



**PHILIPS**

Inspiring stories

Active ageing

Inspiring stories  
from Philips Research colleagues

**Challenges** and  
opportunities

# Definition of Active ageing

“ The process of staying active and socially integrated, both at the workplace and outside, in order to enhance **longer employment and quality of life**, as people age”

(Source: De Lange & Van der Heijden, 2013).

# Active ageing at Philips Research: How does it work? Like this!

The Netherlands has an aging population. We are living longer and staying healthy for longer. New legislation has meant that people are also working longer and employees' average age is steadily increasing. And Philips Research is no exception. High time to anticipate these developments. Through the Active ageing project, which was conducted at Philips Research from the start of 2014 until April 2015, the organization aims to ensure that employees get older at work in an energetic, productive and appreciated manner. And that the organization makes maximum use of over-fifties' talents.

**P**aul Put, Head of Philips Research NL, is convinced that Active ageing is one of the most important company issues for the future. ‘How do we make sure that our people can actively take part in and contribute to Philips Research until they are quite old? Whereas a few years ago we thought – myself included – that working until you were 67 was completely unrealistic, we are now seeing it happening. Some colleagues are already working till beyond the age of 65. In ten years or so approximately a third of the employees on our payroll will be older than fifty-five. And in fifteen years it is possible that we will be over 70 before we retire. We have to address this issue.’

## Learning good practices

Working longer is thus a fact and Active ageing is the challenge. But what is required to enable employees to go on working energetically and enterprisingly? How do you keep on learning for a lifetime so that you can cope with the changes taking place at Philips Research and outside it? What agreements can line managers and employees make regarding this topic?

And what support does the organization offer? What works in practice? And why?

This bundle contains the personal stories of fifteen current or former Philips Research colleagues aged 50 or older, who are getting old at work in an active fashion: retaining both productivity and job enjoyment. The career stories offer inspiration and concrete handles for employees and managers to also take part in Active ageing themselves and make agreements with one another about it. They also show a high degree of diversity of considerations, possibilities and experiences. This is why every story individually is worth reading.

## From project to movement

At the beginning of 2014 the Active ageing project started at Philips Research as a result of collaboration between Yvonne van den Berg – Program Manager Social Innovation@Philips, HR Benelux – and Paul Put, Head of Philips Research NL. The project team<sup>1</sup>, made up of a senior researcher, a department

<sup>1</sup> The members of the project team are: Rufus Driessen (project leader), Ad Leenaars, Loes Bouwkamp, Kees Huijben and Bianca Melis (all Philips Research), Regina Nieboer (Philips HR Benelux) and Cristel van de Ven (Factor Vijf).



“ To identify and shape a supportive work context in which ‘Active ageing’ can be discussed openly in **dialogs between managers and employees and between employees.**”

head, an HR manager, a Works Council member and a communications consultant from Philips Research, together with an employability expert from Philips HR Benelux and an external consultant, examined what requirements both employees and line managers have at Philips Research as regards getting older actively at work. By means of the project they were aiming to create awareness and develop innovative approaches to the topic, so that over-fifties can go on working energetically and enterprisingly.

#### Active ageing events

In the same year the project team organized two Active ageing events. At these events experts<sup>2</sup> gave talks on the topic and participants played the Work and Future CourseCard<sup>3</sup>, a ‘serious game’ in which colleagues discuss Active ageing with one another. At a follow-up meeting the dialogs about getting older at work became more concrete and more personal and the participants had the courage to deal with the issue in greater detail. Employees like exchanging experiences, it was found, and by talking to one another they develop a clearer picture of their wishes and options.

#### Thirty tools that support Active ageing

At the meetings participants told the project team that they needed a clear list of instruments for using Active ageing in concrete terms. The project team therefore made a list of thirty tools that support Active ageing and put it on the intranet. The

project team also started up a special Active ageing group on the intranet to enable over-fifties to exchange knowledge and experience digitally too. The members of the project team also interviewed the fifteen current and former colleagues who tell their stories in this booklet.

#### Keep on moving!

In the end around half of the over-fifties at Philips Research took part in one or more of the Active ageing activities in 2014. The project thus clearly met a need. As a result, in 2015 Philips Research, on the advice of the project team, plans to implement Active ageing in existing business processes. At the start of this year the project team made way for an implementation manager. This implementation manager<sup>4</sup> will continue the movement that has been started, for instance by regularly organizing Active ageing meetings and constantly spotlighting the list of tools. The implementation manager also provides line managers and employees with support in making Active ageing a discussion point at the mid-year interviews: for instance by showing what is possible by way of the stories in this booklet.

#### Happy reading!

May 2015

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Annet de Lange, a lecturer in Human Resource Management at the HAN University of Applied Sciences, spoke at the Active ageing event on 16 June 2014.

Cristel van de Ven, a partner at Factor Vijf and PhD at the University of Amsterdam, gave a presentation at the second Active ageing event on 2 November 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Yvonne van den Berg, Director Social Innovation@Philips HR Benelux, had this CourseCard made specially for Philips Research.

<sup>4</sup> The Active ageing implementation manager is Truuus van der Burgt (Philips Research).

## Arno Ras



1981

Philips Research High Pressure Sodium Discharges – Research Assistant

1986

Philips Optical Storage – Optical Engineer

1993

CFT Philips AppTech – Optical Engineer

2011

Philips Research Optics – Optical Technologist

For me Active ageing means:

**Flexibly accepting changes  
and having the courage to  
grasp opportunities**

**“ Nurture young talent, motivate them and **learn from one another”****

**“ Be active and retain control of your own career”**

# I believe that you need to be very decisive in that regard

Whistling as you leave home for work. I realize that not everyone can do that, but I do it every morning. Previous generations retired when they were as young as sixty or earlier, but I couldn't imagine being at home all the time at my age.

I had intended to stop work in four years' time, but I can see that date being moved back. Not due to external developments, but because of myself. I simply have a really enjoyable job with Philips, from which I get a great deal of energy and satisfaction. A week is nothing, it just flies by.

#### Variation does me good

I started at Philips Natlab in 1981, doing work on gas discharge for lighting. This is an area I feel at home in: after all, for the past 33 years optics has continued to be my field. As an optical engineer I've been involved in various projects in various departments and organizations. That variation does me good. When you notice that you're starting to do the same things over and over again it's time for something new before things get to the stage where you don't want to go to work any more. I believe that you need to be very decisive in that regard. If you no longer enjoy doing your work you have to have the courage to make that difficult decision and not wait until your boss makes it for you. Although personally I don't need to worry about drudgery or boredom. From fundamental research to product development and from Lighting to Healthcare: wherever I work I'm still genuinely enthusiastic about what we do. For me customer satisfaction continues to be the biggest motivation. Since I'm normally involved in the entire process, from development to production, I'm often consulted whenever problems arise. I maintain these networks well, since future projects might come out of them.

#### I've had to learn to be less strict with myself

There have been a lot of changes, of course, during those 33 years. Developments are taking place at a rapid pace and it's important to be flexible enough to cope with them. For instance,

over the past few years teamwork has become far more important and at Research we're collaborating with one another more and more. As a consequence you learn to accept the fact that sometimes other people are faster and sharper and that you don't always have to do everything yourself. But I'm constantly brushing up on my skills by taking courses. A couple of years ago, for instance, I took a course in statistics and in the upcoming period I plan to do work on Zemax on the basis of self-study. I'd also like to improve my Inventor skills: it's handy to have sketches ready that enable your colleagues to proceed. Years ago, incidentally, I used to provide the complete package of drawings myself, but now I leave that to real designers. That's also something you learn as you get older: to ask others for assistance and delegate things.

#### There are many advantages to having close collaboration between young and old

I'm now a granddad and am really enjoying my grandchild. Young people can be very inspirational, not least because of the fresh approach they bring to things. I think that there are many advantages to having close collaboration between young and old. Young talented people can do a lot and in some fields more than older generations. At the same time, in the course of our careers we have gained plenty of experience, enabling us to support, assist and motivate them. It's good to want to learn from one another. After all, you stay sprightly by surrounding yourself with new people and new ideas and by not hiding away from a constantly changing world. By not only accepting changes, but also by continuing to be at the helm yourself. Fortunately we have an infinite number of opportunities, even in the twilight of our careers. We do need to have the courage to grasp them, though!

## Erik Eggink



1982

NatLab (Research Center),  
research assistant

1987

Central Development Lighting, thermal engineer

1999

CFT, later Applied Technologies, thermal  
engineer - thermal system architect

2011

Philips Research, thermal system  
architect

For me Active ageing means:

**Continuing to take initiatives  
and trusting in my own  
knowledge and expertise  
in order to make progress**

**“ Share your experience**  
and knowledge with  
younger generations  
– you yourself will also  
learn from doing this!”

**“ One day a  
week, take the  
time **to work on  
something new”****

# You have to keep on looking at the outside world

What drives me in my work? Fathoming things out and getting things to work. Technical challenges stimulate me, and in that regard I feel like I'm in my element at Research.

We regularly organize Friday Afternoon Experiments at which we're free to put forward ideas and experiments. At such times, when the experiment is the main thing, I can once again feel why I opted for this field.

