

**Report:**

**AVR 50+ working group  
and the D&I group's  
generations network**

Basel, November 2020

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## Introduction

The AVR 50+ working group was formed to identify the concerns of Roche employees over 50 at the Basel/Kaiseraugst site, understand them better and provide them with the support they need.

The working group amalgamated at an early stage with the D&I group's "Cross generations" network, a grassroots movement concerned with cross-generation cooperation and links between different age groups. The two working groups had the common objective of identifying topics of particular concern to the various age groups in cooperating with each other, and generally in their working lives here at Roche. A survey for the Basel/Kaiseraugst site was developed in order to facilitate a structured, fact-based approach to the subject.

Designed to focus on working and support preferences, it was conducted at the end of 2019 – i.e. before the coronavirus outbreak, which has triggered lasting changes in the world of work. The survey generated an overwhelming amount of feedback, comments and ideas. Some critical views were expressed. Aimed primarily at employees aged 50 and over, the survey was distributed with the AVR Newsletter. The responses are thus not representative of the entire Basel/Kaiseraugst site.

Questionnaire structure:

- Age / function / site (3 questions)
- Flexible working (2 questions)
- Support for competencies, knowledge transfer and career opportunities (6 questions)
- Employee health and wellbeing (4 questions)
- Final questions (2 questions and the optional entry of the respondent's name)

In this report we share the results of the survey with all employees at the Basel/Kaiseraugst site.

## Detailed questionnaire analysis

### Language (620 responses)

- German: 71.9%
- English: 28.1%

### Age group (618 responses)

- 18-37: 12.5%
- 38-53: 47%
- 54+: 40.5%

### Function (620 responses)

- Employee with no management responsibility: 75.3%
- Manager with  $\geq 5$  employees: 14.2%
- Manager with  $< 5$  employees: 9%
- Shift worker: 1.5%

### Site (613 responses)

- Basel: 74.5%
- Kaiseraugst: 25.5%

### Please describe your current working practices. Is flexible working an option?

*Please tick everything that applies (574 respondents, multiple responses possible)*

- Flexible working is currently an option (e.g. working from home for at least one day a week, employment level less than 100%, job sharing etc.): 62%
- I am interested in a flexible working model, but it is not currently available to me: 23.2%
- I have talked to my manager about opportunities for flexible working, and we have arrived at a solution that satisfies both of us: 18.6%
- My manager has raised the subject of opportunities for flexible working with me: 7.7%
- I suggested a flexible working model to my manager, but he/she did not approve it: 4.5%

**What types of opportunities for flexible working are you familiar with and are of interest to you? Please tick everything that applies (605 respondents, multiple responses possible)**

- Working from home for at least one day a week: 80.2%
- Activity-based working: 45%
- Job sharing: 21.3%
- Employment level less than 100%: 62%
- Flexible times for starting and finishing work: 67%
- Temporary contracts with terms of less than 12 months: 4.6%
- Temporary contracts with terms of 12-24 months: 5.1%
- Flex Pool – working after retirement: 27.9%
- Continued employment from 65 to 70: 19.7%

**In the context of continuous learning, do you know what competencies will be required in future? (619 responses)**

- Yes: 66.9%
- No: 33.1%

**Agile working: How satisfied are you with the help you are being given to adapt to an agile working environment? (607 responses)**

- 1 (very dissatisfied) 8.7%
- 2 (dissatisfied): 32%
- 3 (satisfied): 46.8%
- 4 (very satisfied) 12.5%

**Knowledge exchange and transfer: How effectively does Roche assist you in passing on your knowledge to colleagues? (605 responses)**

- No knowledge transfer activities or plans: 38.9%
- Clear plans prepared and implemented: 22.1%
- The subject has never been raised: 39%

**Do you have any ideas about how employees can pass on their knowledge? (182 responses in German / 71 responses in English)**

A few key terms:

- Harness technologies
- Create a knowledge transfer platform
- Share best practices
- Mentoring (reverse mentoring, bottom-up mentoring)
- Training
- Shadowing

### **What could Roche do to further your career opportunities?**

*Please tick everything that applies (587 respondents, multiple responses possible)*

- Transparency with regard to my career potential with Roche: 62.9%
- Insights into other departments, duties and career opportunities within Roche: 62.5%
- Improved understanding of career paths within Roche, including horizontal career steps: 60%
- Internal/external training resources – technical competencies: 36.8%
- Internal/external training resources – soft skills (communication, emotional intelligence, stakeholder management etc.): 33.2%
- Personal coach: 40.9%
- Mentoring relationship with Roche colleagues: 38.7%
- Flexible working opportunities (e.g. working from home for at least one day a week, employment level less than 100%, job sharing etc.): 33%
- More support/involvement from line management: 37.3%
- Job rotation/talent exchange: 53.1%

