

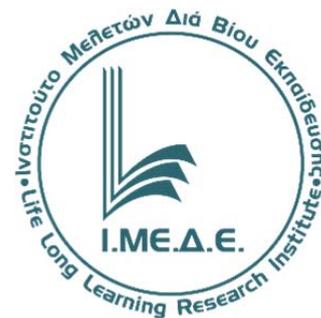
# WP.5 Age Management Seminars for Employers

## 5.4 Analysis and Evaluation of Seminars



***3L Research Institute***

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## Executive Summary

Deliverable 5.4 '*Analysis and Evaluation of Seminars*' forms part of WP 'Age Management Seminar for Employers' and aims at providing an overview of the seminar proceedings and presenting the participants' feedback.

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The aforementioned seminars took place in 3 partner countries: the UK, Sweden and Greece. Addressed to employers, their aim was to inform them on the value of age management practices and policies; in particular, the strategic challenges of an ageing workforce, recruitment and retention strategies, age auditing as well as the value of introducing lifelong guidance practices.

For all seminars, content material was developed to be used by partners, coupled with marketing material for the recruitment of participants and overall dissemination of the event. All seminars were half day events and a feedback questionnaire was given to the participants.

More specifically, this report will provide an overview of the seminar organization in each country, present the findings of the evaluation questionnaire and highlight the key issues emerged.

The aim is to inform on how the seminars were conducted, to analyze how participants assessed them and felt about them, in order to allow for the drawing of conclusions on their implementation.

## University of Strathclyde – United Kingdom

### Seminar Overview

The half day event was organised by the University of Strathclyde. A marketing flyer together with the seminar programme was emailed to a range of contacts in both public and private sector organisations. This included a range of contacts through the Glasgow Employer Diversity Forum, a network of employers who are committed to increasing diversity throughout their workforce. Delegates were invited to register via email for the event.

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The University of Strathclyde hired a venue based in the city centre which is managed and run by Glasgow City Council called The Lighthouse. The room hire included the use of one large room and a reception area used for catering and as a cloakroom for delegates. IT equipment was provided for the event by the Lighthouse.

The half day event was titled **‘Managing the Ageing Workforce’**. A welcome was provided by Margaret Linton from Glasgow City Council. Graham Smith from the University of Strathclyde set the scene with a presentation entitled ‘Defusing the Demographic Time Bomb’. This section was followed by presentations which provided delegates with an update on two additional European projects which the University of Strathclyde is involved in. The session on SILVER project concentrated on ‘seeking intergenerational solutions’ to the issues presented by an ageing workforce. Subsequently, the delegates were presented with a range of age management solutions which have been developed as part of a ‘Strategy Plan’ for employers as part of the LIKE project. The event then provided delegates with the opportunity to hear about the research which has been carried out as part of the AMaP project. Discussion groups then took place allowing delegates to reflect on the range of issues that had been explored throughout the day and consider what strategies their organisation could use to meet the challenges of demographic change. The day concluded with a short plenary session and an opportunity to network over lunch.

### Analysis of the feedback questionnaire

#### Response Rate

In total, 14 delegates attended on the day and 11 questionnaires were completed and returned. This translates to a 78% response rate, which is an excellent response rate as the questionnaire was sent to the delegates and was not handed out on the day.

#### Organization

The overall organization of the seminar was commended by delegates. The questionnaire asked respondents to rate the statement: ‘the symposium was well organized’; to this **63% of the respondents strongly agreed and 36% of them agreed with this statement.**

Respondents were asked if the meeting facilities were comfortable and well set up. **54% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement. The remaining 46% had a more positive attitude towards the facilities.** Respondent comments revealed that it was felt that the room was too large for the size of the group and that noise from outside the building was distracting.

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The half day duration of the event was appropriate for employers. This allowed sufficient time for presentations, discussion groups and networking. The evaluation questionnaire asked respondents to rate the statement, 'the schedule of the symposium was well balanced'. **63% of respondents strongly agreed and 36% of respondents agreed with this statement.**

### Content

The majority of delegates (**90%**) found the presentations very interesting and that the issues discussed were relevant to their organisation. The evaluations highlighted that respondents felt that the discussions were participative and that the final debate and sharing was successful in pulling together the overall issues.

