



Flexibility Coaching for companies

ENHANCING FLEXIBILITY AMONG COMPANIES

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This practice aimed at improving the flexibility of companies to better equip them for dealing with structural changes. The aim was to improve HR management practices in light of sudden changes or imminent problems, such as fluctuations in demand, upcoming or seasonal redundancies. The evaluation showed better results among large companies; however, SMEs were the majority of the beneficiaries of the practice. Nearly all companies (89 %) were satisfied with the work of the consultants.

Name of the PES	AMS Österreich Bundesgeschäftsstelle Public Employment Service Austria
When was the practice implemented?	2005-2019
Which organisation was involved in its implementation?	ÖSB Consulting GmbH in cooperation with Deloitte Human Capital provided the actual counselling.
Which groups were targeted by the practice?	All Austrian companies with more than 50 employees were targeted, but the majority of companies that used the service were SMEs.
What were the practice's main objectives?	<p>The practice provided support for internal management structures to achieve a balance between flexibility and stability, matching the needs of both employees and companies.</p> <p>More specifically, the main goals of the Flexibility Coaching practice were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ to effectively support the flexibility of companies with regards to their HR management structures and procedures; ▶ to establish professional flexibility management in companies; ▶ to strengthen the adaptability of companies to manage upcoming problems by themselves.
What activities were carried out?	<p>The programme was structured as a three-stage procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Step 1: After a first contact between the 'Company Service' (SfU) of the AMS and the respective company, an initial informative meeting was arranged (one consulting day). ▶ Step 2: The 'flex-ability team' analysed the current circumstances of the company, identified main problems and tasks, and involved relevant actors at the company level (e.g. management, board, employees). The consultants developed a first 'flexibility strategy' (up to five consulting days). ▶ Step 3: If the company was further interested in the programme and was granted funding by the AMS, the actual Flexibility Coaching phase began. An individual flexibility strategy was drafted, addressing the needs of the company and offering assistance to implement the first steps. This phase lasted for a maximum of nine consulting days. The last day was reserved for gender-specific issues, affirmative action programmes for women or equal opportunity issues.
What resources and other relevant organisational aspects were involved?	The SfU of AMS informed and advised companies about using the services of the Flexibility Coaching programme (step 1 above). ÖSB Consulting GmbH, in cooperation with Deloitte Human Capital, were responsible for step 2 and step 3.



<p>What were the source(s) of funding?</p>	<p>Until 2015 National budget (tax revenue) and the European Social Fund. Since 2015, national budget only.</p>
<p>What were the outputs of the practice: people reached and products?</p>	<p><u>People reached:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Between 2005 and 2010: 1 277 enterprises. ▶ Although the project was not specifically designed for SMEs, more than 65 % of all companies consulted by the programme had between 50 and 250 employees. ▶ Between 2011 and 2013: 1 212 enterprises. ▶ 74 percent of these were companies with 50 to 250 employees. ▶ Between 2015 and 2019, 4 225 enterprises participated in the follow-up programme (the impulse-consulting programme "Impulsberatung für Betriebe (IBB)"). 93 % of the participating companies were SMEs.
<p>What outcomes have been identified?</p>	<p>The goal of the practice was achieved, and regional cooperation between companies was improved. 72 % of the companies have implemented the results of the Flexibility Coaching. The main HR-related action fields were: organisation (46 %), working hours (31 %) and further qualification and training (24 %).</p> <p>Of the enterprises who participated in the impulse-consulting from 2015 to 2019, 19.9 % focused on "staff fluctuations", 46.2 % focused on learning and development, 18.3 % on productive ageing plus the newly included topic generation management (transfer of knowledge between older staff and newly recruited ones), 9.3 % on diversity and integration and 6.3 % on gender and equal opportunities.</p>
<p>What are the lessons learnt and success factors?</p>	<p>The practice aimed to develop flexibility within enterprises in order to secure and increase employment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Concerning the maintenance of jobs the findings are mixed: a third of companies interviewed stated that the practice helped to maintain jobs, another third stated that it likely helped, whereas another third claimed that the practice had no effect. ▶ Regarding assignments of job seekers to vacancies in the participating enterprises, a positive effect was clearly visible, particularly for large companies, according to the analysis of administrative data. However, there was no positive effect for successful placements. <p>Since the practice was designed as a demand-oriented consulting service, the positive qualitative evaluation findings should be given particular importance. The bottom line for the evaluation results was whether the practice helped to meet the enterprises' self-defined needs.</p>



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