



ASPA

Activating Senior Potential in Ageing Europe

D.4.2. National report: ITALY

Report on organisational case studies

Confidential



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PART ONE: NATIONAL SUMMARY REPORT ITALY

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ITALIAN BACKGROUND

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Brief setting the scene, national developments regarding the practice of age management and specific national initiatives

As in most European countries, also in Italy the most evident measure derived by the 2000 European Council of Lisbon's objectives¹ has been the increase of retirement age. In Italy there are two kinds of pensions: 1) old age pension; 2) seniority pension. From 2008, the retirement age for the "old age pension" increased from 57 to 65 years for men and to 60 years for women. At the moment, the government aim is to raise retirement age to 65 years also for women (only for those employed in the public sector) by 2012. Seniority pension (formerly accessible from the age of 57 with the presence of a certain number of years of contribution) has been regulated by a "quota" mixed method based on age and number of years of contribution that must be: 95 until 31/12/2010 (with not less than 59 years of age); 96 from January 2001 to December 2012 (with not less than 60 years of age); 97 from January 2013 (but not less than 61 years of age). However, with 40 years of contributions, it is still possible retiring at any age.

Furthermore, from January 2009 (law 112/2008 as enforced by law 133/2008), it is possible to combine incomes deriving from both employment and pension.

As a results of the pension reform, in the 2000-2009 time span there has been an increase of the employment rate of older workers (55-64) from 27,7% to 35,7%², while the average exit age raised from 59,8 years of 2001 to 60,8 years of 2008 (EUROSTAT, 2010).

Despite the governmental interventions mentioned above, apart from a law preventing (among others kind of discrimination) age discrimination at work (law 216/2003), in Italy there is a substantial lack of actual policies to foster the employability of older workers, with the following exceptions:

a) the attempt (law 276/2003) to promote employment opportunities of over 50 year old unemployed as possible beneficiaries of "placement contracts", through contribution incentives for organisations (but the measure has had a very little impact);

b) a survey of the condition of older workers in Italy, conducted by a Senate Work Commission (Senato della Repubblica, 2005) that remained unheard and had no practical consequences. Thus, older workers in Italy still encounter many problems at their workplace, especially in times of economic crisis like in the present.

c) financial benefits (i.e. a reduced contribution to be paid) for employers that recruit over 50 year old recipients of the unemployment allowance (a quite recent measure that was included in the 2010 financial act, law 191/2009), to combat unemployment in mature age.

Social cushions

Early retirement programmes "officially" do not exist any more, but older workers are often a "first choice" for companies taking advantages from social cushions such as the "Income

¹ It was agreed to raise the rate of employment from 61 per cent to 70 per cent by 2010. As sub-objectives, an year later (2001) in Stockholm it was agreed the increase to 50% of the employment rate of older workers, i.e. those between 55 and 64 years of age; the year later (2002) in Barcelona it was agreed to gradually raise retirement age by about five years.

² Employment rate of men increased from 40,9% to 46,7% while of women from 15,3% to 25,4%.

redundancy fund” (i.e. Cassa Integrazione Guadagni)³ and the “mobility allowance”(i.e. indennità di mobilità)⁴, regulated by laws 223/1991 and 236/1996. Mainly for this reason in Italy the phenomenon of unemployment in older age is quite widespread (even if less pronounced than in the younger age classes – ISTAT 2009) and often older workers (who, generally, are the most expensive ones for companies), “thanks” to these social cushions can reach the eligibility (in terms of age or contribution) for obtaining a pension (a solution extremely favourable for companies). Out of the 12 organisation investigated in our study, for example, 2 of them were characterised by the co-presence of both good initiatives for older workers and presence of social cushions: *Savio Macchine Tessili* and *Cometa*. In the former, mobility allowance is proposed on a voluntary basis (i.e. offering an economic incentive) to employees next to retirement, while in the latter the Income redundancy fund is applied to all employees (in turn).

Part time

Part-time in the last part of the working career could be considered a positive practice to promote a gradual retirement of older workers, implying also a possible prolongation of the working life, being in this way considered also a good retention strategy. In Italy, part-time (in general, but in particular at the end of the career) is not widespread. Following a European Directive, Italian Parliament produced a decree (decree 61/2000) to incentive part-time in general, but its impact was minimal. Main reasons why part-time in the last part of the career is uncommon, are: a) private companies are not so willing to grant part-time to workers (that is why most of part-time workers are in the public administration); b) part-time is unattractive also for older workers, since their future pension income is still calculated on the basis of wages received in the last part of their career (the higher the wage, the higher the pension income).

A further barrier has recently arisen for part-time also in the public administration (where previously it was sufficient just to ask for, in order to obtain the part-time contract). Recent normative interventions (law 133/2008; law 150/2009; decree law 78/2010) on maximising the productivity in the public sector, on financial stabilisation and economic competitiveness with a hiring freeze in the public sector, have basically hampered the access to part-time, since retired people are not replaced and organisations have to employ as good they can the remaining (reduced) workforce. Thus, public organisations now usually meet eventual requests for part-time less often than in the past. In our study, part-time policies for older workers were found in three organisations: *L’Incontro* (private sector); *Municipality of Trento* (public sector); *Liceo Ancina Fossano* (public sector). As for the public sector, in the *Municipality of Trento* the initiative did not work. The organisation offered the opportunity to shift from full to part-time working schedule both temporarily (for a limited period of time) as well as permanently, but mature workers did not exploit this available possibility. On the other hand, for the (economic) reason mentioned above, at the end of the career there is an opposite phenomenon, i.e. the part-time workers’ application to go back to full-time. In the other public administration (i.e. *Liceo Ancina Fossano*), up to now the initiative runs very well,

3 It provides compensations to workers within short term unusual firm crisis, while CIGS (Extra income redundancy fund, i.e. Cassa Integrazione Guadagni Straordinaria) addresses to situations of structural and persistent crisis with an high risk of being fired.

4 It addresses workers who: a) are going out of CIGS; b) were fired due to personnel reduction or firm restructuring; 5 workers fired in 120 days by CIGS eligible employers; c) were fired due to firm end.

since the above mentioned decree 61/2000 was subsequently implemented by the national collective labour agreement that regulates teaching. In this way teachers who fulfil the age requirements for retirement, while applying for retirement, may, at the same time, apply also to extend their working lives by reducing the working hours through part-time and receiving half the monthly pension as well as the remuneration for the carried out part-time job. Currently, however, some external factors seem to undermine the actual future feasibility of the initiative, since for example recent ministerial funding cuts on available job places in the public education sector are causing an increasing number of unemployed teachers, and these redundancies can negatively impact on granting the part-time after reaching of the retirement age, because the education system in this case prefers to employ a younger unemployed teacher instead of an older one (thus preferring that older teachers retire permanently).

The “social cooperative” phenomenon

Social cooperatives are regulated by the law 381/1991. They are cooperatives that offer recruitment and social inclusion opportunities to people considered disadvantaged, i.e. physically and mentally disabled, ex prisoners, drug-addicted, under-18 people with difficulties, etc., through the provision of educational or social-health services. Disadvantaged people’s share has to be at least 30% of the whole workforce, in order to obtain tax relieves. These kinds of cooperatives tend to be quite aware of employment-related problems of mature people. In our study, for example, 3 out of 12 cases were identified among social cooperatives: *L’Incontro* (job recruitment opportunities, flexible working practices and redeployment and retention); *Atlante* (training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer) and *Idea45* (job recruitment). Being in contact with disadvantaged people, these organisations are more “aware” of the particularly deprived position of mature unemployed pushed out of the labour market, and most of them are also fostering the enrolment of this category among the “disadvantaged” ones present in the law.

Reflective account of issues encountered in selecting and conducting case studies

Mainly due to the present economic crisis and its consequences in terms of legislation (i.e. on financial stabilisation and economic competitiveness) and organisational choices, the issue of age management (that was not particularly developed neither before the crisis) receives currently less attention both by the government and in particular by organisations. The situation has worsened compared to the 2005, when a similar research⁵ was carried out by INRCA and examples of organisational good practices for older employees (in a better general economic context) were found more easily. In order to carry out 12 case studies, researchers contacted (between March and October 2010) 54 organisations that were supposed (thanks to information previously acquired) to implement “good” age management policies or practices for older workers. The main sources for selecting organisations have been: the already mentioned Eurofound case studies database⁶ (which, at least in part, was

⁵ European Project “Employment initiatives for an ageing workforce”, funded by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

⁶ Freely accessible at <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/research/0296.htm>

a follow-up of a previous study carried out in 1995⁷); an Italian quantitative database⁸ (770 cases) on organisational initiatives, policies and opinions towards older workers⁹; snowballing. Snowballing was meant as hints mainly from: other Italian research teams on the issue; experts (i.e., members of the ASPA Italian National Advisory Board); interviewed representatives of the organisations.

For different reasons, 42 organisations dropped out from the study (see Annex 1), and it should be underlined that several organisations that originally declared the presence of positive initiatives, some time later had interrupted the “practice” (i.e. the initiative was no longer existing). The main reason for explaining this has been the economic crisis. Thus some formerly investigated very positive cases have been “lost”, as for example the cases of *ZF Marine Padova*¹⁰ (the company, during these last years, facing the economic crisis, has closed most of the productive sectors and let retiring a lot of workers), and of *UPA*¹¹ (its employees today are mostly young, being the average age 35-40; older employees retired and the actual strategy of the company is not to consider recruitment of older workers). Researchers have also faced in some cases an unavailability to collaborate of some companies, even in the presence of a positive initiative.

Key contrasts between sectors/cases

Due to the previously explained reasons, the Italian research team did not have a real opportunity to choose the sample composition. In this way, some initial wills about “stratification” remained not fully met. For example, the sample was planned to be composed in a quite balanced way as for: dimension (large, medium and small); public, cooperative and private organisations; sector of activity; longitudinal vs. new cases.

In the Italian sample (see Annex 2), medium organisations (250 to 500 employees) resulted underrepresented (2 cases against 5 large and 5 small ones). So in the present context, attention to older workers seems to be paid mainly by small/familiar organisations and by very big ones, which in general have more developed human resources policies.

Three organisations were public, 5 private, one mixed (public/private) and 3 cooperatives, evidencing a reasonable balance in this respect.

Most of the investigated organisations provide social or health activities (5 out of 12). This could be underlined as a characteristic of the Italian scenario: in particular these kind of organisations are those offering more opportunities to improve the employability of older workers (i.e. see above the description of social cooperatives). Other 4 organisations operate in the manufacture sector, and the remaining 4 in other sectors (see Annex 2).

We found only 3 longitudinal cases. For “longitudinal” we intend cases that were previously investigated as case studies (i.e. *L’Incontro* and *Savio Macchine Tessili*), and new cases for

⁷ Walker, A. and Taylor, P. (eds) 1998. *Combating Age Barriers in Employment: A European Portfolio of Good Practice*. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Luxembourg

⁸ Set up by INRCA within ASPA project

⁹ Some contacted organisations answered “yes” to the question: “If we have any further questions on age related management issues may we contact you?” and declared the current presence in the establishment of at least one measure regarding older workers among the following: part-time retirement; reduction of working time before retirement; training plans for older workers; possibilities of extra leave for older workers; decreasing the workload for older workers; ergonomic measures; an age limit for irregular work/shift work; promoting internal job mobility; continuous career development; flexible working hours.

¹⁰ See <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/it007.htm>

¹¹ See <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/cases/it009.htm>

which was clearly possible to rebuild the “original” initiative (i.e. at the time of the implementation) and to describe its further development (i.e. *Trieste Trasporti*). All other cases were treated as non longitudinal cases. This unbalance is explained by the high number of refusal to collaborate obtained by previously investigated organisations, for various reasons (see previous section). The organisation *L’Incontro* deserves a “special mention”, on which the second follow up has been conducted, being investigated for the first time in 1995¹², and for the second in 2005¹³.

Implemented initiatives¹⁴ were found to be mainly in the fields of: training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer (5); flexible working practices (3); awareness raising, changing attitudes and diversity (3); job recruitment (3); redeployment and retention (2), employment exit and transition to retirement (1); comprehensive approach (1). There were not reported significant initiatives in the fields of: career development and mobility management; remuneration; health protection and promotion and workplace design.

There seems to be also a quite evident geographical pattern about the attention given by organisations to the issue of employees’ age management: 8 companies out of 12 are Northern-Italian organisations and 4 Central-Italian. No case comes from the Southern part of the country, a territory where work-related problems are in general more present, being the unemployment rate (at all ages) particularly high.

It is important to underline how initiatives are linked to external aspects. The most important one is the already mentioned general economic crisis. Almost all organisations explicitly declared that crisis has an impact on their activities or initiatives. The most negative evident impact is a reduction of the yearly turnover, or, as for public bodies, it is represented by governmental funding cuts. Sometimes negative external aspects could also be considered a national law. For example, in the *United Shipyards of Monfalcone*, the implementation of law 257/1992 (which promoted the early retirement of those workers who had worked in contact with amianthus during production, by granting them imputed contribution) caused a massive exit of older workers and a deep crisis. Government, on the other hand, did not provide any tool to counter this consequence.

This Italian scenario implies in some cases the presence, in the same company, of a mix of good practices and use of social cushions (laws 223/1991 and 236/1993).

Within this quite negative context, main drivers for organisational good practices of age management of employees are seldom legislative ones. We already noticed how social cooperatives pay attention to the issue (law 381/1991), but indirectly, since the law does not consider the category of “older unemployed pushed out from the labour market” as disadvantaged one.

Other indirect (since they are not explicitly addressed to older workers) normative drivers are laws 229/1999 and 61/2000. The former established the Italian system of Continuing Medical Training (ECM), that in some cases can have a considerable impact on older workers (i.e. *ASL 4 Chiavarese*), while the latter is on part-time promotion, that may have (through appropriate collective labour agreements) a focus on the end of the career (i.e. *Liceo Ancina Fossano*).

¹² Walker, A. and Taylor, P. (eds.) 1998. *Combating Age Barriers in Employment: A European Portfolio of Good Practice*. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Luxembourg.

¹³ European Project “Employment initiatives for an ageing workforce”, funded by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

¹⁴ For the contents of the initiatives, see the single reports

In the quite poor Italian context, important drivers to raise the awareness on the issue can be considered the active participation of organisations in European projects (mostly founded or co-founded by the European Social Found), since this usually implies a direct intervention in the organisation, i.e. both of the Human Resource Management and of workers. This demonstrates that especially in this time of crisis, an organisation hardly plans, organises and implements age management initiatives without an external push, which in some cases comes from the research field. Probably for this reason, only one out of the 12 investigated cases has already taken into consideration new initiatives on this issue for the future (i.e. *L'Incontro*, starting the new "New Poverties" project in 2009¹⁵).

References

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¹⁵ See the case study for details

Annex 1: Contacted organisations who declined the collaboration

Number	Organisation	Previously investigated	Source	Reasons for refusing
1	ZF Marine Padova	Y (case study)	Eurofound Database	Initiative no more existing: the company, during this last years, faces with the economic crisis, closed most of the productive sectors and let retire a lot of workers. The company finally changed the owners.
2	Box Marche	Y (case study)	Eurofound Database	Initiative no more existing. The new situation prospected is the following: older workers all retired and the actual average age of the workers is 35 years. The only owner is 50.
3	UPA	Y (case study)	Eurofound Database	Initiative no more existing: employees today are mostly young, being the average age 35-40. The older employees retired and the actual strategy of the company is not to consider recruitment of older workers.
4	Ferrero S.p.A.	Y (case study)	Eurofound Database	No more available to collaborate.
5	Coop Adriatica	Y (case study)	Eurofound Database	Initiatives no more existing.
6	Argo Vigilanza	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing: most of older workers now retired.
7	ArcelorMittel	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing.
8	C.S.D Diaconia Valdese	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing.
9	Bianchini Maurizio	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Unavailable to collaborate.
10	Poligrafici Editoriale Spa	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing.
11	Lear Corporation	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing: the next year the establishment will be closed.
12	Comune di Ancona	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing.
13	Comune di Cesena	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing.
14	IPAB Vicenza	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing.
15	Casa di cura Dott. Pederzoli Spa	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing.
16	Tessitura Monti	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiative not so positive.
17	Regione Emilia Romagna	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Running initiative (part-time), but it was a failure.
18	Ospedale di Brescia	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Weak initiative.
19	Casa di cura Villa Ortensia	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing.
20	Coop Soc. "In Cammino"	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiatives no more existing.
21	Comune di Correggio	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Weak initiative.
22	Agenzia Italia	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiative no more existing.
23	Azienda Ospedaliera Lecco	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Weak initiative.
24	Comune di San Lazzaro di Savena	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Unavailable to collaborate: weak initiative (marginal).
25	Boering Ingelheim	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Weak initiative.
26	ASL Bolzano	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Weak initiative.
27	ASL 10 Firenze	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Weak initiative.
28	Azienda Ambientale di Pubblico Servizio	Y (questionnaire)	ASPADA Database	Initiative no more existing.
29	Elica S.p.A.	N	Web	After a first positive contact (the company agreed to collaborate), later the company decided to not collaborate.
30	Loccioni Group S.p.A.	N	Web	Initiative does not exist (wrong information).
31	Falc	N	Snowballing	The initiative concerned the integration in the labour market of disabled persons which already collaborated in the company. Actually, however, there are not older workers among employees.
32	Carnj Coop Fileni	Y (intervention project)	Snowballing	Unavailable to collaborate.

33	Plastal Oderzo	Y (case study)	Snowballing	The company is facing an economic and productive crisis, and is considering the closure of the business.
34	Sanbenedetto	Y (case study)	Snowballing	Representatives declined the collaboration. Reason: in this period the company is facing a structural and organisational change.
35	Nuovo Istituto d'Arti Grafiche	N	Snowballing	The company declined the collaboration because not interested.
36	Calzaturificio Peron	N	Snowballing	Because of the economic crisis, the company was forced to fire a large part of the workforce, first of all, older workers.
37	Kallisté	N	Snowballing	Because of the economic crisis, the company was forced to fire a large part of the workforce, first of all, older workers.
38	Lube Cucine S.r.l.	Y (intervention project)	Snowballing	Unavailable to collaborate.
39	L'Oreal	N	Snowballing	Interest for the age management issue (it participates at a working-age workshop organised by Solidalita Foundation in Milan), but no initiative is running in the company (they are trying to understand what to do/initiative to implement).
40	Brioni Roman Style Spa	Y (case study)	Snowballing	Initiative no more existing: due to the crisis the company is now pushing the older workers out of the labour market.
41	Mares	Y (intervention project)	Snowballing	Unavailable to collaborate.
42	Aventis	Y (intervention project)	Snowballing	Difficulties in contacting the company.

