

Spin-off, Staff Assistance and Health Initiatives for Employees The restructuring of St. Joseph Stift GmbH in Bremen, Germany

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Executive summary

The case study describes support measures aimed at helping former staff of a hospital who as a result of spin-offs of various departments at the hospital have lost their contractual employer even though their place of work may have remained the same. Positive structures have been created for the transfer of personnel in the guise of continued assistance being provided to these staff members by the company physician and as a result of the influence the management has exerted on the underlying conditions governing the transfer. The restructuring has gone hand in hand with a far-reaching modernisation and structural changes in the clinical departments of the hospital. After these changes were completed, a certification process was carried out which for its part has also had a positive impact on employee relations in the hospital, as the process required an analysis of staff behaviour and internal communications structures.

The support measures resulting from the restructuring as described in this case study in terms of the increased assistance for those staff transferred to a new employer are rather rare in Germany. The constructive collaboration between the old and new employer is also quite unusual, particularly regarding the fact that the concerns of the staff played a major role in the procedures that were adopted. The entire package of measures aimed at assisting the staff of spun-off units, staff which have remained within the organization, and the promotion of health at work in form of a number of events and guidelines. This case reveals how an organisation can effectively improve the situation of staff members who are affected by spin-offs or restructuring and competitive pressure.

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Bremen, Germany

St. JOSEPH Stift Bremen



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1 Abstract¹

This case study “Spin-off, Staff Assistance and Health Initiatives for Employees” describes support measures aimed at helping former staff of a hospital, which, as a result of spin-offs of various departments at the hospital, have lost their contractual employer even though their place of work may have remained the same. Positive structures have been created for the transfer of personnel in the guise of continued assistance being provided to these staff members by the company physician and as a result of the influence the St. Joseph management has exerted on the underlying conditions governing the transfer. The restructuring has gone hand in hand with a far-reaching modernisation and structural changes in the clinical departments of the hospital. After these changes were completed, a certification process was carried out which for its part has also had a positive impact on employee relations in the hospital, as the process required an analysis of staff behaviour and internal communications structures.

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This case study has come about within the framework of the project “Monitoring Innovative Restructuring in Europe – MIRE”. The project is being conducted in a collaborative venture involving the IPG – the Institute for Psychology of Work, Unemployment and Health at the University of Bremen and the IAT – the Institute for Work and Technology in Gelsenkirchen. Its aim is to identify innovative approaches to restructuring from a European perspective and, in addition, to organise an international exchange and transfer of knowledge and know-how. MIRE is being promoted as an innovative measure under article 6 of the ESF. The project began in January 2005 and is coming to an end in November 2006.

In order to achieve this goal

- National networks of experts are being set up in the participating countries (France, Belgium, Great Britain, Sweden and Germany). These networks are to be linked up with each other in the course of the project;
- To this end, case studies are being carried out in each country in order to document respective “good practice” in restructuring processes.

¹ We would like to express our gratitude to the company physician at St. Joseph Stift, the Chairperson of the Employee Committee and the Business Director for their friendly support.

2 The St. Joseph Stift in Bremen

The St. Joseph Stift is a hospital sponsored by the Catholic Church with a tradition which goes back more than 100 years. Established in 1889, the hospital provides its patients with emotional and spiritual support on top of its medical care and nursing services. The Stift is located in the direct proximity of the large St. Jürgen hospital complex.

The St. Joseph Stift is also part of an affiliated group of hospitals, the St. Franziskus-Stiftung (St. Franziskus Foundation). According to the latest statistics from May 2006, nine hospitals (including the St. Joseph Stift in Bremen), five specialised hospitals, three facilities for handicapped persons and a senior citizens' home are all members of this affiliated group of hospitals. The affiliated group employs 7,500 staff, treats 120,000 in-house patients per year, manages 3,600 hospital beds and can support and has places for 685 handicapped people and senior citizens².

The St. Joseph Stift alone employs approximately 1,000 staff members at present, provides approximately 500 beds and currently has eight clinical departments (Internal Medicine, Surgery, Otolaryngology, Geriatrics, Eyes, Gynaecology, Radiology and Obstetrics with an intensive ward for newborn infants) and is also planning in the future to establish an additional department for natural healing methods, which will open at the end of 2006.

