



# Time 4Help

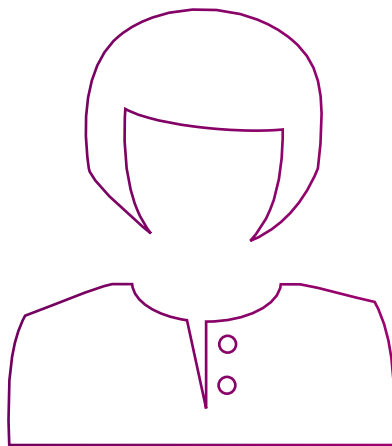
**Women 45+  
as valuable  
employees**

**A guide for  
employers and  
organizations  
supporting mature  
women**





Women  
45+



**Time  
4Help**

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Wrocław, 2021

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# Introduction

According to the forecasts for the next three decades, demographic changes and the aging of societies that we can observe today will cause the shrinking of the labour market. In 2020–2029, the labour market in Poland will decrease by about 1,000,000, in 2030–2039 – by about 700,000, and in the next decade – by more than 2,000,000 employees<sup>1</sup>. The age structure of employees will change as well – the number of people aged 45+ will systematically increase, whereas the number of people aged 25–44 will go down. In view of the above, employers face an urgent need to change their approach to mature employees (aged 45–65), also because the analyses conducted with regard to the labour market confirm that companies do not fully use talent and experience, but most of all they do not take into account the potential of women aged 45+<sup>2</sup>.

In order to meet the above-described trends, help employers face their challenges, and indicate the possibilities of obtaining support from organizations working for mature women, we are presenting this guide to you. It is worth mentioning that it is one of the results of the *Time4Help* project<sup>3</sup> carried out by *Dobre Kadry Research and Training Centre Sp. z o.o.* in 2018–2021. The guide was developed based on the results of the research conducted as part of the project, which allowed us to learn more about women aged 45+ and their needs. We also took into account good practices and reliable solutions used by our project partners from Belgium, Finland and Spain<sup>4</sup> for the professional activation of people aged 45+, especially mature women. The guide contains employers' recommendations obtained during the stage of testing the comprehensive model of support for mature women. In short, we used all our knowledge and experience to create a tool that can help you understand the needs of mature women and effectively activate and support this extremely valuable group of employees or potential employees.

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission, *The 2021 Ageing Report Economic and Budgetary Projections for the EU Member States (2019–2070)*, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/economy-finance/ip148\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/economy-finance/ip148_en_0.pdf), [access: 09.09.2021]

<sup>2</sup> See O. Komada, *Równa płaca kobiet i mężczyzn opłaca się gospodarce*, Deloitte Economic Statement 2021, <https://www2.deloitte.com/pl/pl/pages/zarzadzania-procesami-i-strategiczne/articles/EconomicStatement/rowna-placa-kobiet-i-mezczyznoplaca-sie-gospodarce.html>, [access: 09.09.2021]

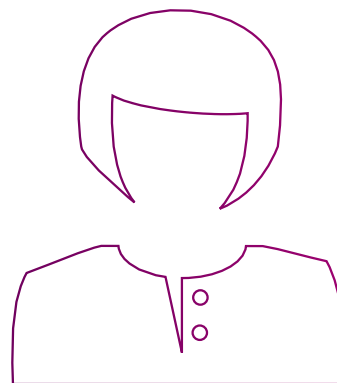
<sup>3</sup> Project co-financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund, no: POWR.04.03.00-00-0039/18

<sup>4</sup> South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (XAMK, Kotka, Finland), Fundación Acción Contra El Hambre (Madrid, Spain) and Odisee vzw Higher Institute for Family Studies (Brussels, Belgium).

The guide is dedicated to employers and all organizations involved in activities for mature women, and also to employment agencies and training institutions.

The first chapter of the guide contains the most important information concerning the position of mature women in the labour market. The second one presents a short description of women aged 45+ as well as their strengths and weaknesses. The catalogue of tools that might be helpful in assessing the potential of this group is presented in chapter three. The next two chapters, number four and five, discuss the areas of the employer's activities and provide recommendations and guidelines that might be helpful when developing a strategy and making decisions to face the challenges of the modern labour market.

Women  
45+



# Mature women in the labour market

In most European Union countries, the professional activity of women is lower than that of men, and there are significant differences between specific member states. The highest professional activity is demonstrated by women in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and the Baltic countries – Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia (over 75%). Poland belongs to the group of countries where the professional activity of women is the lowest<sup>5</sup>, but has a great potential to supplement the shortage of workers by professional activation of this target group. In 2018, the proportion of professional activity among women was slightly more than 63%<sup>6</sup>, but it should be noted that there were significant differences between various age groups. Maximum professional activity was achieved by women aged 40–44 (84.3%), and after becoming 45, it systematically decreased in subsequent age groups (Figure 1). It is safe to say that women aged 45+ simply disappear from the labour market.

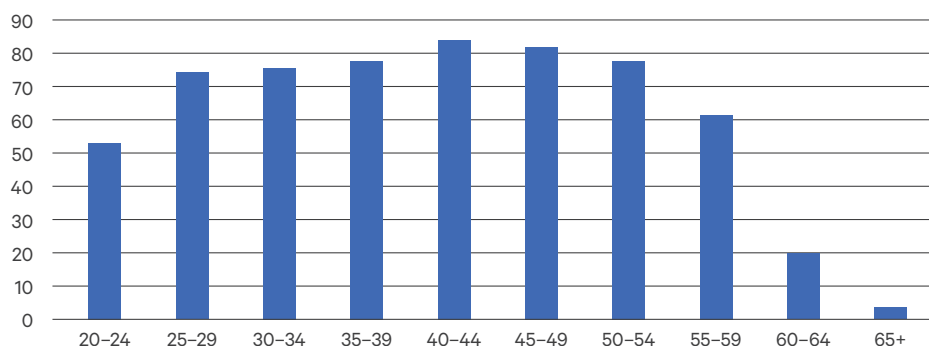


Figure 1. The professional activity rate of women in 2018 by age (in%)

Source: own work based on Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS), Yearbook of Labour Statistics 2019, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/rocznik-statystyczny-pracy-2019,7,6.html>, [access: 11.09.2021]

<sup>5</sup> European Commission, The 2015 Ageing Report, [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/publications/european\\_economy/2015/pdf/ee3\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2015/pdf/ee3_en.pdf), [access: 14.09.2021]

<sup>6</sup> Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS), Yearbook of Labour Statistics 2019, <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/roczniki-statystyczne/rocznik-statystyczny-pracy-2019,7,6.html>, [access: 11.09.2021]

Professional activity of women depends to a large extent on the level of education. Women with higher education, constantly investing in their own development and adapting to new requirements, are the most professionally active group, even after reaching the retirement age. People who withdraw from the labour market are mainly those who did not or could not improve their knowledge and skills due to combining work and family responsibilities, and also those who have not been motivated by their employers to pursue lifelong learning that would allow them to obtain new qualifications. Another group of people who usually do not re-enter the labour market includes women who, after setting up a family, do not take up employment for the sake of raising their children. Unfortunately, even though their children become adult and independent, mature women still lack courage, motivation, encouragement and support (also on the part of their employers) to go back to work. In order for them to do so, they must overcome existing barriers and stereotypes (Table 1). The low level of professional activity of mature women may also be related to the fact that women, more often than men, take care of their elderly parents and/or grandchildren, which results in reduced working hours or quitting their jobs.

Table 1. Cultural barriers to employing mature women – the perspective of women and employers

WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVE	EMPLOYERS' PERSPECTIVE
<b>FAMILY – RESPONSIBILITIES &amp; LIMITATIONS</b>	
Other duties and responsibilities discourage women from fighting for their rights in the job market	Quitting a job for the sake of one's family
<b>THE CULT OF YOUTH AND CHANGE</b>	
Depreciation of one's skills and abilities	Inability to keep up with changes and technological advances
<b>FEAR, SHAME AND HUMILIATION</b>	
Fear of making changes and trying something new	Lack of investment in one's development
<b>"FULL-TIME" STAGNATION</b>	
A sense of "full-time" security, losing one's job = feeling lost and reluctant to take up challenges	A form of employment burdensome for the company
<b>HOLDING FIRMLY TO ONE'S POSITION</b>	
Not a valuable employee	A limitation for the company, a lack of flexibility
<b>UNWANTED POTENTIAL</b>	
Demographic situation seen as an opportunity	A demographic "must", a lack of confidence in one's strengths

Source: Dobre Kadry Research and Training Centre Sp. z o.o., *Time4Help* – a comprehensive model of support for mature women in the context of research results, Wrocław 2021



The research carried out as part of the *Time4Help* project also confirms that the professional situation of mature women in Poland is diversified (Figure 2). More than ½ of them remain professionally active (54%) – they are employed (43%), they run their own business or work as freelancers (11%). Almost 1/3 are retired (29%) and almost ¼ do not work anywhere (24%). Only a small group of retired women think that their pension is sufficient to live on (18%), almost ½ claim that it is sufficient to live on but with difficulties (49%), whereas over 1/3 of women admit that it is insufficient (33%). Among women who do not work, the majority (69%) declare their willingness to take up professional activity. The remaining participants (31%) would like to take up employment due to their difficult financial situation and lack of money (31%), whereas others would do that if their health was good or better (15%). However, for 25% of women none of the arguments would convince them to re-enter the labour market.

