



Active ageing: tools and strategies to value and engage senior employees in companies

RESULTS OF IMPRONTA ETICA'S LABORATORY ON ACTIVE AGEING

In collaboration with:



July 2014

The following paper presents the results of the

Laboratory attended by Impronta Etica's members:

Active ageing: tools and strategies to value and engage senior employees in companies

Held in 2013

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Special thanks to the members of Impronta Etica that took part in the Laboratory:



ASSOCIAZIONE
NAZIONALE
COOPERATIVE
DETTAGLIANTI
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SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION

Why should you use this document?

- Because the topic of evolving demographic inside companies is becoming more relevant especially considering the increasing retirement age;
- Because it will enable companies to better value their resources in terms of human capital; moreover, it will give an opportunity to re-shape and improve human resources policies to take into account long-life career path for employees and the creation of new types of professional development plans;
- Because it provides concrete tools for companies that can be used to analyze the current environment and to plan a project in support of the already existing management policies;
- Because the activities and tools presented in the document have been carried out by the member companies of Impronta Etica and the benefits they have gained are presented as well;

1.1 Introduction

The following paper “Active ageing: tools and strategies to value and engage senior employees in companies” is the outcome of the Laboratory organized by Impronta Etica and SCS Azioninnova Consulting, attended by Impronta Etica’s members, that took place between March 2012 and July 2013. This paper is an easy-to-use tool intended for companies that are interested in facing the topic of active ageing.

The Lab took place in the broader context of a research project about diversity in companies which started with the publication of a document on this topic in 2007 and followed by another Lab that aimed at creating tools for the communication and engagement of foreign employees in firms¹.

Furthermore, the Lab is connected to other activities carried out by Impronta Etica, namely the promotion of the “Diversity Charter for equal opportunities and treatment at the workplace” which was published in 2009 in Italy by different partners, such as Impronta Etica, Fondazione Sodalitas, AIDAF, AIDDA, UCID and the National Equal Opportunities Advisor Office with the support of Labour Ministry and Equal Opportunity Ministry ².

The aforementioned researches and projects were started because of the relevance of the topic; the importance of this issue is linked to the belief that diverse people inside an organization constitute an asset and that projects to raise awareness about this topic should be a priority. In fact, being able to value differences and to leverage on them, can lead companies towards innovation, retention and development of their employees, the creation of a positive collaborative environment and the overall ability to adapt and anticipate transformation in a fast-changing business environment. Simply said, it enables a company to gain a competitive advantage.

The two main objectives of diversity management are people wellbeing and organizational performance. The first one consists in the creation of a management plan which is coherent with the available resources and the goals which can consequently be reached. The second, is about the creation of a strategic plan to monitor results. Different studies support these findings by highlighting the fact that the integration of diversity management in the business strategy and the implementation of policies on inclusion generate many different positive results such as the improvement of managerial styles, better performances in communication, HR management, goal

¹ The document (Italian version) can be downloaded at this [link](#)

² For more information: www.cartapariopportunita.it

setting and planning³. Moreover, they are in line with the experiences shared by the participant of the Lab.

Active ageing, the topic of the Lab, is now a relevant topic in Europe, which celebrated the [European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations](#) in 2012. In fact, Europe can face the challenges of a changing demographic only through Active Ageing from which future well-being and social cohesion depend.

[Europe 2020](#) strategy aims at offering an intelligent, sustainable and inclusive growth with high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. This strategy is based on five goals which the European Union must reach by 2020 and include an increase of 75% of employment for people between 20 and 64 years of age and a decrease of 20 million people living in poverty or social exclusion. **Active ageing is an essential part of the 2020 European strategy** whose success largely relies on the ability to **include the over 50 category in and outside the labour market**⁴.

1.2 Objectives and expected results of the Lab

The Lab had the objective of engaging member companies of Impronta Etica, which share the need of addressing the topic of active ageing, to confront on innovative and responsible practices to find solutions through **co-creation, engagement and collaboration**.

The companies that took part in the Lab are: Cadiai, Granarolo, Emil Banca, ANCD e Gruppo Hera⁵.

The underlying idea of the Lab was to develop, together with the companies, the culture of age management starting with their own experiences and building on the already existing know-how of SCS Azioninnova Consulting which planned and managed the Lab together with Impronta Etica. In fact, SCS Azioninnova Consulting has been studying the topic of Age Management, developing projects with clients and realizing a research

³ Further researches on this topic can be found at: [Bocconi Observatory on diversity management](#); [EU on diversity management](#).

⁴ For more information: ["The EU contribution to active ageing and solidarity between generations"](#)

⁵ A Presentation of the participating companies can be found in the appendix

project in collaboration with the Faculty of Psychology (University of Bologna) called: "Age management: perceptions from companies and employees"⁶.

The aforementioned experiences have been used as a starting point for this work which aimed at creating a feasibility study for each firm that was used to implement an **age management strategy** for the participants.

The concrete steps followed for this research actively engaged the participant firms, starting from deepening the knowledge on the topic, an analysis of data and of the company culture, the creation of action steps to implement the strategy to conclude with the feasibility plans.

Structure of the paper

Following, after a brief explanation of the topic, the development and the results of the Lab will be discussed; the outcome presented will regard both the good case practices analyzed and the tools adopted during the Lab which can be used as a framework for anyone interested in the integration of an Age Management plan inside their business strategy.

Chapter 2 deals with the **presentation of the action steps** of the Lab together with the explanation of objectives set and tools used.

Chapter 3 is dedicated entirely to the **presentation of the tools**, while **chapter 4** summarizes the **experiences** of the member companies of Impronta Etica.

⁶ The results of the research project can be found in paragraph 1.4 of this document

1.3 Why companies should deal with age management

Many developed countries are becoming increasingly interested about the topic of ageing of the workforce and are seeking strategies to value their “over 50” employees. The **demographic transition** observed in European countries means that the increasing ageing population is becoming a relevant topic and that the promotion of initiatives for the well-being of the elderly is an imperative to ensure an **active ageing** of the work force.

