

Hero España, S.A.: Work shifts and leaves of absence that foster work-family reconciliation and collegiality

COMPANY FACTS

Name: Hero España, S.A.

Industry: Multinational food and nutrition company. Founded in Murcia (Spain) in 1922.

Number of employees in Spain: 931. 50% of the staff is female. The average age of workers is 37.

HR Department: 17 people (Workplace Risk Prevention Service, General Services, Internal and External Relations)

General HR policy: The maxim has always been to nurture workers both personally and professionally by offering courses on versatility, new technologies, languages, business, strategies, first aid, hygiene, food, and risk prevention, among others.

Hero was awarded the Human Capital prize for training and development, and the Social Responsibility prize in 2000 and 2004, respectively. In October 2005 it received the Flexible Employer Award in the large company category from CVA. Plus, in November 2006 Hero España was awarded the AENOR certificate for its Workplace Safety and Health Management system, which complies with the OSHAS 18001:1999 specifications (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems).

BEST PRACTICE

At Hero, the Production and Logistics departments work in rotating shifts. By facilitating shift changes for personal reasons, it has managed to get workers to cover each others' absences themselves. In the offices, general services, and laboratory, there is also quite a bit of schedule flexibility. Employees can easily take the days off they are allowed by collective agreement, and should they have used all of their days off they are offered extra leave of absence with the chance of making up the days in the future.

Employees in some departments, including Personnel, Management, Sales, and Research, can work from their homes in special circumstances. These employees are provided with the infrastructure they need, including a DSL hook-up and a laptop computer. The company also offers legal, social, medical, and psychological counseling for all its workers, and there is also a company physician to attend to both workers and their families.

The company offers more than 40 courses on subjects such as versatility, new technologies, languages, business, strategies, first aid, hygiene, food, and risk prevention.

The perks that the company offers aimed at fostering work-family reconciliation include:

- Subsidies for officially-approved daycare for workers' children between birth and the age of three, totaling €30-60 per child each month depending on the schedule.
- A restaurant that is 50% subsidized.
- A shop with Hero products sold at a 40% discount.
- Aids for purchasing school textbooks from preschool to 10th grade, and for vocational training programs and the pre-university high school track. University financial aid is available for children of employees.
- Baby food for all employees' newborns (regardless of type of contract) for the first eighteen months.
- A company bonus payment for employees getting married.
- Agreements with three travel agencies.
- Partial, flexible retirement plan, with more than 20 employees currently participating.
- Accident insurance for workers for the amount of €42,000.
- Fifteen places for workers' children in a nursery school for all children of employees of companies in the industrial park where Hero is headquartered (AEPIO).
- Up to five extra days of vacation for people over the age of 50, depending on their age.