



AGE ADAPT

Inspirational Educational
Materials for SMEs:
Adaptation Guidelines for
Companies

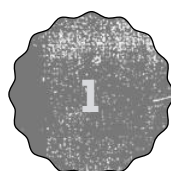


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Introduction:

With an aging population, a significant portion of the workforce is over the age of 55. These workers bring valuable skills, knowledge, and experience to the workplace. However, they may also face challenges in adapting to new technologies and changing work environments. Therefore, supporting their adaptation can help ensure that they remain productive and engaged in the workforce.

Supporting the adaptation of older workers can also have significant economic benefits. These workers are often at the peak of their earning potential and have a wealth of experience that can be leveraged to benefit the organization. By supporting their adaptation, employers can retain these valuable workers and avoid the costs associated with turnover.

At the same time, it can also have social benefits. These workers may face age-related stereotypes and discrimination in the workplace, which can lead to social isolation and reduced quality of life. By supporting their adaptation, employers can help break down these barriers and create a more inclusive and supportive work environment.

In many countries, employers have legal obligations to support the adaptation of older workers. For example, in the European Union, employers must provide training and development opportunities for all workers, including those over the age of 55.

Overall, supporting the adaptation of workers over 55 is crucial for ensuring a productive, engaged, and inclusive workforce, as well as for meeting legal obligations and reaping economic benefits.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

ID: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000033518

AGE ADAPT

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Module

“Mentoring”

Developed by:

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01 Definition of the module



Mentoring or mentorship is the influence, guidance, or direction given by a mentor. A mentor is someone who teaches or gives help and advice to a less experienced and often younger person. In an organizational setting, a **mentor influences** the personal and professional growth of a mentee. Most traditional mentorships involve having senior employees' mentor more junior employees, but **mentors do not necessarily have to be more senior** than the people they mentor. What matters is that mentors have experience that others can learn from.

This topic is important for Age-adapt project, as it is addressing elderly employees, which gained a lot of knowledge and experience through their lives. But mentoring can go in both directions. Also, **young people can be mentors** to their senior co-workers, especially when it comes to ICT technologies. We should have that in mind when we talk about mentoring.

With this module we want to emphasize for the companies that **elderly employees are still valuable workforce**, and they should consider them as equal part of the company. A good mentor can help the mentee become more effective at work, learn new skills, develop greater confidence, and make better decisions for their overall career growth.





02 Summary



With this module we want:

- To introduce the **concept of mentoring**.
- Answer who are the **mentor** and **mentee**?
- To **highlight** what are the most commonly used **techniques among mentors** and what types of mentors exists.
- To introduce the mentoring process and its importance.
- To **explain how to implement** a mentoring programme in organisations.

03 Objectives



The purpose of mentoring is to **connect** an individual who has a lot of **knowledge and experience with someone who has not gained** the same knowledge or experience—yet. Therefore, the main objectives of this module are:

- To **highlight the importance of mentoring** in companies and to introduce the manager, HR, SME's owners value of the knowledge and experience of the elderly employees for the company.
- **Highlight why mentoring is important** for all involved participants and what are the **benefits**.
- To **show companies some steps how to adapt and implement** guidelines into their own work environment and their employees.

04 Content of the module

Introducing the concept of mentoring

Mentoring is a reciprocal and **collaborative** at-will **relationship** that most often occurs **between a senior and junior employee** for the purpose of the mentee's growth, learning, and career development. Often the mentor and mentee are internal to an organization, and there is an emphasis on organizational goals, culture, career goals, advice on professional development, and work-life balance. Effective mentors often act as role models and sounding boards for their mentee and provide guidance to help them reach their goals.



A **mentor** is someone who teaches or gives help and **advice to a less experienced** and often younger person. In an organizational setting, a mentor influences the personal and professional growth of a mentee. Most traditional mentorships involve having senior employees' mentor more junior employees, but **mentors do not necessarily have to be more senior than the**

people they mentor. What matters is that mentors have experience that others can learn from.

There are **5 areas** where **mentorship** is **beneficial for the company and employees:** 

- It **provides more opportunities** for training and development by tapping into the knowledge of your more senior employees.
- Mentorship **gives employees a voice to speak** with leadership, thus breaking down barriers to communication.
- Both **mentors and mentees are given the opportunity to prove themselves by putting into practice** what they discuss during their mentoring sessions.
- Engagement is closely tied with working relationships. **Mentorship builds the social ties** that keep employees from getting discouraged and encourages a growth mindset.
- Mentorship **holds mentors and mentees accountable to the commitments** they make to one another. Making a commitment to grow with a mentor makes it harder to procrastinate doing what needs to be done to improve.



Mentorship enhances employee engagement because it gives high performers personal and professional development. It satisfies their desire for career progression and the development of their knowledge and skillsets.

Approaches for mentoring, techniques and models

As the **focus of mentorship is to develop the whole person**, the techniques used are broad and require wisdom to be appropriately used. A 1995 study of mentoring techniques most commonly used in business found that the five most commonly used techniques among mentors were:

1. **Accompanying:** the mentor participates in the learning process alongside the learner and supports them.
2. **Sowing:** the mentor gives initially unclear or unacceptable advice to the learner that has value in a given situation.
3. **Catalysing:** the mentor chooses to plunge the learner right into change to provoke a different way of thinking, a change in identity or a re-ordering of values.
4. **Showing:** the mentor teaches the learner by demonstrating a skill or activity.
5. **Harvesting:** the mentor assesses and defines the utility and value of the learner's skills.



Different techniques may be used by mentors **according to the situation** and the mindset of the mentee. The techniques used in modern organizations can be found in ancient education systems, from the Socratic technique of harvesting to the accompaniment used in the apprenticeship of itinerant cathedral builders during the Middle Ages.

In many organizations, **leaders feel that mentorship should happen organically**, without a top-down approach. There's a belief that it's more authentic when it grows informally. It is hard to find a mentor, so formal programs can democratize these opportunities.

To make it more concrete, here is the outline of several differences between informal and formal mentorship.



Informal mentoring

Informal mentoring is **when employees find a leader or peer they learn to rely on and want to share the experience**. It can happen intentionally or unintentionally.

When this happens unintentionally, an employee may learn that they can get good advice or guidance for personal and professional growth by going to a particular leader. When a leader is open to helping others, this can happen quite easily.

The employee **naturally starts going to the leader when they have a question or challenge** because they know the leader will help them. In this way, a mentoring relationship develops naturally, and they may never call themselves mentors or mentees.

Formal mentoring

Formal mentoring is **when an organization starts a program** where employees and **leaders can opt-in as mentors or mentees**. With formal mentoring programs, **a schedule is set up for both** mentor and mentee to meet up regularly and discuss factors affecting the growth and understanding of the mentee. Formal mentoring **is structured** such **that both mentor and mentee have specific goals** and targets that match the organization's goals and culture.

Mentoring relationships vary and can be influenced by the type of mentoring relationship. There are several models that can be used, when we talk about mentors:

- **Cloning model:** The mentor teaches the learner as if they were a clone of the mentor.
- **Nurturing model:** The mentor assumes a parental role to create an open, supportive environment where the learner can learn and try things themselves.
- **Friendship model:** The mentor acts more as a peer "rather than being involved in a hierarchical relationship".
- **Apprenticeship model:** The mentor and learner predominantly have a professional relationship.



Besides mentioned above, there are some other models, and it depends from the organisation which one to use and to implement in their environment:



- **Peer mentoring:** Relationships that involve individuals in similar positions. One person may be more knowledgeable in a certain aspect or another, and they can help each other progress in their work. In most cases, peer relationships provide a lot of support, empathy, and advice because the situations are quite similar.
- **Situational mentoring:** Short-term relationships in which a person mentors for a specific purpose. This could be a company bringing an expert in regarding social media, or internet safety. This expert can mentor employees to make them more knowledgeable about a specific topic or skill.
- **Supervisory mentoring:** This relationship involves a mentor with a higher position than the learner. The mentor can answer many questions and advise the best course of action.
- **Mentoring circles:** Participants from all levels of the organization propose and own a topic before meeting in groups to discuss the topic, which motivates them to grow and become more knowledgeable. Flash mentoring is ideal for situations like job shadowing and reverse mentoring.
- **Flash mentoring:** A short-term form of mentoring that focuses on single meetings rather than a traditional, long-term mentoring relationship.

Mentorships are based on guidance. Mentors teach mentees how to navigate through complex social situations and to succeed based on lived experiences, expertise, and wisdom.

Mentoring process and its importance

Mentoring is a process that successful companies already have in place or are in the process of putting in place. Mentors are fundamentally experts in their field of work, and the second most important characteristic is that they like to be mentored.

A **good mentor** should have the following **qualities:**



- is an expert,
- likes to be a mentor,
- is patient,
- knows how to set boundaries and is both strict and fair,
- recognises gaps in the mentee's knowledge and develops the mentee in that direction,
- is reliable and approachable.

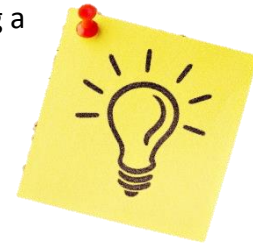
Mentorship is important because **it provides employees with the opportunity to develop and become more competent** in their roles as well as prepare for growth opportunities in the future. Providing these opportunities is key for organisations that want to attract, retain and engage their talent.

