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- Richter, Friesenbichler, Vanis  
Teil 4 "Psychische Belastungen – Checklisten für den Einstieg"  
Part 4 "Mental Workload – Introductory Checklists"

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Mental Health  
at the Workplace · Part 4

## Mental Workload Introductory Checklists

First Edition

InfoMediaVerlag 



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### Evaluation

Please compile the results here and note down the questions which were answered with "no" or "partly" under the respective heading. This gives you a better overview.

- Signs of stress

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- Reasons for stress found

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- Leadership, cooperation and work climate

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With regard to questions answered with "no" or "partly" it is recommended that measures be undertaken that eliminate these shortcomings.

#### Proposals for measures

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Discuss the results with the employees concerned and involve them in working out these measures.

## IMPULS

Operational analysis of work conditions



### Short description

The IMPULS test\*) allows an analysis of the work conditions (in the whole enterprise or at the individual workplace). The IMPULS test enables recognition of stress factors and optimisation of resources (possibilities of coping) in the enterprise.

It contains 26 questions attributed to the following 11 topic areas:

- scope for action,
- versatility of tasks,
- holistic tasks,
- social support,
- cooperation,
- suitably demanding work,
- suitable volume of work,
- suitable work processes,
- suitable work environment,
- information and having a say,
- opportunities for development.

In the IMPULS test personal **IMPULS numbers** are determined which correspond to an "as is" analysis. In addition **DESIRED numbers** can be determined which express the personal desired goals (target analysis). The survey is conducted anonymously for the employees.

\*) see Molnar (2002)

### Use of the IMPULS test

When both management and employees (support by employees' representatives) decide on conducting the IMPULS test, the following points should be considered:

- An organiser (project leader) must be found.
- The time frame for the survey must be fixed.
- The type of information of the employees should be planned (personal individual information, information meeting or staff meeting). The employees must be sufficiently informed about the objectives of the survey.
- The process of the survey (distribution and return of the test) must be clarified.

**Please note:** Assurance of anonymity and data protection, questionnaires to be handed in envelopes, setting-up of a closed mailbox at a location not under surveillance. No enforced participation, only on voluntary basis. Pressure distorts answers.

- The evaluation of the tests must be organised.
- The feedback of the results to management, employees' representatives and employees must be ensured.

This allows management and employees representatives to consider steps for further implementation. Without any feedback of the results the employees would feel disappointed and lose trust and would, in the long run, show no involvement and interest in supporting similar activities.

Transparency and feedback are important.

### Instruction for the determination of the IMPULS and DESIRED numbers

Below you find a row of questions and answers regarding your work conditions for the 11 topic areas a) to k).

#### Calculation of the IMPULS numbers

1. Please mark with an **X** on each line the answer that best describes your work situation.
2. You will find a number next to each box. Please form a total of the numbers marked.
3. Divide the sum by the number of questions as indicated, either by 2 or 3. This gives you the **IMPULS numbers**. The **IMPULS numbers** always stand between 1 and 5. Do not omit any line.

For example:

	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
This work demands close cooperation with others in the enterprise.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I can talk to other colleagues during work about official and personal matters.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I always get a feedback from superiors and colleagues on the quality of my work.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

You calculate  $4 + 4 + 2 = 10 : 3 =$  IMPULS Number **3,3**

4. Transfer the **IMPULS numbers** from a) to k) in the table on page 25.

#### Calculation of the DESIRED numbers

Also calculate your **DESIRED numbers**. Go through the above mentioned steps 1 to 4 once more. Please now mark with a  per line the answer possibility that best describes your **DESIRED work situation**.

For example:

	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
This work demands close cooperation with others in the enterprise.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 5
I can talk to other colleagues during work about official and personal matters.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5
I always get a feedback from superiors and colleagues on the quality of my work.	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5

You calculate  $5 + 4 + 4 = 13 : 3 =$  DESIRED Number **4,3**

Please note:

You can also calculate the **IMPULS** and **DESIRED numbers** in one step.

#### Calculation aid for IMPULS and DESIRED numbers

In the top line you find your calculated sum totals. In the two lower rows you find the **IMPULS numbers** (resp. **DESIRED numbers**), if you divide the sum totals by 2 or 3 respectively.

