



ASP.A

Activating Senior Potential in Ageing Europe

D.4.2. National report: THE NETHERLANDS

Report on organisational case studies

Confidential



European Commission



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Case studies on age-management in organisations

**NATIONAL REPORT
THE NETHERLANDS**

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PART ONE: NATIONAL SUMMARY REPORT THE NETHERLANDS

Sampling

Data collection in the Netherlands took place between March and October 2010. We selected cases based on the format provided by the WP4-coordinators. In case an organisation from the original portfolio was not able to participate, we tried to find a substitute with similar characteristics.

The acquisition of case studies was thwarted by the economic crisis and the feeling of being 'over-researched' by potential organisations. Although organisations in some sectors (e.g. chemical manufacturing) reported the worst part of the economic crisis was behind, many organisations indicated getting through the crisis was their top priority. Especially in the first few months we had difficulties with getting through to organisations. The most difficulties we had at that time with longitudinal cases; this might have been due to the timing (maybe they did not want to talk to us while in a recession and their 'good practices' did not have top priority at that time). Furthermore, many Dutch organisations we approached answered they did not want to participate because they were 'over-researched' in this area; we were not the first who asked them to participate in a study on age-management.

In general, we found that smaller organisations were less willing to participate than larger organisations. Although many kinds of initiatives may be 'good practices' and contain 'pathways to good practices', small organizations do not seem to perceive their attitudes and actions as age-management and maybe even feel uncomfortable with a 'good practice' label.

Fieldwork

The moment between first contact and follow-up was longer than anticipated. Especially longitudinal cases needed a lot of internal consultation before interview appointments could be made. The interviews and data processing went relatively fast, while the feedback from organisations and check for anonymity took longer.

During the interviews we did not encounter particular issues. Most respondents in the Netherlands did not feel comfortable in the presence of tape recorders, so we decided to use only paper and pencil for the interviews, which gave a more open atmosphere.

Interviews were conducted and reported by students from Utrecht University, Esther Punte and Wieteke Conen; we gratefully acknowledge the contributions in data collection from the students who participated in "Qualitative Research" from USG/ Utrecht University and the students "Applied Economics Research Course" from USE/ Utrecht University.

In the end we managed to do 9 longitudinal case studies and 6 non-longitudinal cases; for an overview of all the case studies: see the completed case study summary table in part two of this report.

CONTEXT

Developments in exit mobility

In the beginning of the 1980s, employers' organisations, trade unions and the Dutch Government introduced early retirement regulations as a response to the rapid increase of unemployment. The Government financially supported early retirement schemes because of the expected consequences in the form of positive effects on youth unemployment and greater freedom of choice for older workers. The dominant exit culture was and still is reinforced by strong seniority-based salary systems. Partly as a result of this exit culture, it has been suggested that employers were and are not inclined to train older workers (Ester, Muffels & Schippers, 2003). The mobility of older workers is dominated by exit mobility. The three most important pathways out of the labor market have been early retirement, disability and unemployment. From the 1990s onwards, initially caused by growth in the number of workers participating in one of the disability schemes and the need to cut back welfare state expenditures, the Dutch Government has concentrated on reversing the exit culture by blocking those exit routes.

The first route that the Government attempted to close was the disability route; a route that was frequently used by employers to lay off workers. The Netherlands' Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis calculated that in 1998 nearly one-third of men in the age category of 55 to 64 received disability benefits (Centraal Planbureau [CPB], 2000). Since the 1990s, disability benefits have been reduced, the criteria to enter a disability scheme have become more restrictive and several penalties have been introduced to discourage employers from "dumping" workers (Klosse, 2003). The sickness period paid by the employer instead of the government was expanded and new legislation introduced in 2002 increased the obligations of employers and employees during the first two years of illness. These measures have been rather successful, as the inflow of workers into disability arrangements had fallen dramatically by the turn of the century and have further declined since.

But the three pathways out of the labor market are not independent: closing one road results in more use of the other roads (Van Imhoff & Henkens, 1998). That is why in recent years the Government, in its attempts to increase older workers' labor force participation, has also directed its attention to the other two exit routes: early retirement and unemployment schemes.

After the middle of the 1990s, voluntary early retirement schemes, based on pay as you go funding, have been transformed into actuarially neutral pre-pension schemes on a capital funded basis. Consequently, prolonging the working life becomes financially attractive, as it increases pension levels.

Some major changes were made to early retirement regulation in the Netherlands in 2006, which is relevant for the interpretation of the case studies, especially because this regulation came in effect just after the 2005 'good practices' we followed up. Therefore, some of the longitudinal cases show a change in direction which may find its origin in those national changes.

In 2006, early retirement regulation was organized by a new law. The so-called law VPL deals with three regulations which focus on early retirement: (1) early retirement schemes (V), (2) pre-pension (P) and (3) life-course saving schemes (L).

This law makes it less attractive to stop working before the age of 65, as tax incentives for early retirement and pre-pension schemes have been removed. On the other hand, there are more tax incentives for saving for (extra) old age pension and life-course saving schemes.

Apart from that, in 2006 part time early retirement was introduced and the starting date of early retirement can since then be postponed resulting in a higher payment later. As for early retirement options it means that although workers in most sectors of industry can still use early retirement schemes, the earlier they want to retire, the higher the price they have to pay in terms of lower benefits.

Finally, blocking unemployment schemes was one of the main goals of the cabinets that were in office between 2002 and 2007. During those years, the maximum period of unemployment benefit entitlement was reduced and rules on the eligibility criteria were tightened. A greater emphasis was put on entry and re-entry into the labor market and in 2004 the obligation for unemployed people over 57.5 years of age to apply for jobs was re-instated. Early in 2009, in the middle of the economic recession and growing unemployment, rules with respect to the acceptance of new employment were further tightened.

Currently, the Dutch Government is still concentrating on reversing the exit culture by blocking the different pathways out of the labor market. In light of an aging society, there is a political debate going on about raising the statutory age of retirement from 65 to 67.

National developments in age-management practices

In the area of age-management practices there have been several national developments. In the period 2001-2003 the Elderly and Labour Task Force (Taskforce Ouderen en Arbeid (TOA)) was established by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. This task force was established to make recommendations on how to make hindrances towards extension of working lives disappear. The task force addresses all actors involved: social partners, government, organisations and citizens. In their final report they report on concrete recommendations and available tools, such as creating awareness (with an age-mirror and a Cum L'Oude Award for organisations and combating negative imaging in the media), age-conscious personnel policies for organisations, employability for organisations, financial incentives etcetera.

The successor of the task force was Grey Works, a committee established by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment for the period 2004-2007. The aim of Grey Works was, based on the recommendations of the Task Force, to achieve actual changes in organisations. They also introduced the Senior Power Award, which is a Dutch award for 'good practice' age-conscious personnel policies in organisations. There were two editions of this Award, in 2006 and 2007. In our sample we have the winner of the Award of 2006 (A. van Dongen BV, a small paving company from Schiedam (West of the Netherlands)), and the runner-up of 2007 (KuiperBouwgroep B.V.; a construction company from Arnhem (East of the Netherlands)).

Age-structure of the population and the workforce in the Netherlands

To give an idea about the ageing of the population and the workforce and how our cases correspond to or deviate from those national averages, we here present some national statistics:

	Population (in %)	Labour force participation (in %)
20-34 years	30	32
35-49 years	37	42
50-65 years	33	27

Statistics Netherlands, 2010

The average age of the Dutch labour force is 40 years in 2008.

PART TWO: CASE STUDY SUMMARY TABLE

No.	Name of organisation	Size	Sector	% male	% 50+ Av. age	Original good practice*	Today's good practice*	Motivation	Target group	Retention or reduction
NL1	Achmea	18.445	Financial services	50	22%	3,6,7,9	1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9	Awareness changing labour market, be good employer	All	Development
NL2	Windesheim	1.754	Education	47	47 yrs	6	3,4,6,7,9	Perceived inadequacy and infeasibility of existing policies (focus on early exit)	Professional	Development
NL3	KPN Telecom	10.350	Services, post, telecom	79	21% 42 yrs	2,3,6,8	3,4,6,8,9	Systematic exit of older workers was perceived both expensive and unproductive	Skilled manual, unskilled manual	Development
NL4	BIS Industrial	870	Construction, scaffolding	93	25% <u>45±</u>	2,4,7,8	3,4,7,8,9	Notice high absenteeism and high WAO inflow (disability leave)	Skilled manual	Development
NL5	The Hague University of Applied Sciences	1.348	Education	51	67% <u>40±</u>	NA	3,4,6,7,8,9	Large outflow and need to retain knowledge and skills	Professional	NA
NL6	Ministry of Defence/ CLAS	22.930	Ministry	87	28% <u>45±</u>	NA	3,4,6,8,9	Concern with both physical and intellectual matters of its personnel over the life cycle	Military and civilian	NA
NL7	Police Haaglanden	5.200	Police	67	25% 42 yrs	3,4,6,8	3,4,6,8,9	Societal developments urge people to extend working lives. Good age-management helps	Policemen	Development
NL8	DSM	7.122	Chemical manufacturing	77	32%	10	10	Awareness ageing own workforce	All	Development
NL9	Teijin Aramid	1.255	Chemical manufacturing	88	44 yrs	3,6,7	2,3,6,7	Ageing workforce, expected increase in health issues, changing governmental policies	Skilled manual, unskilled manual	Development
NL10	GVB	4.305	Transport	75	50% 48 yrs	NA	1,3,4,6,7,9	Aged workforce and further ageing	Low and medium skilled workers	NA

* Age-management approach

1. Job recruitment
2. Awareness raising, changing attitudes and diversity
3. Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer
4. Career development and mobility management
5. remuneration, i.e. consideration of bonus and salary systems
6. Flexible working practices (including working-time arrangements over the life-course and reconciliation of work and family life/care)
7. Health protection and promotion and workplace design
8. Redeployment and retention
9. Employment exit and the transition to retirement
10. Comprehensive approaches

No.	Name of organisation	Size	Sector	% male	% 50+ Av. age	Original good practice*	Today's good practice*	Motivation	Target group	Retention or reduction
NL11	NWO Bureau	350	Research/ Science	41	45% <u>45+</u>	NA	1,3,4,7,9	Societal developments and ageing workforce	Highly educated workers	NA
NL12	Municipality Veenendaal	483	Municipality		68% <u>40+</u> 39 yrs	NA	2,3,4,6,7,9	Importance vital development of employees	All	NA
NL13	KNMP	213	Pharmacists		28% 43 yrs	NA	1,3,4,6,7,9	Specific functions require specific skills and awareness ageing population	Professionals	NA
NL14	A. van Dongen	32	Construction	Mostly	23%	2,3,7,8	1,3,7,8	Live up to sociocratic principles	Skilled manual	Development
NL15	Kuiperbouw	50	Construction	Mostly	49% <u>45+</u>	2,3,7	3,7	Retention of workers	Skilled manual	Development

* Age-management approach

1. Job recruitment
2. Awareness raising, changing attitudes and diversity
3. Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer
4. Career development and mobility management
5. remuneration, i.e. consideration of bonus and salary systems
6. Flexible working practices (including working-time arrangements over the life-course and reconciliation of work and family life/care)
7. Health protection and promotion and workplace design
8. Redeployment and retention
9. Employment exit and the transition to retirement
10. Comprehensive approaches

PART THREE: CASE STUDIES IN ORGANISATIONS

CASE 1: Achmea

Executive Summary

Achmea was founded in 1811 as a mutual insurance company. Achmea is part of Eureko, a leading financial services organisation with operations in twelve European countries. The majority of Eureko employees work in the Netherlands (75%) under the Achmea umbrella. Achmea sees itself as a predominately Dutch organisation with some international activities. Achmea is well aware of the changing labour market in Europe. In their personnel policies Achmea addresses matters like changing demographics, ageing population and diversity. In an independent national survey in the Netherlands, Achmea ranks third overall as best employer and has the top position among insurers (Eureko Annual Report 2009). This case study applies to the Dutch part of Achmea. Eureko Achmea international will not be further discussed. Achmea has a long tradition in age-related personnel policies, especially in the field of health protection, training and employability, flexible working practices and exit policies. Achmea invests a lot in 'prevention'. Currently, measures included in Achmea's age-management approach are: recruitment; raising awareness and changing attitudes; training and lifelong learning; career development and job mobility; flexible working conditions; health protection and stimulating good work places; redeployment and retention of personnel; employment exit and transition into retirement.

1. Organisational Background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Service, Private
Work council	Yes

Achmea is a large Dutch financial services company, part of the Eureko insurance group. The company was the result of a number of mergers, Centraal Beheer being one of the companies that it absorbed during the 1990s. In 2009, Achmea employed 18,445 workers, a decrease of approximately 1,000 workers as compared to 2008. In 2008, 46% of the workforce is between 31 and 40 years of age, 33% is between 40 and 49 years of age, and 22% are aged over 50 years. About half of the workforce is male/ female. As a result of cost-reduction programs, the mix between Achmea's internal and external personnel improved compared to last year. The number of external employees in the Netherlands decreased with more than 30% (or 1,160) in 2009.

Every year, Achmea carries out an Employee Satisfaction and Commitment Survey (ESCS). The company's social dialogue is highly formalised. Intensive consultation takes place each month with the unions on a number of subjects, ranging from working conditions to company rules and procedures for organisational change and

restructuring. Each business unit has its own works council, which is consulted by the unit general manager. In addition, there is a central works council, which is consulted by the executive board. Informal consultation takes place on a weekly basis. Finally, there are a number of management–worker committees that facilitate formal consultation and/or contribute to employee participation.

Current policies focus on a variety of human resource interest areas, such as: individual plans for training and development, aligned with career development and life course; innovative and comprehensive plans for health management; reducing overtime; and flexible working time arrangements.

Achmea's challenges

The most important challenges Achmea is currently facing are the financial trust issues. Consumer and governments should regain their trust in the financial sector in order for Achmea to peak again. Being an insurer, Achmea has had problems with usurious policies, which is unviable nowadays. Achmea should be more transparent and use its cooperative background as their strong position in relation to competition.

Social Partners

Every business unit has its own works council of which representatives take seat in the central works council. The Central Works' Council (COR) is formed by representatives from all Achmea Works' Councils. It reviews topics that affect all Achmea employees or issues that concern more than one Works' Council. In 2009, this consultative body had various meetings with board members and had regular discussions with trades unions. Moreover, throughout 2009, there were weekly informal meetings between the COR executive committee, the Chairman of the Executive Board and the director of Group HR. During 2009, the COR received a total of 24 requests for advice and requests for approval. Requests for advice, minutes and agendas are published on the Group's intranet. The consultative intranet provides a forum where related issues can be discussed. Once again in 2009, Achmea provided the COR with more information than legally required. The council cooperates with the unions and together they have a large influence on the shaping of HRM-policies. Achmea works closely together with its brother/sister organisations under the Eureka umbrella but also has sustainable contact with universities and banks for their research and development.

2. Age-management approach

In relation to age-management Achmea has a generic individualistic policy. It is very well possible for an older employee to gain a permanent contract at the age of 60 whenever this suits the person. A person's age does not necessarily play a large role whereas 'life stage' does. It rather depends on someone's vitality and willingness or non-willingness to work longer, different or within a different function.

The following measures are included in Achmea's age-management approach:

- Recruitment and selection;
- Raising awareness and changing attitudes;
- Training and life long learning;
- Career development and job mobility;
- Flexible working conditions;
- Health protection and stimulating good work places;
- Redeployment and retention of personnel;
- Employment exit and transition into retirement.

To highlight some instruments: ‘Compas’ is an instrument which supports employee and manager to make a personal development plan. A new tool is ‘Mijn Loopbaan’ [‘My Career’], a virtual employability centre which supports employee and manager with information, inspiration and self-assessments to boost one’s own employability. When, due to organisational changes, redundancy is inevitable Achmea has a Transfer Centre which supports employees from work to work. To assure personnel’s tenability Achmea offers a training course which pays attention to subjects such as the ‘career check’, a development coach and educational opportunities. When a department is undergoing an organisational change the employees working within have ‘priority’ on receiving such guidance’s and trainings. Departments experiencing organisational change receive an additional budget focused on managers; managers are supplied with extra facilities to fulfil their job optimally during this change, such as: conversation techniques, open dialogue instruments on employability, knowledge on social plans and techniques to have bad news conversations.

Future policies on recruitment and selection of older personnel and the transition to sustainable employability are widely supported within the organisation. Focus is specifically on the acknowledgment of everyone’s talents so exclusion is odious. Therefore age is not important and all employees are able to gain personal career development no matter what diverse background or age.

3. Original measures

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	All
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Work and working time organisation - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

As described in the good practice document on the website of the European Foundation (2005), originally, Achmea developed a set of age-aware and life-course related personnel policies that were - and still are - aimed at all workers, not

exclusively older workers. Nevertheless, Achmea has measures on irregular working hours, working time, health issues, training and development, and early exit which are seen as measures to also address age-related issues:

- Employees are - to a certain extent - obliged to work overtime in order to meet company requirements, but workers over 50 years of age are exempted from this (unless they want to themselves);
- Employees can save time in order to reduce their working weeks or work flexible hours. For employees over 57 years of age this means they can save towards a 20% reduction of their weekly working hours.
- Training and development schemes are related to the life course and a career advice scheme is supported by study facilities. An employee over 40 years of age has a maximum of 10 days per year of paid study leave. The employee is expected to make a proposal and consult line management. Every year, Achmea reports to the trade unions how the study budget is spent.
- The procedure for redundant workers is described in the social plan and is built on the awareness that older workers often experience difficulties in finding new employment after dismissal. To prevent early exit, the plan recommends a maximum effort to place workers over 55 years of age. The guidelines are implemented by the Achmea Transfer Centre (ATC), an internal career guidance and secondment agency that proactively supports redundant employees in finding a suitable new position, preferably within one of the Achmea business units.
- In order to achieve a reduction in (long-term) absenteeism, a taskforce on long-term sickness absence, a health management programme and a health management plan at the level of the business unit has been put in place.
- Achmea and the trade unions agreed to financially support employee investments in the in 2005 established obligatory life course savings.

More background information on the original case study can be found on: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/nl007.htm>.

4. Current policies

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	Continuation
Target groups	All
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job-recruitment - Changing attitudes - Lifelong learning - Career development and mobility - Flexible working practices - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Redeployment and retention - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

Achmea's HRM-policy is generic and individualistic, knows several stages, levels and programs. As part of the Collective Labour Agreements (CAO) the organisation developed the Achmea Work Concept (AWC) and 'Levensfasebewust Diversiteitbeleid' [Life Stage and Diversity Policy (LDP)]. In general, the age for people to leave the organisation for retirement is set on 65 years, although in some cases people choose to part earlier with pre-pension. Retirement before the age of 65 and using 'senior' days are becoming extinct arrangements because Achmea implements the AWC and LDP. This concept aims to create a working environment in which employees can use their talents more successfully, thereby performing more strongly and developing their employability. It is based on flexibility in working times and places, individually and in teams; on changing the managerial attitude to a focus on results rather than 'presence'; on the provision of IT tools that facilitate flexibility, combined with the way Achmea reorganises the workplace; and on how technology can be used for customer interaction. In essence, it offers employees freedom and opportunities to determine where and when they work and how they share knowledge and information. In general the policy can be best described a generic individualistic policy in which explicit differences in life stages are emphasised. The core is to acknowledge individual talents of every specific employee, to recognise and reward them. Managers are being trained to distinguish this diversity and do something with it. Obviously senior personnel are also a specific group at this but also consists out of diverse people.