The lowering of the fertility rate together with the increase of life expectancy are leading society towards an increment of **senility** which, as a consequence, is altering the labour market, pension funds and the health sector. Reforms with the objective of extending the working life of the population, thus incrementing the retirement age, have been made necessary by the increase in the average age of total population. The consequence of this process is the fact that European companies will witness an increasing proportion of senior employees, the so-called *baby boomers*, and they will have to manage this changing work force.

In Italy, the percentage of the “over 50” population has grown from 33% in 1990, to almost 40% in 2011 and the trend is expected to continue in the next decades. Moreover, it has been predicted that by 2060 we will be able to observe a **flattening of the demographic curve** caused by an increase of the “over 60” segment and a reduction of the “under” population that will ensure a more uniform distribution of age group in the population.

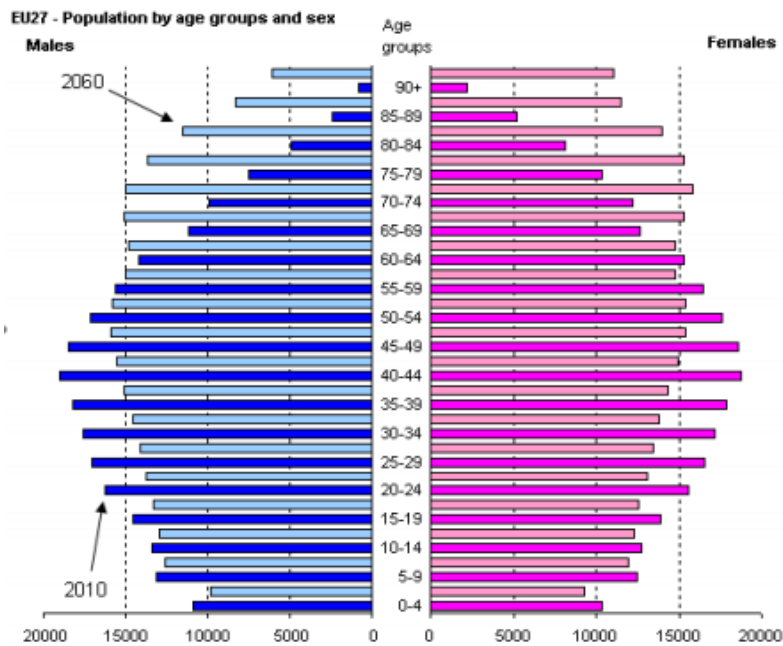
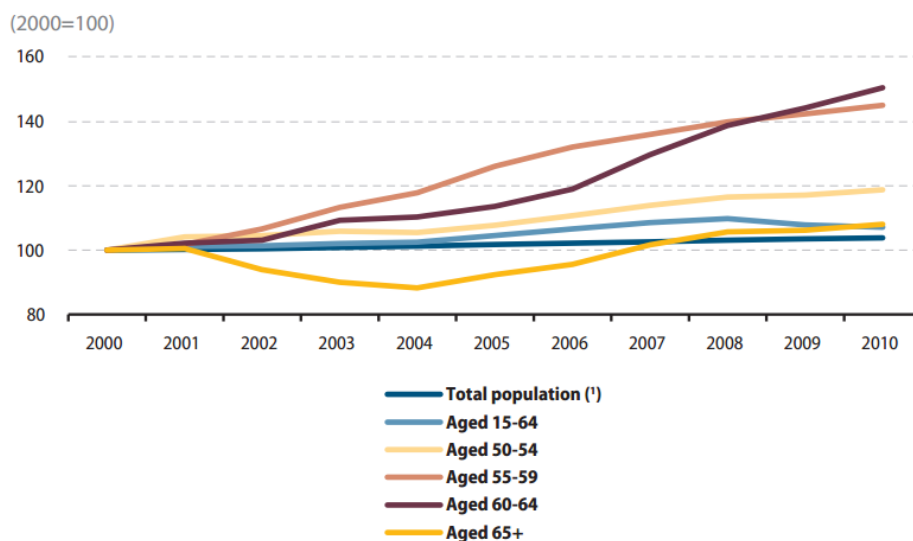


Figure 1 – Population projections 2010-2060 (source: European Commission and Eurostat)

From the figures shown before it is possible to notice that demographic changes will affect the labour market as well. Specifically, if considered that nowadays 25% of the workforce is aged between 50 and 64 years, future projections expect this figure to increase in time.

Between 2000 and 2010, we have witnessed a material increase in the number of workers “over 50”, especially of those over 55, compared with a modest increment of the total population (fig.2). The result of this data is a significant increasing trend of senior employees in organizations, therefore, the ageing of the work force.



(¹) Based on information for 1 January of each year.

Figure 2 – Workers classified by age groups (Eurostat Statistical Book 2012)

This trend is stronger in regard of certain sectors. For example, it is possible to notice from figure 3 that Public Administration (PA), Industry, Services and Utilities have an equal distribution of senior workers while the proportion is quite limited in the Finance and retail sectors (also because they employ less workers overall)⁷.

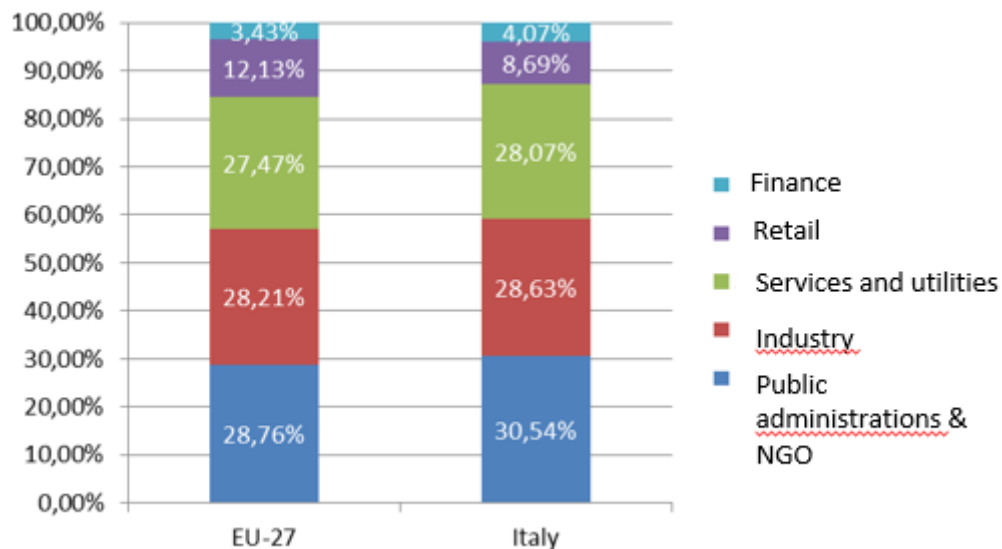


Figure 3 – Percentage of senior workers employed in different sectors compared to the total (data from Eurostat, database online Ifsa_pganws)

The information presented up to now show that this trend is already of primary relevance and it acquires even more importance when considering the effects that **pension reforms** will have on the average retirement age.

