

## **Boehringer Ingelheim UK Ltd**

### **The company**

Boehringer Ingelheim UK Ltd is the largest independent pharmaceutical company in the UK. It forms part of a global corporation, headquartered in Ingelheim, Germany.

The organisation aims to improve the health of people and animals through the provision of high quality prescription medicines, natural health and veterinary products.

### **The workforce**

Number of employees	907 in the UK, 36,000 worldwide
Percentage women	49%
Turnover	6%
Percentage of women returning after maternity	90%

### **The challenge**

It is essential that BI UK Ltd remains an employer of choice in order to recruit and retain the best employees to meet its business goals. Employee feedback also indicated that employees value the opportunity to work flexibly.

Therefore, the challenge it to provide flexible working arrangements whilst continuing to meet business and customer needs. The perception that flexible workers do not make the same contribution as the rest of the team also needed to be addressed.

### **The response**

A project team was established to investigate and implement more flexible ways of working. This team comprised members of the HR division and representatives from the business who understood the real potential impact of flexible working on the business.

First the business benefits of a work-life balance strategy were summarised to the directors of BI. With their buy-in, it has been easier to implement the flexible working policies.

Potential barriers to flexible working have been overcome by inviting employees who request to work flexibly to complete a form to indicate the potential impact on the business and possible solutions.

Above all, the aim has been to promote a culture where the focus is on performance rather than 'presenteeism'.

### **Flexible working patterns and policies in operation within BI**

As a result of the work completed by the Flexible Working Project Team, the following flexible working patterns and policies have been developed or extended:

- Flexi time
- Reduced hours (part time) working
- Home working
- Community Spirit scheme (allows employees to spend 2 days per year doing community work)
- Banking holidays
- Rehabilitation programme (phased return to work following long term sick leave)
- Career breaks
- Special leave (e.g. for religious holidays/caring for a dependant/marriage/moving house)

- Mental well-being policy and well-being room with massage chair for stress
- Healthy living initiatives such as no smoking day
- Maternity leave
- Adoption leave
- Industrial Chaplain (visits fortnightly)
- Childcare vouchers
- Paternity leave
- Parental leave

### **The benefits**

- Increased talent pool
- Employees more likely to return from maternity leave
- Retention of key skills and experience, which results in reduced recruitment costs
- Decreased sickness absence
- Improved productivity by measuring performance and rewarding employees according to achievement and contribution to the business rather than presenteeism in the office
- Overall improved well-being of employees.

### **In practice**

Flexible working arrangements are taken up by employees across the company, provided they are still able to meet business and customer requirements. These arrangements are beneficial for those with child care responsibilities and people who value a better work-life balance.

The Head of HR Operations, reporting to the HR Director, has worked for BI for 6 years: "Working reduced hours allows me to achieve more of a balance between my work and spending time with my children. That is, I spend 4 days at work, 3 at home. This time with the children at such an early stage of their development is invaluable."

The Technology Specialist has been with BI for 10 years. He works flexi-time: "The flexi-time policy in operation within BI enables me to start work early and then leave at 3pm each day. This means that I am able to spread tasks for my personal life to weekdays which, without flexible working, I would have to cram in to a Saturday. In the summer I am able to take advantage of the nicer weather, lighter evenings and enjoy a better social life!"

### **The future**

BI UK's flexible working policies and patterns are monitored to facilitate continuous improvement.

The company will continue to strive towards best practice and the need for a work-life balance will remain at the top of the business agenda.

Above all, BI UK aims to promote a culture where the focus is on high performance rather than presenteeism.