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Why Bosch stands for diversity, equity, and inclusion

Five questions for Petra Kama-Welle

Vice President Corporate HR Transformation Team: Leadership, Learning and Organization and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) at Bosch

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1. Why did Bosch feel the need to supplement “diversity” with “equity and inclusion”?

Diversity is one of our company’s values, and a firm part of our corporate strategy. It’s now ten years since we started combining our diversity-related activities in one single project team. We wanted to have a global network that could create a corporate culture that provides all associates with an environment in which they are respected and appreciated. We’ve achieved a lot since then but, true to the Bosch spirit, we always want to do better. Even though our work in the past has also looked at equity and inclusion, we now want to see these terms explicitly reflected in our title.

2. What does Bosch mean by diversity, equity, and inclusion?

In an organization, diversity means the wide variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences among its associates. But for Bosch, diversity management means more than this. This diversity has to have a genuine impact. We want our associates to realize and contribute their full potential, and we believe that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) will allow this to happen. Only if we work on all three elements of DEI will diversity achieve its full effect. This means two things. On the one hand, we have to create a level playing field, or equity of opportunity. On the other, we have to foster an open, trustworthy corporate culture – a culture in which everyone feels included. We want our new title to sensitize associates to these important elements. In this way, we can heighten people’s awareness of diversity at Bosch and also provide valuable impetus for new ideas and approaches that are essential for making our company more successful.

3. What is Bosch doing to encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion?

Our work related to diversity has always been concerned with ways of fostering equity of opportunity and inclusion. By explicitly adding an “equity” element, we are acknowledging that each individual has different needs, experience, and possibilities. This makes it necessary to establish fair processes – when selecting people for jobs, for example. All too frequently, attempts to select the objectively right candidate are distorted by unconscious bias. That’s why, back in 2019, we developed a seminar especially for executives and HR associates that covers the whole personnel selection process. In this way, we want to ensure an unbiased personnel selection procedure.

The focus of inclusion, the third element, is on leadership and collaboration. This also involves taking measures that will make associates feel welcome and appreciated, just the way they are. One example of a toolbox for this is our psychological safety project, called “SAFEteam – enabling high-performance teams.” It helps executives and associates create an atmosphere of trust in their teams, and can encourage each individual to assume accountability. This has a direct effect on team members’ inclusion. For an executive, diversity can mean things such as accepting different ways of working within a team and bringing them all together. This can sometimes require a special effort, but one that is worthwhile. If, as a team, we manage to include everyone and make sure there is equity of opportunity, we will unleash the team’s full potential.

4. Why is diversity so important in times of (digital) change?

We firmly believe that the structural and digital shift to a leading AIoT company can be achieved successfully only with an open working culture that recognizes each individual’s worth, and in which all associates can contribute their talent and differing viewpoints in the best possible way. Studies bear this out: mixed teams perform better and develop more innovations, since they have a better understanding of different markets and are able to respond to change more quickly. This is why we are developing measures and solutions that can harmonize associates’ diverse needs with business imperatives. For example, Bosch is working closely with the employee representatives on the “Smart Work” initiative. The idea behind this global framework is that our associates should decide themselves how to structure their working day, in conformity with their responsibilities and business challenges. Our focus here is on results, not physical presence. Experience has shown that efficiency increases when people work together virtually. But in-house studies have also demonstrated clearly that people currently miss proximity and interpersonal exchange that is “live and in color.” Regular feedback and space for ongoing dialogue – both between executives and associates and within teams themselves – are thus more important than ever. Active formats such as a “digital coffee break” can help create a feeling of inclusion and proximity, even when people are far apart.

5. In the medium to long term, what potential do diversity, equity, and inclusion have?

Much as diversity in general has become established worldwide at Bosch, awareness of equity and inclusion has to take root in our associates' working lives. In a rapidly changing world, and given the structural change we are experiencing, a vibrant DEI culture can be greatly reassuring. Going forward, we will continue to benefit from our associates' ideas and experience, as well as their varied viewpoints. But we will not be able to tap into them without equity and inclusion. Our DEI work is key to our company's long-term success, and will benefit each and every one of us. I have no doubt about that.

Before joining Bosch in 1992, Petra Kama-Welle did a humanities degree and trained as a journalist. Following various career stages at a university and several newspapers, as well as in human resources at Bosch, she is now responsible for the transformation team as vice president in corporate HR. Together with her team, Kama-Welle focuses on leadership, learning, and organization, as well as on diversity, equity, and inclusion at Bosch.

