

Polpharma Worldwide – People helping People

Neil Devons, EUWIN



We set challenging, measurable and attainable objectives. We want to be the best and we aim high.

We always put people first.

We follow the rules of fair play in our interpersonal relations.

Polpharma Website

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“Everyone is unique, everyone has talent and we are very good at finding this unique spark in everyone” *Dorota Piskorska, HR & Corporate Director*

Established for over 80 years, Polpharma is the largest manufacturer of pharmaceuticals in Poland servicing the Central and Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asian markets. It is among the top 20 generic drug manufacturers in the world, employing over 7,500 people across 7 manufacturing plants in Poland, Russia and Kazakhstan as well as 7 research and development centres. Polpharma Group’s portfolio includes about 600 products, and another 200 are under development.

Polpharma is a dynamic business marked by ambition. Its new facility in Duchnice near Warsaw will act as an exemplar for future infrastructure developments, perhaps enabling production to reach the rigorous standards set by the FDA (US Food and Drug Administration) and thereby vastly expanding its markets in the process.

The business realises that in order to remain competitive it has to be innovative in everything it does, and this means inspiring its employees to contribute ideas to keep it moving forward. In its daily activities, Polpharma follows the motto “People helping People”.

“We do things differently. The culture of the organisation from the highest level of managers including the board is to promote innovation, fairness and mutually beneficial collaboration.”

Ireneusz Martyniuk, Vice-President of Polpharma Management Board

Communication is seen as fundamental, whether it is management talking to employees or communication between employees:

“We try to build a very much inclusive, fair, open door, driven leadership and communication style starting from the members of the supervisory board, the management board and the senior management team. We are all very much hands on. We do our best to spend as much time with our employees and customers to learn about daily challenges and to support them in their efforts.”

Ireneusz Martyniuk

“We often meet with our colleagues at the beginning of a shift. When the shift changes, we talk about our daily duties, ideas, problem and the scheme of mending the units.”

Shopfloor Team Leader

The culture of two-way communication is supported by meetings designed to share experience across functions to help ‘break the silos’, by regular employee surveys, and by installing monitors to ensure everyone has access to the intranet where they can find important information.



Employee driven innovation

Polpharma recognises that enabling improvement and innovation requires freedom to act combined with the ability to design the workplace and work environment in ways that employees want.

“Involving people, engaging people, encouraging innovation, even letting them make as many trials as they want, letting them make mistakes, but using them as a learning opportunity, this is the way of Polpharma doing business.”

Ireneusz Martyniuk

In pursuing innovative work practices that make positive contributions to the objectives of the business and the well-being of employees, Polpharma rates openness, innovation and teamwork as important as professional skills:

“We are looking for people who are very open for change. People who are not afraid of new tasks, who are not afraid of dealing with people from different cultures, who are open on a daily basis for new challenges, new issues to be solved. If people see bigger value than just their monthly salary, if they trust each other and if they can select the way they do their job, these people are very much engaged.”

Przemysław Płachetka, HR Director (Poland)

Making change work

Polpharma’s change culture is supported by a programme based on Kaizen – a Japanese word meaning change for the better or continuous improvement. A technical specialist working in the production flow/circulation department described how making things better and introducing new ideas are ‘gladly’ received by colleagues as it gives both satisfaction and financial reward. He described how innovation can be as small as reducing the amount of paper used, to changing a machine’s specification to make it more efficient. He described how the process involves the whole team:

“I begin with a sketch and prepare a small set of supporting documents. Then, I present it to my supervisor. We discuss it and then we sit down to it with all the crew members. Together, we check if this isn’t going to (adversely) affect production. If the mechanics and my boss approve it, we make a prototype and get it started.”

“It is also satisfying and making me happy that my male and female colleagues from the production department have lighter jobs, the production process is smoother and they walk out of here less tired.”

A water-systems specialist in the infrastructure department added: *“When I’ve come up with an idea it’s never been rejected. There is always green light for it.”*



Learning & Development

Listening to what employees have to say and, in some cases understanding the language they use is an important aspect of Polpharma’s development programme. For instance, they invest in hiring the best young talent available but recognise that Millennials communicate in different ways. In response, senior managers attend workshops to learn how to deal with the young generation of millennials and to establish a common language.

Similarly, many of its employees have developed their careers abroad and they are welcomed back to Poland as bringers of fresh ideas and new ways of leading and managing people.

The focus of learning at Polpharma is hands-on experience, an approach referred to as ‘*seventy, twenty, ten*’. Seventy per cent of your effort should concentrate on developing or learning from practical experience. Twenty per cent comes from learning from others and exchanging knowledge through mentoring and coaching, and ten per cent is through education in the form of training, workshops and conferences.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Employee Engagement

The concept of corporate social responsibility lies at the heart of its management strategy. In addition to actively limiting the environmental impact of its technologies for product manufacture, Polpharma also promotes innovative projects put forward by employees which improve the environmental efficiency of processes, products and services. It confers Green Process Awards every year, with the winners not only receiving cash prizes but also having the right to plant their own tree on company premises.

Workplace innovation in practice

Polpharma is a business which recognises that its future lies in the talents of all its employees, and recognises the necessity of tapping into their experience and knowledge in order to grow and improve. The business also understands that a range of elements converge to bring about sustainable change including communication, job discretion, learning and development, knowledge sharing, employee driven innovation and personal improvement.

“We are innovative. Innovative in the process, innovative in attitude towards our business partners, customers and employees.”

Dorota Piskorska

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