

Retention of the Ageing Workforce: Supporting good work for older people at work?

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Presentation Content

- Context
- Older Worker's Experience of Work
- Work Culture
- Work Adjustments
- Recommendations
- Conclusions

Context

- **By 2020 approximately 1/3 of the labour force will be aged 50 or over.**
- **Many of us will likely be working until the age of 70 (or maybe even more).**
- **Are we approaching a skills gap?**
- **What about employee health and wellbeing?**

Context

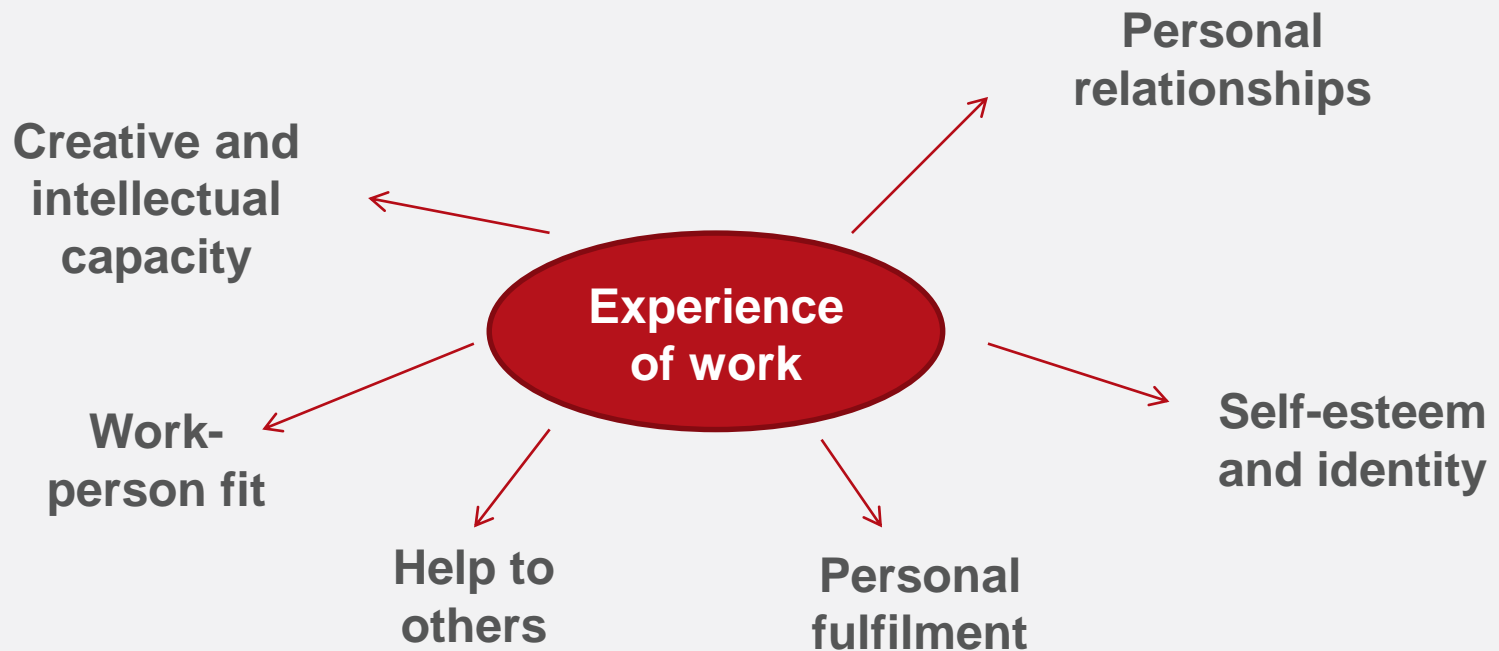


Context

- **From the employer's perspective:**
 - **Older workers can make a substantial contribution to UK employers and the economy**
 - **Employers need to maximise the skills that older workers can contribute to the workplace**
 - **Employers need to engage staff and promote age diversity**

Experience of Work

- There is a range of evidence to suggest that there are a number of factors that contribute to an older worker's attachment with work:

