

## Master Facility & Real Estate Management

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### Work-Life-Balance (WLB) in offices

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The study examines how the provision of secondary services and facilities by Human Facility Management (HFM) impacts the Work-Life-Balance (WLB) of employees working at offices in the Netherlands and Germany.



## **Preface**

This master's thesis has been conducted within the framework of the Facility and Real Estate Management (FREM) program at the University of Greenwich located in the United Kingdom and Saxion, University of Applied Science located in the Netherlands. I affirm that the presented thesis, with the primary objective to investigate the effects of secondary services and facilities provided by Human Facility Management (HFM) on the Work-Life-Balance (WLB) of employees working in office environments in the Netherlands and Germany, is my own work, and I have appropriately acknowledged all direct and indirect sources used as references.

First and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation to my primary thesis tutor, Sandra Borghuis. Her extensive knowledge, invaluable guidance, and unwavering support have been of utmost significance throughout the entire research process.

I would also like to extend my recognition to Arrien Termaat, my second thesis tutor, for his invaluable feedback and contributions. Moreover, for his perceptive suggestions and critical analysis to enhance the quality and depth of this research.

Additionally, I wish to express my gratitude to my business coach, Bart van Roekel, for his valuable guidance and mentorship. His expertise and industry insights have been instrumental in shaping the direction and focus of this research. His unwavering support and constructive feedback have significantly contributed to the refinement and relevance of this study.

Furthermore, I would like to acknowledge and extend my appreciation to all the participants who generously dedicated their time and shared their insights for this study. Their willingness to provide valuable perspectives and experiences has been essential in enriching the findings and conclusions of this research endeavour.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the University of Greenwich and Saxion the University of Applied Science and its esteemed faculty for providing me with the opportunity to undertake this research and for their continuous support throughout the program. Their commitment to academic excellence and dedication to fostering knowledge and research have been instrumental in shaping the development and success of this study.

It is my aspiration that this research contributes significantly to the existing body of knowledge in the field of FREM, specifically within the domain of HFM and its impact on WLB. The outcomes of this study are intended to provide practical implications for industry professionals, equipping them with the necessary insights to develop strategies and practices that prioritize employee well-being while enhancing the overall added value of the built environment.

Once again, I extend my gratitude to all those who have contributed to the successful completion of this research, including my esteemed tutors, Sandra Borghuis and Arrien Termaat, my business coach Bart van Roekel, as well as the participants who generously shared their valuable insights.

Melanie H. L. van Heck (Rensing)

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of secondary services and facilities provided by Human Facility Management (HFM) on the Work-Life-Balance (WLB) of employees working in office environments in the Netherlands and Germany. The study aims to explore the contribution of these services and facilities to the overall added value experienced by employees.

**Design, Methodology, and Approach:** This study adopts a qualitative approach, as the research design includes literature research and interviews to collect data from Human Facility Managers in offices in the Netherlands and Germany. At offices where there is no HFM department, the Human Resource Managers and/or Facility Managers are interviewed. The interviews are semi-structured and provide qualitative insights into the experiences and perspectives of the employees. The interviewees are also asked about employee surveys, to gather quantitative data on employees' perceptions of the secondary services and facilities provided by HFM.

**Findings:** The findings of this study reveal that the provision of secondary services and facilities by HFM plays a significant role in improving the WLB of employees. The employees appreciate the focus placed on their well-being and the efforts made to create a supportive and comfortable work environment, based on an employee-centric decision rather than trends. The availability of a Holistic approach with services and facilities, that fits the employee needs such as flexible working arrangements, fitness facilities, and social activities positively impacts employees' overall satisfaction, productivity, and engagement.

**Research Limitations and Implications:** While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of secondary services and facilities on WLB, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations. The research focuses on office environments in the Netherlands and Germany, and the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts or industries. Additionally, the study relies on self-report data, which may be subject to biases. Further research could explore the effectiveness of specific secondary services and facilities on different employee groups or in diverse organizational settings.

**Originality and Value:** This study contributes to the existing literature by examining the specific added value and range of secondary services and facilities provided by HFM in enhancing WLB. The research sheds light on the importance of considering employees' well-being and satisfaction in the workplace, going beyond traditional measures such as salary. The findings emphasize the added value that can be achieved by implementing comprehensive HFM strategies, which have the potential to improve employee satisfaction, retention, and overall organizational performance.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significance HFM providing of secondary services and facilities in promoting WLB in office environments. It underscores the importance of incorporating HFM practices that prioritize employee well-being and contribute to the overall added value within organizations. The findings offer valuable insights for both practitioners and researchers interested in enhancing WLB and creating supportive work environments.

**Keywords:** Facility Management, Human Facility Management, Secondary Services and Facilities, Work-Life-Balance, Employee Well-being, Employee Satisfaction.

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## 1. Introduction

Over the past few years, Facility and Real Estate Management (FREM) have undergone significant transformations, driven by evolving workplace trends and a Heightened focus on ensuring employee well-being and satisfaction (Nenonen et al., 2023). This emphasis on employee well-being directly influences engagement, retention, and overall business performance, compelling organizations to create work environments that foster physical and mental well-being for their employees (Groen et al., 2019a; Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022).

Recognizing the fundamental role of the physical work environment in influencing employee productivity and performance, organizations have adopted Human Facility Management (HFM) as a strategic approach. HFM integrates Facility Management principles with a Human-centric perspective from Human Resource Management (HRM) (Van der Voordt, 2017; Van Sprang & Drion, 2020). As the workplace landscape continues to evolve, businesses face new challenges such as employee engagement, Work-Life-Balance (WLB), and talent retention. To tackle these challenges, organizations now understand the importance of integrating HR and Facility Management functions, fostering a cohesive and holistic approach to workplace management. This approach optimizes employee experiences and productivity by leveraging the strengths of both disciplines (Jensen et al., 2013; Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022).

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of flexible work arrangements and remote work policies, prompting organizations to rethink their office space management and workforce support strategies. As a result, companies are reimagining their physical workspaces to cater to the diverse needs of employees, including those working in remote and hybrid work models (De Lucas Ancillo et al., 2023).

In response to these flexible working arrangements are one of the possible secondary services and facilities that offices can provide to promote employees' well-being and support Work-Life-Balance (Gagnano et al., 2020a). However insufficient research exists regarding HFM providing these secondary services and facilities.

This study explores how the secondary services and facilities provided by HFM impact the WLB of office employees in the Netherlands and Germany. By analyzing the availability, utilization, and satisfaction with HFM and the services and facilities, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into their connection to WLB in office settings. Facility and real estate managers responsible for designing and implementing secondary services and facilities programs can benefit from these findings, as they can aid in HFM strategy development and contribute to the overall added value within organizations.

**Research Question:** What is the impact of the provision of secondary services and facilities by Human Facility Management on the Work-Life-Balance of employees working in offices in the Netherlands and Germany?



## 2. Literature Review

This literature review delves into the intricate relationship between Human Facility Management (HFM) and Work-Life-Balance (WLB), shedding light on the tangible added value that HFM brings to this crucial aspect. Furthermore, it illuminates the diverse added values of offering secondary services and facilities, enhancing the strength of this synergy. This comprehensive review not only establishes the groundwork for the upcoming field research but also presents a Holistic theoretical framework that intricately connects these fundamental dimensions.

### 2.1. Facility Management

In order to understand HFM, this paragraph delves into the key concepts and practices of Facility Management (FM), highlighting its significance in HFM and WLB.

#### 2.1.1. Introduction to Facility Management

FM is a multidisciplinary field that encompasses the management and maintenance of physical spaces, assets, and services within organizations to ensure the efficient and effective functioning of their facilities (van der Voordt, 2017). It involves the integration of people, processes, places, and technology to create a safe, functional, and productive environment for employees and visitors (Van Sprang & Drion, 2020).

