

“Individual support is necessary in times of restructuring ”



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1. Mrs. Van Acker, can you please introduce yourself and your organization?

Janssen Pharmaceutica is part of the global pharmaceutical group Janssen. On our campus, we discover, develop and commercialize medicines on behalf of patients, doctors and other healthcare professionals. We mainly work in the following fields: 'neuroscience', 'oncology', 'infectious diseases' and 'vaccines'.

I am a clinical psychologist and I report to the head of the internal prevention department of the Campus. As a psychosocial expert, I am responsible for the policy regarding the psychosocial well-being of the employees. I am also the first person to contact as confidential advisor in case of unwanted behaviour at work and I am responsible for counseling, coaching, crisis care and mediation.

2. When did you start the cooperation with Eupora, and for what reason?

That is a long story. It had to do with the wave of restructurings that we have going on since 2007.

The situation within the sector and Janssen Pharmaceutica:

The pharmaceutical industry has to contend with structural changes for several years now. Research and development of new medicines becomes more difficult, expensive and takes more and more time. Existing products lose their patents and

The Employee Assistance Program, in short 'EAP', is a confidential service offered at the employees of the company – and their families – to help them cope with problems influencing their personal well-being and/or their performance at work.

The Restructuring Assistance Program, abbreviated RAP, is a modular concept for companies in reorganization. Next to a (temporary) EAP, also on-site counseling, workshops for managers and management coaching can be offered in an integrated way.

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cannot be sufficiently replaced by new products. The competition with generic products is increasing. We also have to deal with the economic crisis. Therefore the cost structure had to be drastically reduced.

Furthermore, we are moving from a highly decentralized organization to a more central approach, in which several branches in Belgium were brought together in Beerse. The process of change as such takes place in several fields. Our first restructuring announcements date from 2001 with 286 announced redundancies. In 2007 and 2008, there were another 688 and 153 announced redundancies. The number of people who eventually had to leave, was lower but remained important. By the end of 2009, the company announced another 417 redundancies between 2009 and 2013.

A 'classic' EAP in 2007: the start of our cooperation with Eupora

With the second and larger wave of announced redundancies in 2007, we feared for not having enough internal possibilities to assist our people. We therefore have searched an external partner and so we found Eupora. In the time of the restructuring announcements, a 'classic' Employee Assistance Program (EAP) was started. In that way, our employees could get anonymous psychosocial help from external consultants. This was made possible through of a special 0800-number. Moreover, they could have another 5 face-to-face consultations outside the office. All costs were paid by our company. This program was available for our employees, for a period of 6 months.

The results? We received positive feedback from our employees, who provided information about the support received from Eupora on their own initiative. We also received valuable information from Eupora about general tendencies in our organization: individual counseling is indeed strictly anonymous, but as a company, we received a statistical overview of the general/structural concerns of our employees.

We regret that, at that time, few employees used this service. We think that several factors have contributed to this. We assume that the combination of the restructuring announcement and the introduction of this new en unknown offer to the employees has played a role here. Furthermore, the unions doubted the added value of the EAP. That is why they did not support it immediately at launch. And once the initiative had been introduced, we didn't give any additional information within the organization anymore.

After the period of 6 months, we wanted to continue the program as a sustainable tool for helping to raise the psychosocial well-being of our employees. But at that time, this didn't fit into the general strategy of the company. We focused on cost savings and there was no additional budget available to continue this program.

Workshop 'emotional leadership' for managers

The fact that the restructuring rounds succeeded each other, made it very difficult for the employees. They came to realize that Janssen Pharmaceutica would perhaps not be the organization where they would work until retirement.

Besides EAP-support, we developed a complete support plan where we've trained employees and managers how to deal with change and stress.

For these managers, we have developed, in association with Eupora, a workshop where we aimed at the aspect of 'emotion and leadership'. Dealing with 'emotion' has become much more important now. It is the responsibility of the managers to recognize the signals of the employees and to do something with this information. They could give the necessary support themselves, or they could refer them to other support channels, such as individual counseling possibilities.

New restructuring announcements: a new integrated 'on site' concept

By the end of 2009, the organization had to continue its restructuring plans with new announcements as a result. The interventions were drastic and involved a redundancy plan until 2013. Furthermore, it was announced that many members of the personnel – blue collars and white collars – would get a new role. The fear of a major psychological impact was felt by management and support services. We have thoroughly evaluated our approach on individual counseling in the past. Did we have to offer external individual counseling again? How could we do differently and better than in 2007? How could we provide individual counseling that was neutral, yet closer than a 0800-line?

Together with Eupora, we have developed an alternative EAP, adapted to this restructuring project. The basic services remained the same, but the big difference was that we deployed the Eupora experts now also on-site. Both in our branch in Geel, as in Beerse, they were present two half days a week. Employees could walk in without appointment. Instead of the 0800-line, we used the Janssen permanence number that could be redirected to Eupora during nights, weekends and holidays, in order to provide a 24/7 crisis care. We provided regular interventions to make the Eupora counselors familiar with the business context and to keep a finger on the pulse. The 'Emotional leadership' was part of the new concept. The unions were closely involved in the process and have actively referred employees. This approach was clearly more successful and we have continued it over 9 months until the end of August 2010.

Currently, the extern Eupora experts don't work on site anymore, but the support program is still running. We continue to work with the same therapists of Eupora because they are familiar with the culture of the company. They take care of employees in their private practice: these are still entitled to have 5 consults, paid by the company. I am now responsible for the referrals. We also continue to have regular intervention moments.

We are satisfied with our approach. Even if the use of the



program is limited to a few percent of the total number of employees, they are the ones who probably need it the most. Many others get through this difficult period on their own, with the help of the own local network of family, doctor, colleagues,... But the fact that the supporting offer exists, may even be more important than the number of people who actually use it.

Finally ... some recommendations in times of restructuring

- The use of external consultants in addition to the internal supporting circuit should be considered, because intern consultants may be distrusted in times of reorganization.
- Correct, sufficient and two-way communication is of primary importance in achieving success with such a support program.
- The impact of a reorganization doesn't stop at the announcement of it, the opposite is true. An effective individual and collective support plan is necessary to remove all emotional excess baggage.

3. Why did you choose Eupora as partner?

The following elements were certainly important to us:

- A broad experience in psychosocial counseling.
- Strong values in line with Janssen Pharmaceutica.
- Eupora dared to challenge us and that was mutual.
- A high willingness to contribute to thinking about and developing a personalized project.
- A loyal attitude towards us.

4. Can you describe Eupora in a few words?

Professional, ethical, honest, open, loyal, very reliable.

5. Would you recommend an EAP from Eupora to your colleagues?

Of course, I couldn't imagine a better partner for this type of assignments.

Thank you for this interview and for your confidence in Eupora.



Your well-being is our challenge

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