

INTERIM LEADERSHIP

3. LEADERSHIP STUDY
HELMUT SCHMIDT UNIVERSITY



HELMUT SCHMIDT
UNIVERSITÄT
Universität der Bundeswehr Hamburg



management angels

A WIL GROUP MEMBER



INTERIM LEADERSHIP

HEALTHY AND SUCCESSFUL

The Helmut Schmidt University in Hamburg has been researching the effects of flexible working on leadership and leadership success for several years now. In the most recent part of the research project, Prof. Dr. Jörg Felfe and Erdwig Holste present the practice-oriented study "Healthy and Successful Interim Leadership".

The study surveyed 849 independent interim managers across all industries and functions via an online survey in February 2017. The self-assessment was supplemented by an external assessment of close peers (life partners, relatives, colleagues, etc., n=137).

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or require further information.

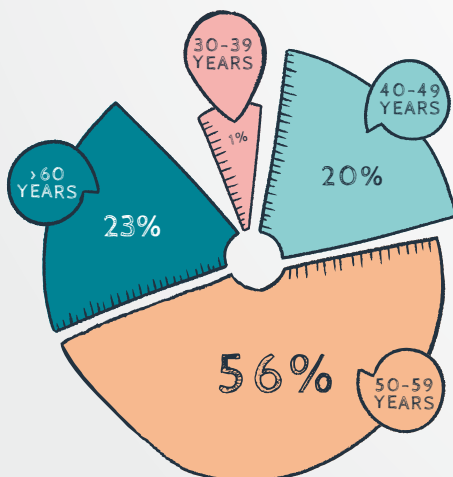
Jörg Felfe
Prof. Dr. Jörg Felfe

Erdwig Holste
Erdwig Holste, MA

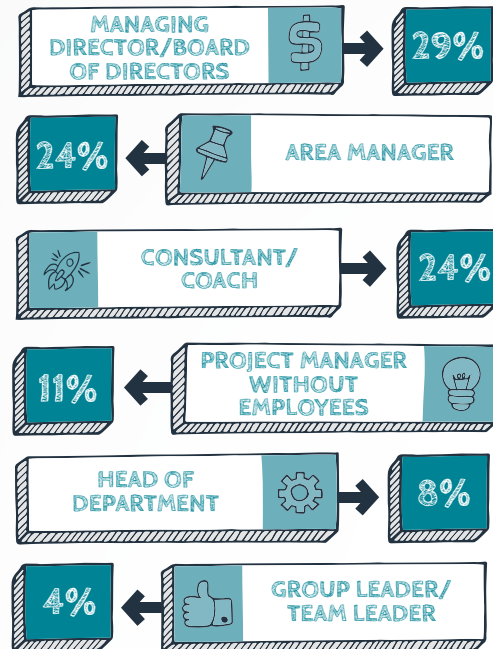
Helmut Schmidt University - University of the German Federal Armed Forces
Department of work, organizational and economic psychology