Within the Collective Labour Agreements a lot of specific agreements on the guarantee of elderly employers' employability are included. A specific part of the agreements applicable on older personnel is the 'Zilverpool' (Silver pool) in which special arrangements for seniors is built-in. The next paragraph explains this Zilverpool.

Silver Pool

The Achmea Transfer Centre (ATC), which aims to support employees to find a new job when they are affected by (organisational) change, is already in place. It has already found new positions for close to 60%. Furthermore, together with trades unions and the Central works' Council, Achmea established the Silver Pool program for an estimated 70 employees in the ATC aged over 57.5 years. The Silver Pool can be considered as a bridging phase until retirement or early retirement and aims to retain skills and valuable experience of these senior professionals for the organisation. They are employed by Silver Pool and seconded throughout the Achmea Group. These people joining the pool do not leave the organisation, but are redirected to an internal interim pool. When they are assigned to a project their employment is 100 percent as well as their salary. When they do not work they still get a salary of 75%. Currently, 18 people are in the Silver Pool of which 12 are active. This pool is a positive signal for the elderly personnel since they are not being amortised. For Achmea it is a positive development since the organisation retains experience and knowledge.

This is both a good practice and financially interesting for Achmea because they do not pay for expensive temporary employers throughout a costly employment agency.

6. Concluding reflections from the researcher

Ten years ago, Achmea was more familiar with the standard 'age-approaches', such as senior days and other special treatments for elderly personnel. The organisation used to know more of such 'spare' arrangements and would have a more 'lenient with elderly' policy. This has evolved towards a more generic policy where people can choose their own path from their 40s on; they can start enhancing their employability – or not - and work until or beyond 65 if they want to. Besides this, a large difference between the HRM-policies now and 10 years ago is the support Achmea managers receive from the top of the organisation. This contributes to a more solid policy.

Achmea has focused on more of an internal cultural change which is aimed at line-management. This change implies more flexible working hours, working at home, travels reduction, internal collegial exchanges which also need to be respected by the managers. An example was mentioned where an older colleague (57) works more from home since he lives further away from the headquarters - so it costs him less energy. In some cases, though, managers choose not to allow their employees. Suggested is to make use of more explicit trainings and workshops where managers are learned to become more alert and respect employees wishes.

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Interviews

Three interviews were held on 16 August 2010. Interviewees prefer to stay anonymous, but it was suggested to attach the contact information of Mr. Enno van Hamel to the case study.

Original good practice

Document on the website from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound, 2005):

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/nl007.htm>

Websites and other references

Eureko Annual Report 2009

Executive Board Report 2009

www.eureko.COM

Achmea Annual Report 2009 (in Dutch)

www.achmea.nl

Executive Summary

Windesheim is a school for higher professional education in the north of the Netherlands. The organisation is well aware of the changing labour market and – despite the current financial climate - Windesheim anticipates by focusing on an increasing internal mobility and retention of the current workforce. Windesheim's personnel can be divided in educating/teaching personnel (EP) and supporting and management personnel (SMP). The share of EP and SMP between 50 and 55 years of age increased with an average of 19% in 2009. In earlier research, Windesheim was evaluated a good practice in age-management mainly in the field of flexible working practices. This cases study describes Windesheims' development in age-related personnel policies. In comparison to 2005, more focus is nowadays on employability, retention and internal mobility. In 2009, Windesheim took several initiatives to address age-related issues, such as the introduction of a new Recruitment and Employability team.

1. Organisational Background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Service, Public
Work council	Yes

Windesheim was founded in 1987 and has developed since then from a small scale educational institute to a large school with ambitions on becoming a knowledge institute. Windesheim counts 10 Schools where related bachelor studies are housed. Six services are responsible for the School's support and management processes. Besides this, Windesheim has an Honours College and 5 knowledge centres where research activities are housed.

In 2009, Windesheim had about 20,000 registered students, 3,000 graduate students and an inflow of 7,400 new students. This is an increase of about 10-15% as compared to 2008. Also the number of lectureships increased. In December 2009, Windesheim had a workforce of 1754 employees, of which 825 are male (47%) and 929 female (53%). In fulltime equivalents (fte) the workforce is 1377 fte. of which 713 fte (52%) are fulfilled by men and 664 fte (48%) by women. The workforce increased in 1 year by 1,2% from 1734 to 1754. The average age is 47 years. The average retirement age is 61 but a slight change can be noticed since Windesheim switched from the 'standard' FPU pension (flexible pension and retirement) to a more flexible policy.

Partners

Windesheim has many regional cooperative ties with - amongst others - the municipality of Zwolle, the Province of Overijssel, companies and institutes such as Fortis Bank, the Police and ABN AMRO Bank. In educational services Windesheim works together with universities, secondary vocational education and secondary schools such as the Free University (Vrije Universiteit), the University of Amsterdam, University Utrecht and the University of Twente. Also international partners are part of Windesheim partners such as the Fachhochschule Wilhelmshaven and the William Paterson University in the United States.

Social Dialogue

Windesheim has its own participation council consisting of district councils per School and service department. These are represented by both employees and students. At least once every 3 months a meeting is organised with the unions. The influence of the participation council is considered to be large as compared to the influence of the unions. The participation council however does not determine policy content. Zestor and the HBO (higher education)-council also influence the whereabouts of Windesheim; both are umbrella organisations dealing with higher educational developments in the Netherlands.

In dialogue with the unions Windesheim implements the collective labour agreements (CAO). With respect to older workers the above mentioned FPU-agreement used to be applicable, but for employees born after 1 January 1950 onwards a more flexible choice pension is used.

Challenges

In general, the transformation of Windesheim from an educational institute to more of a knowledge centre is considered to be a central challenge. Windesheim is dealing with questions on how to integrate research in the organisation and seeking what kind of personnel is required for such a change. Besides this, a challenge can be found in the financial health of the organisation.

2. Original measures

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	Professional
Type of measure	Flexible working practices
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Age-specific

Originally, the personnel policy on age-management was strongly based on (partial) early exit arrangements. Arrangements included in the Collective Labour Agreement were: a compensated reduction of working hours for older workers, early retirement, and partial - financially compensated - early retirement. These arrangements, however, were increasingly considered to be infeasible and Windesheim explored

how to develop more of a life course-oriented personnel policy. Experiments were implemented and Windesheim explored ways to change rather than reduce work and work requirements. Experiments addressed the transfer of experience, training and employability, adjusting task requirements, and the introduction of flexible working practices.

In 2004 and 2005, all older employees were asked to submit proposals for the adjustment of work. Any plan could be submitted as long as it contributed to prolonged employability. The individual employee and line manager had a joint responsibility for acceptance and implementation of the arrangement and the HR department had a support function. In total 10 plans were implemented, such as an older teacher who invested in knowledge transfer to a young teacher while the younger teacher took up some of the former's teaching obligations; and an older and a younger teacher shared the teaching obligation for a single group of students, and also shared other responsibilities. The budget for the project came from the fund for personnel policies aimed at specific target groups which was regulated by the Collective Labour Agreement for the higher professional education branch. Follow-up of the experiments was difficult at that time. Although costs are visible immediately, the benefits of such experiments are not so easy to grasp. Nevertheless, the development of a general life course policy was considered to be a desirable direction by participants and was under discussion in 2005. Until now it has been impracticable to gain complete insight in the financial balance of the project. The project is no longer implemented which is a great loss according to the interviewees.

Further background information on the original case study can be read on: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/nl015.htm>.

3. Development and current policies

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	Abandonment
Target groups	Professional
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training, lifelong learning - Career development and labour mobility - Flexible working practices - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Exit and transition into retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

An organisational development with respect to age-management is the agglomeration of HRM-advisors into one team with specialists. Before every School had one advisor, which is centralised now. The internal communication and information spread has increased and the new HRM team is perceived to be more effective for the organisation as a whole. Besides this, Windesheim has implemented a new team: Recruitment and Employability.

The recruitment team uses a large network of specialists and recruits – amongst others - by social media. Windesheim reduced costs on external recruitments and invests more in the own network. Since last year October there has been a vacancy-stop at Windesheim, which enhances internal recruitment.

Furthermore, Windesheim organised a career market in November 2009, consisting of several activities where employees were able to collect information on career guidance and Windesheim's HRM-policies. A total of 170 people visited the market and 30 subscribed for a 'taster day' at a different department.

To support internal mobility a vacancy-follow-system was implemented. People who approach their director, manager or HRM-department asking for career guidance are advised and guided by this new team. Furthermore, employees who are to become supernumerary but who could be replaced internally are guided by the Employability team. Such employees gain priority over other internal and external candidates. Employees can sign in as a candidate and they are approached by the new team for possible interesting vacancies. The employee is responsible for further action. A total of 16 employees were registered in 2009 in this new system. Such developments have increased Windesheim's internal mobility. Nevertheless, teachers (EP) are more difficult to deal with since they have more specific fields of expertise.

Furthermore, the Employability team recently introduced a special 'unemployment' specialist. This specialist guides and anticipates employees who are to become unemployed in a concrete and preventive way. Employees receive guidance in finding another job by means of a life/career phase coach, interview training etc. Windesheim is own risk carrier; this means Windesheim is responsible for its personnel in terms of reintegration of (partially) unemployed staff and also absenteeism. Organisations who are not own risk carriers leave this task to the UWV (an autonomous administrative authority commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment).

At the end of 2009 a memorandum on 'visible development' was written for the years 2009-2012. This memorandum describes how Windesheim organises and facilitates the development of employees. Professionalization is aimed for by further improvement of management skills and teacher qualities. One of the HRM-department's main aims is to realise an optimal match between the ambition of Windesheim and the ambitions of the employee. Therefore, network meetings, courses, trainings, inspiration days and lectures are organised for employees.

4. Age-management

In comparison with 10 years ago the organisation is more concerned with employability and applies more policies such as (specific) training, lifelong learning and measures to transfer knowledge. The focus used to be more on the individual but nowadays a more general approach is adopted with more strategies. Windesheim is active in career development and mobility management. Performance

reviews are held increasingly and career and performance development tracks now lean on more concrete agreements. Flexible working conditions are also part of Windesheim's measures in personnel policy. Health protection and ergonomic measures in working places have improved increasingly over the years. A labour-team consisting of two people is doing work place research and the outcomes are included in (future) policies. With respect to the transition to retirement and pension measures not much has changed.

More focus is put on guidance of employees to help them in understanding information about their pensions. A lot of employees take care of their pension situation themselves and perceive the organisations' involvement as 'patronising'. Nevertheless, there is guidance for employees who do appreciate this.

5. Concluding Reflections from the Researcher

Windesheim offers employees a lot of freedom and development opportunities and provides career guidance when necessary. Age-management is a priority in the organisation's personnel policy. The largest challenge is found in Windesheim's ambition to become more of a knowledge institute, which also includes getting the right people on the right places. Internal mobility has increased over the years.

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Interviews

Two interviews were held on 13 August 2010.

Original good practice

Document on the website from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound, 2005):

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/nl015.htm>

References and Web sites:

- Collectieve arbeidsovereenkomst voor het hoger beroepsonderwijs 2007 – 2010 [Collective labour agreement for the higher professional education branch 2007-2010]
- Windesheim's Annual report 2009
- www.windesheim.nl

Executive Summary

KPN is a leading international telecommunications service provider, offering wire line and wireless telephony, internet and TV to consumers, and end-to-end telecommunications and ICT services to business customers in the Netherlands. The scope and initiative types of KPN Human Resources are: learning and development, employee engagement, flexible working practices, diversity, changing attitudes and exit policies. HR policies are strongly affected by both past and future workforce reductions. The workforce has been reduced by approximately 37,000 since 2000 and more reductions have been planned for the next years. In the past, the workforce was reduced mainly by the exit of older workers, reorganisations and by internal mobility. Later, it was recognised that the systematic exit of older workers was both expensive and unproductive and the focus shifted from exit to both internal and external mobility of both younger and older workers. Nowadays, the company broadened the concept of age-related policies to reflect a general concern for employment conditions and employability. KPN's personnel policies include policies on training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer, career development and mobility management, flexible working practices, retention and employment exit.

1. Organisational background

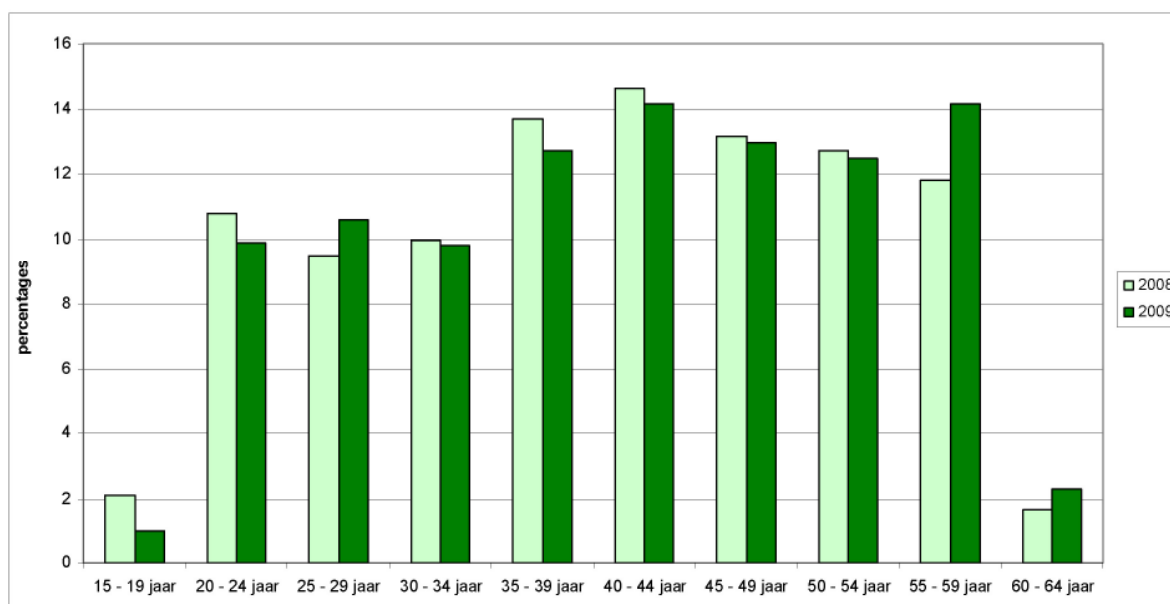
Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Service, Private
Work council	Yes

KPN is a large private company in the telecommunications sector. The organisation is a successor to the former public post and telecommunications office, PTT. The PTT was divided into a postal company (PTT Post, later TPG) and a telecommunications company (KPN Telecom). KPN has a staff of 800 employees (650 FTEs) in stores in the Netherlands, 525 mechanics and the remaining personnel works at the offices. Currently the organisation employs approximately 9,600 people with 9,000 FTEs (not included is Getronics) in the Netherlands, 79% of whom are men and 21% women. This is a large reduction as compared to previous years. In 2000, KPN employed 47,688 people and in 2005 another reduction resulted in 18,803 employees. Because there is strong competition for qualified personnel in the industry, the limited availability of qualified individuals could become an issue in the future. The growth and future success of KPN will depend in large part on the ability to attract, motivate and retain qualified employees.

Age-structure

In 2003, the average employee age was 41.8 years; 21% were aged over 50 years and 27% were aged under 35 years. The average length of employment was 16.8

years. In 2009, about 28% of the employees was 50 years of age or older and 32% was aged under 35. The age-structure of 2008-2009 is illustrated in the graph below.



Toelichting: KPN inclusief deelnemingen

Source: KPN, Sociale rapportage 2009

Social Dialogue

KPN's social dialogue type is based on agreements with the works council and unions. Whereas the case study in 2005 showed a strong social dialogue with the works council, nowadays the influence is more widely spread over the unions.

Challenges

The company's biggest challenges lie in the economic crisis and the continuous reduction of workforce *in combination* with the maintenance of in-house knowledge. Also increasing internationalisation with more workforce overseas is perceived to be a major challenge.

2. Original age-management approach

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skilled manual - Unskilled manual
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing attitudes - Training - Flexible working practices - Redeployment and retention
Social partners involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes
Scope of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age-specific

Before 2005, age-aware HR policies at KPN originated from a life course approach and mainly included measures in the field of training and development, flexible working practices and exit policies. The training and development policies were aimed at keeping up with changes in telecommunications technology. Flexible working practices for all employees aged over 55 years included adjustments to working hours, with gradual financial consequences, less demanding work and more holidays. Exit policies dealt mainly with financial packages. Due to the reduction of the workforce, however, KPN had less resources available to spent on training and development and flexible working practices. Tight economic conditions and expected reductions lead to the impression that investment in internal employability would not pay, leading to the actual application of measures mainly in the field of external mobility and exit.

In 2005, KPN recognised that the systematic exit of older workers was both expensive and unproductive and the focus shifted further away from exit and more towards internal and external mobility. Nevertheless, because KPN still needed to reduce its workforce, KPN's policies were still more aimed towards external mobility.

Personnel policies were set out in a protocol on age-aware HR policies and a protocol on employability (both part of the KPN Collective Labour Agreement 2002) and in the Mobility Agreement 2005; an agreement between KPN, the central works council and the trade unions. The policies aimed to shift the emphasis from compensatory measures for older workers towards employability and external mobility for both older and younger workers. The Mobility Agreement reflects an awareness that room for internal mobility at KPN is limited, because workforce reductions are projected to continue. KPN thus focused on an approach that started emphasising employability and the facilitation of external mobility for all age groups.

More information on the original case study can be found on: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/nl003.htm>.

3. Current Age-Management Approach

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	Abandonment
Target groups	Skilled manual workers Unskilled manual workers
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Career development and mobility - Flexible working practices - Redeployment and retention - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

Over the years, KPN's perspective on age-management has changed. Certain aspects of the original initiative still remain but the general scope of KPN's personnel policy has broadened. Throughout the years certain contextual developments remained largely the same: there was a continuation of workforce reductions and in addition government policies concerning early retirement were tightened which made exit policies more expensive. Therefore, the company over time increased its emphasis on employability. The workforce reductions remain unavoidable so the policies still focus on external rather than internal employability. However, the approach has changed thoroughly.

Life-time employment at KPN is accepted to no longer exist; nowadays KPN can no longer offer life-time protection for its personnel. KPN now focuses less on a life-course approach to employee development as they once used to do. Nowadays, the emphasis is more on employability and the facilitation of external mobility for all age groups. More investments are made in talent development which enlarges personnel's independence in order to facilitate high quality employees but also for people's future perspectives – in or outside the organisation. A less paternalistic approach is thereby created which leads to a more full-grown mutual labour relationship. Increased differentiation is considered to be a positive outcome. In combination with KPN's pay-for-performance culture with an orientation towards variable pay, and an emphasis on long-term value creation, the current approach stimulates the personal growth and development of employees.

