Organisational resilience that supports work ability

Research-based knowledge and solutions

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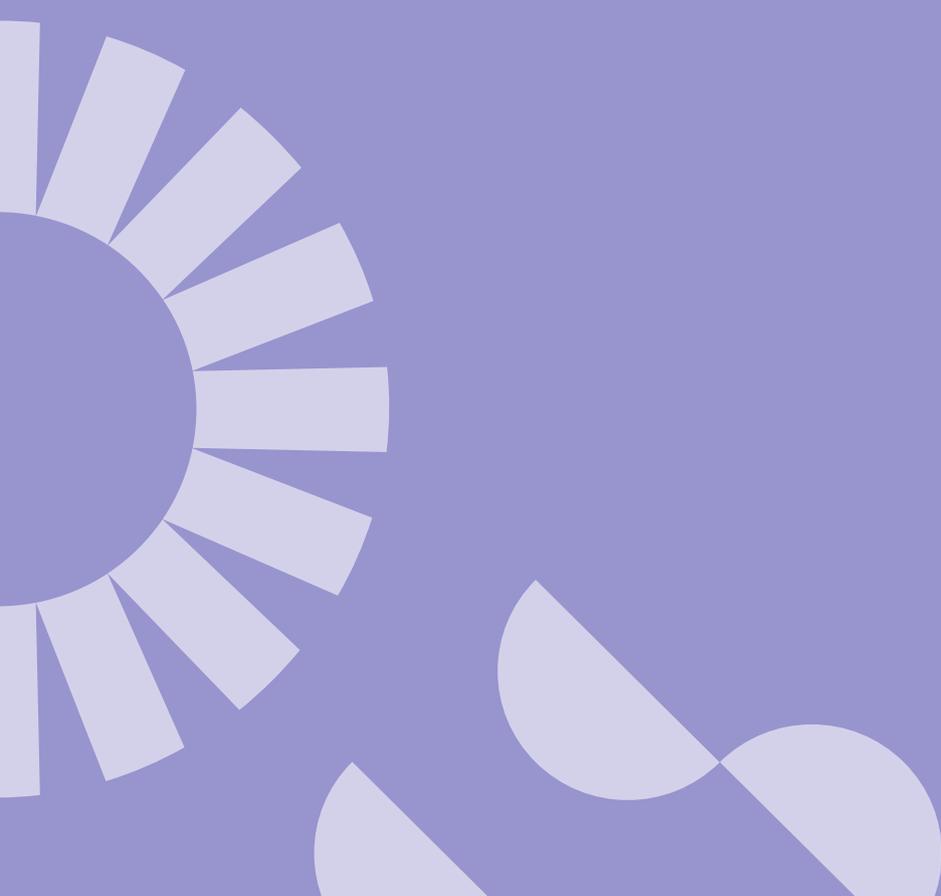
Organisational resilience that supports work ability

Working group

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Introduction

Working life is constantly changing, and each era brings with it new challenges and opportunities. In recent years, technological development has played a key role in many changes within the workplace. Additionally, social conditions, climate change, economic fluctuations and global events can affect the operations of companies.

Work-related changes can impact, for example, working methods, work organisation, co-operation practices, production structures and customer work. At its best, change offers opportunities to learn new things and to enhance work processes.

This report examines resilience resources that companies utilise to support work ability and work functionality within a changing working life. The first section presents a brief overview of research data on change resources. The second section reviews Elo's analyses of change resources and work-related changes.

1. Resilience resources

Organisational resilience refers to a company's ability to adapt to changes and maintain its operations within evolving circumstances. Resilience means not only the company's ability to cope with adversity, but also its capacity to turn change into opportunity. (Raetze et al. 2022; Lennick et al. 2011).

Resilience is created by the company's resources, which help to anticipate changes and support the renewal and learning of the work community. In this report, we will look at those resources that strengthen resilience.

Resilience resources

1. **Proactive and transformational activities**
2. **Smooth co-operation and trust**
3. **Learning management**
4. **Solution-oriented activities**
5. **Psychological safety**
6. **Participatory approach and support for changes**

1.1 Proactive and transformational activities

At the core of a proactive approach is the company's ability to identify tacit signals of change in their operating environment. Continuous monitoring of the operating environment helps organisations to understand trends in working life and prepare for changes (Vakilzadeh & Hease, 2021). The operating environment includes, for example, the company's customers, competitors and partners. The issues to be monitored also include technological development, social conditions, business cycles and the employment situation. Changes in the operating environment often require the development of skills, the organisation of work in a new way, the development of network and partner co-operation, the launch of new products or services, and the use of new technologies (Elo Mutual Pension Insurance Company, 2022).

In working communities, it is important to discuss how changes affect the company's operations, how the work should be developed in order to adapt to those changes and what risks or opportunities the changes may bring about. A common situational picture increases the state of readiness to take on changes. Management plays a key role within the proactive approach, but the involvement of personnel in the development of common issues within the workplace is vital to a company's resilience (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2011).

Studies have emphasised the importance of transformational leadership as it relates to organisational resilience. Transformational leadership promotes employees' innovation, openness to change, initiative and well-being at work. (Peng et al. 2020; Deng et al. 2023; Bass & Avolio 1994).

There are five aspects that are key to transformational leadership: 1) Consistency and exemplary leadership 2) Highlighting successes and giving feedback 3) Listening to personnel and taking account of individual needs 4) Presenting a positive vision of the future and clarifying goals 5) Involving personnel in the development of work and encouraging them to share development ideas (Bass, 2008, Eaton et al. 2024).

1.2 Smooth co-operation and trust

Trust is a key condition for an organisation's ability to transform and adapt to changes (Lengnick-Hall et al. 2011). An atmosphere of trust makes it easier to deal with difficult issues, to make joint decisions and to advance changes in a constructive spirit. Functional, daily co-operation, open dialogue, good information flow and positive experiences from collaboration form the basis for trust (Blomqvist, 2023). Commonly agreed policies, clear objectives and expectations, equal distribution of work requirements and fair treat-

ment strengthen the assumption of shared responsibility. While leadership and supervisors play a key role in building trust, it does not arise from their actions alone. Trust is built on the interactions of the entire work community, structures that support co-operation and everyday actions.

1.3 Learning management

Work-related changes often lead to the need for new areas of competence. In addition to changes in labour needs for certain professions, job-specific skill requirements may also change. In the workplace, it is important to develop structures and operating models that support continuous learning (Evenseth et al. 2022).

Most of the learning takes place in everyday working life, through actual work situations. The importance of tacit knowledge is emphasised as it relates to the learning of the work community (Basten et al. 2018; Nonaka, 1994). Tacit knowledge is an understanding of the work that is gained through experience. Good practices learned in everyday life are transferred through interactions between members of the work community.

The term network refers to the relationships and interactions between people or organisations. A company's internal and external networks determine the level of access to resources and information that help promote transformation and learning (Thiel, 2021, van Waes & Hytönen, 2022). A company's internal networks can be used to bring expertise together across team and work unit boundaries. Technology and communication tools facilitate correspondence, but the actual strengthening of networks is advanced through common work goals, shared brainstorming and an understanding of the ways in which sharing skills and information will benefit the entire work community.