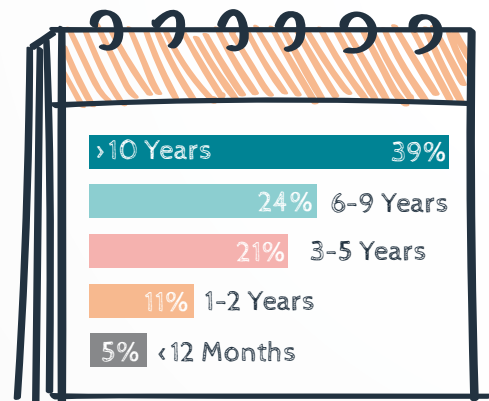
AGE DISTRIBUTION



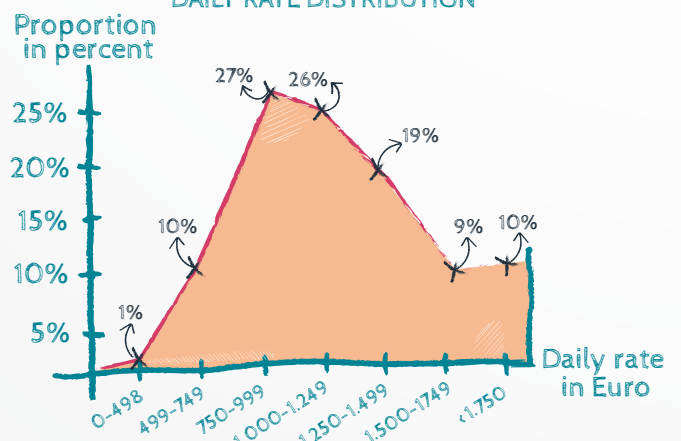
INTERIM MANAGER DEPLOYMENT-LEVEL



EXPERIENCE AS A SELF-EMPLOYED



DAILY RATE DISTRIBUTION



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

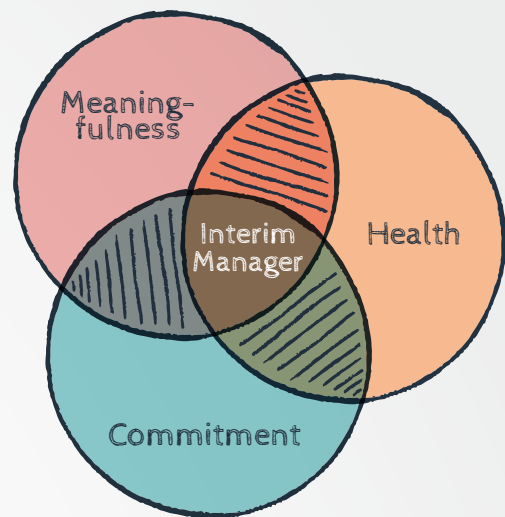
The AOK Health Report 2018* presents some worrying figures. In 2017, the average German employee missed **12 days** of work due to sick leave. This figure rises to **19 lost days** when employees experience little sense of purpose in their work. In general, reports of mental illness rose by 67% between 2007 and 2017.

Interestingly, this research showed a contrary picture. The interim managers surveyed only missed **3 days** due to health problems. They rated their work as important and, to a high degree, self-determined whether they were well enough to work.

Two positively and negatively interacting trends characterise the working world: 1) the striving for meaningfulness and meaningful leadership and 2) the ongoing flexibilization of existing working structures. Harmonising these two trends in the form of meaningful living, health and motivation is a central cornerstone of successful organisations.

The aim of this study is to explore possible health-promoting working styles, using interim management as an example. As independent and highly flexible managers, interim managers are particularly exposed to the opportunities and risks of the „new world of work“. Here's why:

1. High-performance managers. On average interim managers work **6 days or 50 hours** per week. They spend **162 days** a year on each project. Limited planning security, fluctuating revenues and phases with high time pressure are the norm.

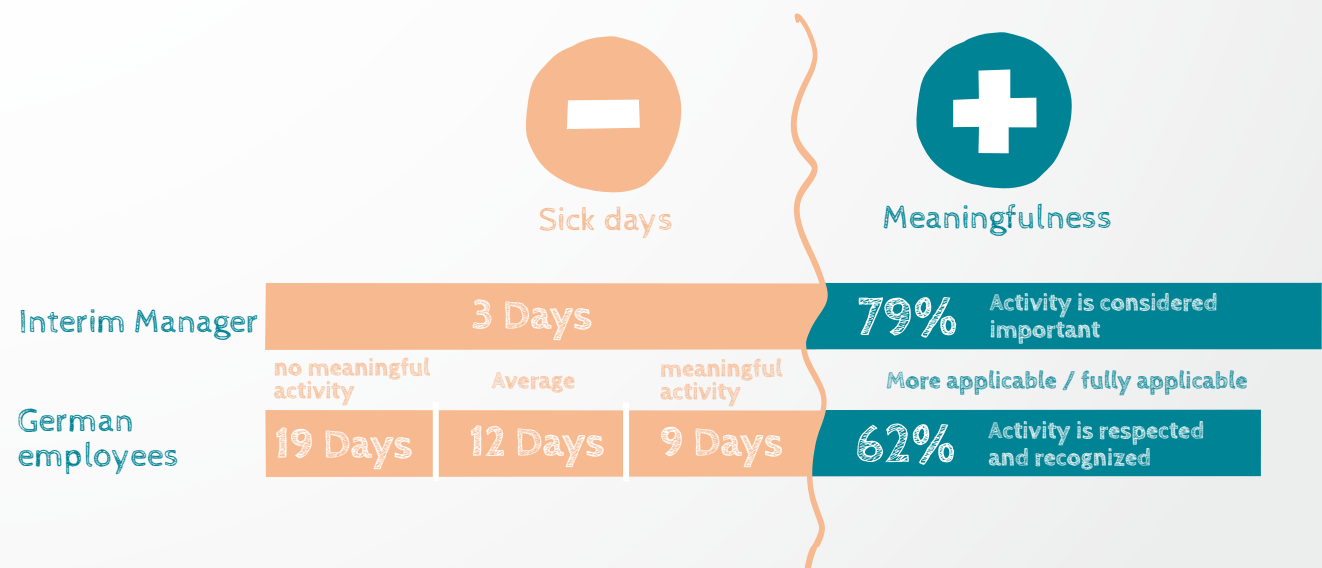


2. Future working conditions. For two out of three interim managers (**66%**), self-employment offers the possibility of continuous further development. Almost every second interim manager (**45%**) states that they are able to organise project assignments very independently.

3. A fulfilling, meaningful life. **79%** of the interviewed interim managers rate their work as important and significant to a high/very high degree. This fact is clearly confirmed in the external assessment, with **96%** of the relatives in agreements.

4. Healthy, dedicated, committed. Interim managers are rarely absent due to illness (**3 days/year**), are willing to invest and strive for perfection and are highly committed to their working independence. **87%** are proud to stand on their own two feet professionally.

5. Healthy executives. Interim managers display above average health-promoting self-management. Interim managers also actively support their employees in the key areas of mindfulness and healthy behaviour.



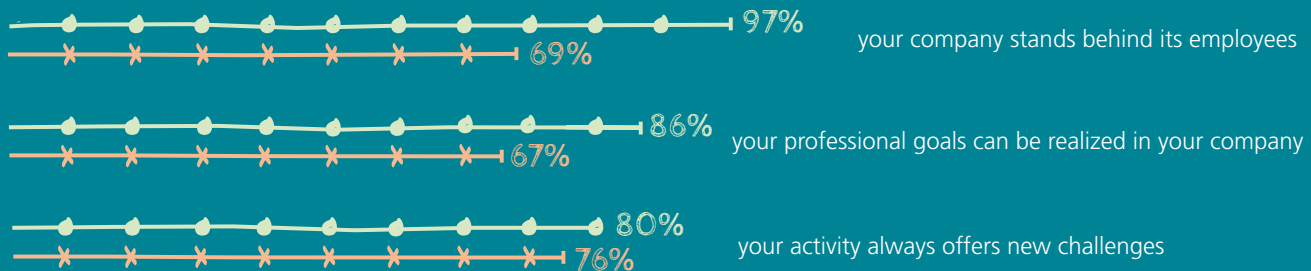
*Bandura, B., Ducki, A., Schröder, H., Klose, J., Meyer, M., (2018). Fehlzeiten-Report 2018. Sinn erleben - Arbeit und Gesundheit. Hamburg, Deutschland: Springer.

HOW SERIOUS ARE SICKNESS ISSUES IN GERMANY?

12 TAG – the average number of days employees in Germany were absent from work in 2017 due to illness. * The average number of days absent from work increases to **19 DAYS** if there is a strong difference between a person's desired working environment and the reality in terms of a meaningful life at work. The data from the AOK Health Report 2018 provide further insights: **

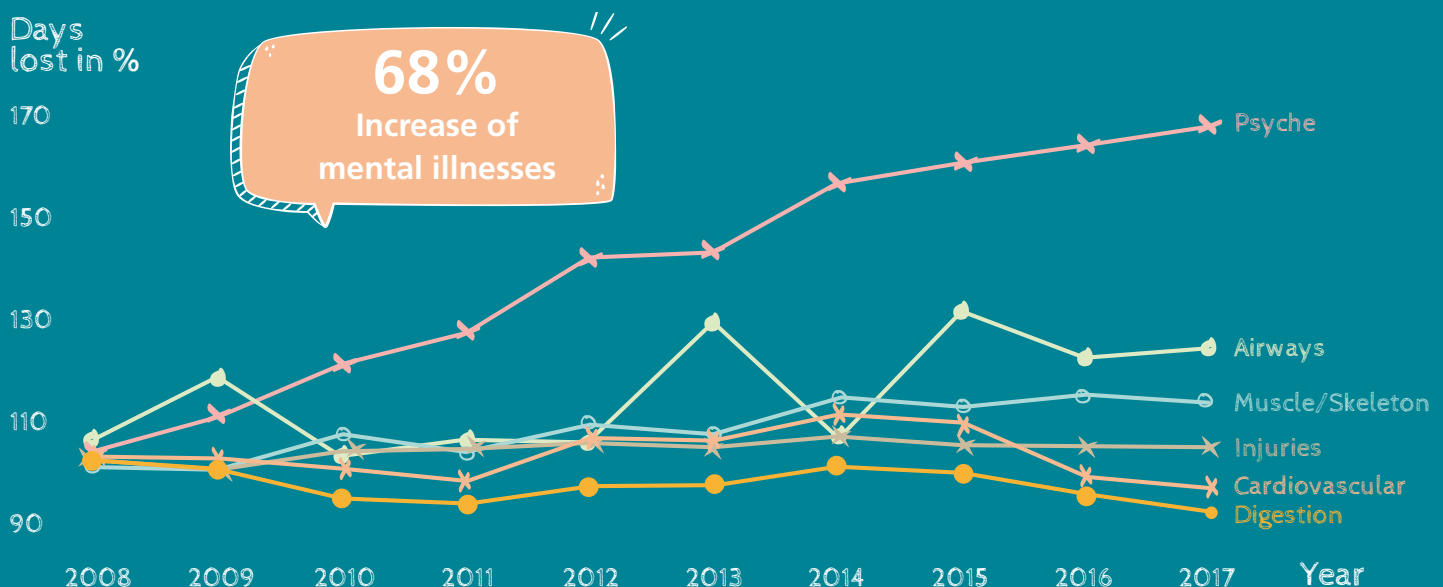
DESIRE AND REALITY

—●— How important is it to you that...? Very / always important in %
 —x— Is it true that...? More or less true / complete in %



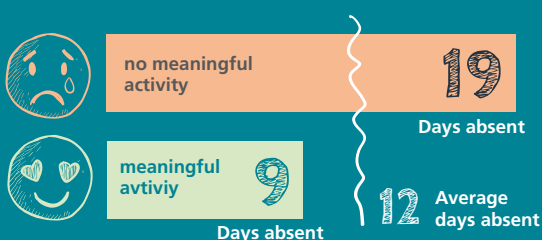
DISEASE PATTERNS

What is remarkable is the sharp increase in mental illnesses over the last ten years. This is problematic because the average time lost per case increases to **26 DAYS** where mental illness is the cause, plus many such illnesses are considered recurrent.

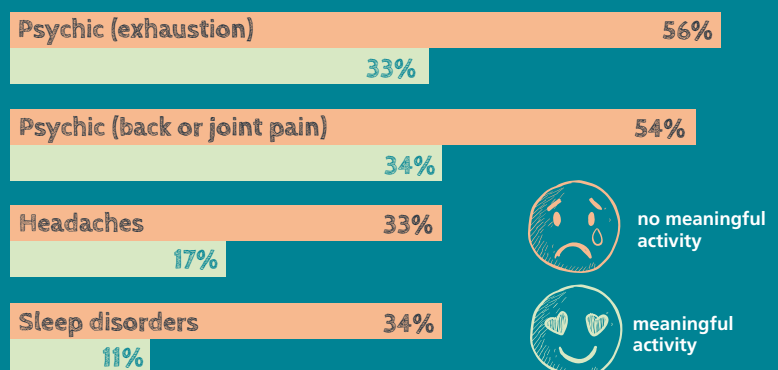


ABSENCE DUE TO ILLNESS

A further insight into the present AOK health report shows that the number of sick days absent due to illness can be reduced to **9 DAYS** if employees report that their work is meaningful.



HEALTH COMPLAINTS



HIGHEST REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERIM MANAGERS

The demands of working as an independent interim manager are high – particularly as they involve long working hours. This is clearly shown by the data collected in our study, as summarised on this page figures. An interim's project-related activity drives fluctuations in income and time pressure. Scientific studies point out that, generally, high work requirements are a central driver for work absence.

*/**



A LONG WORKING WEEK

Interim managers are in intensive deployment. In the sample survey, **68%** of interim managers stated that they work **5** or more days a week. The external evaluation of the corresponding peers actually increases this figure to **84%**.



WORKING HOURS – FROM 50 UP

The increased number of working days is also reflected in the hours worked by interim managers. According to the survey, an interim manager works an average of **50** hours per week. Approximately half (48%) even say they exceed this number of hours.



LESS ANNUAL LEAVE – LESS TIME TO REPLENISH RESOURCES

Taking into account the number of days and the number of hours worked, the question arises as to the number of days of leave taken. Yet interim managers state that they have only taken an average of **24** days' holiday in the past **12** months. This assessment is congruent with the peers surveyed.



HIGH CAPACITY UTILIZATION

Interim managers achieve a high degree of capacity utilization. On average, an interim manager works **162** days a year. In addition, there are unpaid working days for marketing, project acquisition, networking, training and administration.



FLUCTUATING INCOME

The income of interim managers depends on the number of days actually billed to the client, so they are subject to operational fluctuations. More than half of the respondents say that their revenues vary by more than **25%** from month to month.



TIME PRESSURE – THE PERMANENT COMPANION

An interim manager often acts as a company „firefighter“. Solutions must be found quickly and efficiently. Time often plays a decisive role. For **70%** of interim managers, time pressure is clear in every second project - **17%** even experience high time pressure in every project.

FEWER SICK DAYS WITH INTERIM MANAGERS

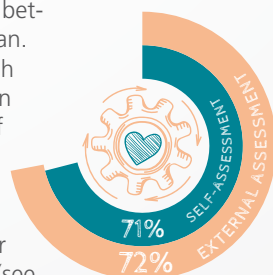
Interim managers report a significantly reduced number of sick days compared to permanent employees in Germany. This number is estimated to be higher by the peers (external assessment).



RECHARGED BATTERIES

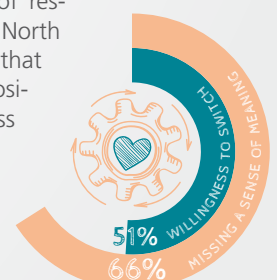
How can we explain the low number of days of sickness absence in interim managers?

1. Sufficient recovery time between projects in the plan. **71%** achieves this to a high degree (external valuation **72%**). However, **29%** of interim managers miss out on recovery phases.
2. For the self-employed, a sense of meaning in their work plays a central role (see next page).



INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF STUDIES

A study of 735 organisations in the UK found that two out of three managers (**66%**) felt they were missing a sense of meaning in their working life.*** **51%** of respondents among 100,000 professionals in North America, Europe and Asia Pacific indicated that they would be willing to accept a lower position or less salary for more meaningfulness in their work.****



*Crawford, E., LePine, J., Rich, B., (2010): Linking job demands and resources to employee engagement and burnout. Journal of Applied Psychology, 95(5), 834-848.
 **Bakker A., Demerouti E. (2017): Job demands-resources theory. Journal of Occupational Health Psychology 22(3), 273-285

***Holbeche L. & Springett N. (2004): In Search of Meaning in the Workplace. Roffey Park, Horsham
 ****Kelly Services (2009): Global Work Force Index

WHAT REALLY MOTIVATES US

The US bestselling author Daniel Pink* sought an answer to the question: What motivates people in the 21st century in their daily work? Based on scientific findings, a model of three characteristics play a central role here: Mastery, Autonomy, Purpose.

These three characteristics are drivers of intrinsic motivation and supportive resource for mental resilience.** Findings from our study confirm the importance of these three properties.

Of central importance for interim managers:

1. the possibility of continuous professional and personal development
2. self-determined and autonomous activity
3. important and meaningful work



Independence requires willingness to take risks

Many interim managers are committed to self-employment and are aware of the risks involved. This study showed that only 13% consider themselves to be below average in their willingness to take risks, with 66% above average (external evaluation 52%). In other words, someone who's dream profession is to be an independent interim manager is likely to accept the related setbacks and disadvantages.



Above average risk tolerance,
response scale 1-7: „Top 3 approval“

*Pink, Daniel H., (2009). Drive: The surprising truth about what motivates us. Riverhead Hardcover, New York.

**Antonovsky A (1997): Salutogenese. Zur Entmystifizierung der Gesundheit. DGVT-Verlag. Wie wichtig der Zusammenhang von Sinnerleben und Gesundheit ist, zeigt bspw. auch das Konzept der Salutogenese von Antonovsky.



PERFECTION (Mastery)

The desire to constantly develop further

Two out of three interim managers surveyed state that they learn new things through their work to a high or very high degree. In the external evaluation this value is even higher (72%). Only 4% of interim managers see little or no chance of learning new things in their job.



Opportunity to learn new things through their work? „to a high/very high degree“



SELF-DETERMINATION (Autonomy)

The desire to lead our lives

Almost every second interim manager (45%) can determine the entire planning of a project himself, without the client giving any specifications. In general, from the point of view of interim managers, their work is determined to a low/very low extent (12%) by external factors (customer, market).



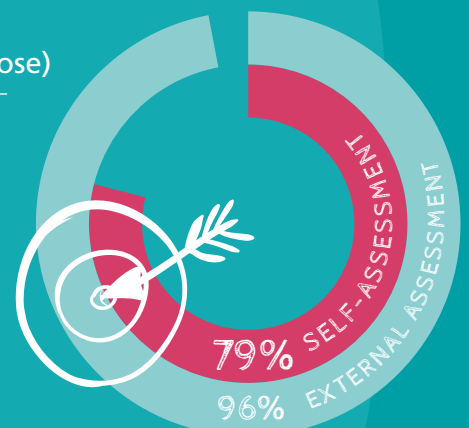
% of orders in which the entire procedure can be determined: „50-75%, 76%-100%“



MEANINGFUL FULFILMENT (Purpose)

The desire to create something greater than ourselves

Four out of five interim managers (79%) report that they experience meaningful fulfilment from their work to a high or very high degree in their daily work. This is also confirmed by 96% of the peers surveyed.



Activity is considered important „to a high/very high degree“



COMMITMENT AND RESILIENCE

Work commitment and personal resilience have a strong influence on daily working life. * These two central characteristics will be examined in more detail below. Health-conscious work behaviour can be summarised in standardised „pattern“ profiles. We have also created a profile from the data collected from the interim manager self-assessment. The comparison of two standard profiles and the interim manager profile can be found further down on this page.

