Challenges in age-diverse recruitment

Maria Schwarz-Woelzl

Zentrum fuer Soziale Innovation / ZSI

Vienna

mature@eu
Supporting Employers In Recruiting
And Selecting Mature Aged Persons

Maria Schwarz-Woelzl, ZSI

Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci

Objectives

- **Our thesis:** Age-diverse recruitment is a challenge, as many standard recruitment practices and selection criteria are age-related.

- Thus, **mature@eu** is directly concerned with providing an **integrated learning environment** to HRM, Recruiters, Equal Opportunities Representatives, Trade Union Officers and Worker Representatives which enable them to introduce **age-diverse** recruitment policies and practices.

➡️ **Our mission:** it is a fundamental right not to be discriminated against because of one's age.

mature@eu
Supporting Employers In Recruiting
And Selecting Mature Aged Persons

Maria Schwarz-Woelzl, ZSI

Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci

Three major factors that help explain the low recruitment intensity rate of mature workers

- **Age** can be expressed by **numbers**. This is manageable by HRM and therefore an advantage for them.

- There is a consensus that age is a signal for decreasing ability. If an **HRM** selects an older worker, he/she feels more pressed to provide a **justification**.

- The higher the unemployment rate, the higher the number of applications. Under these conditions, HRM may have the tendency to select a screening approach by using **simple selection criteria such as age**. (Koller and Gruber, 2001)

Challenge No1: **Persuading Managers**

- *"The challenge for the HR manager is to achieve the awareness and compliance of the board of directors for the demographic shift topic"* (CEO of a recruiting firm).

- *"The first requirement is a solid business case for diversity"* [...] *"It is important to start with the **problem**, not the solution"* (Sam Mercer, EFA).

Challenge No 2: **Raising age awareness at all levels**

- *"Awareness raising is all in this matter: make sure people know that their **age-bias** is just that: a bias, a **prejudice**, not necessarily a truth"* (Dorinde Brands, LEEFtijd).

- *"The start of the process is getting people to start thinking about age … This leads to the **replication** of the **same work-force**. Recruitment becomes self-selecting"* (Sam Mercer, EFA).

- *"We have run an internal age-awareness campaign* (Becky Mason, BT).

  - *… **posters***
  - *… run **banners** across various **intranet** web-pages*
  - *… age-diversity strap lines on **payslips***
  - *… We come up with the **slogan** 'Age of Change'*

mature@eu
Supporting Employers In Recruiting
And Selecting Mature Aged Persons

Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci

Challenge No 3: **Creating age-neutral job descriptions**

- *"… it is really important to provide an appropriate job description since this **drives the rest of the process** including using the right language and imagery in adverts, and where to advertise"* (Sam Mercer, EFA).

- *"… BT has undertaken an age-neutral audit of **job families** and we identified 13 instances where these needed to be amended. Here we focused on developing criteria in terms of what the **role-holder would have expected** to have achieved rather than reference to years of experience"* (Becky Mason, BT).

Challenge No 4: **Job Annoncen**

Analyse der Altersangaben in den Stellenangeboten der FAZ vom 28.April 2007:

- 109 **Anzeigentexte** enthalten Altersvorgaben.
  - **30-Jährige** sind nicht gemeint: „mehrjährige Berufs- und Führungserfahrung", „langjährige Projekt und Führungserfahrung (mind. 5 Jahre)" oder „mehrjährige Erfahrung als Leiter".
  - **60-Jährige** sind nicht gemeint: „2-3jährige berufliche Erfahrungen", „mindestens 4 Jahre Berufserfahrung" oder „ca. 3-jährige Berufspraxis".

- 30 Stellenangebote mit **Fotos** veröffentlicht, auf denen insgesamt 72 Personen abgebildet sind.
  - 96% deutlich jünger als 40 Jahre

Challenge No 5: **Application form**

- Age information should not be given to anyone involved in the **initial selection process**. Best practice advises that selection panels should not be told the short-listed applicants' names until the day. (Age Positive, 2001b).

- BT and LogicaCMG do collect data on age … by asking candidates to complete **a separate form** during the application process.

mature@eu
Supporting Employers In Recruiting
And Selecting Mature Aged Persons

Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci

Challenge No 6: **Job Interviews**

- Interviews should preferably be conducted by **more than one person** and further by a panel with a **mixture of age**. It is helpful to have at least one older worker represented on the interview panel (Age Positive, 2001a:10).

- All candidates should be asked the **same questions**; if a particular question on personal circumstances cannot be asked of all candidates, then this question should not be asked of any of them (Maguire, 2003:14).

mature@eu
Supporting Employers In Recruiting
And Selecting Mature Aged Persons

Maria Schwarz-Woelzl, ZSI

Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci

Challenge No 7: **Training job interviewers**

- *"It should also be said that, within big companies, the very **first application selection** is not done by the HRM him/herself, but by his/her assistant who is usually a **young individual** (25-30 years old) and not sensitive to age related topics"* (Michael Kres, Promove TM).

- *"It should advise against the kinds of **questions** that might be seen to be discriminatory, such as, "Aren't you over-qualified for the job"? (UCEA (2006), Maguire (2003)*

mature@eu
Supporting Employers In Recruiting
And Selecting Mature Aged Persons

Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci

Other challenges

- Analysing the selection **decision**

    - *Such an approach leads to greater transparency and allows for appropriate remedial action to be put in place (Becky Mason, BT).*

- Reviewing traditional **search strategies**

    - age-bias: the internet, radio and job fairs, internal advertising, word of mouth.

    - newspapers tend to be open to all ages

- Checking the diversity **policy of recruitment agencies**

    - send a clear signal to recruitment agencies that age-neutral selection should be employed

- Reviewing obligations **of sub-contractors**

    - deal with firms that can demonstrate an ongoing and measurable commitment to age-diversity recruitment policies.

mature@eu
Supporting Employers In Recruiting
And Selecting Mature Aged Persons

Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci

mature@eu e-learning platform:
available in sixteen languages -> with localised data

- **Bulgarian** -> for Bulgaria
- **Czech** -> for Czech Republic
- **Dutch** -> for Netherlands
- **English** -> for United Kingdom
- **French** -> for Switzerland
- **German** -> for Austria & Germany
- **Greek** -> for Greece
- **Hungarian** -> for Hungary

- **Italian** -> for Italy
- **Latvian** -> for Latvia
- **Lithuanian** -> for Lithuania
- **Polish** -> for Poland
- **Slovakian** -> for Slovakia
- **Slovenian** -> for Slovenia
- **Spanish** -> for Spain
- **Turkish** -> for Turkey

- Realised by the **free**, open source CMS **MOODLE**
- **free of charge** for every user and **ready for the export to the server of interested parties.**

… **visit** us at **www.mature-project.eu/**

Thank you for your attention!