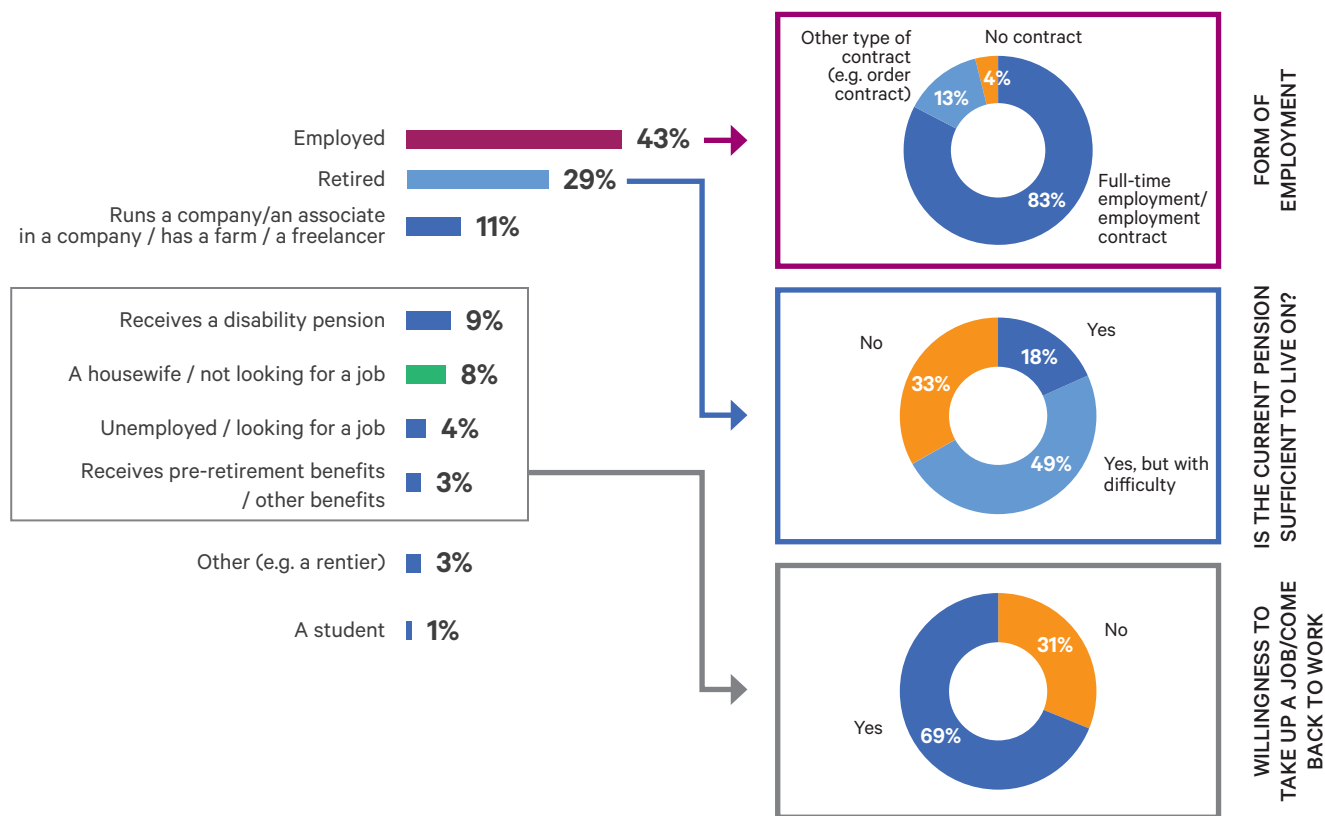


Figure 2. The professional situation of mature women in Poland

Source: Dobre Kadry Research and Training Centre Sp. z o.o., *Time4Help* – a comprehensive model of support for mature women in the context of research results, Wrocław 2021

In the analyses of the labour market<sup>7</sup>, the most common factors discouraging women from becoming involved in professional activity include:

- responsibilities connected with taking care of dependent people
- lack of balance in the division of care responsibilities between women and men
- high costs of childcare and long-term care services (especially Ireland, Poland and the Netherlands – costs connected with childcare take up 20% of a couple's net family income)
- the structure of the tax and social security systems
- high gender pay gap, which translates into significant pension gap.

It is worth noting, though, that effective strategies encouraging women, including mature women, to stay in the labour market are those that help them maintain a good *work-life balance*. Affordable formal care services for children and the elderly, a flexible pension system as well as flexible organization of working time (teleworking or flexible working hours) are of great importance. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure work culture favouring flexible working hours, the flexibility of employers and also their ability to respond to the changing needs of mature female employees. Last but not least, appreciating mature women as valuable employees and managing their potential as well as professional development and psychophysical condition (*diversity management*) also play a significant role.



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**Effective strategies encouraging mature women to stay in the labour market are those that enable them to maintain a good *work-life balance*.**

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<sup>7</sup> European Commission, *Kobiety na rynku pracy*, [https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/file\\_import/european-semester\\_thematicfactsheet\\_labour-force-participation-women\\_pl.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/file_import/european-semester_thematicfactsheet_labour-force-participation-women_pl.pdf), [access: 11.09.2021]

## The specificity of mature women

The group of mature women, that is, women aged 45–65, displays great differentiation both in terms of the level of professional activity discussed in the previous chapter, and in terms of professional experience and retirement prospects. Professionally active women aged 45 have different experiences and prospects (20–25 years of work and 15 years until retirement) than those who are 55 (30–35 years of work and 5 years until retirement), not to mention mature women who gave up their jobs after starting a family and giving birth to children, and who could re-enter the labour market after their children become independent. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to different needs and different forms of support for working women and women who would like to take up employment again. Another group that requires special attention and support is certainly the group known as the “Sandwich Generation”, that is, people who try to reconcile their work life with responsibilities connected with taking care of their elderly parents and young or adolescent children. As the name suggests, they are trapped between loads of daily duties. The *Sandwich Generation* is a relatively new phenomenon resulting from demographic changes (longer life expectancy) and the fact that young people need more time in order to achieve full economic independence. However, it is currently the focus of attention in many European countries.

Mature women differ also in terms of their life situation, health, qualifications and the level of education<sup>8</sup>. Almost half of them (49%) take care of another person (parents, children, grandchildren, a husband/partner or other relatives). The majority (69%) assess their health and physical condition as good or very good, and regularly perform physical activity (mainly cycling, walking and gardening). Over the last 5 years, only 1/3 participated in training sessions and improved their qualifications mainly in the area of professional and digital skills. Only ¼ of them plan further education, mainly in the field of professional skills (more than 50%), foreign languages (more than 20%) and digital skills (less than 20%). Mature women learn new things mainly when they are necessary for their work, when they serve their further professional development, and when they are supported in their professional development and career by their immediate environment.

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<sup>8</sup> Dobre Kadry Research and Training Centre Sp. z o.o., *Time4Help – a comprehensive model of support for mature women in the context of research results*, Wrocław 2021



Among the strengths of women aged 45–65, the most frequently mentioned are experience and very good social skills (the ability to cooperate with others), discipline and willingness to take responsibility, as well as flexibility and loyalty. Employers also emphasize that mature employees better understand the needs of mature customers whose number is also growing due to demographic changes<sup>9</sup>. In the research conducted as part of the *Time4Help* project, mature women confirmed<sup>10</sup> that their strengths include extensive experience (professional and life), greater flexibility, responsibility and loyalty towards the employer. Some of them (about 20%) believe that the argument that could convince employers to hire them is the lack of family commitments, above all the need to look after children. In the opinion of the employers taking part in the study, mature women, apart from their experience and qualifications, are available and responsible, which is also perceived as their strength.

It is important that the great potential of mature women be recognized and developed because they make really valuable employees. Many women work in teaching and medical professions, for which there is now a very high demand. It is worth noting that many European countries face a shortage of engineers and specialists, doctors, nurses and carers of dependent people, educators and teachers. Hence, mature women are valuable employees, also because they possess experience and qualifications that most young employees do not have yet. Therefore, it is important that they remain professionally active as long as possible, and the support of the employer can be a great help in this respect.

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<sup>9</sup> Jobware, *Ältere Mitarbeiter: Besonderheiten und Stärken der Generation 50Plus*, <https://www.jobware.de/Karriere/Aeltere-Mitarbeiter-Besonderheiten-und-Staerken-der-Generation-50Plus.html>, [access: 14.09.2021]

<sup>10</sup> Dobre Kadry Research and Training Centre Sp. z o.o., *Time4Help – a comprehensive model of support for mature women in the context of research results*, Wrocław 2021

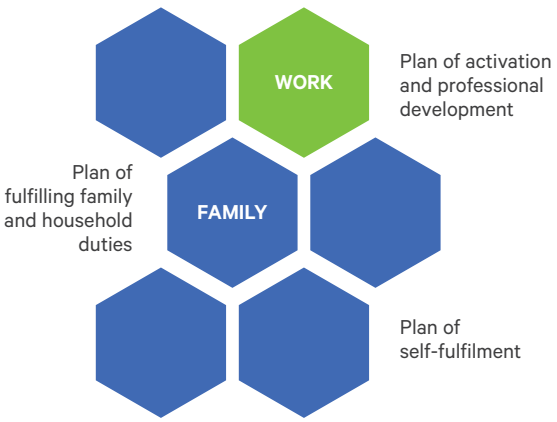


Figure 3. Holistic concept of supporting mature women  
Source: Source: own work

Due to the high degree of differentiation of the group of women aged 45–65, it is believed that tailored forms of support that focus on the needs and goals of a given person will bring desirable results. Employers hiring or wishing to hire mature women should therefore adopt a holistic perspective that takes into account both life and professional situation of a given candidate (Figure 3). It is worthwhile to identify the areas in which a given person needs help and to indicate the existing possibilities of individual and/or group support. According to the work ability model (Figure 4), the effectiveness of the activation of mature women and their professional activity depends on several factors. Interestingly, it becomes higher when certain activities performed within specific areas really fit them.

