

NEWRY, MOURNE & DOWN DISTRICT COUNCIL

National Report

Output 1 – Baseline Analysis and Comparison of the State of Play



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



1. INTRODUCTION

The main objectives and planned results of the AgeFactor project:

- To increase the competences of educators and professionals in the adult education field to promote personal and professional branding.
- To provide digital and transversal skills to create social reputation, professional credibility and to be able to increase the opportunity for lifelong employability. Also to provide physical venues and methods to learn new skills ("job club" techniques) by kick starting innovative methods of education and guidance activities in informal and peer-to-peer settings
- To create (adult education priority) an EU platform for adult educators, trainers and career guidance to make social media – and their value for employability, professional and personal branding and reputation – available to mature workers;

Aims of Output 1 - Baseline Analysis and Comparison of the State of Play:

- **Highlight current state of play** of the provision of adult training/guidance in the areas of social-media ICT tools, career management, digital and transversal skills, and to compare, share and discuss the enabling factors and gaps in these fields in the partner countries and EU.
- **Identify the capacity of enterprises**, in particular SMEs, to adopt diversity/age management processes and to integrate ICT and social media tools with more traditional methods to attract and retain workers, especially seniors.
- **Assess the interest, inclination, needs and attitudes of the target groups** (mature groups, > 50, and secondarily companies) in the partner countries.

Newry, Mourne & Down District Council undertook the research for Output 1 between April and June 2017 in line with the methodology developed by the University of Latvia and the results of the research are presented in this report.

Methodological framework of the research

1. **Desk and field analyses (partners` survey)** – statistics and current situation about employment services, adult education and guidance provision, digital and



transversal skills gaps and learning needs among mature and disadvantaged groups, recruiting and selection practices.

2. Online surveys

1. at least 80 respondents (**adult learners, 50+**) in each country to identify adults' learning needs in terms of digital and transversal competences, and to highlight gaps and/or good practices in the provision of employment/guidance services.
2. at least 20 respondents from **companies** to identify recruitment and selection practices, competence needs, human capital (esp. senior capital) valorisation policies.
3. **Focus group/s** – adult learners, educators, companies, social media expert/s. Each partner shall organize 1 focus group with adult education experts in order to identify the missing link between training and guidance services as well as employment services in general and companies needs and expectations; in particular partner shall investigate the provision of digital skills development programmes addressed to over 50 job seekers.
4. **In-depth interview/s** – at least one in-depth interview with social media experts/bloggers will be conducted by each partner (also online on a forum or video recorded) in order to identify a first group of “ambassadors” to develop the AGEFACTOR package.
5. **Case study** – in order to collect some successful practices in terms of diversity/age management, each partner shall identify a company as a study case on the integration of traditional (offline) and innovative (online) tools and methods to attract senior workers and adopt fair and unbiased HR management processes. The study cases shall take into particular consideration the small and medium enterprises context – as larger companies usually succeed in having special diversity/age management practices and are not always considered as “approachable models” by smaller employers.

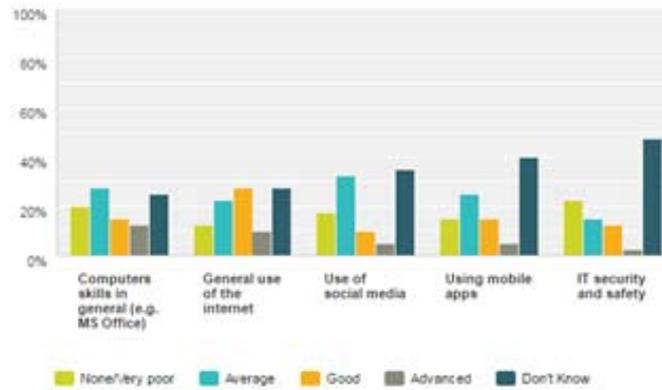


2. ANALYSIS OF ADULT LEARNERS 50+ SURVEYS

The survey was distributed both online through Survey Monkey and in hard copy. A total of 89 responses were received and the results are as follows:

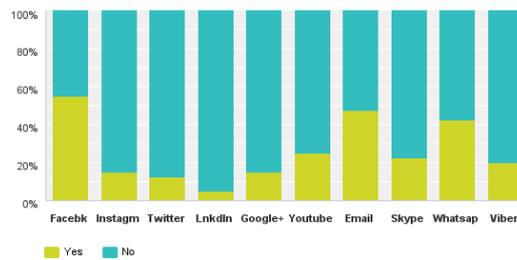
Q1. Please rate your general IT skills:

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



Q2. Do you have an account on any of the following social media, email and communication networks?