With the Labour Reform “Fornero” (L. 92/2012) approved on the 1st of January 2012 (or from the 1st of January 2018 for women that are independent workers) by the government directed by Mario Monti, the new retirement age in Italy is now settled at 66 years of age⁸. This reform determines that the retirement age has to be updated,

⁷ We aggregated data in order to reconstruct industry sectors necessary for our analysis:

- “Industry” sector includes: Manufacturing, Mining and quarrying, Construction.
- “Services and Utilities” covers: Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply; Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities; Transportation and storage; Accommodation and food service activities; Information and communication; Real estate activities; Professional, scientific and technical activities; Administrative and support service activities; Other service activities.
- “PA e NPO” sectors consists of: Public administration and defence; compulsory social security; Human health and social work activities.
- “Finance” combines: Financial and insurance activities.
- “GDO” includes: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles.

⁸ To notice that the reform introduces the possibility of early retirement that is not linked to age and can be granted only in certain cases (even with penalties) for those that in 2012 have

considering age requirements and pension plan, based on the evolution of life expectancy calculated by the Italian national statistics institute (Istat).

In other words: the retirement age is expected to increase as a consequence of higher life expectancy and therefore it has been forecasted that by 2060, the average retirement age in Europe will increment by 1,9 years for men and 2,4 years for women.

From figure 4, it is possible to notice that Italy is late in implementing retirement and pension plan policies and for this reason the change between today and 2060 will be even more relevant.

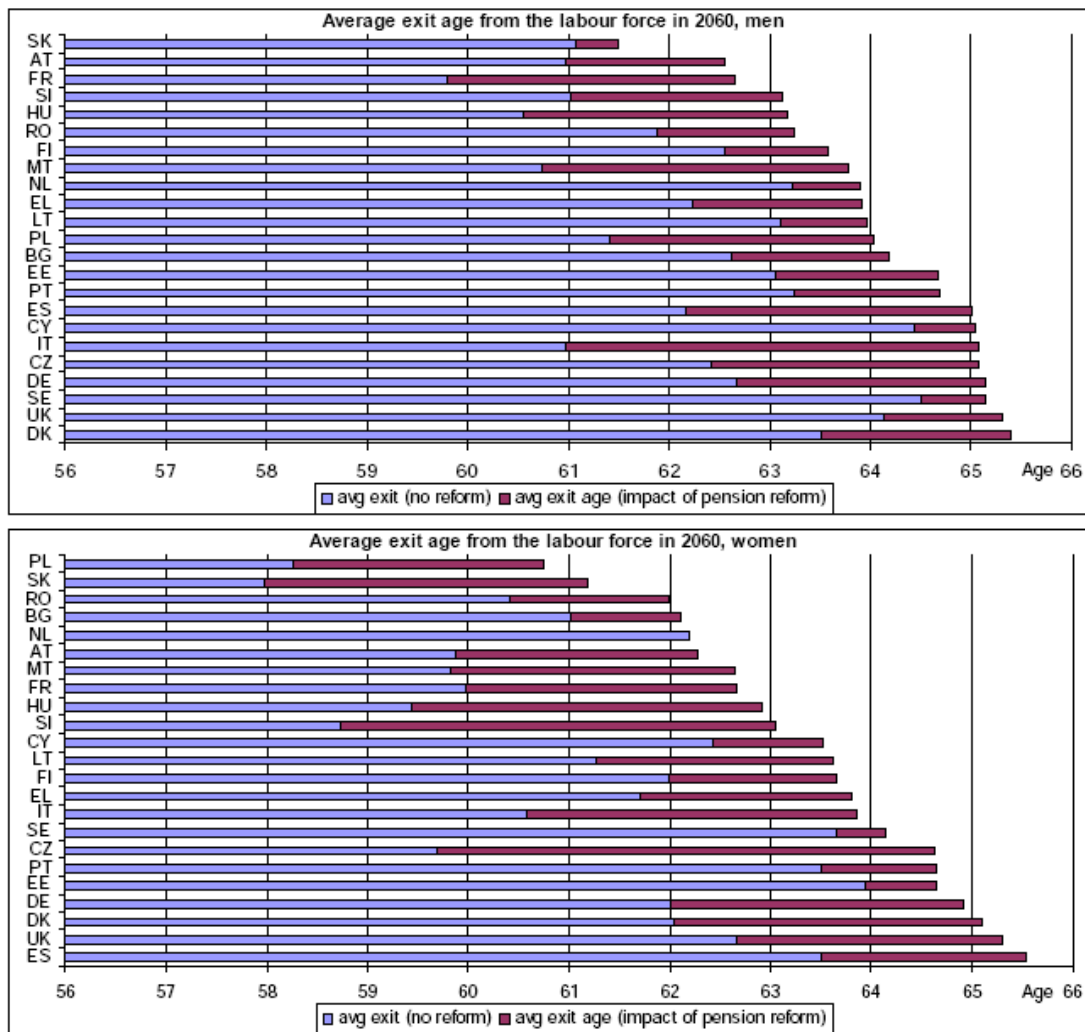


Figure 4 – Impact of reforms on the effective average retirement age (Commission services, EPC)

To conclude, the topic of ageing population will become more relevant in the future because of the increasing proportion of senior employees in the labour market; for this

collected pension payments of 42 years and 1 month (men) or 41 years and 1 month if women. Moreover, workers that perform physically strenuous jobs can retire up to 3 years before the average retirement age.

reason both companies and society will have to find new solutions to deal with this emerging trend. It is clear that in order to value senior workers and to ensure their active contribution until retirement, it is important to create new strategies that are able to exploit this trend in a competitive way. We believe, together with others, that this topic represents one of the biggest challenges that will be faced in the following ten years⁹.

