BS ISO 25550:2022

BSI Standards Publication

Ageing societies — General requirements and guidelines for an age-inclusive workforce

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National foreword

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A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to its committee manager.

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 314, *Ageing societies*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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Introduction

0.1 An ageing workforce

Everyone ages. Age is a continuum. The younger worker of today will become the older worker of tomorrow. Workers expect to live longer. Creating ways for people to have meaningful, productive multi-stage and multidimensional careers is a major opportunity to engage workers across generations for individuals, organizations and communities.

Proactive organizations are tapping into older workers by extending their career models, creating new development paths, and inventing roles to accommodate these workers. This can encourage active participation of older workers and increase the organization's reputation and image in society. This also creates a more balanced workplace, where experience is shared and intergenerational harmony is promoted. Applying these requirements and guidelines can help build a strong multi-generational workforce and minimize the risk of age discrimination. Organizations with an age-inclusive workforce can become more productive and have a competitive advantage if these guidelines are followed.

The benefits of older workers to the organization can include but are not limited to:

— reductions in absenteeism, burnout, turnover, recruitment costs and workplace injuries;

— improvements in innovations, accessibility, staff engagement, motivation, retention and productivity;

— the synergy gained by linking new and existing skills of the workforce that can raise the organization's productivity and capacity for innovation;

— cost effectiveness when the organization invests in skills and health for an age-inclusive workforce;

— solving labour workforce shortages;

— improving the corporate image of the organization.

0.2 Applying this document

The Later Life Workplace Index (LLWI)[24] was used as the initial starting point for this document. The LLWI consists of nine dimensions covering age-inclusive organizational culture and leadership, as well as more specific age-inclusive practices regarding work design, health management, individual development, knowledge management, transition to retirement, continued employment options, and health and retirement coverage. This document provides general requirements and guidelines to support the business case for an age-inclusive workforce and contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)- Agenda 2030, including, but not limited to #3-'Good health and wellbeing', #4-'Quality education', #5-'Gender equality', #8-'Decent work and economic growth', #9-'Industry, innovation and infrastructure', and #10-'Reduced inequalities'.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted several emerging issues impacting older workers. These are described in ISO/PAS 45005.

An age-inclusive workforce is interdisciplinary in nature, complex and it depends on many stakeholders and systems. As such, there are documents linked to older workers, e.g. ISO 30415: and ISO/TR 30406.

This document can be used in connection with an organization's management systems, human resource programs, occupational health and safety programs, diversity and inclusion programs, Corporate Social Responsibility or on its own in the absence of a formal workplace program to support an age-inclusive workforce. Annex F provides the user with an overview of some key topics and their relevance.

0.3 A roadmap

Figure 1 explains how this document is structured.

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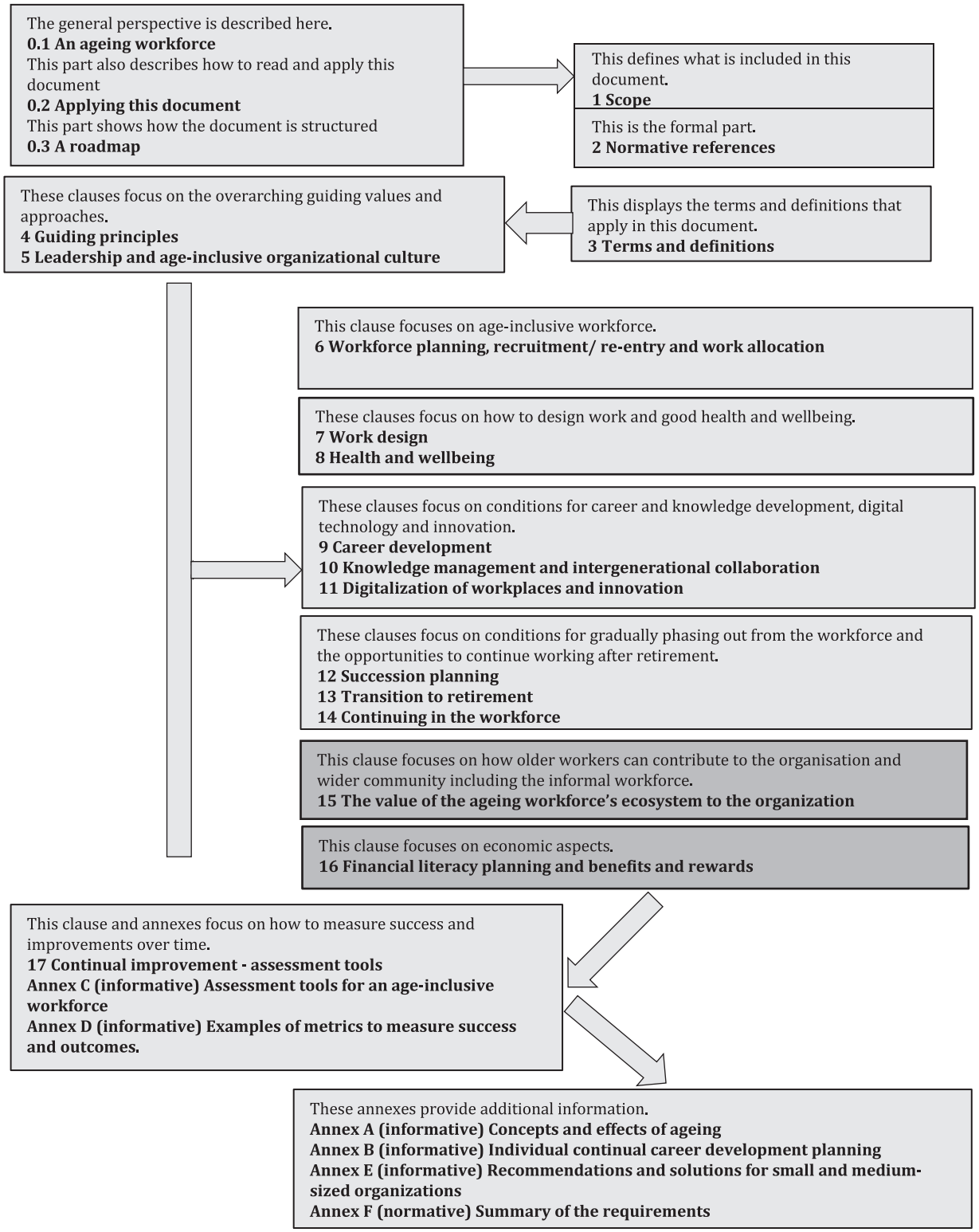

Figure 1 — Roadmap to implementing guidelines and requirements for an age-inclusive workforce

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Ageing societies — General requirements and guidelines for an age-inclusive workforce

1 Scope

This document provides requirements and guidelines to achieve an age-inclusive workforce, which has the potential of adding value for organizations, workers, communities and other stakeholders. This document enables organizations and other stakeholders to develop, implement, maintain and support an age-inclusive workforce. It provides opportunities for older workers, working internal or external to the organization, to be productive.

This document is applicable to all organizations regardless of type or size, and to all work arrangements and all forms of relationships between organizations and workers.

While organizations need to be inclusive of all workers regardless of age, these requirements and guidelines focus specifically on older workers.

NOTE It does not imply that younger workers are excluded. Organizations can tailor these requirements and guidelines according to their own role and specific context.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
ageing society
demographics of an older population that shifts overtime

3.2
accessibility
extent to which products, systems, services, environments and facilities can be used by people from a population with the widest range of user needs, characteristics and capabilities to achieve identified goals in identified contexts of use

[SOURCE: ISO 9241-112:2017, 3.15, modified — Note to entry has been deleted.]

3.3
worker
person performing work or work-related activities that are under the control of the organization

Note 1 to entry: Persons perform work or work-related activities under various arrangements, paid or unpaid, such as regularly or temporarily, intermittently or seasonally, casually or on a part-time basis.

Note 2 to entry: Workers include top management, managerial, and non-managerial persons.

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Note 3 to entry: The work or work-related activities performed under the control of the organization can be performed by workers employed by the organization, workers of external providers, contractors, individuals, agency workers, and by other people to the extent the organization shares control over their work or work-related activities, according to the context of the organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 45001:2018, 3.3]

3.4
workforce
people who provide a service or labour to contribute to business or organizational outcomes

[SOURCE: ISO 30400:2016, 10.1]

3.5
ageing workforce
changes in the number of older people in the *workforce* (3.4)

Note 1 to entry: the specific age of being older will vary by country, industry, and other factors.

