



Case study no. 2

Title of Case study / Good practice	Cognitive flexibility and career development.
Keywords (meta tag)	Career development, senior manager, interaction between the soft and hard skills, aging.
Provided by	SSE Riga
Language	ENGLISH
Case study	<p>The cognitive flexibility is decreasing with the age. The older people get the more difficult it is to change between the different tasks. On the contrary the more experienced personnel can conduct different tasks and make decisions faster because of longer experience that allows one to work smarter. This is a dilemma from the managerial perspective. On the one hand senior managers can make faster decisions on the other they might have difficulties to cope with several tasks simultaneously. For quite a long time companies have been focusing on the development of hard skills. Trainings were conducted and personnel was motivated to learn different skills that are directly related to the tasks that a persona has to perform e.g. marketing people were trained to develop successful marketing campaigns and HR people were trained how to recruit the best employees. However insufficient attention was paid to the development of soft skills that could enhance the utilization of the hard skill significantly. It is a trade off that managers are facing and they need to find a solution. Of course the solution can be specific depending on the industry and type of personnel in focus but in general the issue remains the same: how to facilitate the career development by the combination of hard and soft skills and how to tailor this activity depending on the type of the company, industry it is operating in and personnel in focus.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) To what extent the company management should pay attention to the development of cognitive flexibility for senior management and employees? Should it be more in focus of the company or the employee? Provide the argumentation for your suggestion.2) How to motivate the employees to improve the cognitive flexibility and multitasking skills? How those skills can affect the career development?3) In which cases (types of tasks or industries) the cognitive flexibility is more important and why? Do you see that those industries and tasks will be demanded in 10 years from now?
Reference Link (if any)	https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2020
Type of material	CASE STUDY

(Suggested answers on the next page)



Suggested answers

1. The cognitive flexibility is something that is very demanded from the employees especially at the senior management level. Thus it is very important that employees do possess those skills and can benefit from that. The attention to the development and/or maintaining the cognitive skills should be in focus both for the company as well as for the employee. It is feasible that companies ensure that there are opportunities to develop those skills and there is a motivation from individual employees to pursue such a development.
2. Development of the motivation is a very tricky and complicated task. Very often people consider motivation as something abstract that sometimes appears and sometimes disappears. Usually that is not the case and there are certain factors that affect motivation that we do not pay attention to. Therefore it is important to reflect and understand what are the drivers of the motivation. Companies here can play a very important but rather a supportive role. It can be suggested to organize self-awareness and self-reflection seminars where employees can better understand how with the help of those tools to understand the causes of motivation. Also some other activities can be organized e.g. team building events because team spirit also can significantly contribute to the motivation.
3. There are several jobs and tasks that are expected to disappear or at least significantly decrease. This is especially relevant for simple and monotonous tasks that will be replaced by the machines and robots. On the contrary such jobs that include very complicated tasks with high variability and dispersion will be in higher demand and cognitive flexibility will be an important precondition for employment and career.
The responses to the 3rd question should be linked with the World Economic Forum Future Jobs report.