



## MARS WELLNESS PROGRAMME

### 1. Organisations involved

Mars Poland

### 2. Description of the case

#### 2.1. Introduction

Mars Poland is a subsidiary of the US family-owned business known as Mars Incorporated. The programme is an example of how to put the Mars principles “Quality, Responsibility, Mutuality, Efficiency and Freedom” into practice.

Established in Poland in 1992, Mars Poland is now one of the biggest fast moving consumer goods companies in Poland. Currently the company employs over 1400 workers in different departments: Marketing, Sales, Research & Development, Finance, IT, Personnel & Organisation, Logistics, Engineering, Production, Commercial and Corporate Affairs.

Based on the results of an ongoing health risk assessment survey conducted regularly in Mars Poland, the company decided to put an emphasis on the improvement of workers’ health and well-being with a special programme. Accordingly the comprehensive programme was created based on employees’ needs. The following topics are mainly dealt with within this approach: stress, physical activity and nutrition.

Mars Poland aims at reaching a notable change in employees’ and their families’ attitude toward health and well-being with the programme by 2013 at the latest. The programme is fully implemented at Mars Poland and is currently being introduced in other European countries: the Czech Republic, Lithuania, and Hungary. Further implementation is also planned in Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Albania, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and Macedonia.

#### 2.2. Aims

“Sustainability of our Employees to work, enjoy life and perform at their best” is the mission statement of the MCE Wellness programme. MCE Wellness is a long-term programme, with a detailed plan till 2013. Thereupon a comprehensive assessment and maintenance of the programme is planned. The possibility of further development is also taken into account.

MCE Wellness looks upon wellness as a state of mental, physical, and social health, remembering that these factors are closely related to each other and thus cannot successfully be tackled when looking at them separately.

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

The MCE Wellness programme was created by Przemysław Duchniewicz, MD, Health and Wellness Manager for Mars Central Europe. He also supervised its implementation.

The programme follows a holistic approach, containing elements focusing on mental as well as on physical health. The following elements are the so called MCE Wellness pillars of the programme. Three out of those are of specific interest regarding mental health promotion:

- 7 steps to health tool,
- Mars Balance ,
- Enjoy,

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Furthermore the programme is complemented by actions targeting physical health:

- Nutrition and physical activity

Regarding physical health Mars is not only encouraging employees to take care of their health by staying or becoming active. Mars furthermore makes sure employees are working in a safe and healthy working environment, accounting for all legal requirements but also going beyond this. Employees are for example provided with innovative office furniture supporting healthy ergonomic conditions.

The first pillar – the ‘7 steps to health’ is one of the core factors and focuses on raising the ‘healthy side’ of each employee, as the company believes that in each person there is strength to become (or stay) active and to improve one’s own mental health and healthy behaviour. Lifestyle is seen as an important factor influencing personal health at Mars Poland. Nevertheless the company is totally aware that employees might need assistance in and encouragement for changing behaviour. This is done via the “7 steps to health” programme:

## **7 steps to health**

7 Steps to Health is a simple tool that helps to assess one’s own health and to raise awareness for healthy life style decisions.

Every year, there are several events promoting the programme: Two healthy weeks and one healthy period per factory (lasting four weeks) are conducted. In the following two workshops for employees are set up, lasting three days each. Additionally in 2009 Mars Poland provided 40 whole day workshops for factory workers. All paid by the company and conducted during working time. In 2009 there have been at minimum 4 560 training hours devoted to the wellness programme.