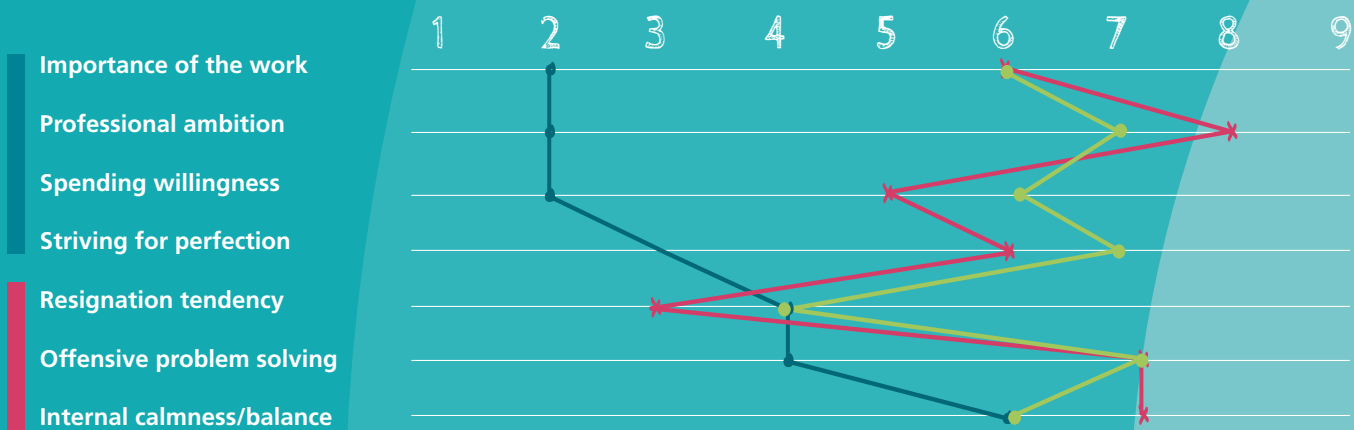
WORK COMMITMENT



RESISTANCE



PROFILE COMPARISON



HEALTH

The health pattern is characterised by a high (but not excessive) level of professional commitment, marked resistance to stress and a positive attitude to life (mental health).

PROTECTION

The pattern of protection is characterised by a pronounced tendency towards protection against occupational requirements.

INTERIM MANAGER

The pattern of an interim manager is characterised by a high level of professional commitment and a pronounced resilience to stress. A parallelism to the health pattern is particularly noticeable.

COMMITMENT TO THE FORM OF EMPLOYMENT

Since the 1990s, research interest in the subject of commitment has been growing in German-speaking countries. Commitment is generally defined as a „psychological bond“. Commitment to the form of employment does not focus on the „what“ (occupation), the „where“ (organisation) or the „with whom“ (team, manager), but on the „how“ (form of activity).*



EMOTIONAL

An emotional connection where a person strongly identifies with their work, with feelings of pride and belonging.



CALCULATIVE

A rational connection, based on the rational balancing of costs and benefits, past investment/value in their work or lack of alternatives.



NORMATIVE

A moral obligation, where you remain faithful to your work even if it means rejecting better alternatives.

INTERIM MANAGER COMMITMENT

Interim managers associate their form of activity with a strong emotional commitment. Calculative commitment is clearly of secondary importance. The emotional and passionate relationship to their work also has a downside: our study shows that the compatibility of career and family often suffers.



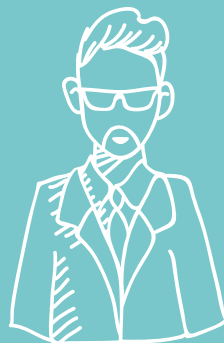
COMMITMENT

On a scale from 1 („not applicable“) to 5 („applies“) the interim managers give an average value of 4.4 for emotional commitment. The mean value for calculative commitment is 3.1 and for normative commitment 2.4. In the external evaluation, the interim managers are also rated as having a very high emotional commitment of 4.6.



WORK COMMITMENT

Interim managers who report an increased commitment (all scales) to the type of activity are characterised by an increased work commitment (all scales). This positive correlation ($r = .29$, $p < .01$) is highly significant.



WILLINGNESS TO SPEND & WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In particular, the sub-scale willingness of interim managers to spend money is directly related to family conflicts ($r = .44$, $p < .01$). This circumstance is questionable as family conflicts are directly related to health problems ($r = .41$, $p < .01$).



