

## Organizational Meta-Strategies for Younger and Older Workers

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### **Abstract**

In this chapter, we expand on a review of literature and previously proposed framework aimed at supporting organizational strategies and practices to better manage an older and age diverse workforce (Parker & Andrei, 2020). The framework, “Include, Individualize, Integrate” (3i), identifies three broad sets of approaches, which we refer to as “meta-strategies,” that can guide organizational actions and practices. “Include” involves strategies aimed at creating an inclusive climate for older workers. “Individualize” reflects strategies aimed at adapting work to specific challenges, needs, and preferences of employees of different ages. “Integrate” involves strategies aimed at facilitating effective collaboration and knowledge sharing processes across an age diverse workforce. We reflect on the implications of the proposed framework for theory, research, and practice, with the hope of stimulating researchers and practitioners alike to think broadly and proactively about what can be done to better support aging employees and to capitalize on the opportunities provided by an increasingly age diverse workforce.

*Keywords.* age diversity, inclusion, work design, knowledge sharing, organizational strategies

### **Organizational Meta-Strategies for Younger and Older Workers**

The demographic changes happening in most developed countries present complex challenges for managing organizations. Population aging is reflected in a growing mature workforce, as well as a workforce with extended careers. Consequently, organizations need to maintain employee motivation, productivity, and wellbeing over a significantly longer working lifespan (Bal et al., 2015). Furthermore, an aging workforce requires managing an increasingly age diverse workforce. Higher-level policies (e.g., changes to retirement funding) that promote participation of older workers in response to existing or predicted labor force shortages can further compound these issues (Kunze et al., 2013). How organizations respond to age-related challenges has important implications for their survival and performance (Boehm et al., 2014; Kunze et al., 2013). Research suggests that organizations who do not adapt their strategies to address these demographic trends might face significant negative consequences as age diversity has been linked with reduced team performance (Joshi & Roh, 2009) and organizational level performance (Kunze et al., 2013).

Unfortunately, despite the potential for practical implications, there is a growing consensus that existing research provides an inadequate evidence base to inform organizations as to what management approaches might be most appropriate, or under what conditions they are expected to work (Bal et al., 2015; Hertel & Zacher, 2018; Truxillo et al., 2015). While the effects of aging at the individual level are well understood, considerably less research considers aging at the team and organisational level. There is a similar dearth of research focused on organizational and human resource practices used to tackle an aging and age diverse workforce (Bal et al., 2015). Therefore, we know relatively little about what types of work practices and interventions make a positive difference to older workers' experiences and outcomes.

Based on these research gaps, as well as our ongoing large-scale research project aimed at guiding organizations to implement interventions to increase participation, productivity, and wellbeing of older workers<sup>1</sup>, we developed an integrative framework that categorizes various organizational actions (Parker & Andrei, 2020). The framework, “Include, Individualize, Integrate” (or 3i for short), identifies three broad sets of approaches, which we refer to as “meta-strategies,” that can guide organizational actions aimed at reaping the benefits associated with an increasingly older and age-diverse workforce.

In this chapter, we further elaborate on the original framework, and identify key implications for future research and practice.

### **The 3i framework**

The impetus behind the development of the 3i framework was practical. In 2017, our research team became part of the Centre for Excellence in Population Aging Research (CEPAR), a unique collaboration bringing together several research teams across Australia, as well as government and industry, to address challenges associated with population aging. Our team focuses on the topic of “Organizations and the Mature Workforce” by conducting research with organizations to facilitate and evaluate interventions aimed at improving experiences and outcomes for older workers. When we began to implement this research, it became apparent that the challenges, focus, and areas of interest for possible interventions differed considerably across the organizations. To provide the empirical base for the interventions, we reviewed a large and diverse literature, including: research on diversity and inclusion (Shore et al., 2011), research on the role of inclusive organizational HR practices and organizational climates for older workers (Boehm et al., 2014), research on work design as a tool for adapting work to the needs of an

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on our research stream, see <https://matureworkers.cepar.edu.au/>

aging workforce (e.g., Griffiths, 1999), and emerging studies on the implications of age diversity for managing team composition, team processes and outcomes (Schneid et al., 2016; Wegge et al., 2012). Integration of the evidence across these topics led to the development of a framework that identifies three sets of “meta-strategies,” or categories of strategies underpinned by distinct theoretical perspectives (Figure 1). We elaborate each next.