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) defined in 2017, ISO 41011, FM as "the organizational function which integrates people, place, process, and technology within the built environment with the purpose of improving the quality of life of people and the productivity of the core business". This definition highlights the holistic nature of FM, focusing not only on the physical aspects but also on the well-being and productivity of the occupants (ISO, 2017).

Historically, FM was primarily seen as a cost center, with the main objective of cost reduction and maintenance of physical assets (Jensen, 2010). However, as workplace trends evolved, the role of FM shifted towards adding value to the organization. Today, FM is viewed as a strategic function that can contribute to the overall success of an organization by enhancing employee experiences, productivity, and well-being (Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022).

#### 2.1.2. The Added Values of Facility Management

One of the primary advantages of FM is that it ensures that employees' physical workplaces are safe, healthy, and comfortable. This aspect of FM is important in promoting WLB because it allows employees to concentrate on their work without being distracted by discomfort, illness, or injury caused by a poorly maintained workplace (Osoian et al., 2009). Furthermore, a Healthy and safe workplace fosters a positive work culture in which employees feel valued, respected, and supported (Deery, 2008; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Gragano et al, 2020a).

The FM Value Map, developed by Jensen (2010), is a conceptual framework that illustrates how FM provides value to the core business and its stakeholders. This study focuses on the stakeholders: employees, as seen by the red marking in figure 1 (Jensen, 2010).

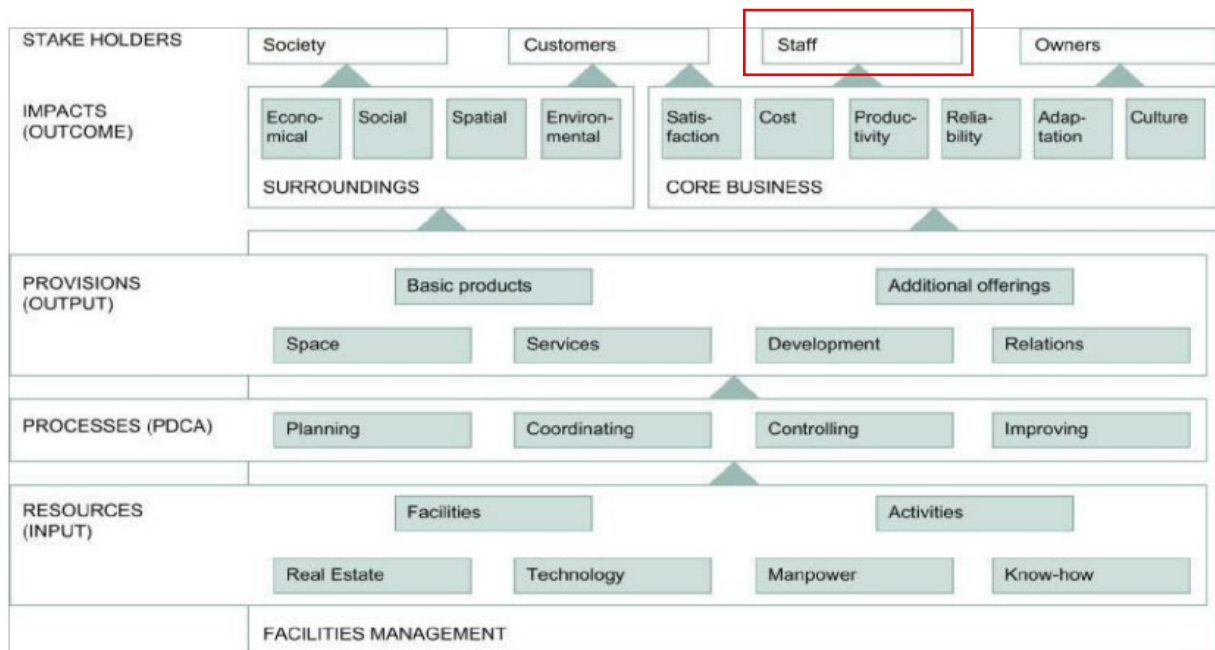


Figure 1: FM Value Map (Jensen, 2010)

It maps the resources used by FM as inputs into internal processes that produce outputs like space, services, development, and relations. These outputs have various impacts on the core business such as employee satisfaction, productivity and culture (Jensen, 2010; Hanc, 2019). That FM can have a significant impact on organizational productivity and employee satisfaction, is also confirmed by a study conducted by Groen et al. (2019a).

Furthermore, several researchers have identified flexibility and adaptability as an added value of FM (Jensen, 2010; De Vries et. al., 2008; Lindholm & Levainen, 2006; Lindholm & Aaltonen, 2011; Jensen et al., 2012). The flexibility and adaptability of FM are underscored by the evolving workplace trends, where the growing emphasis on employee well-being and productivity has led to a transformation in FM's role, as pointed out by Van Sprang & Drion (2020) and Hanc (2019).

### 2.1.3 The roles of Facility Management

Whether it's managing day-to-day operations or implementing long-term facility strategies, facility management remains integral to fostering a conducive and thriving work environment (Van Sprang & Drion, 2020). FM plays a pivotal role in creating and maintaining efficient, safe, and productive work environments for organizations across various industries (Roper & Payant, 2014). Furthermore, as businesses continue to grow and evolve, the responsibilities of FM have become increasingly diverse and complex. From overseeing building operations and maintenance to optimizing space utilization and promoting sustainability, facility managers play a crucial role in ensuring the seamless functioning of a workplace (van der Voordt et al., 2022; Van der Voordt, 2017; Groen et al., 2019b).

## 2.2. Human Facility Management

Building upon the nuanced understanding of Facility Management (FM) established in the preceding paragraph (2.1), this section delves into the realm of Human Facility Management (HFM). This innovative approach harmoniously integrates HRM principles with the operational facets of FM, creating a seamless and effective synergy. The discussion encompasses key aspects such as the collaboration between HR and FM in HFM and the added values attributed to HFM. Furthermore, this paragraph delves into the significance of WLB within the context of HFM, exploring its implications for both employees and organizations.

### 2.2.1. Introduction to Human Facility Management

HFM is a strategic and integrated approach that blends the principles of FM with the human-centric perspective of HRM. This multidisciplinary approach recognizes the profound influence of the physical work environment on employee well-being, productivity, and Work-Life-Balance. By prioritizing employee needs and experiences while aligning with the organization's core business objectives, HFM aims to create a cohesive workplace strategy that fosters a positive and fulfilling work environment for employees (Gillen & Pickering, 2023; Hanc, 2019; Kane, 2022; Van Sprang & Drion, 2020).

HFM can be seen as an evolution of traditional FM, placing a strong emphasis on employee well-being and satisfaction in addition to efficient facility operations. Unlike conventional FM, HFM acknowledges the workplace's role as more than just a space for work; it serves as a tool to attract and retain top talent and enhance overall employee experiences (Atkin & Brooks, 2021). At the core of HFM lies the integration of HRM principles with FM practices. This blend of disciplines fosters a Human-centric approach to FM (Jensen et al., 2013; Van Sprang & Drion, 2020).

### 2.2.2. The Collaboration of HR and FM in Human Facility Management

To align the organization's workplace strategies with employee needs, it's crucial to foster transparent communication between HR and FM. This involves finding the right balance between spaces designed for collaboration and those designated for focused tasks. This does not only enhance employee productivity but also cultivates a positive work culture, as noted by van der Voordt (2017).

This approach is further supported by Van Sprang & Drion (2020), who highlight how HR and FM collaborate to measure the impact of workplace interventions on employee performance and productivity, enabling continuous improvement and optimization of HFM strategies to meet employees' evolving needs (Van Sprang & Drion, 2020).