#### I know many people, I have the knowledge and I think in terms of solutions

I started my career at the NatLab, doing research into new calculation methods for heat problems. Since then heat has continued to be a leitmotif throughout my career. After five years I joined Lighting on Mathildelaan, where I did work on thermal analyses for designing induction lamps. Later I helped set up an Electronics Cooling competence. I was given the freedom to set everything up myself, together with a group of people: I enjoyed having this independence and was able to retain it in all my subsequent jobs. In 1999 I started work at CTF in the heat group of Development Support and then finished up back at Research via various paths. How did I end up in all those roles? I know many people, I have the knowledge and I think in terms of solutions. And that's helped me a great deal.

#### I want to shape my work myself

Work should stay challenging and for me that means constantly forecasting and understanding how things work. And in doing so I like to undertake new things – I don't like routine work. So I look for work that I can shape myself. For instance, I proposed a system approach to heat and built up the competences for it myself. I saw that there was a need for this in the organization, and also thought it was an interesting approach myself, so I decided not to wait. In conjunction with colleagues from Mechatronica I took the initiative for creating it. I've also always continued to learn, I've taken courses in system engineering and studied account management at Development Support. A very different branch of sport, but I learned a great deal from it and am still benefiting from it. I see more and more connections and

interrelationships in my work and that certainly has to do with the different experiences I've gained. There are an infinite number of opportunities for broadening yourself in your work: regard them as an enrichment of your competences!

#### Sometimes you're allowed to dig in your heels a little bit

But how do you face up to changes when they simply appear in your path? In my opinion technical competence remains the best basis. You need knowledge and skills that you've acquired yourself in order to make progress. So you constantly have to go on developing and keeping track of new developments in order to stay relevant. I do of course get grumpy when there are reorganizations in the offing, but I also realize that it's my responsibility to get the best out of them. You have to keep on looking at the outside world, have the courage to bother colleagues with questions and take steps yourself. I sometimes have wild ideas and I enjoy sparring with colleagues and management about them. Now and then you're allowed to dig in your heels a little bit, provided you come up with carefully thought-out and constructive answers.

#### I enjoy helping young colleagues to make progress

Apart from discussing matters, I also enjoy helping colleagues if they're having trouble with something. Coaching is a popular word, but I like giving people advice about putting together a strong team or organizing the work. As you get older this role perhaps falls into your lap automatically – that's possible. And although I enjoy it, I don't see myself carrying on until I'm 67. Another couple of years, as long as I'm mentally and physically fit, but after that working life will really be finished for me. I can just see myself shuffling in behind my walking frame! And you also have to stay realistic – major career moves are simply not going to happen. What you can do is help young colleagues to make progress and support them by sharing knowledge and experience. One day of coaching a week, that would be a nice way to end my career.

## Ferrie Aalders



2003

Philips Research – Head of Business Excellence (from 2007 also Export Control Officer Philips Group Innovation)

2001

Philips Research – Improvement Manager and Executive Secretary

1998

Philips Display Components (from July 2001 LG Philips Displays) – manager development support

1994

Philips Display Components – IT Manager Product & Process Development

1992

Philips Display Components – Department Head Advanced Development Resolution

1990

Philips Display Components – IT Consultant

1985

Philips Research – Senior Scientist

For me Active ageing means:

**Staying curious, being open to new things and not being afraid of changes!**

**“ Be brave and grasp opportunities: you can do more than you think”**

**“ Collaborate with people in order to share the success”**

# I enjoy changes

Change is the thread running through my career. You mustn't tie yourself down in a job, it's fun to do things away from it and continue to develop yourself. At least, that's what I think.

**P**ersonally I've had experience in the most wide-ranging fields over the past few decades. And if you can cover more and more fields because you've mastered them as well, that's simply growth. Particularly if your newly acquired skills fit in with the new Philips.

### I enjoy changes

I'm not afraid of changes – on the contrary. That was already the case when I started work at Philips Research after studying nuclear physics and getting a Ph.D. in solid-state physics. I was responsible for developing software tools and simulations for electron optics, but then made a seamless switch to industry. After all, new software also entails a new approach to working and responding to changes in organizations has always interested me. In the '90s the development of cathode ray tubes switched completely to computer simulation and computer-aided design. Moreover, during this period some of the development work was moved to the manufacturing environment. That was a considerable shift. At that time I put together a road map myself and within four years rolled out and implemented everything based on IT. After that I was given more and more departments, so that all the support departments involved in the development work reported to me. Following a merger with LG Electronics I felt that the time was right to do something different. At Research in Eindhoven I became an executive secretary and improvement manager and within two years had risen to the global level. Needs within organizations change over the years, but I noticed that I was able to put my experience and knowledge from the past to good use in my new field. Switching between line and staff, as I've done several times, is then not only fun but also worthwhile. Because you realize that over the previous few years you've gained many valuable skills on which you can draw.

### Different opinions make for richer solutions

I'm now 56 and am starting to feel that I'm part of a different generation from the young, new employees at Research. And yet that doesn't make feel as if I'm gradually slipping out of the picture. As you get older you have something to say about

more and more topics. You know the ropes and can help other people. And conversely you learn that you don't have to do everything on your own. After all, different opinions make for richer solutions. Sometimes, of course, you have to compromise in order to find a solution that is agreeable to everyone, but that's a good thing. Because even if you work in a guiding role you have to have the courage to assign matters to other people. In concrete terms I do that by making processes transparent and developing tools which people in the organization can immediately start to use. But more important is the fact that I realize that I myself need to stay flexible and keep an open mind. Only by doing this can you propagate the knowledge and experience within an organization and hence the impact that we can generate together.

### Have the courage to follow your own course

What does the future have in store? I notice that the balance between work and private life is becoming more important. For instance, I prefer not to read emails at the weekend and I've purposely started doing more sport. I also don't have a mobile phone. Perhaps inconceivable for some people, but for me it's an effective way of monitoring my limits. Particularly if you're working with people from all over the world, it's nice if you don't have to worry about getting a phone call from China or North America in the middle of the night. I'd like to stop working at my current pace in four years' time. But that doesn't mean that I'm planning to sit in my armchair and watch life passing me by. After all, the fact that you're nearly sixty doesn't mean that you can't make any more plans. The options I have in mind include fulfilling an advisory role, but also writing a book. I feel great standing at the interface between technology and organization, so why not write down my experiences? I think I've got a good story to tell. In my life I've done a lot of things myself and achieved a great deal. At the same time I always managed to surround myself with inspirational, strong people. That's possibly my most important lesson. That in the end you must always have the courage to follow your own course, but that you achieve more with a strong team.

## Hans de Vries



**1984**  
Natlab (Research Center)  
– Research assistant

**1989**  
CDPC – Development engineer

**1996**  
CDPC – Team leader expert group

**2000**  
CFT – Technologist

**2002**  
AppTech – Technologist

**2011**  
Research – Technologist / Senior scientist

For me Active ageing means:

**Keeping flexible and maintaining and extending knowledge of your field**

“Recognize the advantages of getting older: you don’t get flustered as easily and you often **bring calm to hectic situations**”

“In the long run your boss will be younger than you are: **support your boss** – that’s a role that you as a senior employee have to take on”

# I try to remain attractive to the labor market

Measuring, analyzing and explaining in order to gain understanding. That’s what I do in my job, but also in my life.

**S**elf-knowledge always plays an important role, no matter at what turning-point in your life or career you find yourself. I often think about my career and the steps I’ve taken. I’d quite like to take another step, but nothing radical. You’ve got to be able to take along some of your experience.

#### I prefer working at the interface between research and industry

I’m now almost sixty and have worked half my life at Philips. There are of course good reasons for that: I’ve always been able to develop my analytical and technical talents well here. I started at the Natlab and via various business units I’ve now come back to Philips Research. Over the years I’ve found that I prefer working at the interface between research and industry. Not that I’m contrary, but when I worked in industry my analytical tendencies came to the surface. And when I was at Research I tended to be interested in working on aspects in which industry is involved. This meant that I could always see both sides of the coin and I needed a position that integrated these aspects.

#### Working from existing strengths to new solutions

When I was about 45 an important turning-point in my career occurred. Although I enjoyed working in industry, it felt as if I was part of the furniture. It was time for something new and I decided to make a bold move. That wasn’t all that easy at first. I must have sent out forty job applications and was regularly invited for an interview, only to finish second. Not very encouraging. And although I received every support from Philips it was a difficult period, which went on for almost nine months. Then two jobs suddenly fell into my lap. I chose CFT and that was the best move I’ve ever made. The job suited me so well because it’s exactly in between industry and research and because I was able to use all the experience I’d acquired previously in it. During my career I’d often made relatively small steps to the left or right, but now I no longer had to make sideways movements. I could set a course straight ahead, through the middle: where every-

thing came together. Working from existing strengths to new solutions, that’s how I see it.

#### I try to remain attractive to the labor market

I often think about the competences that will be needed in the future: both inside and outside Philips. You have to stay realistic, there are so many changes going on. I try to remain attractive to the labor market by keeping flexible and maintaining depth in my work. I’ve now been in reliability for eighteen years and have an increasingly sharp and extensive overview of my field. At the same time I notice that the work is starting to change. The character of Research is also evolving. That has to happen, otherwise there wouldn’t be much progress. But I’ve experienced three periods like this before and they always make you feel insecure. I’ve uploaded my CV onto LinkedIn, but am happy to receive any assistance with it or with the future course of my career. It’s always clever to examine things from twelve sides. And I do want to carry on working.