For every employee the 7 steps to health programme starts with the voluntary participation in a workshop. The workshop consists of three parts:

- The first part is based on measures regarding several different health related biometric indicators like weight/height/waist/hip ratio, blood pressure, cholesterol level, etc. All measures are taken before the real action oriented programme starts. Employees are also provided with access to an online programme that gives information about techniques on how to cope with stress and how to better deal with possible musculoskeletal load.
- The second part is dedicated to an analysis of personality with the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator®1. The MBTI® tool sorts individuals into psychological ‘types’ so that they can identify how they are similar to some people and different to others, and how they can improve their working and personal relationships in a positive and constructive way.
- The final step during the workshop is an open discussion facilitated by a professional trainer, focusing on individual potentials for improvement and on practical steps how to reach this improvement. Four areas of life can be targeted within this discussion: career, family, individual, and society. The main questions that are dealt with are: What is important to the employee? How can he/she influence his/her life regarding these important topics? What can be done by the individual and what is not within their control?

Having gone through the first workshop of the programme, the employee enters the real steps of the 7 steps to health tool:

- Information (step 1&2),
- Monitoring status (step 3, 4 & 5),
- and facilitating change (step 6 on individual level and step 7 inspiring others to action).

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## Informing

The first and most important action is on informing employees. This is mostly done by leaflets, posters, intranet and email.

Step 1: Internet based coaching system for workers, ex-workers (both retired and previous workers, who changed their employer), and their families regarding healthy life-style, including aspects like the followings:

- assessment of the quality of one's nutrition behaviour by questionnaire
- description of steps to improve nutrition
- information about physical health parameters and the need for regular checkups,
- detection of stress and depression symptoms via questionnaire
- information about where to find help in case of feeling stressed or depressed

Step 2: As a result of the online tool, every person gets a personalized health guidebook, based on individual data.

Unfortunately with the time it was discovered that employees tend to fill in the questionnaire but often don't put much attention to the results. Therefore results were presented separately and the importance of reading and knowing about the results was raised.

## Monitoring

Once an employee has filled in the questionnaires and has received the personalized feedback on his lifestyle, the second phase can be entered. The monitoring phase concentrates on physical aspects like body parameters, nutrition and physical activity.

Step 3: The Company encourages each employee to monitor three physical parameters: cholesterol levels, blood pressure and body biometric data – BMI and waist hip ratio. Medical checkups are done on yearly basis, free of charge for every employee. The checkups are accompanied by consultancy in order to explain the results to employees and to motivate them to start changing daily habits.

Step 4: Nutrition awareness: This is done through workshops, healthy weeks, and meetings with nutritionist. Participation is free of charge. Employees are encouraged to check their diet on a regular basis and improve their nutrition.

Step 5: Physical activity: There are tests run by company fitness coaches. Twice a year there is campaign to encourage employees to check their physical fitness.

## Change

The most important phase probably consists of several actions encouraging healthy changes in employees' lives. As it is difficult to change one's lifestyle, the MCE Wellness Programme includes 2 special steps that address this issue. The first phase concentrates on the person itself, the second encourages motivating others to live healthy.

Step 6: Contains a number of actions helping to create self responsibility for one's health:

- Voluntary discussions and talks regarding health solutions are organised during working time and employees are encouraged to take part.
- Trainings and workshops regarding stress are offered, such as courses on how to avoid stress, how to better manage multifaceted requirements, communication trainings, and anti-stress techniques (breathing, massage, relaxation).
- All employees are provided with a guidebook regarding anti-stress techniques.

Step 7: The "7 steps to health" programme further contains a corporate social responsibility part. Mars is trying to spread positive effects of their internally conducted workshops to the

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community. This approach is followed by encouraging workers to inform people within their community about healthy behaviour and actions to enhance their own mental health. Mars Poland believes that encouraging your environment to live healthy also helps the individual to maintain a healthy lifestyle. By the end of 2013 Mars Poland would like each worker to inform ten people from their local community regarding health issues.