An example of the collaboration of FM and HR in HFM is the initial phases of planning and designing a workplace. In HFM, HR and FM work together to craft a setting that addresses both practical requirements and the well-being of individuals. By combining HR's expertise with FM's understanding of space usage, the workplace is carefully shaped to resonate with the organization's values while also promoting employee welfare (Van der Voordt et al., 2022). Therefore, gathering input from employees through surveys assessing their satisfaction with the workplace and their work-life balance offers valuable insights for ongoing enhancement. This information guides the customization of HR and FM strategies (Gragano et al., 2020a; Van Sprang & Drion, 2020).

### 2.2.3. The Added Value of Human Facility Management

HFM recognizes that the physical workplace plays a vital role in shaping employees' experiences, well-being, and work-life integration (Van Sprang & Drion, 2020). As organizations recognize the significant impact of employee satisfaction and WLB on overall productivity and success, the added value of HFM becomes increasingly evident (Bataineh, 2019; Gragnano et al., 2020a). The following table explores the added value that HFM brings to modern workplaces, highlighting its role in optimizing employee experiences:

Added Value	Literture
<b>Enhanced Employee Well-being and Work-Life Balance:</b>	HFM recognizes the critical role of work-life balance in shaping employees' overall well-being and experiences (Van Sprang & Drion, 2020). By designing and maintaining a workplace, with a human-centric approach, HFM aligns the physical and psychological aspects of the workplace to support diverse employee needs (Jensen et al., 2014). Through workplace amenities and policies that support work-life integration, employees are empowered to achieve a harmonious balance between their personal and professional life (Van Sprang & Drion, 2020).
<b>Increased Employee Productivity and Performance:</b>	A well-designed and thoughtfully managed workplace positively influences employee productivity and performance. When employees feel comfortable, safe, and supported, they are more likely to be motivated and productive in their roles, ultimately benefiting the organization's overall performance (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).
<b>Talent Attraction and Retention:</b>	In a highly competitive job market, organizations need to offer more than just competitive salaries to attract and retain top talent. Providing a workplace that prioritizes employee well-being and offers a positive work-life balance can be a crucial differentiator for attracting and retaining skilled employees (Aktin & Brooks, 2021).
<b>Positive Organizational Culture:</b>	HFM plays a pivotal role in fostering a positive organizational culture by promoting employee engagement, satisfaction, and a sense of belonging. A workplace that values employee well-being and work-life balance creates a supportive and inclusive culture, contributing to organizational success and employee loyalty (Gragano et al., 2020).

Table 1: Added value of HFM

#### 2.2.4. Work-Life-Balance in HFM

To enhance Work-life Balance (WLB) within HFM, this section recognise it as a core value that contributes to the added value of the HFM department. The concept of WLB has evolved beyond a mere buzzword to become a foundational principle in modern workplaces. It embodies the intricate equilibrium between work-related demands and personal life responsibilities, exerting a profound influence on employee well-being, job satisfaction, and overall productivity (Clark, 2000; Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022). Extensive research has delved into the multifaceted impact of WLB on individual employee performance as well as broader organizational outcomes (Shockley et al., 2017; Grawitch et al., 2010).

Embedding WLB within HFM practices recognizes the inherent interplay between work and personal life, fostering a sustainable equilibrium (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Moreover, acknowledging and rewarding a Healthy WLB serves as a motivator for others to similarly prioritize this integration (Aryee et al., 2005).

At last, job candidates now consider WLB and the overall work environment as pivotal factors when evaluating job opportunities (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2018). Which is very important for today's competitive job market (Bunjak et al., 2023).

#### *The Added Value of Work-Life-Balance*

The Added Values of fostering a Healthy balance between work and personal life, cab be found in table below.

Added Value	Lituration
<b>Enhancing Employee Productivity and Satisfaction:</b>	Research by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) indicates a positive correlation between WLB and employee productivity (Gragnano, 2020b). Achieving a healthy work-life balance improves focus, motivation, and the ability to deliver high-quality work resulting in improved overall productivity for the organization, while also promoting higher job satisfaction levels (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).
<b>Increasing Employee Retention and Attraction:</b>	Organizations that prioritize WLB can attract and retain top talent by offering flexible work arrangements, and employee-centric amenities (Raj., 2022; Andrzejczyn, 2023). Satisfied employees are more loyal, reducing turnover rates and associated recruitment costs (Uchil, 2022; Blazovich et al., 2018).
<b>Enhanced Quality of Life and Reduced Burnout:</b>	A well-balanced work-life integration leads to a higher overall quality of life, fostering contentment and satisfaction among employees (Clark, 2000). Additionally, a healthy WLB reduces stress levels, enhances job satisfaction, and results in lower absenteeism and burnout rates among employees (Roopavathi& Kishore, 2021; Bunjak et al., 2023).
<b>Improved Organizational Reputation:</b>	Investing in WLB practices enhances an organization's reputation as an employee-friendly and socially responsible employer (Aktin & Brooks, 2021). This positive image attracts clients, partners, and stakeholders who value a strong commitment to employee welfare (Hammer et al., 2011).
<b>Improved work culture</b>	Furthermore, WLB practices foster a positive work culture, leading to engaged, committed, and motivated employees (Aryee et al., 2005). This culture promotes collaboration and mutual support among employees (Jensen et al., 2012).

Table 2: Added value of WLB

#### *Comparing the Added Values of HFM and WLB*

This comparative analysis of the added values of HFM and WLB can be found in table 3.

Added Value	Conclusion
<b>Enhanced Employee Well-being and WLB:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both HFM and WLB emphasize the importance of creating a work environment that caters to employees' physical, mental, and emotional needs.</li> <li>HFM aims to optimize work-life balance by providing amenities and policies that support employees' personal and professional lives.</li> <li>WLB focuses on integrating personal and professional responsibilities to achieve a harmonious balance, leading to higher job satisfaction and retention.</li> </ol>
<b>Increased Employee Productivity and Performance:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HFM recognizes that a well-designed workplace positively impacts employee productivity and motivation.</li> <li>WLB's emphasis on flexibility and reduced work-life conflict enhances employee focus, resulting in improved overall productivity.</li> </ol>
<b>Talent Attraction and Retention:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both HFM and WLB play vital roles in attracting and retaining top talent in a competitive job market.</li> <li>Organizations that prioritize employee well-being through HFM and WLB gain a competitive advantage in attracting skilled professionals seeking supportive work environments.</li> </ol>
<b>Positive Organizational Culture:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HFM fosters a positive organizational culture by promoting employee engagement, satisfaction, and a sense of belonging.</li> <li>WLB's focus on employee well-being and work-life integration contributes to a supportive and inclusive work culture.</li> </ol>

Table 3: Comparing the Added Values of HFM and WLB

All in all, the added values of HFM and WLB align seamlessly, focusing on employee well-being, productivity, and a positive work environment. Integrating HFM and WLB practices fosters a strong organizational culture, attracts top talent, and ensures sustained growth. Prioritizing these values showcases a genuine commitment to employees' welfare, contributing to a thriving and successful organization.



## 2.3. Secondary services and facilities

Building upon the enhanced understanding of Work-Life-Balance (WLB) derived from the preceding section (2.3), this paragraph delves into the significance of secondary services and facilities for fostering a Harmonious WLB among employees. It explores the definition, varied offerings, and the added values that these services and facilities bring to the overall work-life equilibrium.

### 2.3.1. Introduction to secondary services and facilities

To understand secondary services and facilities, it's important to briefly clarify what in this research is meant by "first" or essential services and facilities like salary and a utilized office with a desk, chair and a computer. They address basic needs, technology and provide security. Secondary services and facilities then build upon these essentials.

Secondary services and facilities play role in extending beyond the core workspace to provide additional facilities, support systems, and conveniences for employees (Schlechter et al., 2015; Kaplan et al., 2018). By offering such services and facilities, organizations actively demonstrate their commitment to enhancing employees' daily experiences and promoting a Healthy WLB, ultimately contributing to greater job satisfaction and well-being (Atkin & Brooks, 2021).

Additionally, the emphasis on secondary services and facilities is driven by the need to attract and retain top talent, as seen in 2.3 WLB has become more important for job candidates (Kaplan et al., 2018). Moreover, secondary services and facilities play a crucial role in shaping an organization's culture. By fostering a sense of community and camaraderie among employees, they promote a positive work culture that encourages collaboration, teamwork, and mutual support (Jensen et al., 2012).

In the context of workplace management and design, it's crucial to distinguish between secondary services and facilities, as they each contribute distinct elements to the overall employee experience. Secondary services encompass a spectrum of facilities and support systems that extend beyond the core workspace. These services can encompass offerings such as on-site wellness programs, childcare services and technology support. These services are aimed at directly addressing employees' diverse needs and fostering a supportive work environment (Schlechter et al., 2015; Kaplan et al., 2018; Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022).

On the other hand, facilities refer to the physical infrastructure and spaces within the workplace. These physical elements include well-designed office layouts, ergonomic furniture and technology-equipped meeting rooms. Facilities contribute to the overall ambiance and functionality of the workspace, enhancing collaboration, creativity, and employee satisfaction. It's important to note that while secondary services often complement facilities, they primarily focus on providing additional services and support systems to enrich the work environment, while facilities center on the physical attributes of the workspace itself (Jensen et al., 2013; Kaplan et al., 2018).

### 2.3.2. Range of secondary services and facilities

Secondary services and facilities encompass a wide range of offerings tailored to meet the diverse needs of employees. These may include, but are not limited to:

Nr.	Category	Literture	Best practise
1	Food and Beverage Services and Facilities:	Incorporating food and beverage services within the workplace, such as cafes, restaurants, and vending machines, can significantly contribute to WLB and employee well-being (Schlechter et al., 2015). Employees no longer need to worry about finding a place to eat during their lunch breaks or bringing meals from home. They can access nutritious and convenient options on-site, saving time and reducing stress (Tulshyan, 2021).	Organizations like Google and Microsoft have successfully implemented food and beverage services in their offices, providing a wide array of dining choices to their employees (Felch, 2020; Fleck, 2023).
2	Fitness and Wellness Facilities:	Providing fitness and wellness facilities like gyms, yoga rooms, and meditation spaces enables employees to prioritize their physical and mental health (Schlechter et al., 2015). Regular exercise and mindfulness practices improve well-being, reduce stress, and boost productivity. Integrating wellness facilities and programs catering to physical and mental health is essential. Furthermore, investing in wellness programs, fitness facilities, and mental health support services positively impacts employee well-being and fosters a healthy work environment (Aktin & Brooks, 2021).	Companies like Apple has integrated fitness centers and meditation rooms into their office spaces, promoting employee well-being and WLB (Apple inc, n.d.). Salesforce, a leading technology company, offers fitness centers, meditation rooms, and stress management workshops. Diverse wellness options support employees in maintaining a healthy WLB and foster a culture of well-being (Salesforce, 2019).
3	Childcare Services and Facilities:	On-site childcare services, including daycare and after-school care, alleviate the burden of finding external care for employees' children (Schlechter et al., 2015). This enables parents to focus on their work knowing that their children are in a safe and nurturing environment nearby. Moreover, offering family-friendly policies, such as parental leave, childcare support, and eldercare assistance, helps employees balance their personal and professional responsibilities (Beauregard & Henry, 2009).	Companies like Patagonia and IBM have been pioneers in offering on-site childcare services, supporting working parents and enhancing their WLB (Patagonia, n.d.; Zimmerman, 2015).
4	Transportation Services and Facilities:	Organizations can enhance WLB by providing transportation services such as shuttle buses, carpooling programs, and bike parking (Schlechter et al., 2015). These initiatives make commuting more convenient and eco-friendly, reducing employees' stress and contributing to their overall well-being.	Companies like Microsoft have implemented shuttle bus services, making it easier for employees to commute to work (Krenz, 2023).
5	Technology and Connectivity Services and Facilities:	Ensuring high-speed internet, video conferencing facilities, and charging stations allows employees to stay connected and productive throughout the workday (Schlechter et al., 2015). Seamless connectivity enables flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or virtual meetings, promoting Work-Life-Balance (WLB) and minimizing the need for excessive travel.	Companies like Cisco and Adobe have invested in advanced technology and connectivity services to empower their employees with flexible work options (Drapkin, 2023).

6	Environmental Sustainability Services and Facilities:	Implementing sustainability initiatives like recycling programs, green roofs, and energy-efficient lighting not only benefit the environment but also contribute to employees' sense of purpose and well-being (Schlechter et al., 2015). Working in a sustainable and eco-friendly environment fosters a positive work culture and aligns with employees' values.	Companies like BMW and Salesforce have integrated environmental sustainability practices into their workplaces, creating a sense of pride among employees (BMW, n.d.; Salesforce, 2019).
7	Concierge Services and Facilities:	Offering concierge services such as dry cleaning, package delivery, and travel arrangements relieves employees of non-work-related tasks, allowing them to focus on their professional responsibilities (Schlechter et al., 2015). By providing these services, organizations support work-life integration and reduce employees' personal errands during office hours.	Organizations operating in different regions and cultures must consider local norms and practices. For instance, BMW offers concierge services tailored to the specific needs of their German employees, ensuring relevance and effectiveness (BMW, n.d.).
8	Health and Safety Services and Facilities:	Promoting health and safety in the workplace through first aid stations, emergency preparedness training, and ergonomic assessments ensures employees' well-being and reduces workplace accidents (Schlechter et al., 2015). When employees feel safe and supported, they can better concentrate on their work and achieve a healthier Work-Life-Balance.	Companies like Airbnb have prioritized health and safety services to protect their employees' well-being (Drapkin, 2023).
9	Social and Community Services and Facilities:	Facilitating social and community services like volunteer opportunities, on-site events, and networking opportunities fosters a sense of belonging and community among employees (Schlechter et al., 2015). Engaging in social activities outside of regular work tasks enhances Work-Life-Balance by promoting a more holistic and fulfilling work experience.	Companies like Microsoft and Cisco have organized on-site events and networking sessions, strengthening their employees' social connections (Drapkin, 2023).
10	Personal Services and Facilities:	Offering personal services like flexible work arrangements, hair salons, dry cleaning, and on-site banking enables employees to manage their personal tasks with ease, reducing time spent outside of work (Schlechter et al., 2015). By providing these services, organizations empower employees to achieve better work-life integration.	Companies like Intel and Salesforce have implemented flexible work arrangements, providing employees with greater control over their schedules (Intel, n.d.; Salesforce, 2019).
11	Flexible Working Arrangements:	Implementing flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options or flexible working hours, allows employees to better manage their WLB and reduces commuting stress (Andrzejczyn, 2023). Furthermore, emphasizing flexible work arrangements, such as remote work, flexitime, and compressed workweeks, is a vital component of supporting WLB (Schlechter et al., 2015). Allowing employees to choose their work hours or location based on their individual needs fosters a sense of autonomy and control, contributing to improved Work-Life-Balance. Companies like Google and Apple have embraced flexible working arrangements (Reisinger, 2022).	Companies such as Clif Bar and XPLANE offers flextime and telecommuting options, , recognizing the diverse needs and preferences of their workforce and contributing to increased job satisfaction and a better WLB (ODOT, 2019).

Table 4: Types of secondary services and facilities

### 2.3.3. Added Value of secondary services and facilities

Secondary services and facilities encompass a wide range of added values that extend beyond the traditional workplace offerings. These services are strategically designed to address employees' diverse needs and enhance their overall well-being (Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022).



Moreover, secondary services and facilities contribute to creating a sense of community and belonging within the workplace (Al-Qutop & Harrim, 2011). As seen by a best practise of Microsoft, social and community services, such as on-site events, volunteer opportunities, and networking sessions, foster connections among employees, promoting a positive work culture and encouraging collaboration (McKinney, 2021). This social aspect of the workplace is vital for employee engagement and work-life balance, as it provides opportunities for individuals to interact and build relationships outside of their regular work tasks (Jensen et al., 2012). Furthermore, secondary services and facilities such as flexible working arrangements provide employees with greater autonomy and control over their schedules, reducing work-related stress and supporting overall well-being (Schlechter et al., 2015).