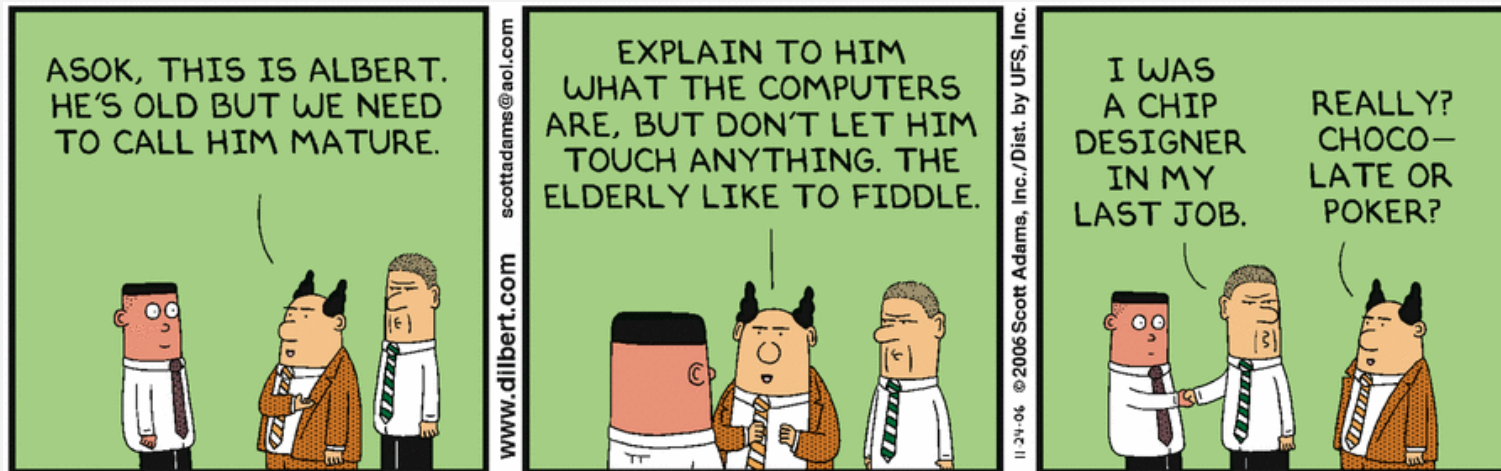


Experience of Work

- How can we make ‘good’ work for older workers?
- Answer: They want the same ‘good work’ as other age groups in the workplace!
- Work that is:
 - * Meaningful
 - * Challenging
 - * Autonomous
 - * Team-based
 - * Fairly paid

Experience of Work

- Older workers want to feel valued



Experience of Work

- **But are older workers experiencing good work?**
- **30% didn't feel valued, recognised or appreciated at work**
- **24% did not feel they had the freedom to do what they wanted at work**
- **27% didn't have the opportunity to learn**
- **48% did not feel involved in decision making**
- **32% not informed about what is going on in their organisation**
- **21% thought their manager did not care for them as an employer**

Workplace Culture

- A culture of an organisation is important for retaining staff of any age, but for older workers there are a number of issues to consider.
- Making work fulfilling for older workers to aid retention includes:
 - Organisational values that closely align with their own
 - Open organisational culture
 - No inaccurate stereotypes and prejudice
 - Effective and consistent HR practices

Workplace Culture



Workplace Culture

- **Attitudes to older working learning and training can have an impact on employee retention.**
- **Employer perceptions regarding older worker training exist (tend to be negative)**
- **But older workers want EQUAL access to formal training, professional development and promotion opportunities**
- **BUT, older workers report being overlooked for promotion and training – and at what cost to the employer?**

Workplace Culture

- **Is technology the barrier that it is often made out to be?**
- **Training new technology can maximise their potential and opens up more opportunities for career development and develops skills**
- **Helps to reduce the gaps between older and younger employees and de-mystify stereotypes**
- **Consider different training methods.**