For this reason, it is important to adopt an age management strategy which starts from an internal assessment of the organization and aims at developing and at implementing a plan. A plan that is intended for both short-term productivity and a long-term management strategy that accounts for the entire working life of employees.

From this perspective, SCS Azioninnova Consulting and the University of Bologna have started a collaboration for a research which tackles the perception of companies about seniority and collects good case practices in regard of international age management strategies.

1.4 Results of SCS Azioninnova Consulting's project on "Age Management: a comparison between companies and employees"

Since 2011 SCS Azioninnova Consulting and the University of Bologna have conducted a research project with the objective of gaining more information about psycho-social phenomena that characterize seniority and organizational practices which support senior employees. The research was developed on two levels and involved persons from different sectors and from different regions of the country¹⁰.

To begin with, the first aim of the research, carried on through interviews to HR managers, was to gain information regarding the perception of organizations on the topic of age management and to collect existing good case practices about this topic. At the same time, considering that HR practices do not represent the only way to ensure an active contribution of senior workers, the research addressed the role of other factors that influence motivation. Namely, the perception of organizations over the productivity

⁹ Cfr. Working and ageing (Emerging theories and empirical perspectives)

¹⁰ About 60 companies were interviewed for the research and about 600 surveys were delivered to senior employees.

and reliability of senior employees, their ability to complete tasks and their capacity to adapt to changes.

Secondly, the research analyzed the impact that the work environment can have on the "over 50" category and how this influences their participation. This was possible because senior workers filled a survey that aimed at measuring their perception over different topics; the results showed a link between organizational culture, motivation, self-efficacy, attitude and participation in the organization (so-called OCB, that is the attitude to perform tasks or adopt certain behaviors that go beyond what is strictly asked to the employee).

The underlying hypothesis of the research is that HR practices on Age Management are considered as an opportunity and consequently result in an increase of motivation and participation, only if the organization successfully manages to communicate a positive image of the skills of senior employees inside the organization.

The thesis is that to ensure that "over 50" workers feel confident about their professional skills, it is fundamental that there is a positive work environment that believes in the relevance of their contribution. Moreover, self-efficacy influences the motivation of senior workers and helps them to perceive HR practices as positive.

The information collected have confirmed the initial hypothesis of the Lab and have provided relevant suggestions for firms that intend to start age management policies within their organization.

From the interviews with senior workers it was clear that there is a **link between organizational beliefs and the self-confidence** that senior employees have in regard of their own professional skills. This means that if the "over 50" category recognizes to be perceived as reliable, adaptable and productive, then in return their actual ability and performance in the workplace will increase. On the contrary, if the organization provides a negative image of senior workers, they will underestimate their potential contribution, decreasing their performances.

However, HR practices carried out by the organization, are perceived as positive only if they are believed to be reliable. Nevertheless, this relationship is indirect and linked to self-efficacy. In other words, **the more senior workers recognize that the organization perceives them as reliable, the more they will feel effective** and, as a consequence, they will recognize the value of the practices created for them. Lastly, as expected, both **positive organizational beliefs and own self-efficacy perception, play an important role in the engagement of the "over 50" category**

and their motivation. The **adoption of an extra-role attitude** (OCB), that are certain behaviors of employees which are not part of their formal job requirements but advantageous for organizations, **increases when there are positive organizational beliefs** especially for what concerns the sense of belonging, conscientiousness and altruism.

The effect that organizational beliefs have on activating extra-role behaviors is indirect and mainly related to the role played **by self-efficacy, engagement in the workplace and to the perceived value of the organizational practices.**

The relationship that surfaced from the research helped identifying **three main interventions** that can be implemented to ensure an active and valuable contribution of outgoing employees (fig.6). Specifically, SCS Azioninnova Consulting and the University of Bologna agree on the fact that fostering positive organizational beliefs that value senior workers, activate a virtuous circle which has a positive effect on the self-efficacy of the “over 50” category. Self-efficacy, in fact, has such an important role in the motivation of workers that deserves targeted actions to strengthen it and potentiate it.

Moreover, it has been noticed that activating initiatives for the senior “population” has the effect of increasing the appreciation of the practices themselves. In particular, those practices that encourage professional development, for example, career counseling and trainings. In general, if senior employees have a positive experience with the good practices of the organization, then they will have an incentive to perceive them as more useful and as a result, they will engage more often in extra-role behaviors (OCB).

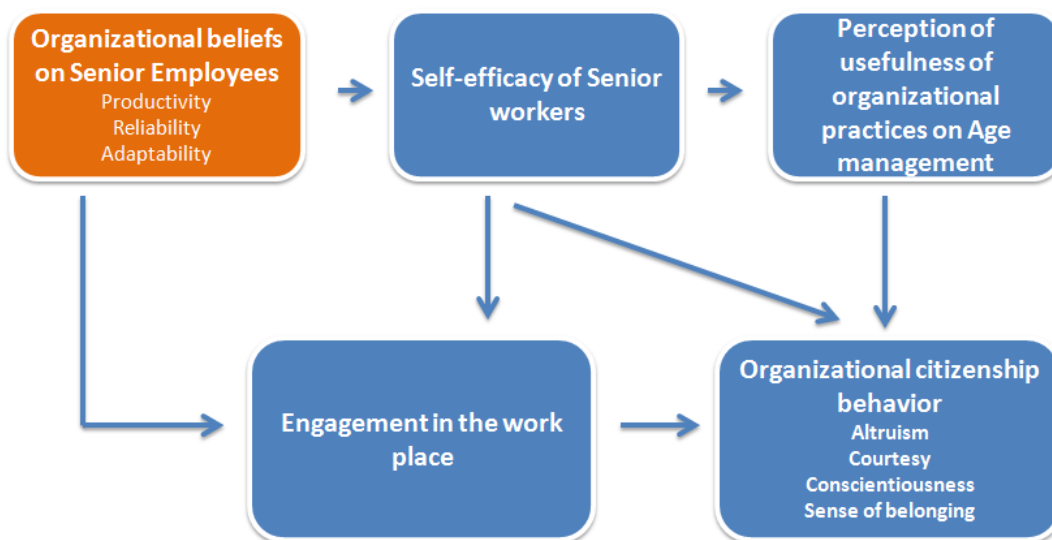


Figure 6 –Best strategies to value senior employees (SCS Azioninnova Consulting)