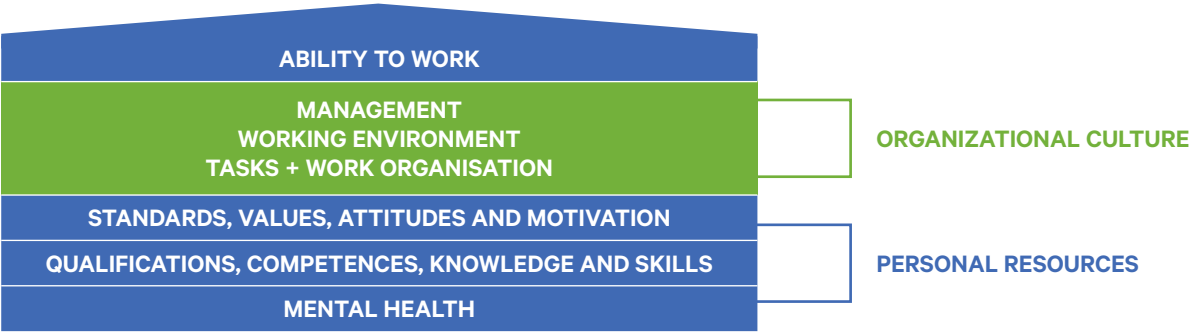


Figure 4. Work ability model  
Source: own work based on I. Kloimüller, G. Klausz, R. Czeskleba, Das Haus der Arbeitsfähigkeit bauen. Eine Baueinleitung um eine Arbeitsfähigkeit zu erhalten und zu fördern, <https://www.arbeitsfaehig.com/uploads/content/pdf/568a4836a564c.pdf>, [access: 14.09.2021]

The ability of women to maintain their professional activity is mainly based on their personal resources: physical and mental health, qualifications adequate for the requirements of the labour market, competences, knowledge and skills, attitudes and values, and the level of motivation to stay professionally active. However, an equally important aspect is the culture of the organization, especially proper management of mature employees and awareness of their needs, an appropriate work environment and professional tasks, and organization of work that takes into account the needs of a mature employee.



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**In the following chapters of the guide, we included tips to help employers identify the resources and diagnose the needs of mature women, and we also indicated the possibilities of carrying out activities to support them.**

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Matching one's personal resources to the culture of the organization gives a great chance to use the potential of mature women and achieve both the goals of the organization, company, enterprise or institution, as well as the employee.

# Mature women – assessment of personal resources, needs and limitations

The first step in supporting mature women should be the diagnosis of their needs and resources (strengths, weaknesses and needs), and existing limitations (Figure 5). The assessment of the latter is of particular importance for mature women who belong to the *Sandwich Generation* and who must reconcile their professional work with other social roles.

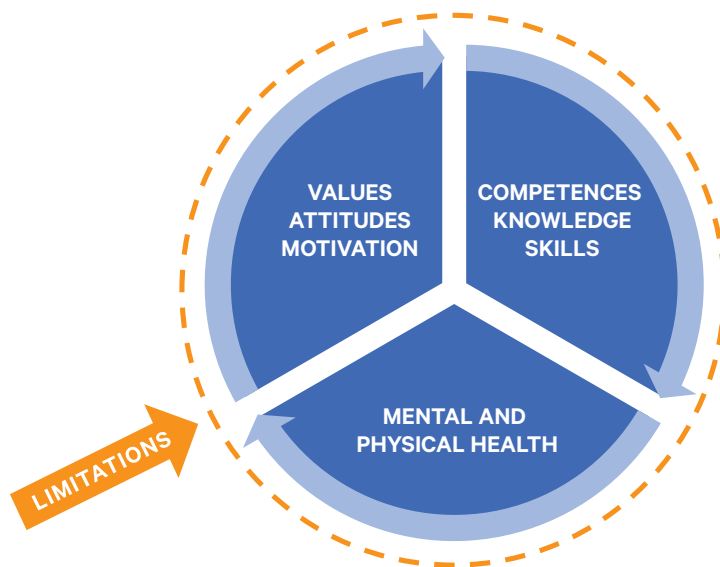


Figure 5. Areas of diagnosis of specific resources of mature women

Source: own work

In Poland, according to the applicable regulations, the employee's health is assessed by an occupational medicine physician. However, what mainly undergoes the assessment is the physical condition and ability to perform professional tasks. If the employee does not report any issues during the appointment, the physician usually confirms his or her ability to work on the basis of the examination results. The employer receives only brief information that there are no contraindications and the employee is able to work. A modern approach to health should be based on

the biopsychosocial model<sup>11</sup>, according to which health is more than just good physical condition – it also includes the mental and social dimension of every human being. In line with this concept and the overall perspective of managing mature employees discussed before, the employer should make sure that all the aspects of the employee's health are monitored.



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**It is recommended that the employer develop their own internal system of monitoring the psychical and mental health of employees. It can take the form of filling in questionnaires or meeting a psychologist or coach on a regular basis.**

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In the case of mature women, it is important to assess the first signs or existing limitations so that the deterioration of health can be prevented and appropriate preventive measures can be taken to maintain good health as long as possible. Mature women, especially *Sandwich Generation* representatives, are particularly at risk of, for example, occupational burnout due to the excess of responsibilities. However, the early recognition of such problems by the employer can prevent many difficult situations in the workplace.

In the diagnosis of the other two areas, that is, competences, knowledge and skills which mature women have and their values, attitudes and level of motivation, it is possible to use some available external tools. As part of the *Time4Help* project, we prepared 2 tests (free of charge) that facilitate the assessment of professional competences in the field of:

- practical skills desirable in the labour market, such as the knowledge of foreign languages, the ability to use IT tools, and the skills of self-presentation;
- preferences regarding the type of performance of professional tasks, preferred activities and the type of work performed;
- motivation for further professional development (obtaining new competences and skills);
- the assessment of attitudes conducive to the effective development of competences and skills;
- the assessment of strengths in terms of soft skills (communication, the ability to build interpersonal relationships, time management, initiative, etc.).

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<sup>11</sup> See R. J. Gerrig, P. G. Zimbardo, *Psychologia i Życie*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2006, p. 414



These tests can be used by mature women for self-diagnosis (a basic version, the results of the test are available only to the person who did it), or they may also become a very good source of information for employers (an extended version, test results can be stored in a database on a server and can be accessed after entering a password) – they can make it easier for them to understand the needs of their employees and prepare special training activities.



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**For employers, the tests can become a very good source of information about the needs and resources of mature women, and significantly facilitate the preparation of appropriate skill improvement strategies:**

<https://kobietywpracy.edu.pl/kwestionariusze-kompetencji/>

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Competency questionnaires



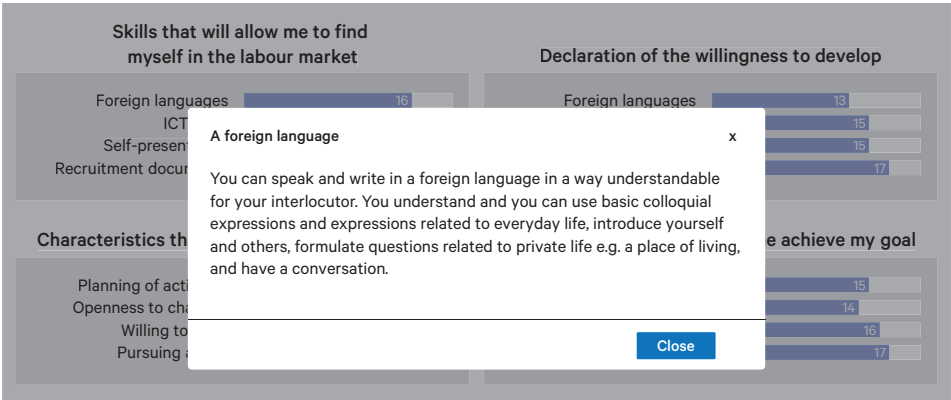
Table 2. *Time4Help* – the structure of competency tests

DEVELOPMENT NEEDS TEST									
<p>The questionnaire consists of 75 statements to be assessed on 2 scales. The scales are supposed to measure the adequacy of the statements to the current situation of the person undergoing the assessment and to assess their willingness to develop in a given area.</p>									
<p>» Examples of questions:</p>									
<p><b>17. I can use Excel</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td>1. Definitely no</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td>2. Rather no</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td>3. Rather yes</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td>4. Definitely yes</td></tr> </table>		<input type="radio"/>	1. Definitely no	<input type="radio"/>	2. Rather no	<input type="radio"/>	3. Rather yes	<input type="radio"/>	4. Definitely yes
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<p><b>22. I can organize my time in such a way as to meet deadlines</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td>1. Definitely no</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td>2. Rather no</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td>3. Rather yes</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="radio"/></td><td>4. Definitely yes</td></tr> </table>		<input type="radio"/>	1. Definitely no	<input type="radio"/>	2. Rather no	<input type="radio"/>	3. Rather yes	<input type="radio"/>	4. Definitely yes
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» The results represent a self-assessment of the current situation and a self-assessment of the willingness to develop in a given area. The comparison of both results allows of additional analyses and interpretations.



» In each area, the result is available in a descriptive form after clicking on its name.



COMPETENCY TEST

The questionnaire consists of 32 pairs of statements in 4 preference areas – scales.