Strengthening the company's external networks helps to give access to information that will support the development of operations, services and products, to identify tacit signals regarding changes in the operating environment and to find new customers. The starting point when seeking to strengthen networks is to identify contacts within the current network, the main partners and potential new collaborative parties. Evaluating existing networks makes it possible to identify areas where there are potential gaps or where connections could be improved considering future needs. (Palonen & Hakkarainen, 2014, Thiel, 2021; Jokisaari, 2017).

1.4 Solution-oriented activities

A solution-oriented approach is an approach in which the work community actively and jointly seeks solutions to challenges and strives to see adversities as opportunities for learning. In solution-oriented thinking, the problems and challenges of work are transformed into common goals. Once a problem is identi-

fied, the desired change is defined. Measures are then laid out for implementation in everyday working life for the purpose of advancing the desired change and achieving a common development goal. Solution-oriented thinking aims to learn from successes and apply previously learned methods or good practices to solve new challenges. Studies show that solution-oriented interactions and teamwork promote smooth collaboration (Kauffeld et al. 2011).

1.5 Psychological safety

Psychological safety refers to a situation in which an employee feels that they can present ideas, ask questions, raise concerns or admit mistakes in the work community without fear of consequences. In a psychologically safe atmosphere, people feel that what they are saying is being heard in a respectful and constructive way (Newman et al., 2017; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). This type of atmosphere is characterised by respectful and open discussion, a willingness to listen to others and the courage to raise difficult issues (Newman, 2017).

According to studies, psychological safety is linked to well-being at work, work performance, the sharing of information, innovation and learning (Frazier et al., 2017). Psychological safety is especially important when facing up to insecurities and mastering new skills and situations. Organisations in which development ideas, problems and new challenges can be discussed openly are able to learn and develop their activities.

1.6 Participatory approach and support for changes

According to research, the participation of personnel and targeted support for changes at work are key factors when it comes to supporting work ability and well-being (Egan et al. 2007). When employees have the opportunity to help plan changes that will impact their work, their attitude towards those changes is often more positive and their well-being at work is strengthened (Pahkin et al. 2015).

Forms of participation may include, for example, the possibility to ask questions about changes, to give feedback and to share their own experiences. Such practices promote transparency and trust, which, in turn, encourages employees to commit to changes and support their implementation.

The observations, ideas and experiences shared by the personnel provide valuable information that supports change management. Employees often have knowledge of everyday challenges, solution methods and areas in need of development that may not be known to management. Drawing on these perspectives can improve the quality of decision-making and increase the likelihood that changes will be successful.

2. Analyses of resilience resources and work-related changes

In this paragraph, we've compiled Elo's analyses of resilience resources and work-related changes within companies.

The analyses comprehensively reflect the perspectives of company executives, HR specialists and employees.

The company executive perspective highlights strategic views on changes in the operating environment and the anticipation of competence needs.

HR specialists assess changes in the work and change resources as part of overall work ability management. The employees' perspective provides insight into everyday experiences of work-related changes and change resources.

The analyses are based on Elo's own data and material compiled through co-operation with partners.

2.1 Research materials and research tasks

The table below presents the research tasks included in the report as they concern the different research materials.

Research materials and research tasks

Material	Description of the material	Research tasks
1. **Survey for SME decision-makers**	A joint survey conducted by Elo and LocalTapiola examined the views of Finnish SME managers regarding their company's business expectations. The survey was conducted in 2024 (n=600) and 2025 (n=525). The report covers the decision-makers' assessment of the monitoring of the operating environment and the development of competence.	**I.** Clarify the SME decision-makers' assessments of the monitoring of the operating environment and their ability to act in crisis situations. **II.** Assess industry-specific differences in the views of SME decision-makers.
2. **HR management interviews**	Total of 15 interviews with HR managers working at Elo's company customers within different sectors. The theme of the interviews was factors that advance and hinder the organisation's ability to change.	**III.** Find out what challenges or supports organisational resilience from an HR management perspective.
3. **Elo's Work community survey**	The Work community survey is a tool used by Elo's company customers to support knowledge-based management. The survey enables the assessment of the personnel experience from the perspectives of work functionality, the functionality of the work community, supervisory work, work resources and work ability. The report analyses are based on a follow-up sample from 2022–2024 and focuses on areas of data concerning resources for psychological security and the level of change activity within the work community.	**IV.** Clarify the personnel experience of the level of change activity within work communities within Finnish workplaces. **V.** Assess the connection between resources for psychological safety and the level of change activity within the work community.
4. **Survey of change-related experiences in Elo's customer companies.**	The target group (n=250) for the survey conducted in the spring of 2025 included Elo's customer companies that felt it was an appropriate time to survey change-related experiences and change resources.	**VI.** Clarify the connection between the changes experienced at work and well-being and work functionality. **VII.** Assess the connection between a company's resources for change and the experience of work-related changes.

2.2 How do SME decision-makers feel about the anticipation of competence needs and the monitoring of the operating environment?
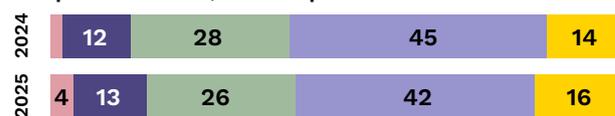
In a survey of company executives conducted in 2025, 79% of respondents at least somewhat agreed that their organisation is constantly monitoring changes in the operating environment.

The majority, i.e. 74%, agreed or somewhat agreed that the organisation has the ability to act in crisis and disruption situations and to react to changes in the operating environment (73%). In addition, 79% believed that investing in the competence of employees is necessary for their company's future success. More than half of the respondents (58%) felt that special focus was being put on anticipating future competence needs. Nearly 30% of respondents 'didn't agree or disagree' with the statement.
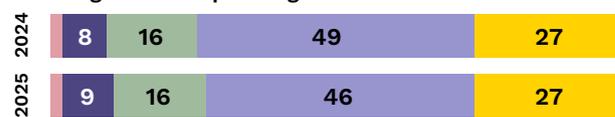
Infographic on the right: Company executives' views on the monitoring of the operating environment and the importance of competence management in 2024 and 2025.

