



"Prioritizing the well-being of working-age individuals promotes productivity and establishes a more sustainable foundation for future working life."

– Jenni Pitkänen, Senior Advisor of Development of Working Life, Technology Industries of Finland.

PHOTO: SANJA KIVINIEMI

Building a Sustainable Future Working Life

Future working life requires more resilience, diversity, and communicational skills. How should we prepare now?

TEXT: EMMA SUOMINEN

Changes are on the horizon for our traditional ways of working, and **Jenni Pitkänen**, Senior Advisor of Development of Working Life in Technology Industries of Finland, is at the forefront of observing evolving work methods and culture.

"Now it's time to take action. We must foster the skills in leadership and on organizational and employer levels that will be necessary in the future," she asserts.

What does this mean in practical terms?

Allocating more time for recovery is imperative

"Work-life barometers indicate that people in Finland, in particular, are experiencing exhaustion. Roughly 25-30 percent of individuals feel exhausted at least occasionally. The nature of work and leadership itself need to change so that people can maintain their health and remain employable until retirement age," Pitkänen says.

Finland's population is aging, the number of those requiring care increases, and the workforce decreases. Prioritizing the well-being of working-age individuals promotes productivity and establishes a more sustain-

able foundation for future working life.

"Workdays need to incorporate more opportunities for recovery. This would enhance brain health, cognitive ergonomics, and overall work effectiveness. Currently, there are no breaks between meetings, and many work evenings and weekends, which makes it challenging to concentrate, relax, and recharge."

Addressing this issue within workplaces can be achieved through implementing specific guidelines and management practices. Such guidelines might simply include the understanding that employees are not expected to read and respond to emails during evenings or weekends. High performers are often at the greatest risk of exhaustion.

Improved communication is essential for embracing diversity

The significance of interpersonal skills, emotional regulation, and emotional intelligence will only grow. The ability to identify and express one's feelings, address issues, negotiate, and co-operate will become increasingly important.

"One reason for this is that working communities will become even more diverse. This places new demands on both employees and

employers, necessitating a strategic acknowledgment of diversity," Pitkänen emphasizes.

Diversity encompasses individuals of e.g. different ages, cultural backgrounds, sexual orientations, as well as diverse work arrangements such as remote or hybrid work.

"We must recognize the unique strengths of individuals and leverage them, while also providing personalized support. Not everyone requires the same English course. Additionally, we need to ensure the well-being of those with partial work ability or disabilities within the workforce."

The significance of ecological sustainability and the green transition has gained considerable momentum and will continue to do so.

"Younger individuals embarking on their professional journeys now inquire about a company's sustainability during the recruitment process. They want their employers to value nature in the same way they do."

By adapting to these changes and embracing a future-oriented mindset, individuals and organizations can better navigate the evolving landscape of work. |

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