



THE «HEALTH IN BUSINESS» AWARD

1. Case metadata

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▪ **Abstract:**

Issue

In order to motivate companies in making investments to improve working conditions and promote health in the workplace, the Luxembourg's Minister of Health launched the first 'Health in Business' award on the 4th June 2007 with this campaign slogan: 'Winning the health award: a+ for your business'.

The idea behind the launch of this award is to encourage those businesses with the spirit of social responsibility and good management to go above and beyond the call of duty by taking initiative when it comes to health and wellbeing at work.

Action

The award has run annually since 2007, and has a different focus each year. In 2011, it focuses on wellbeing at work – i.e. within companies and on the health of their employees. Special attention is paid to: the needs specific to women; the adaptation of working conditions to aging employees; and businesses' social responsibility.

Each year the Minister of Health hands out the prizes to winners.

As an example, HSBC Private Bank (Luxembourg) S.A won the first place in 2010 for its policy aiming at promoting health among the entire staff, promoting team spirit and improved communication between staff members, as well as general wellbeing at work.

Results

Due to the good political will of the Ministry of Health, the 'Health in Business' award has been repeated annually for the last five years motivating enterprises to improve health and wellbeing at work; it has been a great success. It facilitates the sharing of experience and allows enterprises to see that the promotion of health is possible in different businesses, irrespective of their size or economic activity. Since the founding of the award, the number of winning businesses has remained constant.

Following the success of the award, similar competitions have been established in Luxembourg to motivate enterprises, for example the 'Quality Award' or the 'Occupational Diseases Prevention Award'. Notwithstanding, the Ministry of Health has been consistent in ensuring a prominent place for the 'Health in Business' award and in engaging with businesses active in health promotion.

2. Organisations involved

Ministry of Health, Luxembourg

3. Description of the case

3.1. Introduction

Figure 1: Logo of the Award



Working conditions have an important effect on the health of employees. It is for this reason that the Luxembourg's Ministry of Health decided that those businesses that make investments to improve working conditions and promote health in the workplace deserve to have this recognised.

As such, the Luxembourg's Minister of Health launched the first 'Health in Business' award (see Figure 1) on the 4th June 2007 with this campaign slogan: 'Winning the health award: a+ for your business'.

The idea behind the launching of this award is to encourage those businesses with the spirit of social responsibility and good management to go above and beyond the call of duty by taking initiative when it comes to health and wellbeing at work.

3.2. Aims

The objective of the 'Health in Business' award is to encourage those businesses that go beyond their legal obligations and take initiative in matters pertaining to health and wellbeing at work.

3.3. What was done, and how?

In awarding such a prize, attention is drawn to best practice. That said, the idea was to go beyond a simple prize-giving: the competition also aims to bring together examples of best practice in an openly available database. In this database, many initiatives and programmes are presented that can be adopted by other companies. Sometimes some additional effort is necessary in order to perfectly fit the measures to new companies, however for getting ideas and some instructions on how to start, the database is very valuable for many companies starting to be active in this area. The idea of the competition is not just to reward the winning businesses, but also to encourage others to follow the good example they set.

Each year several topics are chosen for being the focus of the award. See Table 1.

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Table 1: Award topics since 2007

2007	▪ Improvements to the working environment; ▪ Promotion of healthy eating; ▪ 'Public health' campaigns; ▪ Stress prevention; ▪ Preventing low back pain and musculoskeletal disorders; ▪ Improved work-life balance; ▪ Dependency prevention (alcohol, tobacco, prescription drugs); ▪ Promotion of physical activity.
2008	▪ Addiction prevention (alcohol, tobacco, drugs); ▪ Specific attention paid to aging, ill or less able-bodied employees; ▪ Prevention and treatment of psychosocial problems such as excessive stress; harassment and violence at work.
2009	Wellbeing at work, in particular: ▪ Promotion of health and wellbeing at work; ▪ Prevention of physical and psychological illness; ▪ Putting in place best practices to improve employee health.
2010	Wellbeing at work of those at particular risk, and especially: ▪ Putting in place appropriate working conditions for aging employees; ▪ Adapting working environments to the needs of disabled employees; ▪ Promoting the health, safety and training of younger employees.
2011	Wellbeing at work - businesses and the health of their employees, and especially: ▪ Needs specific to women; ▪ Putting in place appropriate working conditions for aging employees; ▪ Businesses' social responsibility.

How to take part

Figure 2: Poster of the campaign 2011



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The 'Health in Business' award is open to all businesses operating in Luxembourg, and aims to encourage businesses to put in place and reinforce health and safety at work, and workplace health promotion initiatives. For more information please see the references below.

Winning entries are those that are judged to best put in practice initiatives of lasting benefit to the health of employees, to wellbeing at work and, more generally, to public health by developing initiatives in the following fields, for example:

- improving working environments;
- promoting healthy eating, targeting public health;
- promoting physical activity;
- stress prevention;
- preventing low back pain and musculoskeletal disorders;
- improving work-life balance; and
- dependency prevention (tobacco, alcohol, drugs etc.);
- implementing policies that assist specific categories of employees (pregnant women, older employees, employees with disabilities etc.).

In order to be considered, entrants must complete an entry form (available from the website <http://www.prix-sante-entreprises.lu>) that must contain the following information:

- a brief presentation of the business and its activities;
- a description of the initiative in no more than 3 pages; and
- a one-page evaluation of the initiative, describing briefly its results in qualitative (text) or quantitative (figures) terms.

Annexes may be added freely (details, documents, photos, presentations, or videos which have a direct link with the initiative).

In order to increase awareness of the award among businesses, specialist journals are used (newsletters circulated among employers in Luxembourg: 'Merkur' and 'Handwierk'), as well as journals with public circulation (such as 'Paperjam'), business magazines, and conferences organised by the Ministry of Health's health at work division. A poster is also designed each year (see Figure 2).

An entirely independent panel examines each entry. The panel is composed of representatives from different areas, including health industry managers, the health at work division, the association of accident insurers, the Inspectorate of mines and labour, and the European association for promotion of health.

Elements to be taken into account are:

- the presentation and comprehensiveness of the entry;
- the conception, innovation and coherence of the initiative;
- the participation of employees;
- projected results, efficiency and the budget set aside for the initiative;
- the length of the project;
- pertinence for public health;
- respect for health and safety law and labour law; and
- enterprising spirit and social responsibility.

If any member of the jury becomes aware of irregularities in the running of one of the candidate

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businesses (working conditions problems, safety issues etc.), even if the entry form is impeccable, that candidate business will no longer be eligible.

Winners receive their prizes the following year, during an official ceremony with presentation of each project by the winners. The trophy and recognition diploma are handed over by the Minister of Health to each winner. Videos and photos of the award ceremony are available on the award website.

3.4. *What was achieved?*

Since the founding of the award every year there were about 15 – 20 participants, of which in:

- 2007: 8 winners;
- 2008: 7 winners;
- 2009: 9 winners;
- 2010: 5 winners.

An example of a winning entry: HSBC Private Bank (Luxembourg) S.A. won the first place in 2010

HSBC has been operating in Luxembourg since 1977, with an organisation encompassing six distinct entities covering the key areas of the banking and finance industry: such as, securities, deposits, private banking, asset management and insurance for a diverse and international client base. HSBC employs 600 people in Luxembourg.

Aims

For several years, HSBC Luxembourg sought to improve the work-life balance of its staff, as well as to improve its wellbeing through various activities and working groups. Indeed, the staff are considered by managers as being crucial for the long-term success of the company.

The aim of the measures that were presented for the award was to promote health among the entire staff, to promote team spirit and communication between staff members, as well as general wellbeing at work.

Emphasis was placed on problems that particularly impact employees working in the banking sector: such as, stress, lack of physical activity, and the challenge of maintaining a healthy diet.

Method

Figure 3: Pedometer (Copyright HSBC)

A voluntary committee called the 'HSBC Luxembourg Wellness Committee' was created in March 2010, which organised and conducted a multitude of activities and services designed to improve the wellbeing of HSBC employees, such as:



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- The competition 'Get Moving!' (weight loss challenge): Three medical examinations to be performed by doctors of the 'Association for the occupational health of the financial sector' have been proposed to the participating staff in the contest over a period of three months, dietary menus have been created and continue to be offered every week in the canteen, and finally informal jogging groups were created during the lunch break. Many employees run three times a week.
- The challenge 'Walk to the Moon': The participation of HSBC Luxembourg in the national challenge 'Goen 2010', consisting in walking the equivalent distance from Earth to the Moon (400,000 km). A pedometer (see Figure 3) was given to each staff member and 17,000 km were covered and registered on the website 'Goen 2010', due to the active participation of volunteer employees.
- Numerous seminars and workshops were proposed during lunch breaks, such as 'back massage', 'nutrition', 'diabetes prevention' and 'stress management', as well 'fitness workshops' in partnership with professional personal trainers and first aid training.
- An intranet page dedicated to health issues was created.
- Certain services were put in place: the on-site nurse began offering back massages, and special diet menus were drawn up for the office canteen since the start of the team weight loss competition in spring 2010.
- Each day fresh fruit baskets were made available to staff.
- Employees were regularly informed and kept up to date about new offers and the on-going measures. Communication was mainly undertaken by e-mail, intranet and posted notices.
- 'Focus groups' were used, including workers and managers, to reflect on concrete measures to improve work-life balance.
- The bank recently moved into a new building that is equipped with a canteen providing quality food to staff, and showers and changing rooms allowing staff to run, cycle or participate in fitness classes during the lunch break.

Evaluation

The health promotion programme was extremely well received by the entire staff and has had immense success. For example, the weight loss challenge team from the 'Get moving!' approach had 92 participants in 18 teams.

Others who did not wish to take part in the competition itself came along anyway to get weighed and receive nutritional advice from occupational health doctors from the Association for health at work in the financial sector (ASTF).¹

More generally, all of the workshops, presentations and seminars were very well received by the staff, not only in so far as health promotion is concerned, but also in terms of teambuilding. Several informal groups arose from this, taking advantage of the lunch break, for example, to go jogging together.

Interview with Charles P. S. Hall, Managing Director, HSBC Private Bank (Luxembourg) S.A. and Chris Wilcockson Managing Director, HSBC Securities Services (Luxembourg) S.A.

'The majority of our employees do sedentary work in front of a computer. In the last few years, various measures have been put in place to improve our employees' wellbeing at work. This year, we have put the emphasis on health promotion'.

¹ In Luxembourg, a legal framework to monitor the health and wellbeing of employees at the workplace was adopted in 1994. The ASTF was accordingly set up on 1 December 1994. Far from confining itself to the legal framework, over the years the ASTF has developed a wide range of services for businesses in order to help them to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees.



Where did you get the idea to launch this health and wellbeing at work initiative?

Since 2005, HSBC has been organising global surveys with feedback from over 300,000 participants. These surveys allow us to look closely at the needs of our employees at a global and local level.

The management at HSBC Securities Services (Luxembourg) S.A. wanted to apply the same method of health promotion already tested with other HSBC entities, notably in Guernsey. This plan, which is completely in line with the wellbeing at work policies of the other HSBC entities in Luxembourg, was immediately rubber-stamped by the management.

What is the staff's reaction to the different activities and services on offer?

Recent times have been difficult for the financial sector in particular, which has created increased stress for employees. As such, management wanted to make a priority of a programme of health promotion to warn of any potential health issues. The results, not just in terms of the impact on health, but also on a social level, have been extraordinary: mixed groups of people, of all ages, from different HSBC entities in Luxembourg, have come together to enjoy different activities together. Moving into our new offices has also been advantageous: we have a modern canteen, voted for by the staff that serves a varied menu, cooked onsite by a team of chefs. We also have showers and changing rooms for those who wish to go running or take part in fitness classes.

And what about the future of the project?

By popular demand, this year we are concentrating on a new project: helping those employees who want to stop smoking, in association with the Luxembourg's League for the Disease Prevention and Medico-Social Action.

Other activities have been organised: a monthly bowling night and the putting together of HSBC Luxembourg basketball and football teams.

Contact: Stenhamn Solange, Assistant to management.

3.5. Success factors

Due to the good political will of the Ministry of Health the 'Health in Business' award has been repeated annually for the last five years motivating enterprises to improve health and wellbeing at work, and it has been a great success. It facilitates the sharing of experience and allows business to see that the promotion of health is possible in all sorts of businesses, whatever their size or primary activities.

Following the success of the award, similar competitions have been established in Luxembourg to motivate enterprises, for example the 'Quality Award' or the 'Occupational Diseases Prevention Award'. Notwithstanding, the Ministry of Health has been consistent in ensuring a prominent place for the 'Health in Business' award, and in engaging with businesses that take the initiative in matters relating to the promotion of the health of employees at work.

3.6. Further information

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3.7. *Transferability*

This initiative could be easily transferred to other countries. Such would require, however, a strong political will to promote health in businesses and to motivate business to get actively involved in the promotion of their employees' health.

3.8. *References*

Entry forms and competition rules for taking part in the award can be found on the website:
<http://www.prix-sante-entreprise.lu>.