Press photo: #7edad044

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The Bosch Group is a leading global supplier of technology and services. It employs roughly 395,000 associates worldwide (as of December 31, 2020). The company generated sales of 71.5 billion euros in 2020. Its operations are divided into four business sectors: Mobility Solutions, Industrial Technology, Consumer Goods, and Energy and Building Technology. As a leading IoT provider, Bosch offers innovative solutions for smart homes, Industry 4.0, and connected mobility. Bosch is pursuing a vision of mobility that is sustainable, safe, and exciting. It uses its expertise in sensor technology, software, and services, as well as its own IoT cloud, to offer its customers connected, cross-domain solutions from a single source. The Bosch Group's strategic objective is to facilitate connected living with products and solutions that either contain artificial intelligence (AI) or have been developed or manufactured with its help. Bosch improves quality of life worldwide with products and services that are innovative and spark enthusiasm. In short, Bosch creates technology that is "Invented for life." The Bosch Group comprises Robert Bosch GmbH and its roughly 440 subsidiary and regional companies in some 60 countries. Including sales and service partners, Bosch's global manufacturing, engineering, and sales network covers nearly every country in the world. With its more than 400 locations worldwide, the Bosch Group has been carbon neutral since the first quarter of 2020. The basis for the company's future growth is its innovative strength. At 129 locations across the globe, Bosch employs some 73,000 associates in research and development, of which nearly 34,000 are software engineers.

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for the company to plan over the long term and to undertake significant upfront investments in the safeguarding of its future. Ninety-four percent of the share capital of Robert Bosch GmbH is held by Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH, a charitable foundation. The remaining shares are held by Robert Bosch GmbH and by a corporation owned by the Bosch family. The majority of voting rights are held by Robert Bosch Industrietreuhand KG, an industrial trust. The entrepreneurial ownership functions are carried out by the trust.

Additional information is available online at www.bosch.com, www.iot.bosch.com, www.bosch-press.com, <https://twitter.com/BoschPress>



Sexual orientation – purely a private matter? RBg – the LGBTI network at Bosch

July 26, 2018

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- ▶ Study: an open approach to sexual orientation and gender identity increases job satisfaction
- ▶ HR head Christoph Kübel: “RBg is making a valuable contribution to diversity within the company”
- ▶ New LGBT Allies network provides a gateway to this topic

“How was your weekend?” A simple question? Not for everyone. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersexual (LGBTI) people often feel they have to hide their sexual identity. In Germany, they are subject to discrimination, not only in public, but also in the workplace. In one study, around one in four lesbian or gay respondents stated that they had experienced social exclusion in the workplace. Disinclined to share their family experiences and leisure activities with colleagues for fear of a negative backlash, they devote a lot of energy to hiding their identity.

However, an open approach to sexual orientation and gender identity is important, especially in the workplace. The corporate culture has to be open and appreciative if each individual is to contribute his or her particular talents and strengths. This is why sexual orientation and gender identity are key components of diversity management at Bosch. In late 2006, six associates founded the Bosch LGBTI network RBgay (RBg). “RBg is advancing the cause of our open corporate culture, where employees can be themselves and be valued for who they are – regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Its members are thus making a valuable contribution to diversity within the company. People need emotional security to make the most of their potential and bring in all their creative ideas,” says Christoph Kübel, head of human resources and member of the board of management of Robert Bosch GmbH. Research shows that mixed teams perform better, develop more innovations, have a better understanding of different markets, and are quicker to respond to change.

An open approach to sexual orientation increases job satisfaction

The more straightforward employees can be about their sexual identity at the workplace, the greater their job satisfaction and loyalty to the company. This conclusion was drawn from the 2017 “Out im Office?!” study conducted by the German Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency. Although lesbian and gay employees are more open about their sexual identity than they were ten years ago, a third of them still talk to few co-workers about it, if at all. Three out of four employees report having experienced discrimination in the workplace.

RBg network promotes diversity and equal opportunities

The Bosch LGBTI network RBg has more than 400 members in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. They are committed to reaching out to LGBTI colleagues, aiming to set an example, allay fearful attitudes, and increase visibility in the company. They help ensure that employees with a different sexual orientation or gender identity are respected and valued. The aim is to create a work environment free of bias. “We want to show LGBTI associates at Bosch that they can be themselves in their professional environment. We are striving to put to rest reservations among the workforce and show that Bosch stands behind its associates,” says Mathias Reimann, spokesperson for the LGBTI network.

LGBT Allies network – turning the spotlight on contacts

The network launched the LGBT Ally initiative in 2017. Allies are associates from all areas of the company who are open and approachable on matters related to this topic. Associates who prefer initially not to contact the network directly can reach out to these allies in their immediate environment. This makes the subject easier to broach. Allies are also called upon to openly address possible incidents of bias or discrimination, to raise awareness among associates, and to help shape the transition to an open working culture.