2.1 Context of the restructuring and current hospital concept

Clinics and hospitals in Germany are facing increasing pressure as a result of cost and revenue problems in the health system. Especially large facilities have been subjected to finance cuts over the last few years. According to forecasts, some hospitals will probably have to be closed down in the future, especially large ones: "The German hospital market faces a further drastic restructuring process marked by additional closures or new mergers and increasing specialisation," according to one forecast for the future developments in Germany³. In spite of this prediction, smaller facilities are expected to have a better chance of surviving as they will be able to react in a more flexible manner to changing conditions as a result of having fewer clinical departments. Accordingly, this means that hospitals are more likely to survive if they have fewer beds and a lower number of departments or have a larger number of beds and, in addition, offer a broad range of medical services or, alternatively, if they provide specialised hospital care services.

In the case of St. Joseph Hospital, the path to a leaner, more flexible organisation was fraught with several problems and obstacles. At the end of the day, the hospital was downsized considerably through the spin-off of several departments. The initial situation was marked by dwindling financial resources to fund the hospital. With its very viability at stake, the institution was at a crossroads: it

² „Übersicht St. Franziskus-Stiftung, Mai 2006“, description contained in 2006 Newsletter (no. 1) of St. Franziskus-Stiftung Münster. Information on the foundation is also available at www.st-franziskus-stiftung.de.

³ Germis, Carsten (2. Mai 2006). Krankenhäuser. Chancen für kleine Kliniken. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, online report.

either had to downsize and redistribute beds while drastically curtailing costs, or close down the hospital.

To avoid closure and meet the financial demands of the *Bundesland* (state) Bremen, the St. Joseph Stift has successfully endeavoured to modernise and expand certain specialised departments over the last few years while at the same time restructuring by spinning off non-medical departments. Details on these changes are also provided on the website of the hospital: “The sponsoring association, the hospital and *Bundesland* of Bremen have invested a considerable sum in the further development and further development and refinement of existing services and in the expansion of new services over the last five years. This includes the restructuring of wards in the clinics, the geriatric day clinic, the out-patient eye clinic, the new OP and treatment section, the out-patient clinic at the St. Joseph Stift with specialised physicians’ offices and medical services, the Caritas Service Centre in Bremen with short and long-term care as well as housing for senior citizens and an underground parking garage (...). The objective of creating a modern complex meeting the latest in nursing care and medical standards and offering an attractive range of services for patients and visitors and hence along with it to safeguard jobs at the site over the long term has thus been attained. Investments total Euro 46.5 million. This sum includes Euro 13.6 million in subsidies from the *Bundesland* of Bremen”⁴.

These subsidies were to be used in particular for certain changes to be made to the buildings. Indeed, the *Bundesland* of Bremen pegged the subsidies to this requirement.

- The aforementioned expansion in the Geriatrics Department was another condition stipulated by the *Bundesland*, as there are few opportunities in Bremen for geriatric rehabilitation or assistance of older patients following acute treatments.
- A further requirement was the establishment of a department for natural healing, which was to be up and running by the end of 2006. This ward was to help meet the major demand for such treatment possibilities in the *Bundesland* of Bremen.
- The requirements moreover stipulated closer cooperation between the departments of Internal Medicine and Surgery while at the same time reducing the number of beds in Surgery⁵.
- In addition, the administration is committed to the launch of new technologies in order to move forward with the digitisation of patients’ files and diagnoses. Thus, the St. Joseph Stift – like other Bremen hospitals – is investing in digitalisation technology for x-rays, MRT and CT results. This facilitates collaboration with other clinics and specialists and avoids costly and time-consuming follow-up examinations⁶.

⁴ „Zielvorgabe: Modernes Krankenhaus“. Article, 19th April 2006 ‚Aktuelles‘ auf www.sjs-bremen.de.

