

Diversity Challenges and Initiatives

Mary Kramer interview's Eva Mourino – HR Director Middle East, Turkey and Africa Astra Zeneca

Mary Kramer: Eva, how long has the area of "Diversity" been a priority in Astra Zeneca's HR strategy?

Eva Mourino: Since I started working in Astra Zeneca over 10 years ago as an HR Business Partner in Spain "diversity" especially in terms of gender has been on the agenda. While gender diversity is still a key aspect of our diversity initiatives other areas such as diversity in ethnicities are also very important in many geographies.

Mary Kramer: I know that after working with Astra Zeneca in Spain that you became HR Director in Japan. Tell me about that experience in terms of adapting to the local culture as well as diversity initiatives there.

Eva Mourino: The two years I spent in Japan were so rewarding for me. I went to Japan to transfer knowledge in terms of global HR strategies and to ensure they were implemented locally. Soon after I arrived the Fukushima Nuclear disaster occurred and I was called on to focus on helping our people in the area. As a result of this crisis, and the resulting difficult circumstances, I quickly became closer to and more aware of my Japanese colleagues culture.

In terms of Diversity in our organization in Japan, I can say that I am very proud of what we accomplished. When I started in Japan, we had some troubling statistics in terms of female employee turnover at the managerial potential level and differentiation between female and male

employee satisfaction levels. Specifically we had an issue with our Japanese female employees near the managerial level as they were much more likely to voluntarily leave the company versus our male employees as they faced a lower percent of promotions and lower satisfaction levels.

Mary Kramer: So definitely work to be done, what did you do?

Eva Mourino: First of all we conducted workshops with female employees to understand better their experiences, beliefs, and challenges. What we discovered is that many didn't aspire to become leaders as there were no female role models in the subsidiary and the male role models didn't appear to be particularly happy as they seemed stressed and were working extremely long hours. Also the women had practical issues – for instance if they were to attend events after work which they felt were part of the demands for managerial level roles - they needed additional childcare.

After getting these insights, we established a Diversity Council led successfully by two male leaders (as we didn't have female leaders) and sponsored by me. I see Diversity like rain, it must come from top to bottom. The Council was very active – we brought Japanese female leaders from other industries as well as Astra Zeneca female leaders from other companies to speak to employees at workshops on how they reached the top and how they overcame challenges. We hired from outside AZ the first Japanese female executive team member and also assigned executive search firms to bring forward female talent at managerial levels and we promoted more females internally.

We also offered practical help like providing female employees with money to hire a babysitter when they wanted to attend a business related evening event. After two years, the female employee satisfaction level was as high as the male satisfaction level as they felt the company was taking a proactive, consistent approach towards their development and

they actually had female role models within the organization.

Mary Kramer: That is really impressive Eva. You have been living in Dubai for the last 3 years now overseeing HR for Astra Zeneca for 63 countries in the Middle East, Turkey and Africa. Can you share your experiences in this role?

Eva Mourino: I have experienced a positive and open approach to diversity initiatives. In fact in many countries we have very good representation of female leaders. Where we do have challenges is in the countries where the female talent pool in general is very small.

We do have Diversity metrics that we measure every 3 months. Information like number of female managers, employee turnover rate, diversity in nationalities in countries where it is relevant. For instance in Dubai we historically had an overrepresentation of Egyptian colleagues in our leadership team. Now in the Gulf Region Leadership team we have 8 people, 8 nationalities and a good representation of both female and male leaders. This rich diversity brings creativity and holistic decision making I believe.

Mary Kramer: What is your next Diversity Challenge to tackle?

Eva Mourino: Sometimes you can't go as fast as you would like but our next milestone is that we want to get our talent from emerging markets to the very top of our organization globally - the CEO position.

Mary Kramer: I am sure you will achieve that sooner than you think Eva! Thank you so much for sharing your experiences with SpenglerFox.

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