Social engagement – flying the LGBTI flag worldwide

RBg’s commitment extends beyond the company and out into the community. RBg has been taking part in the annual Christopher Street Day (CSD) event in Stuttgart since 2014, with many Bosch associates joining in. CSD offers a platform for dialogue with RBg members and supportive heterosexual Bosch associates. “CSD affords us the opportunity to make the topic of sexual orientation and gender identity accessible to the wider public and to talk about it with one another openly. We are helping to break down prejudices in society by taking part in the CSD,” says Jean-Claude Loux, one of the network’s initiators. RBg is also active outside Germany, for example, in the U.S. and Japan. A branch of the LGBTI network was set up in the U.S. in 2016; it regularly invites people to after-work events. Another group was founded in 2018 in Japan, where social acceptance for the topic of LGBTI still has a long way to go. It meets

regularly for LGBTI lunches and organizes activities to call attention to the topic in day-to-day working life.

RBg – open to all Bosch associates

All Bosch Group associates and retirees are welcome to join the network, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Anyone who is interested or would like to join can register on an online platform, anonymously if preferred. Members use this platform to share information in forums and via private messages. News, events, and information on all aspects of dealing with sexual orientation in the workplace are posted there. The network's members keep in touch with other company networks, regional groups, and external entities such as PrOut@Work. Bosch is a sponsor and member of the PrOut@Work Foundation.

More information:

[Diversity management at Bosch](#)

[Bosch careers - diversity](#)

[RBg network online](#)

[PrOut@Work](#)

["Out im Office?!" study 2017](#) (German)

[2017 study, "Attitudes towards lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in Germany"](#)

(German)

#1414343, #1414342, #1405080, #1405085, #1405082, #1405083, #1405084, #1164272
The Bosch Group is a leading global supplier of technology and services. It employs roughly 402,000 associates worldwide (as of December 31, 2017). The company generated sales of 78.1 billion euros in 2017. Its operations are divided into four business sectors: Mobility Solutions, Industrial Technology, Consumer Goods, and Energy and Building Technology. As a leading IoT company, Bosch offers innovative solutions for smart homes, smart cities, connected mobility, and connected manufacturing. It uses its expertise in sensor technology, software, and services, as well as its own IoT cloud, to offer its customers connected, cross-domain solutions from a single source. The Bosch Group's strategic objective is to deliver innovations for a connected life. Bosch improves quality of life worldwide with products and services that are innovative and spark enthusiasm. In short, Bosch creates technology that is "Invented for life." The Bosch Group comprises Robert Bosch GmbH and its roughly 440 subsidiary and regional companies in 60 countries. Including sales and service partners, Bosch's global manufacturing, engineering, and sales network covers nearly every country in the world. The basis for the company's future growth is its innovative strength. At 125 locations across the globe, Bosch employs some 64,500 associates in research and development.

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Diversity management at Bosch

Making the most of opportunities for the company and for associates

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Developing complex products for markets around the world is a process that benefits from a variety of perspectives – after all, a mix of viewpoints sparks creativity and ideas. Robert Bosch, the company founder, recognized this early on and enshrined cultural diversity as one of his corporate values. Today, Bosch views diversity as potential that can be leveraged for the company's success and as a crucial factor in its attractiveness as an employer. For this reason, diversity is an integral part of its corporate strategy. The definition of "diversity" is not limited to variety of cultural background, gender, or age groups. Instead, it encompasses the full breadth of various mindsets, experiences, perspectives, and life models of all associates across the globe. Bosch seeks to foster a corporate culture in which all associates feel valued and which gives rise to innovativeness based on similarities as well as differences.

More successful through diversity

Research shows that mixed teams perform better, develop more innovations, have a better understanding of different markets, and are quicker to respond to change. According to the "Innovation, diversity, and market growth" study published by Harvard Business Review, companies that exhibit diversity at the management level are 70 percent more likely to capture new markets. They are also 45 percent more likely to boost their market share, and as much as 75 percent more likely to bring innovations to market. For a global supplier of technology and services like Bosch, these are key success factors. This is even more true in light of trends such as digital connectivity, emerging markets, and differing population pyramids around the world. To foster diversity in the company, Bosch creates awareness for diversity among its associates and encourages interpersonal relationships based on respect.

Building on a wide range of perspectives

The success of this strategy clearly in evidence throughout the company. One of the first milestones in its diversity management was the women@bosch associates network, founded in 1995. Women now make up more than a quarter of the Bosch workforce. Mixed teams develop groundbreaking innovations, such as the Bosch Ixo, a compact cordless screwdriver: the world's best-selling power tool is no longer confined to the basement workshop, but has become a device in the home. Associates from over 150 countries work together at Bosch locations worldwide. One example of this collaboration is automated driving, a key project for the Mobility Solutions business sector. The project is currently undergoing testing in Germany, Japan, the United States, and also in China. The developers and engineers working on the project represent all age groups and come from Germany, the U.S., India, and Italy, to name just a few countries. Bosch fosters this intercultural exchange with more than 6,000 international assignments each year, as well as language courses and intercultural training.

