



FOOD FOR THOUGHT ABOUT CAREER & AGE

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A sense of urgency for Europe

The goal for employment is widely known. The EU set itself the goal that by 2020 75% of its population between 20 and 64 years old will be working. Because of different starting positions the EU countries transformed this goal in different national goals.

In the following table we give an overview of the targets and the employment rates of each country in 2011. We range the countries by their employment rate of 2011.

Employment targets and employment rates for EU-members and the Flemish Region, 2011

	Target 2020	Employment rate 20-64 in 2011		Target 2020	Employment rate 20-64 in 2011
1. Sweden	> 80%	80%	15. Slovenia	75%	68,4%
2. The Netherlands	80%	77%	16. Belgium	73,2%	67,3%
3. Germany	77%	76,3%	17. Latvia	73%	67,2%
4. Denmark	80%	75,7%	18. Lithuania	72,8%	67,2%
5. Austria	77-78%	75,2%	19. Slovak Republic	72%	65,1%
6. Finland	78%	73,8%	20. Poland	71%	64,8%
7. Cyprus	75-77%	73,8%	21. Ireland	69-71%	64,1%
8. U.K.	No target	73,6%	22. Bulgaria	76%	63,9%
9. Flemish Region	76%	71,8%	23. Romania	70%	62,8%
10. Czech Republic	75%	70,9%	24. Spain	74%	61,6%
11. Estonia	76%	70,4%	25. Malta	62,9%	61,5%
12. Luxemburg	73%	70,1%	26. Italy	67-69%	61,2%
13. France	75%	69,1%	27. Hungary	75%	60,7%
14. Portugal	75%	69,1%	28. Greece	70%	59,9%

Source: Eurostat LFS

Europa is a union with different velocities. Germany and Austria have growing employment rates. But a lot of other regions are in free fall. They are located in the South, in the East as well as in the North (Ireland) of Europe.

The current policy of “working longer” is mainly aimed at the end of the career and pension. In order to enable workable longer careers, the focus should however be extended to the entire active career. Concrete measures are necessary in order to support employees in building up a workable, long career.

A number of starting points are significant here:

- A sustainable career policy has as its primary objectives: making it possible to work longer and increasing activity (employability and workability).

- Both employees and employers and the employment market have an interest in strong measures regarding careers and career policy.
- Responsibility for careers is currently placed mainly on the employer. Research shows however that initiative from the employee is crucial in achieving a sustainable and workable career. Employees must therefore be able to take more initiative. Employers and the government must however continue making an active and stimulating contribution.
- Dialogue between employees/jobseekers and employers is central to the career policy. The focus should lie on finding conformity between strengths and preferences of the employee/jobseeker on one hand and the needs of the organisation on the other.

Research shows that there are some stumbling blocks for working longer and increased employability. New measures must be aimed at clearing these stumbling blocks:

- Low job mobility: people choose a small number of employers during their careers.
- Uncertain employability: there is uncertainty regarding the chances of finding a new job but this is not translated into concrete action in order to increase one's own employability.
- The golden handcuffs: seniority is in practice still and too often rewarded as a merit.
- Development inertia: seeing people invest in lifelong learning not out of necessity.
- Benefits for *recruiters* and employers: Job mobility will not always be evaluated when recruiting.
- Obsession with diplomas: Employers still focus too much on diplomas.

Lifelong careers with one sole employer, however, are disappearing. More job mobility is becoming the norm. Employees will also be asked to work longer and to be more widely employable. This requires new career skills. Being able to outline your own career perspective and making your future "working self" explicit (where do I want to go, what can I do, what do I want to do?) are success factors here. The career policy should be aimed at providing maximum support and stimulation for increasing this process of professional orientation and increasing availability.

In this text, we first seek to outline the situation that is currently the case in Belgium and then this is further extended throughout Europe. In the second part, we provide recommendations for improvement on an individual level, on a

business level and on a system level. In the last part we finally formulate partial conclusions- facing us as a European society.

1. Situation in Belgium and Europe

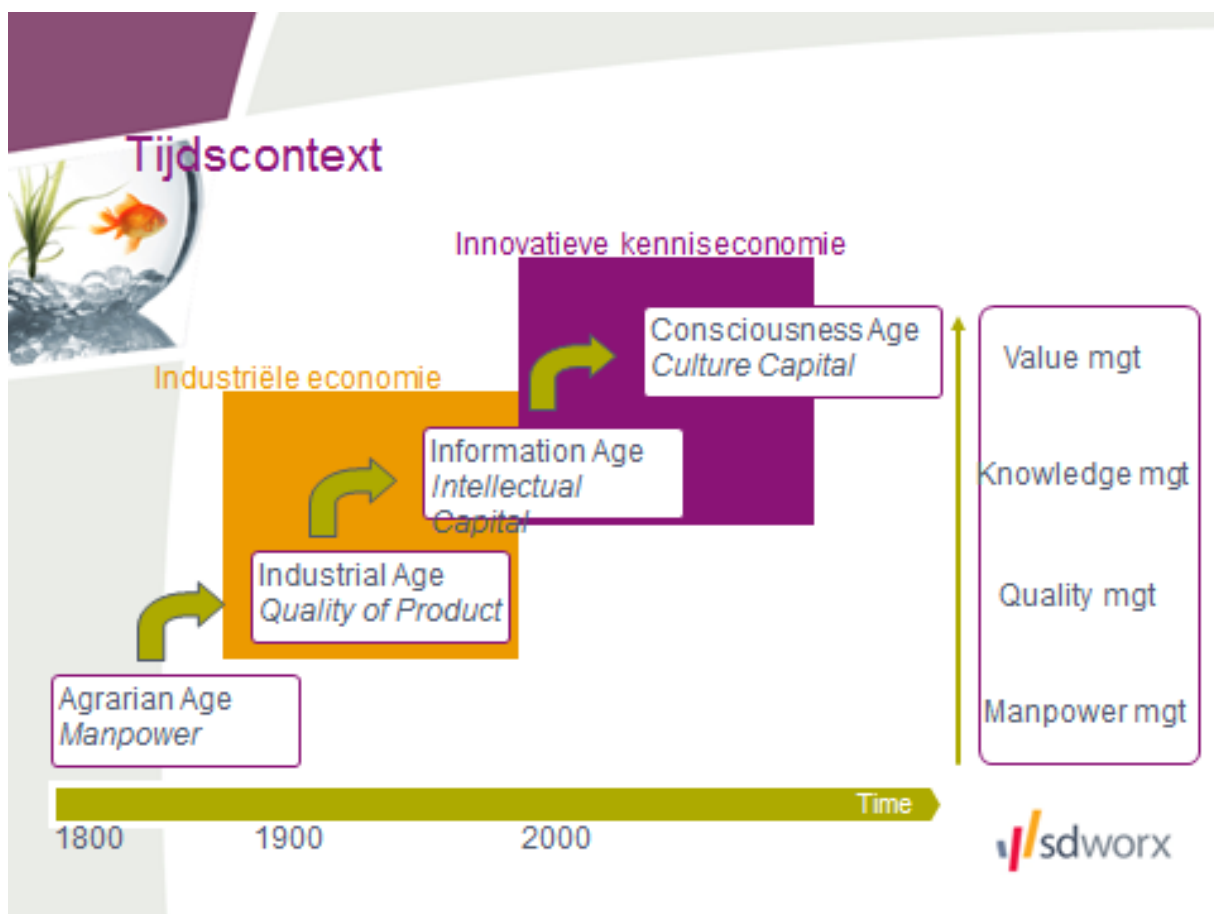
1.1. Careers: what's in a name?

