



## FROM PROJECT TO WELL-BEING POLICY

### 1. Organisations involved

Procter & Gamble

### 2. Description of the case

#### 2.1. Introduction

Procter & Gamble was founded in the USA and has worldwide 138.000 employees. There are offices in 180 countries. Three offices are located in Belgium. Procter & Gamble campus Strombeek-Bever in Belgium is the largest European Research & Development Centre for Procter & Gamble. Approximately 1800 employees of 50 different nationalities are employed in this Brussels Innovation Center (BIC).

Procter & Gamble started their well-being programme based on results of their annual Employee Satisfaction Survey. This is an annual survey for all employees of Procter & Gamble worldwide. The survey consists of several categories (relationship with manager, learning & growth, personal well-being, empowerment etc.). In the 2006 Survey the results showed that there had been a decrease of 7% in the perception of personal well-being and 2% impairment in work-life balance. Due to this results and the new Campus vision, the well-being initiative started in close cooperation with the human resources department, the prevention department and the works council (employee and employer delegation). Within the longstanding Purpose, Values and Principles (PVP's) of the company, people are considered the most important 'asset' for Procter & Gamble. Furthermore a good well-being policy is necessary to deal with the trends of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium: increasing health costs, aging population and corporate responsibility. The wellness policy is first of all based on the knowledge that P&G cares about its employees and according to this follows all the rules in order to ensure that employees' health is not at risk due to working conditions. Caring for the overall well-being of employees was the major premise for starting the implementation of the well-being programme.

#### 2.2. Aims

The aim of the well-being programme was to improve the personal wellbeing and health of the employees. In this way Procter and Gamble wants to ensure sustainable peak performance of their workforce and employee engagement. The objective was to integrate a well-being mindset in daily activities of employees. Sick leave percentage was already very low so a decrease of sick leave was not a priority.

#### 2.3. What was done, and how?

To start up the wellbeing programme a working group was founded with representatives of different key holders in the organisation: employee ambassadors, human resource department, prevention department and works council. This working group set up a concrete action plan which included concrete actions to be taken for both mental and physical health and well-being.

The well-being programme offered to the employees consisted of different activities. The programme was based on a holistic approach addressing all aspects that drive individual wellbeing and work-life balance. The concepts are for both body and mind, to enable and allow employees to make their own choices. Activities are aimed at mental health, healthy nutrition, sports, social activities and physical

# CASE STUDIES

health. Several mental activities are offered like yoga, pilates, mindfulness training (awareness meditation useful for dealing with stress reduction), and laughing therapy. There is an “employee assistance programme” (offered by an external provider) for employees having personal problems. They can contact this service as often as they need and get psychological assistance. This is handled strictly confidential. P&G only receives information about the amount of intakes and figures about what kind of problems were assisted. Different physical activities are offered as well, like running sessions, a team step (walking) competition and physical stretching exercises during a healthy walk after lunch break etc.

P&G offers their employees flexible working time and for that reason employees can participate in well-being activities during office hours as long as it doesn't conflict with the employees' work tasks. Procter & Gamble has a management by objective approach: the performance of employees is assessed by the realisation of their goals and not by the time they spend on their work. This flexibility is also offered by work organisation arrangements (flexible working hours, working from home, options to take sabbatical leaves or taking free for child care). The Chairman of the Site Leadership Council comments on the programme: “We believe that if employees can work in a stimulating work environment this will contribute to overall business performance”.

To promote the wellbeing programme a three day kick-off campaign was organised in February 2007. The aim of this campaign was to inform employees about all health activities offered by the company. To promote the event employees received small teasers: i.e. an apple on their desk with the well-being logo which was especially designed for the campaign, information leaflets were given in the lunchroom, one point lessons appeared on the computer screen of employees.

Line managers and employee ambassadors stimulated employees to participate in health activities. The ambassadors were employees who generally live a healthy lifestyle and voluntary applied for promoting participation in offered health interventions. Every employee is furthermore encouraged, on a voluntary basis, to have a mentor (more senior/higher level manager) with whom he/she also can discuss issues on well-being. There are also persons of trust and a psychosocial councillor for giving employees the possibility to talk about problems occurring at work or in private life. Contact information of this person of trust can be found on the intranet of P&G. Since participation is voluntary the responsibility of using the activities is in charge of employees.