Sector-specific comparisons were made between sectors in which at least 30 company decision-makers responded to the survey. The assessment of the ability to react to changes in the operating environment was slightly higher on average in accommodation and food service companies. The attitude towards investing in competence was slightly higher in companies that are classified in Statistics Finland's Standard Industrial Classification as involving 'Professional, scientific and technical activities' – (e.g. architectural offices, management consulting).
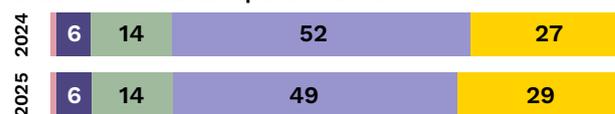
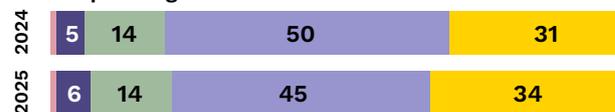**We put special focus on anticipating future competence needs, % of respondents**

Year	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	I don't agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
2024		12	28	45	14
2025	4	13	26	42	16

Our organisation has the ability to react to changes in the operating environment

Year	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	I don't agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
2024		8	16	49	27
2025		9	16	46	27

Our organisation has the ability to operate within crisis and disruption situations

Year	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	I don't agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
2024		6	14	52	27
2025		6	14	49	29

We continuously monitor changes in our operating environment

Year	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	I don't agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
2024		5	14	50	31
2025		6	14	45	34

Investing in personnel competence is necessary for the future success of our company

Year	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	I don't agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree
2024		4	14	42	41
2025		4	14	39	40

Legend:
- Disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- I don't agree or disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Agree

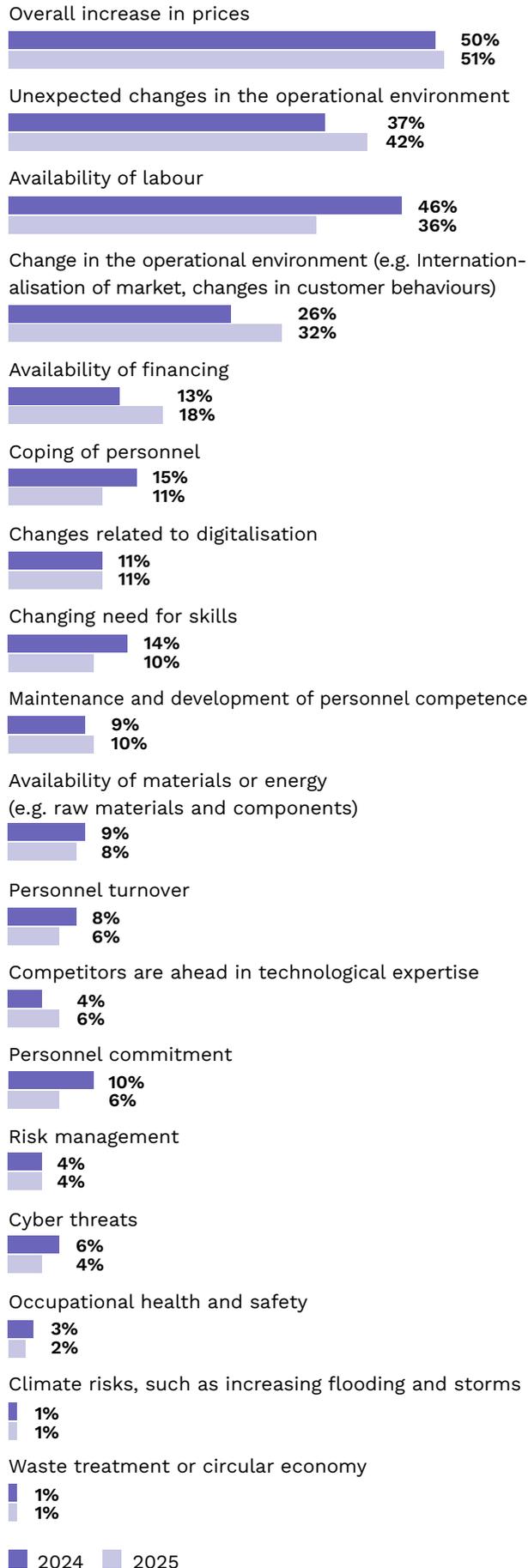|	We continuously monitor changes in our operating environment	Our organisation has the ability to operate within crisis and disruption situations	We are endeavouring to anticipate future competence needs	Our organisation has the ability to operate within crisis and disruption situations	Investing in personnel competence is necessary for the future success of our company
Manufacturing (n=79)	3.96	3.76	3.52	3.99	4.14
Construction (n=81)	3.91	3.83	3.49	4.01	4.07
Wholesale and retail trade (n=97)	4.04	3.74	3.51	3.89	3.92
Transportation and storage (n=35)	4.03	3.86	3.60	4.09	4.11
Accommodation and food service activities (n=32)	4.12	4.19	3.44	4.19	4.12
Professional, scientific and technical activities (n=56)	4.00	3.88	3.55	4.00	4.36
Administrative and support service activities (n=38)	4.00	3.76	3.47	3.89	4.11
Human health and social work activities (n=31)	4.10	4.00	3.61	4.03	4.16
All sectors of comparison	4.04	3.83	3.51	3.98	4.10

The views of company executives *(average, scale 1–5) on the monitoring of the operating environment and the importance of competence by sector.*

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Which of the following factors do you identify as challenges to the success of your business?

Overall increase in prices
50%
51%

Unexpected changes in the operational environment
37%
42%

Availability of labour
46%
36%

Change in the operational environment (e.g. Internationalisation of market, changes in customer behaviours)
26%
32%

Availability of financing
13%
18%

Coping of personnel
15%
11%

Changes related to digitalisation
11%
11%

Changing need for skills
14%
10%

Maintenance and development of personnel competence
9%
10%

Availability of materials or energy (e.g. raw materials and components)
9%
8%

Personnel turnover
8%
6%

Competitors are ahead in technological expertise
4%
6%

Personnel commitment
10%
6%

Risk management
4%
4%

Cyber threats
6%
4%

Occupational health and safety
3%
2%

Climate risks, such as increasing flooding and storms
1%
1%

Waste treatment or circular economy
1%
1%

■ 2024 ■ 2025

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Respondents to the survey for company executives were asked to assess: Which of the following factors do you identify as challenges to the success of your business? Respondents were allowed to choose 1-3 of the given 18 options that were, in their opinion, the most significant threats.

The overall increase in prices, the availability of labour and unexpected changes in the operating environment were the most cited challenges affecting business success. Half of the company decision-makers surveyed experienced an increase in overall prices as a challenge to business success in 2024 and 2025. Unexpected changes were also viewed as a bigger challenge in 2025 compared to 2024 (42% vs. 37%). In terms of the availability of labour, the change was reflected in different ways. The availability of labour was perceived as a challenge in 2025 in more than one-third of responses (36%), while in 2024, the corresponding figure was 46%.

The sector-specific differences in terms of assessed business challenges were minimal. The overall increase in prices was particularly seen as a business challenge in accommodation and food service companies (75%), the human health and social service sector (65%) and in construction (63%).

The availability of labour was especially perceived as a business challenge in human health and social services (58%), construction (47%) and administrative and support services (42%).

Unexpected changes in the operating environment were particularly viewed as a challenge in transportation and storage (49%), accommodation and food service activities (47%) and companies providing administrative and support services (45%).

2.3 What challenges or supports the resilience of your organisation? Experiences of HR specialists.

A total of 15 representatives of Elo's customer companies from different sectors were interviewed for the analysis. The aim was to determine the experiences and practices of workplaces in different areas of organisational resilience. The interviewees work in HR management positions. The planning and implementation of the interviews was carried out by Wise Words Agency Oy.