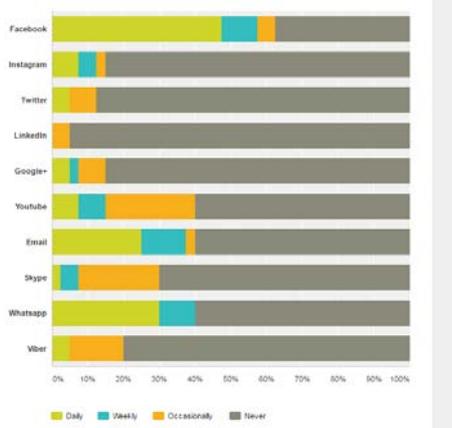
Answered: 89 Skipped: 0





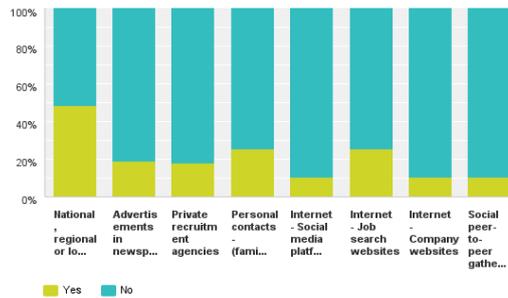
Q3. How frequently have you been using these information and communication networks during the last 12 months?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



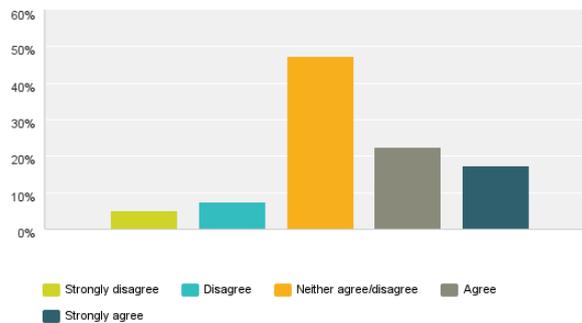
Q4. Which of the following would you be likely to use to find a job?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



Q5. To what level you agree that increased IT skills can increase your competitiveness in labour market and help you to find a job, or get a better job?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0





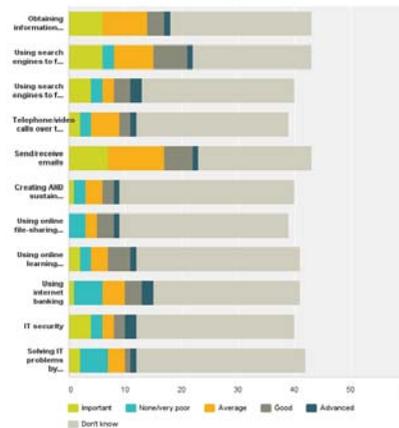
Q6. Do you have any comments re: Question 5?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 83

n/a retired
n/a retired
n/a retired
Important for job applicants
N/A
N/A

Q7. Please mark which of the following IT skills you think are necessary to increase your employability prospects, can you also please rate your skills in them?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



Q8. What is your overall opinion on using IT tools for employability purposes and social interactions?

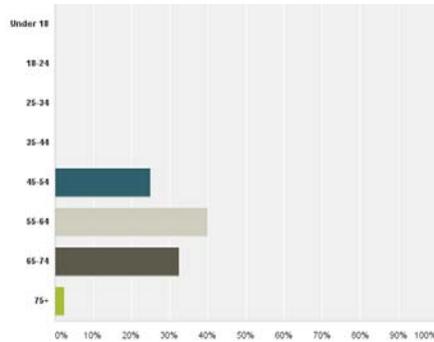
Answered: 14 Skipped: 75

n/a retired
not very applicable to older people
older adults need relaxed, less formal tutorials, when stressed a block to retaining information occurs
n/a retired
In this age digital competence would be relevant in most employment situations
n/a to older people
N/A
I believe it is important to have the basic skills of IT. IT moves extremely fast and impossible to keep up.
N/A



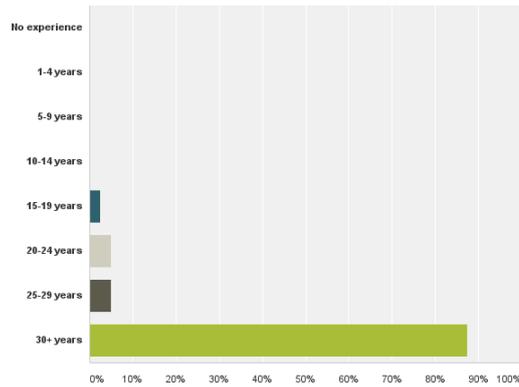
Q9. Please select your age:

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



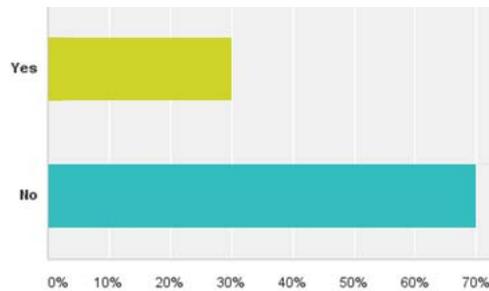
Q10. Please select the number of years of your working experience:

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



Q11. Are you currently looking for a job?

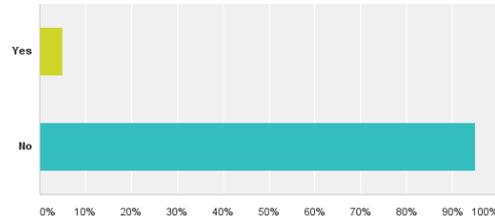
Answered: 89 Skipped: 4





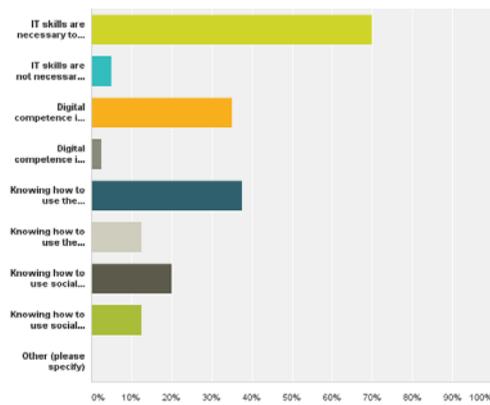
Q12. Are you currently attending, or have you attended any education courses within last 12 months to increase your qualifications?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