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Insert Table 1 and Figure 1 here  
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### ***“Include” Meta-Strategies***

“Include” brings together organizational strategies, practices, and actions aimed at reducing discrimination and barriers to participation for workers of all ages, as well as creating an environment in which workers are welcomed, valued, accepted for their uniqueness, and fairly treated. In essence, this meta-strategy is about the development of inclusive climates, not only for older workers but also for other types of diversity (Boehm et al., 2014; Shore et al., 2011). “Include” is relevant to the idea that “in inclusive organizations and societies, people of all identities and many styles can be fully themselves while also contributing to the larger collective, as valued and full members” (Ferdman, 2017, p. 235).

Social identity theory and social categorization theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tajfel, 1969) underpin the research relevant to this meta-strategy. In the context of work, these theories explain how the natural processes that employees use to categorize the social world will likely lead to them perceiving subgroups based on visible and (relatively) stable traits, such as gender, race, and age. Since people tend to positively identify with similar others (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and to favor ingroup members over outgroup members, cooperation and better results are more likely to appear in homogenous groups (Brewer, 1991; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tajfel, 1969). This means that cooperation and interaction in heterogenous groups might be hampered

because perceiving others as being dissimilar can create difficulties in accepting and treating them equally. When particular traits and abilities are furthermore linked to certain subgroups, stereotype-based discrimination can occur as a result of these processes (Cuddy et al., 2005).

Ample evidence supports the idea that aging employees often face negative outcomes at work such as negative evaluations, limited access to new jobs or advancement opportunities or limited access to training and networks of information (Bal et al., 2011). These outcomes are likely reflecting negative age stereotypes such as that older workers are less competent, more resistant to change, and have a lower ability to learn compared to younger workers (Cuddy et al., 2005; Posthuma & Campion, 2009).

To counteract these processes, workplaces need to take active steps to reduce or prevent divisions formed around age (as well as other demographic characteristics) through “Include” strategies. A cluster of “Include” strategies focuses on removing age-related exclusions from human resource management processes and other practices, as mandated by antidiscrimination laws and guidelines. For example, it is important to ensure that job advertisements do not use age as a criterion (unless, for some reason, age is essential to job performance), or that, in interviews, older workers are not asked stereotype-based questions (e.g., about technology) that are not asked of younger workers. Likewise, it is important to target more subtle forms of discrimination in which age-related bias is cued indirectly, such as when job advertisements discourage older workers to apply by using images only of young people. As discussed by Finkelstein (2015), at every stage of the employment relationship, there are conditions that serve to amplify or reduce age biases, and these should be actively targeted to enhance inclusion.

Another important cluster of “Include” strategies are those that involve proactively building positive environments for older workers. This means going beyond compliance with

existing laws and focusing on building inclusive work environments in which workers can behave authentically, irrespective of their perceived differences (Shore et al., 2018). It is important to note that these strategies are not about “treating everyone as the same,” but rather, “appreciating people irrespective of differences.” Based on optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991), inclusive strategies should ensure diverse members are accepted members of groups (meeting belongingness needs), while at the same time allowing them to maintain a differentiated sense of self (meeting uniqueness needs) (Shore et al., 2011). An example strategy is actively training managers to treat older workers in inclusive ways (e.g., age-inclusive leadership, Kuknor & Bhattacharya, 2020).

Overall, we propose that “Include” strategies will translate into outcomes for individual employees and organizations through two main pathways. One pathway is represented by processes linked to reducing age bias and discrimination at the interaction and process levels, which implicitly or explicitly reduce barriers to employment, promotion, and development opportunities (Toomey & Rudolph, 2018). The second pathway is represented by mechanisms related to the creation of work contexts or climates in which age diversity is viewed positively and valued across the organization, and which also reduce the probability of stereotype and meta-stereotype activation (Finkelstein, 2015).

Some research, albeit relatively limited to date, provides evidence for the organizational benefits of inclusive strategies. In a rigorous, multisource study of 93 companies in Germany, Boehm and colleagues (2014) found that the implementation of inclusive human resource management strategies was associated with a more positive age climate which, in turn, predicted increased older workers’ retention as well as company level performance indicators. Specific company examples have long been documented. For example, in 1991, as a response to a rapidly

decreasing workforce pool, a UK based do-it-yourself chain trialed a store fully staffed by workers aged 50 and over. Amongst other activities, their recruitment campaign explicitly communicated the value that the company saw in an older workforce. The initiative was considered an overwhelming success due to significantly reduced turnover and absence rates, as well as similar productivity/ staff costs, in this store compared to other stores in the chain (Terence & Barth, 1991).

### ***“Individualize” Meta-Strategies***

The second meta-strategy in our framework, “Individualize,” focuses on enabling uniqueness by supporting the individual needs and strengths of an aging workforce. While “Include” strategies focus on social and cultural acceptance of people who are different from oneself, “Individualize” strategies target older workers themselves by supporting their adaptation to lifespan changes. They bring together initiatives aimed at supporting the structural changes needed to achieve a better fit with workers’ evolving needs and priorities.

This meta-strategy is informed by lifespan development theories, such as selective optimization with compensation theory (SOC, Baltes & Baltes, 1990), or the socioemotional selectivity theory (SST, Carstensen et al., 1999). SOC highlights the way people adapt to, and compensate for, age-related declines such as in their working memory or their physical abilities. SST proposes that some age-related changes are dependent on how people perceive time. With age, people become more present-focused as they switch from an open-ended, future focused perception of time, to viewing time as a limited resource. This results in older employees prioritizing emotion regulation goals, positive work experiences and targeted social connections, while younger employees prioritize knowledge acquisition goals and expanding social connections. Taken together, these theoretical models point toward the value of compensatory

processes that, if supported by the work context, allow people to maintain high levels of performance and to age successfully at work (Zacher, 2015). Empirical evidence supports these theories showing, for example, that for younger workers, task variety can lead to more positive results, whilst for older workers, skill variety is more positive (Zaniboni et al., 2013). Similarly, job feedback is received differently by employees of different ages, with older workers reacting more positively to positive feedback oriented to social aspects, while for younger workers, the utility of the feedback plays a more important role (Wang et al., 2015).

Importantly, however, the Individualize meta strategy is also informed by the recognition that there are individual differences in the way people age (Fisher et al., 2017). Thus whilst, for example, skill variety might on average be more important to older workers than task variety, this will not be so for all older workers. Ignoring such individual differences in how employees age would result in a “one size fits all” approach to adjusting work that is likely to fail. Our use of the term “Individualize” recognizes that interventions are required that accommodate the needs of older workers, albeit in an individualized way.

While interventions can be aimed at supporting the individuals themselves to successfully adapt to age-related changes (see Table 1), organizations can *change work designs or work conditions* to better accommodate lifespan changes. Example strategies include ergonomic changes to reduce biomechanical strain on the body; the allocation of more tasks that rely on crystallized intelligence, rather than fluid intelligence, to older workers (that is, tasks that rely on accumulated knowledge rather than tasks that depend on high-level cognitive abilities); and the introduction of flexible work practices that allow workers to meet changing demands on their time outside of work (including, for example, care of parents or grandchildren). Work can also be changed not so much via organizational-led interventions (often referred to as ‘top-down’

work redesign) but by supporting individual employees to change work themselves, for example, through encouraging workers' proactive work behavior (Kooij, 2015), job crafting (see also Chapter 14; Kooij et al., 2015), or negotiating i-deals with their direct supervisors (Bal & Boehm, 2019). Such initiatives allow workers themselves to individualize their work and to align it better to their strengths and needs. As research shows that bottom-up approaches thrive in workplaces where autonomy is high (Slemp et al., 2015) and that top-down approaches benefit from employees' motivation and capability to take advantage of the redesign (Parker & Sprigg, 1999), combining these two approaches might be especially effective (Grant & Parker, 2009).

Overall, we expect that "Individualize" meta-strategies will impact on organizational outcomes through maintaining adequate levels of fit, or compatibility, between employees and their work across the lifespan, which has been shown to relate to positive attitudes toward work (Kim et al., 2020) as well as higher levels of performance and wellbeing (Rodrigues et al., 2020). Both present and future fit needs to be considered, therefore we expect two possible pathways, one focusing on addressing age-related losses (e.g., reduced physical strength) and a second focused on capitalizing on the different knowledge, skills and abilities that workers develop during their work-lifespans.

A practical example of a successful "Individualize" intervention is provided by the BMW case (Loch et al., 2010). This intervention involved a participatory work redesign process which resulted in more than 70 different changes being adopted to improve workstations and reduce physical strains for workers of all ages. Most of these were small and not very expensive changes, such as job rotation, installing magnifying glasses, and having wooden floors. Nevertheless, they resulted in a 7% overall increase in line productivity. Other examples include implementing flexibility practices, such as flexible working hours, telecommuting or working

from home solutions. Marriott is recognized for implementing a wide range of flexibility practices alongside fostering a “flexibility mindset” in managers that focuses on identifying innovative solutions for flexibility needs (Roundtree, 2012).

### ***“Integrate” Meta-Strategies***

Workforce aging brings a simultaneous increase in *age diversity*, meaning that there are more interactions amongst employees of diverse ages. Understanding how to manage these interactions is critical as work becomes more team-based and interdependent, especially as research points to potential negative effects of age diversity (Wegge & Schmidt, 2009; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998; note, however, that some research finds null effects; e.g., Bell et al., 2011; Schneid et al., 2016). While earlier in our framework we discussed differences among employees of different ages (i.e. “diversity as separation”), with “Integrate” we switch focus toward the benefits that can potentially arise from diversity (i.e. “diversity as variety,” Harrison & Klein, 2007). Thus, “Integrate” meta-strategies focus on improving the way age-diverse members collaborate, exchange knowledge, and produce more innovative solutions. Strategies focused at creating the conditions needed for age diverse teams to thrive (Wegge et al., 2012), or at enhancing knowledge sharing processes (see also Chapter 15) and inter-generational learning (Gerpott et al., 2017), fit this category.

Team diversity theories, especially the information/decision-making perspective (e.g., Van Knippenberg et al., 2004; Williams & O’Reilly, 1998), inform this meta-strategy. For example, in team settings, members of different ages can generate a broader pool of resources (e.g., knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences). When dealing with complex tasks, or when required to come up with innovative products, a broader pool of resources is expected to generate better outcomes for teams and organizations (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, as noted above, the link between age diversity and positive outcomes is not straightforward, mainly because bias and social-categorization processes can be triggered by increased age diversity (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Contextual factors in the work environment contribute to the way teams activate these different processes. Creating a work context in which diversity is valued emerges as an important boundary condition for facilitating social integration, performance and innovation in age diverse teams (Homan et al., 2007). For example, positive effects of diversity can emerge when organizations focus on creating appropriate environments for age diverse teams to interact effectively (Wegge et al., 2012). Therefore, “Include” strategies might be an important precursor or facilitator for “Integrate” strategies, an idea we return to later.

Other theories, such as social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1976), inform “Integrate” meta-strategies. SET proposes that people’s tendency to reciprocate attitudes and behaviors will lead to long term relationships characterized by trust and commitment. In our model, this theory has implications for the way younger and older workers work together, as their interactions can be seen as a process of exchanging resources that they might not have, yet value in each other. SET suggests the utility of strategies aimed at partnering young and older workers together to build a reciprocal positive exchange, such as mentoring and reverse mentoring. When employees of different ages develop complimentary social ties and interactions, this contributes to increased social capital, allowing the organization to build strong networks of internal and external connections (Li et al., 2021).

In line with existing theories and models, we expect “Integrate” strategies to contribute to enhanced team and organizational effectiveness by, first, weakening the potentially damaging social categorization processes that arise with increased diversity, both within the group itself as

well as in the perceptions and behaviors of organizational stakeholders outside the group (Wegge & Schmidt, 2009). Second, these strategies are aimed at stimulating effective group processes and emergent states (e.g., coordination, learning, trust) that contribute to increased effectiveness (Wegge et al., 2012). Both pathways are especially key for offsetting the knowledge losses that can occur when mature workers retire.

A combination of “Integrate” strategies has been implemented by TVA, in the US as part of their knowledge retention program. This program was initiated due to the increased retirement risk in the workforce. It entailed a complex process of monitoring both the retirement risk and the knowledge risk factor for each position to identify areas of potential knowledge loss. These areas were then targeted through tactics such as one-on-one coaching and mentoring, job-shadowing, cross-training, brown-bag lunches, rehiring retirees as consultants or establishing communities of practice (DeLong, 2004).

### **Implications for future theory, research and practice**

The “3i” framework provides a foundation to identify needed theoretical, empirical, and practical developments to better support an aging and age diverse workforce in organizations.

#### ***Implications for theory***

Our review identified that the meta-strategies are grounded in solid theory, but each approach has tended to develop in a silo. Our emphasis on integration across diverse research fields is a step forward, but there is more to do to understand how the various processes operate together to support individuals and organizations. Similar to other reviews (e.g., Hertel & Zacher, 2018), we call for the need to clarify the mechanisms that carry the effects of organizational strategies and interventions to outcomes. Emerging research points to the idea that the meta-strategies might not be independent, and their effects might operate in complementary,

synergistic, or sequential ways. For example Li and colleagues (2021) identified that age inclusive management (“Include”) is a boundary condition for facilitating the intellectual capital-based processes linked to age diversity (“Integrate”). There is also temporal complexity within each meta-strategy to unravel. For example, Fasbender and Gerpott (2020) showed that development practices related to our definition of “Include” affect employees’ self-efficacy, with evidence that accommodative HR practices then benefit most people with high level of self-efficacy (i.e. those who don’t experience age discrimination) but harm those with lower levels of occupational self-efficacy (i.e. those who perceive age discrimination). We recommend assessing whether strategies operate independently of each other, simultaneously, or sequentially, as well as theory development regarding the timing of these processes.

Also important is the need for theoretical integration across levels of analysis, which is especially important when the goal is to support practical interventions. While we focused on strategies that operate mainly at organizational level (e.g., HRM practices), strategies also exist at the team- and individual- levels (see Table 1). Mechanisms and outcomes resulting from the meta-strategies can also be expected to operate at different levels. For example, the development of a positive age diversity climate (“Include”) might operate particularly at the organizational level, whereas information-elaboration and knowledge exchange processes (“Integrate”) likely operate mostly at the work-team level, and person-job fit processes (“Individualize”) likely operate mainly at the individual level. Moreover, research suggest that the same mechanism could operate differently across levels. For example, age discrimination as a mechanism based on social categorization is likely to be salient and have negative effects at the horizontal team level because team-members have a similar status and interact frequently. But at the vertical or organizational level, the salience and negativity of age discrimination might be reduced due to

differences in status associated with age that inhibit social comparisons (Li et al., 2021). We urge attention to such multi-level processes.

