



start at best

Workplace Innovation for Business Competitiv y

UCB CASE STUDY

Firm Name
UCB

Country
Belgium

City / Region
Brussels

No. of Employees
> 5000 Employees

Description of the organisation

UCB, formerly Schwarz Pharma, is a leading manufacturer of API pharma products mainly for the treatment of angina pectoris and related conditions. UCB Shannon is one of the leading global facilities in its product field. Schwarz Pharma including the Shannon site was bought by Belgian-owned UCB in 2007 and subsequently faced a difficult period of restructuring in which one half of the workforce was made redundant.

Workplace Innovation practices implemented

Since 2012, the emphasis of UCB has been focused on integrating the plant within the larger group. This was supported by the arrival of the new Director of Human Resources who focused on strengthening employee engagement, collaboration among employees, creating a partnership with the main unit and introducing a culture of continuous improvement.

The company conducted annual participation surveys as part of the global “UCB Voices” commitment initiative, with high levels of employee participation. The survey results revealed several areas of concern, especially around processes, information and communication and recognition. After the the first set of results was communicated to the workforce, the company identified multiple key actions, but furthermore, the HR manager was also interested in involving employees in the search for solutions, and not just pointing out problems or concerns. A workshop, open to all employees, using mind maps and storytelling techniques to build a shared vision of change and improvement was carried out and resulted that improved communication and organizational behaviour were among the desirable changes identified by this workshop.

Of the workplace innovative practices that were implemented, the workplace partnership illustrates the important role of employees and the union, where representatives have played in the process of change and with which employees and unions can identify. Human resources manager attributed results such as time efficiency, productivity, improved communication and improved decision making.

This association and proactive discussion with union representatives on emerging issues resulted in avoiding conflicts and promoting commitment at all levels.

Also, in-house career opportunities are offered and supported for all level employees, and much is done to stimulate learning to help adopt new technologies, also



keeping in mind that learning and development practices are carried out in a very well described and detailed way, and therefore can be transferred and replicated.

Main Achievements



Systematic follow up of the engagement survey.



Effective management culture.



Workplace partnership.



Embedding quality and compliance.



Employee driven improvement and innovation.



Implementation and training in new technologies.

C H E C K T H E S O U R C E H E R E