Workplace Culture

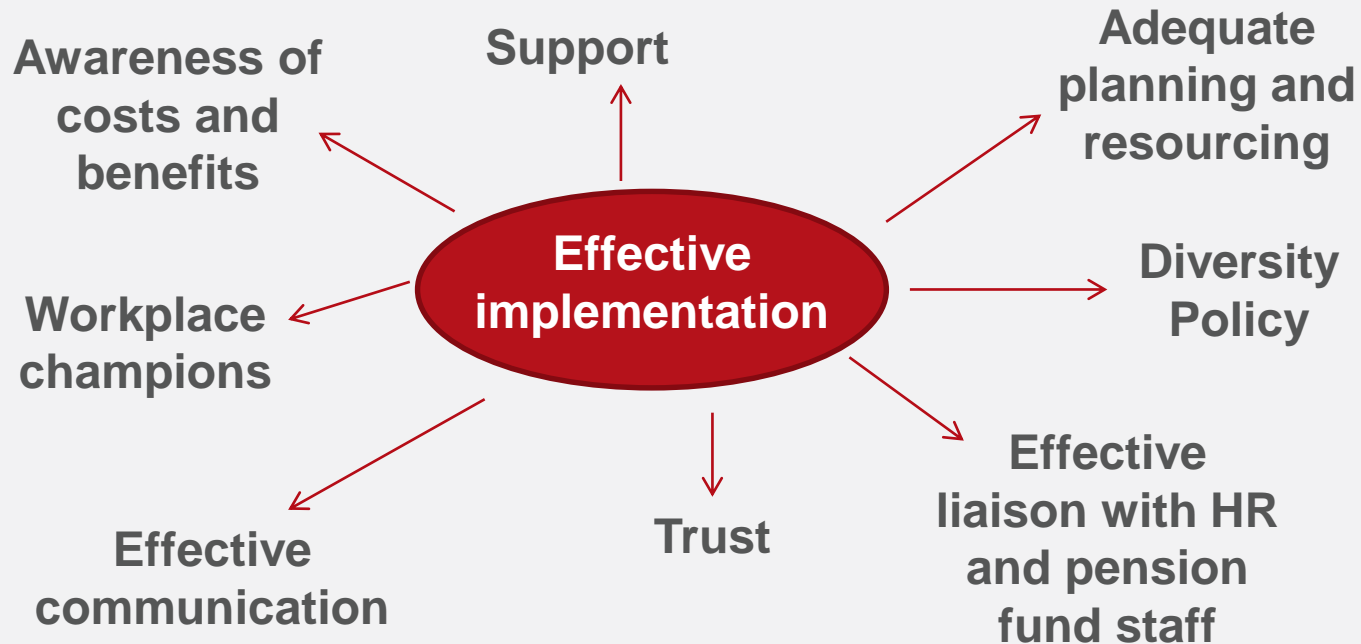


Workplace Adjustments

- **It has been widely shown that with correct workplace adjustments and support older workers are able to remain in the workplace.**
- **Access to flexible working arrangements can help older workers to fulfil their full potential.**
- **Right to Request flexible work – June 2014 – all employees have the legal right to request flexible working practices**

