

Bio Technology / Life Science

Best Practice: Successful Growth-Oriented Company

APOGEPHA Arzneimittel GmbH: A Family Enterprise with Strong Roots

Throughout the company's history, which dates back to 1882, APOGEPHA Arzneimittel GmbH has continuously expanded its product portfolio to improve the quality of life for urology patients.

Combining family and work is a desirable objective, but often out of reach. Not so for employees at APOGEPHA Arzneimittel GmbH. In recent years the company earned two awards for its family-friendly work environment: in 2009, it earned second place in the Sax Plus Competition, and in 2011, the company was named the family-friendliest enterprise of the city of Dresden.

Family-friendliness is ingrained in the company's corporate culture. The family enterprise is considered Germany's specialist in the urology therapy sector and its pharmaceuticals support many patients treated for difficult conditions like urinary incontinence, urinary tract infections and prostate disorders. "Having been active in a particular therapeutic area as long as we have, we know what it means to be able to rely on a strong and highly motivated staff," Managing Director Henriette Starke says. APOGEPHA offers its employees flexible work schedules and, in close proximity to the company, a child-care center that was established in cooperation with the City of Dresden. Offering child-care enables shift-working parents to find flexible care for their children. "We find that besides quality work, child care has become an increasingly important factor for applicants," Starke says. "Our company history shows that former managing directors showed immense personal commitment not only for our technologies but also for our employees, and long-term cooperation means reliability and reduced risk."

The Starke Family's Personal Commitment Maintains the Company

In 1933, merchant Max Biering and pharmacist and chemist Dr. Johannes Starke bought APOGEPHA, which originated from a pharmacy established in 1882. More than 33 patents are proof of the Starke family's inventive spirit. When Johannes Starke passed away in 1968, his son Christian took on the management of the enterprise, which, at the time, had already become a recognized producer of urology pharmaceuticals and was located on Dresden's Kyffhauser Street.

In 1972, the company faced a significant challenge. After temporary expropriation and semi-nationalization, Christian Starke was forced to sign a "voluntary" declaration to sell the company. Political changes after 1989 transferred full ownership back to him. In 1991, Christian Starke was able to re-privatize the company. Since 2000, Henriette Starke, has been third generation leader of the pharmaceuticals enterprise. "Our expertise in the field of urology as well as our highly qualified and committed staff are the reason why APOGEPHA has established itself as a nationally recognized pharmaceutical company in a very short time," Henriette Starke says.

In 2009 Markus Bauer joined the management. Both refer to the many advantages of the excellent medical and scientific structures in Dresden, the Carl Gustav Carus University Hospital with its

internationally recognized urology experts, and the cooperation of the many companies that are part of Saxony's Life-Science branch, a network called 'biosaxony'.

Systematic and Ongoing Development of Products and Technologies

APOGEPHA re-invests about 10-to-15% of its turnover back into research. All of its products and production technologies are self-developed. The company focuses mainly on improving well-known and proven urology treatments in order to ease medication intake and improve patients' quality of life. In addition, the company is exploring new fields of application, like medication for children. Since 1996, pharmaceutical production is housed at the company's second facility in Dresden-Lockwitz, where the company recently started to produce a new drug formulation for its main product, a medication for urinary incontinence. The improved formulation uses the new pellet-technology, which employs microspheres that are stored in capsules and allow the controlled release of medication. Different from the classic tablet the new technology delivers the active substance evenly throughout the day, which increases effectiveness and reduces side effects. APOGEPHA also produces for the international market and has enjoyed continuous growth. Since 2010, the enterprise has increased its staff from 165 to 188; its family-friendly work conditions are surely a factor in this success.

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