skills, communication, self-expression, competencies, socializing; increasing my income; job application, interviews, job-advertisements; life-work-balance; to learn how to learn (strategies, learning type); project management & presentations.

## Age management dimension

---

### Flexible Working Time

- within a given frame from 7 am to 7 pm each employee can choose a tailor-made schedule for herself
- the working hours per week could also be discussed or individually changed

### Career development

### Job recruitment

- waiving age limits in job advertisements to encourage greater age diversity

### Learning, training and lifelong learning

- lifelong learning is part of the organization's philosophy, all staff is permanently encouraged to take part in further education or specialization

### Health protection and promotion, and workplace design

- ergonomic workplaces are installed

- preventive redeployment
- employee participation and education
- regular team meetings and supervision to keep mental stability
- using the program Fit2Work as a tool for team's health

Redeployment (after long periods of absence such as child-rearing or sick leave > part-time reintegration)

Comprehensive approaches:

- a homogeneous result with a heterogeneous team
- an emphasis on preventing age management problems

### Expected result

---

The FBZ age management follows the aims:

- to keep older staff and trainers active, so that their experiences, skills and competencies are not lost;
- to attract younger, well educated women to offer more diversity to our clients (younger and especially well educated people tend to work in Vienna instead of rural areas);
- to reduce sickness absence (which is already quite low, but always a threat, especially burnout is a danger for counselors).

FBZ puts a lot of effort in its working principles: Diversity / Holistic approach / Voluntary use of the counseling center's offers / Compliance with data protection law / Quality assurance.

### Main motives for the decision to implement the age management measures

---

We are a small association, founded in 1992, almost 30 years old. A few years ago, when the first of our employees were approaching retirement, we realized that we should be actively involved in this process. We didn't want to just let things happen, we wanted to deal with the topic of age and generations. We took the average age of our employees and found that almost all of them were the same age, between 40 and their mid-50s. When hiring new staff, we put the focus on younger applicants in their 30s. Possibly with the background of a local minority with a different mother tongue such as Croatian or Hungarian, for having a good mixture of age and culture as well.

We want to be an inclusive organization that reflects the diversity of our region. With a wide range of competencies and experiences that are reflected in age and appearance of our staff.

### Our way towards the age management

---

We started an organizational development process to see what is going well with age management, what could be better, how can we represent more diversity? It was important to create a space for discussion. It takes time and the attention of all employees to understand this process and to be part of it. If this is not the case, the process will bypass some employees and they will not support the decisions.

But it turned out that the whole team was very interested in the implementation of age management and they were willing to be part of it.

We worked on two strands:

First, we created a staff development plan for the next several years. How should our organization continue to grow, and which employees do we need for this?

Second, we made an inventory. How do I feel at work? Do I think it's a healthy workplace? Do I feel overwhelmed? Or under challenged? Do I want to change something? If yes, what? This inventory was conducted in confidential interviews based on the model of the "House of Working Ability". The results were presented and anonymized to the entire team. It showed that satisfaction and the ability to work are given to a high degree.

It is particularly important that the employees can work very independently, that they can use their skills, that there are flexible working hours, that it is possible to take vacation at short notice and that personal or family needs are taken very seriously.

Further findings were that all employees can develop further. Age does not matter. There is no age discrimination, neither for the elderly nor for the younger ones.

Support options for special needs were also presented: funding for height-adjustable tables, standing desks, daylight lamps or special office armchairs, e.g.

The quality assurance measures (supervision, regular team meetings) and the offers for team building such as sports activities or company outings were named as a further strength.

#### Implementation of measures based on Austrian legislation

In an ongoing process since 2000, the Austrian Labour Market Service (AMS) established a package of measures to promote the employment of people – especially women - aged over 45. FBZ is very active to receive part-financing from AMS to implement some of these measures and to offer jobs to the target group addressed by the AMS.

These programs are, for example, “Altersteilzeit” (partial retirement scheme), “Wiedereingliederungsteilzeit” (part-time reintegration), “Eingliederungsbeihilfe” (integration allowance), “Aktion 20.000” (action 20.000 offered jobs older people who had been unemployed for more than a year).

Another tool FBZ is offering is the so-called “Bildungskarenz” (educational leave). Educational leave is aimed at working people who need time for training or further education. It is possible to take a professional break, the so-called educational leave.

FBZ also gives its retired trainers the option of working marginally part-time in training. Their experience and knowledge can be transferred to younger or not so experienced staff and the individual can benefit from remaining active and experiencing a smoother transition to retirement.

#### Development of specific measures

FBZ also put in place a number of small-scale measures to promote better working conditions. All employees are fully involved in the design of these measures to ensure that they fit their needs.