Organisations that want to attract talent should build teams and organise projects that promote the social links that employees want. Providing professional mentors to these employees that facilitate coaching will give them rewards of growth and professional



development while giving them a sense of belonging and responsibility towards their role.

The following list represents demonstrates the importance of having a mentor:



1. **Mentors support growth** – they encourage and enable another person's professional or personal development. A mentor can help focus their efforts by setting goals and giving feedback.
2. **Mentors serve as a source of knowledge** – they can provide specific insights and information that enable the mentee's success.
3. **Mentors can help set goals** – they can help their mentee set personal or professional development goals. For effective goal setting, they can create SMART goals—specific, achievable, relevant and time-based.
4. **Mentors maintain accountability** - A mentor helps hold their mentee accountable for their goals. By tracking progress, the mentor helps the mentee stay focused and on track towards completing them.
5. **Mentors offer encouragement** - When the mentee finds themselves struggling to perform their job or reach a goal, they can turn to their mentor for support. This encouragement can motivate them to keep moving forward despite challenges.
6. **Mentors help make connections** - A mentor can help build their mentee's professional network.
7. **Mentors are willing to listen** - When an individual has ideas, they can use a mentor as a resource to discuss or try them.
8. **Mentors serve as a trusted ally** - Trust represents a core element of mentoring relationships.
9. **Mentors can offer constructive feedback** - A trusting mentorship relationship enables honest feedback. By establishing trust, the mentee understands that constructive criticism aims to build their professional growth rather than make them feel bad.
10. **Mentors provide guidelines** - For individuals just starting their career, a mentor can help set guidelines on professional expectations.
11. **Mentors have relevant experience** - When possible, individuals should choose mentors who have the experience relevant to their profession or goals.
12. **Mentors are a free resource** - Mentorship typically occurs due to networking or company programs, so mentors do not seek payment. They offer to serve this role because they genuinely want to help the other individual grow and establish a more authentic and personal connection.

The **mentor helps** this **individual grow** and **develop as a professional**, often offering advice based on their more advanced knowledge or experience. Mentorship relationships can be built through networking, personal connections or formal mentorship programs.



How to implement a mentoring programme in organisation

For the modern employee, being productive at work is no longer enough. Their commitment is directly related to how valuable a company makes them feel. They understand that a job is a means to an end, which is why they consider their mental and emotional health alongside their professional responsibilities.

Organisations are discovering that if they do not invest enough in employee development, they risk job dissatisfaction, turnover rates, and a diminished commitment to the job and company. Here are **eight steps to get your mentoring program started**:



1. Set your goals.

Determine what you want the mentoring to accomplish. Setting goals early helps the mentor and mentee work towards a target. It also allows the participants to measure the progress of the programme.

2. Provide structure.

Decide on the mentoring type that works best with your company and goals. It usually depends on your organisational makeup. For example, if there are not enough mentors, you may put mentees into groups. Also, consider the workplace culture. If the organisation is performance-driven, a mentor may hesitate to teach the less experienced employee for fear that it will allow the mentee to outperform them.



3. Pair mentors and mentees.

Some companies send out questionnaires to both mentees and mentors so you can match them according to their needs and expertise. Bigger organisations also use specialised software for a more impartial pairing. Initiate participants on the benefits and importance of mentoring. You must also recognise the active participation of mentors. It can be highly motivating and may attract other employees to volunteer.

4. Set a timeline.

Determine how long your mentoring programme will run. It can be as short as three to six months for onboarding new hires, or nine months to a year for career development programs.



5. Schedule mentoring sessions.

Consistent meetings make it more likely that the groups will follow through. Track progress with regular check-ins but allow the mentoring groups some flexibility to work around their schedules.

6. Set guidelines.

Any employee development program benefits from setting guidelines. Can schedules be moved? How should the participants communicate with each other? How do the groups report their progress and how will feedback be given? Guidelines keep participants on track and working smoothly.



7. Provide a journaling or feedback process

Reflection is crucial throughout the mentoring process. For this, a journal would be good for tracking reflections and insights. Just make sure that the mentoring space remains safe for all participants, meaning their work performance evaluation will not be affected by the mentoring journals.

8. Make it easy to back out of a mentor-mentee relationship.

Sometimes, the best-intentioned pairings just don't work out. So, if either party feels that it would be best to end the relationship, the programme should allow them to do so without any fuss. Besides, mentoring needs to change throughout an employee's career and an employee may require different mentors at different times.

Because mentoring provides emotional and career support, it has the potential to contribute immensely to job satisfaction and retention. Best of all, mentoring is attractive to organisations because it uses available resources – the more senior people in the company.

05 Main problem to overcome

In this module you have briefly learned what is mentoring in the first place, who is mentor and mentee, what types or models are there, why is it important to have mentorship in the company and what benefits does it bring.

Main problem with using this module relates to costs. As we have learned the best way to gain new knowledge is learning by doing with the support of experienced person (co-worker).

But not all mentoring relationships are successful, some are marred by conflict, tensions, and difficulties. When these challenges are not managed successfully, the reputation of the mentoring programme is at jeopardy and could result in its ultimate demise. Therefore, we need to be careful when we want to implement mentoring program in the company, and we need to choose the one that fit the most with company policy and values.



06 Main benefits for Companies and workers +55?



Mentoring is still considered the most effective way of transferring knowledge between employees and, as a result, helps to improve various processes within the company. Learning and knowledge transfer is much more effective through the mentor's explanations and the practical work the mentee does. Unlike other forms of learning, where the focus is mainly on theoretical knowledge, in mentoring the content of learning is about the acquisition of specific and current knowledge.



Mentors are usually more experienced employees who pass on their knowledge to less experienced or new employees. This way, new recruits get into the job much more quickly, as they do not have to learn the basics of the job all on their own. Less experienced people gain new skills and can take on new tasks.

In addition to the transfer of knowledge and the time and money saved, mentoring improves individual processes, which quickly proves to be a competitive advantage for companies that use this form of learning on a regular basis.

Benefits to the Mentee:

- Receives guidance and support from a respected member or co-worker.
- Professional development opportunities.
- Increased confidence.
- Increased institutional knowledge.
- Greater awareness of other approaches to work.
- Builds a network of colleagues and expanded knowledge of different areas of the organization.
- Having a confidential sounding board for ideas and challenges.



Benefits to the Mentor:

- Provides fulfilment and satisfaction of helping others and contributing to the development of colleagues.
- Extends network of colleagues/co-workers.
- Supports use and development of key competencies leading to growth.
- Encourages examination of the status quo and alternative possibilities.
- Encourages renewed ideas and perspectives on one's leadership role.

Benefits to the Organization:

- Facilitates the growth and development of high-potential leaders.
- Demonstrates visible commitment to staff development and continuous learning.
- Transfers and maintains institutional knowledge.
- Fosters an inclusive, diverse, and collaborative environment.

Mentees have an opportunity to gain practical knowledge and insight from a seasoned employee who has achieved a level of expertise they aspire to attain. Mentors have an opportunity to expand their repertoire of professional knowledge and skills through their instruction and facilitation of others. The organization has the opportunity to further develop and disseminate the wealth of talent, skill and knowledge of its employees.





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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

ID: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000033518

AGE ADAPT



AGE ADAPT

Module

Team Working

Developed by:



ASOCIACE MALÝCH A STŘEDNÍCH
PODNIKŮ A ŽIVNOSTNÍKŮ ČR

AMSP ČR



01 Definition of the module



Team Working. This module will look at **Team Working** in workers over the age of 55 and how employers can achieve a group dynamic and composition in order to achieve effective team working including all age groups.

Teams are the basic unit of work in most organizations. They connect the skills, experience, and perspectives of several people. Teams perform better than individuals working alone, especially where the work requires a wider range of skills, judgment, and experience.

If a team is properly assembled to meet a clear and specific goal, then the opportunity for consultation, mutual cooperation, and the space for more perspectives will contribute to a more complete solution. A team composed of different age groups, including over 55s, performs better and in successful teams, individuals grow and succeed.

By focusing on this topic, we want to ensure that managers and leaders are aware of why including all age groups in team working is important and they know how to include the multigenerational dimension into their teams.