1.5 Reasoning and structure of the Lab

Considering the interesting results of the research we wanted to give the opportunity to companies within the Lab to reflect about the topic of “active ageing” and to provide information about the **opportunities that can arise from a long-term Age Management strategy.**

The steps that we activated in the Lab represent the right framework for any company that wants to start tackling the issue, adapting it to its own context:

- Understanding of the topic and its urgency within the organization context
- Survey about organizational culture
- Identification of priority action steps
- Feasibility analysis to create the framework for strategy planning

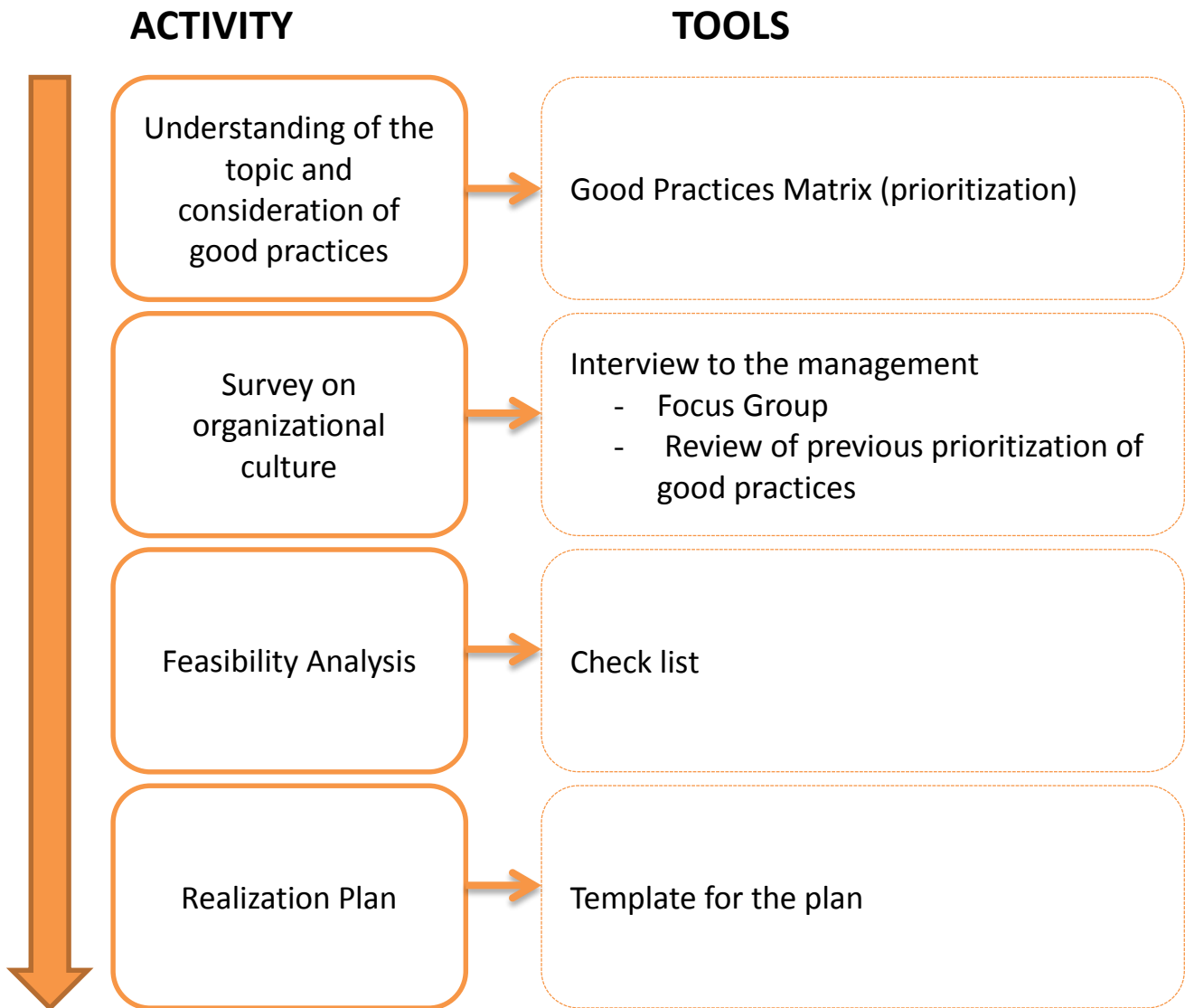
In the following sections the different steps will be explained in detail.



**SECTION TWO – POSSIBLE STEPS TOWARDS AN AGE
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

2.1 Action steps for the analysis and identification of solutions

The action steps that a company should follow to find solutions to the issue of ageing work force are described in the following figure:



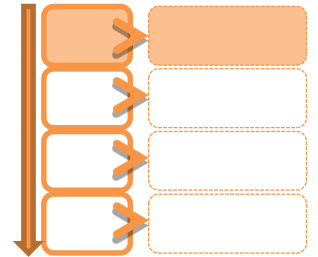
After an initial consideration of the possible good practices of Age Management and their prioritization in respect of the company context, the second step is to analyze the company culture and the organizational beliefs regarding senior employees. This phase should include both the management and the employees.

Starting from the results of the first analysis, the second step is to prioritize the good practices that can be enforced, to identify specific projects that can be started and analyze the feasibility of the strategy to ensure a sound plan.