The "career" concept is very broad and it is often filled in differently depending on the type of organisation and the individual employee. While the traditional meaning of a career could be summarised in terms of making a number of (generally) vertical steps, rather predictably and within the context of a limited number of organisations, we now see that a career can refer to much more than a few decades ago. To summarise broadly, we define a career as "the pattern of work-related experiences that a person encounters during the occupational activity". The following are some causes of this:

- Flat structures imply that "career-making" today in many organisations is considered as being much more than climbing up the hierarchy.
- Change processes and unpredictability make it difficult for an organisation to make long-term promises to employees about the direction they are going and the speed at which they are doing so.
- The diversity on the employee's side is considerable. Preoccupations vary depending on their phase in life.

For every person at a given moment in time, it is the result of objective situations, specific events (at work or at home) and subjective experiences.

1.2. Context



Tijdscontext=time context | Industriële economie=industrial economy | Innovatieve kenniseconomie=innovative knowledge economy

1.3. Who does a career belong to: the employee or the organisation?

A career is located at the crossroads between the employee and the organisation. Organisations depend on the career decisions of individual employees for continuity; however, the career is not the "property" of the organisation. It becomes more obvious that employees have more alternatives on the external market. Senior employees have more know-how and experience to enhance their value and opportunities on the labour market.

The expectations of employees regarding their career and the role that organisations play are unique. Most people want to control their career themselves, while organisations also expect their employees to take responsibility for their career. However, these two expectations are often mismatched. The psychological contract is not clear. The question for employers is the following: how do you best meet both the requirements of the organisation and the expectations and career prospects of employees?

Strategic importance of a career policy

A modern career policy is more than deploying and developing available talent (talent management), and assessing future talent requirements (strategic personnel planning). It acknowledges the active role of the employee in his/her own career. Through career guidance and other practices, organisations have a specific role to play in that career plan. Ideally, this results in a matching of the employee's and the organisation's requirements.

We find this type of career policy in small organisations where it should be possible to make individual agreements for everyone. SMEs depend heavily on their human capital. Investing in that human capital is necessary to sustain the deployment of employees. However, if internal career prospects are lacking or if employees have a more "boundaryless career mindset", they may turn towards opportunities beyond their own organisation for their next career move. For this reason, smaller organisations often take a "conservative" stance towards career policy. The idea that a career can develop across different organisations and that employees do not necessarily need to develop their career with the same employer, is more prevalent among the larger players and in the care sector. SMEs are more focused on retention and continuity by meeting the employee's expectations in a customised and flexible manner.

Larger players often limit themselves in this respect to specific target groups such as management or expert profiles. Talents and careers are still often encapsulated in processes and systems. The more formalised, the more control these organisations have. On the other hand, they are less connected to employee diversity, strengths and motivation. And they have less maneuvering latitude for business questions.

Abandon career paths and target groups policy?

Age, generational and lifecycle approaches keep this target group concept alive. Such a group approach can limit the ability to explore the intrinsic opportunities of the individual. It does not consider the heterogeneity and diversity within the group in question, and seems to contradict the responsibility that employers and employees allocate to the individual with regard to career choices.

In other words, there are many arguments to abandon prescribed career paths and the target groups policy. It requires open systems that enable flexibility for

both the business and employees. It should be possible to leap from one functional area to another, based on growth opportunities and learning challenges instead of diplomas and experience. New business opportunities go hand in hand with new development paths for employees. This is an innovative implementation of the common basis for careers.

1.4. Age management for 50+: case analysis

CONTEXT: Taking into account

- The changing demography
- The need for knowledge transfer, skills and competences
- The specific needs of each and each values and cultures
- The fact that we have to work longer
- The fact that we have several careers
- The fact that there are more older workers close to their retirement (baby boom generation)
- Raise in retirement age

ISSUE: To engage people over 50, women and men.

STAKEHOLDERS:

To adapt the work organization to the needs of different generations:

- Employers
- Map demographics
- Promote negotiations between stakeholders
- Employees
- Governments
- Information providers

Taking into account:

- Employers
- Employees
- Government

Promoting response intergenerational learning:

- Employees
- Employers
- Government

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To adapt the work organization to the needs of different generations:

- culture
- ergonomics
- flexible work time for all ages
- knowledge transfers
- age consciousness
- illustrate good practices
- promote new work organization design
- develop the awareness of the employees

Taking into account:

- Career vision

- Valuing competency mapping
- Skills vision to design specific careers
- Skills mapping should be a preoccupation for employees too
- Career management is a responsibility of both employees and employers
- Audit and evaluations
- Promoting response intergenerational learning
- Support generations to work together (sharing experiences)
- Train manager to age management (generation management)
- Promote intergenerational exchange (tutoring, mentoring)
- Specific plan for transfer (tutoring)
- (goal, methods, communications)
- Not to protect the competences
- New form of social and individual contract that take 'career' into account
- Government = promote and give resources to develop new methods to take intergenerational actions into account and make individual trainings possible

ASSUMPTIONS/RISKS:

- Stigmatization
- The work organization in general (flexibility)

GOOD PRACTICE: The introduction of "i-deals" within the Minerva Plan at KBC (a bank) in Belgium shows that it is possible to flexibly work after 50. Workers can choose to work less or to do a less strenuous job or to work outside their company.

