

## PSA PEUGEOT CITROEN: MAPPING THE WORKPLACE TO BETTER MANAGE THE WORKFORCE – FRANCE

### 1. Organisations involved

- PSA Peugeot Citroën

### 2. Description of the case

#### 2.1. Introduction

PSA Peugeot Citroën is a French car manufacturer employing 118,080 staff in France, 29% of whom are over 50 years of age. Within the company, an older worker is defined as someone over 50 years old or with at least 30 years of professional experience.

With long service, the following potential difficulties have been identified for manufacturing operators:

- a reduction in physical capacities, such as back problems, a reduction of mobility (speed and range of movements), upper limb musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), memory and sensory loss;
- difficulties in adapting to new tasks (limited adaptability to new machines/technologies).

Better management of the workforce is very important for the company, to enable it to maximise its capacity without excluding categories of workers that are still valuable to the company.

Dealing with workers with reduced capacities or disabilities was already well integrated in the company's human resources (HR) and occupational safety and health policies. However, initiatives relating to career management and age-related issues are more recent.

#### 2.2. Aims

The company aims to maintain the employability of workers over the longer term, by minimising the impact of ageing on the workforce's work ability and, eventually, to provide suitable alternative work to those staff whose capacities have declined.

#### 2.3. What was done, and how?

French law on the funding of social security (2009) requires companies employing more than 50 workers to negotiate a company agreement with social partners to promote the employment of older workers. Peugeot signed a 3-year agreement in December 2009. In 2013, in accordance with the law on the 'Generation Contracts' (which aims at developing mentoring tasks for older workers), Peugeot signed a new company agreement implementing the Generation Contracts, which also includes measures for the employment of older workers.

Before the 2009 company agreement, ageing was not specifically targeted in HR policies, and older workers benefited only from measures put in place for staff with reduced capacities. The company agreement put more emphasis on proactive age management by anticipating career changes, preventing work-related strain for all the workers and maintaining the employability of workers.

Peugeot's company agreement covers a range of areas, as per the six key priorities defined by the government <sup>(1)</sup> (focused on recruitment, career management, working conditions, skills development and transfer of knowledge).

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<sup>(1)</sup> Recruitment of older workers; anticipation of career changes; improvement of working conditions and the prevention of arduous working conditions; skills development and access to vocational training; career management for older workers and transition between employment and retirement; transmission of knowledge and skills and development of mentoring.

### 2.3.1. Working conditions

The team of in-house ergonomists completed a mapping of the workplace and all workstations, categorising jobs into heavy, medium and light, according to their energy expenditure (number of calories consumed on a workday to perform a job) as measured by heart rate. Light jobs are those with a consumption of fewer than 1,000 calories, medium jobs 1,000–1,600 and heavy jobs more than 1,600. Quantitative objectives were defined in the company agreement to increase the proportion of light jobs to 60% and reduce the proportion of heavy jobs to 8%. By 2013, 57% of jobs were classified as 'light' (compared with 38% in 2005), 35% as 'medium' and 8% as 'heavy' (compared with 18% in 2005). This was achieved by reducing manual interventions, limiting movements or reducing work performed standing under the vehicle. For instance, in the company premises in Sochaux, workers installing the brake system in the cars now stand next to the car – directly on the assembly line – rather than under the car with arms raised above the head (which caused a lot of health problems) (*Vosges Matin*, 2013).

This classification also enabled the company to distribute tasks among employees according to their physical capacities. Under the agreement, workers over 50 may not be assigned heavy jobs. Light jobs have been created by the reintegration of outsourced activities (such as preparation of subassemblies or assembly operations or welding) so that suitable tasks are available for workers with reduced capacity, or those identified as disabled, for whom there is a separate company agreement.

The *gestionnaire d'aptitudes physiques* or GAP (physical skills manager) is key to this process. This person matches vacant jobs with worker capacity, making adaptations when necessary, to ensure that work can be found for the greatest number of employees. The role of the GAP has been extended to older workers experiencing difficulties in performing their tasks.

Mapping the workplace has also improved the monitoring of working conditions in the company, making it easier to identify employees undertaking strenuous work. Rotation of staff between workstations has been put in place, preventing workers from spending an entire day performing a strenuous job. Workers would typically spend one-third of their day in a heavy job, and two-thirds in medium or light jobs.

### 2.3.2. Job rotation

Rotation between two or three jobs is an effective means of increasing worker adaptability. This has recently been put into place to encourage learning agility among older workers.