Another important part of the programme is the organisation of sessions for line managers to show them how to recognize stress signals within employees, how to deal with employees having problems with stress, and how to tackle stress issues within the organisation by for example adjustments in work. Consequently line managers also can organise sessions for their employees for helping them to improve their way of dealing with stress. Employees are stimulated to be open and talk about their problems. This is another way to tackle work related stressors and to create an open communication culture within P&G. Leadership is also strongly encouraged to actively participate in all different well-being initiatives. These sharing sessions are one of the major activities to unify line managers and their employees and to overcome possible communication barriers.

The wellbeing programme has been run now for three years. Every year the work group assesses the well-being programme by evaluating the participation rates of activities and the feedback forms which can be filled in for each activity. Employees can also post ideas for the health programme in a well-being idea box. Successful activities are continued and if necessary the programme is adjusted for the following year. Every year the new adjusted health programme is launched with support by an information stand. All the information of the programme can also be found on the intranet of P&G throughout the whole year.

## **2.4. What was achieved?**

To make sure that the well-being programme is not only a temporary project, but will be successful on the long run, it's important to evaluate well-being related factors on a regular base. For this reason Procter & Gamble measures well-being in their annual Employee Satisfaction Survey. By evaluating well-being the effects of the programme can be assessed and if necessary activities can be improved. By giving attention to well-being in the Employee Satisfaction Survey, Procter & Gamble also give a signal to employees that they care about their employees.



## CASE STUDIES

The results with regard to personal well-being and work-life balance in the employee satisfaction survey improved over the last three years (see table 3.4.). Accordingly also absenteeism rate has decreased during this time from 1.9% to 1.6%. However it can not automatically be concluded that this decrease is only due to the new well-being programme, since other factors may have been of influence on this decrease.

# CASE STUDIES

**Table 3.4. Employee Satisfaction Survey 2006**

	2006 Overall Results	2009 Overall Results	Results vs 2006
<b>Well-being</b>			
<b>Physical work environment facilitates my productivity</b>	57%	68%	+ 11
<b>I take the initiative to be personally fit and healthy</b>	76%	82%	+ 6
<b>Work-life balance</b>			
<b>Sufficient flexibility to balance my work/personal life</b>	68%	76%	+ 8
<b>After work, I continue to have energy for the things I enjoy</b>	46%	58%	+ 12

## 2.5. Success factors

The following were essential success factors of the programme:

- The programme was encouraged by the management of the company. To have success with a well-being programme it is important to have commitment of all levels of management. Procter & Gamble expects of their leadership to encourage employees to participate in at least one well-being activity each year. Leaders are themselves also expected to set a good example for their employees and thus to take part in at least one activity each year.
- The employees were actively involved by means of the ambassador approach. In this way employees were involved in the development, implementation, and promotion of the programme.
- The well-being programme was aligned with the vision and the Purpose, Values and Principles (PVP's) of the company. Within the vision and PVP's, people are considered the most important 'asset' for Procter & Gamble. This means that the creation of an employee friendly environment should be part of the company policy.
- The well being policy and activities were easy to grasp
- Voluntary participation of employees was important. At every stage of the project employees could choose if they wanted to take part in the interventions and in what degree they wanted to be involved.
- The broad offer of interventions also made for the success, since employees could choose freely between different activities that fit most to their personal preferences.

The ongoing high participation from the management as well as from the employees in all activities offered was one of the core success factors. But also several other facts mentioned above, transferred the well-being activities not only in a successful project, but also lead to a general a well-being policy within P&G. This way a well-being mindset was integrated in the daily activities of employees.

## **2.6. Further information**

Koen Van Gestel, Head of Prevention and Environmental Department

P&G Brussels Innovation Center

Tel : +32 (0)2 456 3779

[vangestel.k@pg.com](mailto:vangestel.k@pg.com)

Tine Roets, Prevention advisor psychosocial aspects

P&G Brussels Innovation Center

Tel : +32 (0)2 456 3267

[Roets.t@pg.com](mailto:Roets.t@pg.com)

[www.pg.com](http://www.pg.com)

## **2.7. Transferability**

A well-being programme for employees consisting of different activities focused on body and mind can be appropriate for employees in other sectors as well. All aspects of the programme are general of nature and not sector or company specific. As employees can choose their own activities, individual differences and needs are taken into account. Moreover, the process of developing the programme can be copied by other companies in the same as well as in other sectors. Employees can be involved in choosing the different elements of the programme by organizing a health working group. Other success factors are relevant when starting a similar programme, like the involvement of middle management, being active themselves and encouraging employees in the meantime, can also play an important role and are as well easy to copy.