LEVEL: We need companies that introduce new HR models and of course individuals that are willing to take the risk to change.

1.5. SME's: case analysis

CONTEXT: SME's have limited resources when it comes to career management and HRM. There are limited opportunities for employee development and there is scarce information about HR.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The members of this Future Search Conference recommend to the employers to:

- Use existing networks to share knowledge in HRM
- Collaborate in training
- Support/create employment opportunities within the network.

The members of this Future Search Conference recommend to the governments to:

- to provide information to and through the SME Networks
- Organise opportunities for networking
- Support SME's networks for sharing knowledge
- Exchange/share workforce
- Collaborate in training
- Exchange tools and good practice, e.g. in HRM.

ASSUMPTIONS/RISKS:

- Focus on day-to-day activities
- Not enough information
- Cannot see the benefits of collaboration

GOOD PRACTICE: Bike Valley is an initiative in Belgium that will link all SME's dealing with the biking industry to each other. They become stronger to the market but also for their employees. They are able to organise work, careers and HR in the same way as a larger company.

LEVEL: We need a system of co-sourcing that gives SME employers the possibility to share their workers in a mutual way.

2. Recommendations

Following recommendations are based on the Future Search sessions in June 2013 in Brussels. We try to link every recommendation with a good practice case. Each recommendation can be developed on the following three levels: system – company – individual. We will mark the level on which action should take place for each of the recommendations.

2.1. Individual level

2.1.1. Flexible careers: the key to committed employees at all ages?

The Flexible Belgian?

We Belgians are sedentary – also when it comes to our work. We don't like to change employers or jobs. This is clear when we ask Belgian employees for how many employers they would like to work, in an ideal world, throughout their entire career. About half say that they prefer to have few employers during their career; 18% would like to have many.

For me, a successful career is with ...		
Many different employers	In-between situation	Few different employers
17.8%	34.6%	47.7%

Seniority

More than half (53.6%) of our respondents have been employed longer than ten years by the same organisation. Nearly one out of every three employees (29.3%) say they have been employed by the same employer for more than 20 years. 16.1% have done the same job for more than 20 years (not necessarily with the same employer)!

	Seniority in the organisation	Seniority in the job
< 1 year	7.4%	8.9%
1 - 2 years	10.7%	15.3%
3 - 4 years	10.7%	14.3%
5 - 9 years	17.6%	22.6%
10 - 19 years	24.3%	22.9%
>= 20 years	29.3%	16.1%

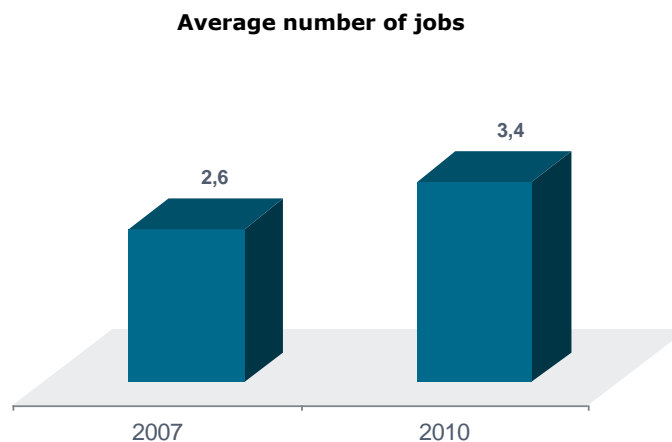
Employees with less than five years seniority in the same organisation have a lower seniority in the current position. Do these figures indicate that job rotation occurs more among younger employees than among older employees? We definitely see that moving to a new employer does not necessarily mean that the job changes, because seniority in the job is higher than in the organisation. We continue doing the same job but in different organisations. It's also striking that the percentage indicating higher seniority in the job drops for older employees

who have worked longer than 20 years with the same employer. This probably has to do with vertical career movements whereby employees with high seniority

and extensive experience and knowledge of the organisation climb to "higher" or managerial positions.

Job switches

As indicated by the high seniority figures, Belgians realize their career wishes in practice with a small number of job switches (half of them prefer to have few different employers). But this seems to be changing. In 2010, the average number of transitions rose to 3.4. 70% of all transitions were at the employee's own initiative.



Source: NV België 2007-2010

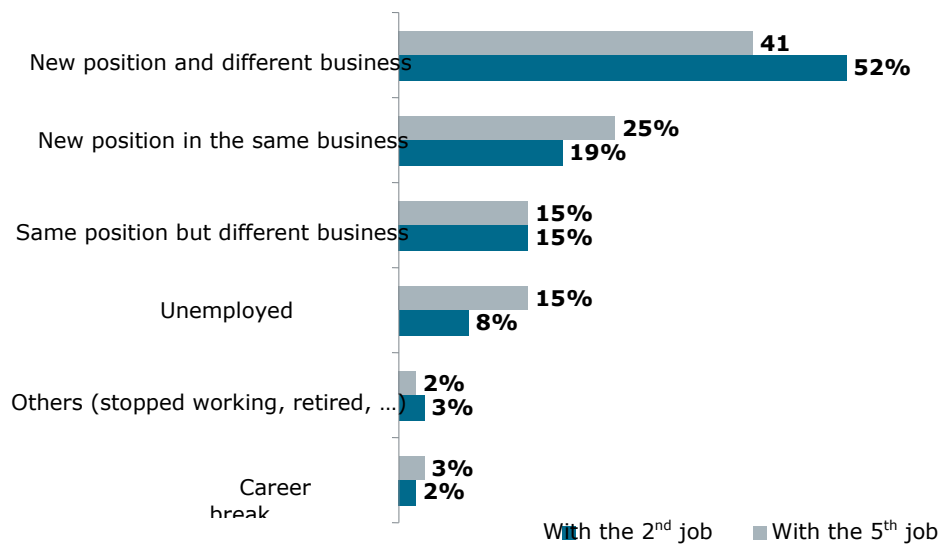
For the initial job switches, most people move to a different organisation. The more often a job switch has occurred, the higher the chance that the move was within the same company.