3.6
workplace
area(s) in which the *workers'* (3.3) activities are carried out

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 25901-1:2016, 2.1.8.35]

3.7
organizational culture
values, beliefs and practices that influence the conduct and behaviour of people and organizations

[SOURCE: ISO 30400:2016, 3.2]

3.8
human capital
value of the collective knowledge, skills and abilities of an organization's *workers* (3.3)

[SOURCE: ISO 30400:2016, 4.1, modified — "people" has been replaced with "workers".]

3.9
stakeholder
person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

EXAMPLE Customers, owners, people in an organization, suppliers, bankers, unions, work councils, partners, or society that can include competitive or pressure groups.

[SOURCE: ISO 30400:2016, 5.1]

3.10
diversity
characteristics of differences and similarities between people

Note 1 to entry: Diversity includes factors that influence the identities and perspectives that people bring when interacting at work.

Note 2 to entry: Diversity can foster learning from others who are not the same, about dignity, respect and inclusiveness for everyone, and about creating *workplace* (3.6) environments and practices that foster learning from others to gain advantages of diverse perspectives.

[SOURCE: ISO 30400:2016, 9.1]

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3.11
inclusion
process of including all *stakeholders* (3.9) in organizational contexts

Note 1 to entry: Organizational policies, processes and practices that are fair and impartially applied can support an age-inclusive *workplace* (3.6).

Note 2 to entry: This involves the entire *workforce* (3.4) having access to opportunities and resources to enable their contribution to the organization.

Note 3 to entry: This involves *stakeholders* (3.9) from different groups being accepted, welcomed, enabled to have a voice, and to develop a sense of belonging.

[SOURCE: ISO 30400:2016, 9.5, modified — "practice" replaced with "process", Notes to entry deleted, new Notes to entry added.]

3.12
financial literacy
ability to identify, retrieve, evaluate and use financial information effectively

3.13
wellbeing
state of being comfortable, healthy and happy

[SOURCE: ISO 17679:2016, 3.3, modified — "feeling" replaced with "state", Note to entry deleted.]

3.14
succession planning
process for identifying and developing current *workers* (3.3) with the potential to fill key positions in the organization

[SOURCE: ISO 30400:2016, 4.11, modified — "employees" replaced with "workers".]

3.15
age-inclusive
including all *stakeholders* (3.9) in organizational contexts where people of diverse ages are treated fairly and equally and included in all aspects of the organization

3.16
age-inclusive workforce
workers (3.3) of diverse ages who all are treated fairly and equally and are included in organizational processes

3.17
ageism
stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age

Note 1 to entry: Ageism takes many forms, including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory practices, or institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs.

[SOURCE: WHO, 2021[23]]

3.18
work allocation
allocation
process of analysing and assigning work to all *workers* (3.3), regardless of age

3.19
health literacy
ability to recognize, identify, retrieve, evaluate and use health information effectively

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3.20
knowledge management
combination of processes, actions, methodologies and solutions that enable the creation, maintenance, distribution and access to organizational knowledge

Note 1 to entry: This is of particular importance with an *ageing workforce* (3.5) to allow transfer between different generations of *workers* (3.3). A knowledge management system includes the organization's knowledge management culture, structure, governance and leadership; roles and responsibilities; planning technology, processes and operation, etc.

[SOURCE: ISO 30400:2016, 14.1, modified — Note to entry added.]

4 Guiding principles

The organization provides an age-inclusive workforce that takes the following guiding principles into account at stages of planning, design, operation and evaluation and is aimed at all workers and stakeholders (see Table 1). The organization has the leadership and guiding principles, based on the underlying principles of social responsibility, to support and implement an age-inclusive workforce policy and develops an organizational culture to support this policy.

NOTE The organization can consult ISO 26000, which provides guidance on the underlying principles of social responsibility, engaging stakeholders, and integrating socially responsible behaviour into the organization such as an age-inclusive workforce.