⁵ „Krankenhaus St. Joseph Stift wird umstrukturiert: Mehr Betten in der Geriatrie – weniger in der Chirurgie. Bremer Senat stimmt Förderung in Höhe von 14,32 Millionen Euro zu.“ *VdK-Zeitung* (2002, Nr. 5). Sozialverband Niedersachsen-Bremen, see

http://www.vdk.de/perl/CMS_Page.cgi?SID=OzhRuZOHY6EDeTx2ExnhnLwfCYPMAh&ID=nb99

(also on the website of the Bremen Senate at:

http://www2.bremen.de/web/owa/p_anz_presse_mitteilung?pi_mid=52196&pi_back=p_presse%3Fpi_bereich%3DS%26pi_archiv%3D1)

⁶ „Krankenhäuser nonstop online: Zentrales Rechenzentrum in Bremen“. Article, 25th January 2006 under ‚Aktuelles‘ at www.sjs-bremen.de (for further information, see: „Freie Kliniken Bremen gehen online“ (2005, no. 9). Sozialverband

3 Spin-offs and restructuring up until 2006

3.1 Restructuring of the St. Joseph Stift – reasons & mode of procedure

The reasons for the restructuring were a simple matter of finance. The spin-offs were the result of financial bottlenecks and were also influenced by the dismal financial situation in Bremen, as the Senate was planning to cut costs by eliminating 500 beds – the exact size of St. Joseph Stift. The outsourcing was thus aimed at preserving the Stift – it was a survival scheme. The hospital management (consisting of the managing director, the head of the nursing service and the medical director) of St. Joseph Stift decided in 2000 to cut expenditures for auxiliary services (i.e. non-medical staff) and to spin off certain departments and achieve savings by cutting back on services. In addition, it was decided to modernise the facilities with the aid of public funds provided by the *Bundesland* Bremen, even if such support was pegged to various requirements for the hospital that would have significant repercussions for the medical staff and their departments.

It was consequently decided at the hospital to spin off the following sections with a total of approximately 100 staff members: Cleaning, Catering, Physiotherapy, IT and Crafts (see illustration 1 and table 1, p. 7).

Illustration 1: Departments spun off since 2001

<i>Date</i>	<i>Department</i>	<i>Number of staff working in the department</i>
5 th Sept. 2001	Cleaning	All 40 cleaning staff.
1 st October 2001	Catering	About 40, 20 of whom were transferred to the new company
1 June 2005	Therastift	9 therapists and in the future all additional persons hired, the entire Physiotherapy Department will probably be transferred later to Therastift GmbH.
Oct. 2005	FAC'T IT	At the time 5. This company has hired additional staff since then. The managing director is in Münster.
1 st April 2006	Fact	All craft personnel and mechanics and all additional members responsible for the building electrical power, various systems and medical technology.

Niedersachsen-Bremen, see also

http://www.vdk.de/perl/CMS_Page.cgi?SID=fnRxJRoTTNru0D49Uhkjiu6goJ6lGj&ID=nb10235

Table 1: Timeline for spin-offs at St. Joseph Stift, Bremen

Year	2001											
Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Sequence</i>												
Cleaning												
Catering												
Year	2005											
Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Sequence</i>												
Therastift												
FAC'T IT												
Year	2006											
Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<i>Sequence</i>												
Fact												

The cleaning service was spun off first, shortly thereafter followed by the catering team. The employees working for the cleaning service were all transferred to a company in Lower Saxony. The disadvantages for the staff were clearly evident, however: although they continued to work at the St. Joseph Stift, they received considerably less pay and had longer working hours. The cost savings also led to cutbacks in cleaning services. These cleaning services are at present being rendered by hospital staff. The reaction of the staff to these changes is described in section 3.2.

The catering department was spun off shortly thereafter in October 2001. The catering services at the St. Joseph Stift provide meals to staff and patients in general. Same as above, all catering staff was taken over by the new employer and continue working in their hospital kitchen. Although some of them are still officially employees of the Stift, all new staff who have been hired since 2001 are officially employees of the new company “SJS Catering” (see section 4 for more information). This is a result of a transitional arrangement supported by the St. Joseph Stift for older employees approaching retirement.

The immediate savings realised in 2001 were of tremendous importance to the hospital and long-term planning at the hospital. There were some additional auxiliary departments at the St. Joseph Stift, however, the costs of which were considerably higher costs compared to private service providers. This resulted in further decisions to spin off three additional departments in 2005 and 2006.

An additional outsourcing move was made in 2005, when the hospital's internal IT section and the crafts and mechanics department were spun off. The physiotherapy group followed shortly afterwards in 2006 and is nowadays called 'Therastift GmbH' and employs nine physiotherapists. Some of these were former colleagues who switched to Therastift following an agreement regarding their transfer after the first two years of employment. The terms and conditions attached to the new positions, for instance with regard to pay and holiday, are less favourable than the previous conditions at the St. Joseph Stift and thus similar to earlier spin-offs.

Changes in the department structure went hand in hand with a move to affiliate the Stift with the St. Franziskus Foundation, the headquarter of which is located in Münster. It was hoped that this merger would help generate additional financial advantages, such as a procurement partnership for supplies thereby cutting the costs of materials purchased. This affiliation also meant a shift in terms of the influence wielded by the St. Joseph Stift compared to the Foundation as well as the managing director of the foundation is now also a board member at the St. Joseph Stift and has to coordinate decisions relating to the Stift with the affiliated partners as well. Indeed, synergy effects have been produced through this cooperative venture thanks to fact that the expertise of the two facilities complement and can be combined in a cost-effective manner: as the company physician at the St. Joseph Stift put it: "We profit from the existing structures in Münster and share our experience with the affiliated clinics".

Like in many other organisations, communication presented a weak point. The staff affected by the restructuring criticised the poor flow of information. This also involved leaks to the press regarding spin-offs and so on before these decisions were actually publicly announced by the hospital. This sowed the seeds of distrust among the staff and can only in part be attributed to the uncertainty that accompanies restructuring.

3.2 Reaction of the staff to the spin-offs

As is to be expected, the reaction of the spun-off departmental staff ranged from shock to fear at the beginning. One result was a lower level of identification among individual staff members with "their" hospital, as a statement made by the company physician confirmed: "I think that the working atmosphere here is much better than in other hospitals, but in spite of this it has deteriorated as a result of the change. Each of us has experienced personally how easily the department one works for can be outsourced even when it is totally unexpected. Outsourcing has also created an atmosphere of uncertainty in the other departments."

As it turned out, there were additional effects that were to have major repercussions. The loss of income in particular was very difficult to deal with for some staff members; as a position at the St. Joseph Stift also included bonuses from the church and above-average salaries on the whole compared to wages paid by other cleaning or catering companies. Thanks to the hard work of the St. Joseph Stift Employee Committee⁷, an agreement was made with the new enterprise in Hannover

⁷ Church-affiliated organisations have employee committees instead of works councils due to a different legal status.

that affected the cleaning staff. This agreement provided that staff who have been employed for a longer period of time would have to be employed on the same terms and conditions under which they had previously been enjoyed.

The spin-offs were furthermore associated with fears that work processes would suffer, and in particular the way in which work conformed to the procedures and routines that apply to the work of the medical and nursing staff. For example, operating rooms are to be cleaned before each operation, whereas general cleaning and the change of bed sheets respectively would take place before and after patients were discharged. On top of this, close cooperation with the medical establishment was also important to their work in the hospital. According to the company physician, the cleaning staff had always been very committed to the well being of patients and placed very high demands on themselves in terms of the quality of their work. But these high expectations on the part of the staff could no longer be met as a result of the greater amount of work that had to be performed in the given time.

Only one of the employee groups affected by a spin-off was specifically supported. A workshop was organized for the craftsmen, as this group was rent by internal strife. The workshop aimed at answering the questions of staff members, provide them with information and at the same time help solve conflicts.

3.3 Efforts on the part of the Stift management and the company physician

In spite of the spin-offs, the management of the hospital continued to feel responsible for the well being of these former employees in the new enterprises. The managing director of the St. Joseph Stift, for example, stayed on as the managing director of the new cleaning company. The same goes for the catering department: in this case the managing director of the St. Joseph Stift carried on as CEO of SJS-Catering GmbH (see section 4 for more information on this).

In addition, arrangements were made allowing staff members to contact the company physician at the St. Joseph Stift about their concerns. This means that the staff of all formerly internal sections continue to be assisted by the company physician at St. Joseph. Thus, the company physician continues to support a total of 1,000 staff (the workforce number has remained relatively stable for several years) despite the reduction of the workforce due to sequential spin-offs and savings measures. The establishment of this supportive structure, i.e. maintaining this same contact after the spin-off as well, was also welcomed by the company physician.

Usually, the sector-specific accident insurance companies would take on this task, but in this case the insurance companies' occupational physicians did not possess the same knowledge of the working environment compared to the staff physician at St. Joseph. If the accident insurance for the construction sector had been entrusted with the care of the cleaning staff, the staff would have had to schedule appointments outside the St. Joseph Stift, which might have led to problems not being addressed and inadvertently developing into truly serious problems.

Providing for continued care by the company physician quickly proved to be the right decision, as the example of the cleaning staff indicates. As a result of the spin-off, the former St. Joseph staff

had to work with new foremen and administrative managers. At the beginning, friction and minor conflicts arose between organisational units and staff members because the cleaning service is organised from Hanover but operates in Bremen. In these cases, the staff in Bremen contacted the old company physician and the managing director to address the problems. These issues were then relayed by these persons to the company management or the works council of the new employer in Hanover.

Another reason for the positive development at St. Joseph in addition to maintaining contacts for staff relates to the daily interaction between all employees in the hospital grounds. All the employees working for outside companies continue to be invited to events put on by the Stift. These employees are thus not socially excluded as auxiliary service employees. Instead, their St. Joseph Stift colleagues treat them as equals at work regardless of their status. Hence, the sense of identification and morale and loyalty is still relatively high amongst outsourced staff.

4 Results of the restructuring

The spin-offs in the St. Franziskus Foundation and later within the St. Joseph Stift led to a number of new companies being founded. These companies have since also assumed tasks or taken on departments on behalf of various hospitals affiliated with the Foundation and provide similar services to several facilities at the same time.

In the case of the St. Joseph Stift, new companies have been established in the areas of catering, physiotherapy, FACT IT and the Fact crafts and mechanics area. Two of these enterprises are “SJS Catering” – the new company in charge of the St. Joseph catering department, and “FACT”, which is in charge of the affiliated group.

4.1 *sjs catering+management*

"sjs catering+management" is a subsidiary of St. Joseph Stift and the result of the catering department being spun off⁸. The company continues to be administrated by the managing director of the St. Joseph Stift. Since it was founded, the enterprise has continued to diversify and now has its own “guest area”. This area rents rooms just like a hotel, but may also be rented by family members of patients staying at the hospital. In addition to overnight stays, guests are also offered services available at the hospital such as therapy baths and massage.⁹



Diagram 2: sjs catering logo

⁸ http://www.informationsgesellschaft.com/st._joseph-stift_bremen.html

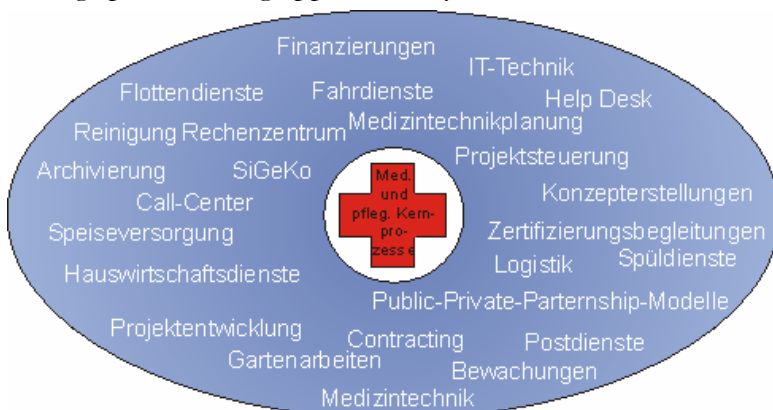
⁹ <http://www.sjs-hotel.de/erleben.html>

4.2 FACT GmbH - Facility Management Partner

FACT is another company that resulted from a departmental spin-off in the St. Franziskus hospital group. Today, it offers facility management services, particularly for those institutions related to health care and social work.

The development of FACT GmbH is thus not directly related to the spin-off at St Joseph-Stift as such, but also the cost problems of the Franciscan Order in Mauritz which had already set things in motion several years previously. Thus, for example, the hospitals affiliated with St. Franziskus in Mauritz already “called upon the technical departments to explore synergy effects through closer cooperation in 1997 [prior to 2005 when St. Joseph joined the foundation as well]. The objective: to achieve cost reductions in the secondary areas. It quickly became evident that the scope of services needed to be expanded and the quality improved. A large part of facility management had already been covered in the hospitals in the past as a result of the large number of services performed. Moreover, internal and external cost pressures were mounting: thus was born the idea of setting up a facility management company. This was aimed not only at turning the secondary services of the hospitals into a core business, but also offering services in the market. The impact of setting up an autonomous company was examined in a study conducted in 1998-99. The current weaknesses and strengths of the technical departments were compared with the opportunities and risks of establishing a separate company. A host of criteria that were applied confirmed that there was an excellent market for facility management services in the health sector. The starting gun sounded on 1st October 2000: in a collaborative venture, FACT GmbH was founded by the clinics of the hospital group” (<http://www.factpartner.de>).

Today FACT GmbH performs comprehensive facility management for the affiliated hospitals. Its services comprise the technical, infrastructural and commercial building management in particular (including building infrastructure, information technology, medical technology, transport technology and building measures, occupational health and safety, transport services and winter services). “In addition to cleaning buildings, these services encompass additional areas such as, e.g. providing dishwashing help at the hospital, household aid services in private homes (FACT Mobil), upkeep of outdoor yards and vegetation. (...) At present there are 175 staff members working in our buildings, cleaning space totalling approximately 2,000,000 m²/month”¹⁰.



<http://www.factpartner.de/dienstleistungen.html>

Since its establishment, the new company has developed very well and today also offers comprehensive consulting and project steering. It has had a subsidiary since 2002: FAC'T RS - Cleaning und Service, and was one of the first German companies to receive the quality certificate for facility management based on the EN ISO 9001:2000 standard¹¹”.

5 Long-term effects and further initiatives

5.1 Certification in St. Joseph Stift

In addition to the various spin-offs, quality management has become increasingly important within the Stift in order to increase the competitiveness of the hospital compared to the state-owned facilities. The St. Joseph Stift was certified in February 2005 under the *proCum Cert* specifications including the requirements of *KTQ*¹² [- Kooperation für Transparenz und Qualität im Gesundheitswesen] in an elaborate procedure. The *KTQ* certificate was developed by the German health insurance schemes, the Deutsche Krankenhausgesellschaft (DKG), the German Medical Association (*Bundesärztekammer*) and the German Care Council (Deutscher Pflegerat) especially for the evaluation of hospitals. *proCum Cert* is a supplementary certificate of the Catholic and Protestant hospital associations. It expands the list of requirements of *KTQ* to include specific requirements that apply to church hospitals. The ‘breast centre’ at St. Joseph has also been certified under DIN ISO 9001, an international standard for the certification of quality management systems in which both medical services as well as the structural quality are assessed (for information, see www.sjs-bremen.de).

According to statements made by the company physician, *proCum Cert* surveys place considerable emphasis on mobbing, motivation and human interaction at St. Joseph Stift. In this certification process, all processes, tasks and areas of responsibility must be described for each and every person, including the chief physicians and department heads, promoting transparency as a result. At the same time, the process helped the hospital to expose weaknesses in communications and the work organisation. There has already been a change in a positive direction in this regard as a result of the certification process. The St. Joseph Stift has increasingly included events aimed at improving communications and conflict management in its in-house continuing education programme.

5.2 Health initiatives for staff

Additional health measures, which have been implemented by St. Joseph Stift, include a Health Day. This initiative was organised for the second time this year, on 5th April 2006 (the first event took place in 2003). This Health Day was aimed at promoting staff health. The programme included information on job safety as well as relaxation techniques, sports, singing and group activities. Documents pertaining to these were also used in the certification. Created primarily upon the

¹¹ <http://www.barbaraklinik.de/258.html>

¹² Information verfügbar unter: <http://www.st-franziskus-stiftung.de/6768.html>

initiative of the company physician acting in cooperation with the management, the St. Joseph Stift seeks to create opportunities for its staff to develop in a positive direction. The promotion of a work-life balance is considered important by the Stift's company physician and management due to the demanding hospital working environment with long working hours, shift work, high physical and psychological stress. Another objective of these Health Days is to improve communications between the departments.