## **Mars Balance**

This pillar refers to a good work-life balance, as this is regarded as a really important mental health factor. Several measures were implemented by Mars Poland in order to ensure a good work-life balance for all employees

- Flexible working time with a core time from 10 a.m. to 15 p.m. (including free time for having lunch during midday) is offered wherever possible. Employees working in the factories in an interdependent position can naturally not take part in the flexi time programme.
- Telework: Working from home is possible as long as special work requirements like meetings etc. do not impede such an arrangement
- A special emphasis is put on mothers and mothers-to-be. Beside the fact that the company pays for childbirths in a private clinic, there is a programme aiming at informing mothers about their rights and possible solutions in order to organise their re-entry at work. Mothers are also offered part-time work when re-entering work.
- There are also trainings offered for fathers and fathers-to-be, giving information about childbirth and children and offering advices. The trainings are called “be closer” and “7 steps to an active fatherhood”.

## **Enjoy**

This pillar is about supporting personal hobbies, passions, and non-working activities of employees. Related to the seventh step of the “7 step to health” programme, Mars encourages employees to be active and to engage themselves voluntary within their community.

The company pays free time during the week for developing employee’s own interests. This measure applies to engaged employees, who have not been assessed lower than average during the last 3 years and who are recommended by their supervisors. There is also the possibility of applying for a financial grant for special activities like e.g. helping with building a playground in the local environment or organizing community events, such as a cleaning action for the local river Bzura.

A pilot of the ENJOY programme has started and currently several volunteers are involved within and outside Mars. The ENJOY programme is seen as a special support for step 7 of the “7 steps to health” tool. It is meant to be an organizational support for employees who would like to engage themselves voluntarily. Activities such as motivating people to engage in activities like leading yoga classes for free, helping to find new owners for dogs etc. belong to potential actions that are meant to be supported with ENJOY. There is maximum number of employees that can enter the ENJOY programme: The ratio is 1:80 employees, which means, that out of 1400 employees, there can be maximum 17 ENJOY programme leaders.

## **Nutrition and Physical Activity:**

Mental wellness starts in one’s body. A proper diet and at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day reduce the risk for many diseases and ensure general wellbeing, so employees feel healthier and are better able to cope with normal stressors in life.

For this reason Mars Poland always offers free raw vegetables, wholegrain bread and tomato dips to all employees. There is also daily information given about the nutrition facts of meals offered at the

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company canteen and their percentage of recommended daily consumption. All employees can use the company's gym and football field, and can take part in aerobic lessons, 'Strong back' classes, yoga courses, free of charge massages, and nutritionist consultation. They can also access over 1400 other sports classes with company co-payment in over 1700 sport and recreation centres all over the country. Employees only pay 10€/month for no limit access to all activities offered.

## **Challenges**

The biggest challenges regarding the implementation of the MCE Wellness programme were budget constraints. The budget was finally obtained from various sources and areas, based on local needs and availability. For example the internal leadership programme from Mars University is sponsoring three days of "7 steps to health" workshops. Other measures were included in the total remuneration package, which means that these services are seen as an addition to the salary. Being regarded as total remuneration, it's probable that those measures in future will continue to belong to the remuneration.

Another challenge was to find the proper way to make employees actually change their behaviour patterns for starting a general cultural change within the company. In order to find the best way to reach employees, several actions were taken. Among them, there was a general survey on employees' needs 700 detailed questionnaires (5 pages long) were gathered and analysed and the composition of the entire programme was based on the results. After creating the first draft of the programme a pilot was conducted in one office and in one of the three factories. On the results of the pilot the programme was changed and then totally implemented all over Mars Poland.

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

The implementation was very well received by employees. The programme was nominated five times by employees to the 'Make the Difference Award' in the innovation category. The 'Make the Difference Award' is an internal prize from Mars international. In 2009 there were 7 000 projects submitted and 75 (Including Mars Wellness) are taking part in the final in Washington DC.

