

ROI Special Women - Central Switzerland's business magazine
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Promotion of women begins with the recruitment process

The Uri-based components manufacturer Datwyler is committed to promoting women. The importance of equal pay is just as self-evident to us as the ongoing development of our diversity strategy. Six women in different functions and positions are evidence of this.



Woman power at Datwyler: top from left Dr. Katja Nilles, Dr. Anette Wiesmath, Priska Florinett; below from left Nadine Renner, Seraina Albrecht and Sarah Rust.

Datwyler is making progress with the advancement of women and is working in rolling planning on a program that creates facts under the title "Employer of choice". Six women in leading positions represent human faces of the concept: Seraina Albrecht, Head of Finance and Control of the IT unit; Priska Florinett, Head of HR; Dr. Katja Nilles, Head of Material Development Food and Beverage; Nadine Renner, Head of Competence Centre EU; Sarah Rust, Head of HR; and Dr. Anette Wiesmath, Head of Mixing Technology and the Development Laboratory. In a Covid-compliant video interview, they presented their points of view.

Start with recruitment

Currently, the proportion of women in the group is 40 percent. Of these, 20 percent are in management. "At Datwyler, the advancement of women begins with the recruiting process and the channels used. In the candidate shortlist, we aim to have at least 25 percent women", explains Priska Florinett, HR manager at the Schattdorf location. Priska Florinett works part-time with Sarah Rust in a job-sharing arrangement. The two HR specialists, both of whom are also mothers, complement each other as an experienced team and are able to bring family and work into harmony. Their joint work is an example of how diversity needn't remain a paper tiger through well-balanced concepts, good organisation and broad support from company management.

The Datwyler diversity process is part of the sustainability strategy for the entire group and is therefore the responsibility of the Executive Committee. CEO Dirk Lambrecht, who specifically set up a diversity council is personally guiding the project. "All relevant areas are integrated into the process and can contribute. There is no top-down requirement", emphasises Sarah Rust.

Women and technology - that fits

Datwyler is an industrial company at the highest technological level. What about the popular opinion that women are less interested in technical professions than men? And how are generalisations judged - those that propose that female schoolchildren and prospective higher education students would be less enthusiastic about the MINT subjects, i.e. mathematics, computer science, natural sciences and technology? The chemist Anette Wiesmath fights back against such clichés. She notes an increasing number of women who feel just as comfortable in this field as men. "A lot has changed for the better lately. There are more female trainees". Katja Nilles also confirms this. She has a doctorate in chemistry and has also completed a degree in business administration. She started in 2013 as the only woman in her department. "There are now eight women in the Schattdorf team, including the laboratory, and 21 globally who work in material development. This proves that women's interest in technical and scientific professions is increasing", Katja Nilles summarises. She adds: "A lot has been done in schools and in the business world to inform and motivate young women to find a future in technical and scientific professions".

More self-confidence and courage

Nadine Renner has been with Datwyler for fifteen years. The export specialist sees great potential in the increased commitment of women. «Women should have faith in themselves as leaders. The prerequisites for this are self-confidence and courage. It is in women's nature to be cautious, but it doesn't have to stay that way", concludes Nadine Renner. Seraina Albrecht, whose department has around 70 percent women, emphasises the importance of equal pay for women and men. And what do the interviewees think of a quota for women? "It's a double-edged sword", says Seraina Albrecht in the general sense, adding: "In the end, it's the qualification that matters. And that's where we find that women are growing, through training."

Research project with the University of Lucerne

How strongly do unconscious prejudices and biases influence decisions in talent management? And how can this bias be reduced? This is investigated by the Centre of Human Resource Management at the University of Lucerne under the direction of Prof. Dr. Bruno Staffelbach. Datwyler supports the research project. It is an exclusive collaboration over three years. More than 100 managers in the group are involved in the research project via online surveys worldwide. HR director Priska Florinett is convinced that "greater awareness and a reduction in prejudice are important in order to enable a better understanding and allowance for diversity".

Datwyler

Datwyler, which operates globally, produces high-quality elastomer components for the healthcare, mobility and food & beverage sectors. With over twenty operating companies, sales in over 100 countries, and more than 7'000 employees (including around 900 at the Altdorf and Schattdorf sites), Datwyler generates annual sales of over one billion francs.