» Examples of questions:

**I prefer to work independently**

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
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**I prefer to work in a team**

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
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**I feel best in a group of people who vary in terms of age, gender and views**

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
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**I feel best in a group of people who are similar to me in terms of age, gender and views**

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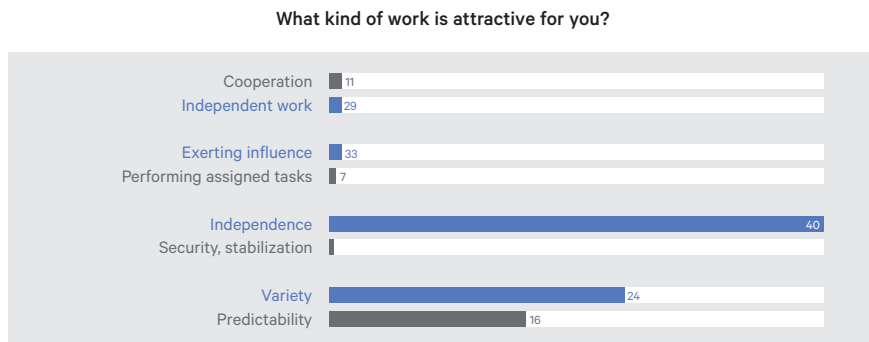
**It is very important to me that my work does not interfere with my household duties**

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
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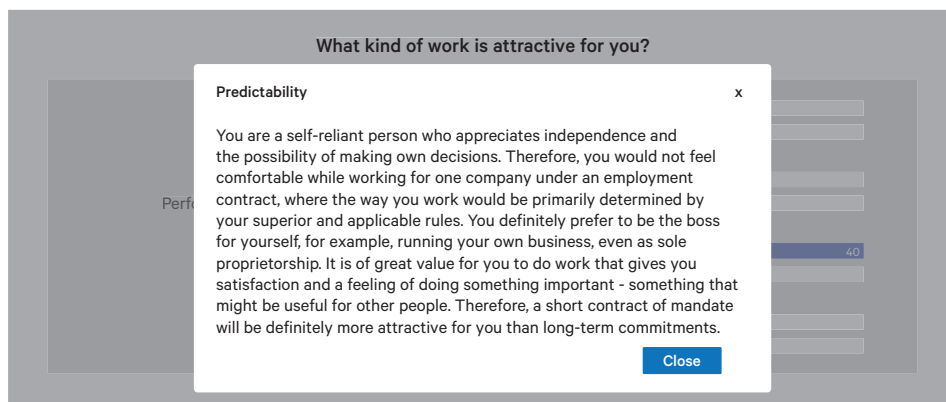
**It is very important to me that my work gives me independence and the ability to make decisions about myself**

<input type="radio"/> 0	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
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- » An example of a result in an online version has a form of a chart showing the preference for work in 4 bipolar scales: e.g. Independence–Stabilization.



- » In each area the result is available in a descriptive form by clicking on the area name.



As for the comprehensive assessment of resources of mature women, it might be a good idea to use the help of a coach who has a number of tools facilitating diagnosis and identification of existing risks and limitations. This form of assessment is an example of good practice, an effective solution especially for the *Sandwich Generation* and a tool that allows us to indicate the areas requiring support. It is important to say that the *Sandwich Generation*, more often than other groups of mature women, has problems with concentration, feels fatigue, falls ill, decides to work part-time or quits their jobs completely. Therefore, the support on the part of employer should cover all the spheres of their life (Figure 3), and for the *Sandwich Generation* this help should be particularly intense. In this case, the diagnosis of personal resources, needs and limitations focuses mainly on the following aspects: roles taken by a mature woman, time management skills, the ability to establish interpersonal relationships, the ability to take over tasks and deal with own emotions (Figure 6).



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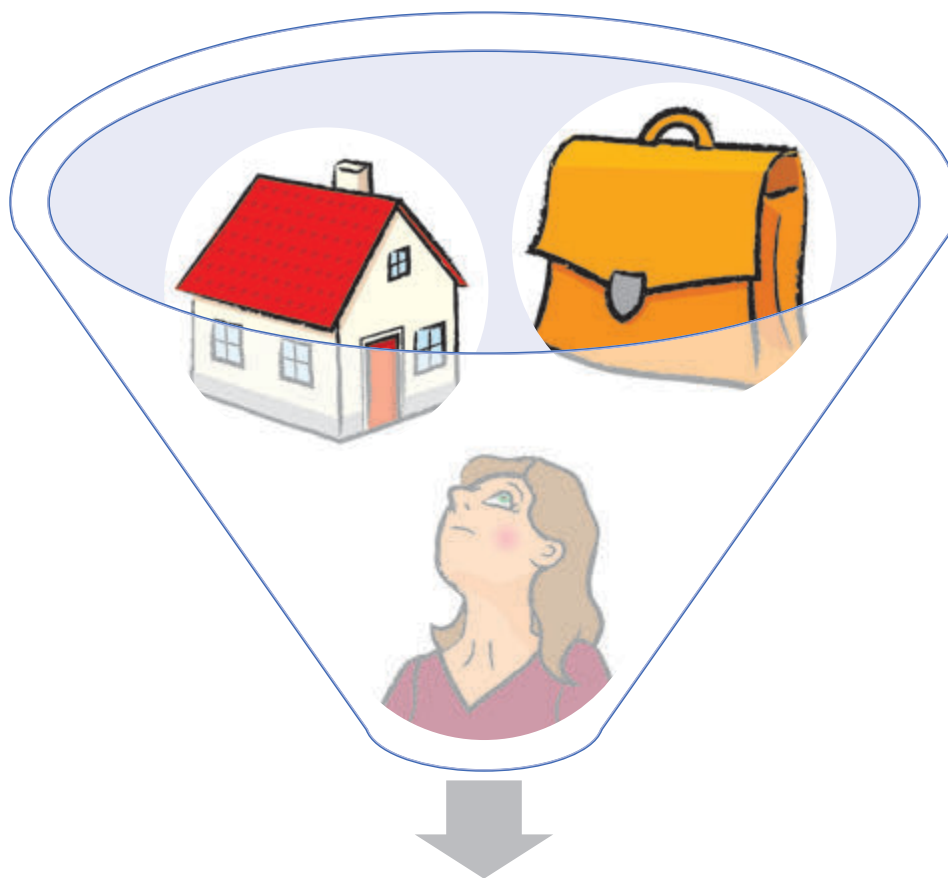
**It is important to assess the current situation of a mature woman as it is the starting point for the support on the part of employer and the effective implementation of the activation and professional development strategy combined with the plan for self-fulfilment and performing household duties.**

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**In Poland, there are many programs aimed at career counselling in the field of lifelong learning and general education. Employers can use free services of a coach, psychologist or counsellor in the Information and Career Planning Centres operating in voivodship labour offices. We have included additional tips in our guide for mature women: 45+ and what next? It is really worth reading!**

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Thanks to the assessment of personal resources, needs and limitations of mature women, the employer is able to find ways of support so that it is possible for a mature woman to reconcile professional tasks with family duties while updating and improving her qualifications and skills. Among the examples of tools used by a coach or psychologist, it is worth mentioning assessment and self-assessment sheets that make it possible to recognize the three aspects of the current situation: Where I am? (professionally / in my family / on the path of my own development), What can I do? (my qualifications and skills) and Where do I go? (directions of development, needs). After diagnosing the current situation, it is possible to create three realistic and comprehensive plans (Figure 3): a plan for activation and professional development, a plan for performing family and home responsibilities, and a plan for self-fulfilment. Naturally, their effective implementation depends largely on the support of the employer.


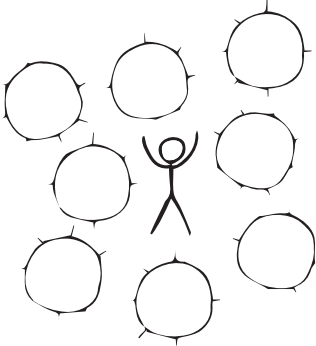
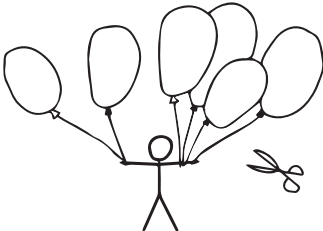
**RESOURCES, LIMITATIONS AND NEEDS:**

roles and time management  
tasks and interpersonal relations  
dealing with one's own emotions

Figure 6. Assessment of personal resources of mature women

Source: own work

Table 3. Assessment of the situation of a mature woman – examples of tools used by a coach

DIAGNOSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION	SOURCES OF SUPPORT									
<p>Draw yourself and the situation you are in now in the form of “a sandwich”. When drawing this picture try to think about yourself and your professional and family duties that overwhelm you. Below you will find some examples of drawings...</p>  <p>Next, in the two pieces of the sandwich write the things that burden you. Then, mark the 3 things that burden you the most. Which spheres do they belong to? Work, family or maybe you?</p>	<p>Who or what is your source of support? Where do you get your energy from? Write it down in the fields below.</p>  <p>Who could give you more support and why? Can you ask for it? Yes/No? Why?</p>									
NORMS, VALUES, ATTITUDES	BOUNDARIES AND LIMITATIONS									
<p>What are your standards and values ? What attitudes do you adopt? What do you have to do? What mustn't you do? Use this drawing and write down all the do's and don'ts you have to face in the 3 spheres of life in the balloons: work/family/you.</p>  <p>What would happen of all those do's and don'ts disappeared? What prevents you from letting them go? What or who could help you cut the string and let these balloons fly away? Which balloon would fly away first?</p>	<p>Do you know your limits? How do you know you are reaching your limit? Can you recognise the signs suggesting it? Try to write them down in the table below.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="798 1029 1441 1244"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3" data-bbox="798 1029 1441 1077">MY LIMITS</th></tr> <tr> <th data-bbox="798 1077 997 1125">PHYSICAL</th><th data-bbox="997 1077 1241 1125">MENTAL</th><th data-bbox="1241 1077 1441 1125">EMOTIONAL</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="798 1125 997 1244"></td><td data-bbox="997 1125 1241 1244"></td><td data-bbox="1241 1125 1441 1244"></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Can you set and respect your own limits? Are they easier or more difficult to identify in any of these areas? In which one? What or who could help you identify them?</p>	MY LIMITS			PHYSICAL	MENTAL	EMOTIONAL			
MY LIMITS										
PHYSICAL	MENTAL	EMOTIONAL								



# Employers and the areas of support for mature women

Changes that have taken place in the labour market in recent decades force employers to update and adapt their management strategies of human resources. It is not only the age structure of employees that has been changing but also the challenges that they face. They result from, among others, changes in the economy and in the field of modern technologies, and they are connected with the disappearance of certain professional tasks and emergence of a number of new ones. In order for mature employees to deal with them successfully, they should have the opportunity to update and improve their knowledge, competences and skills. As we have already mentioned, in the case of mature women, especially those from the *Sandwich Generation*, the employer should adopt a broader perspective instead of focusing exclusively on work and professional tasks. When managing human resources, it is recommended that they introduce a holistic approach because only this approach guarantees the effectiveness of the activities carried out and continuity of business activity (Figure 7).

