



BAUWERT INWEST – SUMMARY

Final Report

September 2013

**Strategies in demographic change
for small and micro enterprises in the construction industry
Value increase through quality – health – networking**

Key words

construction industry, demography, maintain employability, value increase, intervention, online toolbox

As part of the programme to promote model projects
to combat work-related illness

Promotion focus 2009-III:

Demographic change in the construction industry - concepts and models for
promotion and maintenance of the workability and employability

Gefördert durch:



Im Rahmen der Initiative



Fachlich begleitet durch



Projekträger



1 Introduction

The share of elder employees in the working population will continue to rise in the next years, while competition for specialists will become even more fierce. Small enterprises in the construction industry, in particular, will find it more difficult to maintain their competitiveness amid these changed demographic conditions.

The BauWert InWest project was implemented in the Promotion Focus III "Demographic Change in the Construction Industry - Concepts and models for promotion and maintenance of the workability and employability" from August 2010 to September 2013.

The aim was to improve the employability under demographic viewpoints in two respects: on the one hand the competitiveness of companies was to be retained and improved by set their business and operating processes up in a way which makes them well-prepared for demographic challenge to be able to exist in the market. On the other hand, maintenance of the employability had to be retained. This means that work needs to be organised in a way that workability and willingness to perform are retained.

In addition to maintain of the workability and employability, the image of the companies as "good employers" is increasingly becoming a competitive factor. With regard to recruitment of new staff and specialists and enhance employee loyalty, the market is progressively changing from an employer to an employee market during the course of the demographic change. Therefore, more importance is being attached to a supportive company culture, the healthy working conditions and other social factors.

Next to the Institut für Betriebliche Gesundheitsförderung BGF GmbH (Institute for workplace health promotion IBGF) as the project leader, ASD, BG Bau, BIT e.V., conpara GmbH and Dr. Peter Flocken Beratung-Training-Projekte were partners in the project. The different consulting and competence skills of the project partners enable a holistic consideration of all corporate areas. The project was implemented in four regions and 51 pilot schemes. A goal-oriented analysis and intervention method has been developed, implemented and adjusted in line with the pilot project. This method and approach has been made available via the online toolbox (www.bauwert-inwest.de) to all interested companies and a wide network of different consulting groups.

2 Project goals

The goal was to develop a method and instrument that enables small and micro enterprises, under the conditions of the demographic change and associated skill shortages, to retain competitiveness and to improve employability. Via four fields of strategy ("Human resources and health", "Organisation and productivity", "Strategy and development" and "Innovation and co-operation") the project aimed to focus on companies in a holistic approach and implementing the strategies in the companies' everyday routines. During the course of the project, "Statutory work safety" was included as a fifth strategy due to the requirement of the participating small and micro enterprises. To achieve these goals, an online-based toolbox with analysis and action instruments was developed that gives small and micro enterprises in the construction sector the opportunity to implement these methods.

In addition, the project also focuses on a corporate-wide networking of the small and micro enterprises. Next to the operational activities, the project initiated corporate events that promoted the exchange of experience and co-operation enterprises who took part in the project.

3 Project design and implementation

51 small and micro enterprises from the construction industry from the regions Dortmund, Wuppertal, Cologne and Bielefeld took part in the project. On average, the involved pilot companies had 10.8 employees. The project reached almost 550 employees.

The project was classified in company internal and corporate activities. The company internal focus included the development and test of a goal-oriented and resource-efficient company consulting method. In addition, a corporate network, a future dialogue with financial service providers, a representative employee- and company- survey as part of health checks and an evaluation, that expanded and enhanced know-how and opportunities for action, were accompanying project modules.

The company implementation was classified in four steps: initial analysis, harmonisation & reinforcement, action plan and implementation. In the company trials these steps have been proven to be target-oriented, practicable and resource-compatible.

The **initial analysis** was applied by the obligatory conducting of the INQA- Self Assessment CASA-bauen. In addition to the self-assessment as a "subjective image", the market value of the companies was determined with the AWH Standard (www.zdh.de) by using the balance sheets of the past four years as an "objective image". As an alternative to the complex nature

of the AWH standard, which requires qualified experts for implementation, the project team developed the BauWert Check, which each entrepreneur can complete on his own.

CASA-bauen has proven to be a successful initial instrument. The results were transferred to the CASA-star in conjunction with the AWH. Therefore, the areas (personnel and health, statutory work safety, organisation and productivity, strategy and company development, new divisions and co-operation) in which action should be taken can be stated clearly. In that respect, the CASA-Star served as an interpretation- and visualisation-tool to visualise the initial analysis. The further-reaching in-depth analyses were agreed upon following consultation with the entrepreneur.

