

Workplace atmosphere depends on individual well-being

At RWE Rhein-Ruhr, as in many other companies, both field and office work have been increasingly characterised by work consolidation and information overload for several years. The loss of familiar work relationships in the course of restructuring places additional burdens on the individual, which often leads to stress. This situation requires executive staff to play a special integrative role. However, executives are often under particular pressure themselves. That is why the prevention project "Great Atmosphere – Well-Being at Work" has been supporting a comprehensive corporate culture in which executive staff and their employees talk about avoidable stress factors at work. The project combines various organisation units such as further training, integration management, occupational medicine, social consulting and company sports. The project started in Essen. It has been produced in a manual and will now move on from headquarters to the rest of the company.

The project starts with a moderated "kick-off" meeting for executive staff. Apart from information on stress at work and the importance of balancing leadership behaviour, a theatre play and a short film shot in the company are used to stimulate discussions; a member of the Executive Board is available to answer questions. A subsequent action programme with a multitude of information and presentations both on the subject of stress and well-being at work invites employees and their families to deal more actively with the subject. At the same time, information is given about how to increase individual well-being, covering such things as sports, relaxation and a balanced diet.

Employees are encouraged to table proposals to improve their well-being. Some executive staff will be given the opportunity to test a modern stress measuring procedure on themselves with personal advice.

With its prevention project, RWE Rhein-Ruhr has been responding to the proven, long-term damage to health caused by permanent stress. Apart from the personal losses that illness brings for those concerned, the

costs incurred by a company are considerable. This is illustrated by the following example:

- In a company with a total staff of 7,000 employees and a health rate of 95 percent, a total of 300 employees are absent every day.
- Taking an average wage and average non-wage labour costs as a basis, the company loses a total of euros 22.5 million every year.
- If the health rate is raised by 1 percent to 96 percent, this would result in savings of euros 4.5 million per year.

However, these calculations only show the tip of an iceberg. A poor state of health and demotivation caused by the workplace environment already reduce staff performance and efficiency even before a sick certificate is submitted. The full impact of the effects can only be guessed at. Therefore, all parties in the company are called upon to make an effort and pool their strengths to cushion these effects.





RWE Rhein-Ruhr AG, headquartered in Essen, was created in the wake of the RWE Group's restructuring in 2003. It has a total workforce of approximately 7,000 employees. The corporate venture capital fund of RWE invests in enterprises involved in rivers, water, natural gas, environmental services and in high-tech industries. The safe handling of electricity and other energy sources requires employees to act with great care at work, which has been supported by safety and health programmes for years.



Responsibility

The Management Board of RWE Rhein-Ruhr AG takes its responsibility towards its employees very seriously, especially in times when the individual is faced with ever more tasks. We know that the success of our company depends crucially on the motivation and efficiency of our workers. Therefore, RWE Rhein Ruhr AG developed the prevention project "Great Atmosphere – Well-Being at Work". This programme serves to provide support in the case of psychological stresses.

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