The programme was and is generally very successful. The following figures list several achievements:

In 2009:

- All 1400 employees were aware of this project
- 833 employees used the online health risk assessment system (7 steps to health, step 1)
- All employees took part in sport activities however extent of involvement considerably differed.
- 1200 employees took part in 3 Health Weeks - MCE Wellness awareness campaign,
- The option of joining the gym has been made use of by 120 employees already during the first year.
- 500 employees are currently making use of the Mars Balance programme – benefiting from flexi time and telework.
- 22 employees used Mars Maternity Friendly Company package (private hospital, gold medical package, and other benefits).
- 4 workshops "7 secrets of fatherhood" were delivered,
- 420 employees participated in Life Energy Management workshops,
- There was a 0,72% decrease of the sickness absence rate compared to 2008
- All employees of one factory participated in a pilot series of health workshops (each associate participated in 3 workshops in a row),

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- In total 4560 training hours were delivered within the programme. The European Commission (Health and Consumers General Directorate) monitors the Mars Wellness Programme since 2007 and it gets best scores among other 160 European programmes for the 2 last years.

Measure	Mars Goal	Actual
Completion of online health risk assessment tool <a href="http://www.yourhealth.profile.eu">www.yourhealth.profile.eu</a>	80%	833 employees/ 59,5% of the total population
% of population at low overall lifestyle risk - with health risk factor score 0-20, assessed by the online health risk assessment tool	65%	48% of the employees taking part had a low risk
Employees that used the offer to determine their blood pressure	80%	89% know systolic & diastolic BP
Employees that used the offer to determine their cholesterol level	70%	19% know total cholesterol 9% know HDL cholesterol

## 2.5. Success factors

- An important factor for the success of the programme was the implementation of a health and wellness manager. The health and wellness manager is responsible for creating and implementing the whole MCE Wellness Programme.
- Mars Poland wanted a general policy to support a cultural change within the company and to make health and healthy choices every day topics. The intention to change the company policy and to make health an every day life topic within the company was crucial for being able to implement interventions and to encourage employees to take part.
- Beside the fact that everything possible was done to include and engage all employees in the programme, Mars Poland even goes a step further and actively tries to involve family members of employees and people from their community. The idea is to spread and share the healthy approach and thus to create a general healthy and supportive environment.
- It also seemed to be of importance that Mars Poland showed commitment and general interest in the enhancement of their employees' health by "little" gestures such as free healthy food.
- Elements of the programme were built in the total remuneration system and are thus seen as an almost irrevocable part of the salary of employees.

## 2.6. Further information

Contact:

Przemysław Duchniewicz

Health and Wellness Manager

P&O, Mars Central Europe

[przemyslaw.duchniewicz@eu.ffmpeg.com](mailto:przemyslaw.duchniewicz@eu.ffmpeg.com)

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The Programme was nominated 5 times to the “Make the Difference Award” in the innovation area - 2009

The Programme was twice recognized by the DG Sanco as the best out of 160 other health programmes in EU (highlighting the physical health promotion aspects)<sup>2</sup>.

The success of the programme yields Mars units in other countries to launch it as well

Mars won the Gallup Great workplace award - 2009

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

[www.mars.pl](http://www.mars.pl)

[www.marskariera.pl](http://www.marskariera.pl) (in Polish)

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

## **2.7. Transferability**

The Mars Wellness was revealed in order to be implemented in different countries. All the actions implemented in Mars Poland are based on well-known key psychosocial and physical factors that influence employee's well-being.

Since the programme was made especially for Mars, it's based on principals that work better in big companies. Smaller companies might face some difficulties in implementing a similar programme due to various reasons. One of those could be related to financial issues. However some measures that were implemented do not go along with high costs but mainly require organisational changes and a general change in the attitude of employees and management.

Highlighting the work-life balance, coping with stress and the role of personal development are the core interventions which could be implemented in most companies. However not every kind of job allows applying such solutions like e.g. flexible work time or working at home. But most crucial in this case is the approach that is based on the idea that nothing is more important than a happy employee, and that a company should do as much as possible to take care of mental and physical health of its employees as well-being is the result of both.

## **3. References, resources:**

- [http://www.opp.eu.com/psychometric\\_instruments/mbti/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.opp.eu.com/psychometric_instruments/mbti/Pages/default.aspx)
- [http://ec.europa.eu/health/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/index_en.htm)