Project Results and Ideas Worth Revisiting

CBSS/BSLF Project „Sustainable Working Life“ Meeting, 19 March 2019
Hauke Siemen, REM Consult, Hamburg
“How old I am”, said Karlsson. “I am a man in his best ages, that’s all I can say”.

Little brother didn’t quite know what it meant, to be a man in his best ages… So he asked cautiously:

“Which years are the best?”

“All”, said Karlsson with satisfaction.

Astrid Lindgren, Karlsson-on-the-Roof
Quick Facts about the Projects

• Original project: “Best Agers” (2010-2012, 18 partners)

• Extension project: “Best Agers Lighthouses” (2013-2014, 12 partners)

• Partners: further education institutions, chambers of commerce, business development agencies, public authorities, universities

• Cooperation with BSLN/BSLF, e.g. Joint Conference in Riga 2014
WHAT CAN BEST AGERS DO?

- work longer
- be mentors for students
- assist SME as experts
- start their own business
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Hans-Georg Billmann</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>64</td>
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<tr>
<td>Has started</td>
<td>his own consulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>firm at age</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports mainly</td>
<td>SME and business</td>
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<td>founders</td>
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© Perspektive Media / Best Agers
Karen Marie Ravn

Country: Denmark

Age: 65

Works in a museum

Is a mentor for fragile employees

Who will replace her when she retires?
Miervaldis Rozenbergs

Country: Latvia

Age: 68

Works on his inventions since reaching retirement

Supports other (young) inventors
Kerstin Sofia Andersson

Country: Sweden

Age: 70

Built up a Tourism & Conference centre

Consults other founders and business owners, especially women
Points of Departure

• Demographic data shows that working age population will be shrinking throughout (even in growing regions)

• Considerable differences in the Baltic Sea Region (e.g. employment rates of 55-64-old)

• Study among employers in DE, SE, LT, LV:

| Awareness of demographic change exists | no long-term personnel planning: 73% of employers plan only next 1-2 years |
| Positive attitudes towards older employees’ skills | very few companies use age management practices |

• Lack of useful examples from SME
THE IDEA OF LOCAL AGE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIPS = LAMPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scientific Evaluation and Transnational Exchange</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project Partner</td>
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Promotion of Benefits and Success Factors
The Age Management Intervention

Best Agers Lighthouses project

Facilitating Partner contracts

External Advisor

Company/Public organisation

- Career talks with employees
- Adjustment of tasks
- Flexible working arrangements
- (benefits)
- Qualification
- Intergenerational teams

Top-level management

Human resources managers

Internal Mentor

Employees questionnaires

Management interviews

• Analyse company’s age situation
• Analyse what needs to be done to keep key employees and their knowledge in the company
• Propose how to reorganise / adapt HR policy of the company
Intervention example 1 – L3 Elac Nautik, Kiel, Germany

- Medium-sized company with 150 employees in marine electronics and communication
- Age management measures were embedded into a longer-term change programme
- Implemented measures in the fields of
  - Leadership culture and corporate values
  - Know-how transfer from old to young (yearly programmes with inhouse training)
  - Healthcare measures (e.g. short timeouts in stressful situations)
  - Age-adjusted job design, yearly assessment talks from at age 55+
Intervention example 2 – Kaunas University of Technology, LT

- Based on employee survey, external advisors proposed Nordic walking exercises for employees
- Exercises raised employee health, but also facilitated communication between different age groups
  - Debates on perspectives of employees aged 55+
  - Raised awareness about the importance of work ability among employees
  - First steps on the way to age management
What we did find out - key findings of the evaluation

• Managers are generally aware of the competences of employees aged 55+, but admit that in their organisations these are not yet used in conscious manner

• Changed attitudes of managers towards age in recruitment and termination of contracts

• Managers see more value in skills of older employees and competence transfer

• Still a large variety of views among managers

• Increased sensitivity of employees for age issues in the company: raised appreciation and raised expectations
What we did not find out – methodological limitations

- Short time frame limited effectiveness of interventions and relevance of evaluation results
- Lighthouses were all medium-sized – how to reach small enterprises?
- Insufficient results of cost-benefit analysis due to short time-frame, our simplified arguments;
- Productivity gain needed to offset intervention costs
- “Bus-driver example”: personnel turnover costs higher than employing older drivers
Success factors

• Combining a holistic approach with “quick wins”
• Crucial role of the external advisor:
  • Managers often lack awareness, tools or resources
  • no one-size-fits-all solution, but individual approaches that take into account the company’s socio-economic environment
• Crucial role of the internal mentor: building trust and long-term support for an adjusted HR policy among employees, works councils/unions and middle management
• Crucial role of top-level management and HR managers: Commitment and willingness to make changes, communication to peers -> showcase examples!
Further reading:

www.best-agers-lighthouses.eu
The long-term view: Successes and failures

- 17-point programme for sustained employability (BeA)
- Recommendations for Policy-Makers and Social Partners (BeAL)
- Intervention concept: Inquiries from companies after project
- Awareness raising (e.g. in Pomerania)
- Documentary film clips

- Baltic-sea wide database of senior experts
- Age management network of regions
- Workshop concept and material on age management for trade unions
Ideas never realised:

- Follow-up evaluation: What remains of the age management interventions? Was the change sustainable?
- Promoting the “lighthouse companies” - spreading the concept of age management interventions to more employers
- Introducing age management in training of HR personnel (university education / further education)
- A project on senior entrepreneurship
Contact:

Hauke Siemen  
REM Consult  
Hamburg, Germany  
www.rem-consult.eu  
siemen@rem-consult.eu  
+49 40 52 479 489 1

Hartwig Wagemester  
Wirtschaftsakademie Schleswig-Holstein  
Kiel, Germany  
www.wak-sh.de  
Hartwig.wagemester@wak-sh.de  
+49 431 3016 138

www.best-agers-project.eu

www.best-agers-lighthouses.eu
## Appendix: List of lighthouse organisations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partner</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>LAMP organisation</th>
<th>Participating unit</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Branch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 WAK</td>
<td>Kiel, Germany</td>
<td>City of Kiel (public)</td>
<td>2 Departments (1. technical department, 2. tbd)</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Public administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>01 WAK</td>
<td>Kiel, Germany</td>
<td>L3-ELAC Nautik (private)</td>
<td>Whole Company</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>Electronics &amp; Communication</td>
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<td>03 BWH</td>
<td>Hamburg, Germany</td>
<td>Claudius Peters (private)</td>
<td>Whole Company</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Metal and Electronics</td>
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<td>06 Prizztech</td>
<td>Pori, Finnnland</td>
<td>Pori Energia (private)</td>
<td>Whole Company</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>08 SSE Riga</td>
<td>Riga, Latvia</td>
<td>Latvenergo (private/public)</td>
<td>Department</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>09 SCCIC</td>
<td>Siauliai, Lithuania</td>
<td>Siauliai State College (public)</td>
<td>Whole college</td>
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<td>Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 NRDA</td>
<td>Siauliai, Lithuania</td>
<td>University of Siauliai, Social Sciences Faculty (public)</td>
<td>Social Sciences Faculty</td>
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<td>Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 KTC</td>
<td>Kaunas, Lithuania</td>
<td>KTU University (public), faculty of economics and management</td>
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<td>12 NLL</td>
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<td>NLL dentistry service (public)</td>
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<td>Health Care</td>
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