Six actions for a better workplace atmosphere

The cogwheels of diversity and inclusion programs at Bühler are diligently turning. Six actions from across the world of Bühler highlight how inclusion is lived in the company and how local initiatives strengthen cohesion and promote an open corporate culture.

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A Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) committee has been promoting inclusion at Bühler since its establishment in the second quarter of 2017. Their task is developing tools, events, and methods together with Human Resources to ensure that all employees feel they belong, are appreciated, and their voices are heard regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or appearance. This culture of inclusivity should be experienced equally in all regions where Bühler is active, and with time this culture will grow stronger. Like the Chinese proverb says: “A blade of grass does not grow faster if you pull on it.” More and more initiatives are emerging with regard to this forward-looking topic. In the following pages, you will learn about six of the many actions being taken at various Bühler locations with which our colleagues are promoting an inclusive corporate culture. The ideas presented are valuable gears that drive the D&I initiative across our company.

Rainbows and a run in Vienna
The first two actions stem from Austria. The Wings for Life Run is a global race for runners and wheelchair participants held in May. Colleagues in Vienna joined the campaign to not only strengthen team spirit but to provide a value contribution to medical research. A total of 925 kilometers were run by 64 of our colleagues who collected nearly EUR 4,000 for finding a cure for spinal cord injury. The team returned to the workplace with well-earned muscle aches, and a sense of solidarity.
A few months later, 25 employees from five different locations took part in the EuroPride parade in Vienna. Nearly 50,000 people came together on June 15 to celebrate diversity and to peacefully march for equality for all. The employees, who personally covered their costs event, were dressed in colorful clothing and draped in large rainbow flags to show that they as Bühler employees believe in inclusivity and equality.

**Team spirit and sharing in Bangalore**
A good team doesn’t fall from the skies. Solidarity and efficient communication need time to take shape. For this reason, colleagues at Bühler Bangalore recently introduced Fun Friday. Once a month on a Friday, every floor in the various buildings has the opportunity to conduct team-building activities for about 15 minutes. These brief tasks are intended to be simple but fun and to promote interaction in the team and of course between the various teams. The project is still in its infancy, but the local HR team that organized the Fun Friday sees great potential in it. After all, having a bit of fun at work keeps things agile and active, leading to better cooperation and teamwork, and ultimately to good performance.

A second project is called “Knowledge Sharing Forum”. It is currently still in the start phase and aims to promote both team interaction as well as knowledge sharing. Once a quarter, an event is held for exchanging knowledge and experiences between various employees in order to ensure that the existing knowledge is passed on and lessons learned from past mistakes. This is entirely in keeping with projects at Bühler intended to strength a culture of collaboration and lifelong learning.

**The trials of parenthood in Uzwil**

Becoming a parent is more than just smiling babies and fresh, clean-smelling diapers – something that Dovile Akuckaite, Pricing Manager at Bühler Uzwil, knows only too well. Her son, Tomas, recently celebrated his first birthday, and although the time with him so far has been full of many beautiful moments, there have also been a few drawbacks: “I think the most difficult part of becoming a parent is the uncertainty. You can only plan and arrange so much, but unexpected things can happen and you have to put aside all of your plans.” Dovile emphasized that re-entering the workplace in Uzwil, Switzerland after maternity leave is not without its share of obstacles. There are questions like “What happens when my child is sick?” or “How can I continue to breastfeed my baby?” Finding the answers is easier said than done.

For this reason, she decided to take the wheel and create a survival guide for new parents at Bühler Uzwil. This guide is currently still a work in progress and includes a variety of tips and tricks for navigating parenthood. For example, information about how many days are available for taking care of a sick child at this location, and an overview of the most commonly used breast milk pumps.

The new Mom hopes to better prepare colleagues for the adventures of parenthood with this survival guide, to strengthen the dialog and solidarity between parents at Bühler in Uzwil, and to discuss important topics such as the compatibility of managing parenthood and a career.

**Re-entering the labor market**

One project that has been running in Uzwil since the beginning of the year is the collaboration with Women back to Business, a continuing education program at the University of St. Gallen. The program supports women who want to return to work after a shorter or longer break.

The Project Management module took place in Uzwil from September 3-4, 2019 and was attended by 33 participants of 21 nationalities. Dipak Mane, Chief Human Resources Officer at Bühler, emphasized how important this partnership is for the company: “We believe that well-managed, mixed teams can achieve much more than homogeneous teams. And we still don’t have enough women at Bühler, especially in management positions.”

It takes years for internal talents to be promoted and introduced to managerial positions, and these talents should be able to return to the workforce or reposition themselves after a longer hiatus.

“I believe that our partnership with Women Back to Business is an shortcut for us to gain the knowledge of how these experienced women. In addition, we are sending out a signal to all women who are now working for Bühler. If they need a break, they can take a break,” says Mane. For him, it would even be desirable to offer this opportunity to men: “I mean, it’s the same for them. For example, I would have liked to take a break when my parents were ill.”

Patricia Widmer, Head of the Women Back to Business program, has drawn a positive conclusion from this first course at Bühler. “The module was very well received by all participants. We were inspired by the CUBIC, which with its inviting and open workspaces was well suited to the topic of project management.”

Some interviews for positions in Uzwil have already resulted from the visit of this multinational, highly qualified women’s group.

**Be part of it:**

If you would like to introduce one of the actions described here, or let us know about your ideas to promote diversity and inclusion, we would love to hear about them. You can email them to corinne.schneider@buhlergroup.com. You can also follow the Diversity & Inclusion page on B-World to stay up-to-date on the latest actions.