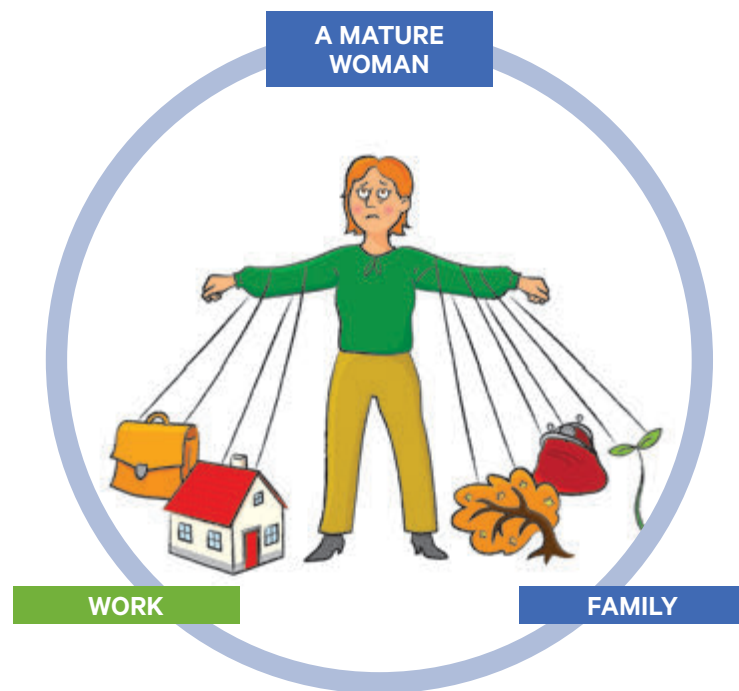


Figure 7. A mature woman as an employee – the overall perspective of the employer

Source: own work

Adopting a holistic instead of fragmented perspective makes it easier to understand the situation of a 45–65-year-old woman who is working or wants to take up a job. It also facilitates the planning and implementation of effective supporting activities. According to the previously presented model of professional activity (Figure 4), the support should cover the protection of personal resources (psychical and mental health, knowledge, skills and competences, motivation and proactive attitudes) and activities carried out for the culture of the organization, in which a mature woman is perceived as a valuable and desirable employee. The employer should consciously manage a team of employees from various age groups, taking into account the needs of mature women, including *Sandwich Generation* representatives.

The first necessary step is to determine exactly how many employees aged 45–65, including women, are employed in the company/ institution/enterprise, and to assess their personal resources and needs. The assessment may be carried out according to the guidelines and using the tools discussed in the previous chapter of this guide. The next step should involve developing a strategy and a plan for support measures. It is worth noting that if any activities are to be performed in the above mentioned areas, they should be performed at the same time (Figure 8).

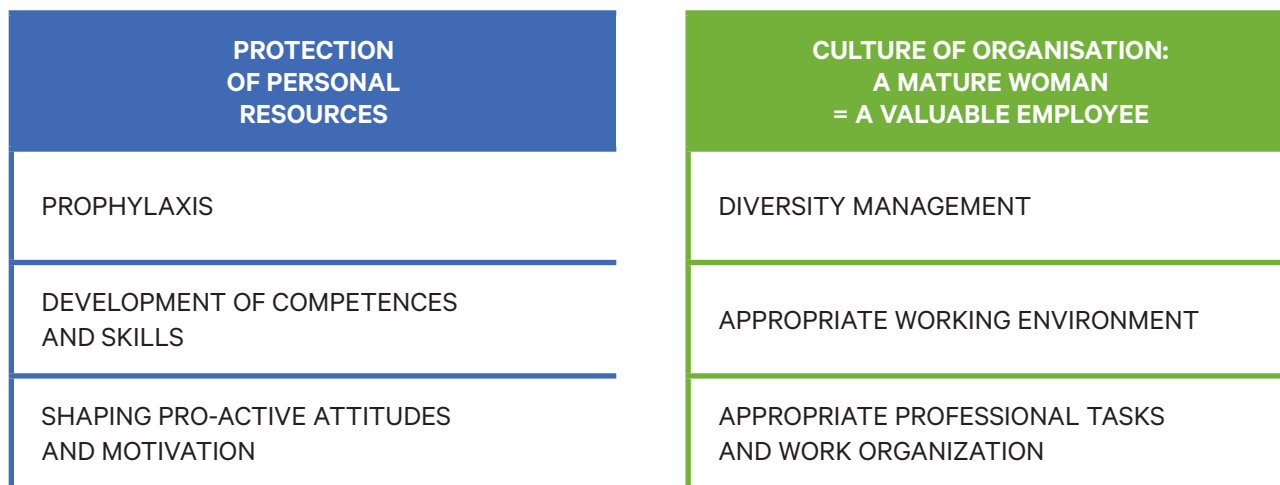


Figure 8. Employers – areas of supporting activities

Source: own work

## Protection of personal resources



As part of prophylaxis, the employer may purchase additional medical examinations for mature employees or health packages including check-ups for 40-year-olds, 50- or 60-year-olds. It is also a good idea to purchase or subsidize sports, physiotherapy or rehabilitation activities. Additionally, it is possible to organize sports events, e.g. regular bicycle trips, walking, jogging and running, canoeing, ballroom dancing, yoga, etc. Another idea concerns organisation of a Health Day, during which, apart from the already mentioned sports activities, participants will have the opportunity to listen to interesting lectures on the possibilities and ways of taking care of their own mental and physical health, e.g. relaxation techniques, ways to deal with stress and healthy nutrition. Last but not least, it is worth making sure that employees are able to consult a coach or psychologist, the costs of which will be covered by the employer.

Updating and/or improving the skills and competences of mature women is usually done through participation in courses, training or workshops. The research conducted as part of the *Time4Help* project showed that employers most often sent mature women to professional development courses, those that allowed them to acquire or improve ICT skills, and also those in the field of accounting. They also thought that mature women should participate in courses allowing them to acquire new professional qualifications, soft skills, the knowledge of a foreign language and technical skills (e.g. a driving licence). Taking into account the results of the research and employers' opinions, we prepared a training and workshop package as part of the *Time4Help* project, which we then tested together with trainers and a group of mature women. Based on the acquired experience, we are

presenting training and courses that allow mature women to update and/or improve their knowledge, skills and competences in the most effective manner. They cover the areas of social skills, ICT skills, the knowledge of a foreign language, as well as creativity and entrepreneurship (Figure 9).

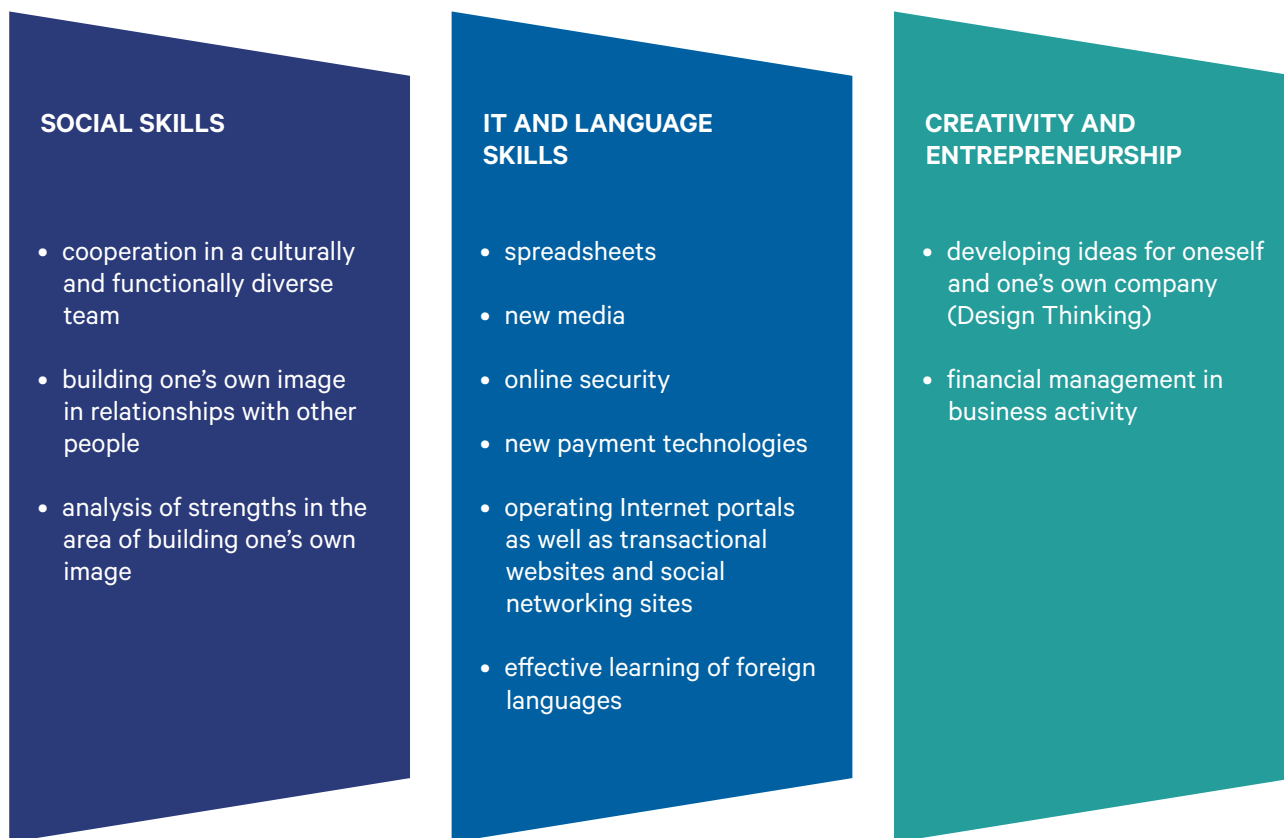


Figure 9. Skills and competences of mature women – training developed as part of the *Time4Help* project

Source: own work

In tables 4, 5 and 6, we present the most important information about individual training courses and workshops, the purpose of their implementation and the expected results. The package prepared by us is a response to the existing needs of employers and mature women which were diagnosed with the *Time4Help* project.