Interview themes

Organisational culture
- What supports or challenges organisational change readiness and resilience?

Humane change management
- How does management support organisational resilience?
- How does management weaken organisational resilience?
- What aspects of change management are viewed as challenging?

Technology
- How is the perspective of work ability taken into account in the face of technological changes?
- How does new technology support a company's ability to change?

Interview results

Repeated themes emerged from the interview material, which helped facilitate a structure for the material. Only those factors that appeared in multiple interviews were accepted as themes.

The material showed that many organisations discuss change and agility. However, resilience is rarely discussed as part of everyday and practical work. One challenge was, in particular, insufficient open dialogue on changes at the everyday level of employees.

In addition, information related to changes was seen as being scattered across different channels, making it difficult to get an overall picture. Changes are often managed in a decentralised manner, and it isn't possible to create a cohesive picture of the different changes being implemented. In this case, the impact that these changes have on work ability may be overlooked.

Organisational culture

Factors that support organisational resilience	Factors that inhibit organisational resilience
• Learning opportunities and positive attitude towards learning • Recognition of success • Active communication, openness and transparency • Trust and psychological safety • Sense of community and co-operation • Agility and flexibility • Clear purpose, common direction and values	• Resistance to change • Hierarchy and control • Lack of communication • Silo mentality • Disregard for emotions and lack of humanity • Hectic pace, stress • Change fatigue

Humane change management

Factors that support organisational resilience	Factors that inhibit organisational resilience
• Upper management commits to change management • Participation of employees • Issues are addressed until dealt with • Clear objectives and areas of responsibility • Empathy and regard for employees • Building of hope • Clear communications and justifications for change • Monitoring of change implementation • Recruitment that supports change	• Employees are not involved in preparing for changes • Information about unfinished matters is not shared • No effective ways are known for involving employees in the preparation process for changes. • The company's strategy and vision are not communicated comprehensibly • Communication is one-sided and there is no room for interaction

Technology

Factors that support organisational resilience	Factors that inhibit organisational resilience
• The impacts of changes on the entire workplace are taken into account • Changes are well justified and efforts are made to ensure that employees understand the reasons for the changes • Employees have the opportunity to deal with their emotions and expectations related to the changes • Employees can express their expectations and needs related to new technologies • The impacts of technological changes are monitored and assessed from both a business and work ability perspective • Employees are given time to learn new things	• The organisation does not consider how many changes are taking place at the same time in different units and how they are reflected in the work of individual employees. • Not enough attention is paid to the fact that technological changes require changes in operating models and processes, as well as new skills • Insufficient time is reserved for the learning of new systems and communication channels.

2.4 How are the resources for psychological safety linked to the level of change activity within the work community?

The research task was to find out how employees experience the level of change activity and joint work development within the work community in Finnish workplaces.
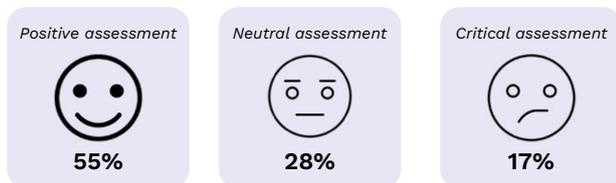
The analyses were based on a follow-up sample of more than 10,000 employees from Elo's customer companies in different sectors between the years 2022 and 2024. The experience of personnel was examined from two perspectives:

- Employee assessment of how actively the work community considers the impacts of changes on the work.
- The employees' assessment of how actively the work community works together to develop new ways of working.
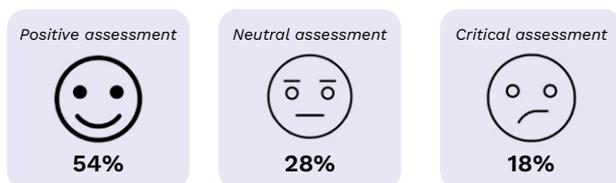
In 2024, more than half (55%) agreed mostly or completely that new ways of working were being developed together in the workplace. One third (28%) had a neutral response (neither agree nor disagree), and less than one fifth (17%) mostly or completely disagreed.

More than half (54%) also felt that the work community jointly considers the impacts of changes on their work. One third (28%) took a neutral approach, and 19% felt that the work community did not discuss the impacts of changes.

*Employee experience* of joint work development

Positive assessment	Neutral assessment	Critical assessment
😊	😐	🙁
55%	**28%**	**17%**

Employee experience of dialogue concerning changes

Positive assessment	Neutral assessment	Critical assessment
😊	😐	🙁
54%	**28%**	**18%**

The personnel experience of joint work development and change dialogue were combined with the index figure that represents the employee experience of the level of change activity within the work community. The result of the survey is expressed on a scale of 1–5. The results indicate that during the follow-up period of 2022–2024, the change activity remained at mostly the same level in the companies within the sample.

The personnel experience of the level of change activity within their work community has remained the same on average for the years 2022–2024

Change in mean value of change activity over the past three years
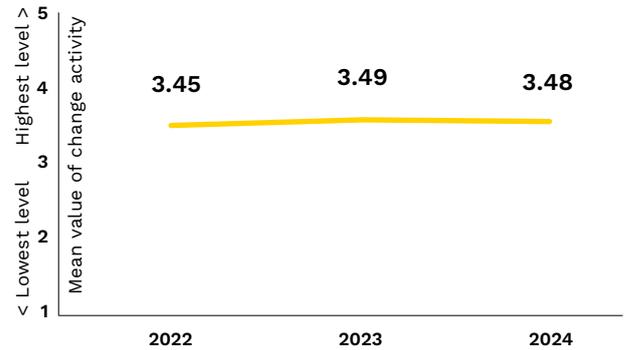
*The analysis sample was based on follow-up data from the same workplaces during the years 2022–2024 (10235–10790 responses per year, 138 workplaces).

The analyses assess the connection between resources for psychological safety and the level of change activity within the work community. From the material acquired by Elo's survey tools in 2024, three aspects of personnel experiences were selected that reflect a psychologically safe interaction atmosphere:

- Respectful interactions
- A feeling of being heard
- Work community atmosphere that is open to addressing difficult issues

The three different personnel experiences were combined into a single indicator that depicts the psychological safety resources of a company. The index value for companies was calculated on a scale of 1–5. The companies in the sample were divided into three groups based on the indicator results:

- Lower than average level (range of 2.54–3.61)
- Medium (range of 3.62–4.04)
- Higher than average level (range of 4.05–4.50)

Employees' assessments of the level of change activity in their work community were compared according to whether they worked in companies where the resources for psychological safety were lower or higher than average.

The results showed a statistically significant* link between the resources a company has for psychological safety and the level of change activity in the work community. With regard to resources for psychological safety, employees working in companies that rated higher than average assessed the level of change activity within their work community more positively.

*Analysis of variance was used as the statistical method. Test results: $[F(2, 10721) = 174.19, p < .01]$. According to the results of the post hoc test (Bonferroni), the difference between all levels of psychological safety was identified in employee experiences of change activity in the work community.