Q13. From your working experience please select the statements you agree with re: doing/finding a job

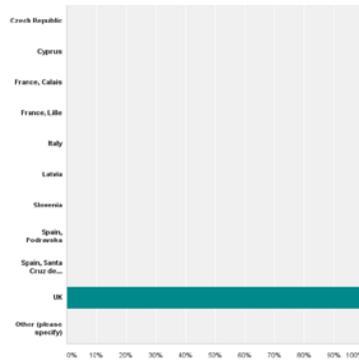
Answered: 89 Skipped: 0





Q14.1. Please select the region where you are working or looking for a job:

Answered: 89 Skipped: 0



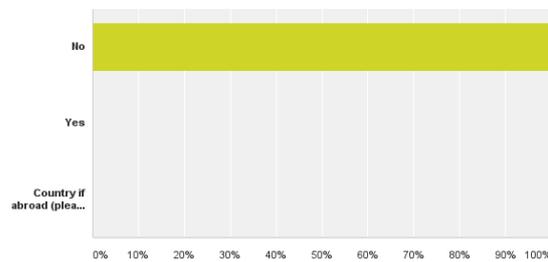
Q14.2. Your country of birth is?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 83

- Ireland
- UK
- Northern Ireland
- England
- Ireland
- N/A

Q14.3. Are you currently abroad? If so, what country are you in?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 10



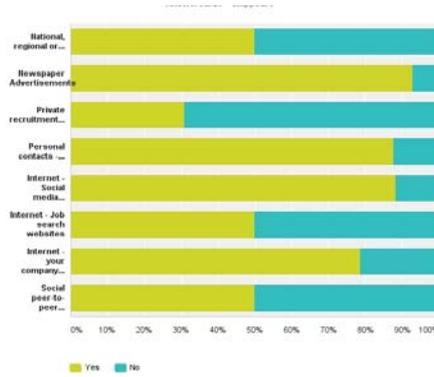


3. ANALYSIS OF COMPANY SURVEYS

A total of 20 completed Survey Monkey surveys were received and the results are as follows:

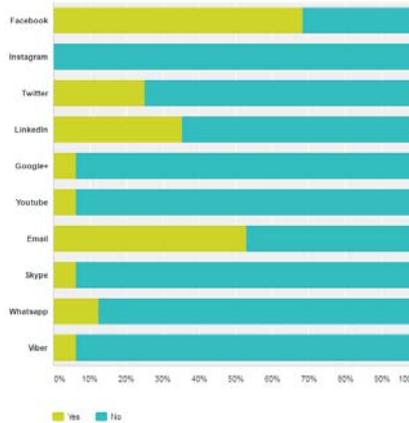
Q1. Which of the following options would you be likely to use to advertise a job vacancy at your business/company?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



Q2. Do you use social media, email or any other networks in the employee recruitment process?

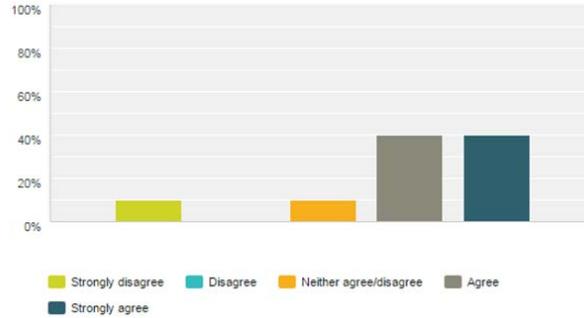
Answered: 20 Skipped: 0





Q3. To what level do you agree that increased IT skills increase a job seeker's competitiveness in the labour market?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



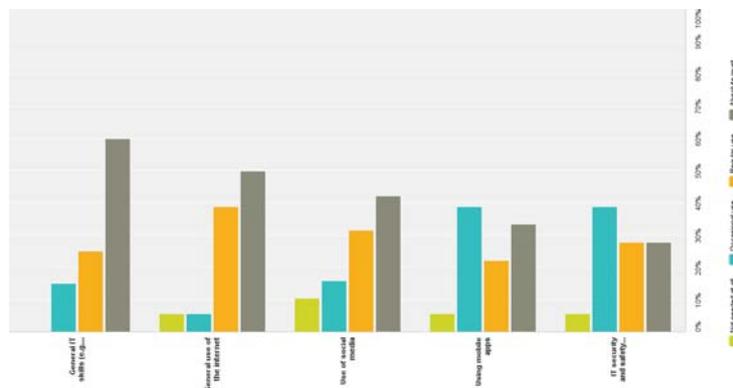
Q4. Do you have any comments re: Question 3?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 16

Hard to imagine employing anyone without IT skills
 Not really relevant to the bulk of our job roles
 need basic IT
 I teach ICT and students don't see the point of it which amazes me because many will
 be business owners and they can't see how it will make them money.

Q5. Please indicate and rate the IT skills you would expect to be deployed during a recruitment campaign

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0





Q6. Do you have any comments re: Q5?