#### Have the courage to think outside your own framework

I see myself as a team leader. I like standing there in my white lab-coat, with a screwdriver in my hand, but at the same time I want to contribute ideas and help to provide direction. For colleagues I often perform a coaching role. Actually you can enjoy any job if only you put some effort into it and are willing to immerse yourself in whatever comes your way. Have the courage to think outside your own framework, though I must confess that I sometimes find that difficult. The courage to change drastically? I don’t have that. That’s also no problem, because it’s not part of my make-up or character. I’m an even-tempered person who takes cautious steps. But I do take them. You have to know yourself well, know what you can and cannot do. In a few years’ time I’d like to take things a bit easier. I’ve already mentioned this to my line manager. I often ponder about the years to come. Can you as an elderly person become passionate about something that’s completely new? I’ve got a retirement age of 65 in my sights, but maybe I’ll carry on working for longer if I’m enjoying it at a location that suits me. We’ll see!

## Henk Miltenburg



2010  
Research/PSO - Consultant

2009  
Aptech/PSO - Consultant

2007  
Aptech/IPM - Consultant

2006  
Aptech/I&A - Consultant

1998  
ASALab - IT Manager

1995  
Research/Multimedia Asset project  
- project member

1993  
Research/EDM group - Cluster Leader

1989  
CFT/EDM - Project Manager

1987  
CFT/EDM - project member

1986  
Corp ISA - Support

For me Active ageing means:

**Continuing to see opportunities and having the courage to embark upon new developments**

“What would you like to be proud of when you look back on your career?  
**Think about that!**”

“**Use your own strength to look for solutions**”

# I'm fit enough to take on new things!

People who are appreciated often walk just a bit faster. I'd like to keep on doing my work well. Constructive criticism is welcome: nobody's perfect and you must always be willing to hear about aspects that can be improved.

**B**ut it's nice when your efforts are recognized and appreciated. I want to be able to look back proudly at what I, in conjunction with my team, have achieved.

**Sparring together in order to achieve the best result**  
What attracts me about my work? I'm a real spider in the web and enjoy making detailed plans. I've been a line manager at several business units. For instance I was a software developer at CFT and then became a team leader, project leader and group leader. It feels rather pleasant to manage and set the course. People expect vision and direction and you can give them. You have influence. But the most important thing is that you need to be good at selecting the people around you. Sparring together in order to achieve the best result, that's what I enjoy most. Tunnel vision isn't good for anyone: not for yourself, not for the team and not for Philips. Because no matter how many bolts, cables and programs we may use here, technology continues to be work done by people. Building a strong group: that's where my passion lies. Finally, in many cases you spend more time with your colleagues than with your own family.

**You realize more and more what you want and what you don't want**

I don't have a management position at the moment. I very much enjoy working in my current group, but routine is lying in wait. So I'm looking for a new challenge. In the course of my career I've more than once gone in search of a new job, sometimes as a result of an organization change. That often meant disappointment and excitement at the same time. The latter usually won, however, so that I soon forgot about all the commotion at my new place. And especially now that I'm getting older I'm less

likely to let things upset me. I get less emotionally involved. I use all my contacts and networks when I'm looking for a new job. I always make sure that I've got a clear idea of what I want. That becomes considerably easier as the years pass. You reflect about the past and realize more and more what you want and what you don't want in the future.

**You learn new things through changes**

I'm no longer as scared of changes as I used to be. Nothing lasts for ever; you just have to accept that. I also get bored and fidgety if I'm doing the same thing for too long. Change does of course give rise to resistance, particularly if it's imposed. But people who've been doing the same thing for thirty or forty years aren't more dynamic than people who've embarked upon different paths during their careers. After all, changes also create energy: you get the chance to learn new things. Not just as regards knowledge or skills, but also about yourself. As a result of changes you find out how many different facets there are to life and people.

**Bring on that gray hair!**

If you look beyond the present day you're thinking in abstract terms. I like that - I did after all study math. So I look to the future with a great deal of optimism. My boss asked me recently whether I wanted to retire yet. I said certainly not. Working gives me energy, the feeling that you're contributing to something important. Jumping on an electric bike and touring around a bit just isn't my style. I am however chair of an archery club, which I really enjoy. But just as I like empowering other people, I also want to use my own strength to find new challenges. So bring on that gray hair - I'm fit enough to take on new things!

## Ingrid Heynderickx



**1987**  
Philips Research Liquid Crystals  
Display – Scientist

**1992**  
Philips Research Transport Phenomena  
– Principal Scientist

**1995**  
Philips Research Personal Care Institute  
– Optical Engineer

**1999**  
Philips Research Visual Experiences  
– Senior Scientist

**2005**  
Delft University of Technology Interactive  
Intelligence – Part-time professor

**2013**  
Eindhoven University of Technology Human-  
Technology Interaction - Full-time professor

**2015**  
Eindhoven University of Technology Industrial  
Engineering and Innovation Sciences – Dean

For me Active ageing means:

**Taking on challenges that  
give you a boost towards  
personal growth**

**“Keep your antennas  
tuned, don’t force  
things and **let time**  
**do its work”****

**“Maintain a  
constructive  
attitude, critical  
**but open”****

# My self-confidence increased

Where careers are concerned you have to let time take its course. That may sound like a rather passive attitude, but it isn't.

The way I see it is: know what you want and keep your antennas tuned, but don't chase after options too ambitiously. In that way you don't get frustrated if you miss out on a job. Thanks to this strategy I've always enjoyed my work, but I've also had the courage to take the opportunities of moving to other places. Personally, though, I have no doubts about what gets my blood pumping. The combination of technology and people is what drives me.

#### I love the human side of technology

I started at Philips in 1987 after doing an MSc and a PhD in physics at a Belgian university. For my first assignment I researched the optics of LCD displays. What did I learn during this period? That you can never say that something's not possible. Technological developments are moving so fast that something that's currently regarded as impossible may be completely normal in a few years. That also keeps our work relevant and challenging. But even more important is the fact that I found out that it's precisely the human side of technology that appeals to me. Not only in my job, in which I like to think about how you can optimize technological concepts from people's point of view. But also when I look at the people I work with. Team performance continues to be more important to me than individual efforts.

#### My self-confidence increased

During the years that I was at the Personal Care Institute I did the job of group leader on an interim basis. I was asked to do it, which at first intimidated me a bit. I was only 35 and thought that I was far too young and inexperienced. However, my self-confidence quickly increased thanks to the direct feedback I received from my environment, from which I learned a lot. And while I might not be the type of person that pushes for a management position, I keep a sharp lookout for opportunities. If there's a problem, I don't go on about it endlessly, but straight away work out what I can do in concrete terms to resolve it. At the same time I'm

someone who works with others, likes to contribute ideas and is always looking for the compromise. By not digging your heels in you keep the dialog and the options open for yourself.

#### I decided to start teaching

In the late '90s I set up a cluster for perception research at Research. It was only then that I really realized how important it is for me to work with people for people. The group increased to eight people and the nice thing was that I was allowed to put this team together myself. It turned into a really tight, stable team. As a result of this job I also noticed that I enjoyed managing and directing people. While studying for my MSc in 1983 I'd obtained my teaching qualification and I felt it starting to pull. So when I became a part-time professor at TU Delft in 2005, that was a natural step for me. I was pleased with the freedom I was given in my research and enjoyed extending and shaping my research in conjunction with students. In 2013 I switched to EUT, where I've been a full-time dean since the start of 2015. This means that I've largely stopped doing research.

#### I look closely at the role models around me

What got me over the line? As a dean at the university I get the opportunity to contribute ideas about strategy, content and organization. I also really enjoy working with students. As far as leadership's concerned, over the past few years I've looked closely at the role models around me. Such as that division head who makes an effort to stay involved with the people on the shop floor. Or that program manager who's a good listener and has the courage to make decisions quickly. Or that group leader who meets others in an open-minded way, whereas I myself tend to wait and see which way the wind blows. From all of these role models I've learned a great deal that I'd like to take along in my future career. In future I'll have to ask for a badge to get into Research. That'll seem very strange. But the ties aren't broken and that feels very good.

## Ingrid Vogels



**1993**  
Research Assistant, University of Utrecht

**1997**  
Researcher, TNO Soesterberg

**1998**  
Post-doc, VU University Amsterdam

**1999**  
Post-doc, Instituut voor Perceptie Onderzoek  
(Institute for Perception Research), Eindhoven

**2001**  
Senior Research Scientist, Philips Research  
Eindhoven

**2015**  
Research Scientist, Eindhoven University of  
Technology

For me Active ageing means:

**Being increasingly aware  
of what you want and  
having the courage to  
follow your heart**

**“ Have the  
courage to think  
unconventionally”**

**“ Follow your  
feelings, even if  
that's not always  
the easiest route”**

**“ Put what is  
expected of you  
into perspective”**

# Thanks to yoga I've learned to accept things as they are

I've always had an interest in academia. Following my doctoral research I worked for several years at a number of universities, which I very much enjoyed. However, thirteen years ago I decided to switch to industry.