- *Ergonomics*: In the offices, efforts have been made to improve workers’ ergonomic situations. Equipment has been provided, such as ergonomic computer mouse, ergonomic chairs or balls to sit on to counteract neck and back pain. Attention was also paid to the height of computer screens and height-adjustable desks, standing desks, daylight lamps or special office armchairs.
- *Work adjustments*: Each employee can choose their workload freely. They make their own schedule and set little breaks individually. Even lunch time is set freely every day.
- *Professional mobility within the company*: Before new employees are recruited, attention is drawn to professional mobility within the company for existing staff. If an employee wishes to change their role within the company, for instance because of health-related issues, their request is prioritized over new recruitment.
- *Annual employee appraisals*: Regularly organized by the management to discuss wishes for further education, improving the situation in the workplace is also discussed. The employees are asked about their best and worst experiences in the past year. Employees can also make an appointment with the management at any time to discuss wishes or suggestions to improve.
- *Supervision*: Regular supervision under the guidance of a professional supervisor is offered every other month. Supervision serves to have heard, to understand, to understand, to change. In a psychologically very demanding job, this is necessary to stay healthy. Once a year a retreat is organized to help develop the organization. All employees take part during their working hours, the costs are borne by the institution.
- *Health promotion*: In the institution’s employee survey, employees requested health promotion activities in the workplace. As a result, FBZ established a contact person for company health. This person got extra

coaching to give first-hand advisory to the colleagues. Additionally, several sports are offered, like an annual bowling competition, a walking club, dancing lessons, yoga sessions.

### Strengths and weaknesses of the chosen approach

---

#### **Strengths:**

- The work on our way towards age management included all team members, it was very integrative and teambuilding. The results were so positive that we would definitely do it again.
- Since we had the opportunity to receive funding for external support and evaluation, we did not incur any extra costs.
- Discussions about worries or fears in the workplace are now much more open. Older employees speak openly about signs of aging. Age is very much valued as a sign of experience, competence and the conveyance of values.

#### **Weakness:**

- The process is very time consuming. It takes a lot of attention to keep the high level of employee participation.
- It is difficult to get new employees involved in this process.

### “Aha” moment

---

We were highly surprised and are also very proud of the level of job satisfaction in our organization. This gives the management the task of continuing the chosen path. It was very important to start this process to see what we have got. Therefore we can now work on ensuring this high quality and remaining able to work. It also became apparent how important employee’s participation is. For us as management it was a relief to see how committed the employees are and how high the identification with the workplace is.

### Activities to sustain this initiative

---

For sure we will follow this process! We could see how identification of the staff with the aims of the organization grew and satisfaction with the workplace as well.

*Company health officer:* The age management process also led to the instalment of a company health officer who is the first point of contact for all questions, problems or ideas about the situation at the workplace.

*Team meetings:* every other week a team meeting is organized, participating is part of the job description. Each team member brings in its own topics or cases. Minutes are taken and provided to the whole staff.

*Supervision:* every other month supervision is provided, participating is part of the job description.

*Employees appraisals,* as mentioned above

### Monitoring system of the effects

---

FBZ will continue to work with the "House of Employability" in self-reflection and in a guided workshop.

Once a year, FBZ spends a whole day monitoring the process with an external trainer.

Association’s board: In the background the board stabilizes the very lively institution. Four times a year board-meetings with the management and a representative of the employees are held. The chairwoman can also be addressed at any time, if problems arise.

### Beneficial effects of the initiative

---

- Higher identification with the aims of the organization.
- More understanding for the needs of the management and vice versa.
- It was good to see the high level of satisfaction and the high degree of ability to work for the entire team.

- More awareness towards the great variety of offers for individual needs, further training and team building as preventive measures for the health of employees.
- *Holistic approach:* FBZ's management has implemented a package of measures which address the issues of ageing, demographic change in the company and society and health at work from various perspectives, such as working conditions and working hours, prevention of health problems, workplace health promotion, generation management, mentoring and transition to retirement.
- *Communication:* A mixture of formal and informal communication channels are used. An example of formal communication is the employees' survey, team meetings, supervision, annual interviews. On the other hand, a very informal WhatsApp-group allows staff to exchange private moments or ideas. In addition, workers can raise any problem at any time with management and know that they will be supported.
- *Employee's participation:* In general, employees are consulted on the initiatives put in place and have the opportunity to give their input in the regular team meetings.
- *Flexible and tailored measures:* According to the manager interviewed, employees appreciate that the measures are flexible and can be easily adapted to individual situations.

### Personal recommendation

---

FBZ obviously has very high demands on job satisfaction. The management provides many resources to keep the employees healthy and fit for work. It turns out that in the social area, especially in counseling institutions, a different obligation towards employees is perceived. The entire team has an above-average level of qualification and is treated differently than in an average production company, for example. It is up to each individual employee to take responsibility for themselves. Structures were created to support the individual employee, now they have to make use of them. Especially further education and educational leave could help to develop a personal career path. All of these measures were tailored to the specific needs of the employees of FBZ as a vocational center.

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