

Needs Assessment of Training and Development for Best Agers (55+)

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Abstract. This critical topic is of particular importance in Germany, since the population, and therefore also the workforce, is undergoing demographic changes with a major shift towards older employees in working organizations. At the same time, a large need for highly skilled labor and leadership personnel is occurring and is getting larger over time. Therefore, it is all the more critical to keep current best ager employees up to date in knowledge and skills and also maintain them as an integral part of a motivated and skilled work force within the working organizations.

In this analysis, several papers concerned with the training and development of older employees will be compiled. Methodology of this meta-analysis is based on surveys conducted with employees in the best ager category, interviews led with experts in the training and development field as well as department chiefs of human resources departments, and content analysis of organizational homepages concerning their training and development offerings. A comparison with literature will round off the triangulation of the subject matter.

Based on the findings, the differentiated and distinguished needs of older employees will be examined and discussed. While it seems apparent that best agers have different needs – at least in some areas of training, in particular technology and computer applications – it is critical not to stigmatize and discriminate them. In an organizational context, it appears best agers do not want to be singled out concerning their needs, despite the fact that it might be critical for their training success to provide modified development programs.

In conclusion, it is critical to work with the sensitivity of the subject matter and introduce the topic of age categories (at least in some areas of training) with appropriate care within the respective organizations in order to allow productivity to remain at least at the same level.