

Energy-saving working 60plus

My client was approaching 60 and we discussed the topic of possible early retirement during the personal and professional assessment. In this context, he also wanted to find out what he could do in the next stage of his life. During the conversation, I became increasingly convinced that it would be a huge waste of resources if he were to retire early without need.

Peter Näf

The reason for his thoughts was an increasing lack of enthusiasm in his job. He also needed much more recovery time than before. The latter was probably due to the biology of getting older. This humiliating experience, which I know from my own experience, is not spared to anyone who has the privilege of reaching the appropriate age. It must be accepted.

When I asked him to tell me about his everyday working life, I was thrilled by the exciting stories and his successes.

Partial dissatisfaction overshadows everything

As managing director of an SME, he was responsible for highly complex projects in which he had to bring many stakeholders from inside and outside the company to the table and lead them to joint solutions. With a mischievous smile, he told me how he had once again managed to convince critical stakeholders through skilful tactics. The impression I gained did not fit the image of a person who was tired of his work.

When asked about this, he told me that these tasks still motivated him. It was the administrative minutiae that was increasingly wearing him down.

I was surprised that he hadn't delegated these routine tasks, for which he was far overqualified and too expensive, long ago. But as a nice manager, he didn't want his employees to do tasks that he didn't like himself.

Strength-based work as a necessity

He underestimated his extraordinary talents. Developing and realising visions were obvious strengths of his and therefore cost him comparatively little energy. He had built up these skills over the years and was difficult to replace. If he concentrated in future on the tasks that really needed him, which he did with joy and ease, and if he delegated everything else at the same time, he should be able to continue working with satisfaction for many years to come.

For many years, companies have been researching what young talents need to enjoy their work. Wouldn't it make just as much sense to ask what people over 60 needs at the other end of their career to enjoy staying in work? In times of skills shortages, it makes no sense for capable knowledge workers - often at the peak of their abilities after years of investment - to be found on the golf course, in the allotment garden or on Mount Kilimanjaro instead of at work.

And it is up to the more mature age groups to rediscover themselves and their qualities in their later years, as I described in the article «50plus - (self-) underestimated potential».

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