Table 1 — Guiding principles

Guiding Principle	Details
Decency of work	The organization supports and takes actions that demonstrate that their workplace provides employment and decent work for all workers. The organization values employees and creates a meaningful work environment.
Leadership and integrity	The organization's leadership demonstrates integrity by endorsing and ensuring strategies, operations and values regarding an age-inclusive workforce are implemented.
Inclusiveness	The organization includes all workers (throughout the worker's life-cycle) regardless of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, colour, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or any other status. This includes being a non-discriminatory organization that is open and trustworthy, values and recognizes workers and their perspectives, and provides opportunities to participate and contribute to the organization.
Health, wellbeing, and safety	The organization ensures that the health, wellbeing and safety expectations of all workers are addressed throughout the organization's operations.
Accessibility	The organization creates a workplace that is designed to be inclusive following universal design principles, i.e. useable by all people and enables everyone to actively contribute to the goals and objectives of the organization.
Responsiveness	The organization acts in a socially responsible way concerning its age-inclusive workforce policies, guidelines and culture. It initiates and responds to communications to and from workers at all levels in the organization, stakeholders, and other interested parties and takes appropriate action.
Confidentiality, privacy and security	Personal information and data, including age, are treated in a confidential manner and stored securely, while respecting the privacy of all workers and only disclosing information with the individual's consent.

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5 Leadership and age-inclusive organizational culture

5.1 Age-inclusive governance and leadership

5.1.1 General

Age-inclusive governance includes ethics, risk management, compliance, accountability, and administration to achieve an age-inclusive workforce. It is a form of governance where the organization takes into account different aspects with the aim that every worker, no matter what age, can contribute to the organization's overall goals as well as achieving their personal goals.

Age-inclusive leadership involves promoting a sustainable working life by balancing the interests and needs of workers' age and the organization's needs. Leadership involves establishing and sharing a clear vision and strategy about being an age-inclusive workforce with all key stakeholders so that everyone can participate in achieving the vision. Leaders provide information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision, and coordinate and balance the interests of all managers, workers and other stakeholders.

Age-inclusive systems are shaped by the organization's age-inclusive strategies and objectives. The organization determines how the roles and responsibilities are assigned, controlled and coordinated to achieve and maintain being an age-inclusive organization. It also determines how information is shared between the different levels of management, workers and stakeholders.

The Human Resources Management (HRM) function can act as a catalyst to ensure that management understands the business case for an age-inclusive workforce.

5.1.2 Requirements

In order to demonstrate leadership, organizations shall:

a) make a clear statement about being an age-inclusive organization through using organizational documents, for instance, in its vision, mission, values, code of conduct and HRM strategy;

b) have an age-inclusive workforce strategy that recognizes and adapts to the changing trends of ageing workers;

c) adopt a total systems approach in being an age-inclusive organization.

NOTE A total systems approach ensures that age-inclusive principles, policies, procedures and processes are integrated into the organization in a systematic manner.

5.1.3 Recommendations:

Organizations should:

a) adapt and customize HRM policies and procedures with a worker life-cycle perspective including the capability, knowledge, needs and wishes of older workers;

b) work with stakeholders that focus on older people and encouraging those stakeholders in supporting an age-inclusive workforce;

EXAMPLE Thailand: An urban social enterprise is running an organic vegetable delivery business. They buy their supplies from older people growing organic vegetables in their own city gardens.

c) have key performance objectives to measure the effectiveness of their age-inclusive workforce;

d) appoint a member of top management to demonstrate and ensure the organization continually supports an age-inclusive workforce.

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5.2 Age-inclusive organizational culture

5.2.1 General

Organizational culture includes a set of values, beliefs and practices that influence the conduct and behaviour of people and their organizations and it demonstrates a commitment to the guiding principles identified in Clause 4 and is supported by everyone in the organization.

An age-inclusive organization focuses on all workers regardless of age and gives particular recognition to the needs, circumstances and choices of older workers. Older workers are included in the process through communications (see 5.3), participation, meeting and consulting with all workers and workers' representatives while promoting equal opportunities (see 5.4), a positive image of all ages (see 5.5) and older worker recognition (see 5.6).

5.2.2 Requirements

In order to meet the commitment to the guiding principles in Clause 4, and to deal with the subject of diversity and inclusivity, the organization shall:

a) develop an age-inclusive code of conduct that addresses the values, beliefs and practices that states how the organization expects its managers, supervisors and workers to behave and conduct themselves towards older workers;

b) encourage a culture in which older workers feel valued and motivated, and are able to perform productively;

c) ensure older workers are included in the promotion of inclusive approaches and culture.

5.2.3 Recommendations

The organization should:

a) establish a combination of bottom-up and top-down approaches allowing workers to safely promote age-inclusive actions with everyone in the organization;

b) communicate this age-inclusive code of conduct effectively to everyone in the organization;

c) develop metrics and systems of accountability to continually review the level of compliance with the age-inclusive code of conduct and take appropriate measures for improvement;

d) use worker resource groups consisting of older workers to adopt an age-inclusive organizational culture.