The analysis of the questionnaires has shown that employers found the concepts for managing an ageing workforce **relevant and innovative (90%)**. However, not all felt that the presented concepts could be implemented in their business area. Some reasons given for this were as a result of a lack of resources and money.

There was a huge interest in the topic from employers and a willingness to learn more. Delegates were asked to indicate if the seminar had increased their knowledge on the topic of managing an ageing workforce. The majority (90%) highlighted that they strongly agreed that the session had increased their awareness of this subject.

### Impressions and Comments

Respondents were asked to highlight strong points or areas that they enjoyed most about the seminar and areas that have room for improvement. These are presented below:

Strong Points	Areas for improvement
Good discussions with a range of employers	Venue
Innovative age management concepts	Would be helpful to have copies of slides to take notes during presentation
Learning about the range of European Projects and how they link together	
Highly relevant	
Presentation on the background	

Participants' Comments included the following:

- Very relevant to my organisation, well organised and interesting event
- I enjoyed the discussions
- All very interesting, good discussion with a range of employers
- The room was too big
- The topics discussed were relevant to my organisation
- Subject matter was very interesting and it was very helpful to have the presentation on the background at the beginning. Really brings home how radical change is happening.

## Folkuniversitetet – Sweden

### Seminar Overview

The *Age Management Seminar* was held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013 with Mr Björn Ensigten as Moderator. The seminar was organised jointly by **Folkuniversitetet** and the **Chamber of Commerce of Uppsala**.

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It was attended by various stakeholders to learn about how to better recruit, retain and re-employ more mature workers for an age-friendly workplace. More specifically, the seminar was attended by **15** people. Prior to the seminar the participants received the translated material produced by the project.

At first Mr Ensigten presented the project, its objective and expected outcomes. The participants asked several questions regarding the background of the project and relevant research. Further, they were asking if such initiative were taken at national level in Sweden. Later Mr Magnusson from Chamber of Commerce Uppsala presented several initiative and actions related to age management in Sweden and abroad. He focused on:

- Re-employment of experienced retired worker, which could solve the issue of skill shortage
- Job re-designs with objective to increase the motivation of older worker to have greater influence on their employment and job environment
- Fair employment concerning access to talented worker based skill and experiences without discriminating by age

### Participants' responses and opinions

Based on above mentioned aspects, the participants were asked to express opinions regarding measures which will promote such goals.

#### Re-integration

Many of participants, especially companies, expressed that the existing model of re-integration, which means that an employee outsourced to a job which corresponds to the functionally limited ability, is a working model for 55+. The principle is that in spite of the unemployment due to the reduced work ability is often a limited operational capability.

#### Primary Prevention

The participants were of the opinion that many Swedish companies are focused on preventive actions, intended to improve individual career paths. Each enterprise should have the tools available which are required for an optimum work technique. Employees of companies should be made aware of the areas of practical ergonomics (ergonomic equipment), safety equipment and precautionary measures.

#### Reasons for retaining the older workers

The representative of the Swedish Energy company described their method for retraining older workers. At the Vattenfall Company the age management is viewed as a strategic priority for the next decade. The company has been focusing, for example, on retaining the older workers, the promotion of employability and intergenerational transfer of knowledge and competences. The "Ageing Workforce Management Programme" was introduced to

support the increase of the retirement age in the company to 65 years. It includes seminars for employees aged over 57 to improve their skills and motivation to extend their career, a special programme (80-90-100) in order to reduce workload and working hours of employees aged over 58, leadership training for age and health management, the development of a "Senior Resource Pool" - a special structure for the re-employment of dismissed older workers and networking for managers and older workers.

### Methods for retaining older workers

The participants offered the following suggestions:

#### Carrier planning dialogue

In Sweden every employee has the right to carrier planning dialogue once a year with its employer where they plan personal development for employees. The participants were of the opinion that the measures for retaining older worker should start at earlier age such as 45 to 50 during such dialogues.

The dialogues could be focused on:

- Flexible working hours
- Reassignment and alter job description
- Training and retraining
- Health care issues
- Job safety and ergonomic solutions

#### Having a strategy for age structure

It is important that companies are aware of the age structure in their organisation. By developing a strategy, they can take relevant measures in time.