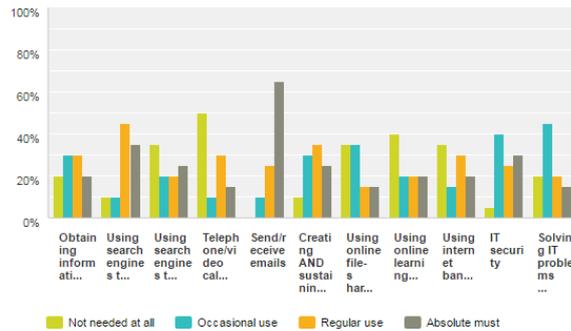
Answered: 2 Skipped: 18

didn't understand whether you meant a) deployed by us in our recruitment process or b) displayed by candidates - have answered as a) - only three people in the company are required to use any form of IT and we are all long term staff. Whilst we have a high staff turnover in other roles and are constantly recruiting, none of the others will be using IT

Business owners need to be more clued up and particularly on digital marketing and SEO.

Q7. Please rate how necessary you feel the following skills would be to support an effective recruitment campaign

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



Q8. Do you have any comments re: Q7?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 19

Upskilling business owners and employees and ensuring they can access good IT training is essential to our economy to make us more competitive



Q9. What in your opinion are some of the main advantages of employing people in the 50+ age group?

Answered: 18 Skipped: 2

experience, more likely to turn up on a monday morning!
experience levels
life experience, more common sense
less time off through maternity/sick
Have more work/life skills and communication skills could be stronger
Maturity
Experience skill communication patience
They tend to have more experience and are more consistent in their attendances'
"work experience dedication wisdom"
they don't take unnecessary sick leave
more reliable and experienced
retired staff are available when others are working - we offer part-time occasional work and they can be very flexible
None
Less distractions at home - children are more independent
Life experience
DEPENDABILITY, TIMEKEEPING
"they have less family commitments are reliable and appreciate having a job "
Reliability, work ethic, skills, knowledge, experience, behaviour, language, customer service skills. Ability to go the extra mile.

Q10. What in your opinion are the main disadvantages of employing people in the 50+ age group?

Answered: 17 Skipped: 3

can be resistant to change
none that I know of
n/a
less likely to have strong IT skills
May have a problem adapting to the digital world and lack confidence to steer them forward
None
Can be too set in their ways for change
inability to adapt to new processes - only on occasion
not up to date with certain skills
May not be as physically capable of certain tasks
Age
Some skills may not be up to date e.g.: Social Media
More set in their ways
PERCEIVED LACK OF IT SKILLS
health, not wanting to work too many hours, lack of IT skills
I really don't see any, unless they have health issues/caring issues.etc
Health could be an issue

Q11. What are your thoughts re: how necessary IT skills are to those seeking employment - particularly in the 50+ age group?

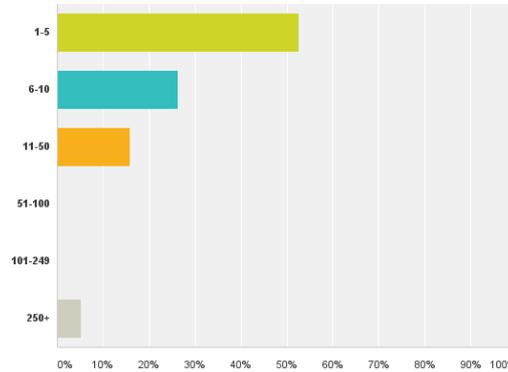
Answered: 17 Skipped: 3

not to have any IT skills would be a disadvantage
definitely an advantage
IT skills are a must have
probably a must
IT skills are vital in today's age and especially in our industry
Necessary
Dependant on the role. Some it skills are required
Must have a knowledge of the basic IT skills
most in 50+ category have sufficient skills as a starting point
general knowledge as things are done differently in every park so
training can take place
not necessary in this employment
Needed
Very necessary
BASIC SKILLS NECESSARY- SIMPLE TRAINING COURSE
important
Absolutely vital
Such skill is essential



Q12. How large is your business/company? (please indicate the number of employees)

Answered: 19 Skipped: 1



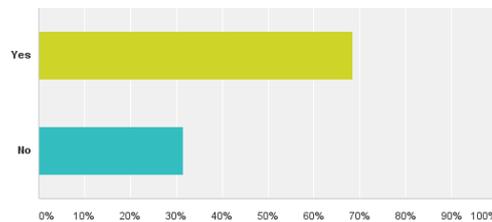
Q13. What would you estimate is the percentage share of your employees who are aged 50+?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

- 25%
- 25%
- 20%
- 20%
- only 1 member of staff
- 50%
- 20%
- 33%
- 30%
- 75
- 3
- 0
- 10
- All
- Just me
- 100%
- 40%
- 50
- 0 purely because I am sole employee.
- 100

Q14. Does your business/company provide training to equip employees with the skills necessary to do their job?

Answered: 19 Skipped: 1





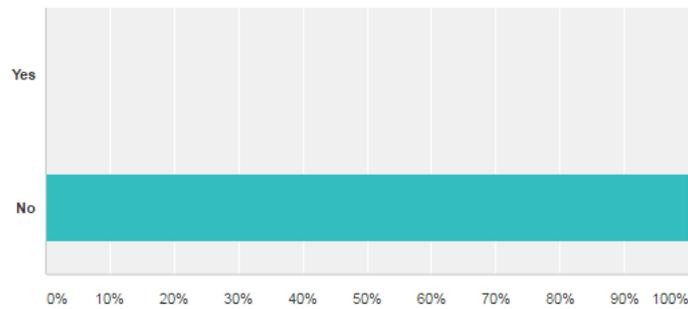
Q15. Do you have any comments re: Q14?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 14

on the job training - not certified
not IT training
Not formal training, on the job training
in house and professional qualifications are widely supported in this business
OUTSOURCE TRAINING
n/a because it's just me sole operator.