In the beginning of a career, young employees need to find a direction, become acquainted with the work environment, and learn what they can expect. Eventually, the grass may seem greener on the other side and they move to another organisation. As their occupational experience grows, they know what kind of corporate culture and values they prefer, and seek a new job in a company where they feel at home.

The link between the diploma and the job is also clearly not as strong as one might think. With 40% of working Belgians, there was no significant link between the first job and the diploma and this link becomes weaker after a few job switches. Organisations are starting to view diplomas as a kind of objectification of a basic level. The search will be based more on meta competences than learning capacity and future important competences such as creativity and cooperation.

10% of those 45 years of age or more have already made the step towards being self-employed at one time. This percentage is higher in men than in women. The increase in the number of sole traders has been noticed in the Netherlands for some time. Up till now this trend has only been observed with caution in Belgium.

What sort of job switches take place?



It is a positive development that not all job switches are promotions. 41% of these refer to a horizontal shift. A job with similar responsibilities or where the same level of knowledge is required but in a different specialist area or another department, sector or organisation will therefore also be seen as a sensible step in the career. We have to get away from the idea that only promotions make it worthwhile taking the step towards a new function.

An even greater taboo is demotion or the reduction in responsibilities or level of difficulty or required level of knowledge in the move to a new job. This is nevertheless a very good way of giving your career a new turn. After ten years of management, it is not a bad idea to take a step back and to move forward once more, motivated from an expert role. From top sales person to internal sales department can be a perfect step to get more time for family life. There are plenty of examples where a demotion can be a good career move.

The "successful" career

For me, a successful career is ...		
Prefer vertical move	In-between situation	Prefer horizontal move
33.7%	39.3%	27%

A successful career can mean different things for a Belgian. This can be concluded from the preceding figures. Another way of investigating this is by checking to which extent the ideal career of the Belgian is "filled". Is a full-time job still preferred, and which types of part-time work are preferred? Is more than a full-time job an option? The work-life balance and factors related to their phase in life play a role in this respect.

The "ideal" career

We asked the question directly: "What would be the most ideal career for you if you could plan it in advance?" Respondents could indicate per age category whether they wanted to work part-time or full-time.

	20- 24	25- 29	30- 34	35- 39	40- 44	45- 49	50- 54	55- 59	60- 64	65- 69	70- 74
Not working	11.0%	1.2%	1.2%	0.7%	0.7%	1.0%	2.0%	10.8%	48.3%	84.6%	96.3%
Part-time work (< half-time, e.g. 2/5)	2.2%	1.3%	2.3%	2.1%	2.2%	2.3%	7.5%	16.1%	18.7%	9.1%	2.2%
Half-time work	1.9%	3.4%	6.0%	5.8%	5.3%	5.3%	13.2%	20.8%	15.5%	3.4%	0.8%
Part-time work (> half-time, e.g. 4/5)	2.0%	5.7%	13.3%	16.0%	16.9%	23.0%	37.2%	33.7%	12.2%	1.7%	0.5%
Full-time work	63.0%	68.8%	65.5%	68.2%	71.1%	66.3%	39.4%	18.2%	5.1%	1.1%	0.3%
More than full-time work	19.8%	19.5%	11.6%	7.2%	3.8%	2.2%	0.8%	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%	0%

The trend is clear and a number of things stand out. The older the person, the less prepared he or she is to work (more than) full-time. Part-time work gains popularity as age increases, and the preferred number of days part-time work is inversely proportionate to age.

The Belgian considers the age category between 60 and 65 in nearly half the cases as the limit for his active career. Hardly 5% would want to work full-time. This means that part-time work at this age is still an option for half of the respondents.

2.1.2. Career competences at all ages?

Career competences are meta skills that enable people to assess their position in their career and what they need to develop to steer their career in the desired direction. It boils down to questions such as: What am I good at and what do I want to do or achieve? These are not easy questions for many people, although they are essentially very simple. During our studies, we never needed to answer these questions. We are not trained to manage our own employment future. Our education system is still geared towards a lifelong career with a single employer. This is an outdated vision of education and the labour market that produces graduates who are commodities for the employment market. The diploma tells us how the owner can be employed.

However, the return on investment of education is not equal to the match between diplomas and jobs. Education is not the same as training. Of course, education and work cannot be separated. For this reason, we should consider employment at an individual level and employment level at the labour market level. The type of study and diploma are not the most decisive factors.

The value of career competences lies in the ability to increase a person's employability. This is a person's ability to obtain or keep a new job (Rousseau, 2001). In other words, this is a key competence on our labour market. Employees who are proactive, who can adapt, and who can maintain their skills at a certain level, are valuable for both their current and their future employers.

These qualities are not only important for organisations but also provide job and income security for employees – irrespective of their age.

Knowledge (and experience?) half-life

There is a growing consensus that everyone should be involved with lifelong learning. The "half-life" of knowledge continues to shorten. Knowledge is passé before you know it. This is also the case for employees, both young and old. What you learn in the first year of higher education may no longer be relevant when you finally graduate. However, it's not because you are older that you may not have up-to-date knowledge. And is it correct to focus specifically on senior employees in this respect? Lifelong learning is for everybody.

"Experience" is the mantra of older employees that allows them to distinguish themselves from younger employees. Their value on the labour market increases thanks to experience and they can justify their position in the organisation. However, the value of "lots of experience" can be questioned. Is 40 years of experience so much more valuable than 20 years? Does an "experience cap" exist or can experience grow endlessly? And, are there differences between domains of experience or knowledge?

Career competences in practice

The majority of the employees feel that they are themselves responsible for shaping their careers. We must indeed get away from the old idea that careers are the organisation's concern and employees just sit pretty until they are offered something: a promotion, a project abroad, training, etc.

Employees must receive a framework from the organisation within which they themselves can take initiative. They must be stimulated by HR and the manager into taking action.

Do you take action yourself to shape your career?



Half the Belgian employees follow vacancies in job magazines or online. A large group works in projects that mean added value for their CVs and a third are busy building up a network. Men work earlier on their network (40%) than women (29%). Other action regarding careers is however rather limited.