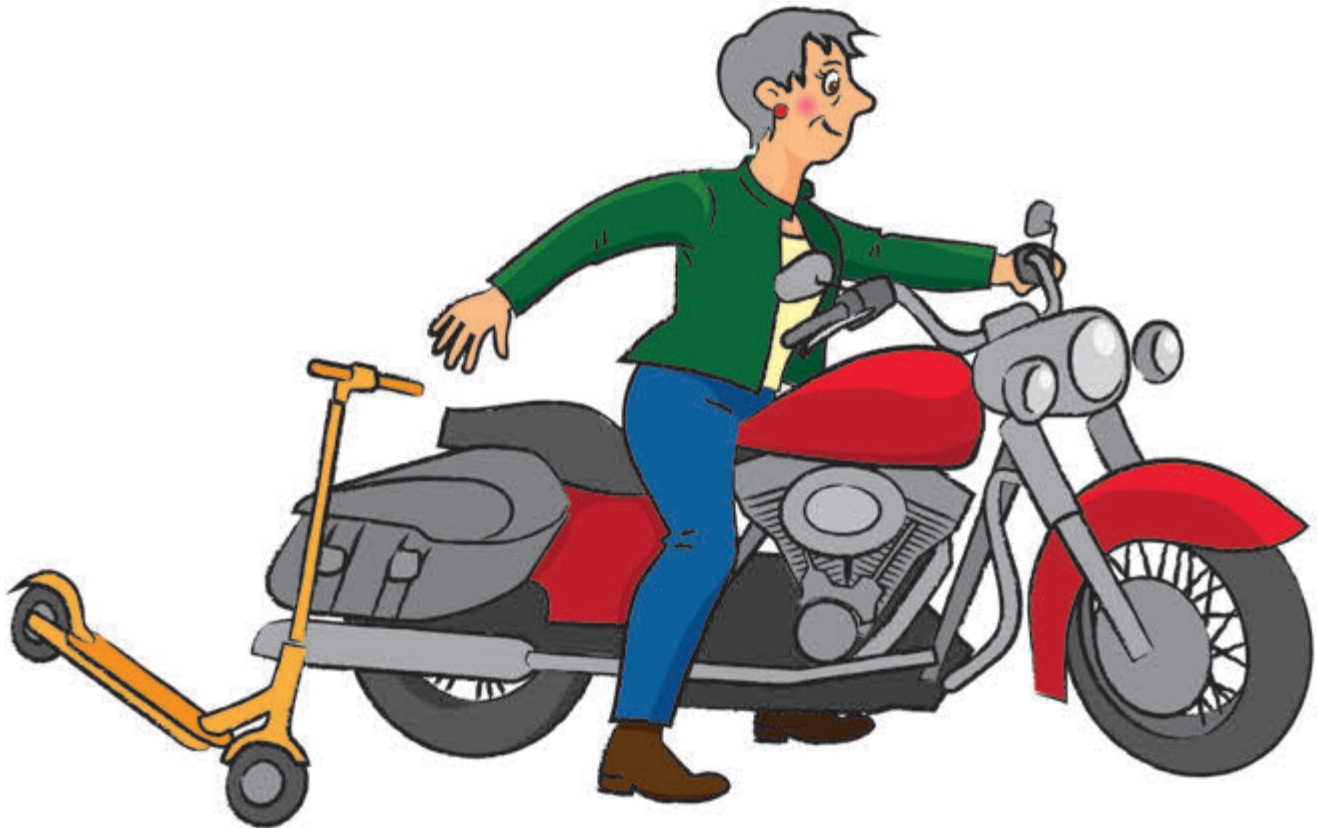


Tabela 4. Skills and competences of mature women – proposal of training in the field of social skills

TRAINING: SOCIAL SKILLS			
TITLE	MAIN GOAL	FOR WHOM?	BENEFITS
THE ANALYSIS OF STRENGTHS IN THE FIELD OF CREATING ONE'S OWN IMAGE BASED ON THE GROUP'S FEEDBACK	Increasing awareness and knowledge of the impact of creating one's own image on other people.	Women motivated to learn new things and those who intend to start their own business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• feedback from the group about one's own image</li><li>• discovering one's own strengths and weaknesses</li><li>• participation in tasks that make it possible to develop skills in conscious self-creation</li><li>• participation in tasks aimed at testing oneself and one's own reactions in stressful situations e.g. when being evaluated by others or performing difficult tasks etc.</li></ul>
BUILDING OWN IMAGE IN RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PEOPLE	Increasing awareness and knowledge of the impact of creating one's own image on the development of professional career with the use of social media.	Women motivated to learn new things and those who intend to start their own business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• feedback from the group about one's own image</li><li>• learning about the latest trends in social media regarding communication and creating your one's own brand</li><li>• participation in tasks that make it possible to develop skills in the field of conscious self-creation or an idea for a business</li><li>• creating one's own ideas on how to communicate on the Internet</li><li>• participation in tasks aimed at testing oneself and one's own reactions in stressful situations e.g. when being evaluated by others or performing difficult tasks etc.</li></ul>



COOPERATION IN TEAM AND MULTICULTURAL GROUPS (KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS)	Acquiring basic knowledge about working in multicultural teams, learning about models and dimensions of culture (selection), cultural differences (selection) and acquiring skills to properly interact and communicate with the representatives of other cultures.	Dedicated to all people who, due to the character of their work, professional and/or social contacts, work or intend to work in a culturally diverse environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• improving the skills of effective communication and appropriate acting in a multicultural environment</li><li>• improving the skill of properly responding to problematic situations caused by cultural differences</li></ul>
A MATURE WOMAN AS SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE WORKPLACE. DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE THE PROFESSIONAL POTENTIAL OF WOMEN AGED 45-65	Informing training participants about various types of disability (sensory, motor, intellectual, autism, Asperger's syndrome), proper communication and the principles of good behaviour towards people with disabilities; developing and strengthening unique social skills of mature women useful in the work environment.	Women who do not work but who would like to take up employment, women who would like to change their job, women who take care of people with disabilities, women who intend to establish their own business in the care sector and those who employ people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• information about various types of disability (sensory, motor, intellectual, autism, Asperger's syndrome)</li><li>• learning about proper communication and the principles of good behaviour towards people with disabilities</li><li>• the ability to behave properly among people with disabilities (both in professional and private life)</li><li>• unique social skills of mature women useful in the work environment</li><li>• development of professional potential</li></ul>

Source: own work based on the concept of training courses and workshops prepared and tested as part of the *Time4Help* project carried out by Dobre Kadry Research and Training Centre Ltd.

Table 5. Skills and competences of mature women – proposal of training in the field of ICT and language skills

TRAINING: ICT AND LANGUAGE SKILLS			
TITLE	MAIN GOAL	FOR WHOM?	BENEFITS
HOW TO LEARN FOREIGN LANGUAGES EFFECTIVELY? CONCEPTS, METHODS, TOOLS AND TIPS	Obtaining information about modern and effective methods of learning foreign languages, increasing the level of motivation to learn and readiness to undertake learning a foreign language.	All people who want to effectively learn a foreign language, the knowledge of which is one of the key competences of the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discovering one's aptitude for learning foreign languages and the preferred learning style</li> <li>• information about effective methods of foreign language learning</li> <li>• a greater degree of independence in learning a foreign language and the ability to manage the process of gaining language proficiency</li> </ul>
USING A SPREADSHEET IN PLANNING AND MANAGING ONE'S OWN BUSINESS	Efficient use of a spreadsheet in the scope necessary to perform basic activities in planning and running a business.	Women who want to start their own business, want to change their job and those who would like to improve their competences in the field of practical use of a spreadsheet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning about spreadsheet tools that can optimize one's work</li> <li>• acquiring skills of using a spreadsheet to plan and manage one's own business</li> <li>• overcoming barriers/fears related to the use of computer applications</li> </ul>
DIGITAL SKILLS IN THE SCOPE OF CREATING CONTENT FOR USING NEW MEDIA	Acquiring skills of preparing an article for a website on one's own (including images), learning about the rules that should be followed when developing content for a website and learning about the tools that make it possible to prepare photos and images for a website.	People considering using the Internet for personal and professional development (e.g. managing a website, online sales, development of interests).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• learning about the rules of proper entering, editing and formatting of the content in the text editor</li> <li>• learning about the principles of creating accessible content (WCAG standard).</li> <li>• acquiring skills of editing photos so that they could be published on the Internet</li> <li>• acquiring skills of using cloud solutions to store and share resources</li> </ul>