Annex 2: The sample

Case number	Interview date	Source	Organisation	Sector	Public/Private	Dimension	Follow-up (y/n)	Initiatives	Crisis y/n	Law	Social cushions	Part-time	New/Planned initiatives	Research Projects
IT01	23/03/10	Eurofound database	L'Incontro	- Social work activities - Residential care activities	Cooperative	Medium	Y	- Job recruitment - Flexible working practices - Redeployment and retention	Y	381/1991	N	Y	Y	N
IT02	20/04/10	Snowballing	Istituto di Riabilitazione S.Stefano	- Human health activities	Private	Large	N	- Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer - Awareness raising, changing attitudes and diversity	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
IT03	11/06/10	Snowballing	Atlante	- Social work activities	Cooperative	Small	N	- Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer	Y	381/1991	N	N	N	N
IT04	15/07/10	ASPA database	Trieste Trasporti S.p.A.	- Passenger land transport	Mixed	Large	Y	- Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer - Flexible working practices	N	N	N	N	N	N
IT05	05/08/10	ASPA database	Municipality of Trento	- Public administration	Public	Large	N	- Job recruitment	N	Y/N	N	Y	N	N
IT06	29/07/10	ASPA database	Savio Macchine Tessili	- Manufacture of machinery and equipment	Private	Medium	Y	- Comprehensive approach	Y	223/1991 236/1993	Y	N	N	Y
IT07	28/08/10	Snowballing	Cantieri Riuniti Monfalcone	- Building of ships and boats	Private	Large	N	- Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer - Redeployment and retention	Y	257/1992	N	N	N	N
IT08	21/04/10	Web	Idea45	- Other social work activities without accommodation	Cooperative	Small	N	- Job recruitment	Y	381/1991	N	N	N	Y
IT09	15/09/10	Snowballing	Taumat	- Manufacture of general purpose machinery	Private	Small	N	- Awareness raising, changing attitudes and diversity	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
IT10	29/09/10	ASPA database	Liceo Ancina Fossano	- Secondary Education	Public	Small	N	- Employment exit and transition to retirement - Flexible working practices	Y	61/2000 CCNL	N	Y	N	N
IT11	30/09/10	ASPA database	ASL 4 Chiavarese	- Human Health Activities	Public	Large	N	- Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer	Y	29/1999	N	N	N	N
IT12	21/10/10	Snowballing	Cometa	- Manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c.	Private	Small	N	- Awareness raising, changing attitudes and diversity	Y	223/1991 236/1993	Y	N	N	Y

PART TWO: CASE STUDY SUMMARY TABLE

Summarised information on the conducted Italian case studies (in addition to the information in table for pre-selection of cases)

Nr.	name of organisation	exact size of Establishment	% of men, women and workers aged 50+	motivation of the firm for age management	nature of social dialogue	target group in original a. current initiative	age profile in original a. current initiative	retention or reduction of original initiative	age management approaches*
1	L'INCONTRO	350 (110 art teachers; 240 member workers)	20% (art teachers) women 100% (art teachers) older workers	Since in 1992 it was very hard to recruit health care qualified personnel, the organization started out a double recruitment strategy: both of newly retired older workers and of early pushed off from the productive world ones, also implementing some flexible working schemes in order to retain them.	The social dialogue takes place through the weekly equipe meetings, the monthly area councils as well as the semester assembly.	Original measure: - Older workers - Qualified workers Current initiative: - Older workers - Qualified workers - Unemployed over 50	age-specific	Retention	Original measures: - 1 - 6 Current initiative: - 1 - 6
2	SANTO STEFANO	948	79% women 21% older workers	Older workers need increasing attention because most of the high quality	The company provides spaces for trade unions meetings and 40% of workers	- Older workers - People with health problems (ex patients of	age-specific	Ended project	Original measures: - 3 - 2

				services are provided by over 45 workers, as at this age nurses, physicians, physiotherapists and other health assistants reach their highest professional level, devotion to work and ability to fulfil the needs of customers.	is enrolled in a trade union.	the organisation)			
Nr.	name of organisation	exact size of Establishment	% of men, women and workers aged 50+	motivation of the firm for age management	nature of social dialogue	target group in original a. current initiative	age profile in original a. current initiative	retention or reduction of original initiative	age management approaches*
3	ATLANTE	101	24% women 35% older workers	To avoid a decrease in efficiency and productivity of the provided services and of the carried out activities.	the social dialogue occurs between the board and the working members during the assembly	Original and current measures: - all workers - over 50 workers	Both overarching and age-specific,	Retention	Original measures: - 3 - 6 Since recently, in addition to the above: - 1
4	TRIESTE TRASPORTI	835 (610 drivers)	5% women (among drivers) 56% older workers (among drivers)	The company planned the initiatives as it considered fundamental to create a more friendly working environment for	trade unions present in the organisation have a relevant role as their representatives and the company management	- drivers	age-specific (that can evolve in overarching)	Retention	Original measures: - 6 - 3

				its older employees, and to motivate them in the final part of their career in order to foster their employability, as well as their know-how transfer.	confront each other on decisions concerning the workforce within a consultation table.				
5	MUNICIPALITY OF TRENTO	1,540	56% women 34% older workers	To allow to older unemployed (pushed off from the labour market) to reach the “right” to retire; to foster the employability of older workers.	Trade unions, play an important role in issues regarding the employees.	- older workers (unemployed)	- age-specific	Retention	- 1
6	SAVIO MACCHINE TESSILI	732 world wide 416 in the establishment	10% women 36% older workers	To spread out, within the organization, the older workers’ importance and expertise, as well as, their loyalty to the company values.	The social dialogue is collaborative in solving the conflicts, which do normally occur	- workers with 25 or more years of seniority - all workers	- age-specific - overarching	Retention	- 10
7	United Shipyards Monfalcone	8,437 world wide 1,702 in the	3% women 15% older	To cope with a professional crisis, which	Social dialogue takes usually place in a	- older workers (as tutors) - retired former	- age specific - overarching	Retention	- 3 - 4

		establishment	workers	traces back already in the Nineties, when a massive escape of experts and highly specialised skilled workers took place.	constructive dialectical and collaborative way.	workers (even, as tutors)			
8	IDEA 45	13	15% women 100% older workers	To fight the unemployment of older people pushed of from the labour market back	Social dialogue takes place through assemblies of members of the cooperative in a good climate of cooperation.	- older (unemployed) workers	- age specific	Retention	- 1
9	TAUMAT	30	10% women 33% older workers	The owner's awareness about the importance of older workers in the company	Major national trade unions are present, although, most of problems are solved through the direct collaboration of workers and managers	- older workers - younger workers - qualified workers - unqualified workers	- age specific - overarching	Ended project	- 2

* age management approaches – please enter relevant categories (see below) which match the dimensions listed in WP4 guidelines:

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: job recruitment and flexible working practices, “L’Incontro” Cooperative, Italy

Executive summary

The “L’Incontro” cooperative was born in 1991 with the aim to care for psychological disabled people or socio-economic outsiders. Since in 1992 it was very hard to recruit health care qualified personnel, the organization started out a double recruitment strategy: both of newly retired older workers and of early pushed off from the productive world ones, also implementing some flexible working schemes in order to retain them.

Later on some independent productive lines were introduced in the industrial as well as in the agricultural fields.

Today the cooperative employs 110 older workers, named Art Teachers, as well as 240 member workers, and its main activity is to foster people with social unease as well as with mental diseases to enter the job market. Indeed the Art Teachers are mainly active as “tutors on the job” for younger member-workers as well as for people affected by psycho-social unease in order to rehabilitate them through the work.

On average Art Teachers are aged between 63-64 years and 80% of them are men. The measure has been successfully run for almost more than 20 years. The Art Teachers can be found in each productive area and since their professionalism and expertise are an important part of the whole workforce, as well as a vital resource for the effective management of the Cooperative.

In 2009 the “L’Incontro” Cooperative together with local public governments and administrations, started a new project called “New Poverties” in order to:

- a) Fulfil the labour demand by hiring over 50 workers early released from work, finding out the professional profiles suited to the different Cooperative productive lines;
- b) Contribute to fight the social exclusion of these people back.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	– Medium (350)
Sector	– Social work activities (Q88) – Residential care activities (Q87) – Non-profit
Work council	– Yes
Yearly business volume	– 39,6 millions of Euros

The “L’Incontro” is a no profit social cooperative with headquarter in Castelfranco Veneto (North-east of Italy). It was born in 1991, to manage a sector of the “Domenico Sartor” nursing home for older people in convention with the public health national system. It’s active in the care of people with mental disease or of socio economic outsiders.

Today the “L’incontro” Cooperative is the leading organisation of a consortium of 15 different cooperatives called “In Concerto” (i.e. “In Concert”), active in the following sectors:

1. Home and residential care for dependent older people or for people with mental disease;
2. Industrial production of electric and electronic products linked to the rehabilitation of people with psycho-social unease;
3. Production, transformation and sell of agriculture products linked as well to the rehabilitation of people with psycho-social unease.

The 2008 sales turnover of the consortium amounted to 39.598.600 Euros, 17.325.372 of which (43,7%) derived from directly managed productive activities and the rest 56,3% from service provisions. The turnover are more than double the 2004 one of 15.191.210 Euros (44,3% for productive activities and 55,7% for services provided in conventions with local public companies).

The operators employed in the cooperative are 350, of which 240 member-workers and 110 Art Teachers, or retired people with professional expertise in the cooperative productive areas of interest, who are tutors on the job for younger member-workers as well as for people affected by psyco-social unease in order to rehabilitate them through the work. In the whole Consortium, member-workers are 750 and Art Teachers 215. On average Art Teachers are aged between 63-64 years and 80% of them are men. Both the Art Teachers as well as the member-workers turn over is extremely low.

The industrial productivity of the cooperative is decreasing due to the general economic crisis and to the resulting lowering of the productive orders. Nevertheless, the general demand of workers has always been quite high, thanks to the production diversification.

The social dialogue takes place through the weekly equipe meetings, the monthly area councils as well as the semester assembly. There aren't any trade unions within the Cooperative.

2. The original measure

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualified workers - Older workers
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job-recruitment - Work and working time organisation
Social partners involved	- No
Scope of measure	- Age-specific

The measure set up by “L’Incontro” in 1992 was mainly focused at hiring as well as at retaining newly retired older workers or early pushed out from the labour market ones, through flexible working schemes: part-time contracts and flexible daily/weekly work schedules reflecting the workers’ personal needs. Just after its birth the Cooperative started the measure, as from the very beginning it was difficult to find qualified health care personnel.

As a consequence it was decided to focus on a particular work supply segment: professional adult nurses (almost all women) who prematurely gave up the labor market (mainly from public structures) due to the impossibility to get a part-time or a reduced time contract, but who were still willing to professionally work in a more flexible way. At the beginning, in convention with the Local Health Authorities of the Treviso Province and of the Upper Padua Province, nearly 20 retired nurses aged on average 55 years were hired (beyond about 30 younger women as member-workers) as responsible for the management of some home and residential care structures for dependent older people and for people with mental disease.

At the beginning the main idea was to offer the newly hired older workers a short term work and to abandon such a strategy once the difficulties in personnel hiring were over.

This was also a consequence of the negative evaluations of the local trade unions concerning the recruitment of retired older workers instead of younger ones.

However, later on, this vision was progressively replaced by the opposite idea to widen the hiring of older workers, considering its positive impact on the whole organisation in terms of:

- a. More flexibility in the human resource management facing a not completely defined and constantly changing labour market;
- b. More flexibility of the working times;
- c. Reduction of the personnel absence rates and turnover;
- d. Professional know-how transfer on the job from older and experienced workers (mostly in contact with dependent or with mental disease users) to younger ones, less used to interact with people with strong relationship problems.

Because of this last aspect, from 1993 up to now, the Cooperative has decided to hire more older workers, both in the local as well as in the regional area, involving both genders (the majority of them are newly retired men with low pension incomes). Such new resources are supported by educators and psychologists and are active as “Art Teachers” in psychophysical rehabilitation Centres as well as in Centres for the replacement of psychiatric patients with mental diseases or with social problems (alcohol or drug addicted people, ex-prisoners supported by educators and psychologists, long term unemployed workers, etc.).

3. Development of the initial measure and current practice

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	- Continuation
Target groups	- Qualified - Unqualified
Type of measure	- Job-recruitment - Work and working time organisation
Social partners involved	- No
Scope of measure	- Age-specific

Today, after about 20 years from its introduction, the recruitment and involvement of the Art Teachers together with the member-workers and the disadvantaged ones constitute “the third leg” of the Cooperative, because of their considerable support to the whole company.

This has led not only to improve the rehabilitation instruments and so the quality of the services provided in convention with the public sector, but also to start some independent industrial and agricultural productions, which have also added some value to make the Cooperative more competitive and so less dependent on the conventions with the local public authorities.

An assessment of the measure after about 10 years shows that the external trade union's initial resistance has gradually changed, because of some concrete data, i.e., the increased overall employment within the organisation and the provided social utility. Besides the Art Teachers involvement on one side increased the motivation and on the other enhanced the younger employees' dedication to the Cooperative mission.

Later on the measure has developed further, but its objectives remain substantially unchanged. Today's employees in the Consortium are 965 (215 of which "Art Teachers") and are able to care for about 500 disabled or with psycho-social unease users.

At the beginning the Art Teachers were only women caring for older people, today 80% of them are newly retired men, or early pushed out from the labour market ones, with an average age from 60 to 70 years.

They are mainly professional tutors in: industrial assemblage centres; the logistic distribution of components as well as of semi-finished assembled goods; farms producing, transforming and selling typical local products; transportation.

Due to the measure development over the years, the local public governments, got interested in developing, together with the "L'Incontro" management, a possible new common project. The need came from an accurate analysis of the labour market of the Veneto Region and its social issues, recognising that the over50 workers who were prematurely pushed off from the labour market were at high risk of social exclusion but, at the same time, a working and professional resource to employ in the productive sectors of the "L'Incontro" Cooperative.

After a study phase it was indeed decided to satisfy the need of workforce fostering the recruitment and professional development of over50 workers.

At the end of 2009, the project "New Poverties" was born in cooperation with the local public authorities.

The project is meant to fight the social exclusion back of two particular categories: prematurely pushed off from the labour market older workers, and poor ones. Indeed the main inclusion criteria to the measure are: 1) being an over50 prematurely pushed off from the labour market; 2) earning monthly less than 500 euros.

Indeed, besides its main objective of recruiting over50 unemployed people, the project is also meant to fulfil the increasing demand of work and income of workers and families affected by the still existing socio-economic crisis, inserting them in sectors of public utility and managed by the "L'Incontro" Cooperative.

The regional public local governments co-funding of 2,000,000 euro i.e. 50% of the labour cost, and this has given the project a wider local worthiness.

The project employment ways are:

1. professionalising traineeship;
2. fixed-term contract;
3. voucher.

Up to now the most used instrument was the traineeship, for two main reasons:

1. Lots of candidates do not have appropriate professional skills and need to be trained;
2. These contracts are less expensive for employers and allow to place more workers.

This first phase concerns three productive sectors of the Cooperative: agricultural, industrial and public gardens maintenance. It's a nearly half a million euros project and, what is more interesting, even if it has just started the "New Poverties" project, already employs 29 workers for an average period of 6 months.

In any case according to the managers of the Consortium, the most positive factor is not so much the quantitative one (number of employed workers), but its core idea: support them offering working and professionalising paths.

An unplanned benefit of the project is the increase of voluntary activities provided by older people who have been "motivated" by the Art Teachers expertise.

For example, the new born voluntary "Carmen" association, who provide social care services for dependent older people.

The transferability of the measure is based on a constant attention to local social, economic and labour market issues, together with a continuous networking with the local public authorities.

4. Age management approach

The general approach of the employees' Age Management is the core company strategy. The birth of the Cooperative in itself was based on recruiting newly retired workers or older workers who had been early pushed out from the labour market, who are of course more than highly regarded.

A proof of the initiative good success is that despite some difficulties due to the economic crisis, the general organisation philosophy hasn't changed and sales turnover are increasing. Considering the ongoing general ageing of the population, the future of the "L'Incontro" is likely to be a prosperous one, as the supply of older labour-force is expected to rise. This is a positive aspect for an organisation which is based on older workers' recruitment and retainment.

About the employees' Age Management approach of the organisation, on the one side particular attention (recruitment and retention) is paid to older workers; on the other a more general life-course approach cannot be excluded, as younger workers are however trained by older ones, so that they can acquire the necessary abilities and "grow older" within the organisation.

Besides what has been said on Age Management through the described measures in sections 2 and 3, even if further formal policies or measure do not exist, some informal practices can be described.

For example, the attention can be surely focalised on the training, continuous learning and on the knowledge transfer. Such “good practice” is active to support younger workers by qualifications and professional know how of the Art Teachers.

As far as the costs of the measures, the recruitment of newly retired older workers (as Art Teachers) is fostered by the possibility to recruit them with quite low-cost and extremely profitable contracts to reimburse the expenses. This is convenient also for workers, since these kind of emoluments can be added to the workers’ pension and represent a surplus for them.

Also hiring unemployed over50 people (as done in the “New Poverties” project) through professionalising traineeships is profitable according to the employer. Such a measure, in fact, at least in the first phase, before the potential “real” recruitment, allows a cost reduction in order to offer working and training possibilities to the highest number of people, despite the negative general economic and working frame in the country.

At present, as the “New Poverties” project has just started, the future plans of the organisation concern mainly a prosperous implementation of the project itself.

5. Concluding reflections from the researcher

As far the interest for the older workers, the “L’Incontro” Cooperative-“In Concerto” Consortium is with no doubt a relevant regional reality. The Cooperative in planning its strategic lines pays great attention to the local social problems of particular categories (older and disabled people, etc.) at high risk of social exclusion.

The full awareness, within the Cooperative, of the problems faced by unemployed older people and of the possible added value provided by them to the Cooperative through their experience, allowed “L’Incontro” to transform a social problem into a key development factor not only for the Cooperative itself but also for the whole local social environment.

The carried out interviews clearly show that the suggested and developed measures to recruit older or newly retired workers, guarantee social benefits to the community, fostering also the involvement of older people in voluntary activities as for example care of older people, improving the quality of life both of volunteers and of their users.

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CASE 2: Training, Lifelong Learning and Knowledge Transfer; Awareness Raising, Changing attitudes and diversity; Istituto di Riabilitazione Santo Stefano S.r.l.; Italy

Executive summary

The Santo Stefano Rehabilitation Institute Limited Company is one of the most important regional rehabilitation centres. The institute is particularly active in its employees' age management: in the period 2005-2007 it joined the "Investing in People" project, to certify the professional skills of over 45 workers as well as their further customised training according to their identified skills and to the professional company needs.

Thanks to this experience the company certified skills of about 500 employees and some over 45 persons prematurely pushed off from the labour market who used to be patients of the institute, and provided them totally about 1.300 customised training interventions.

Due to the increasing demand of high quality care and to the constant attention to social changes, older employees have become the company main target.

Moreover in 2002 the "Lifelong Learning Centre" was created within the Human Resources and Organisational Department to train all employees, regardless of their age.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Large (948)
Sector	- Human health activities (Q86) - Private
Work council	- Yes
Yearly business volume	- 60 millions of Euros

The Santo Stefano Rehabilitation Institute was born in Porto Potenza Picena (Marche Region) straight after the II World War as orphans' summer camp. Afterwards its use destination was often changed and in the 60's it firstly became an hospital, later a bone tuberculosis centre and finally an home for disabled young persons, thus starting the company rehabilitation commitment. In 2007 the institute was taken over by the HSS Group, i.e. an Health and Services Holding, and in 2010 it has become the first company of this kind, listed in the Italian stock exchange. The company has recently grown up and now, with its 16 seats, it is one of the most outstanding reference regional institute. On a national scale there are other 3 seats outside the region, thus creating a collaborative and supportive network for local planning with other international rehabilitation institutes, as well as with Universities, Research Centres and Public bodies.

In 2008 the company employees were 948 and only 36 of them were working outside the region. On the total 823 employees (87%) deliver direct health and care services, whereas the resting 125 (13%) provide indirect health services in laboratories or chemistries, carry out administrative tasks or other general services. 78,6% of employees are women. The 2008 turnover was 60 millions euros, with an increase of nearly 600.000 euros in comparison to 2007, and of about 2 millions euros in comparison to 2006: a constant growth, also due to some taken over companies.

On average workers are 42 years old. 21% of employees (199) is over 50 and 57% of the labour force is aged between 40 and 60 years. Workers are highly qualified, as 58,9% of them has a degree and 16,5% a diploma.

In the light of the quite negative Italian employment scenario in the sector, a rather interesting data is that 94% of employees have a permanent contract and only the remaining 6% have a fixed term contract. This is the reason for the low workers turnover of about 12%.

The company provides spaces for trade unions meetings and 40% of workers are enrolled in a trade union.

The main challenge for the company is to become the most relevant national private health and social care provider, also through newly taken over national institutes. In order to do this the institute has to guarantee high quality care standards by employing highly skilled personnel.

2. Current practice and how it has evolved

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Persons with health problems - Older workers
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training - Work and working time organisation - Changing attitudes - Awareness raising
Social partners involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes
Scope of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age-specific

→ Current status: Initiative abandoned after 3 years!

Santo Stefano's age management initiatives aim at 1) providing high quality services; 2) caring for its employees' health even against potential problems linked to ageing.

According to our interview, most of the high quality services are provided by over 45 workers, as at this age nurses, physicians, physiotherapists and other health assistants reach their highest professional level, devotion to work and ability to fulfil the needs of customers.

This is the reason for the increased awareness and the changed mentality of the company in the management of older workers.

In practical terms, the Equal "Investing in People" project, which was implemented in partnership with the Marche Region and the Province of Macerata, is the main official age management measure at Santo Stefano. This initiative involves training and know-how transfer. It addressed all over 45 workers of the institute as well as some unemployed over 45 patients (9 people) and, at first, it implied the certification of the skills of the single workers, and then the improvement of their performances through specific training.

The Human Resource Department is mainly dealing with the measure planning and developing. Thanks to the tight collaboration between the Santo Stefano management and the workforce, the initiative planning can be based on the real workers' needs.

There isn't a specific budget for planning and implementing the measure and thus there isn't a monetary estimate of its effects, however the increased production is seen by the company as one of its direct consequences.

The "Investing in people" project is meant to test a company validation and certification model of the acquired know-how and competences (also those acquired in previous working experiences) to develop skills in a customised way. The Validation of Prior Learning (VLP) is the suggested experimental model. It is well established in other European countries and it evaluates the workers' capabilities (including non formal ones) and valorises their commitment in the company as well as in their own professional development.

The project lasted 3 years (2005-2007). In 2005 the skill assessment and the related training took place for the bulk of the employees (488); in 2006 training was provided to 417 employees, and in 2007 to 400 employees (so in total, 1.305 training interventions in the 3 years, 80% of which provided to women).

Technically, the test begins with an assessment of the company's professional needs in all its units: direct and indirect health; administrative and general services.

Later, the skill assessment of the older workers' will follow: an external team of psychologists, work advisors and experts interview single workers to get an assessment. Then, another team of external experts provides the Job Description of the surveyed professional profiles.

Comparing the Job Description (that is meant as a model), with the real worker's performances resulting from the interview, it was possible to identify the "gap", so that the company could start the single specific training, in its headquarter of Porto Potenza Picena.

Totally the project training hours were about 35.000 and they were run both by external as well by internal professionals.

Most of the training interventions were addressed to nurses providing direct health care (1.188), while 25 interventions were delivered to foreign workers.

Another addressed category was represented by patients of the Institute (9 people), who, due to their ageing physical conditions had to prematurely exit the labour market but who had been also given the chance to work in the same structure, in which they were cared for.

In general, the skill assessment was fundamental: a) in the light of new personnel recruitments; b) in order to plan specific training; c) in order to change employees' tasks according to their own potentially worsened health conditions.

Besides the hours of training provided, another tangible result of the initiative was the recruitment of 9 over 50 patients of the institute. At the moment they are employed in the administrative offices, in the secretariat and in the reception of the institute, to the economic as well as to the health and social benefits of the involved people.

Despite the relevant (certification and training) work, the initiative is still at its experimental stage. Indeed in practical terms, the institute hasn't structurally adopted the described

certification model: the whole newly hired old workers are still too few (only 9), and, after the training, up to now, redeployment of older workers' has not been implemented, even if it this was one of the objectives of the project.

So, in the next future, the Santo Stefano institute intends to run the system at full in order to effectively fulfil the company and the workers' needs.

3. Age management approach

The "Principles and Values" section of the company Social Report 2007, widely refers to the management of workers' different age.

For the Santo Stefano Institute people are strategic to reach the company objectives. Human resources are therefore valorised and developed from the very first moment of their recruitment up to their retirement.

Data on the commitment (in years) in the company, support such a strategy: 27,6% of employees has been working for the company for nearly 16 years. Besides, the company Social Report states that the institute is against any kind of discrimination, based, in particular on race, sex, age, nationality, religion and personal or political beliefs, and it is committed in assuring equal opportunities of career developments to men and women.

In delivering health and social care services the institute pays great attention both at regional as well as at national social and economic changes.

Due to this and to the constant increase of older unemployed people, the management approach has greatly changed and the awareness of its related issues has increased.

In 2002, the Lifelong Learning Centre was created within the company to support all employees' updating, re-qualification and constant training so to improve their performances and the quality of their provided services, by developing and valorising their professionalism along their entire working life.

Training courses address to physicians, physiotherapists, nurses, laboratory technicians, professional trainers and biologists.

Besides, there is a course of Italian language for foreign workers. Training is compulsory since the ECM (Continuous Health Training) came into force in the public and private Italian Health system.

In 2007, 959 persons (employees and external collaborators) took advantage from the Lifelong Learning Centre, that provided 799 hours of training, with an overall expenditure for the institute of nearly 400.000 euros, i.e. an increased cost of 150.000 euros in comparison to 2006.

The changes in the older employees' tasks according to their modified physical conditions (re-deployment) is informally managed, so it is not linked to the "Investing in People" project.

The Santo Stefano pays attention to the safeguard and the promotion of older employees' health and, as many daily tasks imply relevant physical efforts, task changes are fostered by the company.

For example, in the case of professional profiles with heavy tasks, as auxiliary nurses or physiotherapists directly caring for patients, in their mature age employees are moved to easier tasks as for example supervisors or to other mansions not implying relevant physical efforts.

Besides, older workers and those caring for their own family members are also let off from night shifts. In particular women, representing about 80% of the workforce, are taking advantage of this benefit.

Older workers are generally considered to fully meet the company needs, thus, despite their quite high labour costs (compared to the costs of the younger workforce), the company believes that older workers' added value in terms of high services quality is more than worth the financial effort.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

The first aspect to be stressed is the company full awareness of the importance of the age management and, more in general, of the local social issues related to unemployment.

Due to the tight long lasting collaboration with public bodies (managed preserving its political and managerial independency) Santo Stefano has become an important reference point for the administrative and public bodies in the regional context.

Thanks to the very good relationship the institute has always had with its employees, it was possible to involve the company employees and patients in the institute recruitment and re-qualification processes, in agreement with the social parties as well.

Summing up, the good age management practices are still formally on an experimental phase and, surely a deeper, analysed and systematically implemented planning could foster the Santo Stefano to become, in this context as well, an important reference.

However, due to the company lack of time in joining our project, only one company representative was surveyed and it was not possible to carry out the desirable interview with workers and/or their representatives.

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CASE 3: Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer; flexible working practices; remuneration, Atlante Social Cooperative, Italy

Executive summary

The initiative promoted by the Atlante Social Cooperative, fosters its employees' vocational training and supports in starting their possible interrupted formal education again, by granting them training costs, extra paid leaves, flexible working practices as well as wage incentives.

A rough analysis on the cooperative employees, shows that the older they are, the lower their educational level is. Therefore, even if the measure is addressed to all employees regardless of their age, up to now almost all workers who have taken advantage of the measure, are seniors.

Atlante is a cooperative active in the social unease sector, offering recruitment and social inclusion opportunities to people (i.e. physically and mentally disabled; ex prisoners, drug-addicted, under-18 people) considered disadvantaged by the 1991 Law n. 381.

The representatives of the Cooperative reckon that unemployed seniors who were prematurely pushed out of the labour market, are strongly disadvantaged in replacing themselves, so the organisation is trying to foster their enrolment among the "disadvantaged" categories by the Law n. 381 (i.e. a specific law that allows to recruit under favourable economic conditions following categories of unemployed people: physically and mentally disabled; ex prisoners, drug-addicted, under-18 people at unease, and invalids).

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Small (101)
Sector	- Social work activities (Q88) - Non-profit
Work council	- Yes
Yearly business volume	- 3,5 millions of Euros

The Atlante Social Cooperative was born in 1997 in Numana (Ancona), in the Marche Region. At present its operative headquarter is in Ancona and the cooperative aims at employing disadvantaged people (physically and mentally disabled; ex prisoners, drug-addicted, under-18 people at unease, and invalids), according to the 1991 Italian Law n. 381. 76% of its workers are also members of the cooperative and the capital is yearly shared among them.

Atlante carries out its activities in the Marche Region, mainly providing different services such as: planning and managing public areas; cleaning; gardening; transport contractors; data analysis, management and registration for different companies.

In 2009 the cooperative employees were 101. 61% consists of disadvantaged persons (by Law, this share have to be at least 30% of the whole workforce in order to obtain tax relieves).

80% of the workforce is made of manual workers and the remaining 20% by white collars. 75% of the workforce is working full-time and the remaining 25% part-time.

Most employees are male (76%), and 35% of them is over 50.

In the last years the number of employees hasn't changed. Despite the strong present economic crisis, the cooperative didn't use any social security cushion such as the mobility allowance (indennità di mobilità) or the income redundancy fund (Cassa Integrazione Guadagni), keeping its recruited employees. The 2009 turnover was €. 3,5 millions.

The cooperative main challenge is to increase up to 75% the share of employed disadvantaged people. In this regard the cooperative, to obtain tax relieves, pushing together with some local public bodies and the regional governance, intends to add the category of unemployed prematurely pushed out of the labour market over 50 to the statutory disadvantaged categories, as the present Italian Law n. 381 does not consider them. The main objective of the cooperative is a normative regional action in this direction, even if, up to now, the resulting relationships and contacts between the involved stakeholders aren't particularly encouraging, on this matter.

In the Atlante Cooperative there aren't any trade unions and, according to its cooperative nature, the social dialogue occurs between the board and the working members during the assembly.

2. Current practice and how it has evolved

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	- Continuation
Target groups	- Qualified - Unqualified
Type of measure	- Job-recruitment - Training - Work and working time organisation
Social partners involved	- No
Scope of measure	- Age-specific - Overarching

The main measure of the Atlante Social Cooperative in the field of the age management, is meant to promote and foster senior employees' training through educational or vocational training, allowing them to acquire qualification and to increase their educational level.

The cooperative contributes economically through the payment of the workers' course expenses, and a salary incentive is given to those people who decide to attend training courses.

The social mission of the cooperative helps to better understand the context of this kind of measure: to offer disadvantaged people, according to the 1991 Law n. 381, employment opportunities. In this way training and education have also a therapeutic effect on employees, within a wider company plan of providing them with a useful tool, both for their work within the organisation (i.e. for a better professional placement, or to shift from a part-time to a full-time position) as well as to be more competitive in replacing themselves, in case of need (i.e. resignation).

For the cooperative representatives it is not surprisingly, that the older employees (disadvantages and not) are, the lower their educational level is. In their view this can lead to

a decreased efficiency and productivity of the provided services and of the carried out activities, therefore it is necessary to increase training programs.

The initiative was promoted and developed by the legal area of the cooperative, in agreement with the advisory board and the members' assembly. The legal area was created within the cooperative to support and advise employees, and to create also a contact point with the local authorities.

The initiative budget is yearly set up according to the number of employees who start their abandoned vocational or educational training again.

According to an empiric assessment of the cooperative legal area, the yearly expense for its employees' training (about 200 euro each) had a positive impact on the quality, productive efficiency as well as on the work flexibility, and these effects compensate the measure costs.

For two years the initiative has been running on an informal level, i.e. it has not been formalised in any document, yet. Specifically, it fosters the starting of a possible interrupted school education again to get a secondary or an high school leaving certificate, a University degree as well as attendance certificates of vocational training courses, chosen by the employee in agreement with the cooperative.

Training is supported by paid leaves, flexible working hours to study, as well as by the free use of the cooperative facilities, such as computers, library, etc., even outside the working hours.

Yearly, a studied salary system rewards attending training courses employees. Moreover, training costs (registration fees, etc.) are reimbursed to employees completing their training programme (there is a check on promotions, on the number of passed exams and on the real achieved results).

During the entire training period, the legal area offers employees some advises on the enrolment and other bureaucratic matters.

The initiative is meant to foster cooperative's employees in acquiring additional skills and professional competences also to the benefit of the cooperative itself, whose public visibility on the market increases thanks to its higher qualified employees.

In order to address to all employees, the beneficiaries' age was not taken into account in the initiative target selection. However, the employees who, up to now, have taken part to the training were mostly seniors.

Also gender was not a selection criteria, however, men are more involved in the initiative, reflecting the total workforce composition.

The initiative is also a project on disadvantaged employees, whose training and education are therapeutic for their social integration and participation in the labour market.

In the two-years life of the initiative, the obtained results were satisfying both from the employees' as well as from the cooperative point of view.

Thanks to the benefits granted by the cooperative (in terms of economic support, flexible working practices and salary incentives), totally 8 people (out of which 3 women) started their educational or professional paths again.

3 employees have obtained the European Computer License attending a European funded 96-hours course. Two of them are over 50 and thanks to the obtained qualification they reached a higher professional placement and an increased salary.

Always thanks to the new qualification, an over 40 year-old general worker, supported by the legal area, is now applying for a receptionist position, in a public body.

Other 2 employees, a 50 year-old man and a 35 year-old woman, have recently started University: the first one to get a degree in Sociology and the second in Arts management.

They are both working in the cooperative administrative office: the man is a senior manager and the woman an employee. Once they will get the mentioned university degrees, they will receive a career promotion and an increased salary.

Lastly, one over 45 years old employee enrolled in a vocational school; another one in a school to become a social-health worker, and finally a 40 years old one started the high school.

Thanks to the initiative, the cooperative could indirectly benefit from its employees' higher work engagement, since they are gratified by the offered opportunity.

Nevertheless, the share of employees making use of the initiative is still too low, and this is a "critical" aspect which the organisation want to overcome. In the opinion of the interviewed people, the main reason of this low share of employees taking part to the initiative, is the low perception of its importance by employees. So, in the near future the cooperative will make an effort to change this perception.

The initiative will be surely adopted in the coming year as well. Therefore the legal area has already offered some counselling to employees, who decided or are deciding to start their educational and/or vocational training again.

In fact, besides those who are concluding their studying, other two workers have just decided to start their University studies again, which they interrupted many years ago.

The employees who had taken advantage from the initiative are supporting it, as they are aware of the importance of the obtained higher professional qualifications.

As already mentioned, a barrier to the implementation of the initiative, could be that the category represented by prematurely pushed out of the labour market over-50 does not belong to those labelled as "disadvantaged" by law, and such an exclusion obstacles both the recruitment and the professional path (i.e. training and career development) of these persons.

3. Age management approach

The above described initiative is a result of the general increased awareness of the cooperative, due to a changed perception of its employees' age management.

Such a change was experienced in the social unease context as the cooperative employees are recruited among disadvantaged people, who are at risk of social exclusion. However, according to the cooperative representatives, in order to be recruited those people have to follow a specific and proper professional and training program.

Besides the support provided to employees within the above described initiative, the legal area is working on the recognition of the workers' obtained degrees in other European countries, as well. This action involves some foreign employees i.e. two workers with a

diploma of mechanical operator, one with a diploma of technical expert, and a woman worker with a University Teaching degree.

According to the Atlante representatives, in Italy the general economic crisis and the changed labour market conditions (such as the availability of supports measures only for recruiting young people, even temporary) have forced many senior workers, mostly over 50, and even high skilled ones, to exit the labour market.

The cooperative representatives reckon that seniors losing their jobs suffer so much from such a social unease that over 50 unemployed should be enrolled into the disadvantaged category, according to the present Italian Law n. 381, which allows cooperatives hiring them to receive some tax relieves.

The Cooperative is open to recruit even already trained and highly skilled seniors workers. Even if to hire a senior worker is more expensive than hiring a younger one, the higher expense is balanced by the seniors' minor training costs and by their higher work commitment.

So, generally speaking, seniors' retainment costs are not so high to reduce their employability, and their two-year salary increases are largely balanced by their higher efficiency, commitment, professionalism and reliability, in comparison to younger workers.

This is another reason for the cooperative last three years recruitment of 2 experienced and highly qualified over 45 unemployed: indeed one of them works now in the legal area, and another as executive in the cooperative.