### 3. Objective, research questions, and conceptual model

In this chapter, the focal point shifts towards clarifying the research's purpose, explaining the primary and subsidiary research inquiries, and presenting the conceptual framework that underpins the study.

#### 3.1 Relevance for Facility and Real Estate Management (FREM)

The relevance of this research lies in the context of Facility and Real Estate Management (FREM), a multidisciplinary field that encompasses the management and optimization of physical spaces, assets, and services within organizations. In recent years, the role of FREM has evolved from a traditional focus on cost reduction and asset maintenance to a strategic approach aimed at adding value to organizations and their workforce (Jensen, 2010; Van der Voordt, 2017; Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; Roper & Payant, 2014; van der Voordt et al., 2022; Groen et al., 2019b).

The integration of Human Facility Management (HFM), which combines Facility Management (FM) principles with a Human-centric perspective from Human Resource Management (HRM), has become increasingly important for organizations seeking to create conducive work environments that support employee well-being and Work-Life-Balance (WLB) (Atkin & Brooks, 2021; Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; Gragnano et al., 2020a). According to Hongal & Kingange (2020) is crucial in today's "War of Talents". This includes providing secondary services and facilities to have talent retention and attraction (Drapkin, 2023).

Understanding the impact of providing secondary services and facilities by the company's HFM-department is crucial for FREM professionals and real estate managers responsible for designing and implementing workplace strategies. By exploring the relationship between HFM, secondary services, and WLB, this research aims to provide valuable insights that can inform decision-making and foster better workplace experiences.

#### 3.2 Research objective and scope

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the effects of secondary services and facilities provided by HFM on the WLB of employees working in office environments in the Netherlands and Germany. The study aims to explore the contribution of these services and facilities to the overall added value experienced by employees. To achieve this objective, the study will focus on understanding the role of HFM, its collaboration of FM with HRM, and the importance of secondary services and facilities in promoting WLB.

#### 3.3 Main research question

The main research question addressed in this study is:

**"What is the impact of the provision of secondary services and facilities by Human Facility Management on the Work-Life-Balance of employees working at offices in the Netherlands and Germany?"**

#### 3.4 Sub-questions

To comprehensively address the main research question and achieve the research objective, the following sub-questions will be explored:

##### Sub-question 1:

What is the impact on the added value called Work-Life-Balance when offices in the Netherlands and Germany have a Human Facility Management department?

##### Sub question 2:

What is the impact on the added value called Work-Life-Balance when offices in the Netherlands and Germany provide secondary services and facilities?

### 3.5 Conceptual model

The conceptual model provides a graphic picture of the connection between the subject under investigation and the proposed theory, see figure 4.

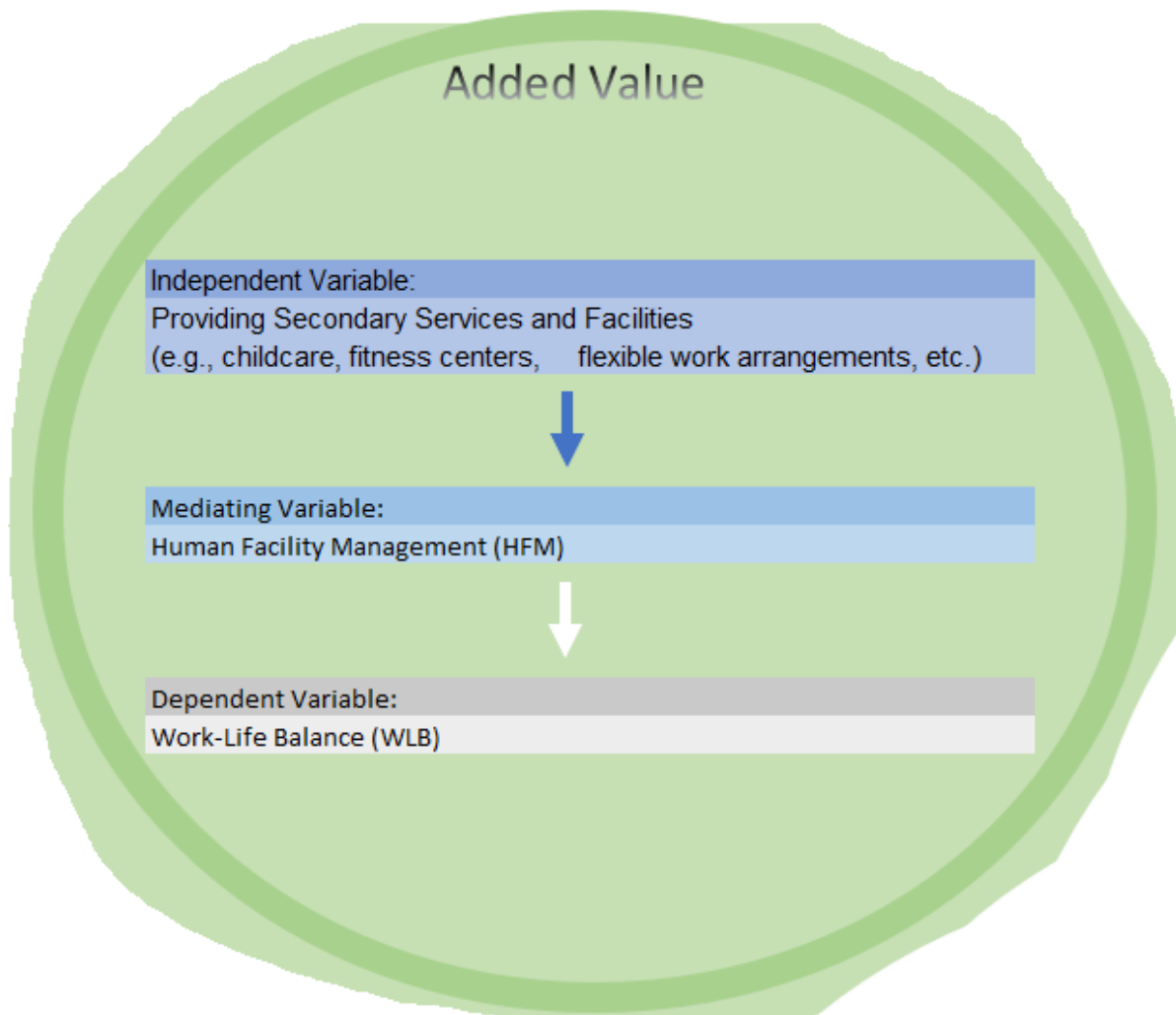


Figure 2: Conceptual model

As stated in figure 2, the conceptual model provides a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between secondary services & facilities, HFM, and Work-Life-Balance, offering valuable insights based on the literature of chapter 2. The conceptualisation is the basis for the study.

## 4. Research Methodology

Expanding upon the insights from the previous Chapter 3, the research methodology explains the approach undertaken to answer the research questions. This includes a thorough investigation into research philosophy and design, data collection methods, operationalization of research variables, sampling strategy, and data analysis techniques.

### 4.1 Research philosophy and design

Saunders et al. (2007) identified three research philosophies. These three ideas are constructivism, critical realism, and positivism. The research strategy is built on the constructivism philosophy, which expresses the researcher's viewpoint on how knowledge is created and deemed appropriate (Saunders et al., 2007).

