

WELLBEING MEASURES AT FERRERO FRANCE

1. Organisations involved

FERRERO



2. Description of the case

2.1. Introduction

Ferrero, the Italian gourmet foods manufacturer behind such names as Nutella and Kinder, has had a presence in Normandy since the end of the 1950s and hopes to be, above all, “a company where it’s good to work”.



Picture 1: Old photograph of the “Prevost et Grenier” weaving mill that was purchased in 1959 by Ferrero

Ferrero bought, transformed and modernized an old textile factory in Villers-Ecalles, near Rouen in the late 50's. The goal was to launch the production of the chocolates “Mon Cheri” in France. Then, in 1961 Ferrero France began the production of “Nutella”. Nowadays, one third of the world’s production of Nutella is made in Normandy. A few years later, new production lines were added to produce also “Kinder Bueno”. The plant is now producing more than a million of bars per day.

In 1993, Ferrero France launched a major modernisation plan for the entire company. Production, distribution, management, but also marketing, communication, everything was optimised. This resulted in a turnover that tripled in 12 years.

Nowadays, the French activity of Ferrero focuses on three sites around Rouen: the plant of Villers-Ecalles, the warehouse in Grand Quevilly and the headquarters in Mont Saint-Aignan. Including its sales forces spread throughout the country, Ferrero France employs now about 1,200 employees. In 2010/2011, the turnover of Ferrero in France amounted to 975 million Euros.

For a number of years, Ferrero France has been pursuing the goal to promote wellbeing at work, the aim being to promote a better quality of working life.

2.2. Aims

Ferrero France launched in 2007 a local corporate social responsibility program, called, “Ferrero Ensemble Justement”. This is a local project following the Group’s global commitments, with the following objectives:

- to satisfy local legal practices and customer expectations
- to support and enhance the actions of the Group in France, sharing a local contribution
- to involve employees directly and increase their wellbeing
- to participate in the Group’s commitments at local level.

This initiative is led by general management and involves the commitment of all the departments and all the employees of Ferrero France in order to define and implement numerous initiatives. It operates on a principle of participation from all parties, including employees, and is based on four pillars:



Picture 2: The four pillars of “Ferrero Ensemble Justement”

One of the specific aims of the program, corresponding to the first pillar “Us”, is to develop a broad wellbeing at work strategy across the three sites. This marks a new slant in favour of wellbeing in the workplace, an approach that has a collaborative nature anchored in a specific methodology - as at an initial stage improvement ideas were gathered through a questionnaire.

2.3. What was done, and how?

In 2008, the initiative was presented to company staff, after which suggestions for improving working life were gathered through a questionnaire. More than 160 employees participated in the reflection process which resulted in 10 specific proposals and an initial plan of action, approved by the Management Committee.

A Steering Committee was set up to put the proposals into action. Comprising 16 people (members of the staff and of the management from all departments of Ferrero France), the Steering Committee gradually built-up a network of interested parties.

In mid-2009, the suggestions of the Steering Committee were presented to the Management Committee which set the priorities for 2009/2010. Finally, at the end of 2009, a progress report was presented to all workers.

Working groups were then put in place, made up of volunteers. These groups were intended to further the reflection and propose concrete actions on different themes like diversity, flexibility, environment awareness, etc.

The measures presented below were developed in the frame of the first pillar of the initiative “Ferrero Ensemble Justement” (Us), aiming at improving wellbeing and working conditions for the employees.

This pillar includes four targets: (1) wellbeing of workers, (2) health and safety at work, (3) management, and (4) diversity measures.

Wellbeing at work measures

The initiatives in favour of a correct life-work balance for the employees of Ferrero in France include:

- Social Unit: provides help to families (study grants, tuition). This measure aims to assist employees during periods of change and monitor their work-life balance
- Education and childcare: includes company nursery, Mini Club, summer camps for children, school coaching and study grants for higher education
- Company reception desk: offers, among other services, IT assistance, administrative procedures and postal services
- Health promotion: provides dietary training, fitness studio, free health check - ups for employees over 45, advice from nutritionists, massage/relaxation sessions for production staff, sessions on workplace exercise, help quitting smoking.

On 14th December 2010, Ferrero France signed the “Charte de la Parentalité”, which aims to promote better reconciliation of employees’ professional and personal lives.

Furthermore, the project entitled “congés familiaux pour tous” (family holidays for all) plans a series of measures that go beyond the legal provisions in effect, including maintaining pay for paternity leave, making available 6 days of leave for young mothers within the first 6 months of their return to work and an increase in days of leave in the case of children’s illnesses. For parental leave and other family-related leave, Ferrero continues to provide 80% of the usual monthly salary.