OPERATING WEBSITES BASED ON THE WORDPRESS CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, ALONG WITH THE ELEMENTS OF OPERATING SOCIAL NETWORKING AND TRANSACTIONAL SERVICES	Learning about the basic principles of creating websites in HTML based on the Wordpress content management system, learning about the advanced functions of Allegro, PayPal, Facebook and LinkedIn.	People who consider more active use of online tools for personal and professional development (e.g. online sales, blogging, looking for a job, development of interests).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the ability to run one's own blog/ website on the Wordpress platform</li><li>• the ability to effectively search for information on the Internet using various sources</li><li>• the ability to sell one's own products/services using transactional websites (e.g. Allegro) or an online store (eCommerce plugin)</li><li>• the ability to use advanced functions of searching for job offers and groups on LinkedIn, Facebook</li><li>• the ability to select the appropriate data to share on social networking sites (LinkedIn, Facebook)</li></ul>
SECURITY ON THE INTERNET AND THE BASICS OF GDPR AS A SUPPLEMENT TO KEY SKILLS OF USING THE INTERNET	Learning about the rules of safe use of the computer and online resources, learning about the rights of internet users in the field of collecting, storing and processing of personal data, learning about the provisions and rules regarding the protection of personal data applicable to the operation of the website, learning about the functions and rules of using cookies on websites.	People using the Internet and electronic devices on a daily basis who want to increase their cybersecurity and be more aware of their rights and obligations concerning personal data protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• learning about the rules of safe use of Internet resources</li><li>• the ability to recognize potential threats and respond to them appropriately</li><li>• learning about the rules of personal data processing on the part of both data processor and the person whose data is processed, learning about the advantages and disadvantages of using the so-called cookies</li><li>• increasing the sense of security and awareness of using Internet resources</li></ul>

NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN SALES AND IN ONE'S OWN COMPANY – AN EXAMPLE OF UNIVERSAL SKILLS	Practical preparation of course participants to perform activities and work as a cashier or manager in a point of sale (selling products or services).	Every person planning to work in a point of sale as a worker or manager, also those who run their own business selling services or products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• general knowledge about the organization of the sales service point</li><li>• the ability to operate a cash desk with a payment terminal, scales and a barcode reader</li><li>• openness to modern technologies in sales systems, electronic payments and other new payment methods</li></ul>
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Source: own work based on the concept of training courses and workshops prepared and tested as part of the *Time4Help* project carried out by Dobre Kadry Research and Training Centre Sp. z o.o.



Source: own work based on the concept of training courses and workshops prepared and tested as part of the *Time4Help* project carried out by Dobre Kadry Research and Training Centre Sp. z o.o.

Table 6. Umiejętności i kompetencje kobiet dojrzałych – propozycja szkoleń w obszarze kreatywności i przedsiębiorczości

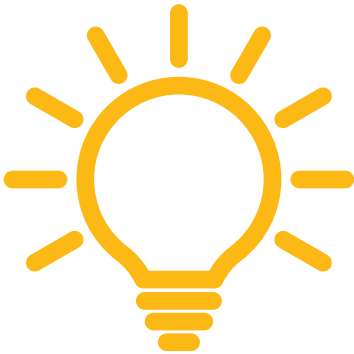
TRAINING: CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP			
TITLE	MAIN GOAL	FOR WHOM?	BENEFITS
HOW TO PLAN “YOUR OWN BUSINESS” THAT WILL GIVE YOU SATISFACTION AND BE USEFUL TO OTHERS? THE USE OF DESIGN THINKING TOOLS TO CREATE IDEAS FOR ONE’S OWN PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY	<p>Learning about Design Thinking and how to use it in order to create innovative and user-friendly solutions.</p> <p>User-oriented design experience based on the key tools of the Design Thinking methodology – inspiration to use Design Thinking tools when searching and developing an idea for one’s own professional activity.</p>	<p>People interested in acquiring competences in the field of the practical use of Design Thinking when creating a concept of their own business activity, those who want to stop trying and start acting, throw their excuses into the bin, learn from experience and make some positive changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• knowledge about Design Thinking – where it comes from, where it is used, how the work proceeds based on the analysed approach and what stages it consists of</li><li>• participation and experience in the Design Thinking and design process</li><li>• learning about principles, techniques and key tools used during the various stages of design and putting them into practice</li><li>• finding answers to the following questions: How to take matters into your own hands and design your own professional activity? How to generate interesting ideas for an activity that is satisfactory and useful for others? How to develop your own passions, hobbies and skills? How to turn your talents into professional activity that will bring independence, freedom of decision, opportunity of self-fulfilment and a sense of financial security?</li></ul>
MANAGING FINANCES IN BUSINESS ACTIVITY	<p>Learning about the tools of effective financial management and determining the level of profitability.</p>	<p>Women who intend to start their own business, especially those who would like to submit applications in order to obtain financing from public funds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• learning about the methods of identifying revenue and expenditure within the conducted business activity</li></ul>


The above-mentioned training proposals present opportunities and fields in which the employer could provide support to mature women in their plans and efforts to update, improve or acquire new knowledge, skills and competences. It is necessary to point out that the group of women aged 45–65 is very diverse (more details on this matter are presented in the chapter devoted to the specificity of mature women). Therefore, the choice of training should be more individual and suitable for the needs of a given person. For example, a mature woman who is professionally active and would like to develop further has different goals and needs than a woman re-entering the labour market. In the following part of this chapter, we present two examples of training path.



**There are numerous possibilities of updating one’s knowledge and improving or acquiring new skills and competences. The choice of a training path should be individual and customised to the needs of a specific trainee, their life situation, plans and possibilities.**

<b>KATARZYNA, 47 years old</b> An accountant working in the accounting department of a medium-sized company. She would like to manage a team of employees, at the beginning a small one. In the future, might want to set up her own business providing accounting services. However, she has no experience in running a company and she feels that she lacks confidence in relationships with other people.	<b>BARBARA, 62 years old</b> After the death of her husband she had been taking care of for the las 5 years she would like to put herself out there and earn some extra money in retirement. Before her husband fell ill, she had been working as a German teacher. Now she would like to work as an assistant of a tour guide organizing trips in Poland.
She chooses training improving her management and social skills	She chooses training improving her social skills and the knowledge of GDPR



KATARZYNA 47 years old	BARBARA 62 years old	
<b>SOCIAL SKILLS</b>		
		Analysis of strengths in the field of creating a personal image based on the group's feedback
		Creating one's own image in relationships with other people
		Working in a team and multicultural groups (knowledge and skills)
		A mature woman as support for people with disabilities in the workplace
<b>ICT AND LANGUAGE SKILLS</b>		
		How to learn foreign languages effectively and efficiently? Concepts, methods, tools and tips
		Using a spreadsheet in planning and managing one's own business
		Digital skills in the field of content creation for using new media
		Operating websites based on the Wordpress content management system, along with the elements of operating social networking and transactional services
		Online safety and the basics of GDPR as a supplement to key skills of using the Internet
		New technologies in sales and in one's own company – an example of universal skills
<b>CREATIVITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP</b>		
		How to plan "your own business" that will give you satisfaction and be useful to others? The use of design thinking tools to create ideas for one's own professional activity
		Financial management in a business activity

The effectiveness of an individual training path can be increased by obtaining on-the-job training, that is, training directly in the workplace, in real conditions and during the performance of new professional tasks. The training can be supervised by another experienced employee or an instructor. One of the methods which employers adopt in this process is a tandem, that is, a mature employee and a young one. The former has the opportunity to share their skills and experience, whereas the younger one – their specialist knowledge.



As we have already mentioned many times, when creating opportunities for further professional development, the employer should take into consideration the overall perspective of a mature woman. Such an approach is important for motivation and shaping a proactive attitude that favours professional activity. Not without significance is also – apart from the personal situation and the existing opportunities to improve one's knowledge and skills – the culture of the organization. It is possible to notice that some mature employees tend to lose their positive attitude over time, which might be caused by several factors e.g. not meeting one's professional expectations, feeling underestimated and unnoticed, poor teamwork and lack of ability to do anything about it.



## Organizational culture – mature women as valuable employees

Important aspects of the **culture of the organization** that have an impact on professional activity and in which the employer may conduct supporting activities are, first and foremost, the management style that takes into account the needs of mature employees aged 45–65 years. Mature employees are perceived as very valuable to the organization (a company, an enterprise or an institution) and valued for their experience, competences and strengths. The employer not only provides mature women with appropriate opportunities for professional development, but they also consciously shape the work environment and organize it appropriately so that it is possible to implement professional tasks in the right manner (Figure 10).



Figure 10. The culture of organization – areas of support for mature women

Source: own work

What should the employer take care of then? What specific actions should be taken to ensure that the **culture of the organization** meets the needs of mature women, the requirements of the modern labour market, and guarantees a sustainable development of the organization? The **management style** should reflect the understanding of the ongoing demographic changes, as well as the necessity and the ability to manage employees of different ages and at different life stages (*diversity management*). It is important to maintain a positive attitude towards older employees, to create opportunities to develop their potential and to support them when necessary e.g. by a coach. It is also important to know how to plan the work of mature employees and how to integrate them into all the areas of the organization. Mature women should feel that they are appreciated for their strengths and experience, and that age and limitations will not be viewed as disqualifying them, but as an area requiring advice and support from the employer (*boundary management*). It is worth remembering that the management style influences the values, attitudes and level of motivation of employees, as well as communication and a positive atmosphere.

**Professional tasks** should be pertinent to one's knowledge, level of competences and skills. In the chapter on the



Figure 11.  
The culture of  
organization –  
activities undertaken  
by the employer in  
order to support  
mature women

Source:  
own work

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### MANAGEMENT STYLE

- a mature woman = a valuable employee
  - targeting the needs of mature women
  - diversity management & boundary management
  - suitable style of communication
- 

### PROFESSIONAL TASKS

- adaptation to competences, knowledge and skills
  - ensuring the possibility of reconciling career and family responsibilities (work-life-balance)
  - allowing self-fulfilment
- 

### WORK ENVIRONMENT

- a workplace adapted to the needs and age of a mature woman
  - ergonomics and ergonomic design of the workplace
- 

### ORGANIZATION OF WORK

- time, shifts, mode, organization and pace of work ensuring the opportunity to maintain *work-life balance* and chances of personal development
- 

possibilities of professional development, we emphasized that mature women (as well as other employees) must be able to update their professional qualifications and acquire new ones. It is necessary to remember that in the ever-changing reality certain professional tasks quickly become outdated, whereas an efficiently operating organization is able to predict those changes, modify employees' tasks and provide them with support if they need it. In the case of mature women, this support concerns the protection and development of personal resources (discussed in the previous chapter) and needs in the field of career, family life and self-fulfilment.