Less than one in five wishes or dares to request a career interview or to seek a mentor in the organisation, let alone start career guidance outside the organisation. Older persons would rather seek career guidance outside the organisation and in larger organisations and people are quicker to request training that is not linked to their positions.

Not every employee is inclined to discuss individual career agreements with his or her employer. The career mindset and the estimated "market value" of one's own competences are decisive to be able to (or dare) negotiate career preferences. If you have a self-steering attitude towards your own career or if you believe you have skills which are valuable for the organisation, you can make more individual agreements. This is a challenge for organisations who want to give their employees the ownership of their career and help them assume this self-steering role, but on the other hand to be prepared for the increasing demand for customised careers which are the result of it.

2.1.3. Flexible integration of work-family-lifelong learning-free time: case analysis

CONTEXT: By taking into account that the labour market is getting increasingly complex and that the boundary between work and private life is getting less distinctive, and in order to ensure that the balance between flexibility for the enterprises and adequate security for the workforce is in place.

ISSUE: In order to ensure that regular update and work-life balance legislations takes place at the various levels of government. Government engage in work-life balance awareness campaigns that target workers, employers and other key stakeholders including education and career services.

STAKEHOLDERS: The members of this Future Search Conference recommend to all stakeholders responsible for this topic that:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- There should be a clear commitment to achieve the right conditions that enable every worker to have an appropriate work-life balance
- Human resources managers should support work life balance initiatives by advocating opportunities for new/ flexible working models.
- Equal access should be provided to all members of the workforces to ensure that the provision of services, resources, information, enabling appropriate work life balance is responsive to their changing needs.

ASSUMPTIONS/RISKS:

- Adequate resources are in place
- Gender stereotyping is overcome
- All stakeholders consider or view work life balance as a societal value

GOOD PRACTICE: The introduction of "flexiwork" at the AG Insurance and "future of work" SD Worx offices in Belgium. Every worker can choose one or two

days per week to work from home. The number of sick leave decreases and the engagement increases.

LEVEL: We need a system that will break with the classical triad of learning – working – pension and that will introduce models of career accounting. Of course companies are able to start by themselves based on the existing legal system.

2.2. Company level

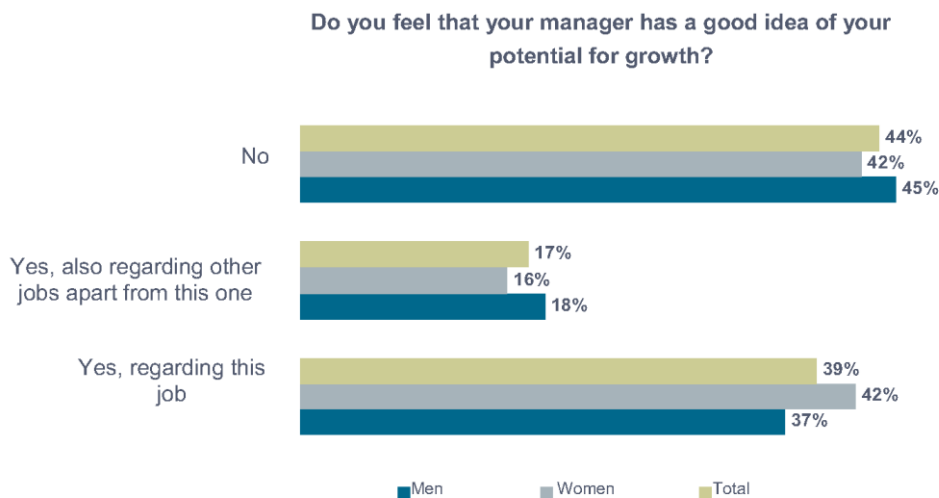
2.2.1. Career guidance

Expectations regarding career guidance

We asked employees what they thought of career guidance in their organisation. Only 28% of Belgians feel that the organisation does enough to develop their careers.



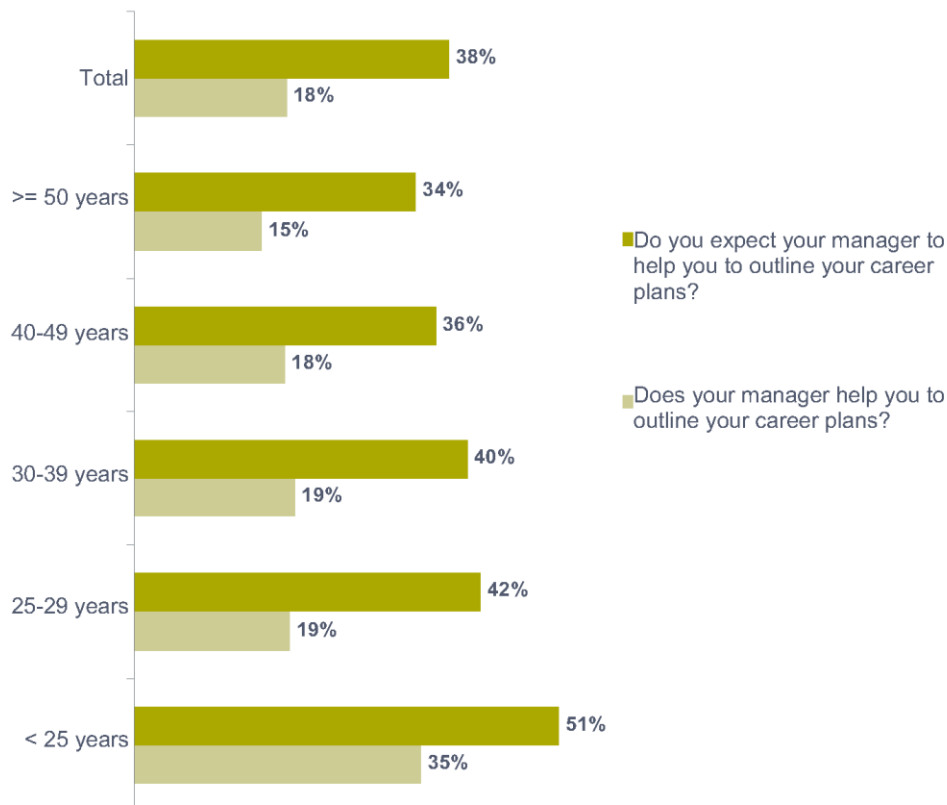
Talent is unknown in the organisation to begin with. 44% feel that their managers do not have a good idea of their potential for growth. Neither managers nor HR carry out any surveys as to talent or competences outside the function when recruiting. If there are efforts in this area, this is limited to certain groups such as High Potentials or management.



