

The Science of Care

- simple, intuitive and effective

Interview with Martina Radzanowski, Chief People Officer at Medela

Medela has been a leading medical device company for 60 years. Who is Medela and how did it start?

Medela is a research-based medical device company that is focused on turning science into care. Providing a scientific basis for own product innovation and further advancement of clinical practice, we have established long-standing partnerships with researchers and academic institutions, and invest in basic and exploratory research with academia and global opinion leaders. On the B2C side, the product range includes personal-use breast pumps and breastfeeding accessories to fully support families on their journey. The professional care range covers hospital-grade breast pumps and accessories, enteral feeding devices for the NICU, as well as surgical and wound care devices, such as cardiothoracic systems, negative pressure wound therapy and professional vacuum systems.

Founded in 1961 by Olle Larsson, Medela began by importing medical electronic devices from Sweden. The name Medela is derived from the German words for medical electronic appliances. A family business since the beginning, Michael Larsson, Olle Larsson's son has been working for the company since 1984 and succeeded his father as chairman of the board in 2001, a position he still holds today. Annette Brüls joined Medela as CEO in 2018. Thanks to passion and entrepreneurship, Medela has grown over the years to a global medical device company with approximately 1500 employees and 20 subsidiaries in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Australia.

Martina Radzanowski, you are the CPO at Medela. Tell us a little bit about yourself and your path to this position?

I was born in Germany, but have been living in Switzerland for nearly two decades. I originally studied Psychology at the Humboldt University in Berlin and have been working in Human Resources ever since I started my career at Gate Gourmet, first

at national and then at European level. In 2012, I was offered the opportunity to take on the role of Head of Human Resources at Franke. In 2016, I joined Medela to head our HR globally. We have only recently changed my title to Chief People Officer better reflecting that people at Medela are at the centre of everything we do. Or as Annette always says: "Everything starts with people, nothing starts with results."

Tell us a bit more about Medela Cares? What does it stand for and why was this program launched?

Over the last 60 years, as Medela has grown as a company and expanded globally and so has our desire to make a difference on a global scale, leaving a legacy we can be proud of. So in 2020, we launched Medela Cares, our approach to corporate social responsibility, and made the commitment to join the UN Global Compact. In joining the UNGC, we recognised that our company has a unique opportunity to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Medela Cares is based on the three pillars 'People', 'Planet' and 'Society' and underpins our mission to nurture health for generations, drives our commitments and provides governance for our social responsibility programme.

As Medela is a global company with offices around the world, are the challenges different in different locations implementing Medela Cares?

Our locations around the world have a long history of supporting non-profit organisations and charitable initiatives that align with our mission. For example, Medela USA has focused its efforts over the years to support breastfeeding families in need by working with mission-aligned organisations, like Good+ Foundation, the March of Dimes, Ronald McDonald House Charities, and others. In Switzerland, we have been supporting the Pink Ribbon Charity Walk for over 10 years already, since the onset. Did you know that breastfeeding

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Photo: Medela

Martina Radzanowski,
Chief People Officer at Medela

lowers the risk of breast cancer? In Australia, for example, we made in-product donations during the catastrophic bushfires in 2020. Medela Cares now provides a strategic governance for our all our efforts worldwide, ensuring that our initiatives are aligned with our purpose, serve the ten principles of the UNGC and advance the Sustainability Development Goals.

The people pillar is of course the most important to you as Chief People Officer. Can you give a couple of examples of what you have done around this area?

Obviously, all pillars are as important, but the 'People' pillar is particularly dear to me, especially as we have achieved a lot in this area in recent years. In 2018, we started to conducting employee satisfaction surveys and measuring "the pulse of our employees" with the Net Promotor Score (NPS). The NPS is an internationally recognised scoring system and results from asking all employees, across all hierarchies, if they would recommend their company as an employer. To be quite honest, the result was not excellent at the time. But it helped us to improve and focus our efforts on the right things for our employees. Since then, we have progressed by 60 points and have been able to create a thriving work environment where our

colleagues can develop personally and professionally. For example, we offer various training and development opportunities for all levels, such as free virtual English language courses or an internal mentoring programme that focuses on inclusive leadership. The Inclusive Leadership Exchange is a 12-month programme that enables Medela leadership to act as mentors and coaches for employees. And just recently, we introduced a flexible working model that allows maximum flexibility based on the individual needs and benefits a better work-life balance.

