

# Older employees need to continuously develop their skills to stay motivated

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Continuous learning and development in the workplace are key for people's motivation, reveals new research by the University of Cologne.

The study, conducted by Professor Anne Burmeister, investigated the positive and negative effects of workers over 45 seeking knowledge from their younger co-workers.

The findings show that older people seeking knowledge from the younger co-workers leads to higher work motivation and higher workability because they are able to learn something new.

"Old dogs can learn new tricks—in fact, older workers are more motivated at work when they can learn something new from their younger co-workers," says Professor Burmeister.

However, the research also reveals that seeking knowledge from younger co-workers can be uncomfortable for older employees, and can leave them feeling embarrassed. This is because societal norms view the older workers as the knowledge providers, not the learners.

This effect was significantly reduced if older workers had higher levels of positive intergenerational affect.

"Creating opportunities for high-quality contact between employees of different age groups, allowing them to get to know each other and discover similarities can facilitate the development of higher levels of intergenerational affect," says Professor Burmeister.

The study was published in the Journal of Organisational Behaviour.

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For more information, a copy of the report, or to speak with Professor Burmeister, please contact Katie Hurley from BlueSky Education on [khurley@bluesky-pr.com](mailto:khurley@bluesky-pr.com).