### **Can you suggest what else Roche could do to further career opportunities?**

(89 responses in German / 30 responses in English)

A few key terms:

- Appreciation of employees aged over 50 (experience, expertise) and non-graduate employees
- New definition of career
- Transparent communication

### **Does Roche provide sufficient health and wellbeing services? (616 responses)**

- Yes: 83.6%
- No: 16.4%

### **If not, what health and wellbeing services would you like there to be?**

(78 responses in German / 43 responses in English)

A few key terms:

- More quiet areas
- Appreciation of experience
- Mutual intergenerational understanding

### **Does the working environment at Roche reflect the needs of your age group? (611 responses)**

- Yes: 72%
- No: 28%

**If not, what can Roche do to meet the needs of your age group more effectively?**

(132 responses in German / 42 responses in English)

A few key terms:

- More quiet areas
- More private offices instead of activity-based working (ABW) workstations
- Office equipment

**What can employees (and you) do to raise the subjects figuring in this survey?**

(160 responses in German / 52 responses in English)

A few key terms:

- Give feedback
- Open mindset
- Speak-up culture
- No-blame culture

**Do you have any further comments?**

(82 responses in German / 28 responses in English)

A few key terms:

- The baby boomer generation's fear of losing their jobs
- Suggested recruitment quota for the over-50s
- Appreciation of work done across all generations

**Your name (optional)**

(72 names provided in the German survey / 24 in the English survey)

## Initial announcement of results

In the June 2020 issue of the AVR Newsletter we thanked all employees who had taken part in the survey. The initial findings of the survey were announced as follows:

- All age groups are very interested in flexible working. Whether or not it can be implemented, however, depends heavily on line management.
- Among the over-54 age group there is an interest in continued employment past the statutory retirement age up to the age of 70, or in being involved in individual projects after retirement.
- All age groups would like to have a better understanding of career opportunities within Roche.
- A need for knowledge transfer was identified. Many suggestions were made for improvements in this regard.
- Sixty-five percent of respondents feel that they understand what professional skill sets will be needed in the future. The figure among line managers is even higher.
- In contrast, colleagues need more help to better understand and adapt to agile working.

# Subject area: Flexible working

## Flexible working

The survey found that all employees are interested in a flexible working agreement. The over-54s are very interested in continued working until 65 or 70 and in the Flex Pool. The survey shows that flexible working is of great interest to all age groups, as flexible forms of working help to strike a better work/life balance and encourage the integration of personal life plans and development paths. This also benefits the employer: "Studies show that flexible working conditions have a positive impact on employee performance and commitment".

Although there are already a number of flexible working models at Roche, they are not yet either widely known or – in some parts of the company – widely used. Only 17 percent of all Roche employees in Basel and Kaiseraugst work part-time, for example, and just 2 percent use flexible retirement models such as Flex Pool or working until 70 (for information on this, see this [link](#)). There are several reasons for this. Employees worry that their career opportunities may be restricted, for example, or their managers may have a negative attitude. Line managers fear that they will have to spend more time on planning, or else they are not yet sufficiently – or at all – aware of the possibilities.

In 2019, as reported in the AVR Newsletter, the subject of flexible working was dealt with in a joint project with the University of Applied Sciences Northwestern Switzerland by a working group consisting of members of the AVR, employee networks, Diversity and Inclusion Basel/Kaiseraugst and the AKR. The results were set out in a brochure that was distributed nationwide. Interested parties can consult the Flexible Working brochure via this [link](#). In the course of its activities, the working group on Flexible Working created its own Google page, which can be accessed via the following [link](#). The working models in use at Roche that are flexible in terms of working hours and/or location are listed on this page, which also provides general and specific information for employees and managers alike.

The potential for individual working-hours solutions has by no means been exhausted. If improvements are to be achieved, employer and employees alike must carry out a rethink to develop innovative solutions. But there are conditions: all individuals must be aware of their own responsibility for this subject, and there must be clear, open communication among everybody involved. The implementation of new working hours and workplace options is also affected by legislation, which necessitates adjustments in line with the new challenges and situations.