**A**t Philips Research I was looking for social relevance in my work, and I found it. Owing to problems with my health I had plenty of time for introspection and discovered that I missed university life. So this year I returned to EUT. But not without taking along all the positive things I'd learned at Philips.

**I was given every freedom to find out what I wanted**  
My health problems have had a major effect on the course of my career. As a result of serious RSI, in 2010 I started working three days a week to see if this would make a difference. This was not a particularly common occurrence at the time and I was given a temporary part-time contract. Personally I found it quite difficult to take a step backwards. It felt as though I'd first been sitting in a fast train and was now suddenly outside it, while the train just went hurtling on. After I'd settled down again my son was born in 2011 and for two years I suffered from anemia and fatigue. Fortunately my group leader was very supportive and gave me every freedom to recover and decide how I wanted my career to continue. I also attended three coaching sessions with e-miles, at which I examined whether my work still suited me. Although I felt that the sessions might have gone on for longer, they were certainly educational.

**Thanks to yoga things are quite a bit calmer in my head**  
While I was recovering I had plenty of time to think. What do I want? What suits me? Where do I want to be in a few years' time? Yoga has helped me tremendously with this. In 2008 I started a 4-year course to become a yoga teacher and I've been teaching since 2010. Yoga is a combination of physical training and mental exercises. I can now relax my body much better and things are quite a bit calmer in my head. Thanks to yoga

I've learned to accept things as they are. I used to be an incorrigible perfectionist and found it hard to let things go. I used to want to monitor and be in control of everything, but by doing that you put more and more work on your shoulders and you get no peace. I had to learn to forget that pattern and yoga helped me do that.

#### **What can you give Philips?**

My decision to start working part-time also had positive aspects to it. Initially it felt like a step backwards. I was no longer kept fully informed, my output was lower and I could no longer assume all responsibilities. On the other hand my body now gets more rest, the balance between work and my private life has improved and I still feel useful and appreciated. I also have the idea that in three days I work much more efficiently. And I've been fortunate enough to work in a group in which we support one another. We work together, help one another and don't begrudge one other successes. This atmosphere has meant that I've continued to do my work and really enjoyed it at all times.

#### **I'd like to do more coaching and share my knowledge**

Over time I've found out that I'd like to work with people more, as I do in my yoga lessons. In January I started working part-time at EUT, primarily doing research and limited teaching duties. I'd like to do more coaching and share my knowledge, including recruiting and assisting PhDs. Money plays a secondary role for me in my choice of career. I'm worse off as regards salary, but this move feels good. I'm pleased, though, that I've had plenty of experience in industry. I learned a massive amount at Philips. And in the future I'll still keep in touch with Philips through shared PhDs and graduate students.

## Julia Nolles



For me Active ageing means:

**Being receptive to new ideas and at the same time sharing your experience with others**

**“ If you want greater freedom you must also adopt a flexible attitude”**

**“ Make sure that you make choices that are important for you”**

**1980**  
Doctorate in physics

**1986**  
Philips CAD Centre

**1988**  
Philips CE – software project manager

**2000**  
Philips ASA lab – PDSL – software project manager

**2005**  
Philips Apptech, moved to Research – (Senior) project manager

# Working, like life, is to some extent a matter of give and take

Variation gives you new experiences and from time to time I like taking a step to one side and doing something different. For instance, I've worked in software development and project management and over the past few years I've provided training courses and coaching sessions at Philips.

**R**ecently I've been doing more and more outside the organization. For instance, I've been chasing a long-cherished dream. Together with my husband I'm planning to use our experience to help people in the Third World: we've booked flights for two months in Africa.

#### Our heart lies in Africa

Large numbers of young people looking to increase their self-awareness pack their stuff and travel round the world for a year to find out what they want from life. We're doing the same thing in our fifties, but not because we don't know what we want. My aunt used to work as a midwife in the wilds of Africa and she was always a genuine source of inspiration to me. I've always fancied the idea of traveling in search of your dreams like that and in the process helping others in a concrete way. In 2013 my husband and I tried it for two months at a secondary school in Ethiopia. A stroke of luck, because the country, the people and the teaching all turned out to be much as we'd hoped. On that occasion I had enough free days for my sabbatical, whereas this time I've taken two months' unpaid leave. We're financially independent, which of course helps. We have the freedom to follow our hearts.

#### I decided to repackage myself

Despite this 'exotic' side road, I don't feel that I've nothing more to offer Philips. Of course, at my time of life cynical things sometimes go through my mind. Especially when one of my projects, into which I'd poured my heart and soul, was canceled four weeks before it was due to be introduced. Something did snap then. 'What am I doing it for?' I thought. 'I'm old, my best years are behind me, time for other things'. I think everyone's had such thoughts at one time or another. But I was able to repackage myself and have embarked on a new path. I rediscovered my enjoyment through smaller projects and in the end through training and coaching colleagues.

#### Working is to some extent a matter of give and take

Being appreciated and having good contacts with colleagues are

in any case the most important things in your work. My method of working isn't so strict. Working, like life, is to some extent a matter of give and take. I'm a flexible person and in this day and age and society a certain degree of uncertainty is part and parcel of life. So you have to make sure you're armed against it and you do that by means of your own attitude. Particularly in a rapidly changing work environment like ours it's essential for you to sometimes allow yourself to go with the flow. Teleworking, for instance, used to be virtually impossible. I can remember suddenly being able to connect to the office using a phone line and a laptop and how amazing that was at the time. Liberating too, since as a part-time worker you could suddenly see far more possibilities for doing your work. At the same time it's sometimes a bind, because you're expected to be online and available at all times. It would be nice if we could accept that we don't all want to be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I don't mind checking my email when I'm at home or doing a bit of work in my spare time. But relaxation and rest are at least as important to enable you to charge your batteries. Discovering and keeping your balance in the given circumstances, that's what it's about.

#### Flexibility has to come from both sides

I don't usually look more than two years ahead. After all, the older you get the less far you can look. I currently work two and a half days a week. Things do have to fit in with your work - I realize that. And I'm sufficiently loyal and flexible to take that into account. After all, flexibility has to come from both sides - there we have that idea of give and take again. At Philips I hope to see greater collaboration between the young pups and the old guard. Sometimes I see young colleagues doing everything again, without drawing from their more experienced colleagues' vat of knowledge. Conversely, we can also benefit from new employees' fresh insights. Really we ought to learn structurally from one another, say in the form of coaching and training between older and younger employees so that we learn to understand one another better and can also get the most out of each other's talents and mistakes.

## Loes Bouwkamp



**1995**  
Philips CFT – technologist, coating technology

**2005**  
Philips Applied Technologies – technologist, coating and material specialist

**2011**  
Philips Research – senior scientist, food chemistry

**2005-2013**  
Works Council member

For me Active ageing means:

**Continuing to think carefully about the choices you make in life**

**“** Make conscious choices, think carefully about the steps that you do and don't take”

**“** Don't just keep on going along a path you once chose – **embrace changes**”

# I needed to come out of my comfort zone

When I look back at my student days I'm rather proud of the diligence and perseverance with which I tackled everything. It started during my chemistry course in Utrecht, which I finished in a little more than four years, specializing in inorganic chemistry and catalysis.

**A**fter three applications I then managed to get a PhD place in electrochemistry. During my PhD period I went through a deep emotional dip, but still got my PhD before I was thirty. My pride is in the fact that I finished it.

#### The Works Council was an enhancement for my development

After getting my PhD I found a work experience position at CFT. There was a rapport right away and after only three weeks I was given a permanent job. I then completed a post-academic course in coating technology and was involved in a wide variety of projects. I did initial developments, for instance, but also industrialization and factory support, including mediating in conflicts between supplier and factory. I enjoyed that mediation work and joined the Works Council. In the end I spent two spells of three years on the Works Council for AppTech and one spell of three years for Research. I was chair of several committees, which was a huge enhancement for my personal development. You had the feeling that you were able to exert some influence, particularly when you did some sparring with other Works Council members from management.

#### I needed a good kick in the pants

Times and needs change and I must admit that by nature I'm not very flexible. I'm horrified when I'm suddenly faced with things that should be different and I quickly go into defiance mode. My need for safety and certainty is also reflected in my preference for my own workspace and having the same people around me. I feel best when I'm firmly rooted in a group. But if you keep on doing what you've always done you have to be able to justify that to yourself. And to others. Over the previous fifteen years I'd been very happy – in my pleasant comfort zone. But what I really needed was a good kick in the pants.

#### Looking for new competences

And I was given one, in the form of a group leader who broke

through my safe cocoon. He told me that my (coating) capabilities would soon no longer be needed at Philips and that it was time to move on to pastures new. Not such a nice thing to hear, but ultimately not a bad thing. He encouraged me to start looking for new competences and challenged me to think about my preferences and passions. What did I get enjoyment and satisfaction from, what suited me? Because he brought the matter up at an early stage, my sense of security in general and job security in particular were never affected. Together we looked for new areas of competence and as a result I continued to look forward to the future with confidence. In the end I found that I had a preference for food chemistry, which has given me a great deal of energy and renewed zest for work. The focus of my activities in the food industry is in Shanghai, but I see it as a challenge to adapt those activities so as to be successful here in Eindhoven as well. I was recently approached by a head-hunter, but the offer was in my previous field and this felt like a step backwards. I don't fancy that now that I'm nice and busy in my new field.