At present the Health Day is still primarily an informational event. The management and company physician are planning on further developing the existing event in the future. According to the latest plans, a choir is to be formed in St. Joseph Stift, Nordic walking and inline skating groups are to be organised, and a jogging group which gets together on an ad hoc basis is to be formed. In addition, the management and company physician are planning on organising relaxation exercises for staff, as the required competences are available in the Stift itself in the guise of the hospital's own physiotherapy.

The St. Joseph Stift also offers a large number of courses for the staff and has a training centre at the site where many programmes are offered to the staff. Thus, for example, numerous training and information events are organised here. They are frequently full and used especially intensively by the nursing department and administration. Unfortunately these programmes are used less by the physicians. The events dedicated to in-house continuing education include relaxation techniques, body-spirit-soul, stress from a Christian perspective, back school and back training. The staff representatives and company physician support these continuing training seminars, as these are important not only to the competence and skills of the St. Joseph Stift, but also to the preservation and expansion of individual employability.

Several working groups have been created in order to address employee interests, to meet challenges related to the competition in the health sector, and to promote new health initiatives. These include:

- A team for quality management in order to meet requirements for certification. Surveys of staff (including surveys of patients) are carried out on a regular basis. To maintain an overview of the status quo, staff and patient surveys are carried out every three years. The team in charge of quality management also includes the company physician, who is at present attending a three-year continuous professional development programme to become health coordinator. This study was approved and is financed by the St. Joseph Stift. The training program includes moderation techniques and dealing with health reports.
- Close cooperation between the Employee Committee and the company physician. In comparison to solely state-financed institutions, the St. Joseph Stift has relatively few social workers, psychologists, and no counsellors to treat addiction, and for this reason the company physician invests in cooperation with the Employee Committee a lot of time and energy to develop new initiatives for the employees.
- The hospital also has a working group on "bullying at work", and another one for "health" which also includes the HR manager. The working group is currently setting up an "addiction"

intervention chain (specifying a mode of procedure and support measures). The anti-mobbing group has concluded an agreement on on-the-job conduct.

6 Conclusion

The St. Joseph Stift has successfully dealt with a number of challenges over the last few years in terms of financial as well as staff cutbacks. The requirements applying to modification as well as affiliation with the St. Franziskus Foundation also translated into a major change for the previously autonomous management. The proactive mode of action on the part of the Stift and the results have clearly demonstrated that the involvement of some staff – in this case the management, Employee Committee and company physician – is the critical factor affecting the success of a restructuring. The initiative in transferring staff to new enterprises, support in spin-offs, the coinciding certifications as well as mistakes made during the restructurings (in terms of missing support measures in the form of informational and workshop events in the first spin-offs in contrast to the workshop which was organised for the craftsmen and mechanics much later on) – all these aspects led to a positive experience and the acquisition of new competences in the face of painful change. This willingness to confront the new challenges has created a significant competitive advantage for the future of the St. Joseph Stift hospital.

The modernisation, the smaller structure, the continuous quality management and the improvements in quality have resulted in St. Joseph Stift being able to successfully increase the number of beds, having been forced to reduce the number as part of the requirements to get government funds from the *Bundesland* Bremen – requirements which also included a somewhat greater emphasis being placed on geriatrics and natural healing, and less focus on surgery. The efforts have paid off: the St. Joseph Stift has not lost patients to other hospitals – as it was originally feared. The founding or opening up of a natural healing department is the last requirement which the hospital will be meeting this year. As a result of the importance and size of the Geriatrics Department, there were some misgivings about this at the outset. Today one can say that the various departments involved still complement each other in their work.

Especially encouraging are the efforts to ensure the well-being of the employees in the spun-off departments, the hospital's current staff and innovative possibilities of promoting health and further improving cooperation between the staff and the management. Because these tools are still undergoing development, a lot depends on whether the commitment of individuals at the St. Joseph Stift will lead to the formation of permanent facilities within the St. Franziskus Foundation. Not only the hospital, but also its patients and the staff themselves profit from a healthy, cooperative and committed workforce. The Bremen model offers a lot of potential and shows how organisations can effectively and successfully support their staff in a socially responsible manner.

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