



WHAT IS WORK ABILITY MANAGEMENT?

Work ability management is goal-oriented and systematic work that is carried out daily to promote the personnel's work ability. Work ability management is based on concrete methods and practices that support employees' work ability in different situations. The key point in work ability management is the company management's engagement, the personnel's active participation, smooth co-operation and the continuous development and evaluation of activities.

Future work ability management is strategic, proactive and inclusive

Many changes in work and the operating environment challenge employees' work ability and can also affect work ability management. Work ability management must be reformed so that employees remain able to work in the future. Anticipation, comprehensiveness and a solution-oriented approach increase the prerequisites for successful work ability management.

SOLUTIONS



Make sure that you are strategic.

Work ability management should be part of the organisation's strategy. It is important to see work ability management as part of building sustainable working life and as a profitable investment. The management's commitment to work ability management is a key prerequisite for success. Make sure that the organisation's structures and processes support success at work and work ability.

Lead with knowledge and be proactive.

It is important to be proactive in order to address work ability problems at an early stage. Make sure that information related to work ability is used in decision-making. It is essential to identify the root causes of work ability problems.

Strengthen competence.

Work ability management requires sufficient resources and competence. Make sure that the management, supervisors, HR staff and employees have a sufficient understanding of work ability and the means of promoting it. Future work ability management also requires a reform of the workplace culture, attitudes and operating methods.

Manage work ability in everyday work.

Supervisors play a key role in day-to-day work ability management. At best, work ability management is transversal daily work. The focus is on everyday discussion, not only intervening when there are challenges in work ability. Building an open dialogue culture and trust takes time. Make sure that supervisors have sufficient time for work ability management. Make sure that the supervisors are also supported in their own work.

Take effective measures.

Future work ability management is systematic and solution-oriented, and it is based on analysed needs and effective measures. Make sure that the personnel have the opportunity to participate in the planning and implementation of work ability management. In the future, individual work ability support solutions will be increasingly needed.

Monitor, evaluate and develop in co-operation.

Work ability management is continuous work that requires smooth co-operation. Work ability is best promoted together with workplace operators and partners, such as occupational health care. The pension insurance company can also provide advice and guidance in matters related to disability risks. Monitor and assess the implementation of work ability management on a regular basis. Impact assessment is important for the development of operations.

83%

of organisations see work ability as a prerequisite for implementing their strategy

76%

of organisations develop supervisors' competence in work ability matters

66%

of organisations estimate that work ability management is goal-oriented and systematic

*Shares of Agree and Somewhat Agree respondents, risk assessments of Varma's customer organisations (2021–2023)

What do we know?

Key forces of change, such as digitalisation, technological development, the ageing of the population, diversity and climate change, affect working life and work. The changes are manifested, for example, in new ways of working and forms of work as well as new professions and requirements for employees. Changing work requires continuous competence development. Good work ability management is a way of supporting the smoothness of work and the work ability of the personnel.

Why is this important?

Many changes in work and the operating environment challenge employees' work ability and also affect work ability management. For example, the increasing demands of work and the psychosocial and cognitive load of work can lead to work ability problems if prolonged. Work ability management must be reformed so that employees remain able to work in the future.

What should be done?

Future work ability management is strategic, proactive and inclusive. The changes in work ability management concern, for example, the workplace culture and mindset, competence, everyday work ability management, work ability support measures and co-operation. Change is needed, for example, in how the workplace approaches partial work ability and mental health challenges. Competence related to work ability management must also be strengthened.

Future work ability management requires a positive, proactive and solution-oriented approach. The supervisor's role in supporting employees' work ability is key. Good work ability management is based on analysed needs and effective measures. Involving the personnel in the planning and implementation of work ability management is important.

In the future, individual work ability support services and more methods for managing psychosocial and cognitive workload will be increasingly needed. It is essential to ensure adequate monitoring, assessment and continuous development of work ability management. Future work ability management also requires stronger multidisciplinary co-operation.

Future work ability management is timely, proactive and courageous.



WHAT WILL GOOD WORK ABILITY MANAGEMENT BE LIKE IN THE FUTURE?

- Strategic and goal-oriented management
- Proactive and comprehensive
- Systematic and timely
- Data-driven
- Day-to-day management and ensuring the smoothness of work
- Continuous open dialogue
- Employees' active participation in promoting work ability
- Solution-oriented and individual
- Learning and developing together
- Smooth co-operation
- Continuous evaluation and development of operations

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Read the report [on our website](#) (in Finnish).

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