

## **Ericsson Hellas: Inspiring great performance through collaboration**

### **What does this case study demonstrate?**

Ericsson has been continuously encouraging open and candid communication within the organization and among employees at all levels. What's more, the employee relationships are supported by initiatives which encourage employees' empowerment and professional development.

*Workplace Innovation elements: Work organization, Structure and systems, Learning and reflection, Workplace partnership*

### **Context**

[Ericsson Hellas S.A.](#) provides turnkey solutions including network design, equipment supply, network deployment and systems integration services and employs around 220 people. The company was incorporated in 1979 and is based in Peania area, a suburb of Athens, in Greece. Ericsson Hellas S.A. operates as a subsidiary of Ericsson. The company believes that in today's rapidly changing world an organization should primarily identify its needs and must carefully plan the changes that should take place in the future for achieving growth.

The company is focused on innovation and is particularly interested in applying workplace innovation practices that can have a direct positive outcome to improving efficiency and performance. Recently more learning opportunities have been offered to the employees, strengthening their engagement and motivation. This is considered as a proactive approach applied to improve the company's market position.

For the implementation of their initiatives, they align their procedures with those defined by the headquarters to comply with their instructions and adapt the implementation to more local needs or peculiarities. Specific project management techniques, for their proper integration, are utilized. The assessment and development process is carried out on a global level with the above considerations in mind.

*"We follow global processes for the harmonization of the procedures in all branches. For the improvement of the company's performance, for achieving excellence, further development, efficiency and better results".* Head of HR

### **Listening to their inner voice**

The company's 'open door policy' helps the organization to be transparent with regular internal communication with employees through online, regular face to face updates, talks and surveys. Particularly, the company's Workplace Surveys give feedback about working life issues and according to the results an action plan procedure starts. One example is the "Dialog Survey" which is an annual employee survey carried out every September or early October. The topics surveyed, through an electronic questionnaire, include issues such as employees' commitment and motivation, leadership, training and development, workplace environment, corporate culture etc. and helps senior managers estimate the overall capabilities of the organization, as all employees participate. The results of this survey are transformed into an action plan, implemented within the global, hub, regional and operational

units in order to realize everyone's improvement. Additionally, the targets that they need to achieve within the next year are set.

*"It promotes dialog by making our voice heard.... we share our needs, preferences and goals with each other... it is an interactive process of feedback and communication between the company and us, the employees."* Employee focus group.

*"We can gain a better understanding of what the company needs and expects from us".* Employee representative.

The company also uses the "Dialog survey" as a valuable "selling tool" in meetings with future and current clients making them aware of the fact that they are cooperating with a company of integrity that listens and protects its employees.

## **Supporting collaboration for letting ideas flow freely**

Great emphasis is placed on ensuring that people are comfortable in the working environment. In the last 3 years they have transformed their work environment into an open space for more efficient and easier distribution of information and communication which inspires and supports collaboration among employees. Additionally, it allows ideas to flow freely with everybody being in the same room and helps the various roles in the office come together more effectively.

*"It is much easier now than it used to be in the past...everyone is within easy reach... We should frequently collaborate in projects so we can communicate with our colleagues easier".* Employees' focus group

The employees feel members of a team and not isolated working in separate offices as exchanging of ideas and carrying out of tasks is enabled. There is also a free sitting approach so someone can choose where to sit in order to cooperate with a team for a project.

For the same reason, they have also created many meeting rooms and booths for making conference calls. They are technologically fully equipped facilitating tele-meetings which substantially reduce days of travelling abroad for meetings as well as e-learning sessions. Within the same concept, their working time has become more flexible. Managers arrange the project's deadlines and demands providing all employees with remote connection to the company's network.

## **Inspiring great performance**

By participating in "Ericsson's learning academy" employees are inspired to increase performance, exchange ideas and stimulate innovative thinking and behaviours. An electronic platform supports the learning academy at all levels and combines formal and informal learning with efficient knowledge-sharing processes to form a responsive and innovative learning culture where employees feel empowered and responsible for leading their professional development. It is connected with the employee assessment process which is carried out 3 times a year. The information and courses offered connect people with the latest ICT knowledge in an engaging manner. Employees can access self-learning through the content of Ericsson Academy which offers over 7,000 learning activities whereas it can also provide tailor made content. More precisely, 10% of the training includes formal classroom training, 10% includes structured learning using digital tools, 70% is based on collaboration, comprising of on the job training, participation in assignments and projects as well as job rotations. Finally, 20% is based on collaboration including knowledge sharing, team working and coaching to help employees' upskill.

## So who benefits?

**Reducing organizational walls and ceilings:** Considering the particular characteristics and needs of the company, everyone is engaged and involved in the process of creating a culture in which their opinions and experiences are valued.

*“We are members of an inclusive and rewarding work environment that our contribution, participation and creativity are encouraged and supported”.* Employees’ Representative

*“We have constant communication with the national top management team for the application of the practices”.* Employees’ Representative

**Enabling continuous improvement, high involvement innovation, shared knowledge and experience:** Through the applied learning initiatives, employees feel more empowered and responsible for leading their professional development.

*“Ericsson is more focused on industry and society therefore adapts in new ways of working and new talent management approaches support the employees”.* Employees’ Focus group

*“Our company has established sharing of knowledge and information through all layers of the organization”.* Employees’ Focus Group

*“Company initiatives create a positive mentality and a team working attitude with employees engaged in any changes. We have a more fulfilling working life, with supportive managers that help us grow professionally”.* Employees’ Focus Group

## Prognosis

In today’s rapidly changing world an organization should primarily identify its needs and must carefully plan the changes that they have to implement for achieving growth. The challenge, for Ericsson, is to ensure a high working life quality for its employees that can have a positive effect on the company’s provided services to internal and external markets.