02 Summary



- GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY IN TEAMS
- COOPERATION IN AN INTERGENERATIONAL TEAM
- BENEFITS OF TEAM WORKING
- WAYS TO EMBRACE MULTIGENERATIONAL DIVERSITY IN TEAMS



03 Objectives

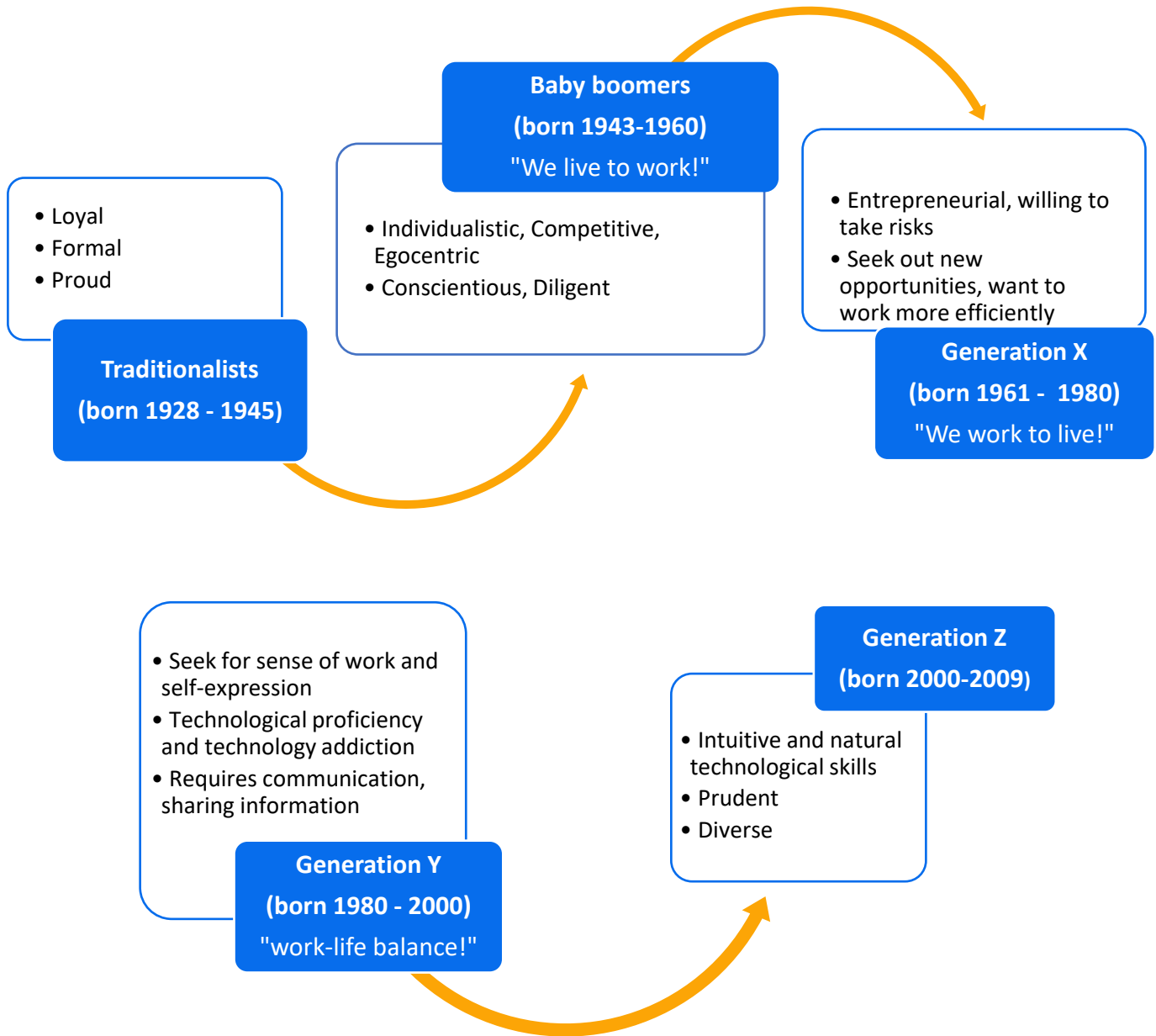


The **main objective** of this module is to provide the employer with the necessary keys to improve team working of workers over 55 in companies.

04 Content of the module

➤ GENERATIONAL DIVERSITY IN TEAMS

Generational diversity is nowadays a very common phenomenon in teamwork. According to sociological and demographic surveys, the human population can be divided into different generations according to the time into which they were born. Each of these generations has its own specific characteristics, values, social norms and ways of behaving.



Different generations, who grew up in different time periods and environments, bring diverse experiences to the team's work. This brings together various generation opinions and attitudes in work teams, who have to get along and work together. It is important for the creators or leaders of these teams to know about generational differences and overlaps in advance so that they can prepare for and work with them.



➤ **COOPERATION IN AN INTERGENERATIONAL TEAM**

The **key to creating a stable and motivated multi-generational team** is understanding the preferences that each generation has in the workplace and figuring out how to make each one happy so that they can be productive in their work style.

Whether you're a small business looking to strengthen your team or a large corporation looking to expand your talent ranks, it's also important to know **what each individual group has to offer**.



Understanding the differences in communication between the younger and older generations is also essential for good teamwork.

Younger teamworkers are often interested in quick solutions to problems and are often unwilling to listen and learn in the way that the 55+ generation expects them to.



The older teamworkers has an urge to help the young generation but expect a certain respectful attitude from them. When they find out it is lacking, misunderstandings occur.

If this challenge can be overcome, the generational team dynamic is expected to work perfectly.

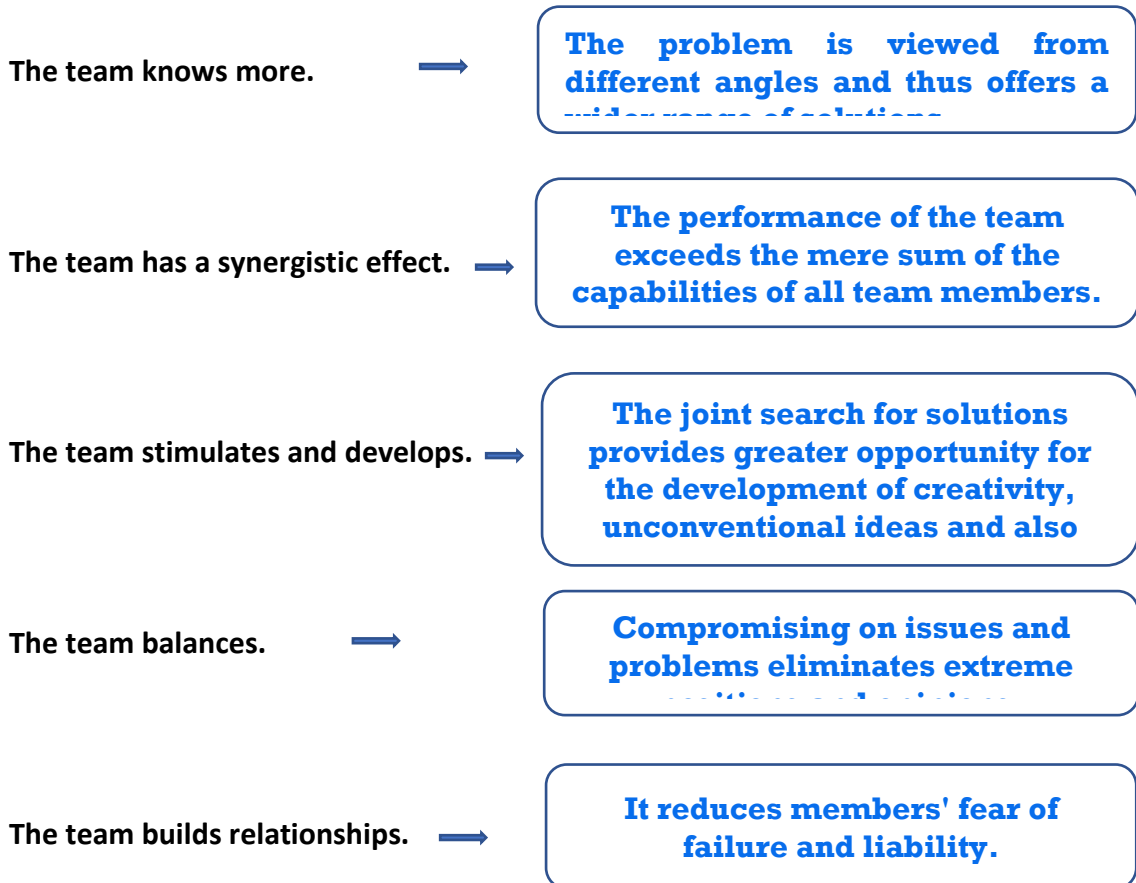




In addition, collaboration in an intergenerational team **can be influenced not only by generational and individual needs but also by team diversity**, which manifests itself in different attitudes towards the attitudes, roles, time, structure and processes that take place in the team.

➤ **BENEFITS OF TEAM WORKING**

Team diversity is the way to improve performance and maintain results. Multigeneration teams are led and managed with the diversity of their members in mind and individual potential is harnessed and respected. At the end, it can create a big competitive advantage for the employer.





The team teaches



respect and consideration for others. It makes the working atmosphere more pleasant.

The team works



with people's creativity and imagination. Accelerates the

Other benefits of diverse working teams might have:

- ❖ Better access to talent and more effective recruitment
- ❖ Improved employer reputation
- ❖ Reduced discrimination
- ❖ Direct financial benefits
- ❖ Better understanding of customer and stakeholder needs
- ❖ Organisational growth and efficiency
- ❖ Positive contribution to company culture
- ❖ Improved employee flexibility and adaptability

➤ WAYS TO EMBRACE MULTIGENERATIONAL DIVERSITY IN TEAMS

As was already mentioned, each generation has different experiences, energy and brings different talents and qualities. The following methods can be used to promote multi-generational diversity and inclusion.

1. Don't make age an issue - Yes, you may have decades more experience than the other person, but you may both come from very similar backgrounds. Try to look for things you have in common.

2. Anyone can be annoying, regardless of age - Don't assume that someone will never change their behavior. You always have the option of either accepting their behaviour



or advising them of a more appropriate solution if that person directly affects your work.

3. Use multiple communication streams - Try to remember that not everyone wants to receive information in the same way you do. Using multiple communication streams within and outside the team can foster a culture of inclusion.

