



Press release

Diversity in German companies is more lip service than reality

The initiative BeyondGenderAgenda publishes the German Diversity Monitor 2020

Düsseldorf, September 14th, 2020 - Many companies have an insufficient understanding of diversity and do not fully recognize the benefits of diversity for economic success. This was the result of the German Diversity Monitor 2020 by the initiative BeyondGenderAgenda.

BeyondGenderAgenda, the initiative for diversity and inclusion, today publishes the German Diversity Monitor 2020. This first study by BeyondGenderAgenda was carried out in spring 2020 and is an inventory of the diversity in the boards of German companies. "The results show clear deficits of the surveyed and analyzed companies in terms of understanding diversity and exploiting economic potential. Unfortunately, diversity is currently more lip service than reality in German companies," explains Victoria Wagner, founder and CEO of BeyondGenderAgenda.

Understanding of diversity is insufficient

The lack of understanding of the terminology already shows how much potential the German economy wastes due to a lack of diversity. Half of the companies surveyed stated that they attach great importance to diversity and an inclusive work environment, but above all with regard to gender diversity or the diversity of cultural origins. Other important diversity categories such as age, disabilities and LGBT+ play only a subordinate role, both from the perspective of the respondents as well as in the annual reports of the DAX 30, MDAX and SDAX companies. This is also reflected in the "German Diversity Evolution" of the study, which was recorded for the first time and which, in the first year of the study, focuses on the gender chapter due to the often-inadequate data situation from companies across all diversity categories. This is why the German Diversity Monitor defines diversity pioneers, followers, losers and refusers in German DAX boards exclusively in relation to the gender category. It is no coincidence that Allianz, among others, was identified as a "diversity pioneer": "As a global financial services provider, we have to understand our customer base in all its diversity - and this works best when we reflect this diversity in the company, too beyond the gender issue. For example, we value our cultural diversity very much and are working systematically to further deepen all diversity dimensions," explains Renate Wagner, CEO of Allianz SE.

The benefits of diversity are not recognized

With a limited view of diversity, many companies fail to recognize its real benefits. Only 40 percent of those questioned are aware of the impact of various perspectives on the economic success of a company. In addition, the companies lack systematic data management for all diversity categories. Even with existing diversity budgets, there is no basis for using them specifically to promote diversity and an inclusive work environment. "Our results make it clear that for a sustainable development of diversity, its benefits for corporate success must be made measurable using key performance indicators (KPIs) and targeted data management," explains Prof. Dr. Susanne Schmidt, Chair of International Management at Otto von Guericke University Magdeburg and scientific director of the German Diversity Monitor. Companies should not only actively promote diversity, but also inclusion, because without an inclusive work environment, diversity is ineffective.



There is no end in sight to the homogeneous structures at management level

The German Diversity Monitor 2020 shows that the top management level in companies - rightly - perceives themselves to be moderately diverse. However, this impression does not mean that greater diversity is sought. A third of the companies surveyed stated that they are not currently planning any changes to the composition of the management floor. In addition, 40 percent of these companies stated that, in their view, more diversity on the management board was not necessary. Henkel also sees the lack of willingness to leave old paths as one of the greatest obstacles on the way to greater diversity in German companies: "The German Diversity Monitor 2020 clearly shows the need for action. Diversity means much more than gender diversity. Making progress on diversity and inclusion is a matter of attitude. We have to be open to change and appreciate heterogeneity, especially at management level. Only then will we be able to make tangible progress and transform diversity into a long-term success factor," says Sylvie Nicol, HR Director at Henkel, one of the "diversity pioneers" of the German Diversity Evolution.

The inventory in the year BeyondGenderAgenda was founded clearly shows there is still room for improvement when it comes to diversity and inclusion in German companies. In order to counteract this deficiency and to bring about the change towards a corporate organization characterized by diversity and inclusion, BeyondGenderAgenda calls on corporate management in Germany to make diversity a top priority, to establish systematic data management and a comprehensive understanding of diversity across all categories and to implement targeted measures for an inclusive work environment. Only in this way can the great benefits of diversity, such as increased innovative strength and economic efficiency, be exploited.

The German Diversity Monitor will be carried out annually from now on to identify progress and changes and to make the impact of the initiative measurable. Further information and the complete study can be downloaded from GermanDiversityMonitor.com.

The scientific responsibility for the German Diversity Monitor 2020 lies with the scientific director Prof. Dr. Susanne Schmidt and the co-authors, Marie-Luise Penter and Sarah-Alena Rössig, doctoral students at the Otto-von-Guericke University Magdeburg

About BeyondGenderAgenda

BeyondGenderAgenda has set itself the goal of securing and expanding the international competitiveness of the German economy in the long term by integrating Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) into the DNA of listed and medium-sized companies. Based on the clear connection between D&I and business performance, equal opportunities of managers with disability, of different gender, age, cultural background, sexual orientation or gender identity in the composition of board positions and supervisory board mandates should be ensured and thus a change of culture involving politics, society and economy be brought about.

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