WORK COMMITMENT & FAMILY CONFLICTS

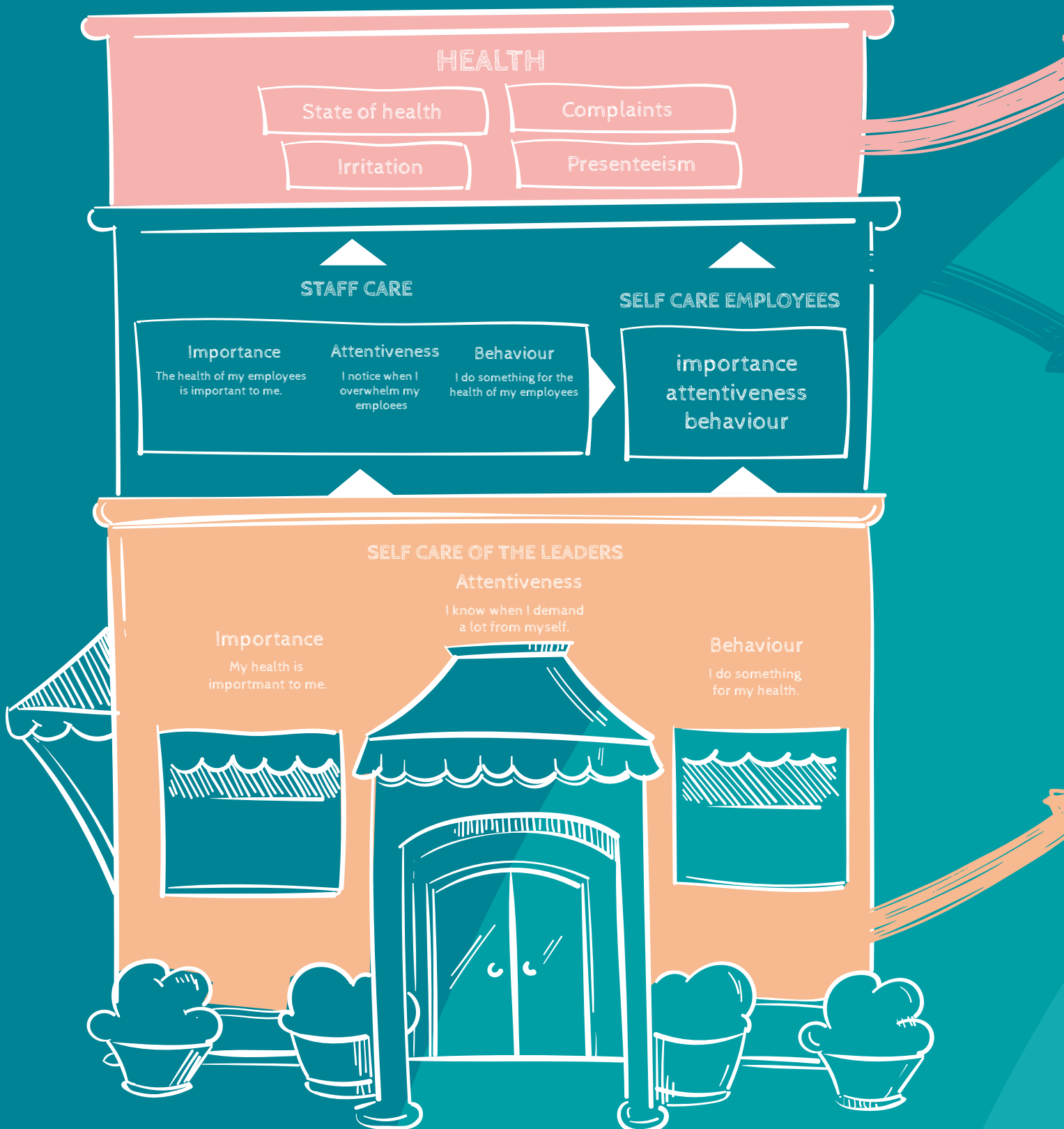
The correlation ($r = .34$, $p < .01$) between work commitment (all scales) and family conflicts (negative work-life balance) clearly shows that interim managers must manage the burdens of their form of activity well. Those who do not master this balance cannot carry out demanding top-level mandates on a permanent basis.

HEALTH ORIENTED LEADERSHIP

HEALTH AND SUSTAINABLE HIGH PERFORMANCE

The modern concept of Health Oriented Leadership* encompasses various aspects of health-promoting leadership. Previous research has shown that managers have many opportunities to drive sustainable improvement in employees' working conditions.

Role modelling in managing one's own health makes management style more credible. Despite high stress peaks during an ongoing project, the interviewed interim managers show astonishingly high health awareness. In addition, they are health-promoting in their behaviour and actively watch out for the health of employees and project participants.



*Pundt, F., Felfe, J., (2017): Health oriented Leadership. Instrument zur Erfassung gesundheitsförderlicher Führung (HoL), Göttingen: Hogrefe.

