

Health at Audi: “Stay strong, focus the mind”

Ingolstadt, March 14, 2024 – At Audi, the health of its employees is a top priority – as demonstrated by the company’s recent receipt of the prestigious German Gold Seal of Corporate Health award. In this interview, Dr. Andreas Haller, Head of Audi Occupational Health, explains how exactly the brand with the four rings invests in its employees’ health and discusses the challenges faced by health management in times of transformation.

Dr. Haller, what are the current priorities for health management?

Andreas Haller: We take a holistic approach. Some of Audi’s employees have physically demanding jobs. We offer them just as much support as other employees with office jobs who need to make sure they get enough exercise. Our employees can have very individual needs, so we look at each person very closely. Among other things, we work with Audi’s gastronomy services to provide advice on a healthy diet.

Another aspect to mention here is mental fitness. The world of work is undergoing a monumental change; jobs are becoming more complex, and the flood of information is enormous – all of which has an effect on people. We know healthy ways of dealing with the strain. Our credo is “Stay strong, focus the mind”. We’re keeping at it.

What does that mean exactly?

Andreas Haller: We launched a comprehensive program a few years ago to raise awareness of and destigmatize mental health. We called it “Jede_r hat Psyche” (English: Everyone has mental health).

It paid off; people dealt with the topic more openly. We added a Mental Health Checkup to our Audi Checkup, which is a preventive healthcare program available to all employees. By focusing on prevention, we want to give our employees the tools they need to stay healthy and prevent crisis situations that would require therapeutic treatment in the first place.

And what effect did the program have?

Andreas Haller: It more than paid off. We were able to significantly reduce symptoms of stress and help people effectively. We also published our results.* The results encouraged us to keep investing in this area. For example, we hired four psychologists last year to help further our programs.

The basic premise also applies to the other areas of Audi Occupational Health: What can be prevented does not have to be treated with lengthy therapy – this is as true for mental health as it is for back pain or eye strain.

Should the issue also be addressed culturally?

Andreas Haller: Definitely! People need to be sensitized to the topic and involved in the solution.

There are different ways of doing that, for example, our “health guides”.

We now have over 90 employees from various departments who support their colleagues as unobtrusive health guides. This approach allows us to make our programs available to people based on their individual needs and gain valuable information from our operations.

We also have to get the managers on board since they act as multipliers and are often employees' first point of contact. Raising their awareness is crucial – leaving aside the fact that managers themselves might need support in dealing with stress.

Audi was recently awarded the German Seal of Corporate Health. Do you view that as confirmation of your efforts?

Andreas Haller: Of course, we are happy about the award, especially as we are the first company in the automotive sector to have received it. However, throughout the certification process, we were not concerned about being able to slap ourselves on the back. Instead, we wanted to know how we could continue to improve. The fact that we received gold on our first certification attempt is valuable but not as valuable as the additional insights we gained during the certification process.

We had an intensive exchange with Professor Bertolt Meyer and his team at TU Chemnitz. Their evaluation was very thorough, including a survey of our employees. We covered all aspects of a modern, comprehensive health management system, including traditional occupational health and safety, occupational integration management, and additional occupational health promotion measures.

Ultimately, we wanted to further increase employee awareness and the use of our programs. We can also continue to grow in our processes. We're already doing a lot there but can do even better. What is important to me is taking an interdisciplinary approach to health management. Many people at Audi were involved in earning us the gold seal. Only by working together can we improve health management at Audi and make health a competitive advantage for the company.

* Zill, Alexander & Dilba, Dominik & Meyer, Bertolt & Lobers, Stefanie & Stubenvoll, Oliver & Weiler, Stephan & Stoev, Marieta & Heinrich, Ute & Haller, Andreas. (2022). Psychische Gesundheit erfolgreich stärken: Mental Health Checkup als Präventionsangebot bei der AUDI AG. ASU Arbeitsmedizin Sozialmedizin Umweltmedizin. 2022. 691–694. 10.17147/asu-1-233041.

Short biography

Dr. Andreas Haller has been Head of Occupational Health at AUDI AG since 2017. In addition to providing occupational and in-house medical care for Audi employees, one focus of his work in occupational health management is a holistic prevention program.

A specialist in general and occupational medicine, Haller joined Audi in 2000 and, before assuming his current position, was Head of the Health Center at the Neckarsulm plant and Head of the Ingolstadt South Health Center.

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