

SHARED LEADERSHIP

Company name : Union Investment Luxembourg S.A.

Activity sector : Activités financières et d'assurance

Company category : Secteur Public

Description of the action

We recently introduced the possibility of shared leadership in order to make leadership positions more inclusive for all interested employees with the required competencies.

Shared leadership describes a flexible working time model in which two managers share one position. The management tandem shares the responsibilities and tasks of that position. The tasks of the tandem partners can be distributed equally or differently. Hence both either have the same tasks and bear the same responsibility or they divide their tasks, meaning that both parties take responsibility for specific specialist areas. In both scenarios disciplinary management of the team is carried out jointly.

This new leadership model enables us to improve employees' work-life balance and make leadership positions more attractive particularly for women who are still underrepresented in our management teams.

Context

A central aim of our Diversity and Inclusion strategy is to increase the percentage of female managers. Analyses of our diversity council have shown that a central reason for women not to take on managerial roles is the difficulty to reconcile their private and professional life while working fulltime.

We entered into contact with the HR representatives of other companies already offering shared leadership. They confirmed that shared leadership positions were particularly interesting for women.

We, hence, decided to introduce the possibility of shared leadership in order to allow for greater flexibility and enable employees of all genders working part-time to take on leadership responsibilities.

Objectives

The main objectives of shared leadership are to increase flexibility for our managers and improve work-life balance.

By allowing part-time employees to take on leadership responsibilities we make leadership an option for colleagues who had not considered it beforehand as being a manager used to require a minimum number of working hours that they could not fulfil.

Thanks to the possibility of sharing leadership responsibilities becoming a manager is no longer dependent on one's number of working hours but solely on one's suitability for the role.

Ultimately, we see shared leadership as one measure to raise the percentage of female leaders and make our management teams more diverse.

Approach

The tandem model is possible for group and department managers. We developed a number of guidelines and rules so that our employees and managers can easily judge whether shared leadership would be an interesting option for them. These guidelines inter alia refer to the size of the teams that the tandems are responsible for as well as the level of employment of the two involved managers. The extent to which overlapping working hours are approved for the leadership tandem is defined individually depending on the respective group size and the complexity of the topics

being worked on.

Due to different legal frameworks, cross-border tandems are not possible. At our company, shared leadership always refers to the distribution of disciplinary leadership. Purely functional leadership by one tandem partner is not permitted.

The application process for shared leadership provides for several scenarios. The first scenario refers to two potential managers who apply jointly as a tandem.

The second scenario would be that an existing full-time manager seeks to continue their position in the tandem in order to reduce their working hours.

In a third case, an existing tandem loses a manager, and the vacant position is filled by a new tandem partner who fulfils the defined requirements.

Finally, an individual part-time employee can apply for a vacant management position as part of a tandem. The successful application of an individual for a management position in a tandem always depends

Impact

Our employees welcome the new leadership model that provides more flexibility and increases the attractiveness of managerial roles.

We have already established a first management tandem composed of two young female colleagues.

« To do »

A good personal relationship between both partners is the basis for good cooperation. The tandem partners need to have consistent management principles and the same vision of their team. They must, moreover, possess strong communication and coordination skills as well as conflict resolution skills and a tolerance for mistakes. Obviously, both partners have to be open to work in a tandem and share responsibility. Finally, shared leadership will only be successful if both partners trust and respect one another.

We sought the advice of an external consultancy that specializes on shared leadership in the preparation of this new management concept. New leadership tandems are accompanied and supported by coaches who have already worked as part of a leadership tandem themselves.

« Not to do »

Expect managers to have a full-time contract. Two part-time managers can bundle their competencies and talents and increase team efficiency.