What does gender equality mean for you and Medela and why is it important?

It is statistically proven that diverse and equal teams work better together, have a positive impact on the corporate culture and lead to better results overall. For us, as a global but still family-run company with strong Swiss roots, an inclusive environment is key and an integral part of the Medela family. Under our People pillar we have made a commitment to our employees to foster an inclusive culture that supports equality and diversity and promotes personal growth and well-being. For this, we have

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Our Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility

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www.medelacares.com



PEOPLE

Champion Equality and Advocate for a Diverse Workforce and Inclusive Culture

Secure Human and Labour Rights and Anti-corruption



PLANET

Promote Environmental Stewardship

Innovate with Sustainability Goals in Mind



SOCIETY

Fight Infant and Maternal Mortality and Malnutrition

Increase Access to Quality Healthcare, Education, and Resources

launched a diversity and inclusion awareness programme, involving workshops and ‘ambassadors’ to help with information. However, equality does not stop at gender. We are committed to providing equal opportunities, regardless of nationality, ethnicity, gender, orientation, religion, age, life situation or ability. We value the different backgrounds, experiences and opinions of our employees.

What is the response from your employees in Switzerland and globally to your programme Medela Cares?

I was really touched by the overwhelming response. Only six months in the making, when we finally presented it to the Board and our colleagues, they loved the approach as it allows for a global view while enabling local implementation. In addition, the approach is very diverse by focusing on social, environmental and people topics. Today, one year after the launch, our colleagues are still enthusiastic and honoured to be part of one of the pillar groups that drive these initiatives at a global level, assess new ideas from other colleagues and also customers, and see to the implementation and reporting.

What do you think about the discussions about gender equality in Switzerland and how has it changed in the last 10 to 20 years? In 2021, Switzerland celebrate 50 years since the last Canton granted vote rights for women...

I am happy to see that public discourse and also awareness have increased considerably in recent times, and that we have made key progress. But it is not enough - as a wealthy country, it is our responsibility to continue to advance gender equality. Did you know that to date, no country has achieved complete gender equality: per end of 2020, less than 25% of the world’s parliaments have been female, and among the Fortune 500 companies, only 8 CEOs were women, representing 7.6%?

As part of our Medela Cares Corporate Social Responsibility programme, we have therefore joined the UN Global Compact, promoting its Sustainable Development Goals. Among other things, we are committed to supporting and encouraging all women on their journey to motherhood - whatever that may look like for them: in the early days, during the transition back to work, and beyond. As an employer, we actively support women on their professional journey, inviting them to get involved, and helping to remove barriers that hold them back today.

Are companies such as Medela helping the progression of this discussion in Switzerland?

For us, given our mission, we want and need to take an active role in the discussion, through individual efforts of our leadership team – for example, Annette Bröls is a passionate advocate for equality, diversity and inclusion and is very engaged on social media, with embracing public speaking opportunities and writing editorials to raise awareness. But we are also committed from a corporate perspective, spearheading communications and being vocal on social media, supporting initiatives and partnerships through Medela Cares to promote equal opportunities, as well as through the provision of infrastructure in our facilities and flexible working policies.

What are the priorities for you and Medela Cares in the next years to come?

For me personally and as one of the People pillar leaders, it is definitely diversity and inclusion. I truly believe that by creating a culture of belonging, we are building engaged teams that work together to serve our customers as one Medela family. By 2025, we have set ourselves the goal of achieving a 50% diversity rate across the company, including our leadership team. Already, 60% of our employees are female, and 40% of our leadership team are women. But as mentioned earlier, it’s not just about gender, it’s about providing equal opportunities for everyone. For us, it is important to have a good balance between nationality, ethnicity, gender, orientation, religion, age, life situation or abilities. We believe this promotes a healthy corporate culture and helps nurture positive experiences for all groups.

Overall, we have ambitious plans for the years ahead. For example, under the Planet pillar, we aim to produce 30% less plastic waste in new products and use 50% renewable energy in all the facilities we operate by 2025. Within the Society Pillar, we will provide resources, training and equipment to 500 midwives and healthcare professionals in low-resource countries by 2025, enabling less privileged people to access quality healthcare. You can read how we are progressing against these goals at www.MedelaCares.com.

by Eva Fiorenzoni, SSCC

www.medela.com