Q16. Does your business/company operate targets with respect to the number of employees aged 50+

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0



Q17. If you answered 'Yes' to Q16 can you briefly describe those targeted measures?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 19

I would be targeting more sales and proposals for jobs if I did have other employees



Q18.1. Please select the region where your business/company is located

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

100% were located in the UK

Q18.2. Your country of birth is?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

55% were born in the UK, 45% in Rol

Q18.3. Are you currently abroad? If so, what country are you in?

Answered: 20 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses	
No	100.00%	20
Country if abroad (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total		20



4. MAIN CONCLUSIONS OF THE FOCUS GROUP

The focus group was held on Tuesday 21st May 2017 in Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and consisted of:

- Adult education provider
- Social media expert
- Adult learner 50+
- Companies representatives

The main conclusions of the focus group are:

1. Older people should be supported and encouraged to get online, but those who cannot or do not want to do so should continue to be able to access services and support in a way that suits them.
2. There is a lack of adequate and sufficient uptake of the online resources both by providers of services/employers and employees.
3. Older people tend to use digital media only as a social platform and not for business/employment purposes.
4. Age-friendly design can help to increase take-up of digital technology, but still 61% of people aged 75 and over have never used the internet. The most common reason that people give for not being on line is that they are not interested in the internet. However there are also other barriers such as costs, and a lack of knowledge and confidence and technophobia.
5. Digital technology offers tremendous opportunities as well as challenges for older people. Positive about the benefits that digital inclusion can bring, from practical help (e.g. online shopping, promote and sell their services) through to improving the ability to stay connected (e.g. using social media and Skype).
6. Many companies, especially those within the public sector are structurally limited and rigid in the use of the internet and social media – employees have limited or no access to digital platforms.
7. Very few companies have time for IT training
8. And yet, while almost all adults aged 16 to 24 years (99 per cent) have used the internet (7.17 million people), only 29 per cent of adults aged 75 years and over have ever used it, representing 1.33 million people. There are a number of reasons why fewer older people are online, including:



□ age-related issues (impaired vision, manual dexterity and mobility, memory and cognition; challenges (such as remembering passwords), and limitations with activities of daily life;

□ training and support issues; including financial barriers to accessing training and the absence of training opportunities – particularly those with suitably qualified trainers who are sensitive to the needs of older people;

□ internet security issues combined with the lack of understanding and confidence of how the internet 'works', this contributes to a feeling of vulnerability and anxiety with respect to the internet.

□ the characteristics of existing technology, including complex screens and small print, a standard computer keyboard format, usability issues with system designs, computer jargon and the fact that some technologies are complex to use, change frequently or simply do not work well.

Main issues identified:

Older workers

There also remains a significant minority of people coming up to retirement who have never been online – 9 per cent of people aged 45 to 54 and 15 per cent of people aged 55 to 64. A lack of IT skills has been identified as one of the primary barriers facing older jobseekers. 25 per cent of all advertised vacancies are online only, meaning that an offline jobseeker who cannot conduct an online job search and fill in an online application form is excluded from a large proportion of the labour market. In addition, most employers require a minimum level of IT skills for performing a job – only 4 per cent state that email skills and 7 per cent that word processing are unnecessary.

Companies

- **Technology in the Workplace Causes Distraction at Work:** Their so many ways technology can distract employees at work. The use of social networks at work can cause so much distraction and it affects the productivity of employees. Some companies have decided to block access to specific websites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, because of the unlimited distraction they cause. Other business technologies which cause distraction at work include smart phones, computers and virtual meeting applications like Skype.
- **High Maintenance costs:** It is expensive to buy technology, but it is also costly to maintain it. Many small businesses can not afford the cost of hiring a full-time



technical person, so they resort to monthly tech contractors who charge them for work done. If business technology tools like computers are not well maintained, their performance will decrease and the process of buying new computers or any other business technology can even be more expensive.

- **Makes employees lazy:** Since most tasks are automated by technology, many employees become lazy at work, technology kills their creativity and skills. Simple tasks like calculating sales and tracking inventory are being done with computers, so you will find that employees do not put their brains at work, they can't solve high-end business problems because a computer or software will do it with no challenge.
- **Affects Workplace Relationships:** Employees communicate via mobile phones, text messages, email or virtual video conferencing tools. This type of communication technology eliminates face-to-face communication. Interpersonal communications are important in building workplace relationships because employees will get a chance to know each other in person, sometimes they can even share non-work related information, this type of interaction is killed by communication technology tools. Employees become more reserved and self-centred; they get buried into their work which can be of great harm to a business.
- **It's Risky:** Though we like the advantages that come with technology at work, it also tends to be risky, especially when it comes to data security. All employees in important decision making positions will need access to private business information; this can pose as a threat, because it can be very difficult to monitor the usage and privacy of this information. Many employees come with flash drives at work, so they can transfer critical business information and use it for their own personal gains.

5. MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND OUTCOMES OF THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW

The interview with a social media expert was recorded and can be viewed on YouTube at:

<https://youtu.be/5vY0rqKTqKM>

The main conclusions are summarised below:

- Older people go online more and more often and their confidence in the use of the internet and social media has increased.



