



# Healthy Workplaces for All Ages

Promoting a sustainable working life

**Monitoring sickness absence, measures for return to work**

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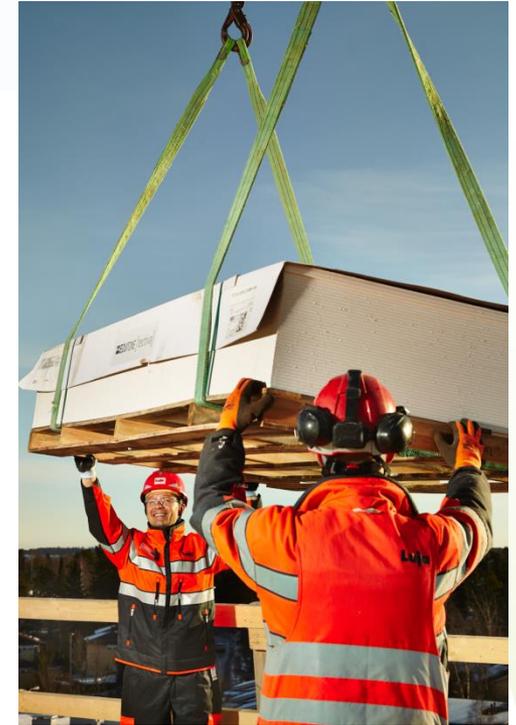




- One of the largest companies in the construction industry area in Finland, family-owned business, which has operated for more than 60 years
- A versatile building contractor with experience in the construction of residential, commercial, and public buildings
- Building projects span across Finland with an average of 120 building sites in progress every year
- Personnel approximately 750 and turnover about 370 M€ (2017)

# Background for Lujatalo's Good Practice

- Physically demanding construction work increases the risk for prematurely losing the ability to work
- Earlier workers could not typically continue in construction work until the old-age pension
- There were lots of musculo-skeletal problems and with long sickness absences → lots of very expensive premature disability pensions every year
- In Finland large companies pay all the costs which are caused by premature disability pensions. At the moment the risks for premature retirement at Lujatalo is over 3 M€, encompassing about 20 workers.
- So there must be preventive ways in companies to support workers to maintain their ability to work



# Monitoring sickness absence, measures for return to work

- A construction worker suffering from low-back or shoulder pain is a typical case of sickness absence at Lujatalo. The sickness absence easily repeats several times.
- Now there are a number of preventive, comprehensive ways at Lujatalo (for example):
  - Lujavire actions at the grass-root level at building sites find out easier and more ergonomic ways to do the loading work phases
  - Lujavire-App is the mobile application, which includes 140 tools and equipment to make construction work easily and more ergonomic way
  - Comprehensive early intervention process under the supervision of the wellbeing manager



The front page of Lujavire-App

# A typical process of a worker with a work ability problem



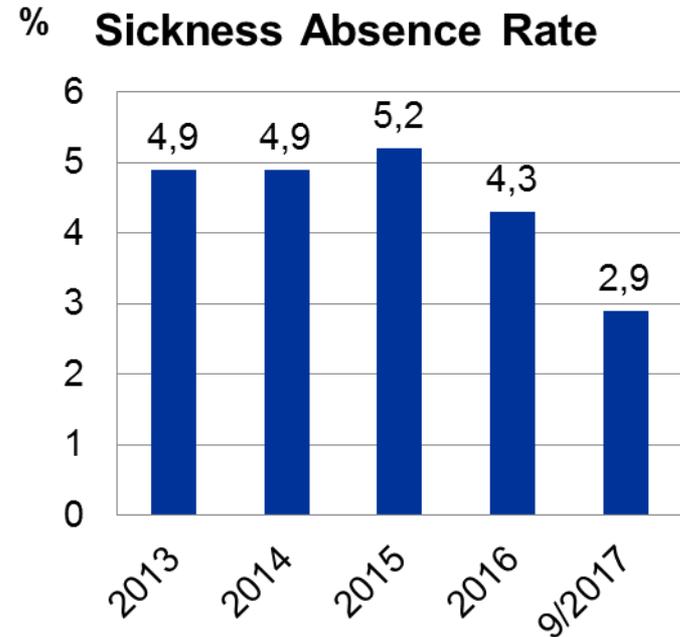
**A worker has either recurrent or a long sickness absence →**