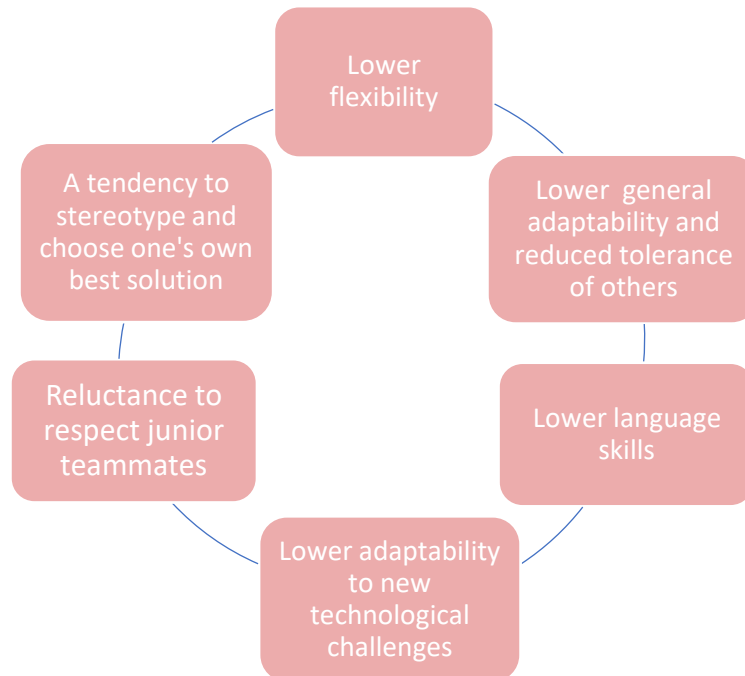
4. Create a quality onboarding program - Consider implementing an onboarding program where new employees learn how to use these tools in your company. It's also a good idea to share examples of successful work. No one needs to feel excluded from the team because they are too old or too young.

5. Map your personal life - Look at your circle of people you interact with in your personal life. If there is only a ten-year age difference between you and the people you meet, you should expand your circle of people. It may open your eyes to what you may have missed in your professional life in terms of age and generations.



05 Main problem to overcome

These are the weaknesses and risk factors of workers over 55 in a team. However, it should be also taken into account that every individual is different and these assumptions can be purely stereotypical.



There are also other common areas where the generations clash in teams might appear...

- The younger generation prefers informality and work-life balance. In contrast, the older generation considers **a fixed corporate hierarchy to be important** and thinks of working for a company in the long term.
- Younger people do not require **personal contact** to work and act, while older employees usually prefer offline meetings and in-person communication.
- Older workers value **the amount of time they spend at work**, whereas younger workers focus on the quality of the work done depending on the amount of time they devote to it.
- Young workers consider it a problem if they do not achieve the **career progression** they would have liked because older workers are still in these positions.
- Older workers prefer **the security and stability** of a single job. They are more realistic in their pay expectations. The younger generation is typically more likely to experience turnover, but as a result, they are more assertive, have more experience with more employers, and also demand higher financial compensation.



06 Main benefits for Companies and workers +55?



Experience is an advantage. An indisputable advantage of older workers is also the loyalty they show toward their employer. Their gratitude and honesty are also valued. Compared to the younger generations, the work itself and its retention are of greater importance to them than career progression.

The most important factors that positively (or negatively) influence management's decision to employ workers over 55 include their experience, relationship to work and to the company, language and computer barriers, and physical and personality characteristics.

Key benefits of a worker 55+ for the team

Mental maturity and seriousness

Know-how of working practices, company products, etc.

Proven knowledge and skill

Reliability, thoroughness and responsibility

Opinion stability and balance

Emotional management and communication skills

Years of industry experience



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AGE ADAPT

Module

“Diversity is
a value”

Developed by:



01

Definition of the module



Diversity is a value. Age diversity should be treated as a strategic value for every organisation. It's related not only to the level of experience but also to a different view of the surrounding reality, with different expectations and needs of older and younger people. We should identify and then try to understand the problems related to age diversity. This will be the basis for defining specific solutions and activities in the field of equal treatment of older and younger people and counteracting age discrimination. The last element is to show how changes should be introduced in organisations to respect the rights of older and younger employees.

02

Summary



- Recognition of age and experience diversity as a value (strategic perspective)
- Identification and understanding of problems related to age diversity
- Equal treatment and counteracting age discrimination - possible solutions
- How to introduce changes respecting age diversity (knowledge and skills of a procedural nature regarding a sensitive approach to introducing changes and managing changes in organisations).

03

Objectives



The main objectives of this module are:

- to present SME owners, company leaders and managers the general benefits of age diversity at the workplace and to help them create their own business case which is relevant for their organisation (team).
- to let decision makers understand challenges deriving from multigenerational working environment and to help them overcome them by creating non-discriminatory workplace
-



04 Content of the module

Recognition of age and experience diversity as a value (strategic perspective)

Diversity in a broad sense exists in every organization. Diversity of gender, religion, ethnicity, age, seniority, professional experiences, competences, political beliefs are no longer treated as a serious obstacle to the effectiveness of managing the organization.

The managerial staff sees the benefits of diversity and tries to manage it. Managers are paying more and more attention to these benefits of diversity, so they conduct research and develop action plans to facilitate diversity management.



Age diversity is one of the most frequently emerging dimensions of diversity in contemporary organizations.

The society is aging and age management of employees in the organization is becoming one of the most important challenges faced by managers. The number of people, who are older and think about retirement is growing. The process of retirement may mean the phenomenon of "emigration of competencies" outside the company - often irretrievably. Therefore, it is a challenge for organizations to extend the professional activity of people, especially those classified as 50+.

Lots of attention is devoted to this issue in the context of the availability of labour resources, as well as their quality and efficiency. It is necessary to include intergenerational management in strategic documents and build a business case on the benefits of age diversity. A strategic approach to age management is particularly important in the face of the current negative trends on the labour market in Europe. From a strategic point of view, it is the easiest to use resources that are available on the labour market, but for some reasons resign from professional activity.

Age management, is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon, because proves necessary due to the deteriorating prospect of substitutability generations and difficulties in ensuring staff succession. Moreover, it is already noticeable that changing the age structure of employee teams is quite a challenge for employers and managers.

It is necessary to make efforts to take strategic in the field of age management. Allows to build a committed and loyal team employees with unique competences. It also makes



it possible to prolong the professional activity of the elderly, and therefore to keep employees in the company (Citkowski, Garwolińska, 2018)

The developed paths and management instruments require reviews and adaptation to the changing characteristics of teams. The most important thing is to have/seek for/reach for elected solutions that are adapted to the needs of a given organization and respond to the expectations of older and younger employees. These needs should/might be recognized during the continuous dialogue between the employer and employees, e.g. in the form of surveys, interviews, meetings. Monitoring is very important to achieve high efficiency employee attitudes. It is also about developing appropriate instruments to motivate employees in terms of their age diversity.

There are many proven benefits of age diversity at the workplace:

Organisational level:

- increasing the work efficiency of people aged 50+ through more effective use of the potential of the elderly employees and increasing their motivation,
- increasing the work efficiency of others employees thanks to a good working atmosphere and reducing intergenerational conflicts,
- reduction of labor costs, eg through lower absenteeism of older workers, obtained through health prevention and adaptation working hours to meet their needs
- reduction of business costs, thanks to transferring knowledge and experience to younger people employees by their senior colleagues
- retaining invaluable (pragmatic) knowledge in the company older workers that is the result of the processing of theoretical knowledge through years of practical experience;
- optimizing employment by better matching the competencies of older people employees to the workplace,
- reduction of employee fluctuation (mature people are usually loyal to companies),
- reduction of recruitment costs

Individual level:

- the ability to earn the income necessary for satisfying life needs,
- possibility of social and professional development,
- opportunity to participate in social contacts,
- self-esteem and social usefulness and professional,
- ability to transfer acquired over the years knowledge and experience,
- feeling that they are not discriminated against,
- possibility of social and professional activity also at retirement age.

Think which of these benefits apply to your organisation the most?



Identification and understanding of problems related to age diversity

“Age management is an element of human resources management, and more precisely: an element of diversity management. It involves the implementation of various activities that allow you to more rational and effective use of human resources in enterprises thanks to taking into account the needs and capabilities of employees of different ages” (Litwiński, Sztanderska, 2010, p. 3).



To be able to effectively manage age in an organization, it is first necessary to effectively identify and understand the challenges/problem areas that are important for managing the age diversity of employees. Among the most common challenges/problem areas related to age management are:

Employment planning and work organisation:

The area of employment planning addresses the key issue of such organization so that the smooth functioning of the company is possible, the most effective use of employees' time and competences is possible, and the development of the company takes into account demographic changes in the labour market.

Recruitment

The area of recruitment and personnel acquisition refers to one of the biggest business challenges, which is growing more difficult to attract new employees. This results in e.g. trying to reach more and more a wider pool of potential candidates and directing more efforts towards increasing the diversity of the pool candidates for specific positions.

