

# Corporate Governance

CONSULTING | ANALYSIS | PLANNING | SINCE 1983

## Our Mission Statement

WESSLING is one of the leading analytical, testing and consultancy companies in Europe. We offer an unrivalled service portfolio that combines laboratory analysis and engineering services. Our analysis data form the basis for making decisions and our advice and planning service organises the data and turns the information into coherent actions. All of the services WESSLING undertakes as a private and independent company serve to improve quality, safety, health and environment (QSHE). The diverse knowledge and wide-ranging expertise of our employees work towards the success of our customers. We aim to be a supportive business partner for our customers in all aspects of service and product improvement – wherever our customers need us.

We are a company that offers unique qualities and is perceived as special by our customers and business partners. Our employees consider it a special task and privilege to assume responsibility for QSHE in their daily work on behalf of our customers. They make an active contribution to the continuous improvement of the quality of life and to its sustainability for future generations.

As a family-owned company, we take our social responsibility seriously, putting sustainability before rapid success in the company and creating prospects and security for our employees and their families.

Mutual respect, appreciation and responsibility are the basis on which we work together. WESSLING regards itself as a company in a continuous learning process where people learn from and with each other as a result of their diversity and uniqueness and where they achieve exceptional results. We recognise that people are receptive and willing to change. That's why we pay particular attention to training and continuous professional development. We are convinced that learning plays a prominent role in today's knowledge society.

In Europe – and moreover internationally – we bridge the gap between the various cultures. We cross the divide of linguistic and cultural regions and have therefore

decided to adopt English as our common corporate language. We recognise the richness of various cultures and the importance of this diversity which also enables us to meet individual customer requirements worldwide. Diversity is an everyday fact of life for us.

## Customer Focus

Satisfied customers are fundamental to our corporate success. All the processes in our company are geared towards optimising the benefits for the customer. The aim of our close customer focus is to identify – through accurate analysis and by maintaining a clear view – what the customers need and what they will need in future. We base the success of our business on the orders we receive from our customers. We strive to achieve this success so that we can give our customers the guarantee of corporate stability. Business success strengthens our independence and safeguards jobs.

We can assure our customers of the following: an unrivalled service portfolio – high quality standards – friendly personal customer care – customised professional advice – reliability – physical proximity – cost-effectiveness – sustainability – adherence to deadlines – customer service – expertise through interdisciplinary cooperation.

Time and again, discerning customers bring out the best in us, spurring us on to improve our performance. The basis for this performance is our clearly structured and efficient processes, the professional and social skills of our employees and an efficient technical infrastructure. Our management system forms the framework for the continuous review and improvement of these processes with respect to customer satisfaction and efficiency. In keeping with our claim that we are in a continuous learning process, essential changes are regularly introduced in our company at an early stage. Our strategic corporate planning identifies future trends in the markets and instigates developments that are market-driven. Through continuous improvement and by learning from the best, we remain competitive and fit for the future – and intend to influence the direction it takes. Innovation in our processes and services drives our future corporate success and hence the success of our customers.

As an international corporate group, we have a decentralised structure and regional representation so that our customers benefit from our individual approach and local proximity as well as our flexibility and efficiency. We generate our dynamic growth from within, based on the rigorous and continuous development of our experiences and ideas (i.e. our nucleus strategy). As a result, our decentralisation strategy – complementing our equally widespread clientele – also underpins our success. Our network of locations, customer-led approach, independence, innovative strength, customised solutions and reliability are all factors that allow us to develop our long-term customer relationships.

## **Independence – a Key Cornerstone**

Our independence is a key cornerstone of our corporate philosophy and one of the basic factors of our success. It contributes to the economic success of our customers and our company. We guarantee independence through our system of values, our breadth of services and the volume and variety of our customer base. We have a strong business ethic and take an active stand against any attempts at corruption.

We consider strict adherence to statutory regulations and standards to be a matter of course.

## **Learning Company – Finding a Better Solution Together**

Here at WESSLING, we have internalised the idea of the listening company and have therefore adopted the structures of a learning organisation.