STEP 1 – First observation: possible good practices and prioritization

The first step of the analysis is to identify the good practices that best suit the context of the company. The objective of this first activity is to:

- Familiarize with possible practices to understand what is a strategy of Age Management
- Discuss and analyze what could be a priority for the company and what could be a feasible strategy to adopt

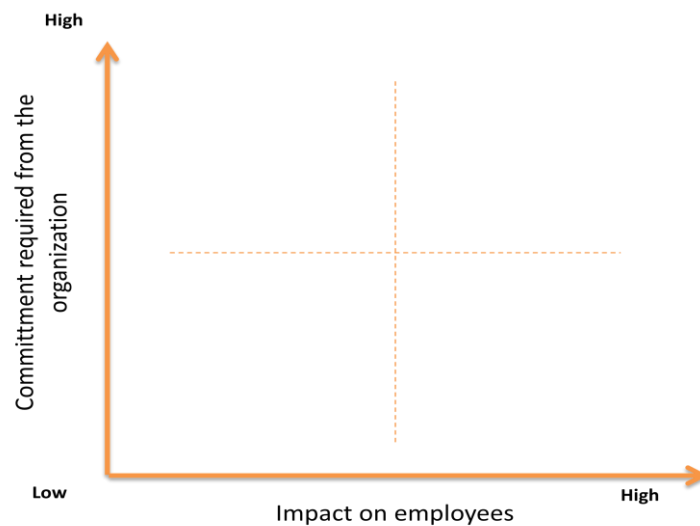


The main tool used is a table in which is possible to prioritize potential good practices in relation to: level of commitment needed from the organization to implement it and impact that the practice has on the senior workers. In the following section the good practices will be presented in detail.



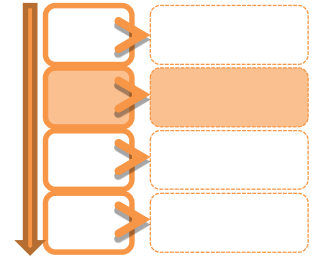
GOOD PRACTICES MATRIX

The matrix is the tool used for the first analysis and prioritization of good case practices within the organization



STEP 2 – Survey on organizational culture¹¹.

The survey about organizational culture enables the firm to create a general understanding of the issue of the ageing workforce inside the company and to identify the most suitable action steps for its own specific context.



The information have been collected from two main tools: the interviews with the management and the focus groups with workers. Different topics have been addressed in the interviews:

Scope of the Survey	Description
Who is a senior worker?	Describe the characteristics of a senior employee inside a company, listing for example: age, work experience, role etc.
Organizational beliefs	Organizational beliefs are assumptions and convictions shared by members of an organization. Beliefs that regard the “over 50” category can be measured through the <i>Age Stereotypes Scale</i> and they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Productivity; - Reliability, loyalty, accuracy and interpersonal skills; - Adaptability towards technological evolutions.
Organizational citizenship behavior	Refers to certain behaviors of employees which are not part of their formal job requirements but advantageous for organizations. They can be measured in four dimensions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conscientiousness: high accuracy in carrying out the job; - Altruism: being helpful with colleagues; - Courtesy: interest in creating cooperative and respectful relationships with co-workers;

¹¹ "**Organizational culture** can be thought of as the **glue** that holds an organization together through a sharing of patterns of meaning. The culture focuses on the values, beliefs, and expectations that members come to share." SIEHL, C. - MARTIN, J. (1984). "The role of symbolic management: How can managers effectively transmit organizational culture?". In J. Hunt, D. Hosking, C. Schriesheim, and R. Stewart (eds). *Leaders and Managers: International Perspectives on Managerial Behaviour and Leadership*. Elmsford, NY: Pergamon. pp. 227-39

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sense of belonging: strong sense of responsibility towards the organization.
Physical resistance and stress management	Pertains to the ability of managing stressful and physically strenuous situations. It includes the capacity of maintaining focus in stressful situations.
Organizational practices	<p>To identify preferences in relations to some organizational practices, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - training and education; - specific contractual agreements; - counseling regarding career development.

Again, the main tools are: interviews with management and focus group with employees (not only seniors). More information about these tools will be disclosed in the following section.



INTERVIEW

The interview is usually **done before the focus groups** and is directed to the HR department or other functions which are considered important (organizational development, production, etc.). The **aim is to identify the aspects of the organizational culture which need to be further analyzed in the focus groups.**



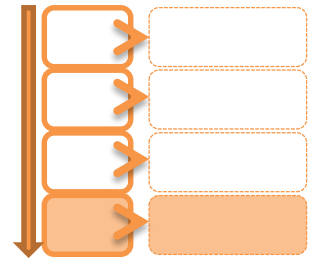
FOCUS GROUP

It is important to verify the main characteristics of the organizational culture previously described in the interviews. It is a way of **depicting the main aspects of the organizational culture.**

The analysis of the results from both the interviews and the focus groups will ensure the creation of an extensive description of the perception of “active ageing” inside the company. This analysis will be the starting point for the second part of the Lab that has the objective of selecting the right good practices and action steps that could be introduced in the firm.

STEP 3 – Feasibility analysis

The third step of the analysis regards the study of the good practices and the selection of the ones that can be adapted to the company’s environment. For this reason it can be useful to evaluate the economic and managerial variables which are relevant for the process. The tool created for this purpose is a check list.

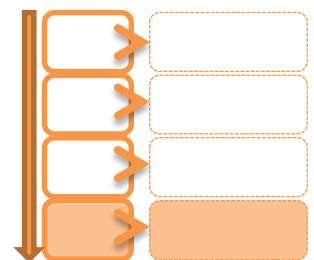


CHECK LIST

The check list is a support tool to identify the most relevant variables which determine the feasibility (or not) of certain practices. The feasibility study can be done on more than just one practice and it is oriented towards the selection of the most valuable practices for the organization.

STEP 4 – Age Management Plan Creation

The last phase is the creation of a detailed plan to implement the practices identified in the previous steps.



Plan Template

This tool is provided as a support in the creation of the plan and it includes different items for the “framework” of the project.