As far as more flexible working models are concerned, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the switch to working from home that it triggered definitely brought about changes – including in the mindset. Working from home, formerly impossible for many professions, simply had to be tried out in the last few months. At present, based on experience in recent months and the resulting outcomes, lessons are being learned from the pandemic and the related home office in terms of people and culture and several other areas, and suggestions are being made as to how the situation could/should look in a post-COVID-19 world. Currently valid information on flexible working specific to COVID-19 can be found via the following [link](#).

Matchmaker is a grassroots movement enabling people interested in part-time working and job sharing to find each other, meet and engage in dialogue. Its objective is to create a database for finding suitable partners for new working models such as job sharing. The Matchmaker page can be found via the following [link](#).

## Working beyond retirement age

Changing demographics and the demands of today's world of work require greater flexibility in the way work is structured. Working past the age of 65 is one such flexible approach. People are now living much longer. We are healthier and more productive. Our survey shows that there is significant employee interest in working for longer. In the next ten years, around a quarter of all employees will reach retirement age – and their knowledge and experience will no longer be available to the company. Roche has three working models – **Flex Pool**, **Working until 70** and **Step-by-Step** – that are designed to meet the varying needs of the different employee generations and improve knowledge exchange.

Roche gives employees the opportunity to work until the age of 70 should they wish. There are three conditions:

- a) The employee must be interested in doing so.
- b) Roche must have a position corresponding to the employee's qualifications and professional experience (equal opportunities).
- c) There must be an understanding of what this means with regard to drawing AHV benefits and company pensions, as well as the tax consequences.

The AVR's view is that these opportunities should be available to all employees equally, regardless of their hierarchical level and working environment. At the same time, a good balance must be struck between permanent appointments for young specialists and older employees wishing to work beyond retirement age.

Scientific studies show that older employees perform just as well as their younger counterparts; they simply have different strengths and skills. Suitable structures and forms must be created within the company to position and utilise these different strengths and competencies. It is important for the enormous, broad knowledge of employees over 50 to be retained within the company so that it can be passed on to younger colleagues.

It would be good to establish generation-friendly talent management to create a corporate culture in which employees of all age groups are included, and thus feel appreciated accordingly.

The globalisation of the world of work and fierce competition for talent make it essential for us to retain expertise within the company, and be regarded as attractive on the job market if we are to succeed in recruiting new specialists.

**Further information on the subject of flexible working at a glance:**

Flexible Working brochure: [link](#)

Google page of the working group on Flexible Working: [link](#)

COVID-19-specific information on flexible working: [link](#)

Matchmaker: [link](#)

Working beyond age 60: [link](#)

Working until 70: [link](#)

# Subject area: Support for competencies, knowledge transfer and career opportunities

## Skill set of the future

The questionnaire was sent out "pre-coronavirus": our world of work has changed radically since then. We now work much more from home, using new technologies such as Zoom, Jamboard, Miro, Trello, etc.

How can our experience of the pandemic help us to further develop our world of work?

In response to the question about lifelong learning, the older generation claims to have a better understanding of what skill sets and competencies will be required in future. The statistics show that English-speaking employees also have a better understanding of these skills. This also applies to managers in comparison with employees with no managerial function, as well as shift employees.

Future professional requirements are complex. They depend on personal professional aspirations, on the company's strategies and plan, and on external factors – which evolve rapidly and are in a constant state of change. COVID-19 has proved exactly that. Roche offers a wealth of opportunities and resources for continued learning. Talking to your line manager, networking with colleagues and arranging coaching from a trained [Roche Career Center](#) expert could inspire you and provide the tools needed for your decision about the best path to select. Several departments have adopted and implemented EAGLE – Engagement, Achievement, Growth, Learning, Empowerment. You will find inspiration on the [EAGLE 2](#) and [EAGLE 3](#) platforms, which offer the facility to depict and evaluate competencies and to define a training plan.

Just as we are redefining the company, we must also redefine ourselves and our career paths.

### [Course catalogue](#)

Previously in paper format. Now available wherever you are! Detailed lists take you straight to Cornerstone and make it easy to register for courses.

### [Employee development](#)

Pursue your career with passion: set out on your development journey! Where do you see yourself in two years' time? "Successful continuing development" means different things to different people. It's important to think carefully about it if we are to make the right decisions about continuing training.

### [Roche Career Center \(RCC\)](#)

In the Roche Career Center you'll find a range of options for personal development and career planning, whether or not you have management responsibilities. Regardless of whether you're looking for support in your career planning, short-term coaching, application advice or learning and networking opportunities – the RCC is here to help. Its services are free of charge. They do not require line manager approval.

