

# Implementing Disability Management in Companies



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## **Disability Management and the Social Welfare System I**

### **Social Welfare States in Europe**

- strongly developed social security systems
- liberal, corporatist and social democratic welfare state regimes (Esping-Anderson (1998))
- companies have only a limited influence on the business costs resulting from sickness or accident

### **Swiss Welfare State**

- among the group of liberal welfare states (Esping-Anderson 1998)
- well-developed system of basic state provision combined with elements of private insurance
- mandatory health insurance, accident insurance, disability insurance

## **Disability Management and the Social Welfare System II**

### **social insurances and companies**

- companies are unable to influence the costs of mandatory social security
- some private insurance costs are under direct corporate influence (e.g. daily sickness-allowance insurance)

### **new social policy strategies and their relevance for companies**

- transformation processes of the Social Welfare States in Europe since the 1990s
- until recently social insurances did rely on a principle of a strong division of work and illness
- new social policy strategies support provisions to give back responsibility for workplace integration to companies

## **Foundations and Empirical Findings on Disability Management**

### **understanding of DM as workplace integration management (Geisen 2010)**

- area-specific form of social case management
- systematical interrelation of the case and the system levels
- approaches to workplace health promotion and the implementation of corresponding measures are based on a systematic analysis of cases
- in-company measures are based on the analysis of concrete problems

### **DM as a term**

- is neither used in practice nor widely known among practitioners in Switzerland
- manifold equivalent German terms, e.g. Eingliederungsmanagement, Gesundheitsmanagement, Case Management

### **two different types of workplace DM established in Switzerland**

- internal Disability Management by the companies
- external Disability Management by service-companies, private and social insurances

## **Workplace Disability Management in Switzerland I**

### **the pilot study DM in companies in Switzerland**

- the study was conducted on behalf of the Federal Social Insurance Office (BSV)
- data collection and conduction Mai 2007 until July 2008
- aims of the DM pilot study were
  - to reconstruct the processes involved in introducing DM in comonies
  - to identify the reasons for introducing such a programs
  - to describe and compare the structures and procedures involved
  - to analyze the outcome of DM in the companies surveyed
- the study included qualitative and quantitative research methods on the levels of HR, DM stuff and employees supported by DM
- a replication study is planned for 2011/2012 to gain long term results on the effects of DM in Swiss companies

## **Workplace Disability Management in Switzerland II**

### **companies with internal measures to support staff members by illness or accident**

- 62 companies and public administrations were identified
- 16 of them were identified as companies with DM
- 8 companies were selected for the study, main criteria were: sector affiliation and the number of staff
  - Klinik Barmelweid: rehabilitation, 250 employees
  - Migros Basel: retail, 3'800 employees
  - PostFinance: financial services, 3'000 employees
  - PostMail: postal services, 16'000 employees
  - ISS: facility management, 9'000 employees
  - Basler Verkehrsbetriebe: logistics, 1'000 employees
  - Siemens: industry, 6'000 employees
  - Implenia: construction, 4'800 employees

## **Workplace Disability Management in Switzerland III**

### **working definition of DM: the four key elements**

- recording and assessing staff absences with the help of systematic absentee management serving the early identification of health risks
- advising and supporting employees suffering illness or injury
- coordinating return-to-work activities and services
- prevention within the framework of workplace health promotion

### **the four key elements must be given to let one speak of comprehensive DM**

**social case management is thereby understood as a fundamental basis for running disability management programs**

**DM refers to the concrete case and its management as well as to the organizational and institutional conditions of gainful employment**

## **Introducing Disability Management in Companies I**

### **three principal reasons: costs – corporate culture - competition**

- staff absence pose a serious challenge to companies
- companies increasingly are seeking to counter the threat of losing manpower and skills by adopting reintegrative measures that begin with the employees who suffer an illness or injury
- costs resulting from staff absences are the key issue
- DM can contribute to strengthening employee ties with the employer
- introducing DM offers a strategic advantage by strengthening their public image as a socially minded employer

**duration: 1-2 years to be completed**

## **Implementing Disability Management in Companies I**

### **approach and structure**

- DM is conducted by adopting a social case management approach
- DM does start in a bandwidth ranging from 7 to 90 days of absence (in the most companies researched DM starts within 30 days)
- employees expressed satisfaction with DM being initiated regardless of when it occurs
- not all employees suffering from illness are offered DM, what is defined as a ‘case’ varied from company to company
- general or line managers play a key role in the DM process
- strongly pre-structured and standardized DM procedures (systems-centered) contrast with more loosely structured and mostly open organizational forms of DM (client-centered)

## Implementing Disability Management in Companies II

### content and figures

- DM is confined largely to counseling interviews and information sessions, other supportive measures seem to have been offered far less
- guidance on medical, financial or legal assistance, or on counseling and retraining are mainly rendered by third parties
- resources allocated to DM vary significantly across the companies surveyed
- the ratio of one full-time DM staff to other company staff ranges between 1'143 and 4'310, on average 1'717
- in DM practice a ratio of at least one full-time DM position for every 1'000 company staff is seen as adequate

## Conclusions I

- company size is a decisive factor for either setting up an in-house program or using external provider
- sufficient resources are required for a successful implementation of DM
- introduction and implementation of DM needs an overall commitment in the company, especially from the upper and middle management

## Conclusions II

- introduction and implementation of DM needs 1-2 years and after this initial period it is an ongoing process of ‘implementation’
- the study identified systems-centered approaches and client-centered approaches – both were seen as successful in the surveyed companies
- the study reveals as well that interpersonal factors are crucial for a successful DM, particularly by showing esteem and respect for the employees concerned