Therefore, the cooperative policies and practices support disadvantaged workers' recruitment and their employability, without discrimination, fostering their career development during their entire working life in the cooperative.

The organisation underlines, however, how generally speaking, some external factors could negatively impact on the age management of employees, or strongly discourage seniors' hiring: the impact of the general economic crisis; the increase of over 50 unemployed persons and the correlated high social costs due to the senior's premature exit from the labour market (in terms of social security cushions such as the mobility allowances and the income redundancy fund). Besides, the incentives available to companies are mostly addressed to the recruitment of young people.

In the future, the cooperative intends to offer disadvantaged people more working opportunities and, in particular to hire prematurely pushed out of the labour market over 50 persons. In order to do this, some employment facilitations are also needed, as, the inclusion of the category of unemployed over 50 among those considered as "disadvantaged" by the 381/91 Law.

4. Conclusions from the researcher

Addressing to categories of disadvantaged workers, the Atlante Cooperative is surely paying attention to social problems and changes which occur in the regional local area.

This has led to an increased awareness of the seniors' specific problems related to their premature exit from the labour market. Such unemployed seniors are a new social emergency and they are disadvantaged in replacing themselves.

The initiative developed by Atlante Cooperative aims at providing to employees with important tools, such as educational training and professional qualifications, to be used both within the cooperative, to improve their placement, as well as in the labour market in general. The obtained results were rather satisfying even if the share of employees taking advantage of the measure, if compared to the total workforce, is quite low. For the future, a larger employees' involvement in the initiative, even through the creation a new cooperative "training office", is desirable.

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CASE 4: Flexible working practices; Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer, Trieste Trasporti Spa, Italy

Executive summary

Nearly 30 years ago the Trieste Trasporti Spa implemented two specific initiatives addressed to its over-50 bus drivers, working for the public transportation service of the town of Trieste (North-Eastern Italy) and of its provincial area.

The first initiative concerns facilitations on the working timetable and place: “fixed shift” choice for over-50 (or with a seniority of 25 years or more) drivers; “fixed route” choice for over-55 (or with a seniority of 30 years or more) drivers.

The second initiative regards a drive tutorship to transfer know-how from older drivers to newly hired drivers. Despite some changes, after many years the two initiatives are still successfully proposed.

Some other company’s “good practices“ are generally addressed to employees, as the possible career progression through internal competitions exclusively open to workers with more than 10 years of seniority (most of them being over 50).

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Large (835)
Sector	- Passenger land transport (H49.3) - Public/private
Work council	- Yes
Yearly business volume	- 62,7 millions of Euros

Trieste Trasporti was born in Trieste in the late Seventies with the name of ACT (Transport Consortium Company). Up to 2000 it was publicly owned by the municipalities of the Trieste province and in 2001 it got the present name as mixed society with public (60%) and private (40%) interest, to provide the bus local transport service in town and in the provincial area.

In July 2010 the company employed 835 employees, all working in the provincial area.

In the last two years, about 80 people were recruited (2 of them were over 50). However, in comparison to 2008 there was an increase of only 8 people, as the number of (mostly) retirements or resignations, was almost similar to the amount of new hired ones. The 2009 turnover was of 62,7 millions of euro with a more than 2 millions of euro increase in comparison to the 60,4 millions of euro of 2008.

Employees are mainly men (779, i.e. 93%). Workers aged 50 to 65 (according to the collective labour agreement, drivers must retire maximum at 60) are 232 (i.e. 28%). Drivers are 610 (i.e. 73%), out of which 28 are women, and none of them is over 50.

Instead among men drivers, about 130 are over-50 (i.e. 22% on the total men drivers). The remaining workforce consists of manual workers (86), administrative employees, technicians and ticket controllers for a total of 139 employees, out of which 101 are aged between 50 and 65. Young employees (18-29 years) are only 21, a minority of the staff, whereas most of

it (582) is aged among 30 and 49. Part-time employees are 20, out of which 7 are women. Among part-time employees, only one is over-50, who was hired in 2004.

The company complains about the great lack of young workforce in the sector, probably due to the juniors' scarce consideration for this kind of work as well as to the high costs to get the necessary driving licenses.

The 6 trade unions present in the organisation have a relevant role as their representatives and the company management confront each other on decisions concerning the workforce within a consultation table.

2. The original measure

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	- Drivers
Type of measure	- Training - Work and working time organisation
Social partners involved	- Yes
Scope of measure	- Age-specific

Trieste Trasporti initiatives regarding the ageing workforce relate mainly timetable facilitations to better the seniors' well-being and to foster their staying in the company. Older drivers are also very important to guarantee another company initiative: the newly hired employees' training through the seniors' know-how transfer.

The two initiatives concerning bus drivers are about 30 years old. However there is no direct or documentary evidence on its exact year of implementation.

When it was implemented, the first initiative allowed over-50 drivers, or those with more than 25 years of seniority, to chose and maintain the same morning, afternoon or evening drive shift. All shifts lasted 6,30 hours and the driver could apply to one of it with a filled-in form to the Human Resource Department.

Moreover over-55 drivers, or those with at least 30 years of seniority, could chose and keep a fixed transport route among the existing ones.

The second initiative, that in the last 10-15 years was more structurally implemented, concerned the new hired workers' training through the seniors' know-how transfer. It consisted in a first 5 day (7 hours a day) group oral training section on legal aspects concerning transport, disciplinary matters, elements of buses maintenance, etc.

Afterwards, followed a practice phase in which experienced drivers, who were mostly over-50, provided driving tutorship to the new hired drivers. Such a know-how transfer consisted in a 2 weeks "group drive", with a bus each 3 or 4 participants driven by the new hired, tutored by at least 2 experienced seniors. As third and final step of the training intervention, a 2-week individual drive tutorship was provided by an experienced driver.

The company planned the initiatives as it considered fundamental to create a more friendly working environment for its older employees, and to motivate them in the final part of their career in order to foster their employability, as well as their know-how transfer. For this

reason, great importance was given to the drivers well-being, relieving them from the most stressful driving shifts and besides allowing them, once they reach their mature age, to better conciliate work and family duties.

On the other hand, the company itself took advantage from the initiative, improving the service through the fruitful wider experience and professionalism of its more motivated older drivers.

As the initiatives were implemented, the company was still totally public owned and they were promoted by a bilateral agreement between the trade unions and the company management.

For both initiatives there was a unique (still existing) “beneficiaries selection criteria”, concerning the general driver selection: up to the age of 48 each 5 years, and then (up to retirement) each 2 years, they have been undergoing a compulsory medical examination to certify their driving ability. If, according to the medical examination, the driver is considered no longer able to drive, he must be moved to other jobs as for example general maintenance worker, or ticket controller. However this is a very rare case.

3. Development of the initial measure and current practice

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	- Continuation
Target groups	- Drivers
Type of measure	- Job-recruitment - Training - Work and working time organisation - Career developments
Social partners involved	- Yes
Scope of measure	- Age-specific - Overarching

As far as training, the initiative goes on without any changes and, on average, nearly 10 over-50 experienced bus drivers are involved in the know-how transfer to train the newly hired drivers.

In the years, the “fixed shift choice” initiative has been indeed partially integrated. For example, at the end of 90’s the seniors’ possible choice of a “fixed turn” once they were over-50 or after 25 years of seniority, was also offered to employees with children in pre-schooling age, so that the initiative got a life-cycle dimension.

This was decided to foster the young parents’ work-family reconciliation, in the years before their children begin the school path.

Besides, in the last years, the initiative was enlarged to support drivers caring for dependent family older members. At present, 16 employees belonging to those last two categories, are taking advantage of the initiative.

The most often chosen fixed shifts by drivers are the morning ones, i.e. seniors prefer the afternoon or evening hours to rest or to carry out other family or personal activities.

On the other hand, as far as the “fixed route choice”, at the age of 55 or after 30 years of seniority, seniors prefer mostly those routes outside the town centre to avoid the traffic, which is particularly dangerous and stressful during the day time.

The participation in the initiative is high. All drivers fulfilling the requirements (age or seniority), apply and get the facilitations (in 2009, 280 drivers – i.e. 46% - took advantage from the “fixed shift” or from the “fixed route” facilitations).

Generally speaking, according to the interviewees, the initiative is carried out in an environment of mutual esteem towards older drivers, who are considered an important resource: this factor favours and fosters their own employability.

The “fixed shift” initiative has always concerned men drivers, as the women drivers’ phenomenon is relatively recent.

The main reason for the original initiative maintenance and development is the always increasing number of older persons who apply as drivers (in the last 10 years the average age of workers has notably increased reaching the present 43 years).

For example, in 2009 the company got nearly 200 applications, from outside the region as well. One hundred candidates came to the selection day, and among them there was only one junior, aged 25. The average candidates’ age was 40. According to the interviewees, this situation is surely a direct consequence, on the one hand of the general employment crisis and, on the other, of the over-40 workers’ large exit from the labour market.

The fact that all drivers remain within the company up to the maximum allowed retirement age of 60, proves the achievement of the initiative aim, that is the improvement of the senior drivers’ work quality, through better timetables and routes.

The employees’ turnover is low: 5% in 2009. In the same year, out of a total of 40 exits, only 5 resigned, whereas the remaining 35 retired.

However the organisation complains that workers do not fully perceive the attention given them in terms of allowed facilitations. In fact, as such initiatives were started more than 30 years ago, they are considered nearly as an “acquired right”.

Always speaking about the drivers’ working timetable, in 2004 the possible “shift change” between two employees was also formalised: after an agreement among the 2 workers and a written application to the Human Resource Office, the employees can freely decide for an autonomous shifts change.

This further extension of the initiative is quite successful and, at present, there are about 50 received and finalized applications (involving totally nearly 100 drivers).

In 2002 the attention towards senior workers became clearer as ticket controllers were permanently staffed through the establishment of the Customer Care Department. Initially, in order to increase the originally understaffed new Department, the general workers and administrative employees who were been hired for at least 10 years, were offered a 1.000 € bonus to move to the ticket controller job.

This option was further given to bus drivers as well. Moreover, over-50 drivers could apply to the so called “mixed shift”, i.e. within a 6.30 hours shift, they could choose to do half shift as bus driver and the remaining half as ticket controller or to be available for possible substitutions.

In the workers opinion, the increased serenity at the workplace is the main direct benefit from the initiative: regular shifts, timetables and paths, allow a better daily life planning, which is fundamental as years go by.

As far as the company representatives, routes run always by the same driver are characterized by: a more familiar relationship with the final users, a better service, as well as a higher worker's responsibility towards their clients, who are almost always the same people. This is also confirmed by the company Complaints Department, which is hardly receiving clients' complains from fixed drivers' areas.

As such initiatives are permanent and the company is used to them, a cost/benefit weighted analysis on their implementation and development has never been performed.

In the last years, the unemployed seniors' always higher supply and the already mentioned consequent increased workers' average age, have become a problem in the initiative management.

The recently recruited drivers who will shortly turn 50, are always and always increasing, and they will be soon able to choose the "fixed shift" even without a high seniority.

This upset a little drivers under-50 who despite their relevant seniority (which is however still shorter than 25 years), cannot benefit from the initiative. So there are some little conflicts among workers and to solve them Trieste Trasporti is considering a solution joining a certain age requisite with a certain seniority length.

Another critical aspect to face is the general increased participation in the initiative due to the even higher number of senior drivers. Up to now, the company has always managed to fulfil its over-50 workers' requests on the matter, however, in the future, they could complain about a lack of enough workers to cover the "remaining shifts".

4. Age management approach

The company awareness on its employees' problems related to age progression as well as to older unemployed has surely increased in the last years.

Even if one of the company policies is to foster the recruitment of young people, as they are an investment for the future, the company is hiring more and more mature people, as they are those who mostly apply.

For example, in the last two last years two older workers were recruited: one 52 year-old driver and a 54-year old general worker. This trend was also fostered by the 1997 amendment of the category collective labour agreement: the higher age to drivers' recruitment was 30, but as such a limit was abrogated, the company could hire more mature drivers.

According to the interviewees, the unemployed seniors' recruitments have an important impact on their own work. Indeed, in most cases, due to the work loss, older people are in critical personal situations and thanks to the new job they reassess and increase their devotion to work and to the company.

Besides the previously described initiatives, other organisational good practices concern substantially career progressions, allowing workers who have been in the company for at least 10 years, to take part in a internal competition. They are mostly mature workers who, for example, from drivers can

aspire to become operative officers and coordinators, with the consequent career progression: 90 workers applied to the last 2006 internal competition for 4 places as operative officer.

The salary system and the negative present economic situation are not discouraging nor the seniors' recruitment or retention, and their employment has no negative effects on the organisation.

In the future Trieste Trasporti, even with some possible necessary changes, intends to maintain its initiatives for older workers, above all in the light of the actual demographic trend concerning both the new recruitments as well as the staff in general: a constant increase of the workforce average age, to which the future organisational policies are surely linked.

5. Concluding reflections from the researcher

The carried out interview shows that Trieste Trasporti management pays real attention to its older workers. Despite this, since the initiatives dated back from long ago, they seem in part to live "from force of habit", even if some changes occurred to better and renew them. In any case, in the Human Resource Office the managers' awareness of the ageing workforce effects is particularly increasing.

This is an inevitable result of the over-40 workers' and appliers' constant increase and of the great lack of younger workforce.

So, in terms of age management, in order to fulfil its older workers' future needs, the company will have to face the situation in a different way and with a better planning. It is appreciable the company willingness to solve the workers' conflicts on the fixed shift choice, as the management intends to study a combination of the two criteria of "a certain age" and "seniority".

To find a balanced combination can be difficult and, in particular, it should imply not to potentially penalise some older (over 50) workers recently hired, who up to now were considered as "privileged", as they did not have to fulfil any particular seniority requirements. Indeed, in order to reach the new requirements which will be fixed, seniors, after their 50's, won't have to wait for too many years before accessing the initiative.

A further in-depth analysis of the initiatives together with some other workers or their representatives would have been likely appropriate, but to do this was not possible because of unavailability and time coordination reasons.

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CASE 5: Job recruitment, Municipality of Trento , Italy

Executive summary

The municipality of Trento provides public administration services in the city. The attention paid by the organisation to senior workers, derives both from external factors, such as the increase of older unemployed people, as well as from internal ones, such as the need to foster this workers' employability, well-being and transition to retirement.

The first factor, considered a social problem as it causes marginalization, is faced with an initiative of hiring over-55 unemployed or those with at least 35 years of pension contributions, with the aim to make them fulfil the requirements in order to receive a pension.

The second factor is faced encouraging part-time work at the end of the career (with very scarce practical results) and reducing the work load in mature age.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Large (1.540)
Sector	- Public Administration (O 84.1) - Public
Work council	- Yes
Yearly business volume	- 271,000,000 millions of euros

The municipality of Trento is located in North-Eastern Italy and it provides public administration services in an area of nearly 100.000 inhabitants.

In 2010 it employs 1.540 employees, out of which 1.507 have a permanent and 33 have a fixed term contract. Out of the total permanent workers, 659 (44%) are male and 848 (56%) female. Among those with fixed term contracts, 21 are female (64%) and 12 (36%) male.

The majority of workers (991) is aged between 30 and 49. 515 employees (34%) are aged between 50 and 70, out of which 266 (52%) are female and 249 male (48%). Within this age group, 12 workers have a fixed term contract.

Out of the 1.540 employees, 369 are general and skilled workers. The majority of workers, i.e. 964, carries out general administrative and clerical tasks. General and specialised technicians are 172, and 27 are managers.

Part-time workers are 321. Part-time contracts are mostly chosen by females (304, i.e. 95%) in comparison to males (16). Only one part-time worker has a fixed-term contract. Over-50 part-time workers are 8.

The yearly business volume of the Municipality is about 271,000,000 millions of euros, and the yearly turn over of employees is very low: 1,6%. On the other hand the general ageing of the employees is considerable, due also to the limited recruitment of young people during the last years. According to the interviewed people, this last aspect can lead the administrative

system of the municipality to strengthen working procedures which are considered obsolete, with a consequent serious risks of a loss of efficiency. This, together with the recent employment crisis in the local area, are the main challenges faced by the municipality at present, in collaboration with the other local public institutions (Province and Region) and the trade unions, which play an important role in issues regarding the employees in the municipality of Trento, as in all the Italian public organisations.

2. Current practice and how it has evolved

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	– Continuation
Target groups	– Older workers
Type of measure	– Job-recruitment – Work and working time organisation – Health promotion and ergonomics and job design
Social partners involved	– Yes
Scope of measure	– Age-specific

The main initiative carried out by the municipality of Trento, to the mature workforce benefit, consists in hiring through fixed-term contracts over-55 unemployed, or people that can count on at least 35 years of pension contributions, enrolled in the job mobility lists (a social security cushion measure for fired workers) or in the provincial unemployment ones, in order to make them fulfil the requirements (in terms of age and/or of years of pension contributions) to receive a pension.

The initiative was studied in 2005, it was elaborated by the Human and Financial Resource Department, and it was included in the 3-year labour requirements general plannings of the municipality in 2006-2008; in 2008-2010 and in the present 2010-2012 plans. Article n. 1, paragraph 1, of this last plan, states: “Up to 10% of the fixed term contracts, can be activated for people aged 55 and over or people with at least 35 years of pensions contributions, enrolled to unemployment or job mobility lists allowing them to have the right to retire. The contract has to be planned in the way that the working relationship ends on the first day of the month after the achievement of such a right”. The initiative was formalised by an agreement signed between the Human Resource Area of the municipality on one side, and the trade unions on the other. In practical terms, the first over-55 worker (enrolled in the job mobility list) was hired in 2006.

Basically, there are different reasons for implementing the initiative. Firstly the general attention, paid by the municipality of Trento, to social as well as labour market local dynamics. In the Province, both the employment and the economic crisis have created a general flow of over-45 unemployed for whom is difficult to find a new job in the labour market, due to the enterprises’ progressive recourse to de-localization and outsourcing in the last 5-6 years. As a consequence, local public authorities have been paying increasing attention to the integration of these unemployed people, who are considered at risk of social exclusion.

Re-integrating over-50 unemployed in the labour market, it's a way to avoid social tensions and conflicts in order to: foster the workers' self esteem, and replacing their social security cushion allowance deriving from the unemployment with a salary from the working activity.

The decision of implementing the initiative derives from guidelines on the matter which were released in 2005 by the Council of the Autonomous Province of Trento, and later acknowledged and formalized by the municipality of Trento.

In practical terms the provincial job centre manages the matching between the demand of over-55 people looking for a job and the supply of fixed-term contracts of the municipality of Trento.

The budget for the initiative is yearly decided according to the recruitment needs of the municipality. The estimated yearly average expenditure for the initiative is about 120.000 €, so the total expenditure for the four years from 2006 to 2009, was about 500.000 €.