Inclusion and integration of intergenerational teams

The area of inclusion and integration of intergenerational teams refers to a set of actions that aim to be real involving people from different generations in effective cooperation in team. Such activities require the right ground (sphere of organizational culture) or open recruitment, however however, even the most open culture and recruitment cannot guarantee real cooperation intergenerational, and the role of the company is to make it so cooperation took place and that it proceeded properly. Appearance in the organization of different generations does not mean that people these work together. On the contrary - the reality many organizations is the formation of closed groups (e.g. teams younger in age, teams with a predominance of people with a higher age seniority), which makes it difficult to use the potential of cooperation

Building an open organizational culture

The area of building an open working environment refers to activities that create the ground for intergenerational cooperation. Before the diverse cross-generational teams



start operate effectively, and even before such teams become created, an open climate must be created in the company such cooperation. The challenge for companies is in this regard building a culture open to different generations - free from stereotypes, attentive to the needs of different employee groups and what is extremely important - authentic in its actions

Lifelong learning and personal development

The area of personal development refers to a set of activities, which are designed to equip employees representing all generations in competences to make it possible effective fulfilment of their professional duties. This area also refers to activities aimed at prevent staff qualifications and activities from being outdated aimed at maintaining professional activity older workers. It also includes maintaining / improving qualifications both in terms of specialist as well as in soft skills. By caring for the development of employees - it also touches the sphere employee involvement.

Knowledge management

The area of knowledge management focuses on one thing of the most important elements in management, i.e. effective skills use of knowledge to ensure growth organization. An organization where employees have the opportunity effective use of existing knowledge other people and can share freely with each other knowledge, creates a favorable atmosphere innovation and development. It is important to ensure knowledge retention, i.e. retention knowledge in the organization in a situation of long-term absence and departures of employees (planned - e.g. retirement, and unplanned - e.g. absence for health reasons).

Employee health

The area of taking care of employees' health refers to the set actions aimed at fulfilling the obligations employers in the area of care for safety and health employees as well as for maintenance activities good psychophysical condition of employees (wellbeing). These activities are of particular importance from the perspective of older people. They also have a direct impact on the commitment and satisfaction of employees and their effectiveness.

Support in change and dealing with conflicts

For the first time in history, we are witnessing a situation when as many as 5 generations are present on the labor market. Unfortunately, conflicts are often inseparable part of working in multi-generational environments. Each of the generations was shaped by specific ones historical events for a given period, social trends and cultural phenomena influencing their perceptions about the world.



Equal treatment and counteracting age discrimination - possible solutions

„Age is one of the most important differentiating factors employees in their professional environment. Ageism it is based on the belief that one age category is inferior to others. The basis of this discrimination is the assessment of external features³⁰. The phenomenon of unequal treatment of categories age is associated with stereotypes, and the term "old" has a clear connotation pejorative” (Leks-Bujak, 2014, p. 108).

Age discrimination can affect all age groups. May affect young people entering the labor market, whom employers expect at the outset work experience and who are offered lower pay for doing the same job work as older workers. However, older people seem to be at risk to a greater extent and in this dimension it is most often the subject of consideration and research and analyses (Łuczak, 2007)

Employers and managers should consider taking the following actions to address the identified challenge/problem areas:

Employment planning and work organisation:

- Analyzing trends in the labor market
- Using flexible forms of employment and flexible working time
- Analyzing and optimizing the use of employee competencies, regardless of age
- Talent base management
- Taking action in the event of an employee's willingness to leave/resign from work

Recruitment

- Conducting the recruitment process in accordance with the principles of equal opportunities
- Formulating job advertisements that are not discriminatory in form and content
- Conducting interviews with respect and care for equal treatment
- Removing Unconscious Bias in recruitment process

Inclusion and integration of intergenerational teams

- Developing mentoring programs,
- Increasing the knowledge of decision-makers in this area,
- Taking into account the perspectives of all employees,
- Promoting teamwork regardless of age,
- Adapting tasks and responsibilities to individual skills of employees,
- Organization of events about intergenerational differences
- Carrying out good onboarding

Building an open organizational culture

- Making a diagnosis of organizational culture
- Development and implementation of a communication map
- Conducting regular employee satisfaction surveys (implementation of conclusions based on surveys)

Lifelong learning and personal development



- Implementation of the Self - SWOT analysis
- Identification and analysis of training and development needs of employees of different ages,
- Implementation of training and development programs tailored to the needs of employees of different ages
- Analysing the effectiveness and evaluation of training/development programs and making changes based on its results

Knowledge management

- Conducting a knowledge management audit (knowledge localization, knowledge creation and development, knowledge sharing, knowledge use, knowledge retention)
- Analysing barriers and difficulties in the transfer of knowledge
- Using mentoring as an element of knowledge management in the organization.

Employee health

- Mental health promotion,
- Ensuring that employees can use health packages,
- Ensuring work ergonomics

Support in change and dealing with conflicts

- Identification of the causes of conflict situations,
- Applying conflict management methods
- Appropriate response in the event of mobbing,
- Implementation of outplacement programs

How to introduce changes respecting age diversity (knowledge and skills of a procedural nature regarding a sensitive approach to introducing changes and managing changes in organisations).

The process of introducing changes in the respect of age diversity in the organization should include:

- Recognition of intergenerational conflict.
- Observation of relations between employees, as well as between the managerial staff and employees - possible reaction to conflict situations.
- Introduction of solutions allowing for reporting conflict situations related to age diversity
- Providing employees with knowledge on how to deal with conflict in the company.
- Constant support for teams in changes that require personnel changes.
- Overcoming resistance to changes related to intergenerational inclusion.
- Preparing the organization for a change involving the employment of representatives of generations other than the currently dominant ones
- Supporting agents/ambassadors of change – people responsible for supporting intergenerational cooperation/activation of people aged 50+, etc.



- Counteracting the functioning of age stereotypes in the organization, which are often a brake on change.

“One of the most important necessities in this field is to recognize the differences in the characteristics of employees belonging to different generations. Differences in modes of operation, effectiveness, learning skills, in the perception of important issues for the company, as well as in expectations employees from different age groups” (Sajkiewicz, 2016, p. 54).



Managers should have a mindset approach for older workers, or more broadly for needs and opportunities for workers of different ages. Approach this means that for the employer the employee's age does not is a problem, is something natural that should be used for the benefit of the company and the employee himself.

To do this most effectively the employer/manager:

- on the one hand should create working conditions in which the employee feels good, which they are adjusted to his abilities and needs, depending also on age.
- on the other hand, these conditions should make it possible maximum use of the employee's potential and his competences, also in part depending on age, and effective cooperation and pooling of potentials employees of different ages.

05 Main problem to overcome

The main objective of this module is to prepare organizations to deal with the challenges of employing employees from different generations. Thanks to this module, employers/managers will be able to more easily overcome diversity issues in the context of intergenerational management. This module can also be an inspiration to take action to make the age diversity of employees a significant value for the organization.



Main benefits for Companies and workers +55?

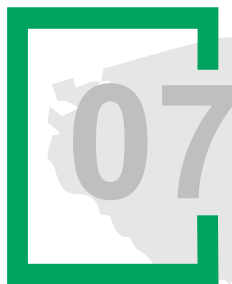


The main benefits of this Module for managers are:

- understanding the benefits of age management and the ability to formulate your own business case
- understanding the most important challenges related to age management and the ability to analyze your organization in these areas (drawing conclusions)
- gaining knowledge on building a work environment that is non-discriminatory on the basis of age
- the ability to prepare your organization/team to implement the basic principles of counteracting discrimination
- awareness of what are the main brakes on changes in the areas of age management, thanks to which they can better prepare for it

The main benefits of this Module for workers 55+ are:

- becoming aware that age is not a differentiating criterion for the employer/manager,
- increase in self-esteem,
- increased self-confidence and greater motivation,
- gaining knowledge on the advisability of using age management tools in an organization,



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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

ID: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000033518

AGE ADAPT

AGE ADAPT

Module

“MOTIVATION”

Developed by:





01 Definition of the module



Motivation. This module will look at **motivation** in workers over the age of 55 and how employers can help to achieve a motivated and effective team to carry out assigned tasks.

Motivation is one of the most influential skills when performing any job function, as it will determine the degree of involvement in the assigned task and the enthusiasm to achieve the objectives set. A motivated worker and a motivated team will always be infinitely more efficient than a worker or team that is not. Hence the importance of this module, which will provide the keys to motivate workers who are in the last years of their working life. In this case, the burden of motivation will fall on the employer, who will be responsible for creating an ideal working environment so that workers are comfortable and feel valued and, as a result, motivated.

What is motivation and why is it so important? Basically, motivation is the constant desire to better oneself and one's work. Motivation is intrinsic to a person when they are interested in doing an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction they experience in learning, exploring or trying to understand something new.