- There is definitely a high degree of peer and social pressure to use social media. For many people over 50 social media, and especially Facebook, Skype and WhatsApp are essential for communicating with family members who have left our area.
- The most important skills for older people are the ability to simply turn on a PC/tablet and to use computers, tablets and social media apps with confidence.
- There are not many social networks specifically designed for a target audience aged 50+. The most obvious example would be Dating Apps.
- Larger companies could have a panel /database of young people they could call on in order to utilise their digital skills. This system would benefit both older employees who would get the experience of using the apps from the experts, and young people, who in turn would get the experience of working in a corporate setting.
- There are not many examples of public institutions in Northern Ireland using social media, with the exception of some campaigns, e.g. benefit entitlement or health promotion. The local council is more and more active on social media. However, we are still some way behind other European countries in this regard.

6. CASE STUDIES

"With an ageing population and a decline in the relative number of young people leaving education, firms will need to look to the over-50s to staff their businesses."

Jermaine Haughton

Businesses are set to suffer from failing to provide enough suitable employment opportunities for older workers, according to new research from Newcastle University.

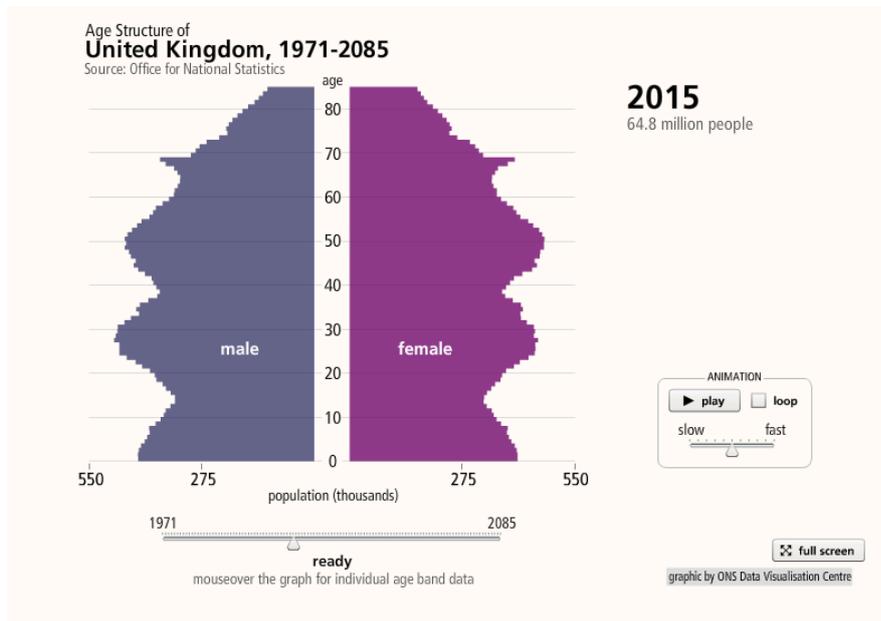
By gravitating towards younger employees and recent graduates during the hiring process, the University's Institute for Ageing report says recruiters are limiting themselves by excluding older workers with maturity, experience and different skills.

This is important as over the next decade UK employers will need to fill around 13.5 million vacancies, with only 7 million young people leaving education according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

This workforce gap will need to be filled by workers aged 50 and over, which is expected to total a third of the working-age population by 2020. If employers are reluctant to hire older workers, this could prove costly to the UK economy, particularly in regards to spending power.



How the UK's population is getting older



B&Q

DIY retailer B&Q sees that an age-diverse workforce brings a wealth of skills and experience. It has operated without a default retirement age for over 15 years, and aims to provide age neutral benefits for its 32,000 employees.

This means ensuring the perks for staff across its 300 UK branches, such as voluntary benefits, apply to all and are not biased by geography, age or gender. Paul Manzi, reward manager, says: "We try to be non-age specific."

B&Q actively recruits from all age groups and, with 28% of its workforce over the age of 50, it has many employees who are semiretired.

The firm recognises that an ageing population comes with some physical restrictions, for example injuries, bad backs and people becoming more frail, so it offers adjustments to utilise these people as well as it can. "With a more diverse workforce comes years of experience," says Manzi. "Whatever the age or skill set, we accommodate those people."

B&Q's oldest employee is 96 and works on the checkouts. YouTube video at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecBPNyrDE8U>



Not many companies can boast about having a 94-year-old employee, but for the DIY retailer it's only the tip of the ice-berg regarding its age-diverse workforce. With no default retirement age and almost a third of its 35,000 workforce aged over 50, B&Q has been specifically targeting older workers for leading roles in their stores since 1989.

Understanding that **older workers are more relatable to customers**, as they are more likely to be home owners and have some knowledge of DIY, B&Q changed its recruitment policy and has experienced a profit increase of 18%, along with greater customer satisfaction. In addition to training opportunities, employees can choose to work part or full-time allowing staff to adjust their work schedule around their life responsibilities.

It is 10 years since **B&Q launched its pioneering age diversity project by staffing its Macclesfield store entirely with people aged over 50.** Since then age diversity has been top of the agenda at the DIY retailer and its name has become synonymous with employing older people. This year to mark the 10th anniversary of the Macclesfield experiment and to reinforce its commitment to age diversity, it has re-launched its age policy, introducing changes to reflect the concerns of its staff today.

