

Taking flexible working culture further **Bosch simplifies telecommuting, private phone calls, and internet use at the workplace** Focus on results, not physical presence

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- ▶ Consistent rules make telecommuting easier
- ▶ Personal e-mails, web access, and phone calls at the workplace
- ▶ Chief personnel officer Kübel: “Flexible working models should be the norm”
- ▶ Combined works council chairman Löckle: “A clear set of rules that gives our associates more freedom”

Stuttgart – Bosch has introduced a consistent set of rules that simplify telecommuting. It is also allowing its associates to manage personal e-mails, surf the web, and make private phone calls at the workplace. The supplier of technology and services is aiming to continue its move away from a culture of physical presence to a more flexible one that focuses on results. At the same time, this move helps Bosch achieve a better balance between work and private life. Together with the combined works council, two new combined works agreements have been drawn up that will apply to Bosch associates in Germany. Bosch recently put in place guidelines for a flexible, family-friendly working culture.

Culture change for more freedom and creativity

“The reason we want to drive this change in our working culture forward is that we are convinced that flexible working models are beneficial,” says Christoph Kübel, member of the board of management and director of industrial relations at Robert Bosch GmbH. “Giving associates the choice of where and when to work increases job satisfaction, delivers better results, and strengthens creativity.” Kübel adds that this is why Bosch wants to make telecommuting the norm.

Simplifying flexible working

Telecommuting is already an option at Bosch. But new, simpler rules for associates and executives are set to make it even easier to choose where and when to work. Until now, associates had to get their supervisor’s individual approval before they could work temporarily at another location or from home.

Now associates have the fundamental right to do so, provided this is compatible with their job. In manufacturing operations as well, management is working to introduce flexible solutions, including shift arrangements that are compatible with part-time working and systems that allow associates to stand in for one another. “We hope that flexible shift systems will benefit the company and its associates to an equal degree, serving the business interests of the one while allowing the others to reconcile the demands of family and working life,” says Alfred Löckle, the chairman of the combined works council.

Personal e-mails, phone calls, and web access at the workplace

From now on, anyone at Bosch who wants to surf the web or use internet banking during their lunch break, say, will be able to use their Bosch company PC to do so. Associates may also use their company e-mail address or company phone to conduct personal business. In a world where work and personal life are connected, Bosch wants to make its associates’ everyday work easier. “I have a smartphone of my own,” says Arne Brixel, a production planner at the Bosch plant in Stuttgart-Feuerbach, “but it’s definitely more convenient to use my work laptop to book a train ticket or quickly pay a bill.”

Guiding principle – a better balance between work and private life

Bosch already offers its associates around 100 working models, including various part-time options, job sharing, and working from home. “That’s why we have also made sure the rules make a clear distinction between work and private life,” Löckle says. “Every associate can define break times and set time periods in which they do not wish to be disturbed.” Guidelines for associates and for executives will help them both to make use of the advantages of telecommuting and to overcome their reservations. Löckle feels executives have a particular responsibility in this regard: some bosses also have to learn to let go, and to accept that mere physical presence should not be confused with hard work.

More focus on results, less physical presence

The consistent rules for telecommuting give associates clarity on issues relating to logging their working hours, insurance coverage, and information security. In accordance with employment law and collective-bargaining arrangements, hours worked while telecommuting will be logged as normal. It will even be possible to make up for free time taken during the week by catching up with work on a Saturday. Bosch sees its clear commitment to telecommuting as an important step toward achieving a better balance between work and private life. “Many of the associates in my team can work just as well from home or from the office using a laptop and a cellphone,” says Anne Cater, a department head at the Bosch Thermotechnology division’s Lollar location. “Our Bosch Connect social business network also makes it easier for associates to work together no matter where and what time of day they are working.”

Internet:

Bosch as an employer: www.bosch-career.com

Guidelines for a flexible working culture at Bosch: <http://bit.ly/ZRVR5Z>

Balancing work and private life at Bosch: <http://bit.ly/1vQgaDN>

Video:

MORE project: Bosch managers test flexible working models (German):

http://youtu.be/d5rQBjMrj_g

Background information:

Press release “Bosch adds to its family-friendly working culture”:

<http://bit.ly/1r6eVqV>

Press release “500 Bosch executives test flexible working models”:

<http://bit.ly/1ndWeBU>

Press photos: 1-PE-20638, 1-PE-20639, 1-RB-19234, 1-RB-19233, 1-RB-19238, 1-RB-19239, 1-RB-19240

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The Bosch Group is a leading global supplier of technology and services. In 2013, its roughly 281,000 associates generated sales of 46.1 billion euros. (NB: Due to a change in accounting policies, the 2013 figures can only be compared to a limited extent with the 2012 figures). Its operations are divided into four business sectors: Mobility Solutions, Industrial Technology, Consumer Goods, and Energy and Building Technology. The Bosch Group comprises Robert Bosch GmbH and its roughly 360 subsidiaries and regional companies in some 50 countries. If its sales and service partners are included, then Bosch is represented in roughly 150 countries. This worldwide development, manufacturing, and sales network is the foundation for further growth. In 2013, the Bosch Group invested some 4.5 billion euros in research and development and applied for some 5,000 patents. This is an average of 20 patents per day. The Bosch Group's products and services are designed to fascinate, and to improve the quality of life by providing solutions which are both innovative and beneficial. In this way, the company offers technology worldwide that is “Invented for life.”

The company was set up in Stuttgart in 1886 by Robert Bosch (1861-1942) as “Workshop for Precision Mechanics and Electrical Engineering.” The special ownership structure of Robert Bosch GmbH guarantees the entrepreneurial freedom of the Bosch Group, making it possible for the company to plan over the long term and to undertake significant up-front investments in the safeguarding of its future. 92 percent of the share capital of Robert Bosch GmbH is held by Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH, a charitable foundation. 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. The remaining shares are held by the Bosch family and by Robert Bosch GmbH.

Additional information is available online at www.bosch.com, www.bosch-press.com and <http://twitter.com/BoschPresse>