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
:2	1	1,5	2	2,5	3	3,5	4	4,5	5					
:3		1	1,3	1,7	2	2,3	2,7	3	3,3	3,7	4	4,3	4,7	5

**Instructions**

This questionnaire (pages 22 to 25) is anonymous.  
 Please do not enter any names.  
 Below you find a total of 26 questions and statements regarding the theme groups a) to k) concerning your work conditions.  
 Please select for each question/statement one of the five answers that best describes your situation.  
 Please do not omit any line, as the test can then not be evaluated.

**Questionnaire**

**a) Scope for action**

	Hardly	Little	To some extent	Much	Very much
When you consider your work, to which extent can you determine the sequence of your work steps?	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
How much influence do you have as to which task is allocated to you?	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
Are you free to plan and classify your task independently?	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
Total _____ : 3 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 3 = DESIRED number <input type="radio"/>			

**b) Versatility of tasks**

	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
Can you learn something new at work?	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
Can you make full use of your knowledge and capabilities at work?	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
On the whole I often have to do different and often varying task at work.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
Total _____ : 3 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 3 = DESIRED number <input type="radio"/>			

<b>c) Holistics tasks</b>	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
At work I can see from the results whether I have executed my task well or not.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
My work is so designed that I can complete a product from the beginning to the end.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
Total _____ : 2 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 2 = DESIRED number <input type="radio"/>			

<b>d) Social support</b>	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
I can rely on my colleagues when work becomes difficult.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
I can rely on my immediate superior when work becomes difficult.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
The team spirit is good in the department.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
Total _____ : 3 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 3 = DESIRED number <input type="radio"/>			

<b>e) Cooperation</b>	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
This work demands close cooperation with others in the enterprise.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
I can talk to other colleagues during work about official and personal matters.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
I always get a feedback from superiors and colleagues on the quality of my work.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5
Total _____ : 3 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 3 = DESIRED number <input type="radio"/>			

Continuation →

f) Suitably demanding work	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
The work involves things that are too complicated.	<input type="text"/> 5	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 1
The demands made on my concentration are too high.	<input type="text"/> 5	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 1
Total _____ : 2 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 2 = DESIRED number <input type="text"/>			
g) Suitable volume of work	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
I am often under time pressure.	<input type="text"/> 5	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 1
I have too much work.	<input type="text"/> 5	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 1
Total _____ : 2 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 2 = DESIRED number <input type="text"/>			
h) Suitable work processes	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
Often the necessary information, materials and tools (e.g. computer, instruments) are not at my disposal.	<input type="text"/> 5	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 1
I am repeatedly interrupted during my actual work (e.g. telephone).	<input type="text"/> 5	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 1
Total _____ : 2 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 2 = DESIRED number <input type="text"/>			
i) Suitable work environment	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies
Environmental conditions at my workplace are unfavourable, such as noise, climate, dust.	<input type="text"/> 5	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 1
Room and furnishing at my workplace are insufficient.	<input type="text"/> 5	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 1
Total _____ : 2 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 2 = DESIRED number <input type="text"/>			

j) Information and having a say	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies																																				
We are well informed about things and processes in our enterprise.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5																																				
The management of the enterprise is prepared to consider ideas and proposals put forward by the employees.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5																																				
Total _____ : 2 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 2 = DESIRED number <input type="text"/>																																							
k) Opportunities for development	Does not apply	Partly applies	Applies on an average	Mainly applies	Fully applies																																				
Our enterprise offers good further training opportunities.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5																																				
Chances for promotion are good with us.	<input type="text"/> 1	<input type="text"/> 2	<input type="text"/> 3	<input type="text"/> 4	<input type="text"/> 5																																				
Total _____ : 2 = IMPULS number <input type="text"/>		Total _____ : 2 = DESIRED number <input type="text"/>																																							
<p>Now transfer the IMPULS and DESIRED numbers of all 11 theme areas into the following table.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>a)</th> <th>b)</th> <th>c)</th> <th>d)</th> <th>e)</th> <th>f)</th> <th>g)</th> <th>h)</th> <th>i)</th> <th>j)</th> <th>k)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>IMPULS number</td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>DESIRED number</td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> <td><input type="text"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>My determined IMPULS and DESIRED numbers.</p>							a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)	h)	i)	j)	k)	IMPULS number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	DESIRED number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)	h)	i)	j)	k)																														
IMPULS number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>																														
DESIRED number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>																														

**Instructions IMPULS star**

The **IMPULS star** is an easy-to-read graphic display of your determined **IMPULS** and **DESIRED** numbers.

**Example**

**Entering the IMPULS numbers**

1. Transfer the IMPULS numbers (table page 25) for the areas a) to k) into your IMPULS star (page 28). The IMPULS numbers are always between 1 and 5.

Given your IMPULS number is 3.3 for e) cooperation.

Now you mark this at 3.3 on line e).



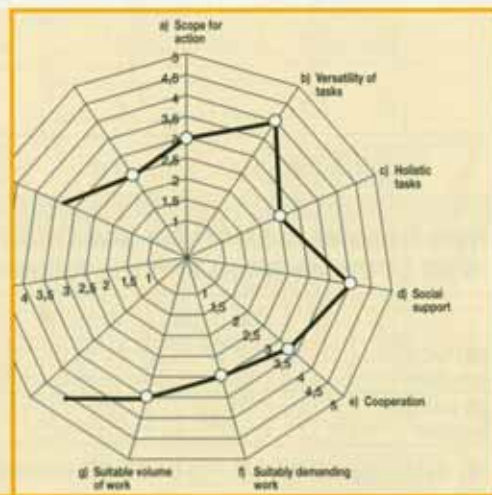
**Example**

**IMPULS star**

2. Mark all your IMPULS numbers on the lines a) to k) for all 11 themes.
3. After having completed all markings, joint the points.

Your personal IMPULS star is now shown.

You can now see how you judge your work conditions.



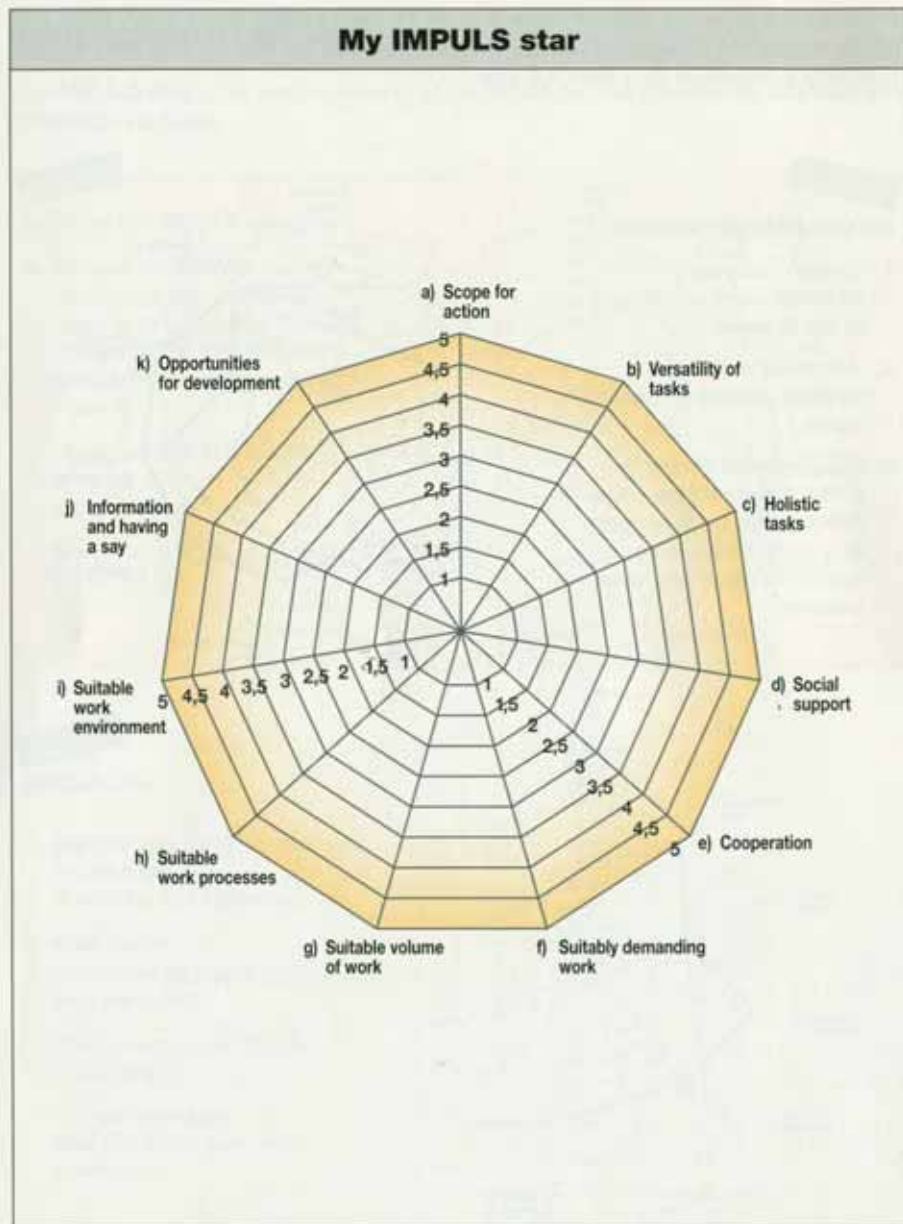
Not everyone finds the highest value 5 in all 11 theme areas to be ideal. Each one has to decide his ideal condition for himself. You can do this by also entering the **DESIRED** numbers in your **IMPULS star**.