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The resources for psychological safety are linked to the level of change activity within the work community.
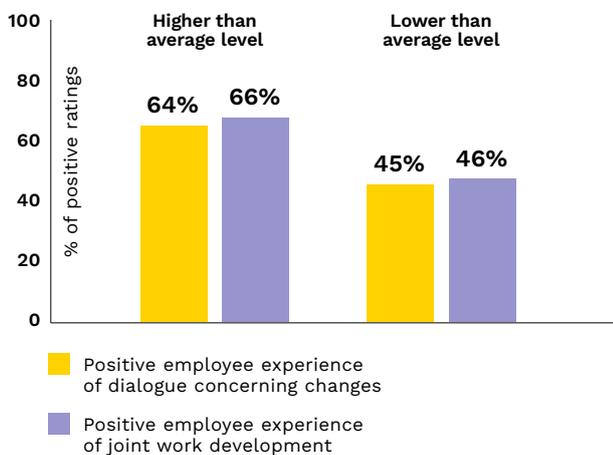
Connection between psychologically safe interactions and the level of change activity within the work community
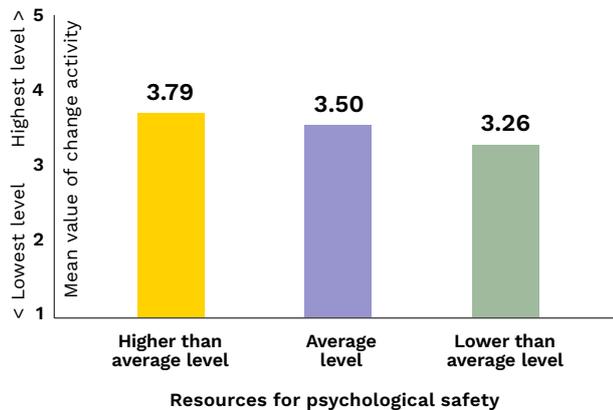
When the resources for psychological safety in a company are at a better than average level, nearly two-thirds of employees feel that new ways of working are being developed within the workplace. If, on the other hand, the resources are at a lower than average level, this proportion decreases to less than half.

Psychological safety is a key factor when it comes to the involvement of the work community in work development and dialogue about changes.

The resources for psychological safety in the company

■ Positive employee experience of dialogue concerning changes

■ Positive employee experience of joint work development

2.5 How are the changes experienced at work linked to workload strain and work functionality?

Elo conducted a targeted survey on change experiences and work functionality in spring 2025. A total of 11 Elo customer companies from different sectors participated in the survey. The participating companies had considered it timely to carry out a survey on change experiences and change resources. The survey targeted personnel groups experiencing work-related changes. A total of 252 people responded to the survey.

Background information of survey respondents

Nearly half of the respondents had worked in their current job for five years or less, one fifth for 6–10 years and one third for more than 10 years. Most respondents (83%) had worked remotely for at least one-third of their working hours.

Nearly half (47%) of the respondents were 45 years of age or younger, one third were 46–55 years of age, and slightly more than one fifth (23%) were over 55 years of age.

Change experiences of survey respondents

The respondents were asked if they had experienced changes in their own work during the last year.

The changes were assessed in eight different areas. Additionally, the respondents were asked how they felt about the changes. The answer options were: positive change, negative change and I don't know.

Almost all respondents (about 96%) had experienced at least one of the changes stated in the survey during the previous year.

Less than half (41%) had experienced no negative changes in the past year, 38% had experienced two or fewer negative changes and one fifth had experienced three or more negative changes.

One fifth of respondents had not experienced any positive changes in their work, 42% had experienced three or fewer positive changes, and 38% had experienced four or more positive changes.

The results indicate that work-related changes can be experienced in different ways by different employees. More than half of the respondents perceived changes to their own work content or areas of responsibility as being positive, while about one-fifth considered them to be negative. On the other hand, changes in workload were more often seen in a negative light, as more than half of the respondents rated them as being negative and about one-fifth as positive.

Survey respondents' experiences of the intensity and impact of changes in work.

Do you feel that there have been minor or major changes in your work over the past year?			What is your experience of the changes that have taken place? (Distribution of responses %)		
			Positive	Negative	I don't know

Content of own work

Not at all	Minor change	Moderate to large change		Positive	Negative	I don't know
21 %	45 %	34 %	→	64%	17%	19%

Amount of work

| 22 % | 44 % | 34 % | → | 23% | 55% | 22% |

Level of work demand

| 26 % | 40 % | 34 % | → | 51% | 23% | 26% |

Areas of responsibility

| 25 % | 43 % | 32 % | → | 69% | 18% | 13% |

Common operating models in the workplace

| 24 % | 51 % | 25 % | → | 54% | 22% | 24% |

Working methods or tools

| 30 % | 54 % | 16 % | → | 53% | 18% | 29% |

Technology used at work (e.g. communication tools, information systems)

| 35 % | 51 % | 14 % | → | 56% | 18% | 26% |

Co-operation in the workplace

| 40 % | 51 % | 9 % | → | 54% | 24% | 22% |

■ Not at all   ■ Minor change   ■ Moderate to large change

Link between work-related changes and everyday work experiences

The data from the change experience survey was used to examine the connection* between work-related changes and the resulting experiences with everyday work and well-being:

• Work recovery
• Personal assessment of work performance
• Time pressures and hectic pace
• Sense of control at work
• Job satisfaction

Two indices were created for the assessment: one index for negative change experiences and another for positive change experiences. The indices show the number and level of intensity of changes experienced by employees, with a division between the positive and the negative. The advantage of this method was that the analyses could separately consider the link between positive or negative changes and everyday work experiences. The calculation method used is presented in the appendix to the report.

Work-related changes that were viewed negatively were statistically significant* in terms of their connection to the experience of everyday work. The more negatively the changes were experienced in the work, the weaker the respondent's assessed level of work manageability, work performance, work recovery and job satisfaction.

Positive changes were clearly linked with job satisfaction. Those who experienced more positive changes in

their work were more satisfied with their work. In addition, there were weak but statistically significant links with the sense of work manageability, work performance and work recovery.

Any changes that could not be assessed by the respondent (assessment of the impact of the change: 'I don't know') were not linked with the everyday work experience.

*The statistical method used was correlation analysis, which provides information on the interrelationships between phenomena.