A discrepancy exists between the expected career guidance and the guidance an employee says he actually receives. Note: More experienced employees in particular expect more guidance than they actually receive.

Career guidance is generally provided at the beginning of the career and neglected once the employee has reached a certain position. However, senior employees also require career interviews and information about careers.

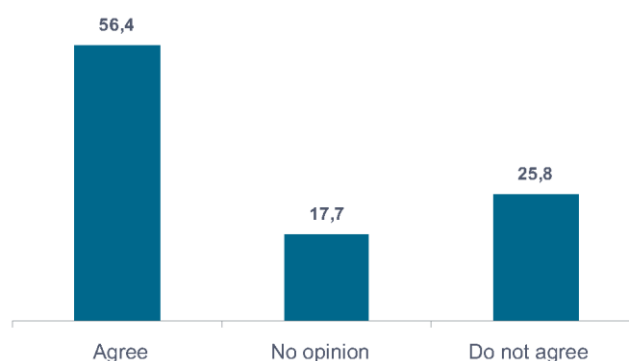
Managers and career guidance



Source: NV België 2008

Moreover, our labour legislation systems are an obstacle to switching jobs in a flexible manner. 56% claim for example that they do not want to switch jobs due to their seniority.

It will not be so easy for me to switch jobs due to the seniority that I have accumulated.



Careers are a key theme for organisations and employees. They are the central pivotal component that connects both. Employees contribute to the results of the organisation throughout their career. Organisations can maximise this contribution through the career policy and by paying attention to what employees expect and can offer, given their competences, talents and the phase in their life. However, the preceding figures give an unfavourable picture of the career dynamics of Belgian employees. The reality does not always correspond with what is written about mobility, taking control of one's own career, understanding career values and talents when making choices, the importance of career guidance, etc. And this is probably one of the reasons why the rate of absenteeism is so high.

2.2.2. I-deals

A good discussion with the employee with respect to his expectations and wishes is a basic requirement in a sustainable HR approach. The idiosyncratic deal is the result of such a discussion between the manager and employee. The i-deal is between the formal employment agreement on one hand and the unspoken expectations of the psychological contract on the other hand.

Organisations must organise an i-deal discussion with all their employees, perhaps in the first instance with older employees. Each (older) employee will have an individual discussion with his manager as to how he or she wishes to continue his or her career in the coming years. A condition for the success of such a "deal" is that the manager, as well as communication skills and an open mind has also acquired a clear framework from the organisation within which he or she can carry out this discussion.

The following questions may arise during an i-deal discussion:

- How do you see your career in the coming years?
- What do you think is physically and psychically still feasible?

- What are your talents and interests that you wish to use?
- What is important for you financially, within the total remuneration package?
- Are there any other working conditions that you wish to discuss?
- What would you still like to learn/develop further?

And it should of course be discussed here in clear terms as to what the department or the organisation expects of the employee.

- What minimum results must be delivered?
- What tasks must be completed?
- What skills are needed?

It is crucial to work individually on this and to motivate employees from the point of view of their strengths and desires for the coming years.

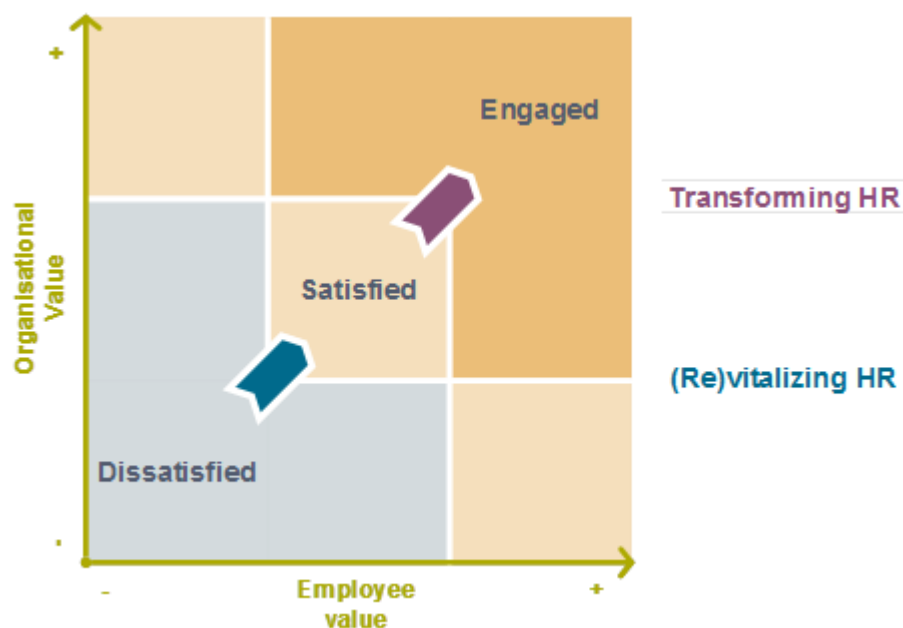
We find few organisations in which 'i-deals' are part of a career policy that places individual responsibility central. This means there is a possibility of 58% individual flexibility in career paths. The theory that employees must initially feel good themselves about their careers, does not therefore necessarily imply the need for a customised approach for everyone when it comes to career development. I-deals in regards to career paths are in many large organisations only set aside for certain target groups such as employees with management potential or critical competences.

The majority of these (85%) did however state that competence development can be adjusted to individual needs. I-deals are therefore generally possible for all employees in regards to competence development.

2.2.3. Engagement

Striving towards satisfied employees is important. HR has understood that focusing on the individual needs of employees has an impact on employee retention. The many satisfaction surveys that have permeated into organisations over the last few years demonstrate this. Swinging back and forth from results-driven to human-driven cannot continue. A good balance is therefore required. Satisfaction in itself does not provide any guarantees of a strong performance and organisational results. On the other hand, engaged employees guarantee this by definition.