02 Summary



- **Types of work motivation**
- **Ageing of the workforce.**
- **Keys to motivate workers over 55 in companies.**
- **Importance of communication with workers over 55 years old**
- **Learning in the elderly.**



03 Objectives



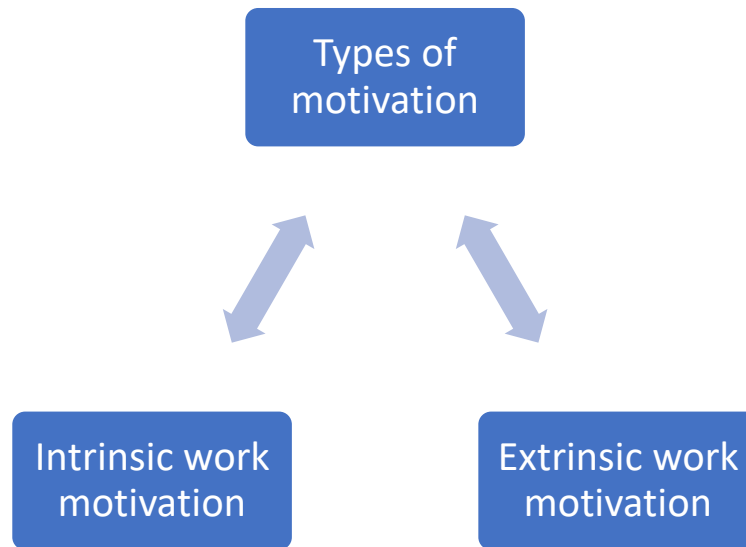
The main objective of this module is to provide the employer with the necessary keys to improve the motivation of workers over 55 in companies. It also highlights the importance of communication, continuous training and flexibility to achieve a complete and motivated worker to improve performance and thus reflect in a greater benefit for the company, since a motivated worker performs better than a worker who is not motivated.

04 Content of the module

➤ TYPES OF WORK MOTIVATION

There are two types of work motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic.

- **Intrinsic work motivation.** Intrinsic motivation is that which is achieved through the satisfaction that comes from performing a task. It comes with one's personality and can be self-stimulated, as it does not require a third source such as recognition from a superior. It is a type of work motivation directly related to the level of personal satisfaction.
- **Extrinsic work motivation.** Extrinsic motivation comes from an external factor, from a third source. It is usually associated with goals, rewards or recognition, and taking care of it will be essential for the productivity and profitability of the company.



➤ **AGEING OF THE WORKFORCE.**

Today, the over-55s now account for more than 12% of the working population. This continuous ageing of the working population represents a very important challenge for companies. This is motivated by certain factors such as:

- Increasing life expectancy, mainly due to advances in medicine and nutrition.
- Later incorporation of young people into the labour market, intensified by the continuous economic crises.

This increase in the age of the workforce means that there is a gain in experience, good sense and common sense.



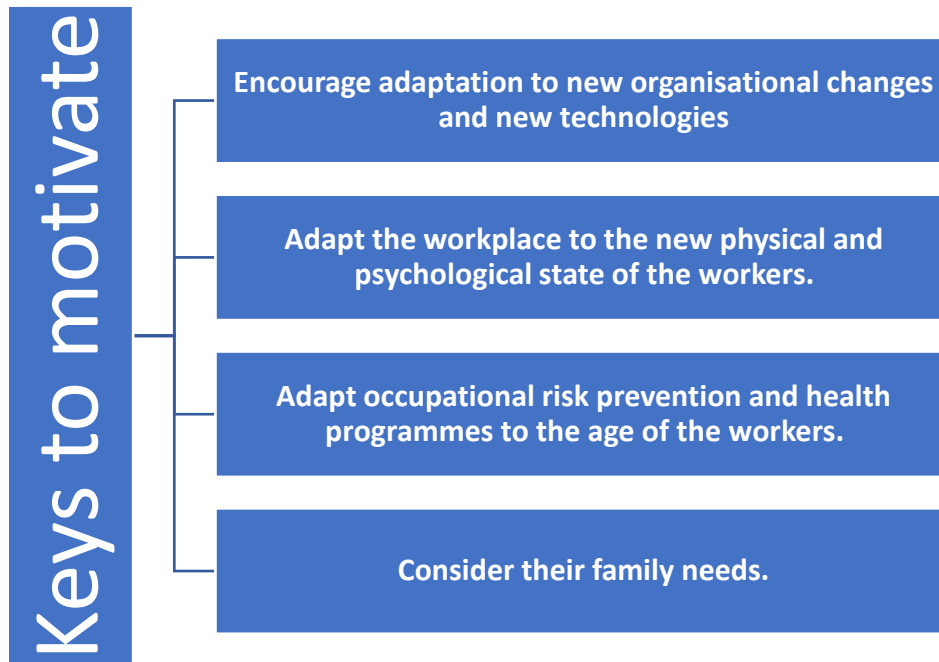


➤ **KEYS TO MOTIVATE WORKERS OVER 55 IN COMPANIES.**

There is a need to approach age management at work and the motivation of workers as a priority area of action from different perspectives, the main one being the constant improvement of working conditions and the adaptation to the age of workers.

The main areas in which to work to improve the quality of work of workers and to improve performance in the company, thanks to motivation, would be the following:

- **Encourage adaptation to new organisational changes and new technologies,** mainly. Older workers find it more difficult to understand new technologies, as they are not as used to them, so it is necessary to implement a proper training plan when there are changes so that the whole workforce is on an equal footing. Once they have become accustomed to the new working methods, they can be just as productive as someone younger, if not more so, as they will be able to adapt the changes to their knowledge of the subject.
- **Adapt the workplace to the new physical and psychological state of the workers.** The continuous changes at all levels that older people experience, both physically and psychologically, must be taken into account. They may no longer be at their physical peak. One option is to relieve them of tasks that involve greater physical deterioration, one of the smartest options being to focus them on training younger and less experienced workers or on supervisory and quality control tasks.
- **Adapt occupational risk prevention and health programmes to the age of the workers.** The risks and problems of an older person are not the same as those of younger people, so it is advisable to set up dynamic occupational health programmes that adapt work to the conditions of each person, and not the other way round.
- **Consider their family needs.** Although their own children are now adults, nowadays it is very common for many older workers to have a series of obligations with their grandchildren or to take care of their own elderly parents. Therefore, the company must assess these situations and facilitate, with flexible working hours or other formulas, the best possible reconciliation of work, personal and family obligations.



➤ **IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION WITH WORKERS OVER 55 YEARS OLD.**

The employer's communication with employees is essential to ensure that they feel motivated in their daily tasks, understood about the changes that are taking place in their careers and, above all, to feel that they are a useful and fundamental part of the company, as there are many factors that influence the mood of older people and their motivation and, as a consequence, their productivity. Keeping employees in mind helps to create a good working environment and a happy and efficient team.

To achieve this goal, there are a number of recommendations to follow:

- **Ensure that each worker is in the right job.** An unskilled worker in a position of responsibility can be just as wrong as a skilled worker doing simple tasks. To do this, make sure that each person is appropriate for his or her job.
- **Providing the necessary tools for the development of their functions.** Training is one more tool at the service of the employer to achieve a motivated team. Taking into account the needs of the workers will help to improve their efficiency.
- **Let them know what is expected of them.** Regular meetings with teams or workers to make them aware of what is expected of them and the results they want to see will help the employee not to feel disorientated at work.



- **Acknowledge the team's achievements and congratulate them.** It is necessary from time to time to let the employee know that you have confidence in his or her work and that you encourage him or her to keep going.
- **Respect is paramount in dealing with employees.** Ensuring that they are happy in the performance of their duties will make them feel respected in their work.

➤ **LEARNING IN THE EDERLY.**

In people over 55 years of age, learning will have a very important relationship with the motivation of workers when carrying out their functions or doing a job. This learning capacity is directly related to the intellectual capacity of each person, but there are also other factors that influence and can be demotivating.

The learning capacity of older people is still ample as long as they feel motivated, although it is true that there is a decrease in performance when learning, based on physiological and sensorial aspects, but these factors are never related to the decrease in learning capacity. In other words, although there are certain faculties that are affected over time, such as memory or mental agility, they can be compensated for with high motivation and interest in carrying out the assigned task.

Several studies have shown that older people are able to achieve the same or higher levels of learning than younger people if they are highly motivated to do so.

An important factor is the use of different learning strategies for older people that are not so much concerned with the speed of the task as with the quality or enjoyment of the task itself.

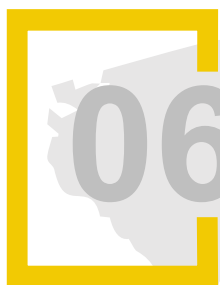
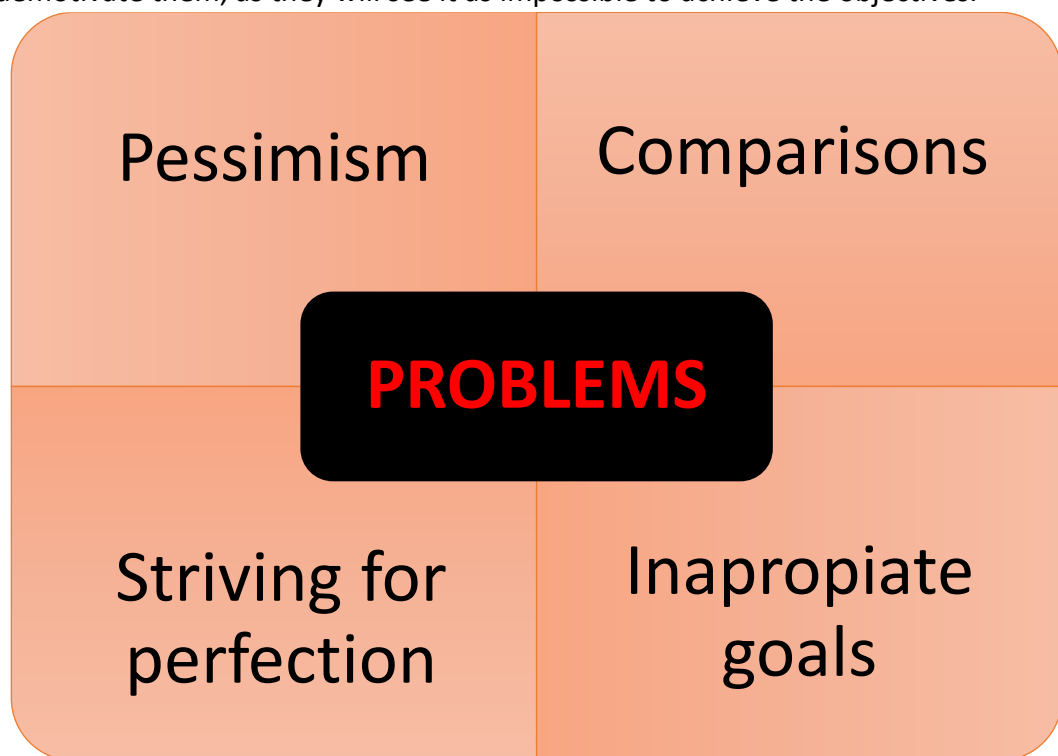
It is the responsibility of the employer to encourage older people to be active, as it is well known that one of the best ways to grow old is to start learning a new task that opens curiosity towards other horizons. If a person is in a stimulating environment, with the possibility of doing tasks that they enjoy, it is very likely that their cognitive faculties and perceived quality of life will increase. Education and training should have no age limit, it should be permanent.