Another important factor is proper **shaping of the work environment** so that it facilitates rather than hinders the performance of work, and ensures comfort. In order for solutions to be effective, they should be adapted to the specific characteristics of an employee, in this case – a mature woman: age (45–65 years), anthropometric features and senses, dexterity, functional limitations, expectations, previous experience and knowledge. The other two important elements are the conditions of the work environment (e.g. ventilation, room temperature) and the usefulness and user-friendliness of devices used at work, e.g. a computer. In this context, it is worth taking care of and providing e.g. larger computer screens, a good lighting system, appropriate office chairs, appropriate room temperature (in winter and summer) and comfortable working space. The employer should also be aware of existing functional limitations (e.g. eyesight, hearing, mobility) and adapt the workplace by removing barriers.



The basic factors of **work organization** include:

- time and work shifts
- a model (e.g. traditional, remote, hybrid) and division of work
- the pace of work and breaks.

All the above-mentioned factors can influence the course and effectiveness of professional tasks carried out by mature women, whereas most of them (time, shifts, model, division and pace of work) are vital for the *Sandwich Generation* and determine whether or not they are able to perform a given job. In modern organizations, work systems are characterised by high flexibility and employers adapt the forms of work organization to the needs of their employees. This allows the latter to maintain proper *work-life balance*.

The effective and applied **work organization** systems include:

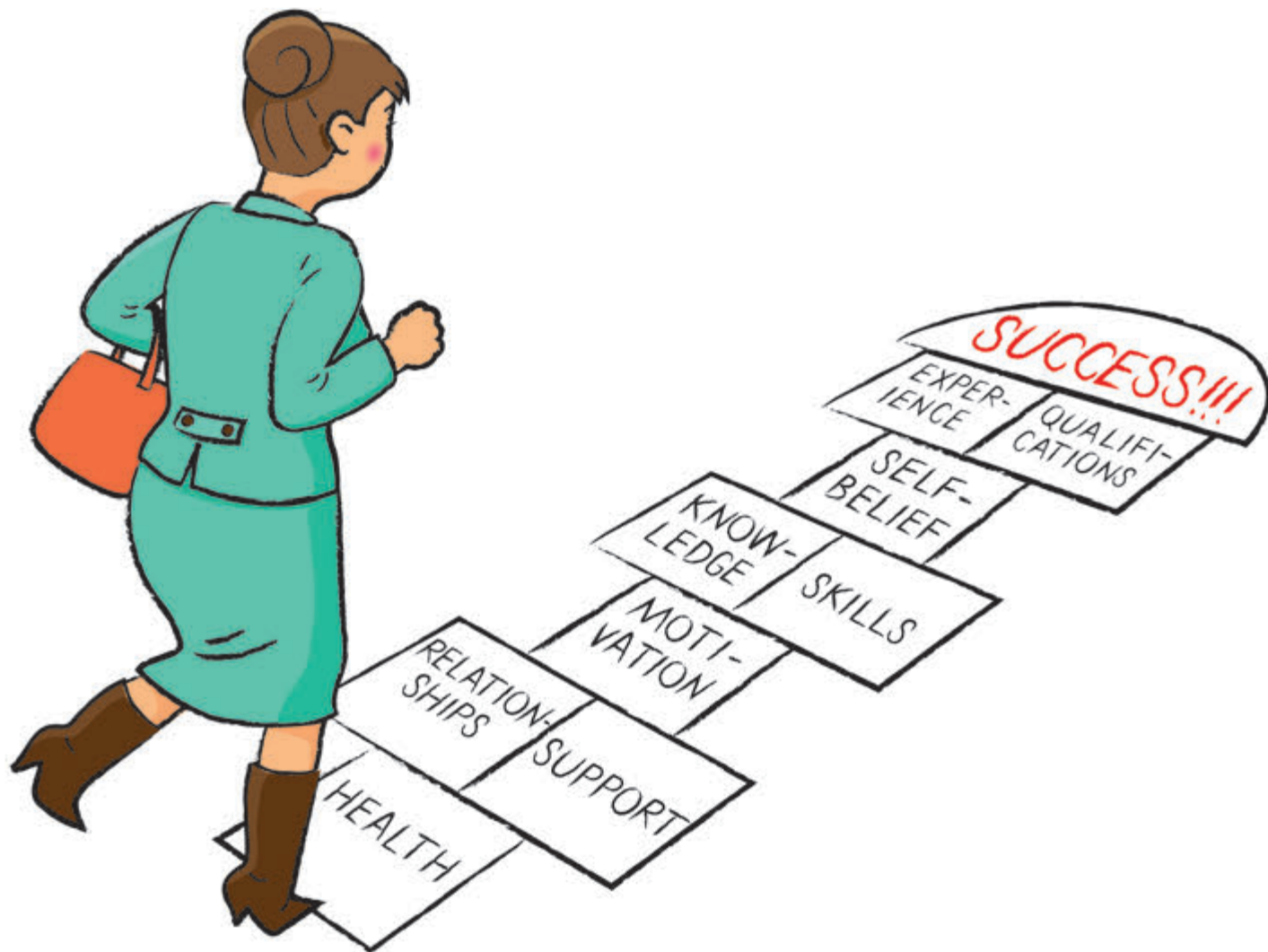
- the possibility of working part time (20-80% of full time), e.g. for a certain period of time during which it is necessary to reduce working hours
- flexible working model (remote or hybrid)
- flexible working hours: the employee can choose the time when they start and finish work, and their working hours are settled weekly or monthly
- longer breaks at work, e.g. allowing someone to pick up their child from school or go back home to prepare a meal or administer medicines to a dependent person
- additional days off in a year for employees to improve their qualifications
- job-sharing (two or more employees perform tasks on one workstation)
- clickworking (designating tasks which can be done remotely, at any time or place)



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**Employers in organizations (companies, enterprises and institutions) in which mature women are perceived as valuable employees, adapt the management style, environment and work organization to their needs and possibilities. They enable mature women to reconcile their career and family life, and they take care of their personal development.**

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## Conclusions and recommendations

Demographic changes, a shortage of specialists in the labour market and the ever-growing group of employees aged 45–65 make it necessary to change the attitude of employers towards mature women. They should note that mature women have enormous potential, they make valuable employees, and they also have experience and qualifications that younger people do not possess. However, it is not enough to change one's attitude and notice the potential. It is necessary to undertake supporting activities allowing mature women to stay professionally active as long as possible or re-enter the labour market. According to the model of professional activity presented in this guide, activities should take into account the overall (holistic) perspective and should be simultaneously aimed at the protection and development of personal resources of mature women and the appropriate adaptation of the culture of the entire organization – a company, enterprises or institutions (Figure 12). It is necessary to remember that only comprehensive and complementary supporting activities will be effective.



Figure 12. Work ability model – balance between personal resources and organizational culture

Source: own work

In specific chapters of this guide, we have discussed in detail the nature and scope of supporting activities and presented practical tips that should make it easier to carry them out. As part of the summary and recommendations, we also include a checklist that will facilitate the development of a support plan for mature women and its implementation.

SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES FOR MATURE WOMEN	
	changing the attitude and approach to mature women; a mature woman = a valuable employee
	identification of the age structure of employees, with particular emphasis on mature women
	management style: diversity management & boundary management
	developing a strategy to support mature women in the organization and their professional reintegration (e.g. recruitment procedures, jobs for mature women)
	development and implementation of an internal information campaign for employees aged 45-65 with particular emphasis on women and the <i>Sandwich Generation</i> (the campaign should cover all employees in the organization)
	communication style suitable for the adopted strategy of supporting mature women
	assessment of personal resources of employees – mature women, their needs and existing limitations
	identification of areas in which a given person needs help and indication of existing possibilities of individual and/or group support
	creating a plan of supporting activities in the area of activation and professional development (together with the plan of reconciling family life and self-fulfilment)
	adjusting professional tasks to the competences, knowledge and skills of mature women
	shaping proactive attitudes and motivation of mature women
	enabling updating and increasing knowledge, skills and competences (a continuous process)
	support for the self-development of mature women
	support in the field of physical and mental health protection (prophylaxis)
	adapting the organization of work so that it is possible for employees (mature women) to maintain a proper <i>work-life balance</i>
	adapting the work environment to the needs of mature women

# General information about the project

The *Time4Help* project (POWR.04.03.00-00-017/18) is co-financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund and implemented in a Polish-Finnish-Belgian-Spanish partnership. In Poland, the project is conducted by Dobre Kadry Research and Training Centre Ltd., in Finland by XAMK University in Mikkeli (South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences), in Belgium by Odisee University in Brussels (Odisee vzw – Higher Institute for Family Studies), whereas in Spain – by Acción contra el Hambre foundation from Madrid.

The main goal of the project is to develop new solutions to support mature women aged 45–65. In order to achieve it, the project assumes motivating the representatives of this target group to increase their attractiveness in the labour market by improving their competences and qualifications in various forms of lifelong learning. As part of the project, we developed a model solution that takes into account the specificity of mature women who belong to the *Sandwich Generation*, that is, a group of middle-aged people taking care of the dependant representatives of both younger (children, grandchildren and older (or the same) generation (parents, siblings).

**Implementation period:** December 2018 – January 2022

**Project target groups:**

RECIPIENTS	mature women (the assumed age is 45-65 years old)
USERS	employers, training institutions, employment agencies

As part of the project, we carried out numerous studies in the area of the needs of the defined target group. We strove to investigate the situation of Polish mature women and, using the results of the research, suggested solutions that might effectively increase the chances of improving their situation in the labour market. The main source of data for the analysis was qualitative (semiotic research on texts of popular culture) and quantitative research (CATI – Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) on a representative sample of 1010 mature women and 104 employers.

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Project co-financed by the European Union under the European Social Fund  
Project number: POWR.04.03.00-00-0017/18

Kobiety  
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