



FILING CARD GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE

European Network 'Career & AGE'

Identification of the 'Practice'

TITLE of the good practice: "Profiler", a software programme for modern & innovative organisations

Country/Region: Belgium / Flanders

Nature: Programme – Measure – Project – Other: An innovative software package with a specific management approach for (large) organisations.

Period*:

Budget*: (min.) € 5,000,- / € 8,000,- (general)???

In which language(s) available: Dutch / English

Final beneficiary:

Leading partner:

Contact details:

Website: <http://profiler.bits-zettabytes.be>

*: If known/if available

Description of the 'Good Practice'

What was the problem?:

Large organisations typically have to cope with a problem which is embedded within their own structure. They often have a hierarchical structure and a top-down management approach, based on functions and need-to-have diplomas all positioned in a strict organisation chart. Staff seldom get to use their real talents and "inner-drive" on the job.

What were the objective(s):

1. To give personnel in a large organisation a realistic opportunity to perform better on the job, taking advantage of skills and talents that not necessarily have to be part of their diploma or function within the organisation. The basic question with Profiler was; "What is something you would love to do you are (told by others that you are) good at?"

2. To adjust jobs and work volumes in an organisation in which the work load for a specific group of staff members tends to be periodically different. Each time these staff members have some spare time, they slide into comfort zones. For those moments when there is a huge stress load on jobs, the workforce never seems to be sufficient. Profiler's main goal is to 'liberate' staff members from the confines of their job descriptions, thus enabling them to use their talents for the benefit of the organisation, in that they can devote 20% of their "spare" time (i.e. when the work load is lower) to

other tasks said employees have specific talents for. . Profiler does not change contracts and paychecks, but commits employees by capitalising on their talents and inner drive .

What did you do?:

We developed a very specific management style, based on the most recent views regarding the difficulties experienced in these large organisations. We changed the core principles of a top-down approach and developed a way of structuring the organisation, based on 6 core principles;

1. Autonomy: employees generally have a desire to operate/work in an autonomous or self-directed manner.
2. Mastery: employees generally wish to further improve already existing skills so as to step up their mastery of these skills.
3. Purpose: employees generally wish to fulfil an important role in their organisation.
4. Creative: a fundamental characteristic of human beings is their creativity, which should always be taken into account .
5. Curious: another fundamental characteristic of human beings is their curiosity which could be an asset to take advantage of .
6. Unique: every person on this planet is unique.

We then developed a software package that uses these core principles to create the possibility to operate **IN** the current organisation, under a person's current contract and with all the known current degrees/diplomas/skills

Employees are requested to list the types of work/activities they both like to do and have a specific talent for.. Then we allocate 20% of their (already) paid time on projects within the firm that **they like to do and that they have told us they have skills that are needed in the project and that they are good at.**

Basically, the Profiler project stems from the scientific insight that employees roughly obtain an efficiency rate of 70 % in the tasks they are to perform as derived from their job description. Instead of "fighting" the loss of 30% with all kinds of systems from the viewpoint of "command & control", **we "give" that 30% time back to the employees and invite them to fill the 30% of "spare time" by searching for a project or activity within the organisation ,the completion of which requires their specific talents and skills.**

As employees remain responsible for their "real" job in the remaining 70% of the time, a huge improvement in efficiency on the floor is achieved without increasing stress or regulations.

Was there a specific focus on gender, diversity?:

No there is no specific gender or diversity focus. All employees (including managers) are treated equally in the Profiler database. Everyone can create new projects. Everyone can participate in existing ones if they feel like it. There is no decision tree. There is no hierarchical model to decide who is allowed to carry out work along the lines defined by Profiler

What did you achieve?:

People started to move within the organisation they had known for many years. They took part in projects because someone asked them to. They created projects and contacted others. Basically, they got a tendency to choose projects that focus on their personal talents and inner drive. People slowly but surely got involved in projects that were beyond the boundaries of their job description and diplomas, but within the reach of their self-assessed talents and passion.

Interestingly, participants help other colleagues and afterwards they return to tell the positive story . It is an enormous and rather unexpected beneficiary effect of profiler to have people be a living testimony of working on a project that they wanted for themselves.

We achieved a more efficient organisation, with a more positive attitude amongst all employees that wanted to be involved in the projects. Projects started flourishing and many were created. Some were successful, others were meant to be learned from.

What were changes or effects of the good practice?:

1. There was a **LOT** more work that could be done with the same number of employees, without any additional costs. People started using their 20% comfort zone time to perform in projects that reached for their talents and inner drive.

2. **Many projects evolved** from the startup phase, mainly because of the positive feedback from participants all over the organisation. Possibly the feeling of being able to work without a direct "boss" and function in a self-directed context, going for projects goals was the trigger?

3. Participants that returned to their original workspace, having worked with "other" or "new" colleagues, spread a **positive testimony** about their project trial, creating a large platform of employees within the firm, willing to support the ideas of working on Profiler projects. It also **resulted in a positive vibe and well-being for the participants and their "normal" work environments + colleagues.**

4. **Management was confronted** with an organic and new way of running projects, similar to the contagion of a virus-like spread of "wanting-to-work-extra"(dis)ease. They had to turn their views inwards and were confronted with elements from "command & control" vs "empower & facilitate". It was a shocking experience for those who kept their eyes and ears wide open. Many were against it in the long run, fearing things would spin "out-of-control".

What were the critical points to get the project running?

1. Green light from upper management, based on comprehension and support for the ideas behind the Profiler programme.

2. Participation and positive feedback from leaders and managers in the organisation.

3. Installation of the software on a "free-to-use" base for everyone, without the need of asking a superior to be allowed to participate in projects + the ability to create projects of their own.

Transferability:

Which part of your approach could be used in another context?

Profiler is applicable in any other (large) organisational context. (pref. > 60 people)

The only thing that needs adjustment and balance is the so-called "talent filter" that is generally tailor made for the organisation in which Profiler will be set up.

Which conditions are needed to optimise the transferability of the project?

The mindset of the upper management and the board needs to be aligned with the values and ways of working as presented in the Profiler core values and management style.

Link with the focus of the network (Tick more than one box if necessary):

- X SYSTEM level
- X ORGANISATIONAL level
- X INDIVIDUAL level
- Life phase
- X Career phase
- Generation

Other information

Any other useful information on the Good Practice:

Profiler also has a large beneficiary effect on the employer. Talents and inner drive are made “searchable” in the organisation. People can give feedback about their learning needs in their own profile.

Profiler runs better when it has a large database of available employees that want to participate in projects. There are more “talents” available for the different projects and searching the right match becomes easier..

Profiler is developed in PHP-language, with extensions in Javascript. It runs on an SQL Database with an SQL-server hardware setup.

There have been some tryouts to port the Profiler to DRUPAL.

Profiler has been implemented in 4 organisations so far – all with different outcomes. We have learned a lot from the start. We have a rock-solid belief that this approach can become a huge thing in modern organisations searching for balance in the information era.

Profiler has been (shamelessly) copied in the Flemish government, to provide a talent database amongst government workers. It operates under the name “Radar” and is 100% based on several documents and a keynote lecture about the Profiler software.

Key references

2009: Daniel H. Pink. *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, ISBN 978-1-59448-884-9

2009: Sir Ken Robinson. *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (with Lour Aronica). Viking.

ISBN 0670020478

2006: Leandro Herrero. *Viral Change. The Alternative to Slow, Painful and Unsuccessful Management of Change in Organisations*. ISBN 1905776055