The personal change experience is linked to well-being at work and work functionality

Negatively perceived changes

↘ Job satisfaction (r=0.47, p <.01)
↘ Sense of control at work (r= - 0.43, p <.01)
↗ Hectic pace and time pressures (r=0.34, p<.01)
↘ Work recovery (r=0.36, p <.01)
↘ Assessment of own performance at work (r=-0.30, p <.01)

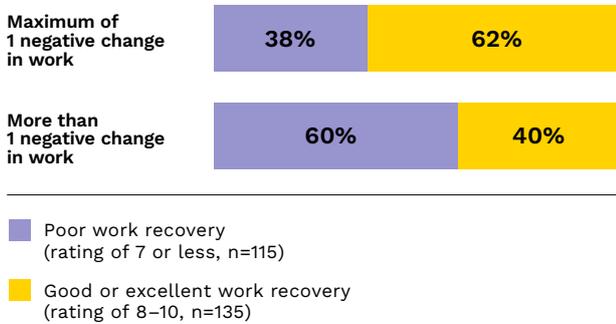**Positively perceived changes**

↗ Job satisfaction (r=0.35, p<.01)
↗ Sense of control at work (r=0.18, p <.01)
↗ Work recovery (r=0.15, p <.05)
↗ Work performance (r=0.18, p <.01)

↘ **Negative correlation**   ↗ **Positive correlation**

The results show that the accumulation of negative changes is reflected as challenges with work recovery. Fewer than half of the respondents who had experienced multiple negative changes over the past year felt that they recovered well from their work.

The accumulation of negative changes is linked to weaker work recovery

	Poor work recovery	Good or excellent work recovery
Maximum of 1 negative change in work	38%	62%
More than 1 negative change in work	60%	40%

■ Poor work recovery
(rating of 7 or less, n=115)

■ Good or excellent work recovery
(rating of 8–10, n=135)

The importance of change resources

The research task was to assess the link between resilience resources and satisfaction with changes. Satisfaction with changes was measured with the statement 'I am generally satisfied with how changes are implemented in my workplace' (answer options: 1=Completely disagree 5=Completely agree.

Employees assessed the following resilience resources in their work community: 1. Participatory approach and support for changes 2. Transformational leadership 3. Investments in competence development 4. Solution-oriented approach 5. Flexibility and innovation of the organisation 6. Team spirit and open interaction. The questions and response distributions from change resource indicators are described in the appendix to the report.

Initially, the respondents' assessments of the resources intended to support change were examined. The change resources that were assessed as being the weakest were participatory approach and support for changes. One third (29%) felt that no effort had been made to hear the personnel's perspective on changes. The ability to try new things was also assessed as being relatively weaker. Nearly one third (28%) mostly or completely disagreed with the statement: 'Our work community boldly experiments with new ways of working.' The most positive assessments were given to transformational leadership. The majority (about 76%) mostly or completely agreed that their supervisor communicated a clear and positive vision of the future. In addition, 76% felt that the work community invests in competence development and maintenance.

Next, the link between resilience resources and the employee experience of work-related changes was examined. Correlations between resilience resources and change satisfaction ranged from 0.43 to 0.74. When employees viewed the company's resilience resources as being stronger, satisfaction with the implementation of changes was significantly more common. Satisfaction with changes was linked mostly with a positive participatory approach and support for changes (r=0.74, p<.01).

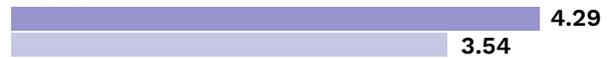*Satisfaction with the changes was higher when resilience resources were stronger.*

Participatory approach and support for changes
- 3.84
- 2.57
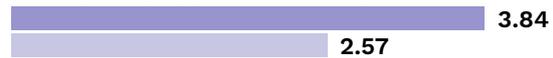
Investments in competence development
- 4.2
- 3.32

Employee assessments of transformational leadership
- 4.29
- 3.54

Solution-oriented activities
- 3.99
- 3.21

Employee experience of organisational flexibility and innovation
- 3.76
- 3.05

Team spirit and open interaction
- 4
- 3.27
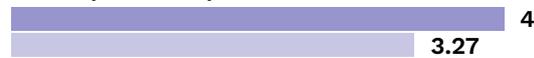
1
< Lowest level

5
Highest level >

■ Satisfied with the implementation of changes (n=142)
■ Neutral or negative attitude to change implementation (n=107)

The majority (75%) of those who were satisfied with changes (142 respondents) felt that there was an effort to hear personnel out when changes are being implemented within the workplace. One fifth of those who had a dissatisfied or neutral experience (107 respondents) were of this opinion.

The majority (82%) of those who were satisfied with changes also felt that the work community actively and jointly seeks solutions to problems and challenges. Less than half of those who were dissatisfied shared this experience. In addition, the majority of those who were satisfied with changes felt that the work community invests in competence development and that the flow of information and interaction is open.

The connection between satisfaction with changes and the solution-focused approach of the work community, the flow of information, competence development and employee participation.

'In my work community, we actively and jointly seek solutions to challenges and problems'

Percentage of respondents who completely or mostly agree

	Satisfied with changes	Critical or neutral change experience
	82%	46%
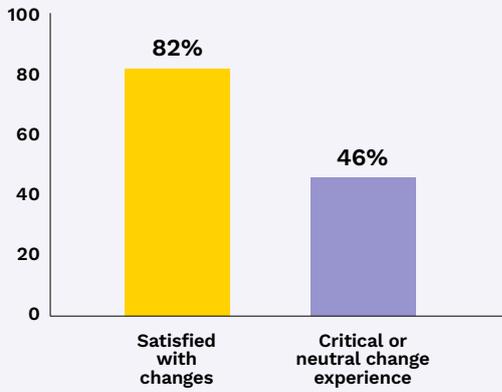
'The flow of information and interactions within my work community are open'

Percentage of respondents who completely or mostly agreet

	Satisfied with changes	Critical or neutral change experience
	74%	37%
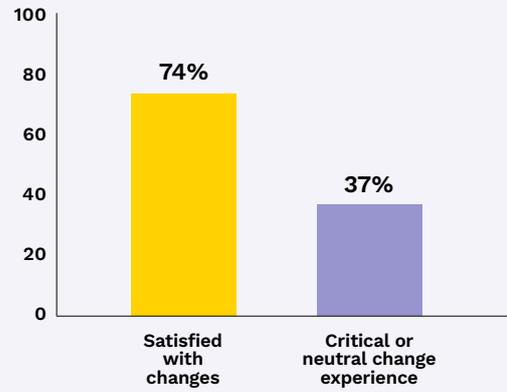
'My workplace makes efforts to hear personnel out when changes are being implemented'

Percentage of respondents who completely or mostly agree

	Satisfied with changes	Critical or neutral change experience
	75%	22%
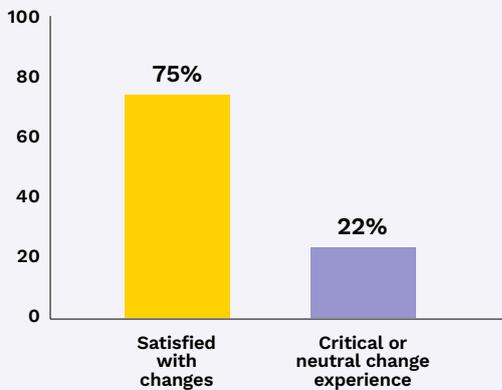
'My work community invests in the development and maintenance of competence'

