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"Take a chance!"

We at Boehringer Ingelheim are powered by our people. This is why we nurture a diverse, collaborative and open environment, valuing and respecting the differences of our people because we are convinced that diversity is an enormous asset. Now more than ever we must understand and utilize the competitive advantage that diversity and inclusion brings us: it drives innovation. For us, *Diversity is the mix. Inclusion is making the mix work.* We focus on fostering an inclusive environment which allows diversity to flourish. Valuing this diversity of thought and creating an inclusive culture is not only the right thing to do for our people, it's the smart thing to do for our business. While we focus on diversity of thinking, we have to admit that gender is one of the most visible dimensions of diversity. We should increase gender balance in our leadership to reflect our diverse markets and customers: 80% of the healthcare decisions are taken by women. With our series "Women in Leadership" we want to introduce female colleagues who hold leadership positions at Boehringer Ingelheim, to share their experiences, successes and challenges. With that, we hope that we can inspire our leaders and our talents to continuously strive for development. In the

Written by:



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Operations, I work with people around the world. My department, which is part of HP Supply and Global Quality, is responsible for interfacing with Development and internal and external production networks. Our duties include:

- Collaborating on the development of new drugs and pharmaceutical products (new chemical entities)
- Transferring the manufacturing and packaging processes for new drugs and pharmaceutical products to the original manufacturer and to additional internal and external production sites
- Maintaining governance over manufacturing and packaging processes within the product life cycle
- Developing and implementing uniform standards (e.g., manufacturing technologies) in the production network

Do you remember the first job you had here?

I certainly do. I went to pharmacy school in Mainz. After graduation, I went to work at a company in Freiburg to complete my industry-sponsored doctorate. I had a limited contract there, so then I proactively sent in an application to Boehringer Ingelheim. I started at Boehringer Ingelheim in 1997. My very first job was as a team leader managing a technical staff of five. At 34, I was made a leader of a team with more than 50 employees, and I felt it was a big responsibility.

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one – right at the start of your career!

No, to be honest, the greatest challenge of my career was still to come. A few years later, after my partner and I had two children, his job took him to work in Columbus, Ohio, USA. He also worked at Boehringer Ingelheim and, of course, he wanted to take advantage of this career opportunity. So, we moved to the United States as a family. I had to give up my position as a team leader here in Ingelheim, which was very difficult for me, because I did not have a job or any prospects waiting for me in Columbus. I struggled with that, and I felt I was putting my own career at risk. Obviously, you want to support your partner, but I did not earn a Ph.D. and work so hard to just sit around the house all day. The children were at school or day care all day, and I did not have anything to do. Career-wise, I basically started from scratch in Ohio and took the initiative to apply for a project manager job at the Boehringer Ingelheim site there. Luckily, they hired me. Once I had my foot in the door, career development opportunities opened up for me there. In retrospect, it was a great experience for me and my family and I wouldn't have missed it for the world – but at the beginning, it was very difficult for me to leave behind everything I had worked so hard for.

What did you learn from this challenge?

For one thing, everything usually works out in the end and it doesn't help to dwell on "what ifs" beforehand. You should be open to new experiences and have faith in your own abilities, and go with the flow. For another thing, living abroad really expanded my horizons, both

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The courage to take a step back

Jacqueline Berlin

working in pharmaceutical production and process technology, holding strategic positions at HQ, managing local production, and I have gained global and local insight into the company's goings-on.

I really value the close contact and collaboration with my colleagues who are involved in manufacturing medications for our patients. In the last few years, we have tackled and resolved many challenges as a team, across departmental and functional boundaries – and always with the common goal of improving our patients' lives through medication.

You told us earlier that you are a mother of two children. How do you maintain balance in your life?

That brings us back to talking about challenges. I think I speak for all mothers who work full time when I say that maintaining a work-life balance is an ongoing challenge – a real balancing act that is not always successful. The biggest issue is trying to meet my own demands – the ones I place on myself as a mother and a department head. It is important not to set the bar too high for yourself.

I was already in a management position when I found out I was pregnant. Leadership positions are harder to hold open for someone who goes on an extended leave. Before talking to my supervisor, I had already thought about possible solutions, and I was very open and transparent in talking with my team about it. Initiative, agility, flexibility, and a readiness to take on responsibility were needed, both from me as an

As an employer, could Boehringer Ingelheim be more supportive in this realm?

No, I don't think so. Boehringer Ingelheim is a very family-friendly company with a variety of working hours models that give everyone flexibility. I think that what we really need is a change in societal thinking and policy regarding these issues, and we need to create sensible conditions that allow both parents to work full time.

When I was in the US, this "German" problem really became apparent: In the United States it is completely normal and even a matter of course for both parents to work outside the home. Children are well taken care of at day cares or at school, where after-school programs give them time to do their homework, hang out with friends, or pursue hobbies. Things are different in Germany, where very few schools offer care for children after 4 pm. And of course kids need to have someone there they can talk to when they get home. We had a nanny to help us out, which frequently led to remarks and comments like, "Yeah, well, you guys can afford that." And you cannot just brush off all the comments. Some of them stick.

Do you think it is harder for mothers to get into leadership positions?

It seems to me that it is still harder for women to even be considered for a position as a department head than it is for men. That is why I have changed my mind about the

they currently have. They care more about the actual work they are doing than things like making more money, having a professional career, or pure status. Many women do not even want to have a career, because they are worried about being put under too much pressure, especially when they work in an environment where they are surrounded by more and more men as they climb the management ladder.

In closing, do you have any tips for young talents?

Focus on your strengths rather than on your weaknesses, and trust your own abilities and your instincts. Ask yourself some questions: Where do I draw strength from? What gives me self-confidence? And don't forget to risk trying new things, speak plainly, and find yourself a mentor.

"Focus on your strengths rather than on your weaknesses, and trust your own abilities and your instincts, advises Dr. Silke Gotthardt. "

Jacqueline Berlin

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about it. It inspired me a lot to read about your way at BI. Thank you

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