In the case of the in-depth analysis tool, it became apparent that the key requirements of the small and micro enterprises could be recorded and processed via four tools. These core instruments include:

- **Workplace situation analysis – problems, solutions and strategies (ASA PLuS)**
The employees are surveyed without executives in a moderated workshop regarding workloads and conflicts as well as proposals for improvements. The employees' views were recorded as experts regarding their workplaces.
- **Occupational and health check (AuG)** - Assesses the company situation and the organisation of workplaces according to industrial safety and health. It includes the development of improvement options.
- **Health check** – This is conducted by company physicians and is a health check for employees, which contains a comprehensive physical and medical examination as well as an interview.
- **Company development planning** – Consideration with the entrepreneur about the company strategy, products and customer and order structure, underlying company framework parameters, market potentials, co-operation and innovation options.

On the one hand these instruments serve as in-depth analyses, on the other hand the participation by the employees lead to a certain implementation pressure. Therefore, the in-depth analyses already had an interventional character. Two additional instruments address special issues such as the company succession.

In the next step, the results were summarised in an individual company **action plan** and put into concrete terms. It included the goals, measures, responsibilities and sets time periods

aiming to use this action plan as an ongoing basis and structural element for company planning and strategies.

In addition to the company activities, the corporate network was promoted via a seminar programme and specific events. To that end 13 seminars were developed, which in terms of content and organisation addressed the entrepreneurs' wishes and requirements. Additional project modules were the representative surveys of the employees and the companies. The summarised anonymous outcome of these surveys allows drawing conclusions regarding future action. The future dialogue with the financial service providers Sparkasse Cologne/Bonn, Coface Germany and SoKa Bau provided informative knowledge, which the project team has summarized in the form of a brochure.

As the fourth module, the systematic network analysis (SNA) in the form of an accompanying evaluation reported the developments regarding co-operation, networking of companies, questions about order-figures, the status of employee illness and innovation in the pilot companies.

4 Results

With the **BauWert-InWest online toolbox** an innovative instrument has been developed that is easy to use and which companies can apply as a combination of self-help and consultant support to deal with the demographic challenge. The toolbox is available free for everyone, and offers a plain structure, basic instructions and target descriptions for the individual tools and also for the systematic method. Tests in 51 companies showed that the combination made up of standardised initial analysis and individualised reinforcement is goal-oriented and resource-efficient. With the **online-based toolbox**, the **accompanying manual** and the **training concept for consultants** a practical assistance has been developed for companies and consultants. The **guide "Credit Granting and Rating for Craft Enterprises"** shows that companies that have addressed CASA-bauen are better prepared for negotiations with lenders. The examination results from the **health analysis** show the necessity for company health promotion measures in the construction industry. Already 66% of the employees are overweight, 56% have elevated blood pressure and approx. 30% have cholesterol values that required treatment. This starting situation underlines the necessity for lifestyle-changing intervention.

7 Sustainability and transfer

The project experience and results are available for free as materials and instruments with which to cope with the demographic change in form of the online toolbox. The modular method of the toolbox ensures that implementation is organised in the companies individually and in line with requirements. It focuses on the benefit for the companies and considers the limited resources available at the small and micro enterprises.

The access paths to the target group, the small and micro enterprises of the construction industry, form the key parameters for a target-oriented and sustainable transfer. The online-based toolbox and the manual "Value increase in the demographic change" serve as the basis for the further dissemination of the project results via consultant networks (CASA-bauen consultants, demographic consultants, consultants who are registered at the "Offensive-Mittelstand") via the consultants involved in the project and via the associations and organisations in the construction industry. In addition, the project has already been incorporated in the INQA networks (at the national platform and also, in parts, at regional level). This offers the opportunity to use or built up additional distribution channels and additional regional networks for the products and methods which were developed in this project.

8 Conclusion

Overall, it could be demonstrated that the construction industry is characterised by a special stress and work situation that is accompanied by the negative health of many employees. The additional pressure to take action by the demographic change strengthens the need to take action. To act successfully, both behaviour and structural preventative, measures need to be implemented. Both entrepreneurs and employees need to be engaged to improve the situation in individual companies. Last but not least, measures must not only be implemented selectively, they have to be integrated in the daily work routines and the company structure. The project experience shows that the right instruments can lead to success, and that small and micro enterprises in the construction industry can be supported in a targeted and efficient manner. The crucial factors for implementing successful processes to improve competitiveness and to maintain employability are - in addition to the set of instruments and the necessary know-how - the will, motivation and discipline of an enterprise to implement and continue a forward-looking company structure.