Three types of job rotation are commonly part of the company's work management:

- rotation among work positions to reduce the exposure to strenuous working conditions;
- rotation to keep workers with reduced capacities in employment, especially for workers who, because of their limited work capacity, can perform a task for only a limited time;
- a rotation cycle among work positions to maintain workers' intellectual capacities and reflexes, which is being tested. It aims to diversify the tasks performed in a day to maintain reflexes and capacities such as memory and ability to react quickly, skills that that may otherwise reduce or become more rigid with age.

### 2.3.3. Career management and skills development

The company agreement goes beyond working conditions and also addresses career management, with personal skill assessments developed for all workers. Whereas reclassification of older workers to lighter jobs within the same activity is automatic, the skill assessment helps in the consideration of other career options, such as moving an employee to a completely different job in the company. The company agreements of 2009 and 2013 protect access to vocational training, ensuring a commitment to continued training for all workers, irrespective of their age.

### 2.3.4. Agreement on the social and professional integration of people with disabilities

In March 2000, Peugeot signed its first company agreement on the social and professional integration of people with disabilities. This agreement has been renewed regularly since then, with a last update in February 2014 (Peugeot, 2014). The agreement focuses on four areas:

- communication (awareness-raising among the teams and managers);
- integrating and maintaining in employment more persons with disabilities than the legally required rate of 6%, using initiatives such as internships, apprenticeships and permanent contracts;
- providing help and support to this category of employees through personal and professional measures such as additional days off, coverage of medical expenses, etc.;
- mobilising and managing, whereby specific objectives are set for each work site and action taken to reach those.

To implement these four goals, a specific working group was set up called Mission Handicap, which is a network of 35 dedicated staff and a central coordinator.

This agreement complements the agreement related to the employment of older workers.

## 2.4. What was achieved?

The objectives set in the company agreements relating to work organisation and working conditions were achieved:

- Heavy jobs were reduced to 8%, the maximum reduction technically achievable, according to the company. Although light jobs have not yet reached the 60% objective, the measure currently stands at 57–58%. Despite resistance from some individual workers against moving to less demanding jobs, there are now no older workers carrying out heavy jobs. The modifications and improvements of the workstations benefited all employees.
- Improving career management is an ongoing process. The company agreement on the employment of older workers changed the perspective on ageing and led to better consideration of past working conditions in the assessment of current employability. However, the agreement also highlighted large information gaps relating to career paths and individual exposure to strenuous work. Although older workers or workers with reduced capacities have a greater number of regular appointments with the occupational physician than other employees, no global picture existed of the work-related strain the employees had been subjected to during their career. The objective for 2014–2015 is to improve the monitoring of employees' careers and working conditions in the company to evaluate their needs and to react appropriately.
- Measures related to skills development, in particular of employees' capacity to perform several jobs and adapt to changes, have been introduced quite recently and are not yet fully implemented. Finally, the development of mentoring activities by older workers is being prepared. This could provide jobs to employees with reduced work capacity.

## 2.5. Success factors

The following success factors have been identified:

- *Legislation underpins the action:* The existence of a negotiated agreement triggered a new approach towards ageing in the company.
- *Worker engagement:* Employees are involved in the decision-making process regarding workplace adaptations. In addition, signing a company agreement with trade union representatives helped ensure support for the activities from the majority of the workers.
- *Holistic approach:* The agreement adopts a comprehensive approach to the employment of older workers, linking working conditions, skills and career management. Both HR and occupational safety and health are involved.
- *Coverage of all workers:* Although the agreement focuses on workers aged 55 and over, the reduction of heavy jobs to 8% benefited all workers.

## 2.6. Transferability

Mapping and rating workstations is a frequently used process and readily transferable to other companies. Manufacturing companies seeking to reduce physical strain, manage career paths and manage staff with reduced capacities could adopt many of the activities used by Peugeot.

## 2.7. Further information

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## 3. References and resources

- Interview with Alexandre Morais, industrial ergonomics expert at PSA Peugeot Citroën
- Collective bargaining agreement on the employment and the motivation of older workers 2010–2013.
- Collective bargaining agreement 'Nouveau Contrat Social', including a chapter on the implementation of the Generation Contract.
- Morais, A. (2013), 'Lorsque l'ergonomie industrielle automobile se frotte aux questions du genre et de l'âge', presentation at ETUI conference, Jobs Take Their Toll: Understanding the Impact of Ageing, Gender and Occupational Hazards on Workers, 11 December.
- Peugeot (2014), Company agreement on the social and professional integration of people with disabilities [in French]. Retrieved 30/10/2015, from: [http://ekladata.com/lsUgzqOWq\\_Z5xNlx-E9qVr9lCC8/Accord-insertion-pro-personnes-handicapees-2014-VF.pdf](http://ekladata.com/lsUgzqOWq_Z5xNlx-E9qVr9lCC8/Accord-insertion-pro-personnes-handicapees-2014-VF.pdf)
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