05 Main problem to overcome



There are a number of enemies of motivation that need to be kept away from older workers:

- **Pessimism.** A positive work environment will encourage motivation.
- **Comparisons:** Continually comparing the work of different colleagues will create a toxic work environment that will undermine workers' motivation.
- **Striving for perfection.** If there is no room for error or mistake, you will never learn how to do things in the right way.
- **Inappropriate goals.** Setting high or impossible goals for the worker will demotivate them, as they will see it as impossible to achieve the objectives.



06 Main benefits for Companies and workers +55?



The fact that the average age of a workforce is high does not imply that there is a decrease in the quality of the work, but rather it can mean the opposite, as age and



years in the job make the worker gain **experience, good sense, common sense, loyalty** and many other benefits for the development of the activity in which they are involved.

When a company has workers with years of experience in their positions or in their functions, it generally makes it more profitable and productive, as well as safer, since experience in the job means less risk of all kinds. Investments are usually analysed more thoroughly, changes in processes are only made when they are properly analysed and justified to be good for the company. In addition, opinions based on experience are usually the most accurate, ensuring the continuity of the business in a safe and positive way.



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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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ID: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000033518





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ID: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000033518

AGE ADAPT

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Module

“Communication
across
Generations”

Developed by:





01 Definition of the module



Communication across generations. This module guideline describes the importance of communication with workers over the age of 55 and how their employers can help to achieve better interaction and communication within the work team to achieve a better atmosphere, work results and goals within their work environment.

Communication is the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another. This may sound simple, but communication is actually a very complex subject as the transmission of the message from sender to recipient can be affected by a huge range of things like our emotions, the cultural situation, the medium used to communicate, age difference and even our location. Good communication skills are considered very desirable by employers around the world although accurate, effective and unambiguous communication is actually extremely hard. Considering the divide among generations in the workplace, managing a multigenerational workforce might be even more challenging due to the vast differences in their values and culture. With this topic, we want to show the importance and achieve an improvement of intergenerational communication in the company's workplace.

02 Summary



- Types of communication at the workplace
- Emotional well-being in workplace communication
- Communication styles
- Workplace communication styles between generations

03 Objectives



The main objective of this module is to provide the employer with the necessary keys to improve communication with workers over the age of 55 in companies. It also highlights the importance of emotional well-being, which plays a major role in workplace communication, and efficient communication within the work team as it brings better results for the company.



04 Content of the module

➤ TYPES OF COMMUNICATION AT THE WORKPLACE

Communication is at the core of any work environment and failure to communicate thoughts and ideas is a recipe for a disaster. Everyone knows and agrees to it but few individuals at the workplace pay attention to these obvious basics. The followings are listed types of communication skills at the disposal in the workplace:



1/ Verbal Communication

Effective verbal communication (or oral communication) is often an exercise in clarity. The clearer one conveys his message, the better. And that is one of the most difficult things. When it comes to speaking, many get emotional, speak unprepared and lack thought structure.

For effective verbal communication, follow the ground rules: avoid the use of extraneous filler words ('yeah', 'so', 'um'), stress and emphasize action words ('need', 'now', 'do'), speak clearly and with confidence, watch your word appropriateness, take care of your tone of voice and try to match it with the verbal message you are conveying.

You can improve verbal communication by inspiring local communication and interaction methods, helping employees figure out whom to speak with, and encouraging feedback.



2/ Non-Verbal Communication

Contrary to common belief, the vast majority of communication is non-verbal. Non-verbal cues like facial expressions are very important, and mastering them invariably leads to good communication skills.

People partake in nonverbal communication in the following ways:

- Body language: posture, body position, facial expressions, and stance.
- Physical behaviour: hand movements, distance.
- Eye contact.

Non-verbal communication is a necessary companion to verbal communication. The more your facial and non-verbal indicators sync up with your verbal message, the better understood you'll be.

You can improve your non-verbal communication by physical appearance, office decor and physical space,





smiling and a handshake or eye contact, tone and body language.

3/ Written Communication

Written communication is not just word - they are everywhere in any workplace. For example, emails, internal memos and notes. Written communication methods are not without their unique nuances and rules as one wants to ensure that he uses correct grammar, spelling, and sentence structure, fewer words whenever possible and convey point clearly.

Written communication comes with its dangers. Interpreting sarcasm or subtle jokes in written forms, memos or emails is not easy. Additionally, written communication may be the most difficult way to convey meaning.

Written communication can be improved with a little practice and deliberation while considering to be clear and concise, checking spelling, and for non-critical written messages deciding on a tone.



4/ Visual Communication

Visual communication is all about presenting complex information in a stimulating way. Common examples include presentations and brochures, organization charts, training videos, charts, graphs, comparison slides and infographics.

As a general rule, visual communication acts as a supplement to verbal, non-verbal, and written forms of communication. The right visual at the right time can work wonders when it comes to conveying someone's message. Visuals are stimulating and provide a supplementary way for people to absorb information.

Improving visual communication is mostly a matter of when and where. It is important to know the right time and place for visual communication while considering the following: visual ads, front and center, and making the content clear.





5/ Listening Communication

Listening is a critical component of workplace communication. Active listening involves engaging with the speaker and working to understand them. True listening is a proactive experience, not a passive one. Listening has a few rules:

- Don't interrupt and wait for the right time to speak.
- Focus is everything.
- Think of clarifying questions.
- Take a moment and rephrase the speaker's main points in your language.
- Use eye contact by maintaining the right amount of staring. It provides an opportunity to assess the body language which can help in furthering the conversation.



Improving listening communication can be done by eliminating distractions and showing concern and offering assistance.

➤ EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING IN WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

Emotional well-being plays a major role in workplace communication. Both positive and negative emotions are very important within the workplace. Therefore, the following might be considered:

- Recognize misunderstandings when they arise and work to correct them – from inappropriate communications (in person or on phone) to unacceptable behaviours.
- Don't take things personally. It's all too easy to take criticism the wrong way, but focusing only on relevant parts and having an honest conversation with the critic can show avenues of growth.
- Trust your employees and co-workers. Have faith in their personal and professional credentials.
- Use empathy: self-awareness helps, and so does imagining oneself in the employees' shoes.

Emotional well-being can be improved by playing a role model, embracing emotions and stress management. The more efficiently it is communicated within your team, the



better the results. Most communication gets ignored because it hardly addresses its target audience. Whether it's formal communication or a casual chat, workplace communication plays a vital role. Make connecting with your employees a priority and reap the rewards.

➤ **COMMUNICATION STYLES**

Each generation has its own separate identity with its own distinct viewpoints, values, and attitudes toward work based on its life experiences. To successfully integrate these diverse generations into the workplace, companies need to create a corporate culture that actively demonstrates respect and inclusion for its multigenerational workforce. In order to do this, it's important for managers to understand a few basic values that each generation has and how these play into their **communication styles**:

Baby Boomers (born between the years 1946 and 1964)

This generation has often been characterized as “workaholics” who tend to put work before their personal lives in an all-or-nothing attempt at achieving personal gratification. Boomers have also been referred to as the “Me Generation.” While at first glance it may appear that Boomers are a ruthlessly self-interested group who will stop at nothing to satisfy their limitless ambition, this generation seeks self-sufficiency. They value ambition, monetary security, and self-sufficiency.

Generation X (born between the years 1965 and 1980)

This generation is inherently suspicious and skeptical of authority figures. They respond well to straightforward communication, and yearn for a greater sense of freedom — do not try to micromanage them. They value a strong work-life balance and the ability to maintain their independence.

Millennials/Generation Y (born between the years 1981 and 2000)

As the first generation in history to grow up with the internet since birth, Millennials naturally gravitate toward digital forms of communication over phone calls or in-person meetings. They're also the first global-centric generation and tend to value inclusivity, diversity, and purpose more than monetary compensation. They're not as one-dimensional as many might think but actually value life experiences over owning personal possessions. To address the value system of the average Millennial in the workplace, companies must stress their mission statement and demonstrate that they're out to do more than just turn a profit.



