

Practice report Next Generation Culture

2023



"Sustainability? It can only be achieved together!"

Culture eats strategy for breakfast - this statement, which is attributed to the management pioneer Peter Drucker, leaves nothing to be desired in terms of clarity. Nevertheless, it often is overlooked when it comes to implementing corporate strategies. One thing is clear: culture and strategy are interdependent. And: culture is created automatically and anew every day. The culture changes depending on how members of the company interact with each other or to which problems they are sensitive. This makes internal communication an important lever for organizational development.

At Evonik, sustainability is integrated into the corporate strategy. In 2022, the next phase of the strategic business transformation was initiated with Next Generation Evonik (NextGen). At the same time, Evonik set itself new, ambitious sustainability targets. In addition to the transformation requirements for the product portfolio (Next Generation Solutions) and the further development of plants and infrastructure (Next Generation Technologies), the "NextGen Culture" program addresses the transformation expectations for employees, in line with Drucker's ideas. Organizationally, NextGen Culture has been anchored in the HR Talent Management function. The aim is for employees to integrate sustainability in their thoughts and actions into their day-to-day work. Communication on NextGen Culture therefore focuses on the human factor with its skills and attitude towards sustainability.

Sustainability thrives on participation. Communication measures on several channels promote networking among employees and raise their awareness of the topic: the crucial point of contact is a digital community that identifies all relevant goals and messages. It is part of the Evonik Social Network, the internal social network with connectors to the intranet and various SharePoints. As an information hub, the community creates many points of contact with the topic of sustainability, collects company-wide personnel and people-related sustainability measures and promotes individual and collective commitment. This makes it an ideal tool for shaping the transformation process towards greater sustainability together with the workforce. At the same time, communication on NextGen Culture was intensified on other channels. A series of articles on the intranet introduced the program and the community. In video messages, HR management and other managers generated additional attention in their role as champions. Blogs, a podcast and sustainability tips rounded off the communication.

The concept worked: Within a brief time, more than 10% of the workforce were actively engaged. More than 50,000 interactions per month with the community content testify to its relevance and the commitment of the employees. It also shows that it is an advantage if the chosen communication channel is open to all employees from the outset and enables dialog. This makes the initiative - and therefore the mandate to participate - visible for everyone. One straightforward way to achieve greater sustainability is to make existing knowledge available to everyone. Evonik has long been using a live video learning format with more than 12,000 active members: the Learning Hour. Regarding NextGen Culture, the invitation to join in was: "Share what you are already doing for sustainability in your day-to-day work and motivate others to join in with your actions." The special charm of the format lies in communicating on an equal footing: it reaches employees who are intrinsically motivated and presents them as role models and patrons of the campaigns.

The community makes it clear that we are already a strong community for more sustainability and that

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sustainability at employee level is more than just the sum of CO₂ savings. It is about togetherness, sharing ideas and getting all colleagues to move from conviction to action.

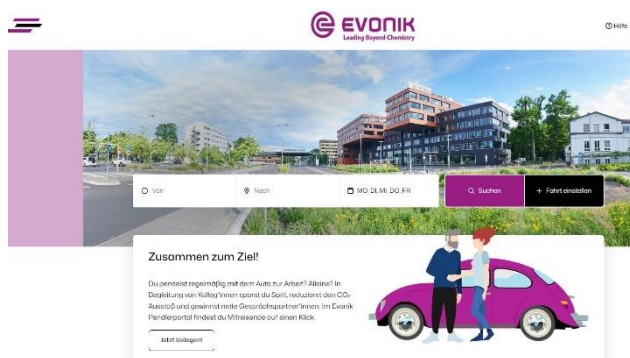
In the following examples, we let our employees have their say directly by presenting texts from the measures submitted to the Next Generation Community.

Examples of successful measures by employees

The Evonik carpooling app

The situation: The idea of a carpooling app was developed four years ago as part of a mobility workshop in Hanau. Surveys of employees at various sites revealed that many employees were interested in carpooling.

The idea also attracted attention at a speed-up conference, so funding was made available, and an external provider was commissioned to create an Evonik CommuterPortal in line with the company's requirements.



The challenge: the CommuterPortal was launched very successfully in January 2020. Within a brief time, more than 1,400 employees from Germany and Antwerp had registered. Six weeks later, unfortunately, everything came to a standstill: Corona had thrown a spanner in the works for the carpooling app and Evonik commuters.

The solution from Evonik employees: The eMotion team has further developed the commuter portal over the past few years. It is now much more intuitive to use. It was successfully launched in mid-October 2023.

The effect: The measure promises more efficient commuting (between home and work and for business trips between two sites), less stress when looking for a parking space at Evonik sites (fewer cars), more sustainable travel by reducing CO₂ emissions and cost savings.