### [LinkedIn Learning](#)

LinkedIn Learning gives you unlimited access to over 9,000 training videos on business, creativity and technology, personalised recommendations based on your experience and development aims, expert training, and convenient learning at your own pace, on any device.

### [Cornerstone.](#)

The Roche platform where you can search for training courses by key words, and even register to take part straight away.

### [EAGLE 2 learning platform](#) (in English only)

This enables you to depict and assess your competencies, and to design your own learning path accordingly.

### [EAGLE 3 platform](#)

Integration of EAGLE 2 from early 2021. Includes additional topics such as onboarding, integrated competencies and a learning curriculum.

### **Further information at a glance:**

Reimagine Me (Learn & Develop): [link](#)

## Agile working

Responses from all age groups to the question: "How satisfied are you with the help you are given to get your bearings in an agile environment?" indicate that there is room for improvement. The older the age group, the greater the dissatisfaction.

Agility is sometimes still interpreted in different ways, depending on the organisation, department, team etc. Uniform language and thought patterns help to give us our bearings in an environment that is becoming increasingly agile.

An agile attitude and behaviour can also help to reduce our carbon footprint, e.g. with virtual methods of working instead of business travel.

COVID-19 has made the working environment even more complex. The constant learning process is more important than ever before, because we have become aware of how quickly jobs can change and new roles can be created.

[Principles of agility: agile mindset](#)

[Principles of agility: agile working](#)

[Principles of agility: enable agile teams](#)

Short videos give an excellent overview of the principles of agility (unfortunately only in English; part 4 to follow shortly)

[Agility Hub](#)

Every journey towards greater agility begins with our internal attitudes and our own behaviour. Here you will find a wealth of resources to help you to set off on the journey. You will learn more about being agile and acting with agility.

[Agile as a team](#)

A page from Mannheim and Penzberg about how teams become agile.

## Knowledge transfer

It emerged from the survey that knowledge transfer is often neglected at present, or that no formalised process for it exists. This would appear to be a serious weakness.

Countless suggestions were made for how it could be improved. Here is a small selection:

- Peer coaching & mentoring
- Increased cooperation between old and young
- Mentoring new employees to impart specific knowledge
- Dedicated knowledge-sharing sessions (virtual or on-site)
- Application of expert contact points and business continuity deputisation provisions

We consider this to be an extremely important subject as it brings nothing but benefits to the employer and employees alike. We hope another working group will be formed to take this subject up. We will be happy to share the full list of suggestions with this working group.

## Career opportunities and appreciation

Long-serving employees aged 50 and over account for a large proportion of the workforce at the Basel/Kaiseraugst site. Older employees are no less motivated than their younger counterparts, and they are equally keen to continue their training and development – so it is important for there to be no barriers to career and development opportunities. These employees have experience of life and work that should be recognised and valued. Respondents to the survey thought there should be more acknowledgement of older and non-graduate employees (e.g. with no Master's degrees, PhDs etc.). They attach importance to transparency in recruitment and selection processes, and to a personal understanding of what a "career" means to each individual.

In the recruitment process, a great deal of importance is attached to the Diversity and Inclusion values practised by Roche, as a recruiter confirmed in a discussion with our working group. Provided applicants' profiles fit the job advertised, there are no fixed requirements in terms of their age or qualifications. Not all cases are the same, of course. For example, in the field of research and development, great importance is attached to academic degrees, for obvious reasons. A clear finding of the survey is that it is important for applicants to receive feedback on why they were not successful.

Nor must it be forgotten that jobs at the Basel/Kaiseraugst site are initially advertised internally, which gives existing Roche employees a head start in the application process. And wherever possible, employees affected by restructuring processes are given preferential consideration.

It is important for employees of all age groups to have entered a fully-updated profile in Workday. This is indispensable if talented individuals are to be identified.

## **What are employees' wishes and ideas across all age groups?**

- Employees should not be treated differently by their fellows simply because they are older. It is important for employees in all age groups to be taken seriously, and for their fellow workers to treat them with respect and tolerance.
- Employees want there to be equal opportunities in restructuring processes, and they want Roche to be aware of its social responsibility as the employer. Cost alone must not be the deciding factor.
- One important contention is that work done by older workers, their experience, knowledge, capabilities and strong social and leadership skills, should be held in higher regard. And there should be recognition of the fact that their wealth of experience helps to avoid errors and thus achieve the desired quality.
- In connection with modern ways of working and employee empowerment, all age groups must be involved in decisions.
- The older the employees, the more their jobs should be protected. Length of service must be recognised.