Neither a monetary nor a financial previous assessment was carried out on the initiative. Only a social assessment on its effects was carried out, which was positively appraised on its capability to prevent potential social tensions linked to the unemployment condition of mature adults without a salary, but with a family to provide for.

As a consequence, the main aim of the initiative is to assure over-55 unemployed workers a job until the fulfilment of the pension requirements and this is pursued compatibly with the availability of resources, in a frame work of efficiency. "Indeed, besides the above mentioned requirements, candidates have to prove (providing CV to be evaluated from representatives of the Municipality) their professional abilities or, at least, a certain acquired expertise in order to obtain a specific professional profile.

This because the intention of the municipality is not to do any charity or to exceed in "welfarism", but, on the contrary, to fulfil precise recruitment needs. To the recruited older workers, on-the-job training is provided.

Thanks to the initiative, in the five year period 2006-2010, 12 over-55 unemployed were hired with 3 year-average contracts. Respectively: 1 in 2006; 1 in 2007; 5 in 2008; 3 in 2009; 2 in 2010.

Most new hired workers (9) were women, and, according to the interviewed referents, this is due to women's bigger difficulties in finding a job in older age.

Out of those 12 persons, two have already retired, whereas one will do it in 2011.

As far as those workers' tasks, they are mainly manual workers and employees prematurely fired from the local enterprises and placed by the municipality: some as manual workers for public works (green areas maintenance, etc.) and some others as white collars.

A quite relevant problem arisen in the last years, is the too much time elapsed between the end of the contract of the worker and the actual gaining (from the national body in charge for this) of the pension allowance.

In the past such a "temporal gap" was quite acceptable as it was of nearly 2 to 3 months. However at present, it can even last one year, with a consequent cash problem for the interested people.

In such cases, the municipality of Trento is thinking of granting an economic contribution in the period between the end of the contract and the "real" availability of the pension

allowance. Nevertheless, this is only an hypothetic stepping in way, which has not been studied in depth, yet.

According to the interviewed people, it's not easy to evaluate the real achievement, on the local area, of the given social objectives (the prevention of possible social tensions deriving from the older persons' unemployment). The initiative was certainly implemented to foster the general community well-being, however on single cases the impact is more easily assessable. In this regard, the hired workers demonstrated to be strongly thankful, as due to their replacement in the labour market, they experienced some benefits in terms of health (also the psychological one), and of improved both social and family relationships.

For this reason the municipality reckons the initiative successful: it was proposed since 2006 and it will certainly be proposed until at least 2012, i.e. the expiration of the present labour requirements general plan.

An aspect considered particularly successful, is how, thanks to the guaranteed contract until the pension requirements fulfilment, these workers have completely lost their condition and sensation of "job insecurity". As a consequence, such over-55 employees in the last years of their career are highly motivated to work.

The initiative is surely transferable and sustainable at all territorial levels of the public administration. In this regard, an important factor is the sensitiveness of the local administrations on the issue of the unemployment of mature people.

3. Age management approach

Besides the above described initiative, other good practices of age management are, for example, the opportunity to shift from full to part-time working schedule, which is offered both temporarily (for a limited period of time) as well as permanently.

This has been decided in order to guarantee the employees a better work-life balance, with positive effects also on the general health and physical conditions of the employees, particularly for those carrying out manual tasks.

From 2006, once a year, according to the availability in the different sectors of activity, there is an internal competition for part-time jobs open to all employees with at least a 5 year seniority (regardless of their age).

The applications of the employees have to be submitted (filling in a form) to the Personnel Department within: 30th June in case of applications for permanent shifts; 31st December in case of applications for temporary shifts.

At the end of the process a list is drawn up, and the winners obtain the new part-time contract.

Over-55 employees and those who within 2015 will have a right to the seniority pension, have a facilitation.

Their application is indeed surely accepted: they have only to apply to obtain the part-time contract, without competing with other candidates.

This is allowed as the municipality tends to reduce the work load of employees who are next to retirement, if they need it, even because of the informal care for dependent family members.

In concrete terms in 2011, for the following 13 professional profiles it is expected the shifting from full-time to part-time contract (i.e. under-30 weekly hours of work):

- n. 2 administrative clerical worker;
- n. 3 administrative/accounting assistant;
- n. 1 administrative/accounting employee;
- n. 1 technical assistant/employee;
- n. 2 administrative/accounting officer;

Besides, for 4 other clerical profiles, is scheduled the transformation from a full-time contract to a 30 weekly hours part-time contract.

Even if it is mention-worthy, municipality considers the initiative of supporting part-time in the last part of career unsuccessful, as out of the present 321 part-time workers, only 8 are over-55. To sum up, mature workers did not exploit this available possibility.

On the other hand, at the end of the career there is an opposite phenomenon, i.e. the part-time workers' application to go back to full-time.

This is attributable to external factors and in particular to the fact that (as the 1995 pension reform on the transformation from a "retribution" to a "contribution" calculation has not been running regularly yet), the pension amount is still severely influenced by the last perceived wages before retirement: the higher they are, the higher the pensions will be. Indeed, this fact strongly obstacles part-time before retirement, in Italy (in fact, part-time is under-used in comparison to most of other European countries).

Besides the part-time initiative, there is the non-formalized practice to ease the passage to clerical tasks of those older workers who do normally have too heavy physical duties. The aim of this practice is to foster the employability of older workers and to preserve their health. For example, the practice has been adopted for nearly 10 years towards senior municipal policemen, who are thus released from tasks such as the street patrol, especially at night.

Further, an analysis of the Personnel Department Direction highlighted the need to extend the just mentioned practice to the older kinder-garden operators, who sometimes have to carry out demanding tasks such as lifting babies up.

On this matter, the responsible managers are studying a possible initiative (for example, in the form of an annual call).

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

As far as the initiative of hiring mature unemployed, an assessment on its real results or on its benefits also through interviews to the directly involved people, i.e. the hired over-55, would have been useful. However this was not possible due to objective difficulties in organizing the interviews with the referents of the municipality, probably due to their scarce available time to spend on the matter.

This failing evidences, can, in a certain way, modify the real framework of the situation.

In any case, it should be underlined that even in an area where the employment crisis was relatively late in comparison to other national ones, the municipality of Trento has surely become conscious of a new unemployed category, i.e. of mature people, who have difficulties in finding a new job.

Nevertheless, this positive consciousness coexists with the stereotyped vision of older workers (i.e. working practices associated with obsolete working practices and risks of a loss in efficiency), which seems to highlight an internal contradiction, which, however, driven by the Province, the Municipality was able to reply in a planned and functional way, in line with its available financial resources, in order to employ unemployed people offering them a possibility to have a pension.

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CASE 6: Comprehensive Approach, Savio Macchine Tessili Spa, Italy

Executive summary

The “Savio Textile Machines” (Savio Macchine Tessili) of Pordenone is a company with an almost 100 years old history.

From its founder it did inherit a particular sensitiveness towards its employees and, during the years, despite some changes of ownership, it was able to transmit and improve it. As a result, different initiatives in favour of employees were born, and some of them with a strong impact on older workers and on their lives even after retirement.

At the beginning of the Sixties the “Gruppo Lavoratori Anziani Marcello Savio” (The Marcello Savio Older Workers Group), was born, which still nowadays proves the older workers’ importance and their attachment to the company values.

Also the “Savio Relief Fund” (“Fondo Assistenza Savio”) was created in the early ‘60ies to guarantee and promote its employees wellness, contributing to their medical expenses as well as to that of their family members.

After about 50 years of implementation, the initiatives are still running even if they have been undergoing some changes in the course of time.

To foster the employees’ reliability and commitment there have always been some good practices, rooted in a company culture which is aimed at focusing on the needs of the employees and of the community in which the company is integrated.

Besides the “Older Workers Group”, the Savio Textile Machines Spa promoted and funded indeed other groups, such as the AVIS Group, to support its employees’ bloodletting, as well as other leisure groups as the “Mountain Group” and the “Savio Committee of family members of disabled people”.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Medium (416)
Sector	- Manufacture of machinery and equipment (B 28.9) - Private
Work council	- Yes
Yearly business volume	- 115,5 million of euros (2009)

The Savio Textile Machines Spa produces machines for the textile sector. It was born in 1911 in Pordenone (Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, Northern-Eastern Italy), thanks to Mr. Marcello Savio.

Until the early Seventies, it belonged to the Savio family, later on it was absorbed, firstly by EGAM (in 1971), than by ENI (in 1977). In the 1995-1998 period it was owned by a network of local businessmen led by the Italian Commercial Bank and now it belongs to ITEMMA, an holding company managing textile machines enterprises, which is owned by the Radici family from the town of Bergamo.

Besides the headquarter in Pordenone (where the high-tech planning and production takes place), the Savio Spa production is also carried out in China and in India, where lower-tech machines and components are produced.

The 2008 Savio Spa overall turnover was of nearly 172 millions euro, whereas in the following year it lowered down to 115,5 millions euro, with a noteworthy decrease of about 60 millions euro due to the general economic crisis, which the company is positively overcoming.

The total Savio Spa employees are 732, out of which 416 are working in Pordenone and 316 in the Chinese and Indian plants.

In comparison to 2009, the Pordenone employees lowered down of 28 due to some retirements and to social security cushion measures used to face the crisis, such as the mobility (mobility is a social security cushion measure to support fired workers) proposed on a voluntary basis (i.e. offering an economic incentive) to employees next to retirement.

In the early 1980s, the Pordenone plant employees were about 1.800, whereas at the end of 2009 they went down to 416. The decrease of employees over the 30 years is explained with: a different productive organization; the increase of electronic machineries, which have strongly simplified the production, as well as with the decision to off-shore the production to make it more flexible and to smooth the impact of strong market fluctuations.

Out of the total Pordenone employees, 373 are male and only 43 (10%) female, being those last ones all working in the administrative and commercial areas. 64 (15%) workers are under 30, whereas 202 (49%) are aged between 30 and 49. Those aged between 50 and 70 are 150 (36%).

General and skilled manual workers are 194, 212 are clerks and 10 managers. Only 14 people are part-time workers, out of them 6 are over-50. The turnover rate is low: it's 3,4%. On the other hand in the productive units allocated abroad (where mostly short-term unskilled workers are hired) it is about 50%.

Within the company, the three trade unions FIM, FIOM e ULIM involve about 30% of employees: the social dialogue is collaborative in solving the conflicts, which do normally occur.

According to the interviewed referents, the main company challenge is to face the crisis, reducing at the same time as much as possible, the Pordenone employment loss, even through the temporary reallocation of its off-shored production in the Italian headquarter.

2. The original measure

Criteria	Parameter value
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualified workers - Unqualified workers - Older workers
Type of measure	- comprehensive approach
Social partners involved	- Yes
Scope of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age-specific - Overarching

Since its establishment, the “Savio Textile Machines” Spa has always paid particular attention to its employees’ problems.

Because of the many initiatives of the company, it is possible to speak of an “inclusive approach” to the age management of its employees, which is maintained, despite the contemporary presence of policies aimed at reducing staff (due to the economic crisis) such as the incentives to the “volunteer” mobility.

Even if most company policies and practices are open to all employees, regardless of their age, and have a minor or bigger impact on employees of different ages, there is an important measure exclusively addressed to older workers.

In this section are indeed underlined the two initiatives of bigger impact on older workers, which trace back to the early ‘60ies and were created and implemented by Cavalier Luciano Savio, the company founder’s son: the “Marcello Savio Older Workers Group” and the “Savio Relief Fund” for employees and retired former employees.

The “Marcello Savio Older Workers Group” was born in 1964, with the main aim to spread out, within the organization, the older workers’ importance and expertise, as well as, their attachment to the company values.

Besides, this company Group had also a certain cohesion function among older workers, fostering their integration also through extra working activities.

The Group was born with the memberships of 19 employees, but it actually grew up over the years. The requirements to join it were the following: to be an employee with 25 or more years of seniority; to be a Savio Spa retired former worker.

Among the main activities of the group were those of spread a two-monthly paper published by older workers on general issues regarding the company activities and its context; organizing, twice a year, company open-days with guided tours; organizing and running leisure activities for its own members, such as, short monthly trips, or longer holidays and guided tours.

Even if it was more a habit than a formalised practice, another function of the “Older Workers Group” was tutoring the unexperienced young workers in the production lines, to guarantee their knowledge and professional know-how transfer.

The “Older Workers Group” headquarter was set in Pordenone and the promoted activities were yearly funded by the company with about 2.000 euro.

The “Savio Relief Fund” came to be in 1963 thanks to an agreement signed with the trade unions, with the aim to guarantee and to safeguard all employees’ health, fostering their attachment to the company.

The impact of such an initiative, particularly on older workers, has proved to be mention-worthy for two main reasons: firstly because the older they got, the bigger they health problems were; and secondly, as retired workers could keep on receiving such benefits even after their retirement.

Within two months from their hiring, all workers could enrol to the “Savio Relief Fund” (also their children) and the retired ones could maintain their membership to the Fund applying within 15 days from their retirement.

In practical terms, thanks to the Fund and to some yearly maximal amounts, the Savio could economically support its employees’ and their children expenditures for medical specialist,

optician and dental examinations, as well as those for drugs, not granted for free by the Italian National Health System.

Beside, it ensured the presence, within the company, of nurses and medical staff for general examinations, which were also available to workers' family members. Lastly, the fund economically contributed to employees' holidays.

3. Development of the initial measure and current practice

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	– Continuation
Target groups	– Qualified – Unqualified – Older workers
Type of measure	– comprehensive approach
Social partners involved	– Yes
Scope of measure	– Age-specific – Overarching

Despite the various changes of ownership occurred over the years, the described company initiatives and the resulting facilitations for its employees have been strongly maintained and implemented by the Savio Spa.

However, due to the job market evolution and to the economic performances of the company, some important changes were necessary to preserve the initiatives. In the last years the “Older Workers Group” has kept a constant level of about 600 members, thus becoming the bigger among the company groups (see the following section 4). Nowadays it can count on 530 members (out of which 40 are female), exceeding the whole 416 Savio employees currently working in the establishment.

However some changes have been made in the initiative, due to the evolution of the labour market and, in particular, to the increase of employees' and of the newly hired ones' average age. These aspects have made particularly difficult to reach the 25 labour seniority to enter the “Older Workers Group” so that, in 1995, the company representatives and the “Older Workers Group” members agreed to lower down to 15 years the necessary company seniority to enrol.

Even if now it is easier to enter the Group, it's still not simple to gain the necessary seniority and indeed most current 530 group members are Savio retired former workers (460, 87%), whereas only 70 are member-workers (13%), i.e. 17% out of all plant employees.

According to the interviewed referents, the progressive workers' decrease in the “Older Workers Group”, in comparison to the retired ones (from 74% in the early '70ies, down to 47% at the end of the '80ies, to the present 13%), is not only due to the difficulty to reach the necessary seniority, but also to the changed local social context: in the past the group activities made up for the lack of leisure moments outside the company, whereas at present there is a bigger choice of extra working activities promoted by other associations, organizations and bodies.

Anyhow, the “Older Workers Group” keeps promoting his publishing initiatives (paper) and transferring know-how to the youngest workers.

In 1995 the company guided tours have stopped but there is the will to start them again, whereas the “Older Workers Group” members for some time are enjoying some sightseeing in other manufacturing Italian firms.

From 2004, the Savio Spa annual funding to the “Older Workers Group” has increased to 2.600 euro. Older workers and the retired ones joining it, reckon that they receive a lot of benefits from their membership as, even after the end of their career, they can preserve their linkage to the company, which hosted and trained them, so they keep feeling part of a community with shared values, and both life and working experiences.

As far as the Savio Relief Fund, the main modification, introduced by the 1999 statute amendment, concerns the decreased fund reimbursements through the reduced upper limit per year.

The benefits (the economic reimbursements) granted by the Fund to employees regard exclusively the ordinary medical expenses and the specialist examinations, which are refundable to workers or to their children, but, unlike the past, only until the age of 18, according to the following annual amounts:

- pharmaceutical care: 80% expense reimbursement, up to a maximum amount of € 155,00 for each worker and a maximum amount of € 78,00 for each children;
- specialist examination: 80% expense reimbursement for maximum 4 specialist examinations for the worker and 2 specialist examinations for each children, up to a maximum amount of € 70,00 for each examination;
- therapies: 80% expense reimbursement, up to a maximum amount of € 180,00;
- dental prosthesis and treatments: 40% expense reimbursement up to € 850,00;
- optician expenses: 80% expense reimbursement up to a maximum amount of € 150,00;
- thermal expenses: 80% subsistence expense reimbursement up to a maximum amount of € 186,00;
- orthodontic expenses: 60% expense reimbursement up to a maximum amount of € 550,00 in the whole life;
- allowance to the family members of a deceased group member: “una tantum” € 1.033,00.

At the moment the Savio Relief Fund has 710 members among the Savio retired former workers (42%) and employees (58%). Out of those employees, 36% is over-50. Currently the Fund yearly manages 130.000 €, out of which 52% is charged to the members (who, in this way, give a single yearly contribution of nearly €95) and 48% is paid by the Savio Spa. The 2009 reimbursed expenses were 134.000 € with an average of 190 € per single member.

Even if throughout the years the importance of the initiative has decreased (nurses and medical staff are no longer granted within the company as well as the economic contributions to the employees’ holidays), workers and trade unions representatives reckon that the initiative is extremely important and they have agreed on its reduction (which has also caused the “cut” of health operators and of the contributions to the employees’ holidays), which was necessary due to the excessive economic effort of the company

The interviews showed that the initiative is considered important particularly by older workers (who in percentage do take the most advantage out of it), due to their bigger health problems related to ageing.

A less positive consequence is the little attention paid to the initiative by younger newly-hired ones as they suffer of less health problems, in comparison to older workers, but also because (and probably mostly) of the new recruitment policies of the company: flexible contracts which, due to the present economic crisis, have become indispensable for the company.

Younger workers are indeed often temporarily hired (with 6 months up to one year fixed-term contracts), thus, they have a short-term working prospective at Savio which is in contrast with the initiative dimension, which concerns the whole employees' working life.

Nevertheless, according to the interviewed workers, they still enjoy benefits deriving from the initiatives: in their working life they feel to belong to a family, which despite "times have changed", still pays great attention to them, so, as it was in the past, nowadays in Pordenone, to work at the Savio Textile Machines Spa is regarded as a privilege.

The Savio initiatives are surely reproducible within any company, however such initiatives cannot disregard a company story and culture linked to the belonging community and a constant attention to its employees' needs.