Constructivism is a theoretical viewpoint that emphasizes individuals' active role in constructing their own knowledge and understanding of the world. This viewpoint emphasizes the value of multiple points of view and the subjective nature of reality. As a result, this study takes an interpretive and qualitative approach, with a focus on understanding the complex and multifaceted ways in which individuals construct their own realities. This method takes into account that the research process could be influenced by a variety of factors, including the cultural, social, and historical context in which it is conducted (Brau, 2020). Drawing from the research onion model proposed by Saunders et al. (2016) and depicted in figure 3, this study is rooted in the interpretivism philosophy, a perspective frequently associated with qualitative research methodologies (Lincoln et al., 2011).

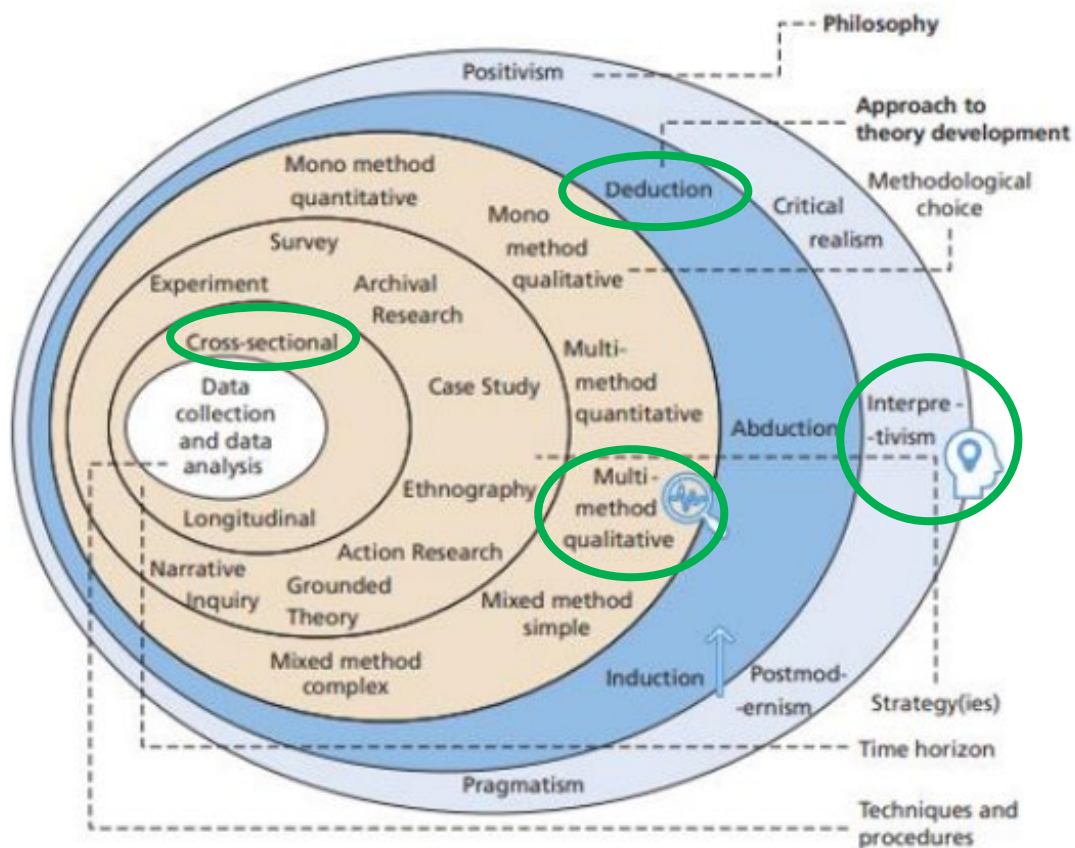


Figure 3: The research onion (Saunders et al., 2016)

The research approach can be divided in two different ways: deductive and inductive approach (Saunders et al., 2007).

This study will take a deductive approach, employing a qualitative research design to investigate the relationship between secondary services and facilities provided by HFM and the WLB of employees in the Netherlands and Germany.

Deductive reasoning begins with a theoretical framework or hypothesis and then tests it using empirical data collection and analysis (Saunders et al., 2007). The theoretical framework for this study will be based on previous research and literature on the impact of employee benefits and WLB. The hypothesis will be that HFM's provision of secondary services and facilities has a positive impact on employees' WLB.

Furthermore, data will be collected and analysed using a multi-method qualitative research method. Qualitative research is particularly well-suited for exploring complex phenomena in-depth and from multiple perspectives (Saunders et al., 2007). In this research the perspectives are semi-structured interviews and literature review.

Moreover, the research design is cross-sectional, as data will be collected at a specific point in time. This design is suitable for investigating the impact of secondary services and facilities provided by HFM on the WLB of employees in offices in the Netherlands and Germany. A cross-sectional design allows for the collection of data from multiple sources simultaneously, providing an outline of the current state of WLB and the utilization of secondary services and facilities.

## 4.2 Data Collection

Effective data collection methods are paramount for gathering reliable data in a study, and their proper implementation significantly influences the quality of the obtained information (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019). Semi-structured interviews emerged as the preferred data collection method due to their adaptability and efficiency in capturing qualitative data regarding experiences and viewpoints (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019). The use of open-ended questions during these interviews facilitated detailed responses, thereby enabling a nuanced understanding of participants' thoughts and emotions on the matter at hand, see figure 4 for more detail.

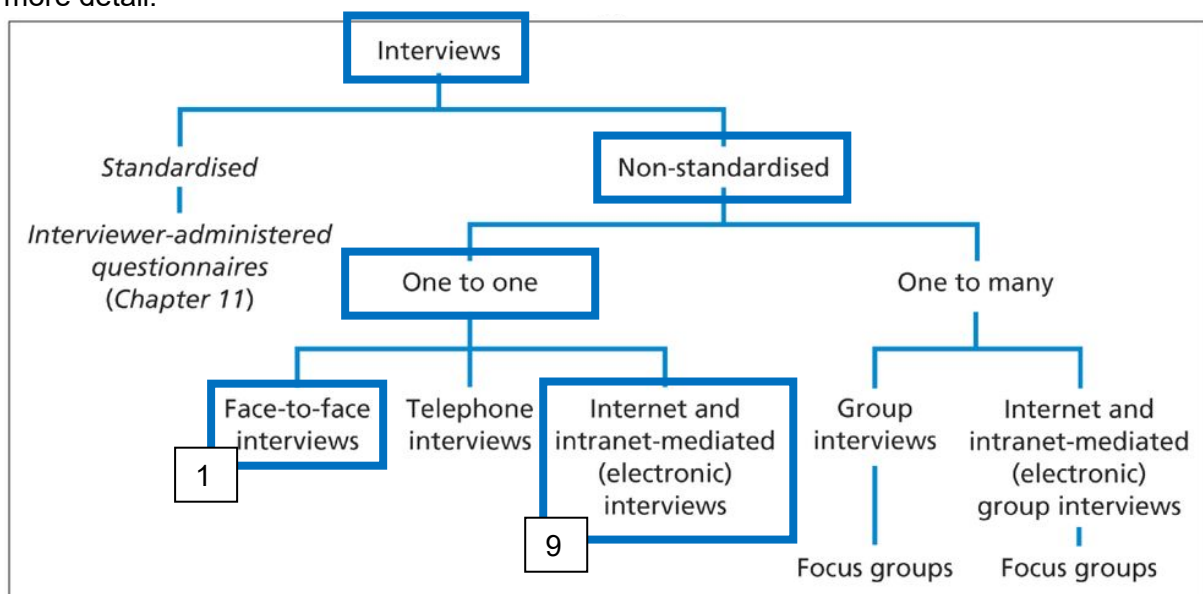


Figure 4: Forms of interviews (Saunders et al., 2016)

Employing semi-structured interviews allowed for a degree of flexibility, enabling interviewers to follow up on responses or delve into unanticipated areas.

This adaptability ensures the acquisition of comprehensive insights, either by extracting valuable information or by clarifying ambiguities. On the other hand, structured interviews, with rigidly predefined questions, were avoided to prevent missing critical insights (Saunders et al., 2007). By utilizing semi-structured interviews with open-ended inquiries, this research aims to thoroughly investigate the impact of HFM-provided secondary services and facilities on employee WLB within office settings. This chosen methodology aligns effectively with the research question, promoting a comprehensive exploration while upholding ethical standards.