Health and safety at work

Initiatives for the health and safety of employees include the followings:

- Many actions have been undertaken by Ferrero France in order to “limit the risks of the company’s vehicle fleet on the roads”. In particular, the vehicle fleet and their safety equipment are renewed every two years and special analyses of accidents are drawn up. Furthermore, 500 employees received road safety training via 4,000 hours of instruction, including special training for multiple-vehicle collisions.
- To strengthen the prevention of psychosocial risks at work, Ferrero France and its social partners signed a company agreement in 2010. This agreement focuses on preserving the physical and mental health of the company’s employees. Feedback was received from around one hundred people during a ‘diagnostic phase’ that led to an action plan devised at the beginning of 2011. Actions planned for 2010/2011 include training 170 sales and promotional staff to manage relations with customers and the diffusion of the Charter entitled “Mieux travailler ensemble” (Working better together).

Management

A special emphasis is placed on a programme called “On Course for Change”:

- Managers participate in budgetary decisions and in medium-term planning
- “Business Campus” for young managers: seven week training modules (self-awareness, conflict management, project management, etc.)
- “360° Evaluation” for all managers, including development planning
- Coaching by an advice group.

More generally, the company tries to ensure transversality across the different departments and plants to avoid compartmentalized working methods.

Numerous information and awareness measures were also put in place through meetings, information from managers, articles in internal publications, the company blog, various brochures and the internal TV system.

Diversity measures

Amongst the initiatives in favour of diversity, Ferrero France has made provision to promote awareness among managers with regard to diversity and to equal opportunities, including an internal enquiry followed by an action plan with provision for any corrective action that may be necessary.

Based on the enquiry, the following areas for work were defined:

- Professional equality for men and women
- Social and ethnic or territorial diversity
- The differently-abled
- Personal information management.

Ferrero France continues its policy to promote the employment and integration of differently-abled workers.

The following are the main actions undertaken in 2010/2011:

- Adapting all the company premises to make them accessible to differently-abled people
- Developing a specific internet address to facilitate activities for differently-abled persons
- Participating in the National Week for people with disabilities
- Collaboration schemes and partnerships to hire and integrate differently-abled employees.

Ferrero France also collaborates with various organisations that facilitate the employment and integration of differently-abled people.

The priorities for 2012 include optimising the recruitment system in order to limit the risk of discrimination from the very moment of starting a job, signing the “Diversity Charter” and obtaining the “Diversity Label” in 2014.



Picture 3: Packaging worker at the Villers-Ecalles production plant

2.4. *What was achieved?*

Human Resources (HR) has noted that employees are impressed by the commitment with which the initiative was put in place, the changes at all levels of the company, and the attention given to welfare in the company, all of which have led to a new atmosphere at work. In the same way, the open space layout of the new company headquarters was designed with these questions in mind, particular attention having been paid to noise issues and privacy.

92% of employees say that they are proud to say to others that they work at Ferrero, 78% of employees say that at Ferrero, all the events out of the ordinary are celebrated.

Among the best received measures were the dissemination of information, greater participation of workers and the participation of managers in medium term planning.

Certain health related measures have not however been met with such approval, such as the possibility to go back to day time work for workers over 55 at production sites. ‘Even if the company partially compensates for the loss of earnings, it is difficult for employees to take a cut in earnings to which they have become accustomed’, said the Director of HR.

For 2010/2011, the employees’ involvement in the actions can be summed-up as follows:

- Social assistance group (support and monitoring for employees): between 80 and 100 cases dealt with each year
- Crèche: 45 children under 4
- Mini-club (childcare): 55 families
- Higher study grants: 15 grants
- Tutoring: 47 children of 39 employees
- Winter and summer camps: 15 children (winter 2011), 26 children (summer 2011)
- Other services/concierge services (more than 8000 jobs/year): parcel services, dry-cleaning, IT assistance, admin assistance, mechanical help, buying fresh fruit and vegetables, postal services, sale of Ferrero products
- Health-checks: 105 since 2008.

Ferrero France has been awarded as “Best Workplace” by the Great Place to Work Institute ® France. Ranked 8 in the category of companies that employ more than 500 employees, this result is rewarding an ambitious social policy that emphasizes wellbeing and work fulfilment of employees.

“Confidence, pride, friendliness, is the true secret of Ferrero! This is why in addition to the excellence of their products, they deserve to be widely present in the awarded companies where it is great to work in 2012 ” said Patrick Dumoulin, CEO of Great Place to Work Institute ® France.

In the future, Ferrero France would like to develop an instrument to measure more precisely wellbeing of employees in the company.

2.5. Success factors

Outside of efforts by management and the Steering Committee, an essential factor in the success of the program has been the high level of participation for a large number of employees.

2.6. Further information

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2.7. Transferability

Ferrero is a company committed to quality of life and wellbeing at work, convinced that long term performance depends on the long term development of its people. As such, in times of crisis, management has opted to encourage staff through policy and practice, rather than subject them to restrictions.

The social responsibility initiative comes as part of a range of programs put in place over the last ten years. It sets up a number of schemes designed to combat health risks at work without the technicalities of a framework targeted specifically at psychosocial risk.

The novelty of the program relates to its participatory nature and to the institutionalisation of a policy of social and societal responsibility which now serves as inspiration for Ferrero's sites across Europe, including Italy, Belgium and Luxembourg, which now subscribe to the “Ferrero Spirit”.

3. References, resources:

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