KPN continued to reduce its fte headcount in the Netherlands, but ensures that employees receive proper assistance in finding new positions inside or outside the organisation. The majority of old-KPN employees are able to find a suitable job within 6 months after their leave. It is possible for people also after their retirement to continue working at KPN, although this is not actively stimulated. KPN is committed to enabling flexible ways of working, to allow workers to find a good balance between their working and private lives and help resolve commuting and mobility issues. KPN provided 3,600 flexible workplaces and installed ICT equipment allowing staff to work from home or other locations. This is also included in the CAO-agreements. Other HR-measurements are aimed at the maintenance and transfer of knowledge internally. There are various trainings and potential programs for high potentials; leadership programs for management; remuneration programs are structured to promote; continuing education for financials and marketing personnel. Next to the training mentioned above a special employability budget has been initiated: a budget of 1,000 Euros a year which finances an education course of an employees' wish to increase their employability. In 2009 40% of the budget was effectively used by employees.

4. Concluding Reflections from the Researcher

There is competition for highly skilled personnel in the telecom branch. KPN depends, to a significant extent, on the continued services of key management, technical, financial and sales employees. Because there is strong competition for qualified personnel in the industry, the limited availability of qualified individuals could

become an issue in the future. The growth and future success of KPN will depend in large part on the ability to attract, motivate and retain qualified employees and therefore also to invest in employees. KPN's increasing demands for in-house-knowledge in relation with the continuing workforce reductions result in a personnel policy with a strong emphasis on employability – not matter whether it aims to be able to grow inside or outside the organisation, the future of employer and employee is 'secured'. KPN also has employee engagement surveys; despite the ongoing fte reductions the employees' engagement score is up compared to last year.

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Interviews

Two interviews were held on 19 August 2010 and 22 September 2010.

Original good practice

Document on the website from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound, 2005):

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/nl003.htm>

References and web sites:

KPN Annual report 2009

KPN Sociale rapportage 2009

www.kpn.com

Executive Summary

BIS Industrial Services is dominantly a scaffolding company with high standards on employees' health and safety. The company is characterised by its working sector which requires physically strong employees. Employees are provided with structured training and education, both internally and externally. Besides proper guidance during the introduction period, BIS Industrial Services offers various training and development options during the whole career.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Construction, Private
Work council	Yes

BIS Industrial Services is a division of the German Bilfinger Berger Industrial Services group. Its core business is scaffolding but the company also has subdivisions such as metal and construction. BIS Industrial Services has a total workforce of 870 employees (93% men and 7% women) but also works with subcontractors. The past years BIS has developed from being a specialised insulation company to a versatile provider of industrial support services.

In 2009 218 employees are over 45 years of age, which is approximately 25% of the total workforce. The age-structure of the workforce very much depends on the different sub-sectors. In construction the average age is 40 years whereas in metal the average age is 47 years. The past few years the company has had a low outflow in workforce. In general the personnel is loyal and BIS personnel have long-term employment, although in the sector 'scaffolding' the outflow is somewhat higher because they change employer more often. In 1998 a high absenteeism rate was signalled which was reason for BIS to do a promotion research in cooperation with the Erasmus University in Rotterdam on the cause of this. In 2006 the company was therefore nominated for the Senior Power Award for its pro-active health policy.

Social Dialogue

Within the company the works council is the most influential partner. The council has a direct and good relation with its adherents which goes through the entire company. Next to that, BIS is familiar with VSB - De Vereniging van Steiger-, Hoogwerk- en Betonbekistingbedrijven [the Association of Scaffolding, Tower Waggon and Concrete Construction Companies] for employees. However, the latter has no influence and no role in the collective labour agreements (CAO). The CAO is part of the Construction CAO and therefore regularised and not under discussion within BIS.

Challenges

As compared to other companies or organisations BIS experiences few negative effects of the economic crisis. A challenge though can be found in BIS' expansion ambitions; the takeover of several companies. Since 4 years BIS is an official holding whereas before the company was much smaller. The takeovers have influence on the workforce but not on the internal relations. In case necessary, integration takes place but until now personnel tends to stay in its own familiar work culture. The takeovers are relatively small and therefore do not have great influence on the overall company.

2. Original age-management approach

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	Skilled manual Persons with health problems
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Changing attitudes- Career development and mobility- Health promotion and ergonomics and job design- Redeployment and retention
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

BIS Industrial Services was formerly known as Rheinhold & Mahla. In 2006, Rheinhold & Mahla was nominated for the Senior Power Award (Case 16 senior-power.nl) for their pro-active health policy. The company doctor had noticed an absenteeism of 13% and a high WAO inflow (disability leave). In cooperation with the Erasmus MC University in Rotterdam they initiated a research project using certain WAO indicators (disability leave) which were later picked up in a national project. These indicators were: age, absenteeism and musculoskeletal disorders (or a combination) for employees with an increased outflow potential. In conversations with the company doctor, employees and the HRM-department, the results were discussed. Originally was also noticed that not all personnel is able to be retained for the company but as Rheinhold & Mahla said: "in order to be a good employer also the care for a second career is included. Working in the scaffold industry is heavy work and not too many people are able to do it until they are 65. Therefore, it is important to intervene on time for people to have a chance for another career". Rheinhold & Mahla said to intervene on time, provide good care and use for instance outplacement pathways.

Safety and health are on BIS' agenda for quite some time. For instance, many BIS employees are due to follow a refresher course for the certificates 'Basic Safety' and VOL – VCA, which is a safety, health and environment course for (site) supervisors. Since 1997 large groups of operational personnel were also put forward for safety and health certificates (VCA1 and 2). Newcomers without a certificate are

put forward for the course as soon as they join the company. This has thus been the case since 1997.

3. Development and current age-management approach

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	Continuation
Target groups	Skilled manual Persons with health problems
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Career development and mobility - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Redeployment and retention - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

BIS Industrial Services has a long tradition with regard to safety at work. Based on the nomination for good practice senior power Rheinhold & Mahla also under BIS Industries keeps up a good HRM-policy. Since the company is mainly occupied with heavy scaffolding and physical work safety is on BIS' priority list. Several initiatives over the years ensure employees' safety and good working conditions under sometimes heavy circumstances. The company has throughout the years made a case for working to avoid any injuries or damage, and therefore constantly strive for zero accidents. The HRM-policy to bring this about is implemented but also develops. Work related the following points on labour conditions are made.

- All employees will be stimulated or trained as much as possible in maintaining and improving the management system for quality, health, welfare and the environment, regardless of their position. The necessary attention will be paid to this during all discussions and performance reviews.
- Every working site has its own safety team. District Safety Teams (DST) operate throughout the entire Benelux organisation. In this team people from the work floor, managers and directors concentrate on the issue of day-to-day safety aspects. The importance BIS Industrial Services ascribes to safety is underlined by the self-designed calendars, diaries and posters.
- The following quality and safety principles are inherent in the aforementioned policy points without any caveats:
 - Injury and damage must be prevented;
 - A good attitude to safety is a precondition for working at BIS Industrial Services;
 - If the work cannot safely be done BIS does not do it at all;
 - Life-threatening actions will result in dismissal;
 - Safety and quality must constantly be improved and are the line managements' responsibilities;
 - Preventing injuries is economically beneficial.

- Workmanship
With a view to the continuous improvement of workmanship many of BIS' scaffolders are being enrolled for the occupational training courses 'Scaffolder A' and 'Scaffolder B'. A group of foremen will be following the 'Foreman' course.
- Refresher courses
 - The refresher course for the certificates 'Basic Safety' and VOL – VCA which are followed by many employees.
 - The self-developed one-day refresher course BRAVO (Company oriented repeat and additional occupational training). The course, which focuses on safety, quality, workmanship and occupational health, is also being provided for subcontractors' personnel.

This is a list of mainly safety precautions for BIS' employees. In order to relate to HRM-policy and age-management this list covers specific trainings and additional education also in order for personnel to stay on track in their career.

Additional HRM-developments

- Career pathways and development tracks are offered to BIS employees.
- Specific elderly policies are made within the company for people who are retiring early. Whenever this group is vital and willing enough the opportunity is given for them to combine an early-retirement with working; a four-daily work week. Also BIS is experiencing a slightly ageing workforce and therefore aims at knowledge maintenance. Whenever elderly leave the organisation for retirement their knowledge is transferred to the next generation. This group meets at the company's career centre.
- A HRM-policy such as flexible working hours is not common in the organisation, neither on the construction sites nor at the office.
- The company tries to learn from everyday situations and HRM- conversations with the employees. Every accident is being widely being assessed and evaluated, also close call incidents. When people experience physical overstrain, internal replacement is a logical consequence. People between the age of 40-45 have a lot of problems but also youngster who signalise physical tension draw the HRM's attention.
- Employees are being rewarded whenever they respect the safety guidelines and rules. For instance, employees receive a bonus when everybody is lined-up and people look out for and after each other.
- In 2010 an employee satisfaction research will be held.
- The younger employees do more heavy work such as heavy carries.

The past years a lot of investments were made in cranes and other materials. Also since 2009, BIS has a musculoskeletal machine for all employees accessible to relax/train their physique.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

This case study is characterised by the physical aspect of the work. The relatively tough working conditions cause BIS's employees to receive regular support, health care and safety guidelines in order to work well. The company has different trainings and career development paths for the personnel to stay vital. Most people do not work until the official retirement age of 65 due to the heavy physical circumstances. However, they are guided in a second career and BIS provides all means necessary to do so. Increasingly employees dare to talk to HRM-employees; either forced through personnel policy measures or out of own free will. The future policies will also focus on and invest in the people currently working at BIS. There is a shortage of good personnel thus sustainable employability is necessary.

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Interviews

Two interviews were held on 7 September 2010.

Original good practice

Document on the website from the project Mature @ EU (2006):
www.mature-project.eu/materials/Brochure_SeniorPowerPrijs2006.pdf

References and web sites:

www.senior-power.nl
www.bis-is.com

Executive Summary

The Hague University of Applied Sciences (HHS) is an institute for tertiary education located in The Hague. The institute offers, in full-time and part-time, different programmes in both Dutch and English. Next to Bachelors and Masters Degrees, the HHS offers professional courses, research and development, and open studies for seniors. There are more than 20,000 students with more than 130 different nationalities studying at the HHS. The staff counts 1348 full-time-equivalents divided in teaching personnel and supporting personnel.

This case study marks itself by being an educational institute which only marginally has to deal with economic downturns. There are always students attending thus the HHS is always able to employ people. However, the organisation is dealing with a large outflow of personnel and tries to retain internal knowledge and experience in the organisation by offering a good HRM-policy for its employees. Another challenge is to become a knowledge institute instead of solely an education institute; a change more tertiary education institutes are aiming at. A major adjustment in the policy was last years HRM-investment for teachers to obtain their Master's degree. Currently 69% of the teachers have a Master's degree. The HHS aims to increase that figure to 90% by 2012. The most important development in HRM-policy is considered to be the new assessment system on personnel's functioning. Current policies in age-management include: training; career development and mobility; flexible working arrangements; health protection and ergonomics; redeployment and retention; exit and transition to retirement.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Service, Public
Work council	Yes

The Hague University of Applied Sciences (HHS) is supported by the Higher Professional Education Foundation for the Haaglanden/Rhine region (*Stichting Hoger Beroepsonderwijs Haaglanden en Rijnstreek*), and has campuses in The Hague, Delft and Zoetermeer. The HHS counted 20,300 students in 2009 which is a growth of roughly 3.7% compared to the year 2008 (19,600 in 2008). This case study describes HHS personnel in educating/teaching personnel (EP) and supporting personnel (SP). The table below shows the development of ageing personnel over the past 15 years. At HHS 50,5% of staff is male.

Year	1995	2000	2005	2010
Fte's	852	993	1180	1348
EP > 40 years	74%	NA	67%	67%
SP > 40 years	38%	NA	67%	67%

Partners

The HHS maintains contacts with professionals in the work field. Knowledge is often exchanged with companies, governmental institutions and schools in de region, both national and international. The University of The Hague operates closely together with other Universities of applied science in Leiden and the Technical University in Delft.

Social Dialogue

The HHS has its own central participation council (CMR – centrale medezeggenschapraad) consisting out of district councils per Academy and service departments. These are represented by both employers and students. The influence of the CMR is large which results in approval or disapproval of policies and whether they are implemented or not. The CMR however does not determine policy content and administration. Another 'internal' social partner is the HRM-commission who advises the directorate and management. Also the unions play a large role in the organisations' social dialogue. The education Union Christelijke Onderwijscentrale (COC), de Algemene Onderwijsbond (AOB), CNV Education (CNVO), FNV, Central Higher Officers (CMHF) and ABVAKABO FNV all interfere in the Collective Labour Agreement (CAO) negotiations. Also influencing on the whereabouts of The Hague University is Zestor and the HBO (higher education)-council.

Both are umbrella organisations who deal with all kinds of developments in higher educational institutes in the Netherlands. Zestor is a labour market and education fund for tertiary educational institutes. They stimulate policies concerning employee's mobility and employability. Zestor represents the shared partners of the CAO negotiations. The HBO-council is the interest and employers association of tertiary universities.

Challenges

A more general challenge is found in the transformation of the HHS from an educational institute to a knowledge centre. The point is not to become an academic institute but more an applied science institute as the organisation already profiles itself. The HHS is dealing with questions on how to integrate research in the organisation and seeking what kind of personnel is necessary for such a change. Besides this, the organisation has to prepare for expected future outflow and tries to maintain internal knowledge and experience by offering a good HRM-policy for its employees.

2. Age-management

Originally, every separate study/academy within the HHS had its own HRM-policy. An organisation-wide integration of personnel policies was found to be much more appropriate. In consent with all (social) partners this change was made and implemented in 2001. A large change in personnel policies compared to 10 years ago is the entire assessment on the performance reviews. There used to be a few to no feedback conversations with employees. Nowadays, everybody has at least 3 feedback moments a year. Before the HRM integration, HHS-wide there was no specific recruitment and selection procedure used; neither for elderly people. Also trainings on lifelong learning and the transfer of knowledge were not systematically applied. A lot was possible in terms of personal development for employees but internal trainings as they exist now did not exist. The stimulation of people's health and ergonomic work situations were applied occasionally, but nowadays this is standard basis training for all HRM-consultants. In relation to specific senior policies, there used to be a guideline from Stichting Pensioenfond (ABP, the National Civil Pension Fund, frequently referred to as ABP, is the pension fund for government and education employees in the Netherlands) named 'vital working'.

3. Current Age-Management Approach

Target groups	Qualified
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Career development and mobility - Flexible working practices - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Redeployment and retention - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	- Yes
Scope of measure	- Age-specific/ Overarching

The HRM policy set out for the period 2010-2013 particularly emphasises steps aimed at anchoring and improving the cohesion between different HRM policy instruments. The main aims of this plan are: to enhance the efficiency of the organisational structure, to build a stimulating learning and working environment and to create attractive employment conditions (annual report 2009). The HRM-department consists out of 2/3 consultants and 2/3 policy advisors. Today, HRM-policy is much more focused on the individual than it used to be. Also the operational structure has developed. Current age-management policies are:

- In dialogue with the unions, the HHS implemented the collective labour agreements (CAO) of which the SOP-agreement is in particular applicable for older workers (Seniorenregeling Onderwijzend Personeel – [seniority scheme for teachers]). This scheme has different variants from which people may choose one, for instance a 10% working time reduction from 55 years onwards and a 20% working time reduction from 57 years onwards.

Employees are often able to work less in exchange for less salary (4-9% reduction).

- Various personnel policies exist in the area of training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer. For instance, every new teacher gets a mentor, HHS has teacher internships to gain knowledge from the work field, and the earlier mentioned Zestor plays also a large role in the HHS's sustainable employability. The fund offers 500 Euros for personal development plans for employees. In 2009 a lot of teachers gained their Master's degree also by means of this fund, the same is done for employees' higher graduation and lectureships.
- Career development and job mobility. A major development in the HHS HRM-policy is the input of the new assessments in the personnel's performance system. This consists out of; 1) a general conversation; 2) a development conversation; and 3) an evaluation and 'mark/grading' conversation. Within this new system there is no specific attention for older employees; the focus is more on general life phase analyses and not on people in a specific age group. All employees are part of this system and have conversations with their manager on the quality of the employee. Every life phase knows different people, and the individual is therefore the central entity.

The Talent to the Top Charter may also be mentioned in this respect. This charter aims to promote the greater influx, advancement and retention of talented women in senior-level positions, based on the premise that it is up to the organisations themselves to implement the necessary upper-level changes.

- Flexible working conditions. For instance, a reduction of working hours is possible, e.g. one may have an 8 hour working day but can leave 0,5 hour early. This arrangement is flexible in order for people to save hours. For elderly, >50 years, an hourly arrangement is possible.
- Health protection and stimulating good work places (ergonomic measurements and job design)
- Replacing and retention of personnel
- Ending career and pension transition (ABP). A lot of seniors have questions about their pension on for instance whether they can work longer even after their retirement age of 65. This is possible at the HHS but is not actively encouraged. The HRM-department presents a lot of information and has their own ABP-stand with HRM-consultants.

Age-Management Challenges

The organisation-wide challenges described above have obvious influence on the HRM-policy. The transformation from a more educational institute to a knowledge institute requested teaching personnel to upgrade their skills and diploma's. Special programmes are offered and more specific individual development plans were introduced. The larger challenge in this can be found in the preservation and enlarging of personnel quality. Suggested by the HRM-department is a strategic plan per academy and service department to achieve this.

Evaluation

The HHS offers a lot of development opportunities for its employees but: the more active employees are themselves the more chances are given by the organisation. Approximately 60% of HHS employees are teachers and professionals who tend to work rather solo and have a lot of freedom and responsibility. As mentioned earlier a recent development is for teachers to gain lectureships. When lectureships are offered it is up to the organisation to also guide and support their personnel because the agreements on accreditation should be proved a good process.

HHS over the years has provided their employees with more intensive individual employee guidance providing counselling, personal development plans, trainings and extra care on health conditions. The employability and input of personnel has increased considerably since 2001. The entire structure and process of working with personnel has become much more professional. These topics are also considered important development in HRM-policy over the years.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

The HHS offers employees a lot of freedom and development opportunities and provides career guidance whenever necessary. The largest challenge is found in HHS's ambition to become a knowledge institute, focussing on putting the right people on the right place. Internal mobility has increased over the years and special attention for personnel asking guidance and personal development is given.

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References and web sites:

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CASE 6: Ministry of Defence/ CLAS

Executive summary

The Netherlands Ministry of Defence governs the Netherlands Armed Forces and consists of the Central Staff, the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Royal Netherlands Army, the Royal Netherlands Air Force, the Royal Netherlands Military Police, the Support Command and the Defence Materiel Organisation. This case study is held with the Commando Landstrijdkrachten (CLAS) [the Royal Netherlands Army].

The CLAS is a very specific case when it comes to the relation between work and the ageing process, since heavy physical and mental working conditions - such as war and working abroad - are part of working in an army. Recently, the government had to restructure, implement financial and personnel reductions and deal with the continuous attention for the improvement of efficiency. This has had great consequences for the ministry's HRM-policy. Lots of functions have been reduced and career possibilities became less advantageous.