The interview questions were carefully formulated based on literature-derived explanations of HFM and secondary services and facilities. To ensure voluntary participation and comprehension of the research's purpose, participants were required to sign consent forms prior to the interviews (see appendix). This step underscores the study's commitment to ethical considerations and participant rights. Data collection methods are essential in gathering data for a study, and their organization can significantly impact the quality of the data obtained. To support research findings effectively, multiple research techniques are necessary (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019).

Upon obtaining participants' consent, most of the interviews were recorded, with supplementary notes taken to capture the interview's key points. One interview was conducted either in person, the other nine interviews where via online platforms like Teams.

#### 4.3 Operationalization

To measure the impact of HFM providing secondary services and facilities on Work-Life-Balance, specific variables will be operationalized, such as shown in figure 4. It recurs the main- and sub-questions.

Impacts of having a HFM-Department	Facility Management	Different definitions of FM	(ISO, 2017; van der Voordt, 2017)
		Added value of FM	(Deery, 2008; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Gragano et al, 2020; Jensen, 2010; Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022)
		Different roles withing FM	(Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; van der Voordt et al., 2022; Van der Voordt, 2017; Groen et al., 2019)
	Added Values of HFM	Enhanced Employee Well-being	(Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; Atkin & Brooks, 2021)
		Increased employee productivity and performance	(Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Jensen et al., 2014)
		Increased Employee Attraction and Retention	(Atkin & Brooks, 2021)
		Positive Organizational Culture:	(Gragano et al., 2020)
		Work-Life-Balance	(Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Nguyen & Thomas, 2021; Clark, 2000; Johnson & Lee, 2016; Roberts et al., 2019)
	Alignment of HR and Facility Management Strategies	Collaboration	(Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; van der Voordt et al., 2022; Van der Voordt, 2017)
		Gathering feedback	(Gragano et al., 2020).

Table 5: Operationalisation part 1

Impacts of providing secondary services and facilities	Added Values of secondary services and facilities	Enhanced Employee Well-being	(Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022; Drapkin, 2023)
		Positive Organizational Culture:	(Al-Qutop & Harrim, 2011; McKinney, 2021)
		Increased employee productivity and performance	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Drapkin, 2023)
		Reduced Work-related stress	(Schlechter et al., 2015)
		Higher autonomy	(Schlechter et al., 2015)
		Work-Life-Balance	(Jensen et al., 2012)
		Increased Employee Attraction and Retention	(Drapkin, 2023)
	Range of secondary services and facilities	Food and beverage services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Tulshyan, 2021; Felch, 2020; Fleck, 2023)
		Fitness and wellness services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Aktin & Brooks, 2021; Apple inc, n.d; Salesforce, 2019)
		Childcare services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Patagonia, n.d.; Zimmerman, 2015)
		Transportation services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Krenz, 2023)
		Technology and connectivity services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Drapkin, 2023)
		Environmental sustainability services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; BMW, n.d.; Salesforce, 2019)
		Concierge services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; BMW, n.d.)
		Health and safety services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Drapkin, 2023)
		Social and community services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Drapkin, 2023)
		Personal services and facilities	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Intel, n.d.; Salesforce, 2019)
		Flexible working arrangements	(Andrzejczyn, 2023; Schlechter et al., 2015; Reisinger, 2022; ODOT, 2019)

Table 6: Operationalisation part 2

#### 4.4 Sampling approach

The study's approach to sampling for investigating the impact of secondary services and facilities within the context of Human Facility Management (HFM) on employee Work-Life-Balance (WLB) employs interviews as the chosen method. A series of interviews were conducted across various offices in both Germany and the Netherlands, selected based on their notable levels of employee satisfaction. To ensure a well-rounded representation, a total of ten participants were interviewed, with three located in the Netherlands and the remaining seven in Germany. This distribution accounts for the differences in size and population between the two countries.

The focus was on identifying the potential influence of secondary services and facilities, along with HFM practices, on employee WLB. Offices with established positive employee satisfaction records were specifically targeted for participation. In Germany, the "Great Place to Work" site,



listing the country's top 100 employers of 2023 was instrumental in identifying suitable organizations (Great Place to Work, 2023).

Meanwhile, in the Netherlands, the gatekeepers for access were a Business Developer from Carlisle Construction Materials and the business coach Bart van Roekel, ensuring alignment of the participants with the defined criteria of having knowledge and experience with secondary services and facilities, and HFM.

To gather participants who possess knowledge and experience regarding secondary services and facilities within HFM's added value, this sampling approach proved effective. However, it's important to note that organizations from sectors like healthcare and universities were intentionally excluded. This strategic selection criteria were chosen to specifically address the main research question concerning offices in the Netherlands and Germany. The primary aim of this research was to comprehensively uncover how working in such environments affects employees' WLB. Given this objective, it was essential to meticulously examine WLB through the lens of offices offering a diverse array of secondary services and facilities.

To achieve a High response rate, invitation letters were sent to the selected participants, and a follow-up email was dispatched to non-respondents to encourage their participation. Despite contacting approximately 60 companies, only one-third responded. Interestingly, the response rate did not significantly differ between the Netherlands and Germany. However, it's worth noting that only one participant from the Netherlands was comfortable conducting the interview in English, while all participants in Germany preferred interviews in German.

#### 4.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis is the chosen method for dissecting the accumulated data. This approach involves recognizing recurring patterns and themes within the data, interpreting them within the context of the research question and hypothesis, and aligning the findings with established literature to verify or challenge the hypothesis (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019). Once interviews are completed, meticulous analysis steps are essential. Thoroughness is crucial to effectively address the research question when immersing in qualitative data. The interviews necessitate transcription—a detailed process of transcribing audio files verbatim to preserve participants' expressions and insights (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019).

Qualitative research involves recording and transcribing interviews as integral to the analytical journey (Saunders et al., 2016). Although time-intensive, transcription unveils not just participants' spoken content, but also nuances in their communication styles. This aligns aptly with the study's core aim: understanding how secondary services and facilities provided by HFM influence employees' WLB.

Post-transcription, data is organized thematically for in-depth analysis. This process adheres to a three-tier coding strategy—open, axial, and selective coding (Boeije & Bleijenbergh, 2019; Saunders et al., 2016). Initial open coding links data fragments with codes from the literature review and interview responses, see appendix for the fragments and code tree.

Subsequent axial coding amalgamates and compares codes, culminating in overarching categories. This iterative axial process identifies core categories vital for comprehensive analysis. Selective coding, inspired by Boeije and Bleijenbergh (2019), explores code interrelationships, constructing an explanatory framework congruent with the study's objective: highlighting secondary services and facilities' effect on employee WLB.



To enhance analysis, self-memos are adopted—capturing real-time insights during analysis stages like listening to interviews, coding, and categorization (Saunders et al., 2016). This practice bolsters analysis and conclusion phases, enriching study outcomes.

## 5. Results and analysis

This chapter reveals the culmination of findings extracted from the conducted interviews, serving as a pivotal component of the research study. Expanding upon the insights gleaned in earlier chapters, which include the utilization of the literature review from Chapter 2, the analysis of these interviews yields outcomes for the sub-questions, as outlined in Chapter 3. Moreover, it highlights the illustrative operationalization, discussed in Chapter 4, through the comprehensive code tree that is enriched by interview fragments. The code tree, further expanded with interview responses, is accessible in the appendix.

Remarkably, the comparison between the Netherlands and Germany did not reveal significant differences. Therefore, the distinction between these countries won't be mentioned in the results. Interviews 1, 3, and 9 were conducted in the Netherlands, while the remainder took place in Germany. As elucidated in Chapter 4, owing to differences in size and population, a larger portion of the interviews occurred in Germany, thus encompassing diverse regions such as Hamburg, Berlin, and Niedersachsen.

