

Award-winning health programme

1

Formerly known as Bayer MaterialScience, Covestro is one of the world's leading polymer materials suppliers. The company attaches great importance to the well-being of its more than 15,000 staff, as it believes their knowledge, skills and commitment are a deciding factor in the global success of the business. Interesting in that regard is a project at Covestro's Customer Services department, called 'Healthy at Work' which has produced some remarkable results, including a reduced number of smokers and a general improvement of BMI and blood pressure. Claudia Schmidt, who leads the project, says the project has been such a success that the company is now considering rolling it out across all of Covestro's operations in Germany. The project was singled out for its excellence at the Corporate Health Award (CHA) 2015.

Ms. Schmidt has worked for Bayer, Covestro's parent company, since 1980. As Head of Compliance and Quality Management, and as Export Control Officer (deputy) for Covestro global, she has many tasks and responsibilities. The 'Healthy at Work' project was started by her in 2005. "With a group of people at the Customer Services Department, we wanted to create a good working environment for our colleagues and for ourselves, and promote an active and healthy lifestyle," she explains.

She emphasises that Healthy at Work is based on the principle of voluntary participation. People who want to take part are invited to an individual consultation with the resident Covestro physician who analyses and evaluates their health issues and creates an individual 'to do' list, as well as recommendations for management. Important in that regard is that the

participants' health records are anonymised and confidential, as Ms. Schmidt emphasises. Participants are invited to take part in fitness programmes ranging from Nordic walking to running and gymnastics. While these programmes have been developed to promote the health and wellbeing of the participants, they also help Covestro to comply with Germany's Occupational Health laws and regulations. "When someone has a bad back, then physical activity can help them, but an ergonomic office chair can too, for example," says Ms. Schmidt. The project has teamed up with Medimouse to further promote back health; the plan is to have participants take a 3D spinal scan for functional testing and three-dimensional representation of the spine. Cardiac health monitoring will be done by another partner, CardioScan, while the project additionally draws on the experience and facilities of TSV Bayer 04

Leverkusen, the professional football club sponsored by Bayer.

The health of the participants has improved considerably and on different levels, attracting the attention of senior management at Covestro who asked Ms. Schmidt to write a proposal outlining how it could be rolled out to other Covestro operations. "When your staff is healthier, their productivity and motivation levels go up, and absenteeism goes down," Ms. Schmidt points out. "Everybody wins." "With a group of people at the Customer Services Department, we wanted to create a good working environment for our colleagues and for ourselves, and promote an active and healthy lifestyle," she explains. "The elementary idea of the complete process is based on sustainability to be seen as a pathway for a healthy future."

L: Present at the ceremony for Covestro were Claudia Schmidt (second from the left), and Martin Wissenbach (fourth from left)

R: The proud winners of the Corporate Health Award