1. Early intervention discussion at the working place with the worker and the supervisor
2. The wellbeing manager sees, if there is or becomes a problem with ability to work, she contacts with the supervisor and the worker and begins the supporting process
3. Appointment with occupational health physician, mapping out
4. Occupational health discussion
  - changing worker's work tasks for tasks with less load OR:
  - partial sickness allowance paid by the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (2 weeks to 6 months) OR:
  - vocational rehabilitation and co-operation with the pension insurance company
    - job coach seeks information and different alternatives for the future
    - work trial 2-6 months
    - retraining in the employee's professional field or to a new profession

**→ Changes at work contents enable continuing career until old-age pension**

# Results: Sickness absences have declined

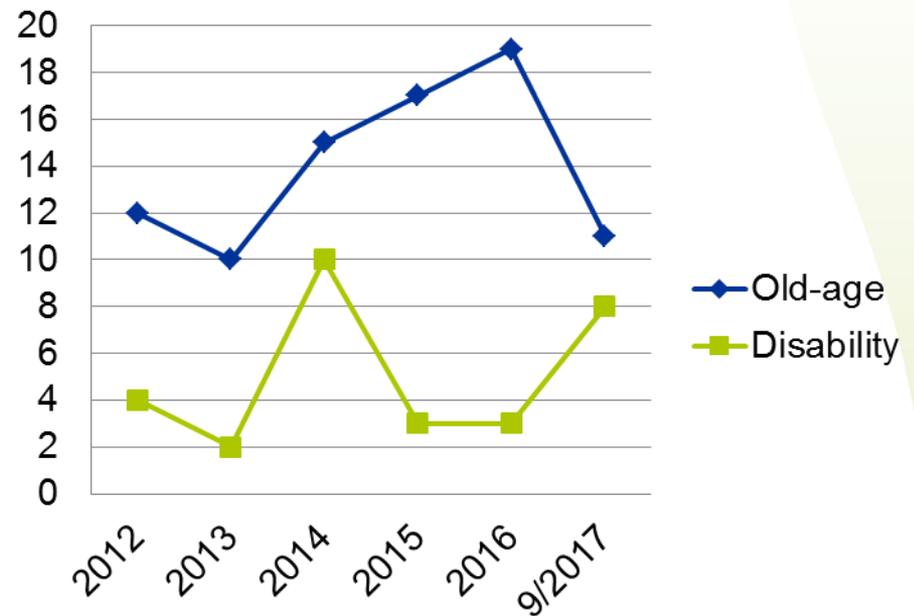
- **Early intervention and follow-up measures for those with reduced work ability have been efficient**
- **All sickness absences have declined a lot, especially the long ones**
- **Occupational health discussions can prevent future problems**
- **The right attitude and cooperation is needed**



# Results: Vocational rehabilitation prevents premature disability pensions

- **Workers with early retirement risk have typically started vocational rehabilitation, most typically retraining, and can avoid premature disability pension**
- **A number of carpenters with a long working experience have been retrained or are in the process to become supervisors at the building sites at Lujatalo**
- **More and more workers are able to continue in working life until the old-age pension is possible**

**Pensions at Lujatalo (pcs)**



# Success factors

- Health expertise in a construction company → HR's active role in work ability problems
- Comprehensive and active early intervention with sickness absences
- Close cooperation with HR, superiors, workers, occupational health care and insurance companies
- The right attitude towards change in the whole company
- Working capacity management