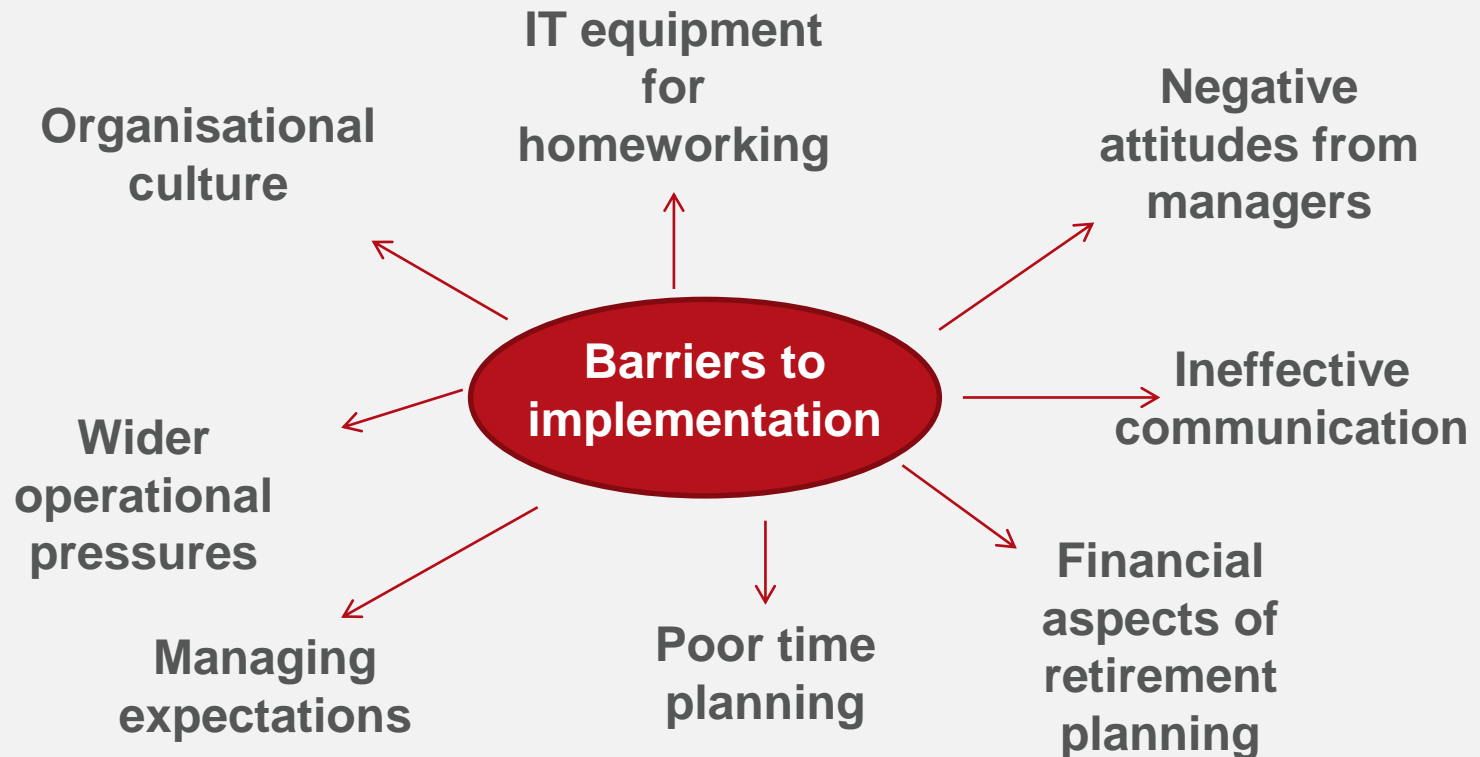
Workplace Adjustments

- Research looking at the provision of flexible work have found a number of factors help its effective implementation



Workplace Adjustments

- Research looking at the provision of flexible work have found a number of barriers to its effective implementation



Workplace Adjustments

- **Health has the largest impact on the ability of older workers to stay in work.**
- **Health conditions can affect people of any age – although most common among the older working age population are Musculoskeletal conditions, stress and anxiety.**
- **Older workers also have a higher prevalence of cardiovascular conditions, deterioration of eyesight, occupational cancers and dementia.**
- **Lack of understanding that older workers are not a homogenous group.**

Workplace Adjustments

- **Many older workers have ageing parents, relatives or spouses who need some degree of care.**
- **This creates an extra pressure on workers who have to balance their own working life with their caring duties.**
- **Many organisations do not have provisions in place to support carers.**
- **More action is needed to help workers in this position.**

Recommendations



"MAYBE I SHOULDN'T ASK WHERE YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS."

Recommendations

- **Providing training and development support:**
 - All employees of any age need training and development
 - Older employees should not be overlooked
 - 'Mid-life career reviews'

- **Support employee health and wellbeing:**
 - No reason why people cannot work if they receive the right support
 - Access to work
 - Line management training

- **Managing retirement:**
 - Everyone's circumstances is different
 - Phased retirement

Recommendations

- **Building an inclusive and age-diverse culture:**
 - No amount of policies will be effective if not introduced within an age-diverse context
 - Need to reverse the entrenched stereotypes
 - Consider the implications on other members of staff

- **Training line managers:**
 - Key to the employment relationship
 - Line managers should be trained to ensure they are competent and confident to have sensitive discussions
 - Be aware of inter-generational issues

- **Workforce planning:**
 - Age diversity monitoring
 - Caring and flexible work practices management

Conclusions

- **To ensure that more of us can work sustainably in the future, it is essential that changes are made in organisations to both make work fulfilling and workplace accommodating.**
- **Although older workers want similar work to young employees, their access to it is reduced.**
- **Clear benefits for employers to implement practices to retain older workers for employees now and for the future.**

References

- **Fulfilling Work: What do older workers value about work and why? (IES and Centre for Ageing Better, 2017)**
- **Creating longer, more fulfilling working lives: Employer practice in five European countries. (CIPD, 2016)**
- **Living Long, Working Well: Supporting older workers with health conditions to remain active at work. (The Work Foundation, 2015)**
- **Living Long, Working Well: Understanding the wellbeing needs of the UKs ageing workforce. (The Work Foundation, 2012)**
- **Rapid Review of Evidence on Retaining Older People in the Workforce. (The Work Foundation, awaiting publication)**

Thank you!

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