Sustainable Career Planning in an Age of Longevity: Maintaining inspiration and positive job experiences across the lifespan.

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Outline

• Increases in life expectancy
• The new multi-stage life
• Implications for life and career design
  – Continuous learning
  – Staying active and productive
• Creating a successful and happy workplace:
  – Values
Increases in life expectancy

- Steady *increase* of life expectancy over the last 160 years.

“The four-decade increase in life expectancy in 16 decades is so extraordinarily linear \([r^2 = 0.992]\) that it may be the most remarkable regularity of mass endeavor ever observed.”

(Oeppen & Vaupel, 2002, *Science*)
Increases in life expectancy

- The 100-year life (Gratton & Scott, 2016)

- Discrepancy between period estimates and cohort estimates of life expectancy.

Source: Human Mortality Database, University of California, Berkeley (USA) and Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research (Germany). Available at www.mortality.org
Increases in life expectancy

Blessing or curse?

• **Health:** Aging associated physical and cognitive decline.
  - However, *compression of morbidity* in people with healthier lifestyles [regular exercise, no smoking, weight control] (Fries, 1980; Christensen et al. 2009).
  - *Longevity = Staying younger for longer* rather than *being old for longer.*
Increases in life expectancy

Blessing or curse?

• *Finances*: How do we fund our longer lives?
• Trend towards working until an older age:

![65+ employment levels (1992 – 2016)](source: UK Labour Market; September 2016)

The traditional Three-Stage life

18 Age 65+

Education Work / Life Retirement

18 Age 65+

(Gratton & Scott, 2016)
The Multi-Stage life

(Gratton & Scott, 2016)
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Continuous learning and development

• Redefining leisure? → balancing recreation and re-creation

• New work structures:
  • Three-day work week, for 11 hours and retire at 75
  • Remote working
  • Transition phases/Sabbaticals

(Barrett, H. 2017, Financial Times)

(Davidson, H. 2014, The Guardian; Gratton & Scott, 2016)
Staying active and productive

• E.g. via Portfolio careers (Hopson & Ledger, 2009)
• Contributes to successful aging
• Why?
  – Improves overall life satisfaction (Binder & Coad, 2013) and health (Goodman, 2015)
  – Organisational volunteering benefits health and well-being, and lowers mortality rates of volunteers (Okun et al., 2013)
• New pursuits:
  – Encore careers
  – Adult education, U3A.
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‘Happiness’ and ‘Wellbeing’ in the workplace

• Media coverage:
  • 5 Science-Backed Ways to be Happier at Work (Lachance-Shandrow, 2016; Entrepreneur)
  • Being Happy at Work Matters (McKee, 2014; Harvard Business Review)
  • Business should ensure the well-being of people and the planet (Kobayashi, 2019; The Telegraph)

– How can this be achieved?
Values

Ten basic human values
(Schwartz, S., 2012)

• Guiding principles in people’s lives.
• Each person has their own unique order.
• Values change across the life-span (e.g. Age correlates negatively with stimulation and achievement, but positively with security and conformity).

Free self-assessment tool
• Personal value assessment, Barrett Values Centre: https://tinyurl.com/nlrympf
Value integration

• Engaging in *psychological groundwork* to find out who we are and what is important to us.

• Raising self awareness, facilitates career/job decisions.

• An opportunity to live/integrate these values in the workplace.

(Edwards, 2008; Gorgievski et al., 2017; Perez, 2017)
Value integration

• Changing attitude/mindset towards work
  – How can I add value to the workplace?
  – Being initiative, proactive and ‘making things happen’

• ‘There is no map’
  – Customise your own work vs. following instructions
  – Gain inspiration from your contributions to work

• Emotional labour
  – Bring your whole self to work
  – Adding unexpected value
Effects of value integration on wellbeing

- Awareness of values increases certainty, direction and self-esteem (Kernis, 2003).
- Affirmation of personal values reduces neuroendocrine responses (Creswell et al., 2005).
- Value integration can reduce job burnout (Rawolle et al., 2016).

- I enjoy this work very much
- I have fun doing my job
- This job brings me moments of pleasure

- affiliation
- achievement
- power
Summary

✓ Longer life expectancy changes the way we create a healthy work-life balance.
✓ New work structures facilitate working and living in an age of longevity.
✓ Integrating values and developing a proactive mindset towards work contribute to a positive job experience.
References