CLAS has implemented personnel policies in the area of internal and external mobility; training, lifelong learning and knowledge transferring; career development; flexible working practices; redeployment and retention; and employment exit.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Military/ Public
Work council	Yes

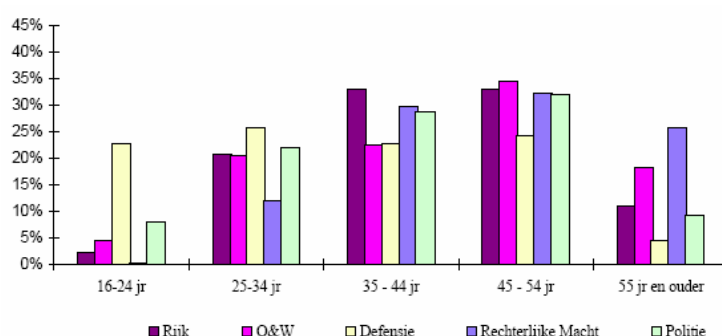
The ministry of defence has a personnel staff of 68,160 in total, making it one of the largest employers in the Netherlands. The Minister and the State Secretary are together head of the Ministry of Defence. The main tasks of the armed forces and of the Royal Netherlands Army are: contributing to peace, security and stability worldwide; defending the territory of the Netherlands and that of NATO Allies; and supporting civil authorities in upholding the law, providing disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, both nationally and internationally. Employing approximately 23,000 employees, both military and civilian, the Royal Netherlands Army is the largest element of the Defence organisation. Internally within the Defence organisation, the army is referred to as Army Command. The military personnel at the CLAS represent approximately 86.5 % men and 13.5% women whereas in the civilian personnel the balance is more or less 50/50%.

Table 1 Personnel structure CLAS (annual report 2009)

	Amount		Amount		Amount
Military	19416	Civilian	3514	Total CLAS	22930
Men	17943	Men	3021	Total Men	20964
Women	1473	Women	493	Total Women	1966

The CLAS maintains a strict age-policy depending on the specific job or function demands. Often the military service requests young, physically strong people. To enjoy internal education at the ministry of Defence (Royal Military School) one has to be younger than 28 years of age. The age structure of the ministry of Defence is relatively young, as can be seen by the yellow bars in figure 1. Military personnel have a dismissal age of 56 and civilian personnel have a dismissal age of 65. In general, when employees are older than 55, they will not be send out on missions anymore. By the age of 57 civilian personnel can call upon a temporary flexible pension and resignation (FPU) measurement.

Figure 1 Age structure ministry of Defence (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 2006)



From left (purple) to right (light blue): Central Government (Rijk), Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OC&W), Ministry of Defence (Defensie), Judiciary (Rechterlijke Macht), Police (Politie)

The ministry of Defence counted 72,000 full-time jobs at the end of 2002 and 61,000 at the end of 2008. Civilian and military personnel were reduced by 20% and 13% respectively over the period 2002-2008 (Statistics Netherlands, 2009). The reduction was the result of a reorganisation process and a reduced interest among the population to make a career in the military. In the first half of 2010, more people seem to be interested in an army career, presumably on account of the economic recession.

Social Dialogue

For the CLAS three unions are most importantly represented in the social dialogue:

1. VBM-NOV which is the union for defence personnel in general;

2. AFMP-FNV is the general federation of military personnel and is part of the Netherlands largest federation of labour-unions;
3. CNV (Public Sector which is a trade union and at the ministry for civilian personnel).

The participation council at Defence and the unions are in close contact. In times of re-organisation often a representative of the council intensively maintains the social dialogue with the unions. Organisation representatives have a very positive attitude towards the unions and are willing to reach agreement under multiple circumstances. Everyone gets consulted and involved in the decision-making process. The relations are perceived as positive and it is acknowledged that positive outcomes are more often achieved with cooperation among several interest groups. An example is the organisations' re-organisation due to the (financial) cuts in government policies. A concrete outcome is the implementation of the SBK (Sociaal Beleids Kader [Social Policy Framework]).

2. Age management approach

In comparison to ten years ago personnel policies in general experienced a great change. It was not until the Bosnian war (1992-1995) that the ministry of Defence and CLAS occupied themselves with personnel policies and age-related measures. Nowadays, CLAS has personnel policies in the area of training, lifelong learning and knowledge transferring, career development and mobility management, flexible working practices, redeployment and retention and employment exit.

3. Current policies

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	Qualified
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Career development and mobility - Flexible working arrangements - Redeployment and retention - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

During their career at the CLAS, employees are provided with training and development opportunities. Especially military service personnel require expensive trainings, accommodation, guidance etc. Therefore, also the transfer of knowledge is part of personnel policy, although this is quite a challenge during financial hard times. To retain military personnel in scarce categories binding contracts and functionality grants are developed. At present, these measures are only easily accessible to professional soldiers with a fixed contract. Furthermore, replacement candidates are supported to study, do courses and follow training programmes as long as this

improves career opportunities in- or outside the organisation up to a maximum of €5.000.

In April 2008 the Action plan 'Recruitment and Retention' (letter State Secretary J. de Vries) was communicated. To contribute to the retention of personnel the number of career counsellors was increased (by 200 counsellors). In 2008, a total of 70 career managers started their function. The increase of career development management is considered to be a positive development since guidance for this group of personnel - particularly for military personnel - requires much more time and specialised guidance.

The social policy framework (SBK) was implemented in 2004 and is effective until 2010. The policies outlined in the framework are aimed to reduce compulsory redundancy due to financial cuts at the Ministry of Defence and facilitate internal and external job mobility. The framework consists of measures to stimulate voluntary outflow and guidelines for internal and external mobility. Voluntary outflow is supported for it increases replacement opportunities for Defence personnel facing compulsory redundancy. Support comes for instance by means of career scans and arrangements for replacement candidates (e.g. a budget for training, mediatory premiums or premiums to support self-employment initiatives). Guidelines to facilitate internal and external mobility are well-defined and similar to voluntary outflow candidates. Measures include mediation, extra training and occupational resettlement opportunities, contributions towards moving expenses etc. Internal candidates have a position of preference compared to people who apply from outside the defence sector.

In general, when employees are older than 55, they will not be sent out on missions anymore. There are however several other options to continue working within the Ministry. The CLAS sometimes experiences conflicts between on the one hand personnel policies and on the other hand the actual realization. An example is that a military soldier is allowed to work until 60 years of age (the dismissal age of 56 is maintained but working longer is thus possible) but it is up to the Commander to have or find a job opening for this older employee. During times of cost reduction, recession and other cuts, an emerging problem is that although an employee may be entitled to work longer, when there is no suitable job available the policy measures are difficult to apply.

Whenever a military employee is a maximum of 3 years away from his official dismissal age (56) they can choose to quit working and claim half-pay waiting money. After that they can apply for a regular UKW arrangement (uitkering krachtens de Uitkeringswet – governmental aliment money). By the age of 57 civilian personnel can call upon a temporary flexible pension and resignation (FPU) measurement. On a voluntary basis people can choose to leave the ministry gaining a financial replacement. The CLAS also has transitional policies such as the PAS [Partial Employment Participation for Seniors] which stimulates to continue working with a

reduction of working hours of 15,8%. Employees older than 57 years of age are able to continue working by a 5% deduction of their salary.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

Military personnel face career change decisions relatively early in their lives compared to 'office' workers. This is due to the physical health and strength which is often related to age and needed for militaries. Thus the physical and emotional pressures they experience are age-related. Over the past two decades the CLAS' age policy has developed and nowadays shows a clear concern for the well-being and professional development of military personnel. This case shows the ministry is concerned with both physically and intellectually matters of its personnel over the life cycle.

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Interviews

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References and web sites:

- Fred Arkesteijn (Statistics Netherlands [CBS]) (2009), 'Aandeel defensie-uitgaven daalt'. Date of publication CBS-website: 8 December 2009 www.cbs.nl

- www.defensie.nl

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CASE 7: Politie Haaglanden

Executive Summary

Politie Haaglanden [Haaglanden Police] is a relatively large police corps in the West of the Netherlands employing over 5,200 people. The organisation has age-management policies on: recruitment, training, transfer of knowledge, career development, job mobility, flexible arrangements and health. Politie Haaglanden won several awards on its human resource policies and was in 2004 described as one of eight 'good practices' on age-management in the area of training and development; mobility and retention; and flexible arrangements (e.g. older employees can apply for flexible arrangements on nightshifts and working hours). Nowadays, the Police has further developed their personnel policies on age-related matters and for instance started focussing on retention of knowledge and prevention of exit mobility.

1. Organisational Background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Service, Public
Work council	Yes

The work area of Politie Haaglanden covers nine districts and over one million inhabitants. The region covers an area of more than 400 km². The police department has several locations across The Hague and the institution is hierarchically structured.

The age structure at Politie Haaglanden is in 2009: 29% is 35 years of age or younger, 46% is between 36 and 50 years of age and 25% is older than 50 years of age. The average age in the corps has increased slightly (0,5%) compared to 2008 to 42,2 years of age. The workforce (including technical and administrative staff) consists for about one third of women; in executive staff this is about one quarter (Politie Haaglanden, annual report).

One of the main challenges at Politie Haaglanden is the paradox for the organisation to on the one hand 'economise', while on the other hand employees are expected and supported to work longer. So the police corps needs to reduce personnel and personnel costs, catch up with the experience leaving the organisation and the corps needs to make it possible for older employees to stay as long as they can.

2. The original good practice

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	Policemen
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Career development and mobility - Flexible working arrangements - Redeployment and retention
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

The Politie Haaglanden's personnel policy has a national HRM component and regional (pilot) policies as implemented at Politie Haaglanden. In 2004, the Taskforce 'Ouderen en arbeid' [Elderly and Work] made a brochure of 8 organisations representing good practices in age-management. Politie Haaglanden was one of the eight. The document describes the Police corps as an organisation with a life phase oriented personnel policy with a special focus on prevention and motivation.

In 2004, Politie Haaglanden has – amongst others - policies on training and development. With the help of a POP [Personal Development Plan] individual advice and training plans to enhance a career are being shaped. For instance, older workers may want to do courses on management and the training provides a larger possibility to acquire a management or leader position. The corps also focuses on transfer and retention. The heavy duty police work and nightshifts is for many older workers physically too demanding. Internal mobility, different positions or a career change helps to prevent exit. The document also mentions employees can use flexible arrangements, for instance exemption of nightshifts and a flexible schedule is used in which employers can buy and sell working hours.

The police corps stresses the importance of clarity: it is important not to arouse too high hopes and later fall short on expectations. Restrictions and possibilities of measures must be clear for everyone. Furthermore clear communication in the own organisation is important: solutions cannot and should not be the obligation of only one division.

In general, from 2004 onwards the so-called 'development-oriented personnel policy' is the pillar under all HRM policies. This vision is nationally rolled out. The two main competences are 'introspection' and 'result-oriented' and the aim is to find a balance between the organisation's wishes to have good employees at its disposal to realize goals and employee's wishes to develop themselves in a way that motivates them.

3. Development and current Age-Management Approach

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	Continuation
Target groups	Policemen
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Career development and mobility - Flexible working arrangements - Redeployment and retention - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

Societal developments (economic crisis, ageing society and workforce) urges people to extend working lives. A good health leads to a higher chance of a (long) life in good quality, leads to sustainable labour force participation and societal participation. Politie Haaglanden underlines this as a concern for everyone. Therefore, the Politie has been developing personnel policies aimed at age-related issues and nowadays Politie Haaglanden has policies on age-management in the area of training, development and knowledge transfer; career development and job mobility; flexible arrangements; and health protection. Age-management is often dependent on individuals and individual corpses and for the future it is plead to develop a more integrated approach with more communication between the corpses.

Training, development and knowledge transfer

Starting point of the current training policies at Politie Haaglanden is 'career-long learning'. Politie Haaglanden makes a distinction between three types of training: obligatory job trainings (100% reimbursement), career related trainings (75%) and 'other' trainings (50%). Career related trainings are trainings which are relevant for a function the public servant could fulfil in the near future and which is a logical next step in his or her career.

All employees are obliged to follow an IBT [Integral Profession skills training] every semester to keep up their condition and shooting skills. A few times a year, employees are tested on their capabilities in the working field. Initially people's motivation for this training was low because there was no different training for different age-groups. Nowadays, the IBT is organised in separate groups and people older then 50 have adjusted programs. It is stated that 95% of the people is motivated to join the IBT. Furthermore, it is stated that most employees constantly need to add knowledge to keep up in the profession. At Politie Haaglanden, there is enough room to do so. Special opportunities for older employees are seen in the area of leadership, coaching and the creation of stable teams.

Politie Haaglanden has several ways to transfer knowledge, but aims to develop this further in the future. In the first year of the police academy, younger employees get placed in a team together with employees with a lot of experience; this way younger

employees can learn the ins and outs of the job. Also technical detectives get a mentor in the first year. After the first year, it is more up to the individual initiative whether coaching is asked for and provided. It is considered helpful for both the younger and the older workers to transfer knowledge and considered a win-win situation if knowledge transfer will be further extended in personnel policies.

Career development, mobility and transition to retirement

Another important aspect of personnel policy at Politie Haaglanden is career development of employees and their job mobility. To structure career development and job mobility, the Politie Haaglanden uses a POP [Personal Development Plan]. The (mandatory) POP gives an overview of what capabilities employees want to develop and/or what kind of job they would prefer in the organization. Interviewees in general think the POP is a positive instrument, although it should not be the central part. For the future, Politie Haaglanden is considering whether to implement competence management. Politie Haaglanden also addresses the extension of working lives and the transition into retirement, such as the organisation of a 'pension week', where people get a little prepared to the question: what is next after my business career?

With respect to job mobility, it is stated that although there are not many possibilities for vertical job mobility, horizontal job mobility is possible at Politie Haaglanden. Internal mobility is especially large with executive employees. This is the case for all workers, including older workers. Furthermore, employees are explicitly looked after; employees at the end of their business career are being asked what they would like to do in their last years, and how they can be facilitated. During many years, mobility was only internally oriented. Nowadays it is recognised mobility also should be external and that mobility of employees will increase when competences are developed which are not only necessary for the current job.

Flexible arrangements

At the Politie Haaglanden, police officers often have to work by day, but also by night and on an irregular schedule. The Police has several special arrangements for older workers to cope with the physical workload, as it affects your biorhythm for example. For instance, there is an option for employees older than 55 years of age, to work less hours per week. People who become 55 can work 11,11% less, at your 58th you can work 33% less; this way you go back from 36 hours a week to 24 hours a week. When an employee uses this arrangement, he or she earns less. All of the arrangements are optional. Furthermore, employees older than 55 years of age get a dispensation for night duty.

Health protection

Health management gives employees a better chance to stay healthy and participate in the labour force, which is not unimportant given the rising statutory retirement age. Since it is a Police organisation, and many employees work on the street, employees

need to be and stay fit. But what does Politie Haaglanden do with older employees who (still) do executive work?

The police have a training program called 'Fit en Gezond' [Fit and Healthy]. This program exists of two parts: a medical test and a physical skills test. In the 'Fit and Healthy' program, employees who are 50 years or older, have an adapted sport test (since six months). Furthermore, there is a senior IBT test [Integral Profession skills training], and people above 50 years of age get an adjusted program. They are really motivated by this; in the previous years they had to train with the younger employees and this lead to motivation problems on both sides. Not all employees are aware of the 'Fit and Healthy' Program, and the organisation aims to communicate the program to all employees.

Furthermore, in the course of 2009 the ABP (a Dutch pension fund) conducted research on age-conscious personnel policies in the police corps: de Active Aging Quick Scan. Based on that, Politie Haaglanden was advised to use the Work Ability Index, which is a survey measuring employees' physical and mental abilities to do their job properly and offers employees and employers the possibility to map employability.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

Politie Haaglanden has actively been developing age-management and has been awarded for this. One of the findings is that the policy on age management does include various instruments, such as flexible arrangements, healthcare, training and job mobility, but sometimes there is a discrepancy between policy and practice. This is mostly related to shortcomings in communication, awareness and priorities towards age-management.

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References and web sites:

Politie Haaglanden
- <http://www.politie.nl/haaglanden/>

Executive summary

DSM is a chemical company located in the South of the Netherlands. At the end of 2009, DSM Netherlands employed 7,122 workers; 71% of employees are over 40 years of age and 32% of employees are older than 50. The ageing of the workforce is an issue for the organization. Because many employees work in shifts, there is a strong focus on health issues. Overall, DSM has a comprehensive age-management approach with programmes aimed at training and development, career development and mobility management, flexible working practices, health protection and promotion and redeployment and retention.

Age-management has been on the agenda for almost two decades now. In general, the awareness of the ageing of the own workforce has been high since the 90s and many initiatives have been taken since in the area of preventive and curative policies and cultural and attitudinal changes. The context has influenced developments highly: reorganisations, changes in the Dutch tax system and the economic crisis have had much impact. Comparing today with the original initiatives, we conclude that measures are being fine-tuned ever since. Nowadays, DSM offers many policies and collective agreements older workers could use, but it is argued these possibilities are often unknown or too abstract to employees. The HR department thinks about how to communicate the package more clearly to employees under one 'umbrella'. The future is not so much seen in inventing new concepts or policies, but much more in communicating the existing ones clearly. Nevertheless, ideas on remuneration, productivity or employability and a vision on sustainable careers are being examined.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Production, Private
Work council	Yes

DSM Netherlands is a subsidiary of Royal DSM N.V. and is the holding company for the Dutch DSM subsidiaries active in the Netherlands. DSM is a chemical company with a long history. Originating from the Dutch State Mines, DSM today is an internationally operating "Life Sciences and Materials Sciences Company". The activities of DSM are grouped into five clusters: Nutrition, Pharma, Performance Materials, Polymer Intermediates and Base Chemicals and Materials. In the Netherlands, there is one corporate HR department and eight decentralized HR departments in each of the social units. All social units have their own collective agreements, because of their own identity from the past. DSM has its headquarters in Heerlen, which is in the South of the Netherlands.

At the end of 2009, DSM Netherlands employed 7,122 workers. Of those workers, 77% was male. The age structure of workers is an issue for the organisation: 71,3% of employees are over 40 years of age; 32,1% of employees are older than 50.

In 1995, DSM Netherlands employed about 12,000 workers; at the end of 2009 the number of employees was about 7,000. The last 15 years of DSM were marked by reorganizations. Units were sold and other units acquired. There was a change away from petro chemistry; DSM today no longer has a backwards integration. The focus has shifted towards Nutrition, Life science, Pharma and Performance materials and the organization repositioned from a regional to a global orientation with a special focus on the BRIC-countries. The key organizational challenges the company has been facing over the last 15 years have been those reorganizations.

The social dialogue takes place at various levels. All business units have a works council and a central works council is present at DSM. Management and the works council have a good relationship. As one of the interviewees put it: "The 'polder model' has a long and strong tradition in Limburg [Southern province of the Netherlands] and at DSM" and this provides a good basis for a well-functioning social dialogue.

Consultation and negotiation with trade union representatives takes place at the 'Centraal Extern Overleg DSM' (CEOD) [External Consultation Committee DSM]. The CEOD acts as a platform for negotiations on the collective labour agreement. A part of the collective agreement that affects in particular older workers is the 'Tijdelijke Ouderen Regeling' (TOR) [Temporary Regulation for Older Workers]. The TOR is a regulation older workers can use in order to work 80% of their working time in advance of retirement or early retirement by using off days. The regulation is aimed at keeping balance between workload and capabilities of carrying this workload.

2. Age-management approach

Age-management has been on the agenda for almost two decades now. In general, the awareness of the ageing of the own workforce has been high since the 90s and many initiatives have been taken since. The current company's personnel policy can be considered a 'comprehensive approach'.