#### I want to make conscious choices in my life

In the past few years I've had the feeling that I'm better balanced. That's partly because I've only been working eighty percent since the birth of our eldest child. I enjoy the freedom and the fresh energy that my day off gives me, even though my laptop's always on. But it's mainly because I'm emotionally more mature and am increasingly operating on the basis of feeling, whereas I used to tend to let my head call the shots. I realize that you can get a very long way on personal strength and want to make conscious choices in my life. Just keeping going along a path you once chose doesn't constitute a conscious choice. That's fear. That flexibility continues to be an aspect of my character that needs developing – it's not in my nature and always has to be stimulated. So I see myself more as a reed. My roots are firmly in the ground, but my stems are getting ever more pliable. I've had to learn to bend with the winds that blow through my life.

## Paula Luitingh



For me Active ageing means:

**Dealing with the dynamics  
of a changing world**

**2006**

Philips Semiconductors (NXP)  
– management assistant

**2008**

Philips Design – executive assistant

**2011**

Philips Research – executive assistant

**“Get off your chair and develop yourself”**

**“Try to live as healthily as possible”**

# After all, you never know what life will throw at you

As a child I wanted to be a pilot. In a small plane above the earth – I thought that must be a great feeling. In the end my life turned out to be a bit different, as life often does.

**W**hen I was forty I started work as a secretary/receptionist, after my partner passed away. I've now had four different jobs and I'm still developing and learning. Why stay within your comfort zone when there's much more to experience outside it? I saw that once on a poster by Loesje (the free speech organization) and I must say that over the past few years this motto has applied to me perfectly.

#### I wanted more development options

Why did I become a management assistant? It wasn't an innate passion or urge. To be honest, I assumed that anyone could become one, irrespective of education or diplomas. And perhaps that's the case, but there's a difference between an ordinary management assistant and one who gets everything out of her job. I wanted to be the latter. Unfortunately that was never going to happen at the accountancy firm where I started. The work was dull, monotonous and there was no opportunity for growth. The middle management course that I took at that time I financed myself, because I felt it was important to keep on developing myself. I realized that it would be better if I went to work at a large company where I'd have more opportunities and development options.

#### I started hunting for vacancies

Via the Randstad temp agency I arrived at Philips Semiconductors (NXP), where I then got my middle management diploma and was also allowed to take a project management course. Philips Design was the next stop, but when I saw that the organization was going to be split up and my job would be axed at the end of the year I started looking further. I'm not the kind of person who waits until new work comes to me. Since I wanted to stay at Philips I started hunting for internal vacancies. Luckily the position of executive assistant became available at Research; I've now worked there for three and a half years and am greatly

enjoying it. And yet I'm still curious about what the future might bring. So I still keep an eye on the job market and keep looking at (internal) vacancies. I also keep my CV on the Monster job vacancies board up-to-date and I have an active LinkedIn profile.

#### Real contact is so important

18 months ago, on my own initiative, I started a business administration course at NCOI. As a management assistant it's important that you have the courage to get off your chair. Don't go on sitting in the same place, but move and look around! When I have to speak to people I simply go to them. I often take my laptop along as well so that I can schedule in a tricky appointment. Real contact is important and when you talk to people something often happens and you gain new insights that you would have missed if you'd used email or social media. Open spaces don't always work for me. I'm rather curious and easily distracted. Ear-plugs are a solution, but sometimes I go somewhere else or go and sit in a room if I need to concentrate. That freedom of movement is important to me.

#### I'm still curious

Since I started the business administration course I've realized that I can do so much more. Perhaps in the future I might want to do something in the field of process improvements. There's still so much more to learn and do. Of course I can tell I'm getting older, but I do my best to stay fit. I eat healthily, work on my fitness a bit, go for a walk outdoors every day and go to bed on time. If I want to keep on working forty hours a week I'll have to look after myself. Looking back on my career I can still see myself as that child who in the evenings used to look at the stars with her father and wanted to fly past them on the way to the moon. In my work, too, I'm still curious about what's beyond the horizon. After all, you never know what life will throw at you. Which is why nothing stops me from developing – I do it for myself. Fortunately at Research I'm given every opportunity to do that!

## Peter Bingley



**1994**  
Mathematics Department – researcher

**1997**  
Software Engineering Methodology  
Department – researcher

**1998**  
Software Architecture Department – researcher

**2001**  
Software Architecture Department  
– project leader

**2006**  
Media Interaction Department – cluster leader

**2007**  
Connected Consumer Solutions Department  
– cluster leader

**2010**  
Human Interaction & Experience Department  
– project leader

**2012**  
Patient Care and Measurements Department  
– project leader

For me Active ageing means:

**Continuing to look actively  
for possibilities to keep  
having new experiences**

**“ Have a chat  
with a recruiter”**

**“ Never be  
discouraged,  
follow your  
dreams”**

**“ Show your face,  
make sure that  
people know you”**

# I like to see people blossom

What do you do until you retire? Not that it's something I think about on a daily basis, but recently it's been occupying me more. Partly because the subject comes up more frequently during performance review interviews.

I'm 51 now and I don't think that in ten years' time I'll be doing exactly the same as now. But what I do know is that I want to go on enjoying my work. That's the most important thing for me.

#### **Lots of opportunities for changing fields**

From chips to lifestyle and interaction between people and robots: since I started at Philips in 1994 I've been involved in extremely wide-ranging research fields. Over the past few years I've mainly been a project leader in the medical sector, a field in which I feel very much at home. The nice thing about Research is that you have lots of opportunities for changing fields and departments. You do stay in the research area, though, so the nature of the work stays the same.

#### **Creating feeling of unity**

In 2011 I spent six months working in Bangalore, in the research lab. It's a fairly new laboratory, with a lot of young people, relatively little seniority and a different approach to working. There's less of the 'Philips feeling' there, which is not so surprising given the high turnover among the employees. I was asked in order to make a contribution with my seniority in that Asian lab, to propagate the 'Philips culture' and strengthen connections to the other Research labs: a nice task that I enjoyed doing. I notice in any case that my interests have changed over the past few years. I used to be mainly involved in coming up with technical solutions, but in recent years I've focused more and more on the human aspect of my work. Collaborating, establishing connections, coaching and supervising people: things like that have become more important.

#### **I like to see people blossom**

I think that the nice thing about managing projects is the coaching: helping people to achieve better results and deploying them to their full potential. Utilizing their talents and working out the best place to get the most out of them. I like to see people blossom in a project that's tailor-made for them. At the moment I'm coaching

a colleague at her request and I'm getting a great deal of satisfaction out of it. I'm also not shy about providing colleagues with feedback and thinking about how they can best tap into their capabilities. Most people are receptive to this and personally I think that it fits excellently into the concept of good employeeship. But it's still a minor aspect, of course, not a structural part of my job. I'd like to make it more than just a secondary activity. The difficulty is that it's much easier to push your career in a technical direction. You can become a senior researcher or a project leader, but if you want to develop people management skills it's less clearly defined. It's not impossible: there really are people who take the step, but it's definitely more difficult.

#### **I'm going to take a course**

Nevertheless I won't be discouraged by that. So I keep a close eye on the vacancies and I'm having an interview with a recruiter at Philips soon, who can hopefully play a further part in this process. Last fall I started doing literature research at iXR in Best. Not because I get all that wildly enthusiastic about literature research, but because it enables me to take a look behind the scenes at iXR and I can show my face. I'm also going to look for possibilities of doing more coaching work in my present job and developing people management skills, for example by taking a coaching course.

#### **I know I can do it**

I also think that this issue goes beyond Research alone. I think that we at Philips need to give people the chance to prove themselves in a different role. For example with a probationary period of a year, so that they can demonstrate that they have more qualities. Ultimately it's all about being able to go on working with pleasure and passion. For me that means following new paths and tapping into dormant talents. I know I can do it – in that regard I don't doubt myself. I think that as a line manager I could get the best out of people. All that's missing is the necessary experience, the knowledge and the chance to show it!

## Sjir van Loo



1985

Industrial Electronics - Software architect and group leader software development

1990

Philips Medical Systems (now: Healthcare) - Systems Architect

1993

Philips Research - Systems Architect

2015

Retirement

For me Active ageing means:

**Not waiting until the work comes to you, but consciously keeping on looking for possibilities**

**“Maintain a strong network”**

**“Look for ways to stay energetic”**

# Look for ways to keep feeling energetic

The big day arrives in a couple of months. That's when I turn 65, finish my work at Philips Research and retire. The last few years have been a search for a satisfactory role for me to fulfill at work.

**G**roups were disbanded, arranged differently or the focus was shifted, so that in many cases the content of my work also changed. Within that changing environment I've always been actively involved in finding enjoyable and meaningful work. You simply have to accept that the world around you is changing. And that you have to cope with that fact. But sometimes it has grated.