SECTION THREE – SUPPORTING TOOLS

3.1 The tools provided for the creation of the Age Management Plan

The Lab provided the participating companies with concrete tools shortly described in the previous section and summarized below:

STEP 1

- [Good practices matrix](#), with a list of best practices

STEP 2

- [Interview to the management](#)
- [Focus group outline](#) with employees and report framework

STEP 3

- [Check list for feasibility analysis](#)

STEP 4

- [Project template](#)

A. GOOD PRACTICES MATRIX

The first activity has the objective of helping the organization familiarize with good practices, especially those that can suit the company's context.

The activity, described in detail in the file ready for download, will ensure a first prioritization of practices.

Download Explanation of Activities: [link](#)

Download Good Practices: [link](#)

B. INTERVIEW TO THE MANAGEMENT

The interview is usually **done before the focus groups** and is directed to the HR department or other functions which are considered important (organizational development, production, etc.). The **aim is to identify the aspects of the organizational culture which need to be further analyzed in the focus groups.**

The length of the interview is approximately 45 minutes and can be delivered by internal or external resources.

A knowledge of statistics will be necessary to process the results of the interviews; additionally, the results should be interpreted taking into consideration the organizational context and the related literature.

C. FOCUS GROUP OUTLINE

One or more focus groups with employees should be organized. It is a way of **depicting the main aspects of the organizational culture.**

Each focus group should consist of 6-12 employees.

The aim is to collect perceptions and beliefs regarding relevant aspects of the organizational culture that are linked to senior employees. The activity is delivered with different methods: in plenary, in pairs and in smaller subgroups depending on the total size of the focus group.

To make sure that the results are reliable, it is important to explain to the participants that they will not be evaluated on their opinion and that the output of the discussion will be anonymous. Considering the sensitivity of the information it is recommended that an external person delivers the activity. A report will be created for each focus group to enable the final analysis of data.

Download the template for the conduction of the focus group : [link](#)

Download PPT template for focus group: [link](#)

Download Template for report of focus group: [link](#)

D.CHECK LIST FOR FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

The check list is a useful tool for the feasibility analysis and to determine potential costs (time and resources) and risks/benefits of a certain practice.

On the basis of this preliminary analysis it is possible to develop an estimation of the opportunities related to each practice. Therefore, considering the resources available, the objectives that want to be met and the difficulties in the implementation, the organization can decide which implementations can be put into practice.

The feasibility study requires the creation of a realization plan.

The tool developed during the Lab is a draft and for this reason it must be adapted and integrated based on the needs of the organization itself.

Download check list for feasibility analysis: [link](#)

E. TEMPLATE FOR THE CREATION OF THE PLAN

The final step is the creation of the final plan and a tool has been provided for this purpose.

What can be found in the template is only the basis for the creation of such a plan and, as previously mentioned, it must be adapted to the specific context and needs of the company.


Download project template: [link](#)



SECTION FOUR – EXPERIENCES FROM THE PARTICIPANTS

This section of the report provides information on the experiences of Impronta Etica's Members that participated in the Lab.

The activities of CADIAI and EMIL BANCA were started during the course of the Lab, while GRUPPO HERA had already developed an Age Management plan before the beginning of the project.

	
ACTIVITY	Analysis of the organizational culture and widespread beliefs regarding senior employees.
REASON FOR THE ACTIVITY	<p>The creation of an Age Management strategy was due to the sensitiveness of the company towards this topic and because of the potential risks and limits of an ageing workforce.</p> <p>Moreover, the average organizational age is 41 years and even though it is relatively low, it quickly grew in the past years and is expected to increase more in the next decade.</p>
PROCEDURE	<p>The analysis was developed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 9 interviews to the management of the HR and services departments (President, General Director, Responsible for Training, Education etc.). The interviews were delivered by CADIAI's responsible for the Lab and were analyzed by SCS Azioninnova Consulting; - 3 focus groups with employees (of which 2 with senior employees and 1 mixed junior/senior). They included 28 workers and they were directed by SCS Azioninnova Consulting and Impronta Etica.
RESULTS	<p>Based on the results of the preliminary analysis, CADIAI has decided to develop a Healthcare project as a response to the physical fatigue and emotional exhaustion expressed by its employees.</p> <p>The project targets the "over 50" employees that work in the Bologna area. The total number of workers that will be able to benefit from this services are about 190-200. The project will organize different meetings between June and Autumn 2014 that will use and value the different competencies of employees. Attendance will be for free and it will take place inside the gyms and therefore the project will be managed internally. The first two meetings prepared will be an experiment and they will be extended and run again if successful.</p>

	CADIAI is willing to prosecute the project and to invest resources in it if it will be appreciated by the recipients.
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better understanding of the topic inside the organization• Opportunity to reflect about the company's resources and to study and value the already existing competencies• Start-up of an healthcare project in the organization• Complication: it is necessary to be careful when explaining the project because it might create barriers across generations



ACTIVITY	Analysis of the organizational culture and widespread beliefs regarding senior employees.
REASON FOR THE ACTIVITY	<p>Emil Banca took part in the Lab because it was interested in exchanging experiences with other companies to benchmark and to have support in facing the ageing of their organizations' workforce.</p> <p>In fact, it was long time that they had perceived the necessity of giving more attention to this issue. At the moment, the average age is 43 years, relatively young, but the percentage of the "over 50" category is increasing every year. Emil Banca wanted to understand how to face this situation and what strategy to implement to better address this phenomena.</p>
PROCEDURE	The analysis took place between December 2013 and February 2014. 8 semi-structured interviews have been delivered to a representative panel of the management: General Director, Director of the HR department, 1 Director of the branches, Responsible for identity development and support to the management, 2 branch responsible and Director of the Administration.
ESITI	<p>The analysis of the organizational culture allowed the interviewers to observe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the characteristics that identify senior and junior employees inside the organizational culture (age, experience, role etc); - The organizational beliefs regarding the differences between senior and junior workers in terms of adaptability (capacity of adapting to changes), reliability (loyalty in regard of the organization) and productivity; - The aspects which are possibly preferred by senior employees (training, healthcare, counseling etc). <p>The analysis enabled the creation of a map of the activities already started by Emil Banca regarding Age Management (tutoring activities launched in 2006 and an award to reward years of services).</p> <p>At the end of the process, the management was obliged to reflect on the topic to understand the necessity of creating a long-term strategy rather than sporadic activities.</p> <p>Building on the previous activities, interviews and another research done in 2013, Emil Banca has decided to</p>

	<p>implement a plan based on a strategy with goals up to 2016. Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - activities to support employees on their work/life balance , especially for seniors - Possibility of "horizontal" career paths to avoid demotivation and burn-out; - Tutoring; - Consultancy in regard of new-born companies.
<p>BENEFITS</p>	<p>The results of the analysis were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An analysis of the organizational beliefs and culture; • Increase in the awareness regarding alternative strategies that can be implemented to value the people and their competencies; • Ability to provide new answers and to structure a proper strategic plan of action.



Progetto GenerAzioni

ACTIVITY	Gruppo Hera started a research project with SCS Azioninnova Consulting and the University of Bologna with the objective of promoting dialogue between different generations.
REASON FOR THE ACTIVITY	The project was started to begin an internal analysis and reflection regarding the topic of "generations" inside the company, especially because of the increase of ageing population and reforms approved at the national level to face this situation.
PROCEDURE	<p>Considering the external changing environment, the project aimed at creating an organizational context that incentivized senior and junior employees to confront on the topic. This was reached in different ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a research on the organizational beliefs regarding "Ageing"; - the detection of possible intergenerational barriers; - possible actions that can be implemented to avoid these barriers and to give value to the different age groups. <p>To collect information, the following activities were organized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews to the management (8 directors) to outline the long-term strategy; - 3 focus groups with 10 participants each: 2 homogenous (1 junior and 1 senior) and 1 mixed group; - a survey filled by a sample of the company's population (about 400 people). <p>The outcome of the project was communicated to the entire firm and a final document was published.</p>
RESULTS	<p>Thanks to the results of the previous activities, Gruppo Hera was able to identify a series of action/activities to implement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some extra activities that will be implemented in the future; - other strategies which were already in place within the company but that can be further improved. <p>All these actions aimed at promoting a dialogue between different generations and to value the contribution of different age groups.</p>
ACTIONS	<p>Among already existing tools, the following ones were enriched:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An internal job posting to facilitate the internal exchange of competencies; - Feedback processes;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New "age oriented" indicators to be included in a survey that is continuously done every two years; - A periodic analysis of the internal demographic structure; - Co-creation of educational activities and storytelling regarding the valuable experiences and contribution of senior employees in the existing project "Hera ti insegna un mestiere a scuola"; - The promotion of increasingly heterogeneous groups when trainings are organized by Gruppo Hera; - Communication of the value of a good practice such as the exchange of knowledge to create a shared value (project "La Scuola dei mestieri"); - Support to the self-professional development of junior employees through coaching.
<p>BENEFITS</p>	<p>Cultural benefits: Gruppo Hera was able to increase the internal awareness of the benefits connected to dialogue, collaboration and transfer of competencies and values. The project has registered a good participation of employees.</p> <p>Managerial benefits: Gruppo Hera was able to implement and value tools and projects that already existed inside the organization, making them more efficient and giving the possibility to the company to get another understanding of the data or indicators to monitor. This resulted in an increase in efficacy of internal management, especially if considering the low costs of the entire process.</p>

APPENDIX 1 – THE PARTICIPANTS



ANCD – Associazione Nazionale Cooperative fra Dettaglianti is the political and trade union structure of the Cooperatives members of the National Consortium Conad. The Association has been created in 1973 and it operates in order to make the cooperation between independent traders is leader in the processes of qualification and innovation of the Italian distribution network and is able to better respond to the needs and expectations of customers, consumers and all other stakeholder.

Eight territorial cooperatives and the National Consortium Conad are members of ANCD. ANCD is member of UGAL (European organization of cooperatives and purchase groups in retail distribution) and of the National observatory of commerce, established at the Ministry of Economic development.



CADIAI a category A social cooperative, was founded in Bologna in 1974 and is a registered ONLUS (non-profit social organization). It provides social, healthcare, and educational services to the public (often in cooperation with public bodies), and healthcare surveillance, occupational health services, and safety training programmes to companies. CADIAI operates primarily in the province of Bologna, where it was founded. It develops projects outside this province by creating partnerships with local cooperatives that share its spirit. Social integration and the improvement of people's quality of life are the main objectives of the activity of CADIAI.



EMIL BANCA is a non-profit credit institute that bases its roots on the centenary experience of eight "Casse Rurali e Artigiane", banks born on initiative of few promoters who, over the years, have been able to collect the growing trust of customers and to contribute to the creation and development of a bank of primary importance. Emil Banca operates through 27 branches located overall its relevant territory, extending between the Provinces of Bologna and Modena. Two more agencies will be opened in the next few months. Emil Banca is a cooperative that counts over 10.000 members and can be defined as a local bank, in that it is committed to the promotion and growth of the territories and communities where it operates.



GRANAROLO was established in 1959 as a small cooperative and is now one of the most important food & beverage companies operating in Italy; in fact, in 2005 it was the third food & beverage company in terms of turnover. The Group has now 13 factories operating all across Italy, almost 2,000 workers and a turnover of about 950 million Euro. The Group includes a producing consortium – Granlatte, which administrates quality and security policies in the agricultural sector- and a public limited company – Granarolo, working in the retail sector. Granarolo's success builds on three main factors: total control of the supply chain and of the agro-industrial production network, a steady orientation towards quality, and the ability to innovate and to build cooperative relations with the institutional, economic, and social actors operating in the relevant context.



GRUPPO HERA, is the second multi-service group in Italy. It was born from the first significant merger of public services companies in Emilia Romagna. It got official listing on the 26th of June 2003 and its working control is owned by public corporations. It operates in the energy, water and environmental sectors with 5,000 employees and 2,200,000 users in the Provinces of Bologna, Ravenna, Rimini, Forlì-Cesena and Ferrara. Hera is structured in a leading group and six territorial operative companies entirely controlled by the leading group. Its organizational model is based on aggregation by sharing, which allows bigger dimensions, balanced structure in terms of business portfolio, risk minimizing and creates strong links with the territory. The innovation in its business and organizational model represents the first Italian experience in the realization of a public services industry.



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