The age-management approach has been highly influenced by the context and the economic performance of the organisation. Reorganisations have hindered many good initiatives. During reorganisations, the main focus is on reorganising and becoming 'lean and mean' rather than on addressing age-management. Reorganisations often cause a period of long-lasting job insecurity on the side of the employees and frustrate – both from the employers' and the employees' point of view – long term perspectives on training, development and the sustainable employability of workers. Policies are perceived to have a better chance of success when implemented during 'prosperous times', when buffer fund is available and the focus on the future is relatively high. The social units of DSM can vary considerably in their

economic performance, which is a complicating factor because these 'prosperous times' may not always take place at the same time.

Another contextual factor comes from changes in the tax system for early retirement. In order to raise labour force participation of older workers, the Dutch government abolished the favourable tax system of early retirement plans in 2006. In the previous situation, workers had pension rights which enable a typical employee to retire at age 62 with a replacement rate of 70%. Since 2006, this regulation applies only to workers born before 1950. The new tax system has led to a change in attitude and behaviour towards the retirement age, for the standard retirement age of 62 is expected to slowly shift towards 63-64. Workers feel the financial need to stay employed longer to achieve a replacement rate that is high enough for retirement. This was one of the contextual factors that gave rise to the 'Tijdelijke Ouderen Regeling' [Temporary Regulation for Older Workers]; a regulation implemented in the collective agreement in 2009. The TOR is a regulation older workers can use in order to work 80% of their working time in advance of retirement or early retirement by using off days. The regulation is aimed at keeping balance between workload and capabilities of carrying this workload. It is argued that maybe the economic crisis had a positive influence on the extension of working lives, because both employers and workers have felt how important it is to improve employability. The economic crisis in that respect functions more or less like a 'wake-up call', in the sense that in order to meet individual financial needs you need to stay employed, and one thus needs to keep physical and mental health up to a certain standard to work productively.

Despite the 'interruptions' from reorganisations, thanks to the long tradition in age-management and maybe 'fuelled by' the economic crisis, DSM has managed to build an extensive array of policies aimed at extending working lives. The current company's comprehensive personnel policy consists of programmes aimed at training and development, career development and mobility management, flexible working practices, health protection and promotion and redeployment and retention.

At present, DSM offers many policies and collective agreements older workers could use, but it is often unknown or too abstract to employees. The HR department thinks about how to communicate the package more clearly to employees under one 'umbrella'. The future is not so much seen in inventing new concept or policies, but much more in communicating the existing ones clearly.

Envisaged future approaches to age management especially seem to exist of adding policies to the current set of policies on the topic of remuneration in relation to age. The high incomes of older workers in combination with the Dutch early retirement culture put a lot of pressure on the extension of working lives. Employees' and employers' expectations of early retirement restrict efforts put in employability to reach a certain threshold. On the other hand, income rises with seniority. This often results in a situation at older age in which income is no longer in line with productivity. Many initiatives to get income and productivity in line are taken at DSM, but remuneration has not been touched upon before. There are many ideas in the

organisation about what remuneration strategies should be followed and how this should be related to sustainable careers and employability. For example, some hold the opinion that a declining wage profile should be considered, for people need more income in the earlier phases (housing, children) and less money later in the life cycle. This declining wage profile would maybe correspond better to (perceived) declining physical and sometimes cognitive productivity over the life cycle. Others hold the opinion that older workers are ‘spoiled’: older workers live in a ‘golden cage’ at DSM, but both explicit and implicit costs should be reduced to bring costs and productivity in line. Finally, some think that the discussion should not focus so much on ‘money’, but much more on capabilities and non-pecuniary incentives.

Ideas for further improvement of productivity and employability are also fine-tuned. DSM already has a lot of policies aimed at this, but keeps looking for improvement. E.g., some people in the organisation are thinking about inventing a health policy entailing much more than ‘just’ vitality and physical health, but also enhancing employability, creativity and overall well-being: creating a mindset in a more overarching way, in which the working career is central but not the only focus point.

This income-productivity issue will be subject of debate in the coming period at DSM.

3. Original measure

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	All
Type of measure	Comprehensive approach
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

In 2000, a study called SPOM (Studieproject Positie Oudere Medewerkers; Study on the Position of Older Workers) was conducted by a study group consisting of HR officials, line management and representatives of workers. This study resulted in a report (2001), which made recommendations on:

- Preventive policies, such as on career and performance reviews and the improvement of interaction between line managers and employees. The policies were aimed at the continued employability of workers in the second half of career;
- Curative policies aimed at ‘streamlining careers’ focusing on different phases of the work course (start, career, exit) and on maintaining balance between workload and work capacity.
- Cultural/ attitudinal changes. This was tried to be achieved e.g. in the form of courses given to employees on life course issues in relation to work and private life. Analyses were being made of employees’ attitudes towards work and individual capacities. A plan for the future was developed and discussed with the line manager.

These recommendations were based on various studies and previous pilots, such as annual health examinations, a study on the outcomes of streamlining policies, a vulnerability analysis of DSM, a pilot ‘Stay Fit’, a pilot on vitality etc.

Although the preparation is thorough and commitment seems to be present, the SPOM policies will not get fully implemented in the business units. This is due to several factors, among which: older workers see programs as a ‘threat’ because they think the real focus is on mobility, lack of support from line managers, DSM is going through a phase of large reorganizations, and there seems to exist a gap between policy formulation and actual implementation.

In 2005, DSM’s earlier formulated recommendations to implement comprehensive age-awareness policies were included in the collective labour agreement. DSM and the social partners agreed that policies proposed in 2000 were still relevant. This renewed emphasis on the importance of age-awareness policies together with encouraging management is expected to further improve policy implementation. At the time of the case study in 2005, the company’s comprehensive personnel policy consisted – amongst others – of programs aimed at life course issues, employability, flexible working hours, training and development, and adjustment of work practices. See for more information on this good practice the document on the website of the European Foundation (2005).

4. Development and current practice

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	Continuation
Target groups	All
Type of measure	Comprehensive approach
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

The three areas formulated on age-management were: preventive policies, curative policies and cultural/ attitudinal changes.

Preventive policies have been continuously high on the agenda at DSM. A main focus has been on physical health and stamina. The vitality program at DSM consists of comprehensive health checkups and individual follow-up on health issues identified. Physical vitality is increasingly perceived to be only a part of health. Health is influenced by work (12%), genetics (35%) and behaviour or lifestyle (51%). In this respect, DSM now aims to address four pillars: nourishment, exercise, recovery and mindset and is currently thinking about ways of creating a mindset on a broader concept of vitality.

Timeline

1995	<p>Start of a pilot containing different measures with a focus on changing attitudes. The program is based on a life course perspective. The reason to start this pilot comes from the understanding that the own work force will age significantly in the years to come. The main goal is to keep older workers employable and motivated until retirement age and to raise the projected age of exit from the company. Business units developed age-aware personnel policy individually and the program 'Stay Fit' was introduced.</p> <p>This pilot was followed by other experiments, amongst others by 'streamlining careers', training budgets, an internal job-database and a pilot program with life course perspective. None of the programs survives. Reasons mentioned are: employees do not want to think about their own careers; line managers dislike the label of 'older workers'; a gap seems to exist between policies and actual implementation and managers seems unmotivated to bring personnel policies regarding older workers into practice.</p>
2000	<p><i>The time period between 1995 and 2000 is marked by several relatively smaller reorganizations.</i></p> <p>In 2001, arising from a study on the position of older workers (<i>Studieproject Positie Oudere Medewerkers (SPOM)</i>) comprehensive age-awareness policies are being implemented. This comprehensive approach focused on both preventive and curative policies and cultural/ attitudinal change stays on the agenda. The SPOM policies will not get fully implemented in the business units. Older workers see the program as a 'threat', because they think the real focus is on mobility.</p> <p><i>Between 2000 and 2005 DSM is involved in major reorganizations.</i></p>
2005	<p>In 2005, the recommendations from the SPOM study have been included in the collective labour agreement.</p> <p><i>Between 2005 and 2010 relatively smaller reorganizations take place.</i></p>
2009	<p>Introduction of TOR [Temporary Regulation for older workers]</p>
2010	<p>A project group is formed. The project group will formulate a holistic DSM-vision on older workers and to address the topic of sustainable careers and employability.</p>

Performance and career reviews also have been on DSM's agenda continuously. The Integral Performance Management – track [IPM-track] works well. During the whole career workers have a meeting with their employer on performance and talk about the workers' functioning. Together with the employer desired training plans are made and concrete agreements are written down. In case of a bad performance, the worker and employer meet more than once a year.

A preventive idea that is examined at present is the possible introduction of a 'backpack'. The idea is that workers can save at a favourable tax rate for their second half of career, for example to reduce shift work. This idea is more concrete and has been suggested before, but it is felt that although workers then were not ready for it, now might be a better moment to introduce this measure.

In terms of curative policies DSM has also introduced several policies in the organisation. For example, in 2009 the 'Tijdelijke Ouderen Regeling' (TOR) [Temporary Regulation for Older Workers] was implemented in the collective agreement. The TOR is a regulation older workers can use in order to work 80% of their working time in advance of retirement or early retirement by using off days. The regulation is aimed at keeping balance between workload and capabilities of carrying this workload. This regulation has been received well by most employees, although in practice it still has some 'growing pains' in terms of scheduling and who gets which tasks in the new situation?

Other curative policies and pilots can be found in the area of flexible working hours and working from home.

Cultural and attitudinal changes are achieved through policies like the vitality program, which changes attitudes towards extension of working lives and increasing employability or through policies regarding working from home, which changes attitudes towards "what we do to each other". Flexibility in time and place is of increasing importance to keep people in balance and avoid exhaustion.

5. Concluding reflections from the researcher

Good practices may emerge during 'pathways of practice' which are not simply journeys towards good practice destinations but may involve retracing steps and adopting new directions. DSM is an organisation with a long tradition of rethinking and implementing and adjusting policies on age-management. DSM keeps putting evolved versions of age management back on the agenda and keeps improving the framework.

This case study may help us to reconsider driving forces behind the process of age management and what factors – both internal and external – cause shifts in attitudes and behaviour towards older workers. Maybe the economic crisis turns out to be an (unexpected) shift towards a more positive attitude.

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- Frank Kroese, Senior HR consultant (interview 9 June 2010)
- Vivian Otten, HR Manager DEXPlastomers (interview 9 June 2010)
- Arno Parren, Director Health and Safety Executive DSM NV (interview 9 June 2010)
- Harry Tombrock, Chairman Central Works Council DSM Netherlands (interview 9 June 2010)
- Huug Bischoff, Managing Director DEXPlastomers (interview 9 June 2010)

Original good practice

European Foundation (2005), *DSM, Netherlands: A comprehensive approach*
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/nl008.htm>

Documents

- DSM (2009), *Q&A 'Tijdelijke Ouderen Regeling' (TOR)* [Temporary Regulation for Older Workers]
- DSM (2010), Collective labour agreement; parts that concern older workers in particular
- DSM (2010), *Sociale Innovatie* [Social Innovation]
- DSM (2009), Memo *'Van ouderenbeleid naar duurzaam inzetbaarheidsbeleid'* [From older workers' policies to policies to sustain employability]
- DSM (2009, 2010), *Summaries of Works Council meetings on the subject of managing the career of workers aged 50 years and older*
- DSM (2010), *PowerPoint presentation "Workers aged 50 years and older and their career" held during a thematic session of the Works Council meeting, 19 April 2010*
- DSM (2007) *PowerPoint Presentations "Resourcing DSM Netherlands" and "Levensfasebewust Personeelsbeleid"* [Age-conscious Personnel Policies]
- DSM (2010), *"Annual report 2009"*

Website

www.dsm.com

CASE 9: Teijin Aramid

Executive summary

Teijin Aramid is a producer of aramid fibers and is located in Emmen, Delfzijl and Arnhem. In 2010, Teijin Aramid employed 1,255 workers, of whom 650 are employed at the plant in Emmen, which is in the East of the Netherlands. The average age of employees at Teijin Aramid is 44 years and the further ageing of the workforce is an issue for the organisation. Because about 2/3 of employees conducts physically demanding work at demanding hours, there is a strong focus on health issues and flexible working practices. Overall, Teijin Aramid currently has an age-management approach with policies on awareness rising and changing attitudes, training, flexible working practices and a strong focus on health protection and promotion and accident prevention, health and wellbeing.

In 2003, the study group consisting of representatives of the employer', employees' and social partners' perspective made recommendations to improve age-management and prolong employability. Comparing today with the original initiatives, we conclude that recommendations have lead to partial implementation. Especially a lot of effort has been put in the area of organisation of working time, but also recommendations on sustainable labour participation and modernisation of employment conditions have been put into practice. At present, Teijin Aramid is still working on active development and effective implementation and puts age-management regularly on the agenda. The economic crisis seems to have had a positive influence in this organisation on attitudes and behaviour towards flexible working practices.

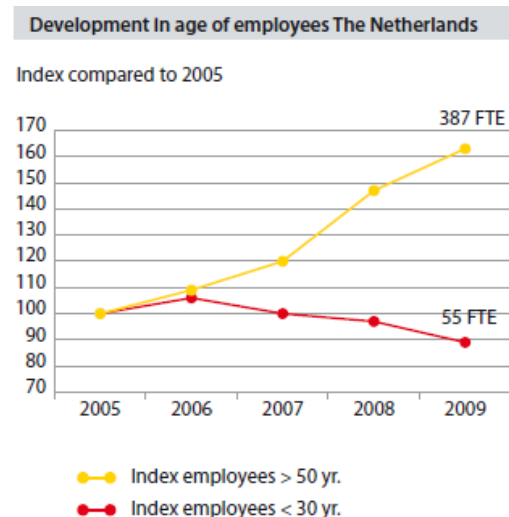
1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Production, Private
Work council	Yes

Teijin Aramid is a subsidiary of Teijin Ltd and produces strong and lightweight aramid fibers in Delfzijl, Emmen, and Arnhem. Teijin Limited, the Japanese parent company, has a long history in industrial fibers. Teijin Twaron was purchased by the Teijin Group in 2000; before that time Twaron was part of AKZO Nobel Fibres. In 2007, the company name changed from Teijin Twaron into Teijin Aramid. In 2010, Teijin Aramid employed 1,255 workers, of whom 650 are employed at the plant in Emmen, which is in the East of the Netherlands. At this plant, work is mainly industrial and physically demanding. 88% of workers is male.

The average age of employees in the chemical industry is 43 years; for Teijin Aramid it is 44 years. The workforce of Teijin Aramid is ageing (see figure below). This

process of increasing numbers of employees in older age categories and younger age categories decreasing started well before 2005. In other words, ageing of the workforce is an issue in the organisation. An integrated health policy is a key personnel policy to properly deploy older workers over the long term.



Teijin Aramid works in a sector of industry with small profit rates, so in order to 'stay in the game' there is a strong focus on costs and benefits. In the years before the crisis Teijin pursued a growth strategy, and now at the end of the crisis - or the beginning of the new phase - a new growth strategy has started. The key organisational challenge is to keep enough thought for 'people' during these times; the organisation has committed itself to spent time and energy on this.

The social dialogue is strongly developed. The plants in Emmen and Delfzijl are both represented, but because of their own cultural history it is sometimes difficult to get to actual results. Those two worlds need more time to get acquainted with one another. The atmosphere is good.

2. Age-management approach

In 2003, a study group representing employer, employees and social partners of Teijin Aramid conducted a study on age-aware personnel policies and came with a list of explicit recommendations. The recommendations were aimed at prolonging employability. Teijin's personnel policy followed an integrated approach. This approach has continued to live on, although the personnel policy line was put into 'new jackets' several times and new insights led to new focus points.

After the collective labour agreement' negotiations in 2005, Teijin started a trajectory under the heading of 'Social Innovation'. Similar recommendations were being made as in the previous personnel programs, but attention was renewed. Flexible working times were one of the measures Teijin tried to implement in this program, for this was a recommendation from the earlier study, but it turned out to be difficult to actually

implement. In order to achieve this, support of management was necessary and not all managers were sure if they wanted to give too many degrees of freedom to their employees.

Just before the crisis, in 2008, the trajectory of 'Social Innovation' was translated into a program called 'New Chemistry', again continuing former programs but with new angles and based on accumulated knowledge. This program did not get much time to mature, for the economic crisis came and priorities were elsewhere.

The economic crisis also hit this company and the organisation came in heavy weather. Nevertheless, Teijin turned out to be not eligible for part-time unemployment benefits as provided by the government. To be eligible for part-time unemployment benefits an organisation needs to prove to be healthy enough to survive the economic crisis, despite a temporary shortfall in business. The company therefore decided to act themselves and introduced shorter working hours. The whole staff was summoned to cooperate on this in order to face the economic crisis. Although there were notorious opponents of flexible working hours, the period during the crisis - when there was not other option than shorter working hours - proved that it could be done and it was actually often perceived as a good thing.

At present, Teijin Aramid is still working on active development and effective implementation. There is focused attention of employers and older employees on employability issues and intracompany communication is further developed. As it was stated 'old habits die hard' and it is difficult to get from a situation where some part of the managers and employees are skeptical about changes, to a situation with real focus and will to act. Behaviour is expected to change when trust is created on several levels. Furthermore, it is considered important to enlarge the pool of people who understand new lines of thinking. That way behaviour is expected to change. Teijin Aramid currently has an age-management approach with policies on awareness rising and changing attitudes, flexible working practices and a strong focus on health protection and promotion and accident prevention, health and wellbeing.

All in all, there has been a constant focus on employability and extension of working lives and new initiatives to put employability on the agenda have been taken several times. The crisis is perceived as a positive interruption for this matter and may lead to actual implementation of recommendations that were previously difficult to 'sell'. Together with the renewed focus on 'people' and commitment to spent time and energy on previously stated recommendations, expectations for recommendations to gradually transform into action rise. For the future employability and extension of working lives is expected to increase.

3. The original measure

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skilled manual - Unskilled manual
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Flexible working practice - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

In 2003, a study group consisting of the company, an employers' organisation, trade unions and the works council together conducted a study on age-aware personnel policies. Internal reasons for the study were the ageing of the workforce in combination with a low staff turnover. Because about 2/3 of employees conduct physically demanding work at demanding hours, an increase in health issues was expected. An external reason came from changed government policies making early exit and disability leave more expensive for the company. Besides this, changed government policies were associated with an increased pressure on both workers and employers to increase the average age of exit.

The study group argued in favour of an integrated approach, including recommendations on: conditions of employment, work patterns and physical workload. Explicit expectations for the company, line management and individual employers were formulated. The study group enlisted factors contributing to older workers' prolonged employability and made the following recommendations:

- A further professionalization of HR management;
- Individualisation of employment conditions and exclusion of age;
- Working towards sustainable labour participation by implementing a mid-career orientation program and extension of health examination through a 'workability index';
- Optimisation of working time schedules in a number of pilot projects.

These recommendations were coupled with an integrated approach on 'what', 'how' and 'process' dimensions.

See for more information on this good practice the document on the website of the European Foundation (2005).