NOTE For further information on inclusive organizational cultures, refer to ISO 30415.

5.3 Workplace communication

5.3.1 General

Communications, both internally and externally, are key to establishing a common understanding about an age-inclusive workforce among workers, their representatives and management in the organization and external stakeholders.

5.3.2 Recommendations – internal communications

The organization should:

a) distribute workers' achievements by publishing articles and images representing all ages within the organization, e.g. in internal magazines, websites and social networks with the worker's approval;

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b) have open and transparent exchange among workers, worker representatives, and management (not only from management but also from workers) regarding all phases of the worker life-cycle, including retirement as well as continued opportunities for work;

c) establish, implement and maintain processes for consultation and participation of all workers in the development, planning, implementation, performance evaluation and actions for improvement of their age-inclusive workplace.

5.3.3 Recommendations – external communications

The organization should ensure that:

a) all external key stakeholders periodically receive communications about activities that the organization conducts in the area of being an age-inclusive workforce;

b) it has clear public statements that the organization is an age-inclusive workplace (e.g. through their website);

c) all phases of the ageing worker's life-cycle are taken into account in external communications.

5.4 Equal opportunities and preventing ageism

5.4.1 General

The organization does not tolerate age discrimination, also known as ageism. Each worker has equal rights and opportunities, e.g. working conditions, career advancement, training and professional development and in the restructuring of the organization.

5.4.2 Requirements

To demonstrate that the organization provides equal opportunities without discrimination, it shall:

a) have policies and procedures concerning an age-inclusive workforce covering all stages of the worker life-cycle;

b) ensure that ageism, bullying, harassment and abuse of all workers is not tolerated.

EXAMPLE Norway: A small shoe shop in an area with a high proportion of older people places an advertisement that states "We are an age-inclusive workplace and employer".

5.4.3 Recommendations

The organization should:

a) have mechanisms in place to identify and address hidden ageism;

b) be responsive to the development of ageing workers' untapped potential.

5.5 Positive image of age

5.5.1 General

Ageing can affect competencies, motivation, values and behaviour over time. The organization recognizes, values and realizes opportunities that benefit older workers, e.g. by identifying and assigning tasks and job designs that correspond to the specific competencies of older workers that will allow them to make a valuable contribution to the organization. People often have conscious and unconscious biases in relation to ageing, making people aware of this will promote a positive image of age.

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5.5.2 Recommendations

The organization, in order to support a positive image of age, should:

a) promote an age-inclusive workforce by raising awareness about positive images of age such as diversity in life experience;

b) provide conscious and unconscious bias training programs;

EXAMPLE Australia: A regional government health department runs age-inclusive workshops for all workers that covers: stereotyping, ageism, unconscious and conscious bias in relation to older workers, different concepts of ageing and how it affects older worker's productivity and ways and solutions on how to promote an age-inclusive workforce.

c) promote, through marketing and communication, older workers' stories about the positive image of age to improve workplace brand;

d) promote a positive image of age to stakeholders including customers, suppliers and organizational partners.

5.6 Older worker recognition

5.6.1 General

Worker recognition is about acknowledging the work and accomplishments of the individuals and teams within an organization. This can be done for all workers but ensure older workers have an appropriate representation.

5.6.2 Recommendations

The organization should, in participation with workers:

a) develop and implement an age-inclusive worker recognition and reward-based program supported by workers, co-workers, their representatives and managers while ensuring that older workers are equally represented;

b) ensure that all managers at all levels of the organization demonstrate through their behaviour that they:

— acknowledge and understand their older workers;

— value current work performance and overall productivity of their older workers;

— consider the suggestions and comments from their older workers;

— recognize individual capabilities;

— allow for the possibility of working beyond retirement age and/or return to work.

6 Workforce planning, recruitment/ re-entry and work allocation

6.1 Workforce planning

6.1.1 General

Workforce planning is necessary to inform organizations of the current and future trends in the internal and external environments that could impact the future sustainability of the organization, and to allow them to be adaptable to maintain their competitive advantage. Workforce planning is the systematic identification, analysis and planning of organizational needs in terms of people and needed competencies. This can include the planning and measuring or development of strategies to enable

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