Each of B&Q's 300 stores has an objective to employ a workforce that reflects the make-up of the local community, but with an emphasis on employing people over 50. The emphasis on older workers came in response to customer comments that they wanted to be served by someone who had lived in their own home and knew something about DIY.

Targeting older workers was seen as a way of avoiding the cost of high staff turnover which is particularly a problem among 17 to 21 year olds. Older workers were also seen as an under-used pool of talent that was available to the company at a time when it was expanding rapidly. The Macclesfield test proved that there were demonstrable business benefits in employing an older workforce and B&Q has been committed to employing over 50s ever since.

Recruitment at B&Q is co-ordinated centrally but the field-based HR teams are responsible for encouraging people from the local community to apply. If the store is in a retirement area, where the number of older staff at the store needs to be higher to reflect the local population, the HR professionals at the store will target local senior citizens clubs and magazines in the recruitment drive. Field HR works closely with store managers to ensure that the age policy is embedded in the culture of the shop floor and is not just an HR issue. In fact, commitment to the issue comes right from the top – managing director Martin Toogood is a vocal champion of the strategy.

B&Q has become an authority on employing older workers. Not only is it regularly cited as a good practice model by other companies but it is one of the founder members of the Employers' Forum on Age and an adviser to the Government on over 50s employment policy. But B&Q is not resting on its laurels. Last year, in response to employee focus groups, it changed its policy on retirement. Previously staff over 60 could stay on a fixed



term two year contract, which could be renewed every two years. Now there is no automatic retirement age, although people over 60 can choose to reduce their hours or change their role. For example, if they no longer feel strong enough to work in the store they could transfer to the less physically-demanding role of expert adviser.

Other developments include the scrapping of the age restriction for graduate traineeships, and disability awareness promotion, especially relating to impairment caused by the onset of age. Next on the agenda is a strategic review of work/life balance, targeted predominantly but not exclusively at the older worker.



B&Q is the largest home improvement and garden centre retailer in the UK and Europe employing over 30,000 people nation-wide, and is recognised as a pioneer in diversity issues, being particularly well-known for its highly successful push to employ older workers. But its scope is wider than that. As far back as 1998 B&Q started to learn about the needs of disabled people as customers, employees and the local community and understand the barriers to employment and shopping that people with disabilities can sometimes face as part of everyday life.

This led to B&Q launching a disability programme, which includes staff training, customer service, access to their stores and a review of their recruitment and employment policies and practices to ensure accessibility for all. In 2006 they won the Enhanced Accessibility Award for excellent customer service. Commendation was received for accessibility of all B&Q stores, the encouragement of staff to learn British Sign Language and the Daily Living Made Easier product range.

The particular aspect of good practice that this blog focuses on is around supporting company car drivers.

B & Q work in close collaboration with their Occupational Health provider and Company Car provider to support company car drivers who have existing, or develop new health conditions which impact on their ability to drive.

As driving is a fundamental part of their role, the initial aim is always to look for potential solutions which will enable the employee to remain in their existing role rather than



automatically looking to redeploy them elsewhere in the business onto a role which reduces or removes the need to drive.

The Occupational Health team provides details of the employee's needs and any limitations, and also make recommendations for potential solutions. The Company Car provider can then review the specifications of the available cars in the fleet to find the most suitable car which will suit the employee, or can be upgraded or adapted to do so.

However, not all solutions require permanent modifications to vehicles. In a recent example regarding an employee who has a spinal condition, B & Q were able to source a suitable portable lumbar support for the employee that enables him to use it in any car he travels in, whether as a passenger or a driver, at work or in his own time. He has been able to continue in his role, and has also reported less discomfort whilst travelling in all vehicles.

Another example of where a quick, easy and very inexpensive action can make a huge difference in enabling an employee to continue in their existing role despite acquiring a disability or long-term health condition.

We're an online recruiter, so before you can apply for a job here you'll need to create personal account. To do this, go to [Apply now](#). If you need any help in completing an application, please contact our recruitment team by emailing recruitment@b-and-q.co.uk

McDonald's - Large Employer



McDonald's has 1200 restaurants across the UK and employs 85,000 employees (over 1,000 employees are over 60).

Flexible Working: Work/life balance across several generations - McDonald's recognise that their 85,000 employees need to balance their home lives with their working lives. They offer a wide range of flexible working initiatives which are all designed to give employees



the freedom to juggle their work with their personal commitments. This can relieve the pressure many people experience when trying to meet the demands of both a busy work and personal life. It also enables those people, who wouldn't otherwise be able to be economically active due to other commitments, to lead working lives.

Family and Friends Contract - The Family and Friends Contract is a UK first, ground-breaking scheme, which allows family working in the same restaurant to share and cover each other's shifts (with no prior notice required). It's designed to help McDonald's' diverse range of employees to juggle their work and personal lives. They have since extended the contract to include friends, widening the group of employees that can benefit from the scheme.

The scheme benefits numerous age groups. For example, students with last-minute deadlines, busy working women with children and not least, older employees with other commitments and employees with caring responsibilities.

Many of McDonald's' older workers work alongside up to three generations of their family members.

The scheme enables them to work as much or little as they wish, depending on their individual needs and situation, offering them greater flexibility without disrupting the business. Several older workers have told McDonald's they appreciate the opportunity to alternate their hours at short notice, giving them a much greater opportunity to change their schedules at last minute. This in turn allows them to fully maximise the benefits of spending time with their grandchildren (or indeed great-grandchildren), spouses and friends, many of whom may be retired.