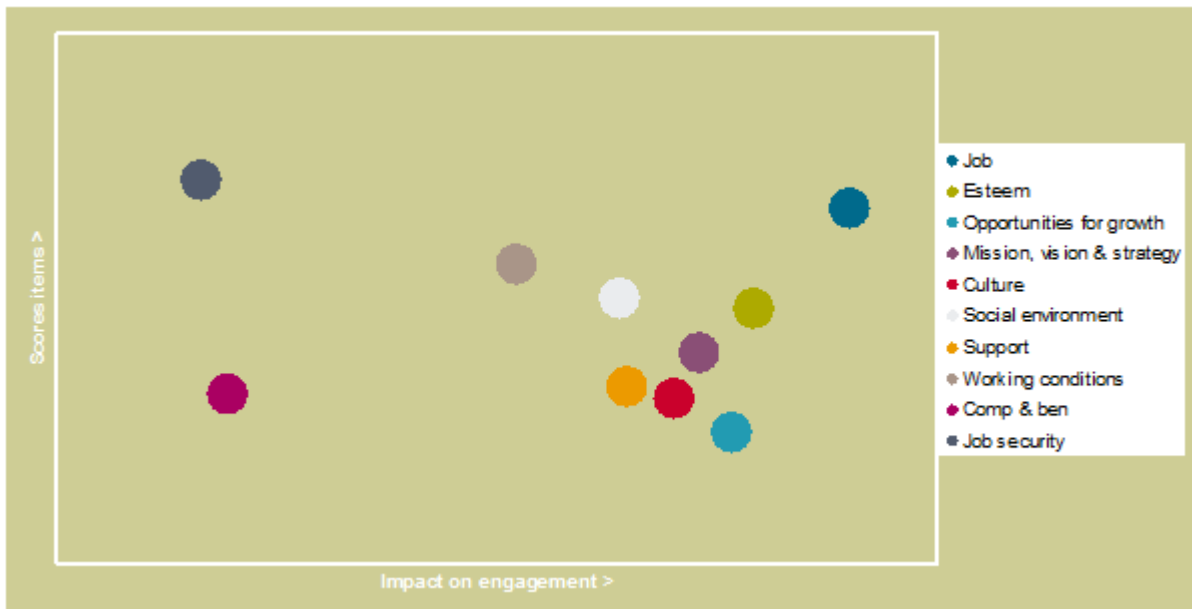
Without labelling employee satisfaction as unimportant, we will qualify things. Satisfaction is a necessary basis, but it is insufficient for lasting organisational success. The following step-wise approach is more accurate and refined. The first step means examining what needs to be done in the first instance to evolve from a dissatisfied employee population to a satisfied population. Step 2 means ensuring that satisfied employees also become engaged employees who perform strongly of their own volition and vouch for the success of the organisation in the long term.



Impact on engagement

The most recent engagement survey in April 2010 shows that the different drivers have varying degrees of impact on engagement. Some are thus stronger drivers than others. The diagram below illustrates this.

The biggest drivers in order of importance are the job, esteem, growth opportunities, the mission, vision and strategy and the culture.



By job we mean the extent to which employees feel challenged in the work that they do, the job content corresponds to their personal interests, the work is regarded as worthwhile, there is sufficient variety in the range of work, they have sufficient responsibility in their job, they can do their work sufficiently autonomously and independently, and the work adequately matches their knowledge and ability. Despite the big impact of the job on engagement, employees do have the impression that this is largely satisfied by their employer.

Esteem means recognition by the manager and management for the contribution of the employee, as well as the extent to which employees have a say in

company policy and have the impression that their opinion is taken into account. This last item is also considered as a form of recognition.

The growth opportunities aspect relates to the extent to which the employee has the opportunity to develop his or her talents, can learn on the job, is guided in his or her career development, is presented with opportunities to share knowledge and experiences with others, and the manager is considered as a good coach and talent manager.

By mission, vision and strategy we mean the extent to which employees have confidence in the vision of the organisation and that of management on the future of the department. They must also agree with the strategy and clearly know what is expected of them and where their priorities lie.

Culture relates to the presence of a respectful relationship of trust between the manager, management, and the employee. The extent to which there is open, honest and full communication plays a considerable role here. It is the job of management to propagate the corporate

When we single out these motives only with respect to older employees, we also arrive at job content, recognition and growth possibilities as elements with the greatest impact on commitment. With a sustainable career policy, one can anticipate these three important motives both regarding younger and older employees and thus maintain commitment levels of all employees.

2.2.4. Talent recognition: case analysis

CONTEXT: Because of a lack of younger labour force replacing the older one which will take place in the future. The need to discover and develop talents in the context of globalization. Specification: a special ability as a part of competency in order to do a certain kind of work at a certain level.

STAKEHOLDERS: Policy makers

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Build an educational framework strategically oriented towards talent valorization (at national and EU level)
- Talent management
- Special programs supporting and encouraging talent (e.g. talent incubators)
- Awareness campaigns (e.g. towards leaders and managers)
- Promoting organizational framework within companies in order to discover talents based on:
 - Cross-functional teams
 - Cross-generational teams
 - Inter-divisional teams
 - Focus on talents at every
 - Evaluational / developmental stage (e.g. annual interview, 360° assessment ...)
 - Functional level
 - Age

Involving HR+ Line managers

- Talent based recruitment strategies
- At policy level (e.g. German dual model)
- At company level (e.g. assessment centres, ...)
- Authorities
- VET
- Social partners
- Business sector (SME, Corporations,...)
- Mass Media

ASSUMPTIONS/RISKS:

- Lack of awareness
- Contingency approaches focused on the emergency situation
- Lack of financial resources
- Lack of managerial skills

GOOD PRACTICE: Specially in the Netherlands they are introducing the notion of "career competences" and they are teaching them to students of the secondary schools.

LEVEL: New research in the Walloon part of Belgium (Dujardin, 2013) focuses on 'meta competences' that can be developed by companies and as a correlation with employability.

2.3. System level

2.3.1. Career platform

Creating a digital career platform bringing together information and instruments enabling employees and jobseekers to take their careers into their own hands. This platform enables workers and jobseekers to work on their own platform. It can form a step towards personal career support (career voucher). As well as registering skills and achievements from the past, this platform helps lay the focus on organising one's own working future (short and long term). The platform is an inspiration and a guide when taking one's own career into one's hands.

