

Horizontal Career Changes: a new job opportunity for older employees

The project supports employees as well as small and medium-sized enterprises to reach the objective of “**entering retirement and being healthy**”.



The demographic change in Germany has led to an increase of the actual age of exit from employment. A lot of employees, however, are working in so-called jobs “with limited tenure”, i.e. a job which cannot be exercised by the workers staying healthy until they enter statutory retirement. A possible solution could be a change of the occupation as a preventive measure in early time. A new occupation with less or a different kind of stress can keep the employee in employment until the legal age of retirement. The search for a new occupation should explicitly consider health aspects. This occupation should require a similar qualification level as before while preserving the employee’s social status. Employability can thus be preserved and a skilled workforce can be retained especially in small and medium-sized enterprises.

The Institute for Work and Health of the German Social Accident Insurance (IAG) has developed a “Digital Guide” which provides information for employees concerned about the concept of a horizontal career change and for

employers against a backdrop of demographic change. The Digital Guide was set up in the form of an Internet portal. The core piece is an ICT tool that includes a database of occupational profiles. When a user enters his or her personal data a so-called personnel profile is created by the tool. The profiles contain items from three categories: qualifications, preferences and possible health impairment. The tool runs these data against the profiles maintained in the database using a special algorithm. Eventually the output results in a list of matching careers the person may change to. The tool works in such a manner, that in addition the results can be analysed in detail.

The resulting list of matching careers gives first step information. In no case this information can supersede a personal counselling interview. The Digital Guide shall rather point to the problem of occupations with limited tenure persuading people to be interested in a horizontal career change. Containing data of 505 initial and 17 continuing training occupations, the data base basically covers all actual occupations existing in Germany.

The information portal including the ITC instrument for the search of suitable occupations has been developed in a low-threshold form and independent of a special internet platform. There is one version accessible to everybody and a second version with better usability including Java script features. Data protection requirements were respected. Both, the information portal and the ITC tool can be reached without pass word on the website www.wegweiser-berufsumstieg.de. The project was completed on 31st of January 2015.

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