Percentage of respondents who completely or mostly agree

	Satisfied with changes	Critical or neutral change experience
	88%	50%
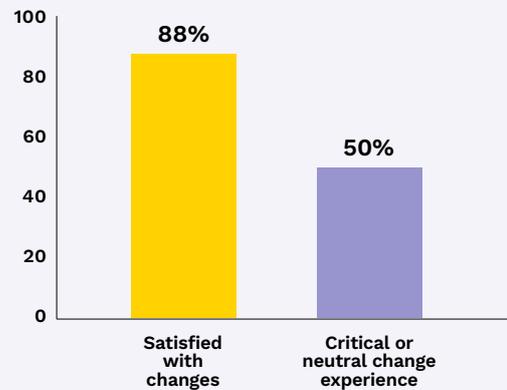
3. Summary of analyses and consideration of results

The results can be summarised in five main points:

1. Monitoring the operating environment facilitates change readiness for SMEs.

2. Good daily management creates the foundation for work ability in the face of changes.

3. Psychological safety enables joint work development.

4. A positive change experience supports work ability.

5. Successful change requires the strengthening of organisational resilience.

3.1 Monitoring the operating environment facilitates change readiness in SMEs

The majority of company executives experienced unexpected changes in their operating environment as a potential challenge to their company's business operations. Previous studies have shown that uncertainty related to unexpected changes has generally increased in working life. According to the Working Finland study conducted by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (2024), 40 per cent of employed persons perceive unexpected changes in work as a factor causing uncertainty or a threat.

According to the results of the joint survey of company executives, conducted by Elo and LocalTapiola, Finnish workplaces are actively realising continuous monitoring of their operating environment. The majority of respondents also felt that their company has the ability to react to changes in the operating environment. The company decision-makers who responded to the survey were slightly more critical of their company's initiative in terms of the anticipation of future competence needs. Companies recognise the importance of investing in competence, but the task of anticipating competence needs is often viewed as challenging.

Accumulated industry knowledge, the ability to identify signals of potential changes in the operating environment and experience-based knowledge of business activities provide companies with the readiness to adapt to and implement changes. When research

data on the development of working life is combined with everyday work observations, it creates a stronger knowledge base for anticipating changes. It is important for management and the personnel to discuss competence needs in order to keep focus on the needs arising within the everyday work environment. Close co-operation between educational institutions and the employment and economy sector is also key to ensuring that education meets current and future competence needs. This will benefit both those who are entering working life and those who are already working. Functional dialogue enables for a joint assessment of the development trends in working life and to identify the skills that may be needed in the future (Kurki et al. 2020).

3.2 Good daily management creates the foundation for work ability in the face of changes

The results of interviews with HR specialists indicate that the ability to change largely relies on good daily management. The key aims of work ability management – such as the fostering of a positive work atmosphere, successful supervisory management, support for psychological safety, the defining of clear goals and responsibilities, and strengthening the sense of community - provide the foundation for the ability to cope with changes. A suitable amount of work, good supervisory management and smooth co-operation create better conditions for learning new things and adapting to changes.

In studies, work load factors are often divided into hindrance stressors (e.g. challenges in the flow of information) and challenge stressors (e.g. learning requirements, demanding tasks, responsibility). Challenge stressors can be loading, but they can also inspire if there are sufficient resources at work (LePine et al. 2005). Organisational support and work resources help employees to experience changes, for example, as opportunities for development (Mukerjee et al. 2021). On the other hand, a lack of resources and minimal support increase the risk of experiencing changes as negative and loading (Pahkin, 2015).

In interviews, HR specialists expressed the importance of being able to visualise all the separate changes in the workplace as a whole and to understand their impacts on work functionality and the well-being of the personnel. Our analyses based on employee surveys show that an accumulation of negative changes, in particular, can contribute to insufficient work recovery.

3.3 Psychological safety enables joint work development

The results show that, in many Finnish workplaces, work is developed jointly and the impact of changes

on work is discussed within the work community. On average, the personnel experience has remained stable in recent years. The personnel have significant potential for developing the work and strengthening organisational resilience.

According to Statistics Finland's Quality of work life survey (Sutela, Viinikka & Pärnänen, 2024), 53% of employees have made suggestions regarding the development of their own work, 36% for working arrangements, 32% for the improvement of well-being at work and 26% for products or services during the last year. The work community's involvement in development is a resource that Finnish companies should strengthen to a greater extent.

There have not been many large-scale surveys conducted on the resources affecting the level of change activity within work communities in Finland. Our analysis based on responses from more than 10,000 employees shows that resources for psychological safety are vital for the work community to participate in work development. When psychological safety resources are stronger than average, nearly two-thirds of employees feel that new ways of working are being developed jointly in the workplace. Dialogue about changes at work is also significantly more common. Psychological safety creates a secure foundation upon which to take initiatives and present new ideas. An atmosphere in which interaction is valued makes it easier to discuss difficult issues and raise concerns and needs for support.

3.4 A positive change experience supports work ability

Our analyses indicate that the way that employees experience changes has a significant impact on how those changes affect work functionality and well-being at work. Changes that are perceived as being negative lead to a weaker sense of control at work, a heightened sense of urgency and an inability to fully recover from work. These factors have been shown to increase the risk of weakening mental health (Bonde, 2008). In particular, the accumulation of negative changes contributed to weaker well-being at work.

Changes that were viewed as positive, in turn, led to a higher level of job satisfaction. The importance of the result is emphasised by the fact that according to international research, an increase in job satisfaction is linked to the strengthening of mental well-being and a lower risk of burnout (Faragher et al, 2005).

According to research, the intensity of stress is primarily influenced by how an individual interprets their own work situation; whether change is seen as a threat or an opportunity. This assessment guides individuals' reactions and influences the impacts the sit-

uation has on well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Mukerjee et al. 2021; van Emmerik et al. 2009). The same change can lead to very different well-being impacts depending on the employee's experience (Pahkin et al. 2015; Verhaeghe, 2008). According to studies, a negative change experience can lead to impaired well-being at work, regardless of whether or not the change involves personnel reductions (Pahkin, 2015). It is important to identify which resilience resources concretely help employees to experience the changes as being understandable and manageable.

3.5 Successful change requires the strengthening of organisational resilience

The results indicate that the following company resources can affect how satisfied employees feel about changes:

- Participatory approach and support for changes
- Transformational leadership
- Investments in competence development
- Solution-oriented approach
- Flexibility and innovation of the organisation
- Team spirit and open interaction

There may be two different explanations behind this result. Resilience resources – such as investments in competence development, transformational and participatory leadership – may have been at a strong level even before changes were implemented, which assured the work community a good chance of succeeding in the change situation. It is also possible that investments were made in resources throughout the change situation, which contributed to increased satisfaction with the changes.

It is worth viewing the resources necessary to affect positive change as objectives worth pursuing. Resilience resources are not only existing strengths, but areas of continuous development that are strengthened as well as maintained as part of everyday work ability management. The development work can be advanced in stages, focusing first on the areas that are most important for the situation within your own company.

Studies have shown that the possibility to participate, ask questions, give feedback and present development suggestions reduces uncertainty in change situations. The learning management practices used in a company create the basis for enhancing competence.

Supervisors play a key role in supporting change readiness. Approaches, such as trust building and the promotion of workplace co-operation and a positive vision of the future will help personnel adapt better to changes. Transformational leadership also involves encouraging and supporting employees in the search for new solutions and innovative ways of working.

An open discussion of how changes will impact every-day work helps to develop work in a way that promotes work ability and productivity. Psychological safety and trust make it possible to raise concerns about changes, but also to share successes and good practices.

This report examined change readiness from the perspective of research data. As part of the study on organisational resilience, practical tools were also developed that could be used to strengthen a company's change resources. The tools, based on research and everyday observations of workplaces, are part of Elo's learning environment. The tools facilitate a company's assessment of its resilience resources and provide ways to augment and strengthen them.

Appendices

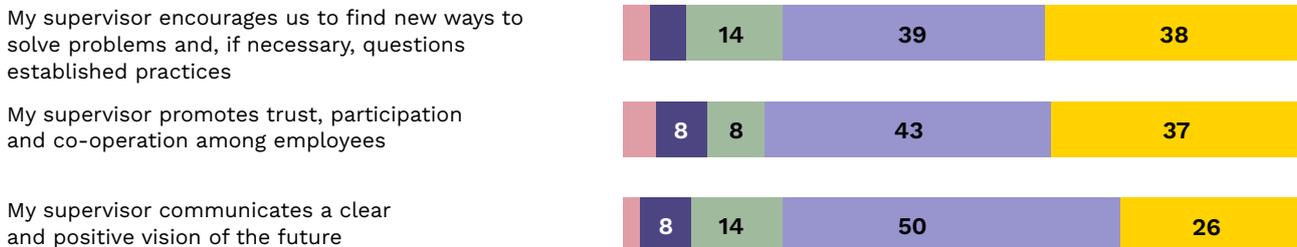## A) Well-being at work and work load indicators

The everyday work experiences used in the analyses were taken from responses to the questions presented in the table below. The indicators for well-being at work and everyday work experiences were based on earlier research data (Muramatsu et al. 2021; Vogt et al. 2013).

Employee experience of everyday working life	Survey question
Work recovery	How well do you feel you generally recover from the loading caused by your work? Choose the number that best describes your situation. (0=Very poorly, 10=Very well)
Personal assessment of work performance	On a scale from 0-10, where 10 is the best level of work performance that you could achieve at work, how would you rate your general performance at work over the past month?
Time pressures and hectic pace	I feel time pressures or a hectic pace at work (1=Completely disagree 5=Completely agree)
Sense of control at work	In general, how do you feel about your current job situation? Select the location on the line scale that best matches your opinion. (0=Unmanageable 10=Under control)
Job satisfaction	How satisfied are you with your work overall? (1=Very dissatisfied, 5=Very satisfied)

B) Change resource indicators and response distributions

Methods for measuring the employee experience that are based on researched knowledge were utilised in the change resource indicators (Pahkin et al. 2013; Carless et al. 2000; Trapp et al. 2023). If an indicator contained more than one statement, the result was the average of the statements.
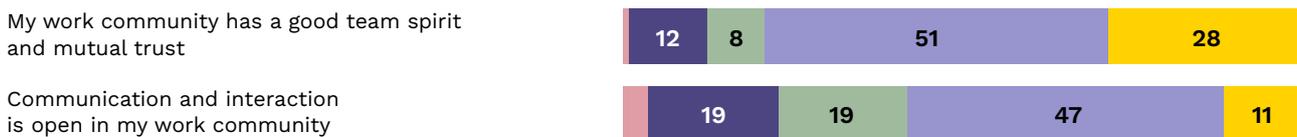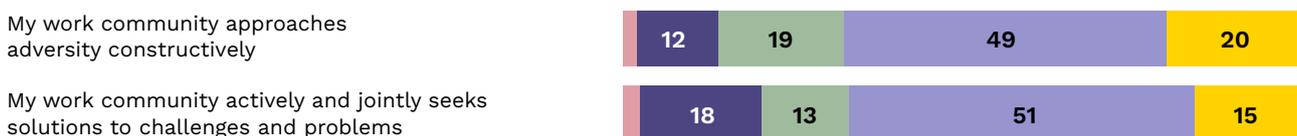
Employee assessments of transformational leadership

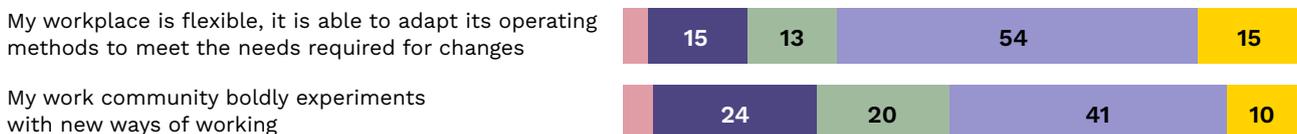My supervisor encourages us to find new ways to solve problems and, if necessary, questions established practices
| | | 14 | 39 | 38 |

My supervisor promotes trust, participation and co-operation among employees
| | 8 | 8 | 43 | 37 |

My supervisor communicates a clear and positive vision of the future
| | 8 | 14 | 50 | 26 |

Investments in development competence

In my work community, attention is paid to the development and maintenance of competence
| 11 | 16 | 46 | 25 |

Team spirit and open interaction

My work community has a good team spirit and mutual trust
| 12 | 8 | 51 | 28 |

Communication and interaction is open in my work community
| | 19 | 19 | 47 | 11 |

Solution-oriented approach

My work community approaches adversity constructively
| | 12 | 19 | 49 | 20 |

My work community actively and jointly seeks solutions to challenges and problems
| | 18 | 13 | 51 | 15 |

Employee experience of organisational flexibility and innovation

My workplace is flexible, it is able to adapt its operating methods to meet the needs required for changes
| | 15 | 13 | 54 | 15 |

My work community boldly experiments with new ways of working
| | 24 | 20 | 41 | 10 |

Participatory approach and support for changes

My workplace makes efforts to hear personnel out when changes are being implemented
| 9 | 20 | 19 | 37 | 15 |

Personnel are provided with sufficient support in change situations
| | 19 | 26 | 40 | 9 |

Legend:
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Somewhat disagree
- ■ I don't agree or disagree
- ■ Somewhat agree
- ■ Agree

C) Change experience indices

The respondents assessed the changes in their work during the last year. The changes were assessed from eight different perspectives: Work content, areas of responsibility, working methods or tools, workload, level of work demand, common operating models in the workplace, technology used at work and co-operation in the workplace. For each area, there were three answer options: 1. No changes 2. Minor change 3. Moderate or large change

If an individual change in one's own work (e.g. the level of demand) was perceived as negative, it was included in the index of negative change experiences. If the intensity of the negative change was low, it was treated as a single value point in the index figure. The index was weighted by change experiences that were estimated to have a moderate or significant impact on one's own work (weight factor 1.5). If an individual perceived all eight different changes as negative and assessed the intensity as being moderate or significant, their value in the index was 12. The index figure reflecting positive change experiences was also formed in a similar way that indicated the intensity of positive changes.

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