

Navigating the New World of Work: Takeaways from 'Neue Entwicklungen in der Arbeitswelt'

As the curtains draw to a close on our latest event series, "Neue Entwicklungen in der Arbeitswelt – New Work in Kürze" a number of discussions have come to a conclusion, providing new insights into the ever-changing environment of modern work.

The series took place between end September to end November and hosted a total of 8 web panels with 10 speakers from the public, private and academic sector. During the events, challenges and opportunities from both the public and private sector were discussed and presented. From reimagining organisational structures to fostering inclusive work cultures and redefining health paradigms, this series has not only dissected challenges but also shared pathways toward holistic and sustainable approaches in the ever-evolving landscape of work.

It was great sharing experiences and learning within a diverse group of participants from the public, private and academic sector. Evidence-based policies are needed to shape the future."

Beatrix Behrens, HRM Policies and Public Management

The event's discussions were diverse and enriching. They ranged from insights into the level of trust in home offices and fostering diversity within the Austrian Ministry of the Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport (Österreichisches Bundesministerium für Kunst, Kultur, öffentlichen Dienst und Sport) to

managing demographics at institutions like the Deutsche Bundesbank. Discussions on the intersection of diversity, well-being, and the role of language in eliminating discrimination resonated deeply with participants.

Key takeaways from the series underscored the vital importance of:

Placing trust in employees when adapting to new work environments

38% of surveyed executives in Germany believe that employees working from home do not work properly. Interestingly, a significant amount of employees favour a hybrid work model over strictly office-based or remote setups. For them, key factors influencing productivity and engagement encompass:

- *Self-management*

Maintaining a physical separation between workspace and personal activities

- *Leadership Behavior: Individual Attention*

Building trust among team members and between the team and leadership

- *Leadership Behavior: Structure & Goals*

Both individual attention to employees and setting structure & goals are essential

- *Home Office Equipment & Resources*

Having the right equipment and resources is a necessary condition for being productive in a home office

- *Work-Family Conflict*

An increasingly blurring boundary between work and personal life

- *Communication Format*

There should be a good mix between videoconferencing and face-to-face meetings

Having strategies in place to bolster diversity, inclusion, and well-being

Discussions on diversity management revolved around achieving a balance between equality/equal opportunity policies and proactive anti-discrimination requirements. Diversity management is primarily "top-down" - it needs to be initiated, supported, adequately valued, and implemented in terms of resources and personnel by those in a leadership position.

To successfully implement diversity management within an organisation, it's crucial to:

- Move away from focusing on individuals and acknowledge the significance of collective engagement
- Shift from linear cause-and-effect sequences to holistic systems thinking, recognising the link between each element
- Instead of superficial observations, delve into analysing deeper structural dynamics
- Move away from merely dictating policy to purposefully designing structures and processes, fostering an environment that contributes to achieving common objectives and agreements

How well-being at work fosters productivity

Current times demand simultaneous tackling of challenges in digitalisation, demographics,

diversity, and decarbonisation. A shift in generational values emphasises the need for generation management. A new aspect is the growing significance of well-being across all age groups. Emphasising mental health is integral to contemporary health strategies. Prioritising healthy work relationships and conditions is crucial.

- Supervisors should recognise the achievements and experiences of employees by, for example, granting them more freedom in the performance of tasks and increased personal responsibility
- Supervisors should respond to the individual needs and living conditions of their employees and should also do justice to the personality and performance of the individual.

Considering the wide-ranging points covered in our series, it's clear that these factors will significantly impact the public sector moving forward. Although our series doesn't mark the end of these discussions, it's essential to continue them for future improvements. Let's use these insights as a starting point to drive ongoing conversations and actions. By digging deeper into these points, we can make substantial strides in enhancing the public sector. It's crucial to keep the dialogue alive for continuous progress.

Stay up to date

For further insights and information on the topic of Human Resource Management, have a look at our collection of blogs focusing on this area below: