

WELLBEING IN OMNITEL (LITHUANIA)

1 Organisations involved

UAB Omnitel

2 Description of the case

2.1 Introduction

Omnitel was founded in 1991. Its founders were Lithuanian businessmen living abroad. This was the first private telecommunications company in Eastern Europe, the first telecommunications company in Lithuania to offer GSM services (1995) and one of the first companies in Europe to offer GPRS technology (General Packet Radio Service).

Omnitel has more than 2 million subscribers and is number 1 in the Lithuanian market and one of the largest telecommunications companies in the Baltics.

In 2004, Omnitel became a part of the TeliaSonera Group, which currently owns 100 per cent of shares. TeliaSonera introduced to the Nordic business experience the development of new services and the introduction of advanced technologies. TeliaSonera is an international company with a global strategy, but wherever it operates, it acts as a local company. This was the first company in Lithuania to bring commercial 3G services to the market (2006).

In this case study, the implementation of a system for improving the psychosocial wellbeing of employees at the company Omnitel in Lithuania is shown. The policy of corporate social responsibility at Omnitel is based on the global business policy of the TeliaSonera Group.

Corporate social responsibility at Omnitel includes:

- Environmental responsibility
- Responsibility in the working environment
- Public responsibility.

This contribution will deal with liability in the workplace and business efforts for the wellbeing of workers at Omnitel.

2.2 Aims

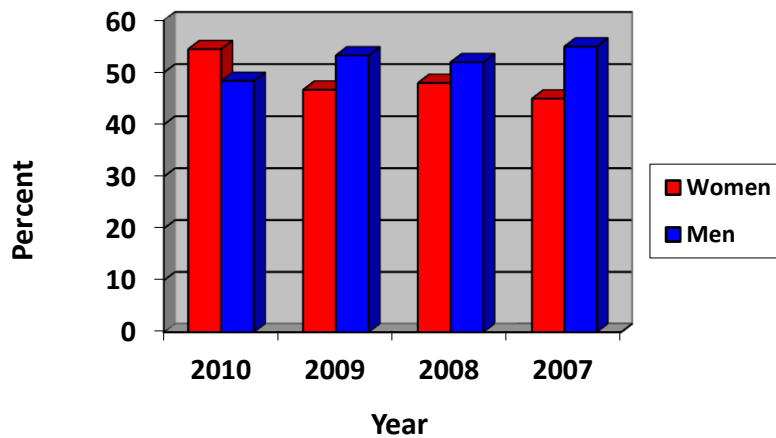
Social welfare in the workplace is central to Omnitel's organisational culture. Omnitel is achieving this aim by developing an open dialogue with its employees, carrying out annual employee satisfaction surveys, implementing the principles of equal opportunities and gender equality, fostering healthy workplaces and atmospheres, and family friendly working conditions.

2.3 What was done and how?

Equal opportunities

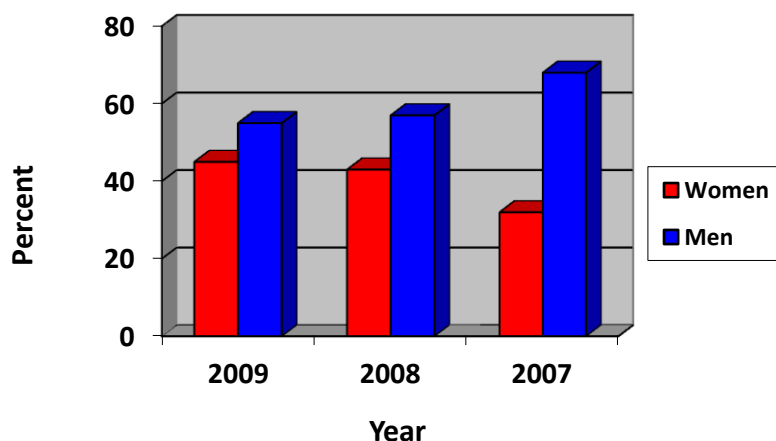
In 2012 (June), there were 580 actively working employees at Omnitel. Within the work environment, Omnitel strictly adheres to equal opportunities and non-discrimination principles. Each employee is evaluated in terms of their knowledge, competence, performance and initiative, regardless of their age, gender, ethnic origin or beliefs.

Figure 1: Distribution of personnel by gender



In recent years, the percentage of female managers increased from 32% in 2007 to 41% in 2009, when it employed 46% women and 54% men. In 2012 (June), Omnitel employed 48% women and 52% men. The ratio by gender between managers is also increasing: 48% female managers and 52% male managers in 2012 (June).

Figure 2: Distribution of managers by gender



Omnitel has a transparent remuneration policy, strictly follows legal requirements and uses the benchmark system of other international companies' salary median.

Code of Ethics and Conduct

The TeliaSonera Code of Ethics and Conduct is the foundation of TeliaSonera's Customer relationship work. Together with their vision and values, it forms the basis for each and every TeliaSonera employee's conduct in day-to-day-operations.

The TeliaSonera Code of Ethics and Conduct¹ represents the organisation's commitment to conduct business in a responsible way and provides guidance on how to interact with various stakeholders: customers, business partners, competitors, co-workers, the environment, shareholders, governments and regulatory bodies as well as with the local communities in which they operate.

Dialogue with employees

Omnitel places great emphasis on dialogue with employees, discussion of goals and values of the company and employee participation in decision making.

¹ <http://www.teliasonera.com/en/about-us/corporate-governance/code-of-ethics-and-conduct/>

For active dialogue, Omnitel has the following tools and initiatives:

- Regular surveys of staff opinions on the processes and working environment at the company and measures for their improvement
- Open employee discussions regarding various questions
- Managers' leadership evaluation according to the 360 degrees feedback methodology
- Performance management
- Informal meetings of employees once a month called "A Cake Day" for spreading the news, improving cooperation and being together in a less formal way
- Regular meetings with the Management
- Intranet for sharing information, inviting employees to an open discussion by using an interactive blog where each employee can express their views, criticisms or ask a question on any topic and get an answer from any colleague or manager and even write their own blog. On the intranet, short news stories are published and new employees are introduced
- OmniTV with live video and audio streaming for all company employees. During a big change in the company, the president of the company was able to discuss issues directly with all employees. OmniTV also developed programs for workers on relevant themes such as the World Mobile Congress in Barcelona and other.

Other initiatives to keep employees engaged are:

- An informal group called LIFT that aims to inspire an idea friendly environment. The aim is to make it a part of the organisation and involve all employees and customers in creating ideas and engage them into the implementation process. In 2010, LIFT received 106 ideas from which 15 were implemented and 25 will be implemented in the future. LIFT also carries on brainstorming on relevant topics. LIFT brings together nine permanent staff and collaborates with various departments within the company.
- Professional volunteering project "Who needs it?!" This long-term project, initiated by the mobile telecommunications company Omnitel and Swedbank, helps schools to invite experts from various fields of industry, share their knowledge and create practical tasks for the students. The idea of the project is to encourage volunteering at schools and increase students' motivation to learn.
- Induction programme for the newly hired that helps employees to join the company in the most friendly and effective way.
- Traditional awards of employees staying with the company for more than 10 years. In 2010, sixteen employees received letters of thanks and remembrance badges with diamonds.
- "Thanks giving" tradition – a tool on the intranet and a mobile application for employees to express gratitude and respect to colleagues for good cooperation.
- Annual events at Christmas and summer picnic.

Healthy and safe working conditions

Omnitel is trying to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for all employees. The company's workplaces and work equipment that is used have to meet the highest safety standards.

There is a strict medical check-care system.

A family friendly environment

Having established themselves as a family friendly company, Omnitel carries out initiatives including:

- Mobile working place – employees can fulfil their job duties away from the office. An employee, for example, can stay with a sick child or make some personal arrangements and at the same time adhere to his/her work duties.

- First day back to school event– parents get free paid time and can take part in the event together with their pupils.
- Shadow days for employees' pupils/students – helping to learn about various specialties and helping to choose a future profession or motivate them for studying.
- All employees working at Omnitel are not only encouraged to take in parental and childcare holidays and additional free days but also to take part in family events or initiatives organised by the company.

As part of Omnitel's consistent aim to establish itself as a family-friendly workplace and a responsible community partner, since autumn 2009 the company has been implementing a project financed by the European Union called "Creation of A Family-friendly Workplace and Promotion of Quality Employment in the Country through Social Partnership".



Picture 1: Family weekend event organised by employees



Picture 2: Family event organised by the company for children that attend Child Care Center (“Save the Children Lithuania”)

This project has been implemented in conjunction with its partners “Save the Children Lithuania” and the Continuing Studies Institute of Šiauliai University. Project activities will last until June 2013 and focus on two streams: improvement of the quality of life of socially vulnerable families and creation of a family-friendly workplace. As a part of the project, Omnitel has the following educative initiatives:

- Training workshops for Omnitel managers and employees about measures promoting balance of work and family obligations.
- Consultation of employees in all regions about how they feel they could achieve a better work-life balance. This is undertaken by specialists – psychologists and family law professionals.
- Individual training sessions organised for families in the low earning bracket.

Complete information about the project and educational materials for Omnitel employees are available on the company intranet. The intranet includes the information column about family-friendly measures, specialist advice and employee success stories.

As part of the “Save the Children Lithuania” organisation, Omnitel has such activities as child care and education, parents’ education, teachers’ education and other tools for helping create better life quality for families.

Welfare package

Omnitel is committed to providing its employees with opportunities to have good living conditions. One of the key measures is that each company employee receives a welfare package consisting of:

- Medical expenses for accidents while traveling, voluntary health insurance
- Presents to parents at the birth of a baby
- Death grants for employees who have lost a family member
- Each year, employees receive a fixed amount of money for shopping in Omnitel showrooms and

reduced employee payment plans for Omnitel services.

Employee training

Omnitel's aim to have professional staff creates a large focus upon continuous employee training. Every year the company implements an annual corporate training plan. Omnitel has an Internal Trainers' Club that includes 17 employees trained for giving professional training throughout the organisation on various topics.

There is an internal library containing almost 200 books, and it is constantly updated with new publications. Each employee is able to offer relevant professional and other useful books. **Employee performance management and opinion surveys**

All employees take part in annual performance management from December to the end of February. They also have mid-year and quarter individual meetings of manager and employee. Line managers evaluate and give feedback to their subordinates on target fulfilment and setting goals for the next year. They also discuss career expectations and development.

At the level of TeliaSonera, they carry out regular employee opinion surveys where Employee Commitment Score (ECS) is measured. Having results, they are meeting with managers, employees, gathering suggestions and preparing action plans. Implementation of the action plans is monitored.

All managers are evaluated on leadership competences and through the 360 degree feedback methodologies.

2.4 What was achieved?

- Omnitel attempts to evaluate each employee based on their knowledge, competence, performance and initiative, regardless of their age, gender, ethnic origin or beliefs. In recent years, they managed to increase the percentage of female leaders from 32% in 2007 to 48% in 2012. With this, they almost achieved the same rate, regardless of gender, as they have personnel.
- In 2010, 25 employees exercised the right to paternity leave; 76 employees with children received a cash gift from the company.
- In 2010, more than 500 employees joined the training on various topics. In same year, the company paid for 30-80% of studies for 12 employees. The new library also helps employees to obtain new knowledge.
- 90% of employees are saying that the mobile workplace helps them to achieve a work-life balance.
- 91% of employees are saying that in case of changing company, they will choose one that has implemented a mobile workplace.
- The Employee Commitment Score that is measured every year is very high and still growing (80 out of 100 in 2011). Employee motivation is also consistently very high – 73.
- In 2009, at the National Awards for Socially Responsible Business that was held at the Lithuanian Academy of Science, Omnitel in Lithuania was recognised as 'Socially Responsible Company 2008' and 'Workplace of the Year 2008'.
- In 2011, according to a survey performed by the newspaper "Business News" and by the career website www.cv.lt, Omnitel was ranked third among the "Most Desirable Employers". Omnitel has been taking part in the survey since 2005 and always is ranked among the top 5 "Most Desirable Employers".

2.5 Success factors

The management of the company pays great attention to dialogue with employees and wellbeing at the workplace as well as the welfare of the employees' families. Almost all measures are implemented after employee surveys and discussions with them. There is good involvement and cooperation from employees in various projects and good use of benefits offered by the company.

2.6 Further information

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2.7 Transferability

The case is a good example of a systematic improvement of the wellbeing of workers. A variety of activities and actions in areas such as dialogue with employees, equal opportunities for workers, surveys, training of workers and a favourable environment for the families of employees have been shown. Some possibilities can be transferred to large international companies and some of them can be also implemented in smaller companies.

3 References, resources:

1. <http://www.omnitel.lt>
2. <http://www.wikipedia.org/>