



Motorhuis Leiden is a middle-sized enterprise which has integrated workplace health promotion and occupational health care into its quality and social policy. Developing human potential and developing mutual trust between employees and management is a priority. As a result absenteeism rates due to sickness have been low for many years and employees are very loyal to the company.

The company generally initiates health policies but is very grateful for the support of the Company Council for Motor Vehicles and 'Arboned' (the occupational health service).

How the business operates

The Motorhuis group has a decentralised organisational structure made up of independent working companies which are responsible for their own business success. The group employs 850 people spread over 10 locations. The business described here is based in Leiden. Motorhuis Leiden deals primarily in Opel cars but also has an interest in American vehicles. It employs 200 people, some of them on a part-time basis. In addition to selling new and specialised vehicles, the company sells spare parts and has a garage for maintenance and repair and a car wash. There is also a sales and administration office. Economically, the company is very successful and has expanded over the last few years.

The benefits of a caring policy

Motorhuis Leiden believes that investing in people, maintaining good communication channels and developing sound health policies makes good business sense.

Motorhuis has a long tradition of encouraging a very human work culture. Management tries to be very open and is anxious to ensure that employees feel involved in all aspects of the organisation. It has worked hard to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.

Introducing successful measures

An effective internal communication system has been developed. Good formal and informal communication channels are in place and the managers are very approachable. The company has a very active staff association which organises activities for employees. An internal computer network is currently in development. A staff magazine called 'Het koppel' (The link) is produced 5 times a year.

Opel Netherlands introduced a motivational programme in 1995 called 'Opel Difference' which focuses on quality and optimal customer service. Within this programme attention is paid to working conditions and workplace health promotion. The company attempts to balance the demands of the job with workers' well-being and satisfaction. Employees are encouraged to enhance their skills and are given extensive training opportunities. As great emphasis is placed on personal responsibility and decision-making, special motivational and training programmes are offered to employees so that they can further their personal development.

Motorhuis Leiden employs an occupational health co-ordinator who meets up regularly with occupational health co-ordinators from the other nine establishments. The company has a written policy statement for occupational health care, makes annual occupational health care plans and fulfils all legal requirements. The company often makes the first move regarding new and improved health policies but is also extremely grateful for the support provided by the Company Council for Motor Vehicles in developing these policies. Support from the OHS service 'Arboned' has proved invaluable and the occupational health doctor has also made a very important contribution. All the above have played their part in the company's low

rates of absenteeism due to sickness (which are much lower than those of similar businesses in the same industry).

Positive results

Tremendous emphasis has been placed on occupational health care and health promotion as well as caring for the mental health and well-being of employees. A caring company culture and approachable, employee-oriented management structure is seen as being vital to the success of the business. Staff display great loyalty to the company, to the extent that several employees who left to take up other jobs have since returned to their old posts.

In 1999 and 2000 a great deal of work was carried out to improve occupational health care and workplace health promotion. Prior to this, research was conducted in a number of areas, for instance, noise levels were measured in all workshops and potential risk factors in using solvents looked at. All the recommendations made were acted upon. Every employee is given the opportunity to visit the local hospital for a health check.

Consultations about work, work satisfaction and training are carried out regularly and talking about personal health is part of this. Motorhuis Leiden gives people the chance to develop by giving them

responsibility and by providing focused training programmes and courses. Employees are encouraged to voice their opinions. When people leave the company the reasons for this are looked at.

The very human, interactive approach adopted by Motorhuis Leiden has reaped dividends in financial terms, the company is very successful and profitable. As a result further health initiatives are planned along with a greater emphasis on health promotion measures, such as making the company a smoke-free zone.