

GE Pink Bridge

Company

GE, the largest U.S. investor and employer (13,000) in Hungary, provides 21st century infrastructure solutions that can help Central Eastern Europe (CEE) to increase its competitiveness.

Programme name

'Bridge of Health PartnerChain', Hungary's first health & screening awareness program targeting employees of participating companies.

Programme Objective

The healthcare system of former socialist Hungary requires modernization, improvement and there is a need to promote for its citizens to take personal responsibility managing healthier lifestyles. A key challenge is to bring about behavioural change and motivate individuals to participate in state-financed screening. The program aims to reach people for impact at work, an influential social space in their lives.

Programme Overview

In 2009 under the patronage of the First Lady, the Bridge of Health Alliance, a nonprofit organization to reduce the impact of breast cancer, launched PartnerChain, the first large-scale, innovative health awareness/screening promotion campaign. It was initiated by GE. Today it has evolved into an annual campaign involving business players who join forces with one objective: a society with improved health.

Programme Components

The PartnerChain was based on GE Hungary's 2006 best practice, a six-step all-employee internal health awareness campaign in which messages were directly cascaded down from the CEO.

In 2011 six newsletters were distributed over a 2 months period (both online and offline versions), providing information on breast cancer, as well as cervical and prostate cancers, two other frequently occurring cancer types that are screenable and curable. Employees not only learn about treatments; they can locate the closest screening station to their place of residence. There are five pillars to the programme. They get tips on how to reduce the risk (stop smoking, exercise, eat healthy and manage stress successfully). They can ask questions from medical experts either publicly on a message board or via email. Participants are invited to complete a health quiz to win prizes offered by their CEO with the overall prize of having the opportunity to meet the First Lady, the brand ambassadors and celebrity supporters of the Bridge of Health Alliance at an exclusive reception at the end of the campaign in the Hunter's Hall of the Hungarian Parliament.

From 2011 the campaign became even more interactive with new games and activities by partner organizations aligned around the pillars of health, including a recipe and photo contest, free yoga and fitness classes as well as optional health screenings.

Results

"The Bridge of Health PartnerChain has special importance as the key business players and their employees take on the cause of fighting against breast cancer and join forces for a healthier society in Hungary". - said Minister of Health Tamas Szekely at the program's inception in 2009.



In 2011 the third year of the PartnerChain, reached over 100K employees from the 17 participating companies and their families encouraging them to make positive decisions in terms of smoking, drinking alcohol, healthy nutrition, regular exercise and rest, as well as stress management.

Media, Chambers and health organizations also promote the initiative emphasizing the importance of early detection of diseases and a healthy lifestyle. "According to statistical data, the number of women who attended by invitation has increased from 38% to 46% since 2002, which is great. These results give us hope that we can soon reach at least 70%, which is the inflexion point when the mortality rate starts decreasing." – says László Vass M.D., Ph.D., Past President of the World Society for Breast Health.

Hungary is the only country in CEE that has a nationwide, state financed breast cancer screening programme and can therefore serve as a model of how to change people's health attitudes with joint effort from business, government and the NGO sector.