Research on aging workers has to date focused primarily on understanding individual outcomes (Wang et al., 2012). But given organizations' interest in achieving organizational-level outcomes, a theoretical jump is needed to understand how individual effects are translated into higher level effects (see also Chapter 9). Researchers agree that it is not just a matter of "adding up" the individual effects of aging to the team or organizational level, and theory needs to evolve toward a collective approach in examining the value add of aging and age diverse employees (Boehm et al., 2014; Li et al., 2021). One approach is to link diversity-related strategies to company-level outcomes through dynamic capability frameworks (Roberson et al., 2017). Such approaches move away from seeing diversity as a resource that organizations can use to perform better, to instead focus on the company's capacity to activate and use resources to adapt to environmental changes (i.e., their dynamic capability). Different meta-strategies might shape different capabilities. For example, building on the model proposed by Roberson and colleagues (2017), we speculate that "Include" strategies will contribute to capabilities such as market access, by facilitating a workforce composition that better reflects the demographic that the organisation serves. "Integrate" strategies might support dynamic capabilities around research and development, knowledge management, and strategic flexibility, as all these capabilities rely heavily on information-elaboration processes and coordination of knowledge resources. Last but not least, "Individualize" strategies might play a major role for efficiency capabilities, such as the execution of routines and operational processes, by promoting a better fit between the tasks and workers' capabilities. Research investigating how organizations can create different types of capital out of age diversity (Li et al., 2021) shows the potential of this direction.

One further opportunity for theoretical development concerns investigating the role of contextual factors that might shape the implementation and effectiveness of the meta-strategies. Such factors might reside again at the organizational level (e.g., organizational characteristics such as size, strategy, functional diversity, culture); work level (e.g., routine vs creative task type); or even the larger context such as national culture.

### ***Methodological implications***

A key methodological implication of the framework is the motivation that stimulated its development in the first place: the scarcity of intervention research (see also Chapter 11). Truxillo et al.'s (2015, see also Söderbacka et al., 2020) conclusions about this lack still ring true: most aging intervention studies focus on people that are beyond working age, and the few that exist in the context of work rarely consider the processes that explain the effects of an intervention, or compare effects across age. Intervention research is critical for understanding what works in practice, and why. Ideally, intervention research is accompanied by the use of experimental and quasi-experimental research designs that allow for stronger causal conclusions about outcomes and mechanisms (Hertel & Zacher, 2018; Truxillo et al., 2015).

Of course, there are challenges of experimental/quasi-experimental research (e.g., experimental control is difficult in applied settings, it is hard to isolate mechanisms in the field), which are reflected in an overemphasis of cross-sectional designs in existing studies on aging workers (Hertel & Zacher, 2018). One way forward is to use longitudinal designs to investigate intra-individual change, which might be especially relevant for understanding successful aging at work (see also Chapter 10). Multi-level research designs can also help to assess processes related to interventions around age diversity (see, for example, Nishii, Khattab, Shemla, & Paluch, 2018). Similar to within-individual change, multi-level and longitudinal designs should assess

the time lags of effects (see, for example, Giga, Cooper, & Faragher, 2003 in regard to stress management). Mixed-methods approaches that combine qualitative and quantitative designs are recommended (see also Chapter 12; e.g., Kooij et al., 2014).

There is a need to refine existing measures of organizational-level strategies. HRM practices are increasingly highlighted as important for managing the challenges associated with an aging and age diverse workforce (Fasbender & Gerpott, 2020; Kooij et al., 2014), but research seems to either solely focus on one area, mostly either “Include” (e.g., Ali & French, 2019) or “Individualize” (e.g., Kooij et al., 2014), or combine items from different meta-strategies into a single bundle (e.g., maintenance practices in Fasbender & Gerpott, 2020). In particular, better measures of HRM practices that support “Integrate” strategies are needed.