#### Initiating a senior pool

Since some employees make a conscious decision to retire earlier than pension age, companies can try to have them voluntarily in a pool for transfer of knowledge and temporarily skill shortage.

#### Seminar Evaluation

Twelve (12) participants gave **4 on a scale of 5 regarding satisfaction**. The participants were of the opinion that such issue should be integrated in other training seminars that the Chamber of Commerce monthly organizes for employers. The reason is that it would firstly be difficult to have it as a separate subject; secondly, it is an integrated part in other company measures regarding Human Resources management.

## Lifelong Learning Research Institute - Greece

### Seminar Overview

The half day seminar was organised by and convened in the Lifelong Learning Research Institute premises which are conveniently located in the centre of Athens, close to the main metro line and with good transportation links. All participants were provided with a hard copy of the presentation given during the seminar; copies of the content material were also available. A business meeting room was provided that was suitable for the group size and the purposes of the seminar.

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Marketing material was produced in Greek and was used for the recruitment of participants. Invitations were sent via e-mail to the partner's wide network, comprising both public and private entities. The brochure provided information about the seminar, including a table of contents of the issues to be discussed and information of the AMaP project, its aims and partnership.

The seminar was titled «[Διαχειριστείτε τον Ανεκμετάλλευτο πλούτο της Επιχείρησής σας: Την Τρίτη Ηλικία](#)» [**Manage the Untapped Wealth of your Business: The Ageing Workforce**]. The seminar started off with a presentation of the AMaP project in order to guide participants on understanding where the seminar fits in the activities of the project and what it seeks to achieve. Then, the seminar moved to the presentation of the core elements for age management: a set of clear guidelines for employing an age management strategy was given and the discussion also emphasized the importance of age management for European societies and economy as well as the salience of learning and training for older workers. More specifically, the seminar delved into the following:

- Introduction to Age Management Challenges, Policies and Benefits
- Recruitment and Retention
- Flexible Working
- Managing Health
- Learning and Skills Development
- Career Development
- Career Exit and Transition to Retirement

A feedback questionnaire was circulated at the end of the meeting, asking participants to rate the organization and content of the seminar on a scale of: *poor, satisfactory, good, excellent*. The questionnaire also allowed for participants to propose possible improvements, and add any comments they wished to make.

## Analysis of the Feedback questionnaire

### Response Rate

The seminar was attended by **15** employers and **9** of them responded to the questionnaire that was circulated provided at the end of the seminar. Hence, there was a 60% response rate that allows for a meaningful evaluation of the seminar proceedings.

### Organization

The overall organization of the seminar was rated positively from the participants. All respondents' answers were on the positive side of the scale; **55% rated the organization excellent and 45% rated it good.**

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When asked '*how appropriate were the facilities provided*', they all gave positive feedback; **66%** of the respondents replied that they found the facilities excellent and **33%** found them good. Participants also positively commented on the duration of the seminar. In the question if the duration was too short, appropriate or too long, the plurality of them found the duration appropriate for the subject.

### Content

In terms of the previous familiarity of the participants with the age management concepts and management, the majority of them stand somewhere in the middle; **22%** stated that they are very familiar, **56%** that they are somewhat familiar and **22%** that they are not familiar at all.

Moreover, the respondents positively acknowledged the opportunity to raise questions, have discussion and interact. When asked if they had '*the opportunity to raise questions for clarification and interaction*', all answered positively; **56%** rated this as excellent and another **44%** as good. The presentation delivery and content was also positively received; 56% said that they found the presentation delivery style excellent and 44% that it was good.

### Comments

The discussions and the feedback revealed a keen interest in the subject and the willingness to learn more about it. When asked if they want to receive more information in the future, the majority of respondents replied positively and expressed that they want to be kept updated of similar initiatives. Participants manifested a positive attitude towards changing their management procedures and implementing age management strategies and the importance of the ageing workforce in the future labor market was widely acknowledged. At the same time, the concern expressed was the lack of funds and resources to implement new workforce management strategies, especially amidst the economic crisis in Greece.

A selection of participants' comments:

Very good presentation

Helped me understand the importance of ageing workforce

Very interesting, I would like to receive information about the subject

The concept is good, but we need to find the money to implement it

If the benefits are big enough, I will do it

At a time we are struggling to survive, this sounds like a luxury item