We regard learning as the point of departure for all processes. Even the best service and the best method are not so perfect that they cannot be improved further. To be able to compete, we intend to be one step ahead of the trend at all times and to challenge established practices, improve good practices and develop new practices.

We build on the knowledge, skills and commitment of our staff. A willingness to learn and try out new things is encouraged so that each and every individual is able to commit his or her personal skills and knowledge to our corporate success and contribute to the success of the overall process. By acting with self-reliance and self-reflection, each employee ensures that his or her creativity and innovation are brought to bear in reviewing and improving the effectiveness of all our operational procedures. By learning from the best and adjusting to changing circumstances, we are able to secure and improve our position in the market.

No one is in possession of the truth, but by means of open communication, we can seek out a better and appropriate solution together.

## **Innovation – Inspired by Discerning Customers**

Our innovation management supports the ongoing development of products, services, organisational structures, processes and the implementation of new ideas.

The annual WESSLING Innovation Award recognises the best ideas put forward by our employees.

## **Quality, Safety, Health, Environment (QSHE)**

Our service portfolio allows us to make a key contribution – in the form of the quality and safety of products and services and workplace safety – to health and safety and the regeneration and protection of our environment. For this reason, we are rigorous in

giving due regard to environmental protection and safety factors within the company and are keen to optimise our operational procedures accordingly.

We demand and encourage safety and health awareness among all our employees and strive for continuous improvement. Our integrated management system is also certified according to the relevant standards and incorporates quality assurance, environmental protection, health and occupational safety.

## **Quality**

Our excellent performance underlines our commitment to continuous quality improvement. Our services meet the normative, statutory, technical and scientific requirements and – what is more – the expectations of the customer.

We use the full range of quality control methods to ensure that we deliver quality. Our quality control measures include the following: participating in round-robin tests; gaining accreditation for our analysis procedures; registering for certification schemes; obtaining the necessary licenses/authorisations and submitting notifications; conducting internal benchmarking; sharing information in corporate study groups; participating in scientific and standards committees; undertaking internal and external audits; actively dealing with complaints and suggestions for improvement.

We are of course prepared to work according to external test requirements or to modify our own test requirements accordingly.

We try to exclude all errors. Even a small error can have far-reaching consequences for the customer, people in general or the environment. Our process management includes dealing with potential errors actively and constructively to turn them into opportunities for future improvement, and this also applies with respect to the customer.

## **Health and Safety**

Health means quality of life and quality of work and is a key objective for the company. As a provider of such services, we understand the enormous responsibility we have for health and safety. The working environment, a healthy workplace and a positive work-life balance are important factors that impact on people's well-being and performance. Occupational health and safety is embedded in our management systems and is actively implemented. Each employee is responsible for health and safety and ensures that accidents are prevented by actively dealing with hazardous situations. All employees are obliged to report hazardous situations and near-misses. Any accident is one accident too many, causing personal suffering and avoidable expense.

Occupational health and safety go hand in hand. We aim to create working conditions that support physical and psychological health and result in job satisfaction.

It is forbidden to consume alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace. Here as well we are concerned to manage the problem of addiction and support its treatment through therapy. All employees are aware of the need to be alert towards colleagues in respect of potential addiction problems or strain due to physical or psychological illness.

## **Environment**

An awareness of our stewardship of the environment and of our natural resources is integral to our daily work. This responsibility shapes our services for our customers, our relationships with our suppliers and the way we procure our materials.

A great many customer orders include environmental protection and therefore precautionary and remedial environmental measures. Hence, our work has not only economic but also frequently direct ecological consequences. One of our principles is to give due regard to ecological factors when assessing environmental damage and developing measures for its elimination, and we support our customers in the sustainable use of energy, water, raw materials and land.

We favour processes that conserve energy and resources and investigate the options for cutting emissions, reducing waste, reusing and recycling.

By collaborating in research and development projects, WESSLING actively participates in the development of new and optimised solutions for tackling environmental issues. A regular external sharing of experience and information takes place through our voluntary participation in expert bodies, standards committees and professional associations.

Throughout our consultancy work, we operate on the basis of a certified environmental management system. The measures involved are monitored by the continuous capture of key data which are evaluated on an annual basis with respect to added value.