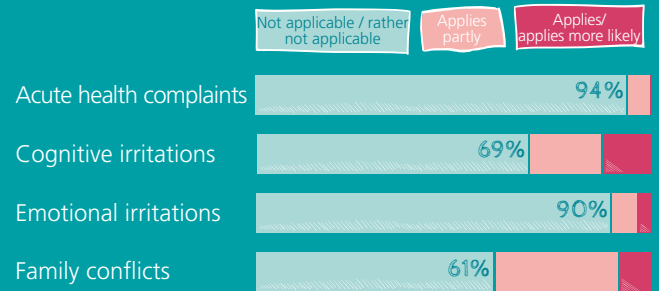
INTERIM MANAGERS TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES AND OTHERS

In this study, scientific data on the health status and health-oriented management behaviour of interim managers were presented for the first time.

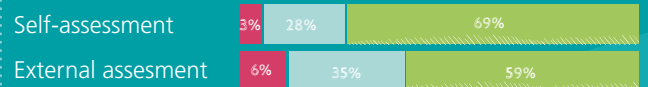
HEALTH STATUS OF INTERIM MANAGERS

In the self-assessment of their own state of health from 1 (very poor) to 10 (best), 69% fit in the three highest health categories (8-9-10), 28% see themselves in the midfield (5-6-7) and only 3% in the lower third (1-2-3-4).

The external assessment is somewhat more critical, with 59% being assigned to the highest health category, 35% to the medium health category and 6% to the lower health category. Employee health was not part of this study.



GENERAL HEALTH



EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND MANAGEMENT BY INTERIM MANAGER (STAFF CARE)

Although interim managers are only with the company for a limited period of time, they are usually under high pressure to act. Although conditions in the company are often difficult, interim managers focus on staff care and pay attention to employees.

75% consciously pay attention to health warning signals among employees. Good interim managers seem to recognise that the successful completion of challenging projects rests on having healthy, motivated employees.

STAFF MANAGEMENT

With my employees I consciously pay attention to health warning signals.



HEALTH AND SELF-MANAGEMENT (SELF CARE) BY INTERIM MANAGER

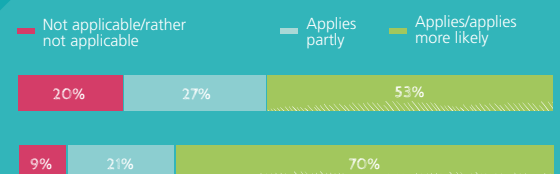
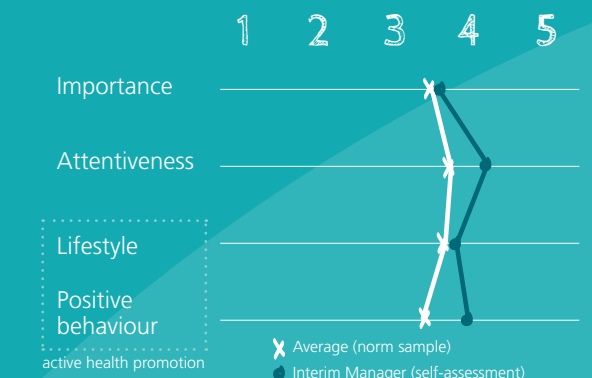
Interim managers combine peak load and recovery. 53% of the interviewed interim managers admit that they always expect their work to be demanding.

At the same time, 70% „ensure that things are calmer again when they have been under stress for a longer period of time“. This is confirmed by 66% of external evaluations.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

It happens again and again that I demand a lot from myself at work.

When I have stress for a long time, I make sure that things get calmer again.



IMPRINT

Helmut Schmidt University. University of the German Federal Armed Forces Department of work, organizational and economic psychology
Prof. Dr. Jörg Felfe, Erdwig Holste, MA
Holstenhofweg 85, 22043 Hamburg, Germany
Mail: holstee@hsu-hh.de

Text: Erdwig Holste, Johannes Koldehoff
Design: Boie Baumann

Cooperation partners:

Management Angels GmbH
Atlantic House, 17. floor
Bernhard-Nocht-Straße 113
20359 Hamburg, Germany

www.managementangels.com
info@managementangels.com
Phone: +49 (40) 44 19 55 - 0

Working Group Interim Management Provider (AIMP)

The AIMP brings together renowned interim service providers from German-speaking Europe. In the growth market of interim management, the AIMP stands for more transparency, professionalism and quality, but also for innovation in the interim business.
www.aimp.de

The contents of this study are protected by copyright. The use of the text or graphics - also in extracts - is only permitted with reference to the source: „Holste, E., Felfe, J. & Koldehoff, J. (2019): Interim Leadership. Healthy and successful, Helmut Schmidt University“.

49,- EUR
protection fee