

Mars Belgium in top three of “Best Employers”

As a family business, Mars Belgium continues to invest in co-workers and to hire in spite of the crisis

Mars Belgium has improved its ranking in a survey of Belgium’s “Best Employers”, rising to third place in the category for businesses with fewer than 500 employees. As a division of one of the largest family businesses in the world, Mars Belgium is showing that its unique corporate culture and consistent long-term personnel management philosophy can also make the difference in time of crisis. Mars Belgium has continued to invest in a human resources policy that prioritises transparency, equality and personal development.

In its very first participation in 2009, Mars Belgium was ranked a remarkable fourth best employer in Belgium in the category for businesses with fewer than 500 employees. Scarcely one year later, the family business has managed to break into the top three. The list of Belgium’s best employers is compiled by the Great Place to Work Institute, in association with Vlerick Leuven Gent Management School. Only businesses with an exemplary personnel management are eligible for inclusion in the internationally renowned ranking. Trust between staff and management and a corporate culture characterised among other things by pride, respect and team spirit are decisive criteria in the assessment.

“At Mars Belgium we are convinced that a leading position on the market and a responsible role in society are possible only when your organisation is borne by your people,” said Karin De Backer, Personnel Manager P&O at Mars Belgium. “That’s why we call our employees associates and actively listen to them. As a family business we are able to establish our own long-term priorities.”

As Mars does not have to justify its actions to shareholders, it can continue to invest in its workforce in a time of crisis, and it does so with a focus on openness and equality.

Transparency and equality are guiding principles

In spite of its impressive ranking as fourth-best Belgian employer in 2009, Mars Belgium arranged an in-house survey with the aim of further improving HR policy. After an in-depth analysis and open reflection on the survey results, the company set to work on a number of improvements. As a consequence, Mars Belgium has further improved the clarity with which it communicates development opportunities to all associates. The flexibility of the working hours system has also been changed to enable a better work-life balance.

In addition, as a result of the survey all associates, regardless of their job, now have the opportunity to drive an ecological company car. This particular initiative results from the equality principle that Mars Belgium as a family business cherishes as one of its guiding principles. For instance, no one at Mars Belgium, including senior management, has a personal assistant or a private office.

Continued recruitment and career opportunities in spite of the crisis

Mars Belgium continues to hire staff in spite of the current crisis – 27 people in 2009 to be exact. As a result, the total workforce in Belgium grew. Last year 22 associates retired after an average 29 years of service. Such long careers are due to the intensive attention Mars invests in internal mobility with varied challenges and growing responsibilities. Last year, more than 12% of the associates were given the opportunity to take up fresh challenges in a new job.

“We endeavour to create maximum opportunities for our associates that enable them to grow and continue to develop within Mars, at home and abroad,” explains Karin De Backer, who has herself worked at Mars Belgium for 19 years. “We do that not only through training programs. We also encourage our associates to innovate, advance and assume responsibilities through other initiatives.”

The “Making the Difference Award”, for instance, rewards initiatives of associates that enabled them to have a significant impact within the firm. Or how the “best” employer forms the “best” employees...

PRESS CONTACT:

MARS Belgium

Karliën Desmet
Corporate Affairs Manager
Kleine Kloosterstraat 8 - 1932 Sint-Stevens-Woluwe
Tel. 02/712 72 22 - Tel. 0800/93 113
E-mail: contact@be.mars.com

KETCHUM PLEON Belgium

Press relations Mars Belgium
Jeroen Fermie – jeroen.fermie@ketchumpleon.com
Tel. 02/550 00 84