Business Benefits: McDonald's has revealed the commercial impact of creating the right blend of youth and experience in its workforce. According to research conducted by Lancaster University Management School, which examined the performance of more than 400 McDonald's restaurants across the UK, employees aged 60 plus deliver a significant business boost.

The study revealed that levels of customer satisfaction were on average 20 per cent higher in restaurants that employ staff aged 60 and over as part of a mixed age workforce.

David Fairhurst, Senior Vice President and Chief People Officer, McDonald's UK & Northern Europe, said: "Changing demographics in the workplace mean that later life workers are now the fastest growing age group in the labour market. Yet despite the growing numbers of mature workers, their contribution to business and the wider economy often goes unsung. It might surprise people to learn that at McDonald's we employ over 1,000 people aged 60 and above. These employees play an important role in our business and, as the research shows, they make a huge impact on customer satisfaction." *Information correct as of November 2011.*



A survey of Business Managers at McDonald's revealed some of the reasons behind the customer satisfaction boost delivered by later life workers:

- over 66% said later life workers empathised with and connected well with customers;
- over 50% cited later life workers' ability to go the extra mile to deliver the best possible customer service.

Recruitment - McDonald's recruitment policy is called 'Hire the smile' - they recruit for qualities, not qualifications. McDonald's actively encourage older workers to apply to work at their restaurants in addition to other age groups.

McDonald's have advertised 'our Jobs' targeting websites which have large numbers of older readers, such as the Telegraph and 50connect.co.uk in addition to wider targeted sites.

This has directly resulted in a significant increase (year on year) in the number of older workers applying and subsequently being hired for vacancies at McDonald's. In 2009, McDonald's saw a significant increase in their recruitment of older workers compared to 2008.

McDonald's hired a total of 746 individuals over the age of 41 in 2009 (an increase of 152% on 2008). Recruitment of employees aged 51-60 increased by 280% from 2008, and of employees over 61 increased by 233%. In 2010, these significant increases were maintained and in addition, a further 25% increase was seen in hires of employees aged 61-90 years.

Employee stories

Fred Turner was the face of McDonald's 2009 'Later Life Worker Awareness' Campaign. Recruited to McDonald's in 2005 aged over 60, flexible working policies allowed Fred to devote himself to his main passion in life, Judo coaching, two nights a week whilst working two days per week for McDonald's.

Brian Holden, 82 is a Customer Care Assistant at McDonald's. After taking voluntary redundancy in 1992 at the age of 63, Brian contemplated early retirement. However, believing he still had lots to offer a prospective employer, Brian opted instead to take on a part-time role at his local McDonald's. Having worked with young people for many years as a lab technician at a local college, Brian relishes the young and vibrant atmosphere at McDonald's.

In his role as customer care assistant, Brian oversees the dining area and loves the constant interaction with customers. " I've had plenty of experience of dealing with young people in my previous job, so I feel I can relate well to all our customers, no matter what their age. Obviously, I'm quite a bit older than everyone else who works in the restaurant, but we all get on really well. It's fair to say, throughout my time at McDonald's there has always been a fantastic team spirit. With 18 years McDonald's experience under my belt and a whole lot



more life and work experience, I like to think I'm something of an example to some of the younger staff.

After all, I've seen quite a lot of life, so it's great to be able to call on that experience to help out my colleagues." *Information correct as of November 2011.*

Stella Fleming, 74, was made redundant from her old job at the age of 65. Stella decided to apply for McDonald's and was delighted to be given the chance to join the team, taking over from another mature worker who had decided to retire at the young age of 72. Stella has worked 30 hours a week for almost ten years, starting early in the mornings, which allows her to spend the afternoons with her grandchildren.

Bill Dudley, 86, says age is not an issue and that he is fighting fit for his six hour shifts, which he does two days a week. Despite having suffered angina and having a pacemaker and a new knee fitted, he would not want to retire quite yet. Many of the customers in the restaurant where he works as a customer care assistant think he is in his 60's due to his energy and enthusiasm. They don't believe it when they hear he is 86! He says the thing he values most about the job is the feeling of belonging to a family, the flexibility and the chance to stay young by being active. His manager says he is very popular with the customers.

7. OVERALL NATIONAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Older people should be supported and encouraged to get online, but those who cannot or do not want to do so should continue to be able to access services and support in a way that suits them.
2. There is a lack of adequate and sufficient uptake of online resources both by providers of services/employers and employees.
3. Older people tend to use digital media only as a social platform and not for business/employment purposes.
4. Social media could be used as a platform where older people could share their experience with young people.
5. Age-friendly design can help to increase uptake of digital technology. The most common reason that people give for not being on line is that they are not interested in the internet. However there are also other barriers such as costs, and a lack of knowledge and confidence and technophobia.
6. Digital technology offers tremendous opportunities for older people; from practical help (e.g. online shopping, promotion of their services) through to improving the ability to stay connected (e.g. using social media and Skype).



7. Many companies, especially those within the public sector, are structurally limited and rigid in the use of the internet and social media – employees have limited or no access to digital platforms.
8. Larger companies could have a panel /database of young people they could call on in order to utilise their digital skills. This system would benefit both older employees who would get the experience of using the apps from the experts, and young people, who in turn would get the experience of working in a corporate setting.