#### **There are possibilities everywhere**

Once you turn 55, building up a career is a thing of the past. For me the most important thing after that was to enjoy my work. I didn't want to think about all the changes that were taking place. Of course, I also felt uncertain and anxious about what might happen. After all, I wouldn't be the first person to lose their job. But I wanted to be ahead of the game. So I've never waited to see what my boss would say - I've always kept on looking for possibilities myself. And I've laid out the lines of my career in a positive and active manner. That's brought me plenty of benefits - I've always had enjoyable and meaningful work. I knew where my strengths lay and what opportunities I was able to and wanted to grasp.

#### **I started actively looking around**

My career has always revolved around system architecture: an area in which, until a few years ago, there was less and less interest at Research. A reorganization took place around 2007 and it was unclear whether there was enough work for me. I didn't wait to see what would happen then either, but started actively looking around in the network that I'd built up over the years. I was soon able to get myself seconded on a part-time basis to ESI, an institute that I'd done some things for previously. I stayed on the Philips payroll. For me this was the perfect solution for bridging the period in which system architecture was under fire at Philips. With a solid safety net in case it failed.

#### **I consciously make time to go for lunch and take a walk around the block**

I can certainly tell that my energy levels have reduced over the past few years. Working full-time costs a great deal of energy and sometimes I think that in the past few years I should have worked a day less. But I didn't. What I did do was look for ways to keep feeling energetic. For instance, every morning and afternoon I set aside half an hour in my diary so that I don't spend the entire day in meetings. I also consciously make time every day to go for lunch and take a walk around the pond. After all, you might want to do lots of things, but your body and your mind have to play ball too. You'll have to take that into account yourself.

#### **I wanted to finish my work on a strong note**

Now that I'm about to retire it's also time for reflection. My feelings are predominantly positive. Philips Research is a fantastic work environment and I've had a great time here. We enjoy a high degree of autonomy at Research. We can exert plenty of influence over our work and our career ourselves. I'm somewhat less positive as regards the past year. Now that people know I'm leaving, they involve me less and less in the work and in new projects. That's only logical - the work just carries on after you leave, but it's also difficult. I wanted to contribute a bit more and deploy my strengths so as to leave something impressive behind me. Perhaps it would be a good idea in situations like this if employees and managers made a plan together to conclude the final year in a positive manner. A conscious policy regarding departing employees, such as a final project based on specific strengths, could be the answer. That would have given me an even better feeling and been a lovely farewell from this company, where I've worked with so much passion and pleasure. Because what's certain is that I'll look back at all those years at Research with warm feelings!

## Truus van der Burgt



1978

Natlab – support and advisory role to Information Processing Department

1988

Natlab – support and advisory role to Thermodynamics and Rheology Group

1991

Utrecht Polytechnic – project leader, lecturer, propaedeutic coordinator, head of bachelors education (Electrical Engineering)

2001

Philips Research – program manager at Centre for Technical Training

2010

Philips Research Eindhoven – manager special projects

For me Active ageing means:

**Continuing to invest in new fields in order to keep on developing yourself**

**“Look for an inspirational sparring partner, at home or at work, who thinks along with you”**

**“Don’t hide away from people you can help; use your network”**

# I like to be needed

My husband is a poet and a mathematician and he often says: ‘Our marriage is mixed. She’s a doer, he’s a thinker’. That’s correct. I’m not a dawdler and it’s not in my nature to sit and wait.

sometimes have doubts, of course, but my first question is always: ‘What can we do about this?’. And you can see that reflected in my career. It’s really not always been easy and the various steps in my career have often been triggered by external factors. But those changes have given me a more flexible view of my life and work.

### Uncertainty can sometimes be a blessing

If you experience many changes in your work, that helps you to be more pliant in your work relationships. And not to immediately go around moaning when things aren’t going well. You learn to discover new possibilities and create opportunities for yourself. For example, when I left NatLab to go to Utrecht Polytechnic I wasn’t particularly pleased about it. That wasn’t so surprising – I’d spent almost ten years studying at Eindhoven University of Technology supported by Philips in terms of time and money and then suddenly your job’s up in the air. But I found it really hard not to be certain about my work, so I decided not to wait around but to leave instead. It was certainly not nice. It took a great deal of time, discussions and reflection, involving pluses and minuses. Fortunately I’ve got a strong home front that I can discuss everything with. With hindsight I’m glad things turned out the way they did. That uncertainty was a blessing – it meant that I found it easier to direct my focus outwards and embark upon new paths.

### I like organizing, but with an intellectual challenge

When I returned to Philips Research after spending twelve and a half years in Utrecht, I met people who’d been doing the same thing all that time. Even the building smelled the same, as though nothing had changed in all those years. For me that would be suffocating. Although I wonder whether I would have left Philips if things had been the way they are now, afterwards I was proud

that I’d experienced so many changes. Nevertheless, my various jobs do have a common denominator. I like organizing, but with an intellectual challenge. In that regard I’m now in exactly the right place. Via my internal network I received a tip about a vacancy at Research as the right hand of the head of Philips Research NL and to maintain specific training courses. The latter activity grew to encompass setting up and maintaining a Research curriculum and a role as a business partner for Philips University. A job that suits me nicely. I like making a difference, I like having influence and I enjoy seeing my ideas come to fruition. Where do you see that better than in instruction and training courses that help our organization to move forwards?

### I can always find work as a freelancer

I know from experience that things can simply cease. Which is why I keep my ears open always and everywhere. You won’t hear me complaining about open-plan offices – that racket’s a source of inspiration and information! If I want peace and quiet I can work at home for a day. I recently expanded my activities and started monitoring clinical studies. A rich and, for me, fairly undeveloped field, about which I’d like to learn a lot more: also as an investment in the future. If my work at Philips were to disappear I could always find work as a freelancer. What does frustrate me, though, is the fact that you can no longer run as fast as you could before. Literally and figuratively. New material doesn’t sink in as easily and after a hard day’s work it’s tough to get stuck into the textbooks in the evening. I’m still a real work-horse, though. I now work 90 percent, but if you asked me whether I’d rather work more or less I’d have no hesitation about opting for more. Sometimes on a Monday morning I’ll see emails from people I couldn’t quite help. That upsets me, I don’t feel good about it. I like to be needed.

## Anja Welvaarts



1989

Philips Research – management  
assistant to head of personnel

1991

Philips Research – secretary/co-founder  
Secretary Power in the Lab (SPIL)

2008

Philips Research – coordinator Jet-Net Research

2012

Philips Research – event manager Research /  
coordinator Jet-Net Research

2014

Philips Research – manager Jet-Net@Campus

For me Active ageing means:

**Keeping my sights  
on the future and  
not seizing up**

“ Have the courage  
to **show yourself**  
and make contacts”

“ Take a course  
and keep  
working on your  
**development**”

# I'd rather chase my dreams

Enthusiastic and curious as I am, I'm always on the lookout for new things. So standard, routine work wouldn't suit me. I enjoy being surprised.

**S**o I'm always looking carefully around me. Working's enjoyable if you have the courage to take risks and aren't afraid to try all sorts of things out. Who knows what you miss out on when you let doubt be your guide.

### I've built up an extensive network

And you can see that decisiveness reflected in my career. In 1989 I started work as a secretary at Philips through a temp agency. At that time the children were no longer so small and I wanted to get back to work. Since then I've gone from one job to another without having to apply very often. I've always been very active outside my secretarial work: I've also been on various committees. I've never sat still and have never hidden behind my actual job. In this way I've built up an extensive network of people who have thought about me whenever a nice new job became vacant.

### It was becoming more and more my baby

In 2008 I started work as an assistant for Jet-Net Research, a program for getting secondary schoolchildren interested in technology. They often have the idea that the technological world consists solely of physics 'nerds'; but we show them that, on the contrary, technology is broad, extensive and exciting. From that time on I worked two days at Jet-Net Research and two days as event manager for Research under the MarCom flag. When in 2014 the MarCom department was axed, I had a lucky escape and my working week was even increased to five days. But because Jet-Net was becoming more and more my baby, in October of that year I started working entirely for Philips Nederland. A relief, because working for two bosses always involves making compromises. I now have a WGPer (WGP is the Philips Employment Scheme) who relieves me of day-to-day matters so that I can concentrate fully on projects and contacts with organizations for Jet-Net. I'm learning a lot from Jos, my colleague, who takes me along to all the relevant meetings and is teaching me the tricks of the trade. Should he retire in a few years I hope that I'll be fully up to speed with his work.

### I've achieved my growth myself

Over the past few decades I've gone from working two and a

half days to five days. Quite an increase, especially when you consider that you're not getting any younger - on the contrary. My work has also become more challenging, with more independence and responsibilities. To be perfectly honest I'd be dreadfully unhappy if I were still working as a secretary. I've achieved that growth myself. How? Primarily by developing myself all the time. Course after course I've been on, in the fields of communications, public relations, business skills and personnel & labor. All those acquired skills are now coming in useful in my work.

### I'm not afraid to show myself

But that growth is also down to my character. Spontaneity and an urge to organize help tremendously if you want to progress. Nobody knows who you are if you keep yourself hidden behind your laptop in the open-plan office. Look around, talk to people and have the courage to ask questions. What's going on in the organization, what changes are taking place? People underestimate how much a simple chat and genuine interest can produce. This is why I now work one day a week on Boschdijk. A new environment, new people: for me it has an inspirational effect. Even though conversations may not lead to anything now, you never know where they can get you.