4. Development and current practice

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	Continuation
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skilled manual - Unskilled manual
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing attitudes - Training - Flexible working practice

	- Health promotion and ergonomics and job design
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

The recommendations made by the 2003 study group were partly implemented. The HR management was further professionalized and employment conditions were modernised in terms of the introduction of a commission on age discrimination and at the national level the introduction of a savings arrangement for relatively long-term interruptions of working life. The ‘workability index’ was not applauded at first, but after a while company doctors did embrace the concept. Several pilots on flexible working hours and working from home were started. At first, especially management was rather sceptical about these pilots. The pilots were started in a well equipped ICT environment. Management guidelines were formulated and written down and clear agreements were made between management and employees. Since the responsibility lies in the end with employees, guidelines that lead to clear situations are being written for employees as well.

Nevertheless, in the flow of everyday working life and with the interruption of the economic crisis, some recommendations have faded away and have been replaced by new lines of thinking. A recommendation that was not implemented is for example the mid-career program. The reason for this predominantly comes from a lack of personnel capacity to get to actual implementation. “Everything you invent needs implementation time”. So the mid-career program is still on a list, but the HR department needs capacity and time to put flesh on this policy. Practices on age-management entail also an ongoing process of new lines of thinking and re-addressing the issue from cumulative knowledge on what works and what does not. The changing general approach towards age management as described in the second paragraph reflects this process.

5. Concluding reflections from the researcher

Efforts to advance staff’ employability are often easier to conceptualize than actually implement. Teijin Aramid keeps putting evolved versions of age management back on the agenda and keeps improving the framework. During times when there is no sense of urgency to change behaviour or to address age-management it is hard to actually implement measures.

This case study may help us to reconsider driving forces behind the process of age management and what factors – either internal or external – cause shifts in attitudes and behaviour towards older workers. Maybe the economic crisis turns out to be an (unexpected) shift towards a more positive attitude.

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Original good practice

European Foundation (2005), *Teijin Twaron, the Netherlands: Redeployment, training and development*

[Http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/nl012.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/nl012.htm)

Documents and website

Teijin Aramid (2010), *Corporate Social Responsibility report 2009*

<http://www.teijinaramid.com/>

CASE 10: GVB

Executive summary

Gemeentevervoerbedrijf (GVB) is a public transport company of Amsterdam and surrounding areas. The company exploits transport by bus, subway, tram and also facilitates ferry services. GVB was founded in 1900 when a number of private companies were taken over by the City of Amsterdam and merged to form a municipal corporation. In 2007 the company was privatised.

The majority of GVB employees work in the sector transport or at the technical department and works in low or medium skilled jobs, 75% of employees is male and 50% of employees is older than 50 years of age. So, facing a severely ageing staff, GVB is looking for ways to sustain the performance and productivity of its employees. By implementing a broad range of measures such as health promotion and improvement programmes, flexible working practices, additional training programmes, transition and retirement programmes, GVB is trying to execute an age-conscious personnel policy.

Successfully implemented measures include the 'Healthy GVB' project, the workload reducing programmes for senior workers (50+) is generally appreciated and recruitment policies are not denying senior workers. Nevertheless, several age-related human resource dimensions are open for improvement at GVB. To improve the position, productivity and motivation of the ageing staff, GVB is giving thoughts to a comprehensive approach in which all separate measures are brought together. The GVB aims to fully yield the benefits from the potential value senior people are offering the company.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Large
Sector	Service, Private
Work council	Yes

Gemeentevervoerbedrijf (GVB) is a public transport company operating in the Amsterdam area in the Netherlands. The company exploits transport by bus, subway, tram and also facilitates ferry services. The intricate network of public transport by road, water and railway, both at street level and underground, is linked to the Dutch Railway stations and regional transport systems. The GVB was founded in 1900 and was privatised in 2007; since then the municipality of Amsterdam has been the largest shareholder.

GVB is a large company with 4305 employees in 2009; 75% of them is male and works full-time (GVB is employing 4100 full time equivalent). Most employees work in

the sector transport and the technical department and have low to medium level education. Labour turnover at GVB is 8 percent and the average employee has been employed by GVB for about 7 to 8 years. The average age of the staff is 48 years and rising. At GVB, 12% of employees is younger than 35 years of age, 38% is between 35 and 49 years of age and 50% is older than 50 years of age.

Category	Number of FTE	Share
<20 YEAR	4	0,10
20-24	55	1,34
25-29	167	4,07
30-34	261	6,37
35-39	351	8,56
40-44	529	12,90
45-49	672	16,39
50-54	695	16,95
55-59	905	22,07
60-64	452	11,02
65+	9	0,22
Total	4100	100

Table 1: Age structure at GVB

Social Dialogue

GVB was a state company until 2007 and the civil servant past of GVB still has a big influence on the company. The largest union is Abvakabo. At the GVB 70-80% of personnel is union member; the national average is 24% (Statistics Netherlands, 2006). This may be explained by the relatively old workforce at GVB; according to Statistics Netherlands the share of people who is member of a union is 3 times higher among people aged 45-65 than among younger employees.

Employees at the GVB are represented by the works council, which plays an important role. Primarily, the works council has an advisory role. Nevertheless, due to the high rate of unionisation, the works council is a powerful unit. The works council is actively involved with labour agreement discussions and negotiates with the management board. Especially with respect to retirement provisions there has been much discussion, which have been 'won' by the works council for a large part.

Challenges

Mainly due to early retirement programmes, GVB has to make drastic cutbacks amounting up to 32 million euro in the period 2006-2011.

2. Age-management approach

In general, older workers at GVB are appreciated for their dedication and knowledge. Therefore, the high share of older workers is – in essence - not perceived as a problem. Nevertheless, the further ageing of the workforce is perceived as a problem. At present, at some departments 75% of employees is older than 45 years of age. The GVB strives for an organisational culture with more age diversity, which facilitates a better knowledge and skill transfer to younger generations, a continuation of skills within the organisation and a synergy between existing skills of older employees and new skills of younger employees. This keeps productivity and innovation up to a certain level.

Productivity is not perceived to differ much between younger and older workers. Younger workers may be in better physical health – on a general level – while older workers are more disciplined, have better motivation and have acquired skills the younger workers do not possess yet. Firm-specific human capital is highly valued at GVB which is more captured in the older workers. Capital goods are not perceived to influence productivity highly. For the future, new material is expected for the subway, but this is also not expected to affect younger or older workers productivity, for employees will be trained to use it.

GVB is well aware of the ageing of the workforce and expects labour market problems in the future. GVB is determined to actively combat these problems. The focus is on prevention, increasing employability and activating senior potential. GVB tries to increase productivity and employability of senior workers by using various age-management measures, such as health policies, flexible working arrangements and offering training facilities.

3. Current practice

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Qualified – Unqualified
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Job-recruitment – Training – Career development and mobility – Flexible working arrangements – Health promotion and ergonomics and job design – Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Age-specific – Overarching

Health and prevention

Employees – especially in executive positions such as driving and in technical functions – are recorded to be less healthy than average, with relatively many

problems with mobility and heart- and vascular disease. Also mental health is below average. Some problems are related to working conditions, some to employees' lifestyles. Working conditions contributing to health deterioration are for instance irregular work shifts, little exercise (e.g. with driving staff) and incidents. As a consequence, GVB has a relatively high sick leave. In 2008, sick leave was 8%, which is a reduction as compared to 2004 when it was 12%, but still relatively high as compared to the national average of 4%. Also the frequency of reporting ill is relatively high.

GVB has implemented various measures to stimulate health and employability of employees. In the past, GVB mainly used repressive policies. In recent years, however, policies have shifted towards preventive policies. Repressive policies are mainly used to solve and settle sickness notices. Employees who frequently report ill are called into a consult with their managers to discuss how to prevent future health problems and they are being monitored more closely. The internal safety, health and welfare service is involved in the procedure. Employees can be examined or taken care of to get better soon. In case a sick employee is unable to fulfil the prior position, he or she is offered other work.

In the area of preventive policies GVB has introduced many health policies. For instance, GVB has started the project 'Healthy GVB', which is aimed at improving the health of employees, to create awareness among employees and help them adopt different lifestyles. For instance, examinations are offered and dietists are hired to improve nutrition patterns of employees. Also courses are offered to quit smoking. Furthermore, it is possible to sport at a discount rate and GVB also offers special sporting programs for employees over 45 years of age. Employees at the department for maintenance of railways and track switches learn how to safely lift and use their backs properly. Furthermore, employees are provided with special ear protection and their ears are tested regularly. Some people have an unhealthy life due to financial problems, and GVB offers them courses to learn how to spend money wisely.

Work place design is also a way of prevention, and GVB invests in healthy work spaces. For instance, trolley drivers have special equipment to minimise shocks and vibrations. GVB employs experts whose job it is to see to healthy working conditions. Flexible working arrangements can also help to support physical and mental health. All employees have the possibility to reduce working hours. Depending on the job position, employees have the possibility to use flexible working hours. Employees older than 60 years of age have a reduction of 2,5 hours a week. In some positions older workers cannot work less hours a day, but they can take up extra leave days. Executive staff (driving and technical) work in fixed schedules which makes it difficult to influence working hours. Because this can lead to extra tension among personnel, GVB recently started a pilot with 'self-scheduling'. This measure gives employees the opportunity to express suitable working hours. This pilot was held with a group of trolley conductors and trolley drivers in 2010. Employees working with this new scheduling were enthusiastic and GVB want to develop this principle further in the future.

Recruitment

Despite the ageing workforce the GVB is clear about their recruitment policies: GVB recruits in an age-neutral way. Recruitment is about what job openings there are and which applicant fits best. The Recruitment and Selection department picks applicants and communicates these suggestions to managers. The line-manager chooses an applicant. There is no maximum age but recruitment is competence based. Nevertheless, there are departments where less or more older workers are recruited. For instance for job openings where high investments in training are necessary and medical examinations are needed more younger workers are recruited, while in functions with less night shifts and driving staff recruit relatively often older workers.

Training, development and knowledge transfer

Since a few years GVB provides in training facilities. Training is not for older workers specifically, but in case an older worker is not skilled enough in a particular field, they can follow courses. The GVB pays for these trainings. In the past there were no policies on training. Older workers who have been working for GVB for a long time have received relatively little training. It depends whether training is obligatory; the current labour agreement says about this: "The GVB offers training and development facilities to stimulate employees to keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date in order to be able to do their current and future work suitably. According to the labour agreement the GVB can oblige an employee to do a training when this is necessary to do the work properly". For instance, at the department for maintenance of railway and track switches, new employees are obliged to do several courses before they are allowed to do the job, such as welding, traffic controller and additional courses. These are all external trainings and the team leader is responsible for the education of employees.

Knowledge transfer is not formally recorded in personnel policies. In practice, older workers are often used to transfer knowledge and skills to younger colleagues. The works council thinks it is important to retain knowledge in the company, especially when employees retire. GVB acknowledges mentoring would be of great benefit to the organisation and thinks about how to formally shape this.

The GVB also acknowledges better policies should be developed in the area of career development and mobility; at present they are actively working on this. For instance, in June 2010 a conference was organised on the topic of age-conscious personnel policies. At the conference, it was discussed which aspects of policies need to be improved at GVB. At present, career development and monitoring is hardly applied. There are little measures to actively plan and monitor employee's careers and the measures that do exist (performance reviews) are in practice not or not well executed. The potential of employees, including older workers, is not activated properly.

Mobility, exit and transition into retirement

GVB has special department who mediate and support employees who cannot function any longer in their current position: the division “Transition”. This division mainly was called into existence for employees who cannot function in their current position due to illness or redundancy. At first, ‘Transition’ tries to find a suitable job inside the organisation. Employees over 55 years of age may be transferred to a position with a lower salary. Demotion, however, always has to occur in agreement with the employee. When internal mobility is not successful, ‘Transition’ offers support in finding a job outside GVB. The department is often successful in transferring personnel. Some interviewees mention the department is only partly successful because they almost only handle employees who are ill or redundant. Employees in other situations can also apply at ‘Transition’, but this is not stimulated and because there are only few possibilities for internal mobility, employees do not seek help here.

Because until 2007 GVB was a public organisation, a lot of public exit policies are still present. Apart from the ‘dying’ measures to retire early, GVB abolished all measures to retire early. Only employees who save money in the life-course principle may retire early in the future. In 2008, in the labour agreement the job-related age-conscious personnel policy was developed. An important distinction between this policy and previous policies is that the choice and responsibility for early retirement is completely with the employee. In practice, this turns out to lead to problems, for employees think they have the ‘right’ to retire early. They are not aware of their own responsibility and the fact that they cannot retire early for they already spend the money.

The GVB nowadays offers a course to employees who will retire in the near future. Employees are invited together with their partners to – together with the organisation - think about the future for a week. Both financially and socially future retirees are supported. For instance, attention is given to insurances, social security, old-age pension but also to exchange ideas on how to meaningfully continue life. All interviewees confirmed this course was very much appreciated by employees.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

At present, GVB has implemented several measures of different dimensions of age-management. However, these measures in the area of age-management are now only loosely related. There is no overarching approach which combines and integrates the various dimensions of age-management. Although an attentive switch is being made towards preventive policies and a stronger focus on employability, the legacy of the past in terms of for instance repressive health policies and early exit policies still has its place in the culture of GVB. A well-devised age-conscious personnel policy is of importance to capture the senior potential. GVB is well aware of the future and there are clear ideas about how to translate ambitions into policies; only future can tell whether these ambitions will be translated into the actual implementation of policies aimed at increasing employability.

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Interviews

Interviews were held with 6 people from GVB. An interview was held with an employee from the labour law department, a team leader from the technical department for maintenance of railways and track switches, an older technical employee, and the secretary and two undersecretaries of the employees council. Interviews were held in May 2010.

References and websites

Website

www.gvb.nl

Documents

GVB (2008), 'Sociaal Jaarverslag 2008' [Social Annual Report 2008]. Amsterdam: GVB
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Labour Agreement 1/1/2009-1/1/2010

CASE 11: NWO Bureau

Executive summary

The 'Nederlandse organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek' (NWO) [Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research] is a research institute in The Hague that is financed by the Dutch ministry of Education, Culture and Science. It initiates, stimulates, improves and finances scientific research in the Netherlands. Confronted with an ageing population, NWO is changing its human resource policies into policies that are able to deal with these demographic changes and needs from the working force. NWO is a good practice in age-management in several areas, such as in recruitment, training and career development. NWO recently established a working group on life phase-related personnel policies. The working group formulated several points of interest for future policies. These include amongst others: the policies need to be comprehensive and show a clear and coherent vision on age-management; the policies should be broadly based and the different roles of the actors have to be clear; communication should be improved; and the working group recommends a gradual implementation. In the new policy plan, the separate building blocks of the personnel policies will be based on the same vision and will be 'modernized'. The ageing of the population has led to a real sense of urgency in the organisation to adequately address age-management.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Medium
Sector	Service, Public
Work council	Yes

The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) is a research institute financed by the Dutch government. The main tasks of the NWO include: financing scientific innovation in the Netherlands and operating as an intermediary between researchers, (international) science centres and society; NWO finances, coordinates and monitors research projects and collaborations in all sciences, and mediates for the use of facilities; NWO is the national partner with regard to knowledge exchange and scientific collaboration within and outside Europe; NWO promotes (the use of) scientific breakthroughs by NWO subsidized research in the Dutch society and industry. NWO comes within the area of responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Under the umbrella of NWO several units exist. The NWO Bureau is one of the units and comprises the bureaus of the research institutes like SRON, ASTRON, ING and NSCR (except for technology foundation STW) and supports the NWO as a whole. This case study applies only to NWO Bureau. For NWO as a whole a collective

labour agreement exists (CAO-OI). This CAO-OI is developed by the employers' organisation WVOI and the labour unions.

In 2009, NWO as a whole employed 890 people, of which 350 worked at NWO Bureau. Employees at NWO Bureau are predominantly policy advisers, support staff and managers. The workforce contains for the most part highly educated employees. Within NWO Bureau, 55% of the employees is aged under 45, 27% is between 45 and 54 years of age and 18% is older than 55 years of age. Until recently, NWO had favourable early exit policies, which may partly explain the relatively low share of older workers. In 2008, 59% of employees of NWO Bureau was female.

At NWO, in the development of policies all perspectives are tried to be captured. There is interaction between employees, the unions, the HR department and feedback groups and working groups containing representatives of different function groups.

2. Age-management approach

Before the implementation of the new CAO-OI which is due for July 2010, all social partners agreed to study life-conscious personnel policies. Point of departure for the new policy is that employees are able to work effectively and healthy in every stage of life, and shape their careers. A working group was established to put flesh on the policies. This working group wrote an internal policy document containing a new policy plan and recommendations.

The reason for the development of a new policy plan came from several societal developments. Since early exit has been restrained in recent years, employees tend to work longer nowadays. Within NWO this has led to a raise of the share of employees over 60 from 5 to 9 percent. The awareness that the share of older workers will increase further should be captured in personnel policies. Furthermore, it was recorded that older employees experience higher pressure than they used to, which may lead to mental and physical fatigue. It is therefore stated that the work-life balance should be examined and taken into account in new personnel policies. Finally - despite the current crisis - the NWO expects structural shortages on the labour market due to the ageing of the population.

The working group states that new policies should be aimed at all employees, with distinctions for different life phases. Personnel policies should stimulate the development of employees (keep employees productive) and facilitate the reciprocity between life, work and development (keep employees motivated). Furthermore, personnel policies should be preventive in nature to counteract productivity decrease and unilateral development.

To capture the employees' opinion the working group conducted a survey among NWO employees. In general, employees are content with their career opportunities, the possibilities to combine work and private life and the applied measures on

training and development. A point of special attention turned out to be there should be more room for the individual and the opportunity for tailor-made development.

3. Current policies

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	Highly educated
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job-recruitment - Training - Career development and mobility - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

Recruitment

As laid down in policies at NWO the organisation does not make a distinction between older and younger applicants to fill vacancies, but applicants are distinguished on whether they meet the requirements for a particular function. The organisation behaves age neutral towards applicants. This is also reflected by the fact that NWO hires older workers; one of the interviewees mentions to have become employed at NWO Bureau at age 55+. This does not mean that in absolute terms many older workers are being recruited: older workers will in practice usually apply for jobs in senior positions, which are often filled in by internal promotion and internal mobility. Nevertheless, when there is a vacancy NWO uses an age-neutral approach to fill the vacancy.

Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer

When an employee enters the organisations, there is a standard training track which has to be followed. After this initial period, employees are more free to do training and courses. The regular performance interviews and assessment interviews between employee and manager is the time to discuss training needs. Employee and manager gear whether, when and which training suits the employee. Both employee and manager can take the initiative for this. Financial means to invest in training is enough. In 2009 the training budget was raised from 1.2% of average earnings in the company to 1.9%. This is according to interviewees enough to fulfil employees' training needs. The employee survey 2008 shows 43% of older workers follows courses or training, with younger workers this share is about 20% higher. The reason for this difference is unknown to the organisation; it may be in the fact that older workers have acquired more skills and knowledge during their career and do not need, or think they do not need, further training. Interviewees stress training and lifelong learning is a means and not an end in itself, so – since the reason is unknown – for now the organisation does not worry about this lower share of older workers participating in training. Some interviewees mention that after the age of 40 the encouragement to follow courses lessens, and the initiative has to come

increasingly from the employee. Whenever an employee is lacking initiative, he or she is stimulated less to follow courses at an older age than managers encourage trainings at lower ages. It is suggested to actively pursue a policy that is aimed at stimulating training and lifelong learning among older workers.

Within the organisation roof-tile-constructions exist to transfer knowledge between generations and prevent loss of knowledge. For instance, a worker leaving NWO had a transition period of three years in which he transferred knowledge to younger workers. Two years in a management function and the third year as mentor at a distance. For line-managers exit policies are considered important because it makes it easier to think about transfer of knowledge and how to fill the upcoming gap in time.

Career development and mobility

Of special interest to career development are the regular Professional Development Plan (PRO) interviews. Previously, it was called a 'Personal Development Plan' (POP), but this was perceived to be rather a 'toy' for employees to express their personal wishes and what the employee wanted from the organisation. Nowadays, the point of departure is not so much the personal development of the employee, but rather on the development of the employee inside the organisation NWO and the development of the employee with the NWO strategy. The new PRO will be used to determine the wishes and possibilities for the employee from the employee and employer perspective. One of the aims of the new PRO interviewing is to increase internal mobility and achieve a better fit between people and organisation. Mobility inside departments does exist, but NWO aims to particularly increase mobility between departments. The launch of PRO was accompanied by an extensive internal campaign to create awareness for the new policy. Furthermore, managers were trained to interview adequately.

Health protection

Ergonomics and workplace design are well developed at NWO, as is affirmed by all interviewees. At NWO as a whole, until the age group 55-59 one can see an increasing amount of sick leave days as compared to working days. After the age of 60, sick leave decreases; this may be caused by the healthy worker effect. Sick leave at NWO Bureau is higher than at NWO as a whole, which may have to do with the work force population. The other institutes employ predominantly scientists, who have a relatively high work ethos and more options to use flexible arrangements. This applies only to the *frequency* of reporting ill, while the absence duration is short. NWO states this is due to behavioural or motivational components of sick leave, which can be influenced. In 2010, NWO therefore started health policies, which means more interaction between employee and manager when sick leave is higher than twice a year. Also, reporting ill nowadays goes through line-management instead of the HR departments, which leads to shorter communication lines. Workload and stress are points of discussion within NWO, and policies to find a better work-life balance, also for older workers, is under revision.

Transition to retirement

At NWO, older workers receive age-related extra leave. So, for instance workers aged 45-49 receive 24 hours extra leave and employees over 60 receive 48 hours. NWO also has policies to reduce weekly working hours in the face of retirement. Every employee receives 156 senior days after the age of 59 at 85% of their gross salary. The regulation is confirmed for every employee individually and at the same time arrangements are being made about the development of duties and training and development. The idea is to facilitate flexible transition and a gradual and smooth internal transmission of work. The confirmation of the plan is advantageous for both the employee and the employer. The employee sees a clear picture of the future, has a less stressful transition and more motivation. The employer can adjust in an early stage by looking for adequate replacement and look after a proper knowledge transfer. These policies will be terminated in the near future and will be replaced by life course extra leave policies. This is aimed at – independent of age – to keep a healthy work-life balance.

Furthermore, NWO organises ad hoc events, such as trainings on pension measures and how to deal with those.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

The position of older employees at NWO can be considered 'good': older workers are not perceived to be less productive than younger workers and in recruiting NWO looks at job requirements and applicants' skills only; NWO adopted an age-neutral recruitment procedure. NWO is well aware of societal developments and takes these into account in their personnel policies. This has translated into several aspects of age-management which are already well developed, but the organisation is working towards a more complete and comprehensive approach.

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Interviews

Five interviews were held with a member of the board, a HR officer, a manager, and two older employees in May-June 2010.

References and web sites

Website
www.nwo.nl

Documents

NWO (2009). Werkgeverswerkgroep levensfasebewust personeelsbeleid, achtergronden. [Employer's working Group age-conscious personnel policies, backgrounds]. NWO: The Hague

NWO (2010). Samen werken en ontwikkelen. Strategische uitgangspunten P&O 2010-2014 [Working and developing together. Strategic principles HRM 2010-2014]. NWO: The Hague.

NWO (2010), Sociaal Jaarverslag 2009 [Social Annual Report 2009]. NWO: The Hague.

Collective Labour Agreement CAO-OI
<http://www.wvoi.nl/default.asp?cid=92&pid=76>

CASE 12: Municipality Veenendaal

Executive summary

The municipality of Veenendaal is a relatively small municipality in the middle of the Netherlands. The municipality employs 483 employees and is aware of the ageing of its workforce. The period 2009-2010 was dominated by the reorganisation of the municipality internally and the need for financial cutbacks. Noticeable is how the organisation uses this challenge to reconsider its personnel policy in order to gain a better organisational balance. One of the core issues is that the municipality wants to be an inspiring employer and at the same time deal with financial cutbacks. While doing so the focus is on a continuous improvement of the personnel policy since the organisation is also dealing with an ageing workforce. This has led the past four years to more internal flow within the workforce.

The municipality currently has personnel policies in the area of awareness raising and changing attitudes; training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer; career development and job mobility; flexible working conditions; health protection and stimulating good work places; and employment exit and the transition into retirement. These personnel policies will be further developed in the nearby future.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Medium
Sector	Service, Public
Work council	Yes

The municipality of Veenendaal is located in the province of Utrecht, in the middle of the Netherlands. Veenendaal is surrounded by four larger municipalities: Utrecht, Amersfoort, Nijmegen and Arnhem. The city of Veenendaal is the only population centre within its administrative borders and counts 61,681 inhabitants.

Size and characteristics workforce

Between 2009 and 2010, the size of the workforce has increased slightly from 460 to 483 employees. The workforce consists of 62% fulltime and 38% part-time employees which is comparable to other municipalities. The age structure is characterised by an increase in age. In 2009, 68% of the total workforce is 41 years of age or older; 50% of the employees are between 41-55 and 18% of the employees is 56 years and older.

Due to the limited inflow of younger employees and an increase of older employees the organisation deals with an ageing workforce. The table below illustrates these data more explicit.

Age	2008	2009
Younger than 30 years	27	25
30-40 years	123	116
41-55 years	230	255
56 years and older	83	94
Total	463	460

The inflow of employees is between the 5% and 10% annually; in 2009 this was 6%. The average age is 39 years. The internal mobility in 2009 was 5% which is according to the interviewees average and very much dependent on the amount of new employees. In 2008 more older employees (55 and older) left Veenendaal than in 2009.

Challenges

The municipality's main challenges can be found, as in multiple public sector organisations, in its confrontation with financial cutbacks. Next to that the position of the municipality has changed over the years. Municipalities used to be more administrative bodies, while nowadays it is much more focused on the 'demanding citizen' asking a lot more from a municipality. This can be considered a challenge that has been influencing the past 1.5 decennia. Currently, this new duty and way of working is integrated largely in the organisation so it is no longer considered a big issue.

Social Partners

Veenendaal has a cooperative tie with the municipality Rhenen and the municipalities in the Province of Gelderland; Wageningen and Ede (together WERV). Next to that the organisation deals with the national employers and employees' organisation ABVAKABO FNV and CNV. The FNV is an organisation of unions that represents the interests of employees and social benefit claimants. CNV is the National Federation of Christian Trade Unions in the Netherlands. Another social partner of the municipality is the VNG, Association of Netherlands Municipalities. United in the VNG, Dutch municipalities have more influence than individually. Veenendaal is a relatively small municipality and deals with larger partners. The influence of the other social partners in personnel approaches is mostly set in the collective labour agreements (CAO).

Next to that the organisation also has its own works council influencing the municipality's policies. The council has the right to advice and the right of consent. Besides this, the municipality is obliged to inform the council and the council can initiate proposals. The works council in Veenendaal receives feedback from the employees but also contacts employees; mainly via internet, e-mail or via staff magazine Intercom.

Veenendaal also has its own “Georganiseerd Overleg” [GO] (Organised Consultation) which consist of a representative of the municipality and a representative of the labour organisations. The GO discusses about various issues in the area of the position of public servants, including personnel policies. The most important issues of 2009 were:

- Development of the organisation (social plan 2009);
- Regionalisation of the fire department;
- Implementation of generic function profiles;
- life phase personnel policy – age management.

Finally, Veenendaal has a staff association to stimulate the internal relations between colleagues by organising different types of activities.

2. Current policies

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	All
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing attitudes - Training - Career development and mobility - Flexible working practices - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

The interviewees perceived a change in personnel policies; especially over the past couple of years. In previous days, the HRM-policy of the municipality mainly focused on the administrative management of the organisation. Compared to personnel practices nowadays, the personnel’s strategy used to be more ‘patronising’ in its attitude of the municipality as employer. Long-term employment was much more applied than nowadays and career development used to be more ‘imposed’ by the Municipality. The following measures were applied, although they have been further extended over the years:

- Awareness raising and changing attitudes (e.g. by doing research on labour conditions and health and interactively adapting policies);
- Training and lifelong learning (e.g. by education plans and trainings to acquire general skills in computer programs);
- Career development and job mobility (e.g. the career centre, career development budget and enhancing job mobility by – amongst others - reducing the number of external employees and thereby increasing job opportunities for internal staff);
- Flexible working conditions (e.g. policies are developed to acquire more flexibility for different life-phases. The conditions on working times are going to be arranged better, the possibilities for working at home further improved, and more attention for family care and maternity/paternity leave);

- Health protection and stimulating good work places (e.g. by recommendations on ergonomic workplaces by the labour coordinator);
- Employment exit and the transition into retirement (e.g. flexible pension and retirement schemes (FPU), support in understanding pension and a personal HRM-advice. Especially for elderly older than 65 years the possibility to work part-time is offered when requested. People between 50 and 65 are also welcome to continue working on voluntary bases’.

Labour conditions research

Veenendaal has an active and interactive personnel policy aiming to get the most out of its people. Veenendaal has its own labour commission which internally exchanges information on labour conditions and health. At the level of the Municipality, a risk and perception research has been conducted over the past two years. This research was evaluated in order to determine how to apply risk-management within the organisation. Also the perception on safety and personal experience on safety of municipal employees has been determined. The organisation took several measures caused by the outcomes, such as a protocol on aggression training. Furthermore, workplace research was conducted which led to several recommendations on ergonomic workplaces by the labour coordinator. In the organisation, a lot of attention was given to health policy on the work floor and research showed the health percentage has increased over the years. In 2009, the health percentage was 95,8% which is higher than the national average.

3. Age-management approach

When it comes to age-management, the municipality puts the vital development of employees in a central place. Age-related personnel policies are focused on sustainable employability and commitment and inspiration for the employee. For policies of 2009 in general the following 5 point were included:

- Labour market communication;
- Career development;
- Development of introduction policy;
- Internships;
- Professionalising project management.

Aspects related to age-management, such as ‘career development’, are elaborated below. Veenendaal’s age-management approach provides the opportunity to build - on an individual basis - a basis to finance periods of unpaid leave. Next to that the organisation offers an education plan for specific trainings and courses. For instance, employees are trained in computer systems like Word, Excell en Groupwise. Especially for people older than 50 years special ‘vital-in-your-work’ arrangements exists. Employees can do courses like a workshop ‘project management for department managers’, a workshop ‘employee satisfaction research’ and other trainings. Also the possibility to work from home is present. People are able to log-on the internal computer network from their homes.

Career development

The organisation uses the career centre of the municipality of Ede. Currently, 40 employees have experienced a career advice at the centre. Employees who are a civil servant at the municipality of Veenendaal for 5 years or longer are entitled to such an advice. The past year all 'development wishes' of employees were honoured.

Another instrument for career development combined with knowledge transfer is mentoring. At the municipality, a mentor is an experienced employee who supports new personnel in gaining knowledge on his/her tasks, during and after the introduction period. Currently 8 mentors are being trained for this assignment. Veenendaal also tries to deal with people who initially have arrears in education or experience. The department managers try to help people who are qualified but not experienced enough to get a regular function.

As mentioned before the municipality's largest challenge can be found in its confrontation with financial cutbacks. Currently new instruments are being developed where specific data on strategic personnel policy can be found. The current economic climate forces the organisation, together with the unions, to reach a good agreement. It is agreed dismissals should be prevented as much as possible, and Veenendaal will rather invest in the employability of its personnel instead of salary increases. Therefore, the followings (new) points on personnel policy have been introduced:

1. Labour market, mobility, education and employability. The municipality wants to increase the chances and possibilities of development for its personnel. The mobility should be stimulated, the amount of external employees should be decreased and there will be more focus on current personnel from within the organisation. Therefore every employee receives a career development budget of € 1.500,- for every 3 years.
2. Flexible working arrangements. Policies to fill-in different phases of life in a more flexible way. The conditions on working times should be better arranged, the possibilities of working at home, family care, and maternity/paternity leave.
3. Special focus on elderly and their taxes and taxation load. Employees of 62 and older are supported in their fiscal opportunities.

Due to the financial cutbacks Veenendaal is more oriented on results which may come at the expense of social policy. Nevertheless, management tries to develop a good personnel policy.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

Veenendaal has implemented several measures of different dimensions of age-management, although these measures seem to be only loosely related; there is no overarching approach which combines and integrates the various dimensions of age-

management. Nevertheless, the municipality has the ambition to be an inspiring employer and make better use of its internal staff by enhancing employability. Veenendaal is well aware of both the present need for financial cutbacks but aims to hold a long-term perspective in trying to retain and train its employees.

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Interviews

Two interviews were held in August 2010.

References and web sites

Website

www.veenendaal.nl

Documents

- Gemeente Veenendaal (2010), *Sociaal Jaarverslag 2009* [Social Annual Report 2009]
- Summary of employees research

CASE 13: KNMP

Executive summary

The 'Koninklijke Nederlandse Maatschappij ter bevordering der Pharmacie' (KNMP) [Royal Dutch Pharmacists Association] is the umbrella professional association for pharmacists. KNMP is located in The Hague in the West of the Netherlands. The KNMP employs 213 employees and is aware of the ageing of the population. Most employees at KNMP work at the office or in laboratories and are highly-educated workers. The work characteristics at KNMP may contribute to the positive attitude towards workers; older workers are perceived to be of extra value to the organisation because of their accumulated skills and experience, which also justifies higher wages for older workers.

The KNMP currently has personnel policies in the area of job recruitment; training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer; career development; flexible working practices; health protection and promotion and workplace design; and in the area of the transition into retirement.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Small
Sector	Service, Private
Work council	Yes

The Royal Dutch Pharmacists Association (KNMP) is the umbrella professional association for pharmacists. The association was founded in 1842 and aims to assist pharmacists in their daily work and management and to contribute to the maintenance of quality in the sector. From their office in The Hague in the West of the Netherlands, KNMP supports pharmacist's policies. For instance, KNMP develops quality guidelines, reference books, helpdesks, protocols, information for patients, media campaigns, and the Pharmaceutical Magazine.

In 2010, KNMP employs 213 workers in 15 departments. In this organisation, 42% of employees is younger than 40 years, 31% is between 41 and 50 years of age, and 28% is older than 50 years. The average age is about 43 years of age, as compared to about 41 years of age nationally. Most employees at KNMP work at the office or in laboratories and are professionals / highly-educated; working at KNMP is not physically demanding.

The KNMP has its own labour conditions which are not similar to the collective labour agreement of pharmacists. The KNMP choose not to adopt the CLA of pharmacists, because the bureau employs workers from many other disciplines. Trade unions are not involved in the negotiations for the conditions of employment. The works council

of the KNMP does the negotiations for the employees. The works council is consultative to the organisation in the area of personnel policies.

2. Age-management approach

The main motives for adopting age-management are both internal (specific functions require specific skills) and external (awareness about the ageing of the population). The awareness of the ageing of the population urged KNMP to make a strategic personnel planning, which maps developments and exit of its employees. This way, the organisation knows beforehand where knowledge gaps may emerge and preventive actions can be taken in terms of recruiting experienced employees or equip internal staff. At present, KNMP does not experience labour shortages, but KNMP does foresee this for the future.

Most jobs at KNMP are at the office, which is not physically demanding and older workers can do these jobs as good as younger workers. According to the HRM department, sick leave is not higher among older workers. Furthermore, employees' human capital is not so much subject to depreciation; there is little renewal of capital goods. The characteristics of the work at KNMP may contribute to the positive attitude interviewees hold towards workers; older workers are perceived to be of extra value to the organisation because of their experience and it is argued they can do more work in less time because of their accumulated skills over the life course. This also justifies higher labour costs for older workers. In line with this, the organisation holds an age-neutral attitude in the recruitment of employees. KNMP recruits based on education, knowledge and experience of the applicant. For some functions the organisation needs experienced workers, on which older workers have a better chance of recruitment than younger workers. In the time period 2008-2010, 41% of the hired personnel was younger than 30 years of age, 31% was between 30 and 40 years of age, and 28% was older than 40 years of age.

Currently, KNMP has age-related personnel policies in the area of job recruitment; training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer; career development; flexible working practices; health protection and promotion and workplace design; and in the area of the transition into retirement.

For the future, KNMP considers to introduce a 'personal budget', which means every employee has a fixed budget he or she can spend on specific conditions of employment, such as additional leave or training. The current senior arrangement will be abolished then. The main idea is to create more equality in the organisation and design policies covering the whole working life. The budget will provide more flexibility and individual age-management, which is considered to improve the sustainability of human resource management. A transitional arrangement will be designed for the current senior arrangement.

Furthermore, demotion is considered an important measure for the future. In general, demotion is socially not well accepted, and therefore not applied by many

organisations. Firstly, it is important to know how demotion influences status, wage and pension. Second, it is important the pension does not deteriorate; this is a task for the employer. Furthermore, it is important the employee – in his new function – has tasks he or she has affinity with. Finally, social support is needed and communication and clarity are very important in this respect.

3. Personnel policies

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	Professional
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job recruitment - Training - Career development and mobility - Flexible working practices - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Exit and transition to retirement
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

Lifelong learning and knowledge transfer

Because knowledge is of great importance to both the organisation and its aims, and to employees and their motivation, KNMP attaches great value to lifelong learning. With respect to training and courses the organisation determines for each function what is necessary to do the job adequately. For training and courses the function is important, not the age of the employee. There are employees who followed courses shortly before their retirement. This is possible, because knowledge obtained in these courses can be transferred to other employees. These are profession-related courses, not competence courses; the latter are usually not necessary for older workers close to retirement. Apart from job-related courses, there are non-related courses like for instance first aid courses, which can be followed by employees from all age groups. In some organisations policies on lifelong learning and training for older workers merely exist on paper rather than in practice; this is not the case with KNMP. Both older workers and managers mention older workers follow courses and training and even older workers close to retirement make use of the opportunities. Knowledge transfer is considered to be very important. The organisation has a strategic personnel planning and the exit of employees is therefore foreseen. The awareness of future developments makes sure KNMP can start in time with knowledge transfer to younger employees. Both the manager and older workers report this happens and older workers enjoy transferring their knowledge. This seems however to differ between departments, for another employee says this can be done better in practice and the period for knowledge transfer is too short.

In all departments managers and their employees have planning conversations, performance reviews and job evaluations take place. Planning conversations are meant to express expectations for the coming year to each other. In case from this

conversation it is concluded the employee has the potential and wants to develop further, a personal development plan will be made, which describes a development track for the coming 2 to 3 years.