## **Further information on the recruitment process and career opportunities:**

Employee development: [link](#)

Talent Innovation Basel/KAU: [link](#)

Talent Acquisition for Line Managers: [link](#)

## The anxiety of older employees about losing their jobs

Recent years have seen an increasingly large number of restructuring processes and transformations. Not all employees affected by a reorganisation can count on continuing to work within Roche, or on finding new employment outside of the company.

Employees over 50 are hit hardest. Many employees over 50 are afraid that a restructuring process could mean the loss of their jobs. Depending on the circumstances, people of this age who must face the possibility of losing their jobs often become mentally ill, as the over-50s age group has extreme difficulty in finding satisfactory jobs in the market. Submitting applications and being rejected over and over again is devastating to self-esteem. In a situation like that, there can often be grave effects on AHV and pension benefits.

Art. 47a OPA enters into force on **1 January 2021**. This provision enables all insured persons **aged 58 or over** to retain occupational pension cover on a voluntary basis if their working relationships are terminated by their employers. Information on this is provided at the appropriate time by the Pension Fund Office.

If an employee aged 55 or over is affected by a restructuring process but, despite the redundancy scheme, cannot yet take early retirement, our working group proposes the following measures:

- Job sharing should be considered, e.g. dividing a job between two employees so that both can remain in the pension fund.
- More temporary internal jobs for employees aged 58 or over who are affected by restructuring processes. This would tide employees over until they qualify for early retirement.

### **Further information:**

Pension benefits at Roche: [link](#)

Basel Employer Compensation Fund [link](#)

AHV/IV Information Agency [link](#)

Roche benefits [link](#)

Working until 70: [link](#) (presentation)

Information on severance practice: [link](#)

Occupational pension announcement no. 152: [link](#) (download)

## Closing statement and thanks

Our working group would like to thank the Roche employees who took part in the survey for their support, the AVR, and the various agencies and employees with whom we have conducted lively exchanges in recent months.

We have observed that employees in many areas have organised their own initiatives – but as there is often no central information platform, much information is lost. It is therefore a matter of central concern to our working group that this information should be more accessible in future. We are currently considering what medium would be most suitable.

The world of work is changing, and that change will intensify in the years to come. So it is all the more important for employees, regardless of their age, to remain flexible, to actively keep up with the changes and – whenever possible – to add to their qualifications. It is essential to any company, as well as the labour market in general, for knowledge and expertise to be exchanged across the generations, and to be passed on from each one to the next. This will allow us to develop holistic ideas that will support and advance society and the economy.

### **Members of the working group:**

Stephanie Agius, AVR

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Gioia Brentini, D&I group generations network

Beat Hess, AVR pensioners' representative

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# Appendix

## G+ pages mentioned in the report

### **Talent Innovation Basel/Kaiseraugst (Lifelong Learning & Development)**

<https://sites.google.com/roche.com/talentinnovation/home>

### **ReImagine Me (Learn & Develop)**

<https://sites.google.com/roche.com/turkeylearnanddevelop/reimagine-me>

### **People & Organizational Development G+ Seiten**

<https://sites.google.com/roche.com/grow/global-resources>

### **Roche Career Center**

<https://sites.google.com/roche.com/rccen/home>

### **Talent Acquisition for Hiring Managers**

<https://sites.google.com/roche.com/taforhm/home>

### **Work Flexibly / Flexible Working at Roche**

<https://sites.google.com/roche.com/workflexibly/general-information>

### **Matchmaker (Find the perfect match for your working model)**

<https://sites.google.com/roche.com/job-sharing/home#h.o8bmsxsb4tw9>

### **SGU4YOU - Your guide for a healthy future**

<https://sites.google.com/roche.com/she4you/home>

### **Roche Pension Funds**

<https://sites.google.com/roche.com/roche-pension-funds/pension-benefits>

**Further information from the Basel-Stadt canton:**

**Link to a Basel-Stadt canton media release:**

<https://www.medien.bs.ch/nm/2020-regierungsrat-richtet-die-basler-alterspolitik-mit-neuer-vision-langfristig-aus-rr.html>

only available in German:

<https://www.gd.bs.ch/dossiers-projekte/alterspolitik.html%C2%A0>

<https://www.marktplatz55.ch/aussteller-2020/>

<https://www.statistik.bs.ch/befragungen/kantonal/befragung-55plus.html>

<https://www.gleichstellung.bs.ch/>

**Pro Senectute** (only available in German)

<https://www.50plus-info.ch/>

**Go for job sharing**

<https://www.go-for-jobsharing.ch/en/home.html>