Combining development and experience

Expertise is not a question of age – it is the combination of practical experience and fresh ideas that counts. That is why at Bosch, up to five generations work side by side. Since 2015, “generation tandems” have made it possible for younger associates to learn from more experienced associates, and vice versa. In such tandems, the participants regularly exchange information, and in this way gain an understanding of different life stages. In reverse mentoring, younger associates show more elderly ones how to use digital tools and give them the benefit of their knowledge. At the same time, they benefit from elderly associates' experience. And Bosch retirees can still apply their expertise, often earned over the course of several decades at the company. In 1999, the company established Bosch Management Support GmbH, which coordinates the consulting services of retired associates on limited-term projects throughout the Bosch Group. Its aim is to retain Bosch expertise and allow younger associates to benefit from the experience of senior experts. All told, those in the expert pool have over 40,000 years of experience.

In addition, Bosch invests more than 250 million euros in occupational training and professional development each year.

What we need to foster diversity

One of the challenges encountered when fostering diversity lies in meeting each associate's individual needs. These can change depending on their current stage of life, cultural background, or career path. Bosch responds to these needs with a range of worktime models tailored to different life stages, as well as the option of working flexibly and remotely. This offers associates an optimum way to achieve their professional and personal goals.

Bosch's "Guidelines for a flexible and family-friendly working culture," first introduced in Germany, have since been rolled out to many other countries in which Bosch operates. Flextime, telecommuting, job-sharing, and part-time work make associates' everyday lives easier, and sabbaticals give them an opportunity to take some time off. The purpose of the guidelines is to promote a working culture that provides associates with the necessary freedom and in which the focus is on their results, not the time they spend in the workplace.

Not all markets are subject to the same social conditions, which calls for different approaches. In Brazil, for example, parents at the Curitiba location have had access to on-site daycare since spring 2016 – the first such facility in South America. Associates in Germany who wish to split their position with a colleague via job sharing or part-time work can find each other using JobConnector, an in-house online platform. Locations in other countries have introduced new options such as working from home.

Strengthening awareness of diversity

However, appreciation of the advantages of diversity management and a thoughtful approach to stereotypes that may be unconscious are not necessarily a matter of course. For this reason, Bosch not only provides regular information but also employs measures that further raise awareness of the benefits diversity offers for associates and for the success of the company. Together with mentoring programs, seminars and training courses that examine unconscious bias help managers take action specifically to promote diversity in their teams. Besides the first associate network, women@bosch, a host of other voluntary networks have been established to facilitate dialogue and thus foster diversity. These include afric@bosch, chinese@bosch, 50plus@bosch, family@bosch, software@bosch, and the Turkish Forum Bosch. Bosch has received many awards for its diversity management.

Awards (selection)

- ▶ Diversity Award of the Hungarian Business Leaders' Forum, Hungary (2019)
- ▶ Human Resources Management Award, second prize in the Leadership category for the "Brain Snack – Impulsgeber im Dialog" learning format, Germany (2019)
- ▶ "Women in Leadership" award, Latin America (2019)
- ▶ United Nations Global Award, Brazil (2018)
- ▶ Big Impact Initiative Award from Prout at Work, Germany (2018)
- ▶ Total E-Quality Award for several Bosch locations, Germany (2018)
- ▶ German Human Resources Management Award, first prize in the Leadership category for the entire Bosch diversity strategy (2017)
- ▶ Trendence Employer Branding Awards, first prize in the Diversity category, Germany (2016, 2017)
- ▶ Engineer Powerwoman 2017, award for Bosch women manager, Germany (2017)

- ▶ Human Resources Excellence Awards, first prize in the Best Use Of Technology category for the JobConnector, Germany (2016)
- ▶ XING New Work Award 2016, Germany (2016)
- ▶ Private Company Supporting Women in Business award, Turkey (2015)
- ▶ German Diversity Award, best diversity strategy, Germany (2013)
- ▶ Most family-friendly large enterprise, Germany (2012)
- ▶ Certificate of gender equality, Mexico (2012)

Internet:

[Bosch as an employer: www.bosch-career.de](http://www.bosch-career.de)

[Diversity at Bosch: www.bosch-career.de/diversity](http://www.bosch-career.de/diversity)

[Senior experts at Bosch: http://bit.ly/2rm8QO8](http://bit.ly/2rm8QO8)

[Wir zusammen: www.wir-zusammen.de](http://www.wir-zusammen.de)

[Charta der Vielfalt: www.charta-der-vielfalt.de](http://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de)

[Innovation, Diversity, and Market Growth study: http://bit.ly/1jFX08p](http://bit.ly/1jFX08p)

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