Health

KNMP has general arrangements for its employees in the area of health protection, which are not specifically aimed at older workers. All employees can use a fitness-arrangement called Fitness First. This arrangement comes down to a 60 percent subscription compensation by KNMP. KNMP also has a bike-arrangement, in which employees can buy a bike at a reduced price. Job design falls under the working conditions act. Some employees in the organisation are ergonomically trained and take care of the work posture of colleagues. Policies in this area are mainly preventive in nature. New employees are observed in their seating position and other ergonomical aspects and adjustable seats and desks are used. In case an employee gets for instance pain in the back, he can easily report this and the work situation is made fit for the employee again. The organisation is thinking about stimulating healthy food (at present, unhealthy food can be easily obtained) and health promotion by for instance teaching yoga.

Transition into retirement

KNMP has a senior arrangement providing employees over 60 years of age with an additional leave of 15 holidays a year. Besides this, employees over 62 years of age are offered to work 2 hours a week less. Furthermore, there is the possibility to retire partially or early. Also courses are organised for employees close to retirement, to think about the time until and after retirement. Replacement of retiring employees is organised in time, so a adequate knowledge transfer can be arranged.

The retirement age at KNMP is very diverse. Some employees stop at age 62, some at 65 and some want to continue working after this statutory retirement age. It is possible to continue working after the age of 65; they even have an employee over 70 years of age who is officially employed with KNMP.

Once retired, KNMP has an association employees can join. Former employees are then invited to jubilees and some company parties. There is also a special day on which retired employees can visit KNMP. Both retirees and older workers appreciate the contact which is established this way.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

From the interviews we learned in various dimensions of age-management personnel policies are well developed, for instance in the area of lifelong learning and knowledge transfer. The attitude towards older workers and their productivity is positive and training and development is not age-related at KNMP. This results in a lifelong learning track which is not a restricted area for older workers. In the end the KNMP finds it important to be a good employer for all employees, including the older ones.

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Interviews

Four interviews were held with a human resource officer, a manager, an older employee and an employee from the works council in May-June 2010.

References and websites

Website

www.knmp.nl

Documents

- KNMP (2010). *Jaarverslag KNMP 2009* [Annual Report KNMP 2009]. The Hague: KNMP

CASE 14: A. van Dongen B.V.

Executive summary

A. van Dongen B.V. is part of RWD Group, a company located in the West of the Netherlands. Van Dongen is a paving company founded in 1997. Van Dongen employs around 30-35 employees of which about a quarter is 50 years of age or older. The work is physically very demanding. Van Dongen aims to be a sociocratic organisation. The company won the Dutch Senior Power Award in 2006 for their age-conscious behaviour towards older workers. At present, the company has age-related personnel policies in the area of job recruitment; training and knowledge transfer; health protection; redeployment and retention.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Small
Sector	Construction, Private
Work council	-

A. van Dongen B.V. is a paving company from Schiedam in the West of the Netherlands. The company was founded in 1997 and their activities include road construction, civil engineering and land development. In addition, they specialised in both regular and ornamental paving (which requires additional expertise). The company mainly works for the Dutch government and the working area is within a radius of about 70 kilometres from Schiedam. A. van Dongen B.V. is part of the RWD group, which also contains a landscaping company, a construction company and is participating in an administrative office.

With its 35 employees in 2009, Van Dongen is a small company. In 2009, 43% of the employees is younger than 35 years, 34% is between 35 and 50 years of age and 23% is 50 years or older. Working at Van Dongen is physically very demanding. The economic crisis was felt at Van Dongen and in the winter of 2009 they had to dismiss employees. During their monthly discussions they discussed redundancies and concluded that the younger employees were to let go. The reason for this was that younger workers are easier to relocate. *“A lot of fellow companies don’t hire older employees and the image of an older employee being sick more often, achieve less or cost more still dominates.”* Between 2009 and 2010 seven junior employees were let go and three medior employees (“medior” is a (skill) level between “junior” and “senior” frequently used in the Netherlands).

The company’s organisation is based on sociocracy¹, which is a system of governance allowing everyone to have an equal say in decision-making. To realise this form of equivalency, decision-making has to be organised according to the ‘principle of consent’. According to van Dongen the basic idea of this method is

¹ For an overview, see for instance: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociocracy>

implemented within the company. All employees meet at least once a month and discuss relevant matters, which helps to achieve this way of interactive working. All employees can join the conversation and think along.

2. Age-management approach

As with other matters at Van Dongen, age-management is based on sociocracy. Within a sociocratic framework, everyone has an equal say in decision-making. To realise this form of equivalency, decision-making has to be organised according to the 'principle of consent'. This means that none of the members present during the process of decision-making have argued against or objected to a decision. This equality that van Dongen aims to pursue is also reflected in age-management policies. This is for instance reflected in recruitment policies; Van Dongen hires people based on their qualities and based on their own needs at that moment. E.g., Van Dongen hired a construction worker who was 60 years of age, who could work for another year. They needed someone for a project of exactly a year, so they hired him. For those already employed at the company, the sociocratic method can be applied to keep the employees satisfied and pleased to stay with the company. This method ensures everything is negotiable. In addition, the threshold to talk about personal matters is low, which reduces stress and illness on the work floor. Private problems are all stress factors which holds the danger employees stay at home. In case Van Dongen can help to resolve problems, to give them the opportunity to clear their problems, they do so. It is believed that when you act like that, people are sick less.

At Van Dongen, older workers are not perceived to be less productive or more costly than younger workers. It is argued older employees have more muscles than their younger colleagues and they possess numerous skills younger workers have not developed yet. Therefore, a combination of age groups is important to the organisation. Balanced teams who ensure a transfer of knowledge and skills ensure sustainability, and that is what the company is looking for. Such measures Van Dongen want to develop further in the future.

3. Original measures

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skilled manual - Persons with health problems
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Changing attitudes - Training - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Redeployment and retention
Social partners involved	-
Scope of measure	Overarching

A. van Dongen B.V. was nominated for the Senior Power Award in 2006 (a Dutch award for age-conscious personnel policies in organisations) by Grey Works (a committee established by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment for the period 2004-2007). The aim of the Senior Power Award is to collect appealing practices, and to award and disseminate good practices. Van Dongen was the winner of the Award in 2006.

The company was founded in 1997 by Aad van Dongen. At that time, he is 45 years of age and decides to give up his civil servant job at the Municipality of Schiedam to start his own company. During his first week he and his colleague have to cobble 2700m². Despite his strong will to finish the job, this task physically turns out to have become too much for him. The pain made him realise the job should be done in another way. This incident has determined his later way of working, for he attaches great value to regular consultation and health prevention. Furthermore, the company tries to find other work for employees when this turns out to be necessary. “We do not look for people to do a job, but we look for a job that fits someone”. The overall company contains also a landscaping company, a construction company and is partner in an administrative office. This makes it easier to find suitable work for an employee when this is necessary. For instance, a work foreman - recruited at the age of 60 – is involved in an accident after three months. When he returns to work after recovery, he is not able to perform his previous job. Together they look at what he still can do. They decide he will do acquisition for the company, which suits his amiable personality and his professional experience. Another example includes a paver with physical problems who learns how to drive a crane. Aad van Dongen stresses he does this also for financial reasons: employees who are ill at home are costly to the company. In those cases, it is better for everyone to find a fitting job.

In terms of training and development a lot is possible, as long as the courses taken are beneficial to both the employee and the company. Furthermore, Van Dongen believes in learning-on-the-job. For this reason, a younger and an older employee are coupled. This serves two purposes: older workers can transfer their knowledge and skills, but also teach the younger workers how to keep the body sound. Paving is top-class sport, so you need how to take care of your body. Health protection is also established by training employees; all employees in paving and landscaping did a course on “working safely alongside the road” and employees in construction all had training on “recognising asbestos”.

4. Development and current policies

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	Continuation
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skilled manual - Persons with health problems
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job recruitment - Training - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design - Redeployment and retention

Social partners involved	–
Scope of measure	Overarching

So far we learned that Van Dongen has age-related personnel policies in the area of job recruitment; training and knowledge transfer; health protection; redeployment and retention. These policies have continued to exist and some are developed further. In the following we have a closer look at training and knowledge transfer and health protection; two areas of great importance to the sustainability of working lives and areas that are under development at Van Dongen.

Training and knowledge transfer

As we said before, in terms of training and development a lot is possible, as long as the courses taken are beneficial to both the employee and the company. Learning-on-the-job is an important facet of working in the paving sector. Van Dongen wants to further develop the coupling of a younger and an older employee to keep knowledge within the company. Now, older workers are incidentally coupled with younger employees. This is not always appreciated because the older worker sometimes feels he has to fix what the younger employee has been doing wrong. It is argued that younger employees only learn the standard paving at school, which differs from many 'real-life' projects. Therefore, they need the support of an experienced employee and need to learn-by-doing. The mentoring concept and transfer of knowledge is one of the areas Van Dongen is developing.

Health protection

Van Dongen also recognises an employer must keep its employees in good physical health to keep them content and to keep them within the firm. Therefore, Van Dongen provides his employees for instance with decent work clothes, which are of better quality than legally obligated. The men on the work floor are physically very strong and healthy, and it is not the paving that is so exhausting, but rather the pushing and pulling. Even worse are bad weather conditions; when it is cold or wet. So another part of protection is that everyone has long underwear, even thermal if they want to.

Van Dongen recognises the importance of such facilities and provides his employees with clothing that protects them against bad weather conditions and increases safety on the work floor, for instance by providing safety jackets and steel-toe boots. The employees are forced to wear this clothing, because, when they do not, they can be fired. To promote the importance of the clothing provided the manager also always wears his safety clothing such as his safety vest and his safety helmet.

Another way to "spare" employees and to make sure they are able to continue working until retirement age, is by rotation. "You can bend a twig 500 times and after the 501st time it breaks. Therefore, you have to make sure to never bend it more than 400 times if you do not want to break it. It works the same way with the human body."

By job rotation, employees do not have to endure heavy lifting or other physically heavy work on a constant basis and the body lasts longer in better physical condition.

Furthermore, Van Dongen tries to avoid drop-outs by investing in physically less demanding methods.

5. Concluding reflections from the researcher

Since Van Dongen is a small company, there are not so much age-related personnel policies in place but rather an certain attitude towards older workers shaping possibilities (or not). The sociocratic starting point adopted in the organisation creates a very open atmosphere and a strong dialogue. This means 'a lot is possible' and 'open for discussion'. This is not so much age-related, but in practice is beneficial to all employees over their whole career.

During the interviews there was a strong focus on areas such as training and health protection, which does not mean other areas of age-management are not present within the company, but at least not as prominently.

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Interviews

Four interviews were held with a manager and three older employees (two pavers and a shovel driver) in May-June 2010.

Original good practice

Document on the website from Grey Works (2006) (in Dutch):
http://www.senior-power.nl/img/PDF/Brochure_SeniorPowerPrijs2006.pdf

References and web sites

Website

<http://www.entreeding.com/bedrijven/235289/a-van-dongen-bv-rwd-groep>
<http://www.rwd-groep.nl/>

Executive summary

KuiperBouwgroep is part of KuiperArnhem, a construction company located in the East of the Netherlands. KuiperArnhem is a family business founded in 1902 and employees often stay with the company for a long time. The ageing of the workforce and the importance of the retention and transfer of skills and knowledge embodied in older employees is an important boost to invest in age-management. KuiperBouwgroep tries to keep older employees within their organisation for as long as possible, because their additional value in knowledge and experience is considered of great importance to the company. Therefore, several people are specifically engaged in age-management. Age-management policies and strategies are continuously being evaluated and adapted. The knowledge and experience older employees possess is being transferred by coupling older employees to younger employees. In return, the younger ones can help the older employees by partly taking over heavy work. KuiperBouwgroep uses the term 'DUO-working' for this policy. Furthermore, KuiperBouwgroep creates better working circumstances in terms of health protection by for instance providing clothes and the usage of prefab material and in terms of lifelong learning through ongoing education. As an employee puts it, KuiperBouwgroep is a company in which people get a nice job, and in most cases this becomes a job for life.

1. Organisational background

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	Small
Sector	Construction, Private
Work council	Yes

KuiperArnhem, a family business, was founded in 1902 and is located in Arnhem; a city in the province of Gelderland in the East of the Netherlands. KuiperArnhem is active in the construction sector. The company develops, builds, revitalises and restores accommodations for various clients. KuiperArnhem marks off its geographical work area in a radius of about 80 kilometres around Arnhem and Nijmegen. KuiperArnhem employs ca. 100 workers and is an umbrella company encompassing three independent subsidiaries. The focus of our case study will be on KuiperBouwgroep, which is the branch of KuiperArnhem active in the construction of new buildings. Currently, they have ca. 50 constructors in the field. The age distribution at the company is about 13% younger than 30 years, 38% is between 30 and 45 years of age, and 49% is 45 years or older. KuiperBouwgroep has an active works council. The works council discusses the corporate strategy, is involved in the development of personnel policy and introduced Senior Power policies, for instance 'DUO-working' (see 'current policies' for more information).

2. Age-management approach

KuiperBouwgroep looks for a mixture of different aged employees in their workforce. Younger employees are perceived to have additional value since they have a better physical condition, but on the other hand the company does not want to lose the experience and knowledge of older employees, especially of those who have been working for the company for a longer period. Experience and knowledge obtained by older employees over their careers play a central role in the added value of older employees compared with younger ones. Specific industrial related knowledge is collected over the years, which is of great value for KuiperBouwgroep. It is considered important for an organisation to have employees who can guide projects and having experienced employees transferring knowledge to younger people in the organisation. In that light also the term 'culture bearer' was introduced, by which is meant it is important to have workers in the organisation who can pass on the company's culture and knowledge to the next generation of workers. He or she does not necessarily lead a team, but hands over the norms and values which are considered important for the company.

At KuiperBouwgroep, several people are actively engaged in age-management and brainstorming on improving the application of age management within the company; this is an ongoing process. KuiperBouwgroep has also developed their own Senior Power Award. The goal of this award is to remind employees that experienced colleagues are important and should be respected.

The main age-related personnel policies implemented at Kuiperbouwgroep are training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer and health protection. 'DUO-working' is much applied and Kuiperbouwgroep invests highly in safety and labour conditions. For example, they provide better work clothing and lighten heavy building techniques. This way they can retain both their older and younger constructors.

3. Original measures

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Skilled manual- Persons with health problems
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Changing attitudes- Training- Health promotion and ergonomics and job design
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

Kuiperbouwgroep was nominated for the Senior Power Award in 2007 (a Dutch award for age-conscious personnel policies in organisations) by Grey Works (a committee established by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment for the period 2004-2007). The aim of the Senior Power Award is to collect appealing

practices, and to award and disseminate good practices. KuiperBouwgroep finished in 2nd place in 2007.

In 2007, the Dutch construction sector was in a good economic climate and the labour market in that sector was tight. The company grew fast and became a medium-sized regional construction company with about 100 employees. Of particular concern to KuiperBouw was therefore the recruitment and retention of new and good personnel. That is why they paid special attention to keeping the best employees committed to KuiperBouw; to keep valuable knowledge and experience within the company and to be able to transfer knowledge to newcomers. The real wake-up call came when two experienced construction workers announced their retirement. This was considered a huge loss, because these kinds of people were getting rare in the building sector. The works council was the first to wake up with a start. It was realised that KuiperBouwgroep was an old company, with many older employees and some had an employment history with the company for even 40 years. The first thoughts on age-management emerged and were translated into personnel policies.

Leading examples were those from soccer, for instance: when he became older, Philip Cocu played his last seasons at PSV in a coaching role. With Cocu in a coaching role, PSV made it to the semi-final of the European Cup. This turned out to be an inspiring analogy for construction workers. Just like PSV, Kuiperbouw makes sure there is enough experience "on the field". Senior Power nominated the company for a specific way of working, what was later called 'DUO-working'. It means that a younger and an older employee are a couple during building projects. This way, the older employee can transfer knowledge and experience to a younger employee. The mentored junior employee can take over some physically heavy work from the senior – if necessary - in return. This ensures knowledge is retained for the organisation and seniors can continue working for a longer period of time.

KuiperBouwgroep wants to make employees feel content with their work. That is considered to be the best way to keep employees loyal to the company, to develop themselves further and to stay active even beyond the retirement age. KuiperBouwgroep invests in safety and good labour conditions. Workwear is of high quality; employees feel comfortable in it and get injured less. Furthermore, the company invests in building techniques to relieve employees, for instance by using prefab foundations. When the workload gets too high, employees get other tasks. For instance, there was an employee who is excellent at calibrating and profiling. This is heavy work and the employee has the character to continue working without complaining. Since the company wants to prevent he 'dies in harness', he got lighter work and transfers his knowledge and skills to younger workers. The two other experienced construction workers also remained with the company for several hours a week, amongst others as a mentor to younger employees.

4. Development and current policies

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	Continuation
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skilled manual - Persons with health problems
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Health promotion and ergonomics and job design
Social partners involved	Yes
Scope of measure	Overarching

Lifelong learning and knowledge transfer

KuiperBouwgroep developed two different but related concepts specifically developed for younger and older employees: 'Junior Power' and 'Senior Power'. Junior Power is a project in which extra support is given to younger employees, for instance by providing them with extra workshops on industry-specific subjects. An example is that KuiperBouwgroep organises an educational afternoon for younger employees, for instance starting at 4 o'clock, and somebody from the working field is describing something about the production-process; education on things they still have to learn.

Senior Power is a concept developed for older employees, which is mainly based on how the company can try to keep their older employees to continue working. Part of this concept is the division of labour: younger employees take over physically heavy work from their more senior colleagues. The combination of employees with younger and older employees is called 'DUO-working' at KuiperBouwgroep. From the interviews we learn that although the term 'DUO-working' does appear on the work floor, the concept is being carried out in a rather natural way. Unconsciously, they are applying it constantly, and both younger and older employees appreciate this way of working.

The additional support provided by KuiperBouwgroep in terms of Junior Power and Senior Power is well received by the employees. It is stated that the Junior Power meetings are very well attended and young workers are glad with the Junior Power project, and the additional support they receive. *"You learn all kinds of new things, because a lot of new products are introduced in the industrial world and you learn how to work with them. You really learn a lot.* An additional benefit of these meetings is that employees from different levels of the organisation come together, get the chance to get to know each other and this creates a form of solidarity.

Health protection

Another way to help the seniors is to use 'prefab' materials. Some constructions are already assembled in advance by external companies. This way, employees at KuiperBouw only have to do the last stage of construction, instead of the whole process. The company also invests in good working clothes. The company provides these free for all their employees to improve their physical working conditions.

The reduction of heavy work circumstances is well received by its employees too. The constructors of KuiperBouwgroep appreciate that more and more prefab material is being used. They also make good use of the working clothes provided by KuiperBouwgroep. Working clothes are very important for the physical condition of employees, and good clothes are not always used if they are not provided: *“In former days there were no that good clothes (...) you just wore what you already had (...) Yes, it does contribute of course.”*

5. Concluding reflections from the researcher

Age-related personnel policies which are well developed and internalised in the company's culture at KuiperBouwgroep consist of lifelong learning, knowledge transferring and health protection. During the interviews there was a strong focus on these areas, which does not mean other areas of age-management are not present within the company, but not as prominently.

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Interviews

Five interviews were held with a general manager, a human resource manager, two heads of constructors (one older constructor), and a younger employee in May-June 2010.

Original good practice

Document on the website from Grey Works (2007)(in Dutch):
http://www.senior-power.nl/img/homepage/-00209_brochure_voor_pdf.pdf

References and web sites

Website

<http://www.kuiperarnhem.nl>

Documents

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