➤ WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION STYLES BETWEEN GENERATIONS

The cultural events that have shaped the attitudes and values of the above-listed three distinct generations are also reflected in their communication styles. This drastically different approach to communication can sometimes make it difficult for everyone to come together in a workplace setting and collaborate effectively. Therefore, it is recommended to modern companies deal with the generational gap in their workforce.

Phone vs. Chat vs. Email

One of the major generational differences in communication styles between workers lies in their preferred communication channels. For Millennials, shooting someone a message like SMS is often their go-to mode of communication. On the other hand, Baby Boomers may prefer a phone call or an in-person conversation in lieu of an email or instant message which can sometimes cause friction among co-workers. If a person is not communicating with someone through their preferred channel, they may not answer right away, which leads to production delays and opportunities for miscommunication abound.

Formal vs. Casual

Workplaces used to be much more formal. The rise in the hip, laid-back start-up culture has shifted the needle in terms of office formality. While younger generations may see no problem rolling into work in jeans and chatting up their co-workers through an app, older workers may see this lackadaisical approach to workplace culture as unrefined. At the same time, younger generations tend to favor efficiency over tradition and may view writing memos, wearing ties, and using company letterhead as tedious. To remedy this potential culture clash, internal communications departments should set clear expectations on the level of formality expected in office communication.

Collaborative vs. Individualistic

Baby Boomers and Generation Xers are known for their rugged individualism and hardcore work ethic. These workers often seek individual success, while Millennials tend to be much more collaborative. Younger people also seek out more guidance, feedback, and acknowledgment from their leaders and peers. This can lead to tension as older,



more independent workers scoff at what they perceive is the outcome of a pampered, high-maintenance generation.

Security vs. Freedom

Older generations tend to favor stability and security over freedom and self-expression. This is a major difference in how generations approach their position in the workplace. Millennials tend to job-hop-seeking businesses with missions and company cultures that align with their own personal values. Older generations tend to stay with companies longer and often express more loyalty to their employer than their younger counterparts.

Pragmatic vs. Pathos

Older generations, especially Gen Xers, tend to have a more blunt, direct communication style and usually prefer email over face-to-face conversation. Millennials, on the other hand, crave positive feedback, recognition, and work more collaboratively, wanting a lot of input and direction.

These differences in communication styles can sometimes clash in the workplace, causing misunderstandings or even interpersonal conflict.

05 Main problem to overcome

➤ HOW TO OVERCOME GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN THE WORKPLACE

Try to understand the other side's point of view. Different generations have different perspectives on the same issues, from management style to popular culture. Therefore, try to see things through the eyes of others and better understand their thinking.

Adjust your communication. Young people tend to prefer to communicate using modern technologies such as email or instant messages. Older people may prefer more frequent face-to-face contact. Both parties should therefore take communication differences into account when dealing with each other.

Keep an open mind. Try to avoid prejudices about representatives of other ages. Each employee has different skills and strengths, therefore seek to learn from each other.



06 Main benefits for Companies and workers +55?



Typically, the better communication among generations when people know, understand, and like each other, the better they will work together. It is recommended for companies to encourage their multigenerational employees to get to know each other and facilitate an ongoing dialogue. This way, instead of grumbling at each other's communication quirks, employees can appreciate and recognize their differences and learn to work around them. With the right leadership strategies in place, having a workforce made up of different generations can be a huge value add to the company.



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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

ID: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000033518

AGE ADAPT

AGE ADAPT

Module

Adaptability

Developed by:

RegioVision
GmbH Schwerin



01 Definition of the module



Adaptability. This module is focused on **adaptability** – the crucial human ability to adapt to new conditions and surroundings. Adaptability is necessary both for individuals and for organisations.

The speed of change in technology and society is ever increasing, so the need to adapt is growing. Persons and organisations that have a high adaptability can use this to their advantage, when they are quicker than others to adjust to new conditions.

We want to show that even older people are very well able to adapt and to learn new things. When older employees give up some traditional resistance against changes, they are able to have a more satisfying and successful live and work better in teams composed of different generations.

02 Summary



- WHAT IS ADAPTABILITY?
- KNOWLEDGE CHANGE
- ADAPTABILITY SKILLS
- CRITICAL THINKING
- RESILIENCE
- COLLABORATION
- GROWTH MINDSET
- LIFELONG LEARNING



03 Objectives



The **main objective** of this module is to provide the employer with background knowledge about the soft skills older workers bring to the workplace and that can be very helpful in raising the adaptability of the company and improve the collaboration within multigenerational teams.

04 Content of the module

➤ WHAT IS ADAPTABILITY?

Adaptability is one of the core abilities of humans. It is defined as the ability to adjust to new conditions and has helped us over thousands of years to survive changes in our environment, pandemics as well as changes in our economics and societies.

Adaptability is something that decides if a species survives or not. Just think of the dinosaurs...



➤ KNOWLEDGE CHANGE

In 1945, it has been estimated that human knowledge doubled every 25 years. Today, it doubles **every 12 hours!** A well-known symbol for this extreme acceleration is the printed encyclopaedia.



Foto by [Clay Banks](#) on [Unsplash](#)

A complete set was quite expensive even 30 years ago, but nowadays it is nearly worthless. The last printed version in Germany was released in 2014. The content of these volumes was largely outdated before the books left the printshop and many new and important things were not covered.

Because of this unprecedented knowledge change, the traditional way of acquiring skills and knowledge in school, vocational training and/or university and then relying on this fundament throughout your professional life does not work anymore.

➤ ADAPTABILITY SKILLS

There are a couple of so-called “soft skills”, that define adaptability and surprisingly, older employees are already quite good in a number of them. Besides that, the old saying “don’t teach an old dog new tricks” has been debunked by science. Everyone’s brain is able to learn new stuff – regardless of age.

The main reasons why it seems to be harder to learn something new when you are older are

1) tradition: in previous times there was no need to learn something new because at a certain age, you simply knew everything you needed for your job – you had become a “master”

2) reluctance to leave your comfort zone: learning new skills is demanding. When we try something for the first time, we make mistakes. Children are used to this, and their endless curiosity helps them to try again. When we get older, we like our comfort zone more and more, so our motivation to put effort into learning might be lower.

However, certain skills that are necessary to maintain a high adaptability are usually already found in older people. We will look into the most relevant ones next.

➤ **CRITICAL THINKING**

Critical thinking is the process of evaluating information, arguments, or data in order to make an informed judgement. It involves using reasoning, logic, and objectivity to identify strengths and weaknesses in arguments and evidence.

Older people are often considered to be good at critical thinking because they have accumulated a wealth of life experience and knowledge over the years. This experience can help them to more easily identify patterns, make connections between seemingly unrelated pieces of information, and evaluate arguments and evidence in a more nuanced and thoughtful way. Additionally, as people age, they often become more reflective, which also helps to foster critical thinking skills.



➤ **RESILIENCE**

Resilience is the ability to adapt and recover from stress, adversity, or trauma. It is a trait that can vary widely from person to person and does not necessarily decline with age.

Research suggests that older adults may have more developed coping mechanisms and a greater sense of perspective, which can contribute to resilience. They may also have a stronger sense of self-efficacy, which is the belief in one's ability to cope with difficult situations. Furthermore, older adults may have a more extensive social support network, which can provide emotional and practical assistance during difficult times.

➤ **COLLABORATION**

Older employees may have more experience working in teams and may have developed effective communication and problem-solving skills. They may also have a wealth of knowledge and experience that can be beneficial to a team. Furthermore, older employees may have a more developed sense of perspective, which can help them to see different viewpoints and find common ground with others.





A well-composed multigenerational team can therefore be a huge advantage for every organisation when it comes to adapting to new strategies or circumstances.

➤ **GROWTH MINDSET**

A growth mindset is the belief that one's abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort, learning and experience. It is the opposite of a fixed mindset, which is the belief that one's abilities and intelligence are set and cannot be changed.

People with a growth mindset approach challenges and setbacks as opportunities to learn and grow, whereas people with a fixed mindset may give up easily or avoid challenges altogether. Research has shown that having a growth mindset can lead to greater success in both personal and professional settings.

Adopting a growth mindset is something that can be learned and developed, and it can be particularly beneficial for older people who may be more set in their ways and less open to change. A growth mindset can help older people to continue to learn and adapt, and to approach new challenges with a sense of curiosity and a willingness to learn.

➤ **LIFELONG LEARNING**

As we have already seen, in our modern, ever-changing world with its growing complexity, people need to keep learning. A team or a company that relies only on traditional skills and knowledge will fail.

Companies need to encourage lifelong learning by actively including older employees



in trainings and other learning activities. Managers and owners should be a good example for employees and support openness and curiosity throughout the teams.



05 Main problem to overcome

This module will help companies to change their perspective on older employees which are often seen as reluctant or even unable to support changes and therefore lower the adaptability of the enterprise as a whole or a team they are part of.

06 Main benefits for Companies and workers +55?

The main benefits of this module will be:

- a different perspective on the soft skills of older workers
- a better understanding of the value of multigenerational teams
- ideas for lifelong learning

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Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

ID: 2021-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000033518

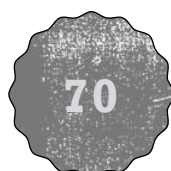


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