### Keep dreaming and chase your dreams

I don't feel 57, but my passport says that's what I am. And yet I keep investing in my future. Of course, I sometimes get anxious at the thought that I'll have to go on working for another ten years. That 'have to' in particular is something that doesn't cheer me up. But what's the alternative, sitting at home in three years' time? I still want too much for me to regard that as a realistic option. When people have a dull job they move slowly towards their retirement. I can't really be bothered, they think. I don't want to have an attitude like that. I don't want to quietly trundle on, I want to move up a gear. Or preferably two. If you have to do ten more years anyway you may as well make sure you get as much out of it as you can. That's why I'd prefer to do international work. That's quite an ambition, I realize that, but without dreams you may as well call it a day right away. I'd rather chase my dreams.

## Wim Weekamp



1969  
Philips Elcoma – engineer

1991  
CFT – senior consultant

2002  
Philips Applied Technologies – senior consultant

2011  
Philips Research – senior technologist

For me Active ageing means:

**Keeping on consciously asking myself these three questions: what do I want, what can I do and what does Philips need?**

Now that I work eighty percent my weekend has been extended by fifty percent and that suits me fine.  
**Highly recommended!**"

**“ Use knowledge and experience that you’ve gained in a different field”**

# More advantages than you might think

Curiosity is one of the most important factors for my work, as is creativity. I've worked at many places, but always in the field of product development.

**T**hat's the best area for me to express my ideas and creativity. I'm currently involved in several projects. I enjoy that diversity and have fun in my work. Once you lose that you have to look elsewhere.

**Carrying on working beyond 60 is becoming the norm**  
In my environment I see more and more colleagues who carry on working beyond sixty. For me there's also a certain degree of loyalty involved. I still feel closely connected to the organization because of the long history that I have with Philips. I worked at Elcoma, a Philips unit where components used to be made, for about 23 years. Elcoma was spun off around 2000 because components became commodities: anyone can make them, and at a lower cost than we can. I saw the same thing happen at Semiconductors. That's a pity, but such changes simply happen to you. You have to learn to deal with it.

**You have to know where your strengths lie**  
I later joined CTF, where I worked on connection techniques and laser welding for Elcoma, cathode ray tubes and semiconductors. Here I was asked for the second time in my career to play a management role, but I turned it down because that's something I don't fancy. You have to work out for yourself what suits you and where your strengths lie. So at the moment I'm mainly doing what I enjoy doing and, hopefully, what I'm good at. You need to build on your strengths, especially during the last few years of your career. I've always created new concepts and designs and I like the fact that there's now more time for FAE: the Friday afternoon experiments, which give you some scope for trying things out.

#### **I'm involved with people and technology all day long**

Things that have drastically changed the work are Office, the Internet and email. Your world used to be much smaller and it was harder to build up a network. Nowadays work worlds are becoming increasingly intertwined with one another and that has more advantages than you might think. My innate curiosity about technology remains my greatest driving force. It's maybe a deviation, but my motto is: Everyone's entitled to a deviation. I'm involved with technology all day long. That's the nature of the beast.

#### **I'm getting better and better at judging my own worth**

I'm currently working on medical products: intelligent catheters and needles with which surgeons can see even more clearly what they're doing during operations. Products that matter! I visit trade fairs to keep abreast of developments in my field and I think it's important to coach young employees substantively. I also continually translate my knowledge and experience into things that are good for the organization. The nice thing about getting older is that you get better and better at judging your own worth.

#### **Outside air keeps you healthy**

So I'd like to go on working as long as I still enjoy it and am healthy. A spot of exercise is good for that, such as cycling every day and playing sports occasionally. We also have a large garden in which I do a lot of relaxing in the summer months – outside air keeps you healthy. I also have my own little workshop in this garden, where I work on ideas and concepts. I recently found an observation book from 1971 in which I'd noted down a recipe for bright-pickling aluminum. That sort of thing makes me very happy. So I'm certain that my love of technology will never leave me. Not even after I retire.



# Threads

Which factors cause people at Philips Research to get older at work in an energetic, productive and appreciated manner? Although every 'Active Ager' in this book has a unique and individual career story, there are still some threads that can be spun. We will expose these threads in this section. At the end of the section we will summarize our findings in the form of tips for both employees and line managers.

## Factors that promote Active ageing

The factors that cause Philips Research employees to get older actively at work occur at various levels:

**1**

**Individual:** factors within the individuals themselves, such as work enjoyment, determining a course themselves, having a flexible attitude towards changes, occasionally taking a step and working on a healthy balance between work and private life and on vitality;

**2**

**Relationships:** factors in the relationships that over-fifties have with people inside and outside Philips Research, such as working in teams, social networks, social support and active encouragement by line managers, colleagues and partners;

**3**

**Organization:** factors within the organization, such as the opportunities for taking training courses, career coaching and part-time working, as well as promotion opportunities, a high degree of autonomy and being appreciated.

On the basis of the personal career stories we will in the next few sections describe what factors determine Active ageing. We will illustrate them with quotations from the portraits.

## Individual factors

The following individual factors determine Active ageing at Philips Research.

### Work enjoyment

Enjoying and continuing to enjoy work: on the basis of the portraits we conclude that this is the most important thing for going on working in a motivated, productive and energetic fashion. "Ultimately it's all about being able to go on working with pleasure and passion", and "I'd like to go on working as long as I still enjoy it", say interviewed employees. It seems as though work enjoyment becomes increasingly important as the years pass. One of the people portrayed expresses it like this: "Once you turn 55, building up a career is a thing of the past. For me the most important thing after that was to enjoy my work". Being passionate about technology is an important source of work enjoyment for many people. "In my opinion technical competence remains the best basis", and "technology, that makes me very happy. I'm certain that my love of technology will never leave me. Not even after I retire", say successful Active Agers.

### Being open to changes

Being open to changes is a second important personal quality that emerges from the portraits of Active Agers. The employees interviewed show themselves to be flexible, are curious and are open to new things, as evidenced for instance by this statement: "Change is the thread running through my career. You mustn't tie yourself down in a job, it's fun to do things away from it and continue to develop yourself". Not everyone is keen on changes. One interviewee says: "Times and needs change and I must admit that by nature I'm not very flexible". Another says: "Have the courage to think outside your own framework, though I sometimes find that difficult". So everyone's attitude towards change is different. What the people portrayed have in common, however, is that they all accept that change is a fact: "...in this day and age and society a certain degree of uncertainty is part and parcel of life", says one interviewee. Another says: "You simply have to accept that the world around you is changing. And that you have to cope with that fact". In addition, changes give rise to positive things, say the Active Agers. One

of them expresses it as follows: "Changes give you energy: you get the chance to learn new things". On the basis of the acceptance of change and a focus on the positive sides of it, people start moving.

### Control over your own career

What is striking is that the employees portrayed start moving on their own initiative. They chart their own course and take control over their careers. "I'm not the kind of person who waits until new work comes to me", "I enjoy making detailed plans" and "I've never waited to see what my boss would say - I've always kept on looking for possibilities. That's brought me plenty of benefits". These were some of the quotations we noted down. These people do not wait until something happens to them, but think proactively about the future of Philips Research and what their relationship is to it. They are interested in the organization's focal points and strategic course. "I often think about the competences that will be needed in the future: both inside and outside Philips", says an interviewed employee. Another says: "You have to work out for yourself what suits you and where your strengths lie".

### Regularly taking a (small) step

Besides knowing what you can do and what you want to do and where things are headed at Philips Research and/or outside it, it is important to take a career step occasionally. These steps do not have to be large, as evidenced by the examples in this book. "From time to time I like taking a step to one side and doing something different", says an interviewed employee. Another says that he would like to take a career step, "but nothing radical". And yet another one says: "I'm an even-tempered person who takes cautious steps. But I do take them". Pressing ahead substantively on the basis of your own technical knowledge, exploring a different competence area or using your current expertise in a different business are examples of horizontal or diagonal steps that people take to keep their careers moving literally and figuratively. And incidentally the stories show that there is also nothing wrong with taking or wanting to take larger steps. Moving to a different organization, aiming for a management position, continuing to dream of that international career or simply "moving up a gear" are also specified by interviewees as possibilities for getting older actively at work. For all steps, whether large or small, addressing a new challenge is the 'leitmotif'. Particularly when routine is lying in wait, the Active Agers portrayed say that it is important to go in search of it. "Why stay within your comfort zone when there's more to experience outside it?" is one interviewee's advice to her colleagues. When taking career steps, incidentally,

a healthy dose of perseverance comes in useful. Because it turns out that it is not always easy to find something new. Support from social contacts and the organization is then of fundamental importance. More about that later.

### Working on balance and vitality

The Active Agers in this booklet have something else in common with one another. They take good care of themselves: both as far as the balance between work and private life is concerned and also as regards their vitality. Sometimes people are forced to pay more attention to their vitality, as evidenced by the statement: "My health problems have had a major effect on the course of my career". People also often make conscious choices in this area. "I notice that the balance between work and private life is becoming more important. For instance, I consciously no longer read emails at the weekend and I've started doing more sport". The colleagues portrayed have found various ways of working on the balance between work and private life and vitality. Some do yoga, some like to work in the garden, while others consciously do not have a mobile phone so as to be better able to monitor their limits. Other activities mentioned are: going for a walk every day, setting aside at least half an hour in your diary every morning and afternoon so as not to be in meetings all day, occasionally taking a sabbatical in order to go on spectacular trips and do development work, and also thinking up new ideas and concepts in your private life, since that generates energy. Contact with colleagues is also important for your vitality, said one interviewee: "You stay sprightly by surrounding yourself with new people and new ideas". Working on balance and vitality is necessary, according to the Active Agers, because your body changes as you get older. No matter how much you enjoy your work, your body and mind require (more) attention. "After all, you might want to do lots of things, but your body and mind have to play ball too. You'll have to take that into account yourself",

These people do not wait until something happens to them, but **think proactively about the future** of Philips Research and what their relationship is to it"

says one of the people portrayed. Another says: "What frustrates me is the fact that you can no longer run as fast as you could before. Literally and figuratively". One Active Ager gives concrete advice: "Discovering and keeping your balance in the given circumstances, that's what it's about". The Active Agers have a positive view of the situation: "So bring on that gray hair - I'm fit enough to take on new things".

## Relational factors

On the relational level the following factors determined Active ageing:

### Collaboration enriches

"Over the past few years teamwork has become far more important and at Research we're collaborating with one another more and more", says one of the people portrayed. Active Agers' stories show that they draw energy from this. They experience working in a team as being enjoyable ("I feel best when I'm rooted in a group"), and many people notice that as the years pass they give more attention to the human aspect of their work ("Collaborating, establishing connections: things like that have become more important"; and "Apart from discussing matters, I also enjoy helping colleagues if they're having trouble with something"). Most of the employees interviewed say that they enjoy collaborating with younger colleagues. You get energy from transferring knowledge and experiences, for example by means of coaching, between younger and older people. One of the people portrayed says, in this regard: "Really we ought to learn structurally from one another, say in the form of coaching and training between older and younger employees. So that we understand one another better and can get the most out of each other's talents and mistakes". Others see themselves as having a role in coaching colleagues and would like to devote more attention to this in the latter phases of their careers. "Major career moves are simply not going to happen. What you can do is help young colleagues to make progress and support them by sharing knowledge and experience. One day of coaching a week would be a nice way to end my career", says one interviewee. He is not the only Active Ager to have this wish.

### Social networks

According to the interviewees, social networks are of crucial importance for maintaining work enjoyment and occasionally taking a career step. Working in teams (see above) offers plenty of opportunity for making contacts with different people. But the employees interviewed also do much more to build up and maintain their social networks. The portraits are full of good examples, such as: having an active

LinkedIn profile, having yourself temporarily seconded to a different department, sitting on various committees in a different field from your own, occasionally working at a different Philips site, taking courses and training sessions, having interviews with Philips recruiters, and regularly literally getting off your chair and walking around in the building. Joining the Works Council is also found to be an effective way of strengthening your network, as well as – at the same time – increasing your knowledge of the organization. "Don't go on sitting in the same place, but move and look around", says one Active Ager. Because networking produces benefits, as evidenced by this statement: "How did I end up in all those roles? I know a lot of people. And that's helped me a great deal".

### Social support and encouragement

In order to keep working energetically and enterprisingly, social support and encouragement from, among others, the line manager, colleagues and a partner are important – along with collaboration and a social network. For instance, a line manager can give someone the necessary push to get moving. One of the people portrayed says in this regard: "Over the previous fifteen years I'd been very happy - in my pleasant comfort zone. But what I really needed was a good kick in the pants. And I was given one, in the form of a group leader who broke through my safe cocoon. He told me that my expertise would soon no longer be needed at Philips and that it was time to move on to pastures new. He encouraged me to start looking for new competences and challenged me to think about my preferences and passions". In the case of an employee who had become less employable owing to health problems, the support of a line manager also proved to be of crucial importance: "My group leader was very supportive and gave me every freedom to recover and decide how I wanted my career to continue", said the interviewee. Not only line managers can provide the necessary support – colleagues are also found to be a good source of assistance, as evidenced by this statement: "I'm learning a lot from my colleague, who takes me along to all the relevant meetings and is teaching me the tricks of the trade". Many Active Agers also mention their partners at home, who act as sounding boards when career decisions are being made and regarding activities (such as traveling or playing sport) for the purpose of keeping the right balance between work and private life. In short: you don't do Active ageing alone. You need other people for it as well.

## Tips

After reading these portraits we summarized a **number of tips for managers** to support Active ageing:

### Tips for line managers

1. Express your appreciation of over-fifties;
2. Provide jobs that involve learning and that come with enough autonomy and challenges;
3. If necessary, give people a 'development push';
4. Discuss changes in the organization with employees;
5. Enter into dialog with employees and make tailored agreements, for example about work content and responsibilities (such as coaching duties for over-fifties);
6. Offer people ample training, development and promotion opportunities, including over-fifties;
7. Stop the option of working part-time from being a taboo subject;
8. Draw up a concrete plan with employees in their final working year.

## Organizational factors

The organization also contributes significantly to the way in which people get older energetically and enterprisingly at work. The following organizational factors emerge from the portraits.

### Training and development opportunities

To learn for a lifetime, and so keep up with developments both inside and outside Philips Research, training is necessary. Many of the interviewed employees have been given opportunities to do this and have grasped them. "Course after course I've been on" and "I've also always continued to learn, I've taken courses" were statements made by two of them, for instance. Active ageing is not only about taking formal training courses, it is also about opportunities for developing yourself personally, for example by having interviews with a career coach, or professional support when writing and uploading a CV to, say, LinkedIn. We heard good examples of this too, such as: "I attended three coaching sessions with e-miles, at which I examined whether my work still suited me. Although I felt that the sessions might have gone on for longer, they were certainly educational". There is no maximum age for learning and development, it emerges from the portraits. The interviewed employees are still taking a wide variety of courses or have plans to do so.

### Part-time working

Some of the employees interviewed say that working part-time helps them to go on working for longer. "I work eighty percent. I enjoy the freedom and the fresh energy that my day off gives me, even though my laptop's always on", says one interviewee, for example. However, the switch to working part-time at Philips Research is found to be not always easy: "Initially it felt like a step backwards. I was no longer kept fully informed, my output was lower and I could no longer assume all responsibility. On the other hand my body now gets

more rest, the balance between work and my private life has improved and I still feel useful and appreciated. I also have the idea that I work much more efficiently". In the end this interviewee made the switch to part-time work. There is also an Active Ager who did not do that and looks back at it in this way: "Working full-time costs a great deal of energy and sometimes I think that in the past few years I should have worked a day less. But I didn't". A missed opportunity? But there are also Active Agers who have taken the reverse route. One of them started working more rather than fewer days a week as the years passed. So playing it by ear as regards working hours would seem to be the best idea.

### Internal promotion opportunities

The fact that Philips (Research) is a large organization, with internal promotion opportunities, is regarded by the Active Agers portrayed as an advantage. For some of them the size of the organization was a factor in selecting Philips Research as their employer: "I realized that it would be better if I went to work at a large company where I'd have more opportunities and development options", says one of them. Anyone who wants to can take internal steps. For instance by mobilizing their own network, or by keeping an eye on internal vacancies and replying to them.

### Autonomy

The content of the jobs at Philips Research largely determines how much work enjoyment people experience and how much of a challenge the job is. The Active Agers interviewed are enthusiastic about the degree of autonomy that they experience in their work. "We enjoy a high degree of autonomy at Research. We can exert plenty of influence over our work and our career ourselves", says one of the employees interviewed. For many people autonomy is an important work value. Fortunately, based on the portraits, getting older seems to have a positive effect on the degree of autonomy experienced: "my work has become more challenging, with more independence and responsibilities", said one Active Ager. In short: jobs that teach you things and provide a great deal of autonomy, rather than jobs that wear you out, are a determining factor for Active ageing.

### Appreciation

For Active Agers appreciation is also an important driving force for keeping working energetically and enterprisingly. "People who are appreciated often walk a bit faster". The employees interviewed feel appreciated. One Active Ager, who has now retired, does have some concrete advice regarding the final working year. He argues in favor of "a conscious policy regarding departing employees". He had noticed that in his last year people had involved him less and less in the work and in projects. He felt that that was logical, "but also difficult". Appreciation from the first to the last working day at Philips Research, that's what it's about! Line managers play an important part in this. They can express their appreciation of Active Agers at performance review interviews, or by handing out compliments at work.

### After reading this book one thing is absolutely clear.

**Working on Active ageing is worthwhile, for all parties concerned!**

## Tips

After reading these portraits, would you like to be part of Active ageing? If so, we give **a number of tips below**.

### Tips for employees

1. Enjoy your work;
2. Be open to changes;
3. Determine your own course;
4. Regularly take a (small) career step;
5. Work on your vitality and the balance between work and private life;
6. Collaborate;
7. Build up and maintain your social network;
8. Ask for support and accept encouragement from your line manager, colleagues, partner;
9. Take advantage of the development, training and promotion opportunities available at Philips;
10. Make tailored agreements, for instance about work content and working hours.



**For additional information**

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