### *Implications for practice*

The framework highlights that organizational stakeholders need to do three core things: (a) reduce discrimination in employment processes and develop positive climates in which employees of all ages feel included; (b) support individualized work arrangements/work designs that maximize person-environment fit across the lifespan; and (c) stimulate teamwork and information elaboration processes that capitalize on the unique skills and knowledge of age diverse employees. While complex dynamics about timing still needs more research, it is likely that “Include” strategies are a safe starting point, laying the foundation for the success of “Individualize” and “Integrate” strategies.

Second, the simplicity of the framework helps organizations to move forward in this complex space. We have used the framework in our work with organizations, such as to aid in strategy development and and to help communicate insights obtained in the diagnosis phase. As an example, to help organizational stakeholders to understand their challenges, we map the

company's policies and practices onto the three meta-strategies. We then, with the stakeholders, assess the maturity of each. What results is a high-level overview of where the organization is focusing resources. This approach allows organizations to appraise if their current focus needs realignment, areas that might have been overlooked, and/or where programs exist but need to be better implemented.

Third, we have observed that the framework helps organizations to move beyond reactive, compliance-oriented approaches that seem to dominate practice in this area (that is, the removal of discriminatory practices that is part of "Include") toward a more proactive and strategic focus aimed at capitalizing on the added value of a more mature and diverse workforce ("Individualize" and "Integrate"). By highlighting the full range of interventions areas, as well as the value creation pathways for each, the framework helps stimulate a shift in discourse from dealing with the 'problems' of an aging workforce to capitalizing on the benefits of having older workers with diverse experiences and skills.

## **Conclusions**

The development of the integrative "3i" framework was primarily inspired from a practical, use-oriented perspective. As such, the framework delineates the main areas of action for organizations and highlights the underlying processes that enable a positive and strategic use of an age diverse workforce. While it is not (yet!) a testable theoretical model, we hope that the framework's solid grounding in theory will support diagnosis, intervention, and methodological innovation, enabling practitioners and researchers to achieve an integrative approach to age and age diversity at work.

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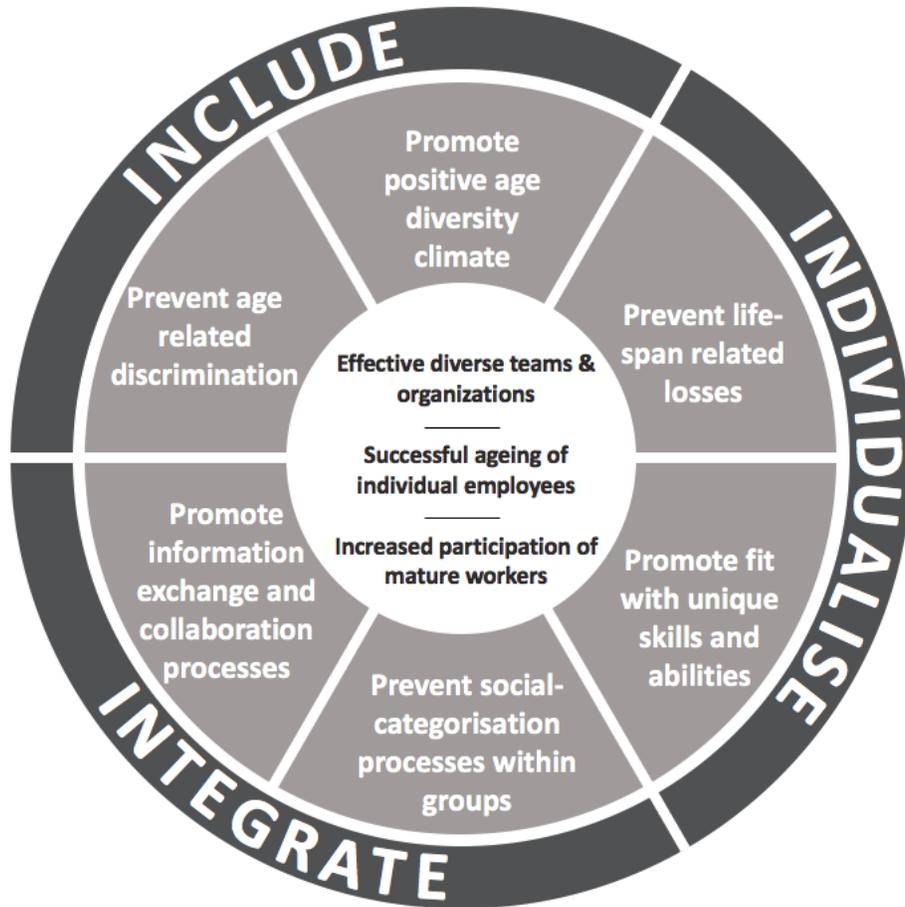


Figure 1. Overview of proposed meta-strategies and proposed key pathways.

Table 1. Definition and examples for the proposed meta-strategies.

	<b>Include Meta-Strategy</b>	<b>Individualize Meta-Strategy</b>	<b>Integrate Meta-Strategy</b>
<b>Definition</b>	<i>Organizational strategies to welcome, accept, and fairly treat older workers</i>	<i>Organizational strategies to accommodate and support the changing individual needs and preferences of older workers</i>	<i>Organizational strategies to improve how age diverse members interact, share knowledge, and learn from each other</i>
<b>Example Strategies/ Interventions- Organizational Level</b>	<p>Vision (e.g., “we are one”)</p> <p>Age Diversity &amp; Inclusion strategy</p> <p>Age-Inclusive HRM practices (e.g., non discriminatory recruitment or evaluation and reward systems, etc.)</p>	<p>Individualized HRM practices (e.g. maintenance/ development practices differentially applied to employees at different ages)</p> <p>Work analysis (to understand specific demands on workers and abilities needed to meet the demands)</p> <p>Implementation of technology/support systems (e.g., robots/computer systems that help compensate for age related changes)</p> <p>Flexible working arrangements (e.g. flex time, job sharing, leave options, diversified pathways to retirement)</p>	<p>Lateral integration mechanisms/ organizational designs</p> <p>Collaborative-based HR practices (e.g., practices that support and promote knowledge sharing and collaboration)</p> <p>Reward systems for teamwork, collaboration and information sharing</p> <p>Implementation of team-based work systems</p> <p>Implementation of technology/systems to support knowledge sharing</p> <p>Workforce planning and succession plans</p>
<b>Example Strategies/ Interventions- Workgroup Level</b>	<p>Inclusive leadership training</p> <p>Awareness training for age related changes and debunking age-related myths (targeted at leaders or team members)</p>	<p>Age differentiated leadership training</p> <p>Top-down work design/redesign</p> <p>Ergonomic interventions</p>	<p>Mentoring/reverse mentoring programs</p> <p>Teambuilding training</p> <p>Team design strategies</p>
<b>Example Strategies/ Interventions-</b>	<p>Information/training (e.g., aimed at reducing age bias or stereotype threat)</p>	<p>Work-life programs</p> <p>Bottom-up work redesign (e.g., job crafting; I-deals; proactive career management)</p>	<p>Training for teamwork skills</p> <p>Perspective taking interventions</p>

<b>Individual Level</b>	Resilience training or employee assistance programs (EAP) for people who experience discrimination	Health promotion interventions (e.g., voluntary preventive health checks; physical exercise)	
	Unconscious bias training	Supporting older workers' individual adjustment to cognitive, physical, and psychosocial life changes (e.g., career management, health promotion, SOC training; coaching)	
		Pre-retirement & retirement planning initiatives (e.g., midlife planning initiatives, retirement planning, counseling, awareness of retirement pathways)	
<b>Key Outcomes</b>	Attraction and retention of older workers	Individual performance and occupational wellbeing	Preservation of key organizational knowledge and expertise
	Increased workforce diversity	Increased participation of older workers in the labor force	Optimal team and organizational performance
	Compliance with regulatory frameworks and equal employment guidelines		Enhanced innovation

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