

Implementation of operational integration management (BEM)

There is still a need to catch up

37 baua: Facts

Although the statutory regulation on BEM has been in place since 2004, the present analysis of the 2018 BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey shows that only around 40 % of potentially eligible persons received a BEM offer. Of these, almost 70 % accepted the offer. In smaller companies, in the craft and service sector, the proportion of eligible employees who have been offered BEM is even smaller than 40 %. BEM is more widespread in areas where workplace health promotion measures are implemented, where the management is supportive, and where cooperative behavior among co-workers is more pronounced.

Operational integration management

Employers are obliged to provide an operational integration management (BEM; § 167 German Social Code IX) to employees who have not been able to work for more than six weeks within one year. The aim is to overcome an existing work incapacity, to prevent a renewed work incapacity, and to maintain the job.

In the representative 2018 BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey, 17,323 employees provided information on their periods of incapacity to work over the last twelve months. The 2018 survey also collected data on the offer and use of BEM for the first time. Employees who were absent from work for more than 30 days (at a time or in total) were asked whether they were offered BEM. If this was the case, they were asked whether they accepted the offer.

Less than half of potentially eligible employees receive a BEM offer

Of the 17,323 employees who provided information about their periods of incapacity for work, 8 % (N = 1,382) reported being incapable of work for more than 30 days, thus being potentially entitled to BEM. Of this group, 1,356 employees provided information on a BEM offer. 40 % of these employees were offered BEM, which was accepted by 68 %. It means that around one-quarter of the 1,382 employees who were potentially entitled to BEM made use of it.

BEM offered more frequently in large companies, the public sector, and the industrial sector

As with the implementation of occupational health and safety measures and workplace health promotion, BEM is also more likely to be implemented in larger companies,

the public sector, and the industrial sector. BEM is offered more frequently in companies with 250 or more employees than in smaller companies (50 % vs. 36 %). Employees in the public sector who are potentially entitled to BEM were most likely to receive an offer, followed by employees in the industrial sector. BEM was offered less frequently in the craft and service sector (see Figure 1).

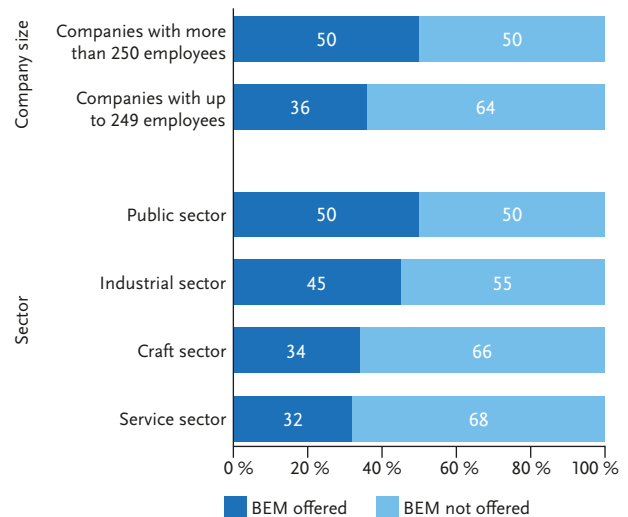


Fig. 1 BEM offer by company size and economic sector

BEM more frequently offered in health-oriented companies

There is evidence from qualitative studies that the presence of BEM is also associated with characteristics of a health-oriented organization. These include health management or other health-related structures, a cooperative management style, social support, and a trustful working atmosphere.¹ On the one hand, this can be explained by the fact that introducing new health-oriented measures is

easier if the corresponding structures and attitudes are already in place. On the other hand, BEM cases can also be a reason to develop or expand the company's health management or to prioritize the topic of health.

In line with previous research, potentially BEM-eligible employees who reported that health promotion measures were implemented in their company in the last two years more frequently report BEM than employees who reported that no measures were implemented (or that they were not aware of them) (57 % vs. 28 %).

Potential BEM beneficiaries who more often reported receiving praise and recognition for their good work were offered BEM more often than employees who rarely or never received praise and recognition (see Figure 2). Of those potentially eligible for BEM who never received praise and recognition from their direct supervisor, less than one quarter reported being offered BEM. Whereas, among those who were frequently praised, more than half reported receiving a BEM offer.

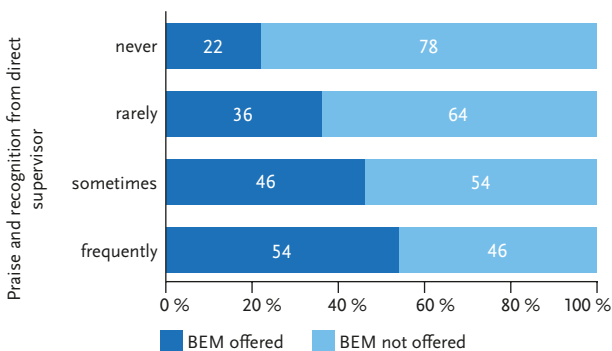


Fig. 2 BEM offer by frequency of praise and recognition from the direct supervisor

Those potentially entitled to BEM were also offered BEM at above-average rates if they frequently felt part of a community at work (45 %) and frequently received help and support from superiors (47 %). This also applies to those who felt that the cooperation between them and their colleagues is good (44 %) and received help and support from them (44 %). Likewise, employees who were very satisfied with the working atmosphere were more likely than average to receive a BEM offer (47 %).

Conclusion

Although employers are required by law to offer BEM, fewer than half of all potentially eligible employees receive such an offer. However, the acceptance rate is almost

70 %, which shows a need among employees, meaning that further efforts are needed to spread the use of BEM in companies. There is a need to catch up on BEM implementation in companies of all sizes and in all sectors of the economy, but particularly in smaller companies and in the craft and service sector.

The results of this evaluation indicate that BEM is most likely to be implemented in companies already committed to the health of their employees, where supervisors provide health-promoting leadership through praise and recognition, and where there is a positive climate among employees. On the one hand, reasons for this may be that the implementation of BEM is facilitated by existing health-related structures and health-oriented attitudes among managers. On the other hand, companies take individual cases or a high level of sick leave as an opportunity to establish BEM in conjunction with other health-related measures in the company.

The BEM compass, for example, is helpful for introducing BEM in the company. It provides initial practical guidance on the 'why, what, how, and where' of BEM.²

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Further information

- 1 Vater G, Niehaus M. Das betriebliche Eingliederungsmanagement: Umsetzung und Wirksamkeit aus wissenschaftlicher Perspektive. In: Betriebliches Eingliederungsmanagement in Deutschland. Berlin: iga.Report 24 2013: 13–19
- 2 BEM-Kompass: <https://www.bar-frankfurt.de/themen/arbeitsleben/betriebliches-eingliederungsmanagement.html>
- 3 Wrage, W., Sikora A., Stegmann R., Wegewitz U. Die Arbeitssituation von längerfristig erkrankten Beschäftigten. In: BAuA (2020). Stressreport Deutschland 2019: Psychische Anforderungen, Ressourcen und Befinden. Dortmund: Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin.