

# Companies



## The Development of the Business Case GlaxoSmithKline

***GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) invests significant resources in a corporate culture based on partnership and health because of the returns for individuals and the company. A healthy, engaged and innovative workforce is a prerequisite for all companies striving to achieve optimum performance; but GSK is also a leading player in the global pharmaceuticals industry, making it doubly important for the company to be seen at the forefront of healthcare for its 100,000 employees, as well as an exemplary corporate citizen.***

From a rather paternalistic, pre-merger culture, GSK has matured its original Occupational Health provision – often regarded as a cost centre rather than a benefit centre into a comprehensive in-house Employee Health Management service (EHM), which contributes to the company’s overall performance. It is an active and fully integrated approach, which seeks the willing cooperation of employees through partnership, communication and practical support.

At the core of EHM is the company’s conviction that wellness means more than just traditional health protection; it is a philosophy that embraces the complete “biopsychosocial model” – the whole person. The company’s mission – “to improve the quality of life by enabling people to do more, feel better and live longer” – applies to its own employees, as well as to its markets.

GSK’s policies on such issues as smoking, flexible working etc, are based on population health management, but are geared to take account of individual needs. EHM professionals gather data, identify trends and problems and produce action plans, programmes and frameworks. Managers are required to lead by example and the service enjoys increasing involvement and backing from trade unions and the European Works Council.

Well-being programmes benefit the individual, but also need a business case justification. GSK is an innovation-driven company, spending £ 2.4 billion on R&D in the UK alone. Its success requires employees to be present and “switched on” – the key to tackling sub-optimal performance, capturing new ideas and avoiding costly errors. Shareholders have shown a close interest in workplace health issues.

GSK points to an influential survey, the Watson Wyatt Human Capital Index, which reported how workplace policies could enhance the market value of a company, such as flexible working arrangements (3.5 percent), high employee satisfaction (1.6 percent) and trust in leadership (1.2 percent). As a result of its own policies, GSK recently recorded a 20 percent drop in mental ill-health and a similar reduction in sickness absence lasting more than a week. EHM has developed an independently validated work-life survey, including a self-reported performance impact measure. Counselling is also evaluated, enabling comparisons on effectiveness.

GSK fosters a supportive and responsive environment where people can do their best work. EHM strives to demonstrate the link between health and performance. The all-round benefits are appreciated by well-informed and engaged employees.