Possible sub-aspects on the platform:

- Mapping out strengths and interests
- Displaying future career and development options (five-year plan, scenarios, etc.)
- Simulating the impact of an amendment to the articles of association (temporary staff, self-employed, etc.) or other career stages (part-time work) on future wages, pensions and development possibilities
- Displaying alternative career paths (horizontal, vertical, fragmented, etc.)
- Developing your ideal career: What would you like to do, what skills do you need for this and how are these interconnected?
- Project management: when will this be started and with what? Tips, links and advice on networking, resources and proposing training, etc.

2.3.2 Financial incentives for career investments

Evaluate clear career initiatives (courses, job transitions, etc.) also financially. The government is already financially stimulating investments in sustainable development such as, for example, energy-saving measures in various ways. If

working longer and increasing activity are priorities, it makes sense to develop similar systems for investment in sustainable careers.

The word "career" is still for many employees a vague and barely comprehensible long-term concept. It unfolds within organisations and within a global context on which we see ourselves as having little hold. Few people are therefore actively involved with their career or lifelong learning.

An immediate and concrete win for workers/job seekers is on the other hand a financial advantage. Seeing an effect in the short-term of a career initiative that has been undertaken makes one's own career management concrete and tangible. Employability will also grow at the same time and more possible directions for the career will open up. Workers will thus have more control over the management of their own careers.

Financial stimuli can consist of a "job discount plus", a career bonus or even "tax career credits", for example for:

- mapping out skills on the career platform;
- going through digital career coaching and following up on the portal;
- internal or external job mobility;
- following courses or self study via various channels;

- the regular updating of experiences or future perspectives;
- participating in examinations and gaining certificates;
- being invited to job interviews.

The more active someone is with his or her career, the more credits are accumulated and the greater the job discount or career bonus. The financial incentive would therefore not just be aimed at workers and not be the same for everyone. The worker or jobseeker must do something for this and the following applies: the more active, the bigger the professional and financial benefit.

The benefits: a win-win-win

The combination of a career platform and incentives is supported and stimulated for all workers and jobseekers. There is no difference between strong and weak profiles on the employment market, everyone can benefit from this initiative.

There is no threat from this; there is no negative stimulus or obligation.

- There need not be any cost to employees and they still benefit directly via increased de/employability, overview of talents, visibility on the platform, support for internal HR service, etc.

- It is engaging for employees. They will gain control over their own careers and are encouraged to take action.

- Employment market mediators, such as the Flemish public employment service VDAB can play a full role on the career platform.

- The government will make an effort regarding investment and get a more active employment market in return.

Such an activating policy not only fulfils the employability objectives but also the ideas of lifelong learning.

2.3.4. Managing transitions through lifespan: case analysis

CONTEXT: While taking into account the disappearing of the security of the jobs, based on the old model of one employer/one job for a life, due to globalisation and rapid technological changes there is a strong rhetorical emphasis on the security of transitions instead of the security of jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- System level/ MS: In order to ensure career security for all, supportive systems must be developed in a patchwork career friendly way. Which includes e.g. individual working accounts & customised lifelong career portfolios, intergenerational care systems etc.
- Sectoral/regional/ organization levels: New forms of work organisations, new flexible HR management (e.g. flexible working time, individual working accounts, (link to the SSS), regular access to skill assessment and development of an individual career portfolio with transferable skills.

GOOD PRACTICE: The introduction of a flexicurity system like Denmark is using, is a good example of how the labour market can be forced to be more open to career transitions.

LEVEL: We need a system that will break with building 'golden cages' around their workers to assure that they will stay within the same company for their entire working lifespan. Of course companies are able to start by themselves based on the existing legal system.

2.3.5. Low skilled people: case analysis

CONTEXT: While taking into account the lack of validation of low skilled jobs and the stereotypes about low skilled people.

ISSUE: in order to assure the equal distribution of resources power (education and leadership) and to support unemployed and low skilled people to deal with their career?

STAKEHOLDERS: The public administration (authority)

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Education from the primary school. It has to provide people/ children/ students the knowledge of the real value and benefits for the society of all kind of jobs
- Provide social economy enterprises
- Validate the competences and the experience
- Start up support for small business
- To provide entrepreneurship at school
- To promote light network between school and business

ASSUMPTIONS/RISKS: Resistance to change the mentality, the cultural stereotypes, hidden circuits in economy.

GOOD PRACTICE: In the province of Limburg (Belgium) VDAB (Flemish public employment service) built one campus for vocational training. Every participant and every employer can network, also the low skilled people. The integration results of low skilled persons in companies are marvellous.

LEVEL: We need a system that will integrate all kind of people to each other.

3. Conclusion: sustainable careers as a challenge

In order to have sustainable careers in the future, we see the following three sets of challenges.

3.1. System: supporting career transitions

- Equal access to information
- Support transition at the employee level => entrepreneur / new career focus
- Making informed decisions with full awareness of the implications
- Empowering individuals to become motivated to manage their adaptation to change
- Link between education + enterprises (incl. better information on career choices)
- Implementing a career account
- Breaking the classical triad: learning – working – pension

3.2. Company: creating flexible working environments

- Flexible working models/organization
- HRM Networks/Sharing
- New forms of work organization – Flexible working models
- Work-life balance
- Flexible HRM
- Workability

Organisations should work out a sustainable career policy with the following challenges:

- Focus on availability and feasibility,
- A career policy is more than a retention policy,
- Thinking beyond the current needs,
- Developments in supply and demand in employment can be anticipated but are not themselves an objective as regards the planning,
- Taking a wide reference framework, as that offers more possibilities for solutions,
- Recognising the inherent subjectivity in careers,
- Ensuring that the individual remains the owner and that this implies responsibility,
- Create a context that supports and activates.

3.3. Individual: fostering competencies and talents

- Knowledge management
- Validation of experiences and competences
- Creating talent pools/ Cross functional teams
- Acknowledgement of the individual's needs/aspirations

Individuals must learn:

- How to develop career competence,
- Thinking about careers starts at the beginning and has nothing to do with age or stage in life.

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