## **Management Based on a Common System of Values**

Our employees and managers identify with our corporate objectives and services to a great extent and are remarkably open to constant change.

We practise a participatory style of management. Trust and quality of communication are fundamental principles for us. Our management guidelines are used for self-reflection and define conduct that can be expected of our employees. They reflect our common system of values and exemplify the corporate culture in terms of how we deal with each other, as our communications are defined by transparency. We rely on reflective openness and trust. Our actions are shaped by responsibility, reliability, clarity and transparency and they are self-critically examined. Our dealings with our colleagues are characterised by respect and care in equal measure. We do our utmost

to encourage team spirit and the use of initiative, the transfer of knowledge as well as holistic and joined-up thinking and action. We believe that this is key to identifying customer needs quickly and developing solutions.

## **Personal and Professional Development Opportunities for all Employees**

We are a modern service provider selling knowledge-based services. Our future rests on the training and continuous professional development of all our employees. As a learning company, we attach great value to the steady advancement and continuous development of each individual, to accredited skills upgrades and to the transfer of knowledge on an international scale as well.

Regular training courses and support for personal development and opportunities enable the company to maintain a permanently up-to-date skills base and help employees to identify more with the company. We want to offer all our employees long-term prospects with the company and to advance their personal development through work-based opportunities. Our employees are involved in decision-making processes and assume clear responsibilities. A pleasant working environment and atmosphere helps to promote motivation and satisfaction.

By practising open communication across the board, we improve the effectiveness of our operational procedures.

Each employee has the same opportunities regardless of gender, ethnic origin, race, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation, age, illness and disability. We take an active stand against any type of discrimination, whatever the reason. We recognise that diversity enriches our company.

## **Family-friendly: Combining Job, Leisure and Family**

Our success rests on each individual and the enthusiasm that drives it forward. This can only happen with satisfied employees who are able to combine their work, private life and family. Long-term prospects come from a positive work-life balance. Flexible part-time working patterns enable parents to balance bringing up their children with their work. However, family-friendly is a term which refers not only to families with children but is also aimed at the needs of staff who, for example, are carers for dependent family members.

## **Communication: at the Heart of all our Relationships**

Communication is of central significance in a learning company. Internally and externally, our communications practice is open and transparent as well as coherent and accurate. We recognise the key role of the media with respect to the general

public. We support our customers in objectively stating the facts and standing up for truth and clarity. Our general ethical values, corporate philosophy and service portfolio are also reflected in our publications and websites. We partake in a lively international exchange through our multilingual employee newspaper "Die Welle" (The Wave).

## **Data Protection and Secure Media**

Data protection and the sensitive handling of data are firmly embedded in our overall strategy. Our data protection officers monitor adherence and train the workforce to create a data protection culture that is lived out in practice. The responsible handling of data also includes sole use of licensed software and adherence to licensing terms.

All our employees are bound by a duty of confidentiality when handling company data and our customers' information. We maintain secrecy with respect to third parties.

Our employees have access to modern information sources. We provide state-of-the-art technology for secure data connections. It is regarded as a matter of course that all employees comply with legislation, uphold the reputation of the WESSLING Group and use and disseminate content ethically. We therefore forbid any access to, or supply of, offensive, defamatory, anti-constitutional, racist, sexist or pornographic statements or images.

## **Supplier Relationships: Open Dialogue**

We cooperate with our suppliers in the same way as our customers: by aiming to forge long-term collaborations. We endeavour to hold a transparent and open dialogue with our suppliers. We also regularly share our experience with our suppliers, such as equipment manufacturers. This frequently results in the further development of equipment as well as improved performance. We expect suppliers to pursue such ongoing development and to strive for innovation.

## **Our Social and Cultural Commitment**

Central to our commitment is the idea of people, education and creativity. This is the focus of the WESSLING Scholarship Fund, which provides opportunities for training and education for ambitious young people in the company, thus giving them a foundation for future areas of work. We provide funding on a centralised and decentralised basis through donations and sponsorship for selected projects which chime with our philosophy.

Art, culture and literature are regarded as important within our corporate culture and form an integral part of staff activities and corporate events.