According to the eMotion team, the aim of the measure is also to make employees feel more connected to Evonik, in a shared culture of trust and the desire for more sustainability in the workplace.

Conclusion: an idea that directly influences our emissions by changing our workplace and commuting culture and now invites people within the company to join in and implement it in other regions.

Reducing the footprint of food in staff restaurants with the climate score (Andreas Voßmüller)

The situation: "If everyone lived like we do in Germany, we would need 3 planets." (Eaternity Institute, <https://eaternity.org/foodprint/>). A statement that makes you think. Andreas Voßmüller and the employees of Evonik Catering Services felt the same way about 1.5 years ago at an event organized by the Eaternity Institute from Switzerland, which has been studying the effects of our diet on the environment for over ten years. But where major polluters are identified, it is often possible to find major levers for improvement. The team recognized their potential to reduce food-related emissions by around 50% through smart dietary choices.

The challenge: Thousands of employees at the Evonik Industries AG sites meet every day at lunchtime in the staff restaurants to eat a variety of fresh dishes (often every working day) and to socialize with colleagues. To make it easier for as many colleagues as possible to contribute, the aim is not to force anyone to sacrifice anything. How can this change process succeed?

The solution was provided by Evonik employees: With a rating that distinguishes the menus in terms of climate friendliness, every guest is offered the opportunity to make their own conscious and climate-friendly decisions - entirely in the spirit of responsible action - and thus also entirely in the spirit of Next Generation Evonik. The measure targets several areas of sustainability with a focus on people (e.g., "Knowledge and education" or "Sustainable consumption").

The rating attempts to educate and raise awareness of climate-friendly nutrition and show that everyone can contribute. Catering Services does not want to decide what "ends up on the plate" but wants to encourage the topic of climate-friendly nutrition to be on the table even at dinner with loved ones.



The effect: the climate score makes it easier to make the right decision and influences eating habits and, in turn, the range on offer in staff restaurants. The score is available on all digital menus in the catering app, in the menu portal or on the displays in the staff restaurants: the more stars (scale from 1 to 3) a menu has received in the rating, the more climate-friendly the guest's choice is. A 3-star meal halves our CO₂ footprint and contributes to achieving the climate degree target! As a cooperation partner of Evonik Catering Services, Eaternity has now calculated more than 100,000 CO₂-equivalent emissions from food

and provides continuously updated calculations and climate ratings for all lunch dishes on the menu via a continuous interface. Factors such as the origin of the food purchased and seasonality are considered. The scheme was launched in Marl at the end of 2022, followed by Essen Campus, Essen Goldschmidtstraße and Wesseling in 2023, then Darmstadt, Hanau and Rheinfelden.

Conclusion: a clear positioning for more sustainability supported by the catering service employees, and the whole workforce can participate directly in its success.

Laying the foundations for a green site with the Sustainability-Quick-Check at Wolfgang Industrial Park (Kerstin Oberhaus, Julia Schultheis)

The situation: The past seven years have been the warmest since weather records began. Even if we succeed in limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, we must prepare ourselves for more frequent and more severe extreme weather events and long-term environmental changes. The consequences of climate change, such as water shortages and hot temperatures in summer, also affect work at the industrial park. We are already seeing the consequences of human activity in our environment in many other ways.

The challenge: Colleagues want to address the challenges and are asking themselves what they can do together at Wolfgang Industrial Park to make the site more sustainable.

The solution offered by Evonik employees: At employee level, all of us from different areas and companies at the site come together once a quarter for a "Sustainability Quick Check". There we discuss various sustainability topics, such as paperless offices, natural flowering meadows, green hydrogen, mobility ("cycle to work"), greening buildings, rainwater use and much more.

The effect: Ecological, social, and corporate sustainability are gaining massively in importance. With the measures we have achieved, we are helping to reduce CO₂ emissions, creating an environment in which our employees feel comfortable and demonstrating ways in which a large chemical site can tackle the transformation of the industry together. In addition, we motivate the workforce to help shape this transition and encourage them to participate in a shared vision. This is how one measure gave rise to many others. Wolfgang Industrial Park shows how we are working towards a common goal with over ten other measures now in place. Individual measures include the H₂-pipeline connection, promotion of the Ecosia search engine, the paperless office, participation in World Cleanup Day, the mobility workshop on eMobility, bicycle path connection and promotion of local transport at the site, a PV initiative, site development with the workers council, which was also able to hold an exhibition on the UN's sustainability goals.



Conclusion: This submitted measure shows the strong impact that results from cooperation between employees and that it is worthwhile for a location to determine its own fields of action.

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