4. Age management approach

Generally speaking the Savio Spa has always paid particular attention to its employees' requests and over the years this attention has turned into good practices, which, besides the above described ones, are still nowadays running in favour of its employees' and are, in any case, addressed in a life-course dimension attitude, to all employees regardless to their age. According to the workers and to the trade unions representatives, the good practices (transparency, employees' involvement in processes and innovations, cohesion and strong collaboration between managers and other employees) have always allowed a strong link between workers and company.

At all working levels, values such as fairness in the rules application and respect of other people, have become acknowledged and shared in the company culture and have always been considered a key factor for the company good running.

Placing the employees' well-being at the centre of the company attention allows to increase its reputation and attractiveness. Company's good practices have reached the aim to guarantee a good quality of life at the working place, with satisfied employees, who are motivated in carrying out their tasks.

Mention-worth are some company policies and practices implemented over the years, such as the establishment of other groups with social or leisure functions.

For example in 1961 the AVIS Group was created (Italian Blood Donors Association) to promote employees' blood donation, which is currently constituted by 106 workers.

There is also the "Mountain Group", with its present 101 members with a shared passion for leisure mountain walks.

Over the years this group, which was promoted in 1970, has opened itself to external people and it is still nowadays considered as a Savio added value.

In 1981, during the ENI ownership, the "Savio Committee of family members of disabled people" was indeed created with the aim to allow families caring for disabled people to share the problems they were coping with.

At the beginning the activities were focalised on employees' disabled family members, however, later on, they started to concern disability in a broaden sense.

This last group, with its 45 members, is still considered a company pride and its present main activity is to promote the job placement of disabled people both within the company as well as within other local ones in collaboration with the Job Placement Service of the Local Health Authority and with various social cooperatives of Pordenone. At present, Savio employs 14 disabled persons.

There are also some positive data on older workers recruitment: as pointed out in section 1, due to the many retirements occurred in the last 8 years, the number of employees has decreased. Workers who retired were mostly people with strategic roles or working particular shifts, such as the night one.

Given the scarce supply of workers with expertise or available to work in particular shifts, the Savio Spa hired some mature workers. Indeed the hired over-45 workers were 6 in 2007, 4 in 2008 and 5 in 2010.

The acquired consciousness in the field of age management and the general attention of the Savio towards its employees are also highlighted by the participation in the June 2007 transnational conference: "Over-55 workers: a wealth to valorise", which took place in Rome, and where the Personnel and Organization Executive of the company highlighted the above mentioned experiences.

5. Concluding reflections from the researcher

During the different changes of ownership the Savio Textile Machines has achieved a leading and managing strategy, which pays great attention to its employees' quality of life and working environment.

Such a conception was stronger in the past, when the company dimension was still linked to a narrow community and the relationships between workers and the company were more personal.

Because of the markets widening and the off-shore displacement of productive units, working relationships became more "de-personalized".

Despite this, according to the interviewed company managers, to the employees and the trade unions representatives, the Savio Spa nowadays is still particularly attentive to its workers and to the local community changes, and its initiatives are still nowadays fundamental to employees to afford important expenses.

The Savio Spa case is emblematic for two other reasons: on the one side, it shows, as due to the temporary external factors (for example the economic crisis), there can be a possible co-hesitance of negative (for example, encouraging the "mobility" through an incentive) and positive policies addressed to older workers. On the other hand, it highlights the importance of some "bridge" initiatives between work and pension, such as the "Older Workers Group", open both to older workers as well as to retired ones, for whom it is fundamental to keep feeling part of a "family", which has hosted them over their whole working life. As far as the trend of the always and always smaller participation of the workers in comparison to the retired members, a possible solution could be to set a new inclusion criteria for the workers, in addition to the 15 years of seniority, such as, for example, to be aged at least 50. In such a

way, given the trend of hiring mature workers, also employees who haven't reached the 15 year-seniority yet, but are age mature, could join the group.

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CASE 7: Training, Lifelong learning and knowledge transfer, Redeployment and retention, Cantieri Riuniti Italiani (Italian United Shipyards) S.p.a., Monfalcone, Italy

Executive summary

The Monfalcone shipyard of the United Shipyards, is located in the Gorizia province in the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region (North-eastern area of Italy). The sector of activity is the mechanic shipbuilding and cruiser boats. The shipyard was created in 1908 by an Austrian entrepreneur family, called Cosulich, and currently it is the most important Italian shipyard.

The company started the specific initiative of age management, which concerns the transfer of knowledge and professional know-how from the older to the younger or newly hired workers, in 2003.

It is realised through the organisation of permanent training and life-long learning courses on different topics related to the productive activity of the company.

Specifically, the technical and specialised courses on shipbuilding techniques are given by over-50 workers.

Besides, some good practices can be found in the possibility of career promotions and of internal mobility: i.e., moving from the position of manual worker to the one of employee within the shipyard, which is given to experienced workers with fundamental professional abilities in the different company productive sectors.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Large (1.702)
Sector	- Building of ships and boats (30.1) - Private
Work council	- Yes
Yearly business volume	- 3,1 milliards of euros (2009)

The Monfalcone shipyards of the Fincantieri PLC, is located in the North-eastern area of the country. The Monfalcone shipyard was born in 1908 thanks to the Cosulich Family under the name of Cantieri Navali Triestini (Triestine Shipyards), which owned it until 1959, when the company becomes “Fincantieri” under the ownership of IRI.

In 1966 it became ITALCANTIERI, through the merging of the two companies Ansaldo and the Cantieri Riuniti dell’Adriatico (United Adriatic Shipyards).

The Cantieri Navali Riuniti Spa (United Shipyards), is made up of the Monfalcone shipyard as well as by other 9 shipyards located in Italy and by some other shipyards placed in the North of USA (Lake Michigan).

The total employees of the company are 8.437, whereas in 2008 they were 8.900.

In the Monfalcone seat there are 1.702 employees, out of which 1.651 (97%) are male and 51 (3%) women. All women are employed in the administrative sector. About 15% (250) of the workers of Monfalcone is over-50; 4% (i.e. 62) up to 29 years old, while the majority

(1.390, i.e. about 81%), 30 to 49 years old. The 2008 total turn-over of the group was of nearly 2.9 milliards euro, whereas the present one is around 3.1 milliards euro.

Out of the total employees of Monfalcone, 1.208 are skilled workers, 488 administrative employees, technicians and chief supervisor employees and 10 are among executives and managers. There are 2 foreign workers and 14 part-time ones, out of which 13 are women.

The main challenge currently faced by the organisation, is the persistent need to cope with a professional crisis, which traces back already in the Nineties, when a massive escape of experts and highly specialised skilled workers took place.

In the company the three main national trade unions (CGIL, CISL, UIL) are present, and the dialogue takes usually place in a constructive dialectical and collaborative way.

2. Current practice and how it has evolved

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	– Continuation
Target groups	– Qualified – Older workers
Type of measure	– Know-how transfer – Retention – Work and working time organisation
Social partners involved	– Yes
Scope of measure	– Age-specific – Overarching

The age management initiative implemented in 2003 by the Fincantieri of Monfalcone, concerns the training, the transfer of knowledge and of professional know-how from older (both formerly – retired – as well as currently employed), to young and newly hired workers. The main reason which led to the implementation of the initiative, was the massive exit of old personnel in the three-year period 1998-2001, due to the coming into force of the so called “Law on amianthus” (Law n. 257 of 1992), which favoured the early retirement of those workers who had worked in contact with amianthus during the production phases, by granting them imputed contributions, for the relative periods. The initiative was started under the boost of: the management of the seat, the line managers, the workers of the productive areas of the shipyard, and the bodies in charge of controlling the production.

The company has faced difficulties due to this massive retirement of workforce, whose consequences are still nowadays evident, and, despite the implementation of the initiative has all in all bettered the situation, the lack of expert employees, able to transfer their knowledge and experience to younger and newly hired workers, is still perceived.

The initiative is carried out through training and life-long learning courses, run by the Company Training Centre, “Sergio Cerato”.

The training and life-long learning courses are yearly offered according to the different training needs arisen in the various company areas. Courses concern 5 different topic areas:

- Institutional training, characterised by paths to support roles and functions which are fundamental for the company;
- Managerial training, aimed at widening the widespread of knowledge on processes and methodologies, which are considered fundamental, such as, for example, project management or the activities of cost planning and control;
- Training on security, to support the widespread of the culture on the prevention of accidents and of the health and environment safeguard;
- Training on quality, to provide the necessary instruments to better, at the same time, the customer satisfaction as well as the business result;
- Technical and specialised training, to transfer the technical know-how, the knowledge of rules and regulations, as well as the refreshment courses or the acquisition of new abilities related to IT and technical systems.

As far as the last described topic, the training and life-long learning courses are given by the older employees (as well as by external qualified trainers), who have fully acquired the expertise and knowledge on the productive phases of the shipyard and are able to transfer them to newly hired young people, who do not have the needed expertise.

In Monfalcone, due to the above described law, in the three-year period 1998-2001, out of a total of 1.900 employees (48% of the work force) as much as 925 employees did retire. These more than 900 expertise employees (about 80% of them being highly professional), were substituted with 962 newly hired ones, the overwhelming majority of which being young and non experienced ones.

According to the interviewed referents, a direct consequence of this process, was that newly hired young workers did not have any reference point to carry out their work, as, in the entrance phase, they suffered from an insufficient training.

Such a sudden transition had heavy effects on the labour force management in general, which has resulted to be less motivated and with a lower sense of belonging. All this was underlined by some negative indicators such as: absenteeism, low productivity and qualitative problems, due to the low professional know-how level.

To contrast this critical aspect, the company has thought to implement a training initiative using older internal employees as well as some retired former workers, together with an external training system. For the technical-specialised training, the company allocates yearly a budget of nearly 260.000 euro.

Training courses concern all strictly productive fields related to the shipbuilding industry as, for example, carpentry, welding, ship mechanics, crane operator and electrician courses. Training courses are run each two months. Each time, 80 training hours are given and the trained groups are made up of maximum 15 workers, trained by 6 over-50 tutors.

Mainly they are not compulsory training courses: participation is voluntary and linked to the needs of the productive departments.

The application to participate, has to be submitted by workers to the Human Resource and Selection Department 30 days before the beginning of the training course, by filling a proper form in.

Up to now, in the 7 years since the implementation of the initiative, almost more than 4.500 workers took part in the training, and more than 300 thousand training hours were given.

Thanks to the initiative implementation, the situation has improved. The quality and the productive efficiency did increase, the absenteeism was reduced due to an improvement of the internal climate and of the relationships among the different generational groups of workers, also fostering the sense of belonging to the group.

The experienced workers' massive exit in the period from 1998 to 2001, has also caused some serious problems to the future sustainability of the initiative, as there are a few left over-50 workers, and besides they are all almost next to retirement and are considered difficult to replace.

Besides this, according to the interviewed persons, this labour force crisis was not properly (at the time no action was undertaken to retain and discourage the retirement of experienced workforce) and timely (the training initiative was implemented only in 2003) faced.

For the future it will be surely necessary to incentive more the experienced workers next to retire, to keep on being trainers within the company, in order to favour the employees' professional growth and to create the base for a future skilled workforce.

3. Age management approach

Besides the above described main initiative, in the company there are some good practices in the field of the age management of employees, in a framework of professional development over the entire working career.

To employees who become experienced in the productive sector, has been always offered the possibility to develop their career through professional promotions, as, for instance, from worker to become supervisor or even shop foreman.

In a sector as the one of shipbuilding industry, the professional know-how is fundamental: therefore the company needs line-managers, who do perfectly know the managerial dynamics of all sectors of the shipyard (the shipbuilding, the internal plant engineering, etc.). As a consequence, according to the interviewed ones, this requirement can be fulfilled only through internal career promotions, which are granted through assessments run by supervisors.

Thus, the approach to age management is considered as a life course one, as the company fosters the training and rewards (with career developments) those employees showing willing to professionally grow, and loyalty to the company.

Another practice, which developed within the company since 2004, is the possible change of job offered to experienced workers, for example, through a shift from the productive sector to the technical-administrative one, carrying out roles in the planning office, storehouse management, ship plant engineering planning, quality control, etc.

This internal job-change is based on the company needs to occupy certain positions, which are highlighted by the Human Resource Service. The internal candidates (who need to have at least three years of working seniority in order to be considered) are firstly assessed by their department manager. Later on, the Human Resource Service assesses the behavioural aspects of the candidates, on the basis of: their absenteeism level; possible disciplinary measure against them; their professional development, even through the participation to training courses, and their general attitudes and technical abilities to occupy the requested role.

The requirement of the “only” three-years working seniority is perceived as a potential problem by the interviewed older workers, who underline the scarce knowledge on the working and productive processes, which can be gained in only three years. The company is thus thinking to increase the needed years of company seniority, to compete in the internal selection.

As a result, in 2008 totally 40 (out of which about 25% were over-45) workers took advantage from the two initiative of the career development (with the promotion to the profile of supervisor), and of the internal job-mobility (from the productive to the technical-administrative sector).

Such initiatives activated by the company, are run in a quite negative context, which has suffered from the freeze on external recruitments, due to the crisis affecting all industrial sectors, in Italy.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

The Monfalcone shipyard is surely still suffering from the consequences of the crisis of labour force, which affected the company in the three-year period 1998-2001.

The situation was not faced timely and with the appropriate counter-measures, thus a big gap of professional know-how took place among the workforce.

The initiatives undertaken by the company of: 1) involving the few remaining experienced workers in providing training and ensuring knowledge transfer to the younger ones, and 2) giving workers the chance to develop their career and to internally change job, are surely effective in order to provide new incentives for the loyalty to the company and to better the productivity.

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CASE 8: Job recruitment, IDEA45, Trieste, ITALY

Executive summary

Idea45 is a social cooperative founded in Trieste in September 2005 mainly thanks to a project, called Over 45, funded by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region within the SiLavoro program "Subsidies for the integration to work", funded by the European Social Fund and coordinated by IAL (a training body created by the CISL trade union) of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region. The initiative consists in the creation of the social cooperative, named Idea45, which was founded by a group of over-45 people, who were expelled from the labour market, to develop ideas and turn them into concrete opportunities of self-employment. Besides, the cooperative intends to propose innovative activities, enhancing the abilities by providing older workers with new knowledge, to make them always more proactive and competitive. After its birth, one of the main purposes of the cooperative has been (and still is) to encourage the recruitment of unemployed mature workers, to the aim of developing, ideas and business projects within the cooperative itself.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Small (13)
Sector	- Other social work activities without accommodation (88.9) - Non-profit
Work council	- No
Yearly business volume	- 45.000 euros (2009)

Idea45 is a Social Cooperative which came to be in September 2005 in Trieste, in the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region.

The cooperative is active in the social services sector. Specifically, his business concerns the recovery and recycling of food close to the best-before date, and therefore quite unsaleable and set to be eliminated, which is anyhow still wholesome and eatable.

Recovery is carried out in different supermarkets of the town and of its surrounding municipalities, whereas recycling takes place in the canteens of some organizations of solidarity to the benefit of people in need, who consume the food before its expiration date.

The current working members of Idea45 are 13, out of which 11 men and 2 women (President and Vice President). Out of the 13 members, 11 workers belong to the Board of Directors. All working members are over 45-50, and their turnover is almost absent. The 2009 company's turnover was about 45.000 euros, while in the year before, it was 90.000 euros. Trade unions are not present in the cooperative, and social dialogue takes place through assemblies of members of the cooperative in a good climate of cooperation.

The interviewed referents show a growing difficulty in recruiting over-50 workers (this is the main reason for the creation of the cooperative) willing to take part to training paths to re-enter the labour market, through the activities of the cooperative. According to the

interviewed persons, in fact, often over-50 workers prefer to take advantage of the available social security cushions, rather than starting a new career path.

Currently the main challenge of Idea45 is to cope with the current economic crisis, which is causing the always increasing scarcity of public funds (indeed, social cooperatives work mostly thanks to public funds for procurement contracts in various activities) to finance the cooperative projects and activities, and to plan and implement its future activities, to the detriment of the survival of the cooperative.

According to the interviewed representatives, another aspect to be improved, is the collaboration with institutions, social parties and other local cooperatives, to better face the emergency of replacing mature people expelled from the labour market.

2. Current practice and how it has evolved

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	– Continuation
Target groups	– Older workers
Type of measure	– Job-recruitment
Social partners involved	– Yes
Scope of measure	– Age-specific

In itself, the creation of the Idea45 Social Cooperative can be seen as an initiative to the benefit of older workers. In fact, the reasons which led to its creation and development, are closely related to the problem of unemployment of mature people, a growing phenomenon in the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, as in the rest of Italy.

The birth of Idea45, is part of a wider initiative of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, which covered the co-funding of two European projects: "Over45" and "IperTools". Both projects aimed to identify and develop new models and tools to counter the exclusion of over-50 workers from the labour market. In particular, the "Over 45" project has provided specific funds to support initiatives for the self-employment of mature unemployed workers. A group of 20 over-45 participants in the project has voluntarily decided to give birth to a social cooperative to carry out the above described activities.

In this way, the 20, prematurely expelled from the labour market, over45-50 people, were able to reintegrate into it by identifying and developing an innovative working activity.

Since its establishment, Idea45 has also meant to propose itself as a "laboratory", to collect and support self- entrepreneurship ideas. It is just an intention for the moment, as this type of activity has not had any practical implication, yet.

To access the cooperative as a member-worker there are no special requirements except for the following ones: being older than 45 years; being able and willing to suggest and develop businesses.

For the members, after having been pushed out from the labour market, one successful aspect was surely to have succeeded in creating themselves a job, thanks to the high

awareness of the institutions (which have started the process through the financed projects) on the issue of unemployment in old age.

On the contrary, the lack of a network collaboration and the fact of being a small company, in times of economic crisis like the present one, cause serious problems not only in the recruitment of over-45 unemployed, but also in the very survival of the cooperative. With regard to the recruitment of the unemployed, according to the interviewed referents, if compared to the initial purposes, the reached results have not been particularly favourable. Indeed, according to the members of the cooperative, people remaining without work in mature age (at least in the local area), often prefer to "take advantage" from the available social security cushions (such as the income redundancy fund i.e. the cassa integrazione guadagni; the mobility allowance, unemployment benefits), or even resort to the economic support of the family network, rather than re-invent a new job, even if they have the opportunity to try.

The survival of the cooperative is also put into crisis by the growing unwillingness of most supermarkets to provide free food close to its best-before date, preferring to discard or sell it at a discounted price.

The transferability of the initiative is certainly not called into question, and, according to the interviewed persons, in dealing with the re-placement of unemployed mature people, much depends on their own willingness, as they can sometimes take advantage of the opportunities granted by the institutions, as happened in the case of Idea45.

