

Feelgood manager in Dual function: Claudia Schwan about Kampf's company health management

From the European secretariat to leading the health management team: Cologne-born Claudia Schwan not only manages the exercise break in Wiehl, but is also committed to modern methods in the working environment at Kampf GmbH.

Ms. Schwan, you have been with Kampf for a long time and are now responsible for health management. How did this come about?

I originally started out as a European secretary at WT Wickeltechnik, handling correspondence in English, Spanish and French. After Kampf took over the company, I started there as a sales assistant and increasingly also took care of trade fairs and events. In the process, I became increasingly aware that I like to organize cooperation. It's simply in my blood: my gift is to make people feel good!

Does this gift also motivate you to get involved in health management at Kampf?

Absolutely! But I've been doing this since 2012. I've been working as an exercise trainer at Kampf alongside my job as a sales assistant. Ultimately, the topic of exercise and wellness has been with me all my life; it is also my personal passion, which I continue to develop. I am now a certified yoga teacher and offer classes in my converted living room.

The people responsible in the HR department knew about my commitment and that's why I became part of the new exercise scout team. That's how the exercise break came about, which I still offer twice a week - now also online for colleagues working from home.

When Mr. Thorwesten asked me in 2023 whether I would like to take over health management in addition to my role as Assistance Sales, I immediately said yes! Thanks to my experience and cooperation with the Institute for Workplace Health Promotion BGF and the health insurance company AOK Rheinland/Hamburg, I was already well connected.



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What does this cooperation involve?

On the one hand, the AOK supports our courses financially. In addition, the BGF and the AOK offer various activities for us trainers and also for the employees. For example, the „Health Working Group“ takes place three times a year. As the people responsible for health management, we use the AOK's sickness absence data in this committee to identify trends and derive measures from them. Since Covid, people have been suffering increasingly from mental health problems and this year, for the first time, we are offering meditation, mindfulness and breathing exercises to improve mental health. However, it is not easy to establish new methods. It helps that I am a persistent person and know that it will pay off in the long term.

The best example of this is the sports course that I offer on Thursdays at the company - and have been doing for over 10 years now. There are always around 20 of us and one colleague even recently decided to become an exercise scout herself - with the support of the BGF Institute. In addition, our partners are always providing us with new ideas and activities ...

... for example?

There is a whole range of them, such as office gardening. This „field break“ was very successful last year and helps participants to gain a completely new approach to nutrition by growing food together. There are also fun activities such as step challenges or cycling campaigns to get employees moving. But we also provide active advice: in cooperation with AOK, we offer bike coaching on the subject of cycling in the prevention mobile. At our health days, participants can find out their stroke risk and stamina levels. They also have the opportunity to find out their stress type and do a back check, which shows how their back is doing. New employees find out how important this is to us right at the start of their employment. We address ergonomics at the workplace from the very first inspection and adapt it accordingly.

In addition to the wide range of courses for employees, there are also courses specifically for managers. In our coaching sessions, they can develop their leadership skills and learn how to conduct difficult and healthy conversations or how to deal with employees who are under psychological strain.

Another key pillar of our health management - and as I said, a great passion of mine - is active sport. Every Thursday, we do Zumba, yoga or Tabata together - and we welcome all employees who want to take part. There are also Nordic walking and running groups that we organize ourselves. I think we're already doing quite a lot - and I'm convinced that constant dripping wears away the stone and that we're reaching more and more employees.

In your opinion, what characterizes good health management at Kampf, what strategy does it follow?

Our health management is already very holistic. This means that it combines preventative methods, i.e. prophylaxis, with corrective, improving components. The former motivates and informs employees so that they stay healthy, which ultimately benefits the company. This includes team spirit, active breaks and overall health-promoting behavior, but also our bullying hotline. Employees can call if they feel they are being bullied, and we will then help them with advice and support.

On the other hand, we use corrective measures to ensure that colleagues are reintegrated smoothly and individually after illness. To this end, we offer confidential discussions as part of company integration management in order to be able to help. For example, if someone needs a place in therapy, we as a company can speed this up with the psychological service.

Our accompanying offer for trainees is also well established. Together with the BGF Institute, we motivate them to adopt healthy behavior during their training. I always say „start now to maintain your health - you can't take it for granted!“

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Healthy employees - is that your vision? Or what do you want for the future - where do you want to develop health management?

Basically, I think things are going really well at the moment. We are all working on increasing acceptance within the company. Our managers are called upon to motivate their teams and promote the measures. I think it would be great if we could all take a physical activity break together after lunch. It doesn't have to look like a drill! (laughs) But I think fifteen minutes of exercise twice a week is something that „everyone“ should be able to do! That's why I'm all the more pleased when I see that many have introduced a walk after lunch. This shows that our efforts are bearing fruit. And specifically, I would like to see more attention paid to the topic of mindfulness. Simply pausing for a moment is becoming increasingly important to prevent mental illness.



You have now been with Kampf for 26 years - and are therefore an isolated case. What does Kampf do right that there is such a low fluctuation rate?

It's quite simple: Kampf is like a family! But while you can't choose them, we always manage to find people who complement us. We all get along wonderfully. The people who work here are simply very empathetic and respectful. And if there are differences - they say that happens in the best families - we can resolve them. The bottom line is that the working atmosphere and mutual respect are simply unique. That's the key and why I always enjoy coming to work!

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