**Example**

**Entered DESIRED numbers**

1. Simply mark your DESIRED numbers for each of the 11 areas.
2. Join these markings by lines, preferably in another colour.
3. Compare your desired IMPULS star with the actual IMPULS star. Do they match or is something lacking in order to reach your ideal situation.





## Evaluation

The IMPULS numbers can be between 1 and 5.

The lower the IMPULS numbers are, the less suitable the work conditions. The higher the IMPULS numbers, the better suited are the work conditions. The bigger the IMPULS star, the more likely that satisfactory and health-promoting work conditions prevail.

The smaller the IMPULS star, the greater the necessity for action and development scope.

The IMPULS star shows you where your work conditions are more or less suitable for you.

You can optimise your work situation if you succeed in preventing or reducing stress factors on the one hand, on the other hand resources must be created or developed.

Draw up a list of priorities for you as shown on page 30.

Perhaps you would like to discuss the result regarding your work situation with someone. You could, for example, do this with a colleague or with an expert for health promotion.

### How do I evaluate the test for a group/department/enterprise?

An evaluation and interpretation of the results for the whole group/department/enterprise can be built on the evaluation of the IMPULS tests for individuals. The

IMPULS numbers of the 11 theme areas for all participants are added and divided by the number of participants (number of test forms).

It is important that only such questionnaires be evaluated that are completely filled in. By adding the respective IMPULS numbers for the group/department/enterprise an average valuation of the respective work conditions is attained.

All 11 average figures are entered into the 11 respective theme areas of a group IMPULS star.

If you wish to know if this IMPULS star also matches the DESIRED target of the group, the individuals must also fill in their DESIRED numbers for the 11 theme areas. These are then added and divided by the number of questionnaires completely filled in. The average DESIRED numbers must then be entered into the IMPULS star. You now have a DESIRED star for the group/department/enterprise.

You can now compare the "as is" analysis of all work conditions of all participants with the common DESIRED numbers (target analysis).

### Interpretation of results

As organisers/project leaders you can display the values of all participants obtained from the IMPULS "as is" analysis in the following table of priorities.

The total values for the 11 theme areas are entered into the table on page 30.

**Table of priorities**

		Stress-factors	Development-potentials	Resources
Theme areas	IMPULS value	Below 2,5	2,5 to 3,5	Above 3,5
a) Scope for action		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Versatility of tasks		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Holistic tasks		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Social support		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Cooperation		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Suitably demanding work		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Suitable volume of work		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Suitable work processes		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Suitable work environment		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Information and having a say		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Opportunities for development		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Linking of reference numbers

Values below 2,5	Stress factors exist. There is urgent need for action.
Values between 2,5 und 3,5	Here development potentials prevail. It is necessary to take up stress reducing measures. Available resources can be built upon.
Values above 3,5	These values reveal resources. Be happy! Still it is necessary to foster and maintain these resources.

If, in addition to the employees IMPULS star a DESIRED star is also available, further important information is at hand. The variations between IMPULS numbers ("as is") and DESIRED numbers (target) express where there is a need for action from the employees' point of view.

**Introduce measures**

A project is only then successful when the decision makers are prepared to introduce und support follow-up measures. An additional success factor would be the involvement of employees in follow-up measures.

To control success the test should be repeated in a year or two.

Below a few operational and personal examples of positive work conditions are described briefly. Further information on what measures can be like is available in chapter "Measures" and in Part 2 or 3 of the brochure series "Mental Health at the Workplace".

**Measures in enterprises**

**a) Scope for action**

- Creation of content- and time-wise degrees of liberty.

**b) Versatility of tasks**

- Learning and development opportunities, offers for further training, change in tasks for as many employees as possible.
- Being able to use knowledge and ability more widely – suitable tasks for the right qualification.
- Varied tasks – prevention of monotony and underdemand. Reduce monotony by restructuring tasks, combining tasks.

**Please note:** For those employees whose work is anyway strenuous and involves a variety of demanding tasks, work enrichment could, however, lead to overirritation.

**c) Holistic tasks**

- Possibilities of executing a task from planning via organisation and execution up to controlling one's own work.
- Information and feedback from superiors, colleagues and customers regarding the quality of one's own work. Such a feedback should be carried out regularly and in a structured manner.

**d) Social support**

- Support from superiors – regular information and talks with employees.

- Support by colleagues – promote co-operation, communication and exchange of information, team building, offer the respective trainings and seminars, regular briefing sessions.

#### e) *Cooperation*

- Clear definition of work processes and tasks.
- Cooperation with colleagues – promote communication and exchange of information, team building, offer the respective trainings and seminars, regular briefing sessions.
- Create opportunities for talking between colleagues regarding job-related and private matters.
- Feedback from colleagues regarding own work – regular processes of consenting, define and achieve common objectives.

#### f) *Suitably demanding work*

- Regular adaptation of further training and qualification to suit the needs of work.
- Placement of employees in line with qualification – have the right person working at the right place.
- Adapt work environment and organisation to suit the requirements of work, e.g. time periods and rooms free from interference to allow for concentrated work.

#### g) *Suitable volume of work*

- Less work under time pressure – optimise and simplify processes, tuning of personnel and time resources (considering needs of all involved), better prior information for all involved can be of help.

#### h) *Suitable work processes*

- Necessary information, tools and materials are available – timely and systematic checks, good action planning.
- Few interruptions during work due to organisation of meeting and working hours enable smooth work process.

#### i) *Suitable work environment*

- Reduce environmental strain due to noise, climate, dust, etc.
- Design rooms and furnishings to suit the work process and the employees working there (lighting, draught, sufficient space to move).
- The ergonomic design of the workplaces has been carried out (right working height, ergonomic design, ergonomic lifting and carrying).

#### j) *Information and having a say*

- Creation of transparency.
- Involvement of employees in planning and decision processes.

#### k) *Opportunities for development*

- Opportunities for further training – being able to syntonise personal further development with the development in the enterprise, offers for training and further development within the enterprise.
- Chances for promotion – execute new tasks and acquire new competences, take on project responsibility.

### Individual measures

#### *Putting point of view into perspective*

- Do not allow yourself to get pinned down with each problem. Place some distance between yourself and the problem by e.g. executing other tasks. Often finding a solution at a later stage is easier.

#### *Arrange work processes*

- Those who are able to determine their own work should ensure alternation. Varied work contents prevent fatigue.
- Undertake tasks with varied demands.

#### *Eliminate disturbing factors*

- If a task demands your special concentration make sure that work can be carried out without disturbance. For example, choose those times when you are less likely to be disturbed. Inform your colleagues that you do not wish to be interrupted and, for example, agree with others that telephone calls be redirected to them.

#### *Take a break*

- Breaks of 2 to 3 minutes to relax can generate considerable improvement in performance and promote the feeling of well-being.

#### *Learn to cope with stress*

- Recognise own sources of stress and exploit situations to recharge your batteries.
- Plan and try out new behavioural patterns.
- Do not be discouraged by setbacks.
- Provide for stress buffers in daily life – take time to find your balance, e.g. cultivate hobbies and friendships, let off steam through physical exercise and learn how to relax.

#### *Create resources*

- Plan and organise your work systematically.
- Build your expertise and abilities to cope with situations better.
- Cultivate your personal and social relationships.
- Keep yourself healthy and physically fit through exercises and a conscious lifestyle.