3. Age management approach

As it emerges from the above described situation, in the cooperative Idea45 there are good practices towards older workers, since its birth was due to the founding members' and local institutions' full awareness of the subject. As in 2005, these people were unemployed, they indeed did join two different projects financed by the European Community and in the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region: IperTools and Over45.

Both projects were meant to identify and define new models and tools to support a specific policy to fight the exclusion from the labour market of the over-45 back, focusing, through specific objectives, on the match between the demand of the companies and the supply of the employees, not excluding the self-entrepreneurship.

Among the objectives of the two projects there was to analyse, within the regional area, the reasons for the exclusion from the labour market of over-45 people, and the dimensions of this phenomenon over the time. This analysis is still today constantly proposed by some members of the Board of Directors of Idea45, in agreement with some local public institutions.

Another objective of the projects has been to adopt innovative measures and models to foster the work flexibility and to enhance the over-45 human capital, while trying to create conditions to retain them and also to increase their level of participation.

So, Idea45 was born in this context, and in case of possible needs of labour recruitment, the organization would consider only over-45 unemployed candidates.

According to the representatives of the company, the opportunities provided by the projects Over 45 and Ipertools were in general not well exploited in the Region. Indeed from both projects, a more practical value was expected. Instead, the only practical implication of a certain relevance was the creation of Idea45, whereas no other similar initiatives have been able to develop.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

The birth of Idea45 was an attempt to tackle, in an original way, the unemployment in mature age, and such a try leads us to reflect on an absolutely significant issue concerning the discussed topic: the possibility of “doing” business and of creating new job and professional opportunities. This is an important step, because it’s a way to be on at stake, supported initially by the institutions, and later by the own efforts.

Idea45 is one of the few concrete positive examples in this sense in the country: it was created due to the founding members’ participation in the two above described European-regional projects, and to their acquired awareness to be able to autonomously develop entrepreneurial projects to re-enter the labour market.

Unfortunately, the good ideas and willingness clash with the negative economic and working context in which they are set. Thus, it becomes difficult for this small cooperative, to find the necessary outlets and partnerships to go on with its work. Nevertheless, it intends to try, keeping on to seek for solutions.

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CASE 9: Awareness raising, changing attitudes and diversity, Taumat S.r.l., Atessa (CH), Italy

Executive summary

The Taumat S.r.l. (Ltd) produces high precision mechanical components and, for more than thirty years, it has been active in the sector, as a small enterprise.

The initiative implemented by the company in the context of the age management of its employees, consists in having participated in the 2008 "Fit4Work" project, funded by the European Union and coordinated by the University of L'Aquila and the Abruzzo Region. The Taumat joined the project as pilot company, where to carry out the experimental phase, which consisted of a series of meetings, within the company, between the University researchers and some (young and mature) workers, to exchange views on issues related to work, and in particular to investigate the intergenerational relationships among employees belonging to different age groups; the state of the motivations to work of over-50 employees; the motivations of the company management to keep the over-50 workforce.

In the company, there are also good practices concerning the retainment and the re-employment of mature workers, to ensure high standards of quality and productive efficiency thanks to the high professional know-how of these expert workers.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Small (30)
Sector	- Manufacture of general - purpose machinery (28.1) - Private
Work council	- Yes
Yearly business volume	- 1.8 millions euro (2009)

The Taumat S.r.l. (Ltd), was born in 1987 in Atessa, a small village in the central Italian Abruzzo Region.

It produces high-precision mechanical components and it works on behalf of third parties, providing mechanical engine components to big companies such as Mitsubishi, Honda and Yanmar Marine Engines.

It is a small manufacturing company, as its workforce amounts to totally 30 employees, out of which 23 are skilled workers in the production and 7 are employed in the administrative sector (quality control, engineering, accounting).

Out of the total employees, 27 (90%) are male and only 3 (10%) females (2 are in the administration with a part-time contract, and one is in the production). Five employees (17%) are aged between 18 and 29 years, 15 (50%) between 30 and 49 years and 10 (33%) are over-50.

An important figure regards the turnover, as in 2008 it used to be 4.3 millions euro, while currently it amounts to approximately 1.8 millions euro, with a significant decrease higher than 50%. This is a direct consequence of the production crisis that has hit the manufacturing sector, within which the company operates.

The main challenge the Taumat S.r.l. has to face is to overcome the present crisis without resorting to layoffs or staff reductions. For the moment, even despite the drastic revenue reduction, the company personnel has been maintained. The turnover of employees, is practically absent.

Within the company, the three national trade unions (CGIL, CISL and UIL) are present, even though, most of the times, problems are solved through the direct collaboration of workers and managers, without any need to consult the trade unions.

2. Current practice and how it has evolved

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuation through other informal practices - Abandonment of the original measure
Target groups	- Older workers
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job-recruitment - Retainment
Social partners involved	- No
Scope of measure	- Age-specific

The Taumat S.r.l. initiative, as far as the age management of its mature employees, consists in having taken part as pilot company to the "Fit4Work" project, funded by the European Union and coordinated by the University of L'Aquila and the Abruzzo Region.

The aims of the project were to investigate: 1) the intergenerational relationships among employees belonging to different age groups, 2) the state of the motivations to work of over-50 employees, 3) the motivations of the company management to keep the over-50 workforce.

The goals were pursued through studying a sample of selected companies of the Abruzzo Region, in which a series of company meetings between workers and researchers of the University of L'Aquila has been carried out.

In addition, the project was aimed at investigating the prospects, within the company, of workers after retirement, as well as those of the younger ones.

The company owner's motivation to participate in the trial, derives from his strong awareness of the importance of older workers in the company and from the considerable experience such workers have acquired over the years.

This becomes even more important given the very high level of technical expertise, which is necessary for the production at the Taumat S.r.l.

According to the owner, the project appeared as a suitable tool to thoroughly investigate the working motivations of mature employees, their relationship with the younger employees and more generally, the possible interactions among the employees of different age.

In the company, the "Fit4Work" project was carried out between November 2007 and March 2008. On Saturday afternoon (outside the working time) 4 hours meetings took place in the company, between researchers and teachers (of psychology, sociology and law) of the University of L'Aquila, on one side, and six workers of the Taumat S.r.l., on the other, out of which 3 were over-50 and 3 were young. The talks concerned mainly issues related to the life and work, both in and outside the company.

The participation in the project did not require any money outlay from the organisation and no requirement has been applied to employees, who voluntarily took part in it.

The results obtained from the carried out project, were presented in late 2008 at the Regional Palace of L'Aquila. However, currently, these results have not been sufficiently disseminated and they are difficult to find, therefore in the following text, the impact of the project will be evaluated solely according to the respondents' point of view.

Participating in this project, the Taumat President's aim was to foster the dialogue among employees of different age groups and to highlight their different motivations and problems, related to the work in the company.

According to the interviewed persons, the initiative seems to have improved the work climate, the dialogue and the understanding between older and younger workers, so the goal appears to have been reached. As evidence of this, once the project was ended, the group of employees, who took part in the initiative at the end of 2008, has worked together at starting up a new company warehouse. This thanks to a more profitable (than before) interaction between the over-50 workforce and younger employees, which, according to the referents, has also led to a renewed motivation at work and to a stronger attachment to the company.

Thus, the initiative has generated important benefits, improving the cohesion among all employees. During the implementation of the project, those employees who were not joining it, were constantly trying to understand what the project was about, and what was happening in the meeting sessions with the university experts, showing, at the same time, both curiosity and desire to participate in the project, which have stressed their growing awareness of the issue of age management.

One certain successful factor, that facilitated to carrying out of the initiative, was the possibility for older workers to have a confrontation with various experts on important issues close to them. This has increased their self-esteem and made them feel positively regarded by the company.

None, internal or external factors has negatively impacted on the initiative implementation and success. On the contrary, the company owner wishes, that this initiative does not remain a sporadic example but that, with the help of experts, it can be, steadily and systematically

planned again over the time, as such activities bring benefits to both participants and company.

3. Age management approach

The good practices related to the age management at the Taumat S.r.l. are not only related to the above described initiative, but are also realized by the company recruitment and retainment of older workers.

In particular, as far as the second aspect, the necessity to promote, as long as possible, the employability of over-50 workers in the company, is due to the need of the company to ensure products with both high qualitative standards and high levels of personalisation.

In addition, older and expert workers' presence, thanks indeed to their in-depth knowledge of all aspects regarding the company production, guarantee both an high production efficiency as well as a considerable economic performance. All this is particularly true especially in a small production context like the one of Taumat S.r.l.

That is why, given the crises of orders, that hit the company in 2009 and caused a sharp decline in revenue, the Taumat S.r.l. has not carried out any staff layoffs or activated any social security cushion.

According to the interviewed person, to reduce the effects of the crisis, it would have been possible to hire more young manual workers, through apprenticeships or fixed-term contracts, by firing older employees and therefore reducing the higher wage costs.

However, according to the company referents, this would create a "false economy" and, in the long term, it would later imply high costs for training the young and inexperienced staff, as well as high expenditures, due to the loss of productive efficiency, which is now guaranteed by the older employees.

In 2008 the company has also hired an over-60 worker, who used to be a former employee who resigned in favour of another job, which, in the long run, has proved unrewarding, whereas at Taumat S.r.l. he used to play a fundamental role in the production. He was hired again, with the same job and salary as before.

Currently, no intervention or future initiative related to age management is planned. In such a small company as Taumat S.r.l. is, the relationships between the company and the employees become often personal, and needs are assessed and met whenever they arise, without a specific management policy. However, the interviewed ones seem to be fully aware that the present and the future of the company are closely linked to the presence of older and experienced workers.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

As it usually happens in every small company, the dialogue between the company and its employees takes place at a more informal level, rather than through formal policies in the strict sense.

The company participation in the Fit4work project, shows a certain desire to deepen the topic of the age management of its employees and its related problems. Nevertheless, the initiative is now an isolated case that has not led the company to think about and to plan long term initiatives in the age management sphere. It would be desirable that the owner's intention to facilitate the dialogue among different generations of workers, through cyclic meetings, in the wake of the carried out test, could more systematically be implemented in future.

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CASE 10: Employment exit and the transition to retirement, flexible working practices, Ancina High school, Fossano (CN), Italy

Executive summary

"Ancina" is a secondary school with an emphasis on sciences (i.e. a public body) located in Fossano, a village of the Piedmont Region in Northern Italy.

The found initiative to the benefit of older employees is the arrangement, for those teachers reaching the retirement age, to provide part-time to facilitate their gradual exit from the labour market. The initiative was implemented in 2001 in the wake of the Legislative Decree 61/2000 which promotes the part-time work, well acknowledged in the collective labour agreement for teachers.

In addition to the initiative in question, other good practices for older workers can be found in the school, such as the employment of retired former teachers for remedial classes for students, as well as training courses offered by the institute to the entire teaching staff which are particularly useful to older teachers, such as trainings on the new technologies used in their teaching.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Small (62)
Sector	- Secondary education (85.3) - Public
Work council	- Yes
Yearly business volume	- 350.000 euro

The "G. Ancina" public secondary school with an emphasis on sciences is in Fossano, a small town in the Piedmont Region (province of Cuneo), in the North-western area of the country.

The employees of the school are in total 62, out of which 50 are teachers and 12 members of the administrative sector. Out of the total employees, 18 (29%) are male and 44 (71%) female. Out of these last ones 3 are part-time employed in the administration. An additional part-time worker is an over-60 male teacher. Three people (5%) are aged between 18 and 29 years, 47 (76%) between 30 and 49 years and 12 (19%) are over-50. In 2008 there were 65 employees, with a decrease of 3 employees in comparison to the current situation, due to the retirement of three teachers.

The annual budget of the school amounts to about 350.000 euro (out of which 150.000 euro are provided by the Ministry of Education, and almost half derives from student contributions for trips, study tours, etc.).

The yearly turnover of employees is around 20% and it is mostly due to the rotation of the substitute teachers.

The main challenge of the institute and, according to the school headmaster, more generally of the Italian school system, is to tackle the current lack of preparation of students, who enter the secondary schools less prepared under an educational point of view.

Therefore, this will imply adapting the learning tools through innovative supply, based on both the actual level of preparation of students as well as on their needs.

In the organisation are present trade unions of the education sector. The relationships between the school management and these unions are good, there aren't indeed any tensions during the negotiation, and the request for cooperation is mutual.

2. Current practice and how it has evolved

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	- Continuation
Target groups	- Qualified workers (teachers) - Older workers
Type of measure	- Job-recruitment - Retainment - Training
Social partners involved	- Yes
Scope of measure	- Age-specific

The initiative implemented by the Ancina Secondary School of Fossano is in favour of its teachers in advanced age, and it consists in encouraging the part-time work at the end of the career, once the requirements for retirement are met, i.e. 60 years of age or 40 years of seniority (as provided by the Italian law for the education sector).

In practice, the development of the initiative at issue was realised in the wake of the Legislative Decree No. 61 of 25th February 2000, which was subsequently developed and implemented by the national collective labour agreement that regulates teaching.

According to the collective agreement, teachers who fulfil the requirements for retirement, while applying for retirement, may, at the same time, also apply to extend their working lives by reducing the working hours through part-time, receiving half the monthly pension as well as the remuneration for the carried out part-time job.

There are various reasons that led the management of the Ancina School of Fossano to foster the gradual exit of its teachers from work, even after reaching the minimum standards for retirement. On the one hand, there are the motivation of teachers, who wish to continue working after reaching the requirements for retirement. On the other, there are some reasons related to organisational aspects: due to the funding cuts to the public educational service carried out by the Ministry of Education, the replacement of a retiring teacher is no longer guaranteed, so schools may face problems related to a too much reduced organic, as a result of retirement. The part-time at the end of the career is also preferable because the performance of teachers, especially after the threshold of 55 years, may be of poorer quality due to their possible reduced motivation, and a decrease of their workload, through a gradual pathway towards the final pension could be useful, as a longer period of rest can help mature teachers to improve the quality of their teaching.

By 15th March of each year, teachers who meet the criteria for retirement can submit a filled in form to the headmaster's office of the institute, together with their application for retirement. So the most involved actors in the process are the headmaster of the institute and the provincial Local Education Authority.

In fact, the headmaster assesses the suitability of the applicant for part-time on the basis of his/her previous teaching career. This assessment is then submitted to the Local Education Authority, which decides whether or not granting the part-time.

The headmaster's assessment is therefore decisive and the headmaster of the Ancina High School tends to favour as much as possible this kind of request. The Local Education Authority may decide not to grant part-time in case of a surplus of unemployed teachers, since in such a situation the inclusion of younger unemployed teachers is preferred.

The potential beneficiaries of the institute are all teachers who have reached the retirement age or 40 years of seniority. There are no additional selection criteria.

Since the collective agreement has been signed at the national level, the geographical scope of the initiative has, of course, a national character. However, it is bureaucratically managed through the provincial offices of the Local Education Authority.

Since 2000 up to now in the Ancina High School, there have been yearly on average two requests for part-time at the end of the career, with no particular gender differences. Recipients continue usually to be part-time employed for 4-5 years after the age 60, before definitely retiring. Currently, only one teacher works under this type of contract. The initiative, relates to a particular stage of the working life (i.e. the transition to retirement).

According to the headmaster, it could be observed as by reducing the workload of teachers in advanced age, they have found a renewed motivation for teaching, an activity that they carry out more willingly and with a newfound effectiveness. In addition, thanks to the chance to keep on working (with a gradual and less traumatic separation from the world of work) they also enjoy better psychological and physical condition, while being able, at the same time, to take advantage of the economic and not-economic (i.e. the increased availability of free time) benefits, due to the "retired status".

In addition, some other indirect benefits emerged, due to the possibility to longer retain in the teaching staff important employees with relevant experience, who also become a reference point for younger teachers.

This initiative is certainly sustainable in all schools, although it has to be pointed out that it can more easily be implemented in secondary schools. Indeed, as far as the primary schools, the workload for over-60 teachers becomes generally too heavy, and to keep working on with a part-time schedule (which is, in fact, less requested in this type of school), is regarded as potentially deleterious.

Currently, some external factors seem to undermine the actual feasibility of the initiative. In fact, while on the one hand due to the funding cuts the replacement of a retiring teacher is no longer guaranteed, on the other hand, in case of recruitment needs, the possible excess of unemployed teachers leads the provincial Local Authority of Education to be against the part-time grant, in order to encourage the recruitment of unemployed teachers. The recent

ministerial cuts on available jobs in the public educational sector, cause an always increasing number of unemployed teachers, so this can negatively impact on grating the part-time work at the end of the career.

In addition to the just mentioned issues, the possible (the topic is being discussed at political level) increase of the retirement age for teachers from 60 up to 65 years, would add another obstacle to the feasibility of the initiative. Over the next year, two teachers will reach the minimum of 60 years and they have already told the headmaster they intend to apply for part-time as well as for retirement. However, they are unlikely to benefit from it: given the current huge number of Italian unemployed teachers, the opinion of the provincial office of the Local Authority of Education will be probably against it.

In the opinion of the headmaster, given the current situation and possible future scenarios, it would be certainly necessary to study another initiative in the school, in order to keep on guaranteeing to older teachers the possibility to have a gradual separation from teaching. May for example be some good reinforced practices already in place in the organisation (and which will be described in the following section), also through an increase of funds dedicated to this purpose.

3. Age management approach

Especially since the implementation of the above-described initiative and its development over the following ten years, the headmaster and the school board of the Ancina High School of Fossano, have gained a certain awareness of the importance and the role of teachers in advanced age within the teaching staff of the institute.

On the wake of the main initiative, even if informally, other two informal good practices, were born: the re-employment of already retired older teachers, and the general lifelong learning of teachers.

The practice of the re-employment of retired teachers of the institute consists in assigning to these teachers, extra-schooling remedial courses for pupils who need them. These courses can be afternoon or summer ones, with classes of 6-7 students on average. Currently, two retired former teachers are committed to doing this task as completely voluntary collaborators (without remuneration). The average duration of the courses for each subject is of 45-50 hours per year.

The second practice is the establishment of refresher courses promoted by the institute to foster its teachers' lifelong learning.

Such refresher courses are given by the teaching staff, they are addressed to all the teachers of the institute who do voluntary attend, and they cover various subjects: from teaching, to learning difficulties of disabled pupils, the strengthening of foreign languages and provide abilities to manage the new teaching technologies in use in the school.

Yearly 10 courses are held on average for a total of about 100 provided hours of training. Each course is attended by an average of 20 teachers and they are in particular attended by teachers aged between 30 and 45.

An exception, however, is represented by training courses on the new teaching technologies, which are taught by young teachers and are attended by many older teachers (aged 50 to 60 years), with an average of 5/6 mature participants for each course. Indeed, particularly older teachers, due to their lack of knowledge of new technologies, feel the need to remove this “obstacle”. Sometimes, however, the lack of knowledge of new technologies for some older teachers is so significant, to become a key factor for choosing the final retirement rather than a part-time schedule (which would entail an updating on the matter) at the end of their teaching career.

The two above described practices are also due to the need of the organisation to promote, by methods other than the part-time, the continuation of work beyond retirement age.

This consideration also arises from the awareness that it will be always increasingly difficult to grant part-time schedules to retired teachers at the end of their career, as recent government policies foresee increasing job cuts, so the national trend in the educational system is to let teachers reaching requirements for retirement retire as soon as possible, in order to encourage the recruitment of unemployed teachers.

Therefore, for the future the Ancina High School, going partially against the just described national trend, is trying to retain mature teachers by providing them with more appropriate skills and lifelong learning aimed at maintaining high quality standards in teaching.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

In the near future, in the light of the policies of the Ministry of Education of funding cuts to public schools and education, the above described initiative seems to be seriously compromised.

Nevertheless, as extensively explained in the previous paragraphs, this does not depend on the direct will of the management and of the teaching staff of the "G. Ancina" Public High School, which appears instead to have clear ideas about the possible future initiatives to support the training as well as the life long learning of mature teachers, through gradual retirement pathways.

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CASE 11: Training, lifelong learning and knowledge transfer, ASL 4 Chiavarese, Italy

Executive summary

The ASL 4 Chiavarese is the Local Health Authority of the town of Chiavari (province of Genoa, Liguria Region), which was established in 1993.

The initiative was implemented in 2007, it developed over the following three years, and it consists in assessing the skills of the medical doctors of the ASL 4 of Chiavari through criteria and forms specially created by the managers of the Units, and the following planning of targeted training programs based on the actual training need of the doctors, identified by means of the evaluation.

The case at issue is particularly interesting to investigate, as, although the initiative addresses to the entire medical staff, most of it is made up of over-45.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Large (1.871)
Sector	- Human health activities (86) - Public
Work council	- Yes
Yearly business volume	- 270.8 millions euro (2009)

The ASL 4 of Chiavari, is a public body founded in 1993 in the Liguria Region. The sector where the organisation operates is therefore provision of health and medical services.

Totally the hospital of Lavagna, a town included in the ASL territory, is made up of 1.871 employees, including medical and administrative staff, with an increase of 6 employees in comparison to 2008, due to a transfer of some employees from other hospitals.

The workforce is largely made up of women since they are 1.390, representing 75% of the total. Male employees are 481 (25%).

Under-30 employees are the minority: only 79, i.e. 4%. Employees aged between 30 and 49 years are 1.107 (59%) while 685 (37%) are over-50.

Out of the total employees, 326 (17%) belong to the administrative department whereas the remaining 1.545 (83%) are medical doctors and auxiliary medical personnel. There are 172 part-time workers, mostly within the administrative department, out of which 11 are males and 161 females. The turnover of employees does not virtually exist.

The 2009 turnover was of 270.8 million euro, i.e. a decrease of 900 thousand euro compared to 2008.

Being a public company and depending directly from the Region, one of the biggest problems of the ASL 4 is definitely the shortage of labour force due to the hiring freeze imposed by the Ministry of Health. So, the main challenge the enterprise is facing and will

face in the coming years is to try to deal with all strategic objectives, despite the progressive reduction of funds dedicated to the public health by the Italian government.

Within the organisation can be found the trade unions of the health-care category and the social dialogue takes place between the physicians and representatives of the chief medical office in an atmosphere of mutual cooperation.

2. Current practice and how it has evolved

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	– Continuation
Target groups	– Qualified
Type of measure	– Training – Work and working time organisation
Social partners involved	– Yes
Scope of measure	– Age-specific – Overarching

The initiative implemented in the field of the age management of its employees by the Unit of Risk Management, Quality and Accreditation of the ASL 4, is primarily addressed especially to physicians, with a perspective on their whole working lives.

The initiative was studied in the Lavagna hospital and it consists in assessing the skills of doctors and in a following planning of training interventions designed to meet their training gaps identified through the evaluation. Since both the assessment and the training are addressed to physicians of all ages in an overarching way, it represents a good practice of age management since: it improves the skills of future aged doctors (in a life-course perspective) and do not exclude older workers from training (a fact that should be underlined in the Italian context).

It involves the whole medical staff regardless of age, but is particularly important for older employees, because a substantial part of the medical staff is over-50. According to the interviewed referents, the quite large presence of mature physicians in the hospital is also explained by the hiring freeze in the public health sector imposed by the Ministry of Health. Therefore a progressive ageing of the medical staff is taking place, furthermore the non-renewal of young staff to replace retirees, implies a growing labour shortage.

The initiative was implemented in 2007 following the English project CHKS (CHKS is a UK's leading independent provider of healthcare intelligence and quality improvement services), which provides a specific standard to assess and train the medical staff to the aim of improving the performance of each doctor.

According to the interviewed referents, the training of health workers, beyond being a requirement by the system of Continuing Medical Education (CME), is a real tool for their professional development to foster the continuous improvement of their performances. The evaluation process and the subsequent organisation of training courses were held in four years from 2007 to 2010, and is therefore still ongoing.

In 2007 the managers of each single health-care unit identified the criteria in order to assess the performance of the medical personnel with respect to:

- "physician profession";
- "information technology skills";
- "English language";
- "internal relations among the employees".

Particularly, as far as the "physician profession" is concerned, following aspects were assessed:

- medical history and clinical classification of cases;
- guidance for diseases;
- internal-medical and surgical issues;
- instrumental and managerial aspects.

In 2008, the unit managers assessed the performance of each single doctor according to the criteria identified in the previous year. The evaluations were carried out by the unit managers filling a form in, observing the daily work of physicians. In this way, the training needs of each doctor could be identified. In fact, the resulting evaluation forms were then reviewed by the staff of the Unit of Risk Management, Accreditation and Quality.

It was possible to investigate especially implemented training actions regarding the "physician profession", that are the bulk of the training. In fact, in 2009 the first cycle of non-compulsory training courses (doctors did voluntary join) regarding the "physician profession" was held, relying both on external experts as well as on internal teachers, by providing courses in different fields of activity as below identified:

1. quality of the risk management planning;
2. prevention, diagnosis and treatment;
3. guidelines for care pathways;
4. clinical audit and quality indicators.

Training courses were given in each of the mentioned areas of activity, and each of them lasted on average 3 working days per year. The course on "quality of the risk management planning" was attended by 698 physicians (out of which about 14% was over-50). The other three courses, which have been followed on average by 30 physicians, were in general less attended by mature doctors (only 2 or 3 over-50 doctors each course), probably because older doctors are more interested in planning aspects.

After having identified the criteria and created the forms to be filled in for evaluations in 2007, assessed the doctors in 2008, held training courses in 2009, the goal for 2010 is a re-assessment of the medical staff who attended the training courses, in order to verify the actual results of the training (data on this activity are not available yet). The reasons that led the ASL to develop and implement the above described initiative, are partially due to legal obligations and partially to the decision of meeting the CHKS standard. According to the law, physicians must devote a part of their working time to training activities. However, on the other hand, the General Management in agreement with the Unit of Risk Management, Accreditation and Quality, has decided to profit from the legislative obligation

to address the life long learning in the best way by taking into consideration the actual training needs of doctors, after assessing their competence. In 2010 the budget dedicated to the initiative amounts to € 365.000.

According to representatives of the organisation, the practical running of the initiative has exactly followed the conceptual design: the actual assessment of skills that took place in the course of 2008 has allowed to plan training.

The initiative appears to have provided a renewed motivation especially to older doctors, as even if they participated to a limited extent to some courses, the impact on their work has been very positive, with an improvement of many “negative” habits and ways of doing they had (for example the improved relationships with their younger colleagues).

The initiative was certainly negatively influenced by the lack of personnel who could have replaced in the various wards the doctors, while they were training. So, for this reason, some physicians did not attend the training courses in an appropriate manner and to the expected extent.

In the future, a key role in the initiative will be played by government policies in the field of Health. Indeed, for 2011 further public funding cuts on health-care are foreseen as well as the continuation of the hiring freeze. This will lead the Local Health Authorities to a necessary further rationalisation of the already poor funds, with a consequent predictable decrease of those funds dedicated to the quality and the training, against, among other things, a progressive ageing of the medical staff due to the hiring freeze.

In the future, to ensure satisfactory standards of quality and lifelong learning to the medical staff, it will be necessary to increase the internal training and to entrust it to recently already trained physicians as training providers, trying, in this way, to save internal economic resources in the face of the progressively more limited budget.

3. Age management approach

Further organisational practices in the age management of the staff appear as necessary, since the hiring freeze imposed by the Ministry of Health is leading to a gradual ageing of the medical personnel within the organisation.

Indeed, some additional practices can be observed, which, nevertheless, are still primarily attributable to the collective labour agreement, that for example allows older physicians (over-60 if female and over-62 if male) to apply for an exemption from night shifts. Furthermore, medical managers have also the opportunity to take advantage of part-time at the end of their career.

Nevertheless both possibilities (exemption from night shifts and part-time at the end of the career) are highly disadvantageous in terms of remuneration. For example, arguments against the part-time at the end of the career, derive from the fact that the amount of the monthly pension is calculated on the basis of the wage of the last years of work. On the other hand the main argument against the exemption from night shifts, is that each night shift implies an additional 50 euros to the monthly wage. Therefore, in order to enjoy the best possible economic conditions, the medical staff of the ASL does not take advantage from the two available initiatives: in 2009, only a doctor (woman) applied for the exemption from night shifts, while in 2010 no demand from doctors was received. Moreover, part-time is not widespread among older doctors.

Another practice that can be found, even if on a very limited scale, is to avoid too heavy or difficult duties to older doctors. An example may be represented by surgeons, who perform less and less surgeries as they age.

In general, in the Local Health Authority of Chiavari older physicians are generally highly esteemed, as they are considered as those with greater experience. Primarily for this reason, this local public body intends to increasingly use them as internal teachers in the training courses.

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

The ever-increasing funding cuts for public health cause obvious restrictions in the allocation of resources to activities such as the age management of employees, which are not considered as "core activities".

Nonetheless, the hiring freeze does not promote the generational turnover and increases the workload of older doctors. In the future, the task of protecting and promoting the work of older doctors, their lifelong learning and a favourable work environment for them will likely be carried out in the face of increasingly limited financial resources.

The low decisional power of the ASL concerning the recruitment policies (as the government is mainly taking the major decisions on the matter) causes a serious constraint to the design and implementation of autonomous initiatives to support mature employees.

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CASE 12: Awareness raising, changing attitudes and diversity, COMETA Limited Partnership (Ltd), Casoli (CH), Italy

Executive summary

Since 1980 COMETA is a small-medium company within the automotive engineering sector producing mechanical components for motorcycles and aircrafts. It is located in the industrial district of the Val di Sangro in the Abruzzo Italian region.

The initiative of age management of employees was implemented by the company in 2007 and it concerned the planning and the carrying out of a series of training modules about different working issues, also in order to improve the relationship between the mature and the younger workforce within the establishment.

In addition to the above mentioned specific initiative, other good practices of the company consist of professional trainings addressed to the entire workforce, and enhancing the work-life reconciliation of its employees' (in particular with the activity of caregiving for dependent older family members), by granting them extra paid leaves beyond those provided for by the collective labour agreement.

1. Organisational background

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Size (employees)	- Small (60)
Sector	- Manufacture of machinery and equipment n.e.c. (28) - Private
Work council	- No
Yearly business volume	- 8.449 millions euro (2009)

The COMETA Ltd was founded in 1980 in Casoli, a small town in the Abruzzo Region (Central Italy). It produces mainly mechanical components for cars and motorcycles and works on orders on behalf of third parties, i.e. Honda and BMW, primarily in the motorcycle industry.

It's a small-medium sized organisation, in fact the workforce is made up of totally 60 employees, out of which 46 are skilled workers in the manufacturing and 14 in the administration (quality control, engineering, accounting).

Out of the total employees, 53 (88%) are male and 7 (12%) are female administrative employees. Only one male worker has a part-time contract.

10 employees (17%) are aged between 50 and 60, 45 (75%) are between 30 and 49 years old and 5 (8%) are aged between 18 and 30 years.

Due to the economic crisis of the mechanical sector the turnover underwent a drastic drop of about 5 million euro: from 13.459.000 million euro (2008) to 8.449 million euro (2009). The

current turnover is around 9 million euros, with a slight recovery thanks to a partial increase in orders.

Without doubt, according to the interviewed referents, the current challenge of the COMETA Ltd is, given the effects of the crisis, to try to retrain the whole workforce. Nevertheless, at present the company is resorting to the Ordinary Redundancy Fund, which provides for the reduction of the working shifts of all employees in turn. Thanks to this tool it was possible not to dismiss the employees. The turnover of employees is almost non-existent.

No trade unions are present in the organisation and the internal dialogue takes place informally among employees and management in an extremely collaborative climate in order to solve problems. The COMETA Ltd was awarded the SA8000 Ethical Certification, which ensures the observance of the business contract obligations towards its employees.

Moreover, the organisation is active in helping to solve some social problems of the local area, taking part in projects of social value, in particular collaborating with two social cooperatives working in the fields of training and job placement of disabled people.

2. Current practice and how it has evolved

Metadata:

Criteria	Parameter value
Status of initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuation through other informal practices - Abandonment of the original measure (ended project)
Target groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualified - Unqualified - Older workers - Younger workers
Type of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job-recruitment - Training - Flexible working practices
Social partners involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No
Scope of measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age-specific - Overarching

The initiative to promote the employability of its over-50 employees, consisted of a series of training modules addressed to all employees, which were implemented by the organisation and lasted from the end of January 2007 for the entire year, focusing on three specific issues of the working world. Specifically:

- Professional motivation of the older worker: a resource for the company. This training was implemented by external consultants of the University of L'Aquila within a project, with the main objective to inform all the workforce about the importance of older workers and of their integration in the work context, as older workers are regarded as a great resource both in the productive as well as in the social contexts.

- Work Ability & Disability. The objective here was to provide the company with an adequate knowledge on the Work Ability and on the methods to enhance the residual skills of the workers in case of disability. This training program has as well concerned the concept of the worker's age and ability throughout the whole working life.
- Health and Safety at the workplace. The training module was designed with the objective to make all employees aware of the importance and implications of safeguarding of health and safety at the workplace, with particular emphasis on the strategies to maintain ageing workers active and protected.

The reason that led the organisational management, together with Human Resource Office and the internal manager in charge of the compliance with the SA8000 rules, to plan such an initiative was the need to develop new methods to more effectively interact with older and expert workers, who are amongst the most important qualitative resources in the organisation, as well as the main actors to transfer knowledge to younger workers. The initiative was also implemented to provide the less motivated mature workers with new motivation in order for them to continue efficiently in their jobs.

The training sessions on three above described topics were held on Saturdays at COMETA outside the working hours, and each meeting lasted about two hours. On average each training session was totally made up of 10 hours.

The attendance has been satisfactory: out of the total employees, 24 (40%) took part in every module, including 16 mature workers (all the 10 over-50 and 6 over-45). The participation was voluntary, i.e. a workers' free choice. The management has only insisted on the participation in the meetings of the heads of the production departments to which the mature workers belonged. The organisation has stressed this aspect as it considered essential to make the coordinators of the personnel aware of the matter. In this way it was meant: to foster the intergenerational relationships between employees of different ages; to provide over-50 workers with the right working motivation making them more effectively interact with younger workers; to best exploit the skills of mature workers in a perspective of a knowledge transfer.

Especially as far as this last aspect, the meetings were of great importance, given the very high professional expertise required from employees at COMETA.

Once the project was nearly completed, at the end of the training modules, the Human Resource office asked the participants to fill in some questionnaires (created by the same office), aimed to analyse the degree of awareness on the covered topics as well as some aspects linked with possible practical implications in the organisation.

According to the interviewed representative, who analysed results of the questionnaires, the employees revealed a significant awareness of both the issue of ageing within the enterprise, as well as of the importance of the intergenerational interaction. Such an arisen awareness was attributed to the trainings programs.

The initiative did not require any money expenditure from the organisation, and has led to an increased tutorship of mature workers to young ones in various departments, aimed at the knowledge transfer from the former to the latter ones.

One factor of the initiative which was considered as very positive, has been to have offered workers the chance of an intergenerational interaction on many important issues which

according to the interviewed person, has provided mature workers with a renewed motivation.

No internal or external factors hindered the success of the initiative, which is on the contrary regarded as a starting point for the further training of all employees and for transferring knowledge from mature to younger workers.

3. Age management approach

Other two company good practices of employees' age management are: on one side, the paid leave granted outside the contractual terms to employees, in order to allow them to care for their dependent family members. On the other, the professional training to all employees. In the opinion of the interviewed referent, the paid leaves are very important especially to older workers, who at home are often informally caring for their older parents. On the other hand, younger employees do not consider this possibility as a particularly important additional benefit.

As far as the professional training is concerned, given the highly specialised technology required by the COMETA production, employees are on total granted yearly 4.000 training hours (not compulsory) on the technological innovations needed by COMETA. According to the interviewed person, older workers are those attending such courses the most, as they perceive training as a bigger opportunity for career progression thanks to the newly acquired skills.

The organisation does not appear to find a correlation between the current economic climate characterised by a generalised crisis in the sector, and the retainment or hiring of mature workers. Besides it does not pose difficulties to the recruitment of over-50 workers.

As evidence of this, two years ago, a worker (the father of another female employee), who lacked two years to the retirement age, was hired.

The interviewed person reckons that in general today it is easier than in the past to hire a mature worker with a certain degree of experience. This is primarily due to the phenomenon of the unemployment of older people. As a result, these people accept any remuneration as long as they can work, and so companies can employ older workers by taking advantage of profitable contracts with them (such as short-term contracts, professional collaborations, etc.).

4. Concluding reflections from the researcher

For 30 years the COMETA Ltd has always been very active in the local area, with its projects of social value and constant collaboration with bodies and organisations linked to the issue of the disability.

The "social conscience" of the organisation has also promoted the growth of awareness of the ageing of workers and of the employability of the older ones. The decision taken by the management to stimulate the interaction between workers of different generations on various working aspects is considered an important first step towards the issue of the age management. Unfortunately, even given the clear future willingness of the COMETA in this

regard, its current resort to a social security cushion due to the economic crisis does not, for now, facilitate the in depth study of its employees' age management.

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