For a more comprehensive understanding, the appendix contains interview transcripts, the comprehensive code tree, and fragments, offering valuable insight into the intricate process of result analysis.

### 5.1 The Impacts of having an HFM-department

Through the analysis of the interview data, several findings emerged regarding the Added Values and reasons why organizations should combine Facility Management (FM) and Human Resources (HR) functions. The following findings shed light on the first sub-question:

**“What is the impact on the added value called Work-Life-Balance when offices in the Netherlands and Germany have a Human Facility Management department?”**

#### 5.1.1 Facility Management

Prior to the interviews, participants were engaged in informative discussions. Among the pivotal aspects of these interviews was the articulation of a clear definition of Facility Management (FM), as highlighted in the comprehensive literature review. This step held significant importance due to the varying interpretations of "Facility Management" across different organizations. Consequently, several organizations employed distinct terminology to refer to it. For example, while one interviewee labeled it as "office managers," others denoted it as a "taskforce."

Nonetheless, a consistent theme emerged in terms of roles, added value, and responsibilities, aligning with the foundational concepts outlined in paragraph 2.1 of this study. In essence, the core attributes appeared to remain unchanged. Notably, the dynamic nature of FM over recent years has led to challenges in its precise definition, resulting in the adoption of alternative nomenclature by organizations.

For further insights into the findings on FM definition, added value, and roles, please refer to the appendix.

#### 5.1.2 Alignment of HR and FM

The findings of 5.1.1 what is understood by FM, sets the stage for the following paragraph, delving into the alignment between HR and FM. To formulate a conclusive understanding of how HFM influences Work-Life Balance, it is imperative to grasp the mechanics of HFM and the underlying significance of this alignment. Indeed, the synchronization of HR and FM strategies within the framework of HFM assumes a pivotal role in attaining the envisioned outcomes:

Collaboration between HR and FM: The integration of HRM and FM through the HFM framework stands as a powerful strategy for organizations aiming to enhance employee experiences, optimize resource allocation, and bolster their competitive edge (Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; van der Voordt et al., 2022; Van der Voordt, 2017). The insights shared by participants underscore the relevance of such collaboration in addressing contemporary workplace challenges and fostering an environment of holistic support (5 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "In our case, we work very closely together in this area because our Facility Manager is part of our upper management structure. [...] We (HR) collaborate closely with the Facility Manager to discuss and determine potential changes." (*Interview: 9.31*)

Gathering Feedback: The findings underscore the vital role of a Human facility management department in creating a thriving work environment. By actively engaging employees through conversations, surveys, and dynamic decision-making processes, organizations can cultivate a culture of inclusivity, responsiveness, and continuous improvement. The practice of leveraging human-centric approaches, as supported by the quotes and sources, not only enriches employee experiences but also fosters organizational growth (10 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "We always include questions about employee satisfaction with work-life balance in our employee surveys ..." (*Interview: 2.14*)

Streamlined Processes: The insights gleaned from 7 out of 10 interviews underscore the transformative potential of an HFM-department in fostering streamlined processes within organizations. The fusion of individual adaptability, effective communication, collaborative initiatives, and a commitment to ongoing improvement collectively contribute to the realization of enhanced operational efficiency and organizational success (7 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "Our company strives for short and efficient communication paths, which has been beneficial in integrating facility management and human resource management initiatives." (*Interview: 5.10*)

Shared Goals and Objectives: Participants emphasized that successful collaboration is built on shared goals and objectives between HR and FM. Furthermore, 7 out of the 10 interviews emphasize that Human Facility Management embodies a shared commitment to collaboration, effective communication, individual well-being, and flexible work dynamics. The amalgamation of Facility Management and Human Resource Management has the potential to holistically address the multifaceted needs of employees while promoting a cohesive organizational vision (7 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "Our short and efficient communication paths help in sharing and aligning the organization's goals and objectives across departments." (*Interview: 5.10*)

Mutual Understanding and Appreciation: A positive working relationship fosters mutual understanding and appreciation between HR and FM professionals, enabling them to collaborate more effectively towards shared objectives, according to 5 out of 10 interviews. The coded interview quotes emphasize the pivotal role of an HFM-department in fostering mutual understanding and appreciation within the organization. The establishment of open communication, empathetic understanding, and a commitment to employee satisfaction all contribute to a thriving workplace culture. This approach aligns with contemporary research that highlights the significance of human-centric strategies in organizational success.

Furthermore, the success stories shared by participants demonstrate that such an approach can effectively address challenges and cultivate a more harmonious and productive work environment (5 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "It's challenging to define exactly how things are structured. However, I believe that when there are any issues or concerns, the integration between the departments allows for faster response and action." (*Interview: 8*)

Consistent Organizational Vision: Aligning HR and FM strategies ensures that the HFM department's initiatives are in line with the organization's overall vision and values. The interview data underscores the transformative impact of a Human Facility Management approach on organizational coherence. By nurturing engagement, empowerment, and sustainability, this approach showcases its potential to craft a vision rooted in humanity, thereby reinforcing a robust organizational fabric. (Interviewees: 6 out of 10). When HR and FM work together towards shared objectives, they create a unified approach that supports the organization's mission and goals (Jensen & Van der Voordt, 2020a).

*Participant Quote:* "In general, I believe these services contribute to making individuals feel seen and heard. It allows them to express their needs and be involved in shaping their work environment to create a better place for themselves." (*Interview: 4.20*)

Seamless Implementation: When HR and FM strategies are aligned, the implementation of HFM initiatives becomes seamless. This alignment ensures that all stakeholders are on board with the changes and are supportive of the new workplace practices and policies. (Interviewees: 7 out of 10)

*Participant Quote:* "I think that the collaboration between Facility Management and Human Resource Management can provide a real added value in terms of Work-Life-Balance and ultimately contribute to employer attractiveness both internally and externally." (*Interview: 2.17*)

### 5.1.3 Added Values of HFM

Commencing with the inception of a Human Facility Management (HFM) department, the amalgamation of Human Resources (HR) and Facility Management (FM) has demonstrably emerged as a profoundly advantageous strategy for organizations. This assertion finds unequivocal validation through insights gleaned from interviews with diverse participants. Embarking on a discourse regarding the Added Values inherent in this integration, it becomes evident that these values extend their benefits to both employees and the company at large.

Enhanced Employee Well-being: The findings from 9 out of 10 interviews underscore the importance of a HFM approach in enhancing employee well-being. The integration of supportive services, managerial support, holistic well-being initiatives, and a positive company culture collectively contribute to creating an environment where employees can thrive (9 out of 10 interviews). These insights align with contemporary research on employee well-being and organizational effectiveness (Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; Atkin & Brooks, 2021).

*Participant Quote:* "In general, I believe these services contribute to making individuals feel seen and heard. It allows them to express their needs and be involved in shaping their work environment to create a better place for themselves." (*Interview: 4.20*)"

Increased employee productivity and performance: The insights gleaned from 9 out of 10 interviews substantiate the assertion that HFM plays a pivotal role in enhancing employee productivity and performance. The provision of the cultivation of WLB and the collaborative efforts between departments all contribute to a Holistic strategy for fostering a productive and engaged workforce. By implementing such measures, organizations can not only boost their bottom line but also create an environment where employees thrive and contribute their best (9 out of 10 interviews). This can be confirmed by Jensen et al. (2014) and Beauregard & Henry (2009) by saying that engaged employees are more committed to their work and the organization, resulting in improved performance and productivity.

*Participant Quote:* "We strive for flexibility and to ensure that people feel seen in their needs, and we always seek the best possible solution for everyone within the system. I believe that approach makes the greatest impact." (Interview: 4)

Increased Employee Attraction and Retention: According to Atkin & Brooks (2021) having an HFM-department where employees feel heard, also increase employee attraction and retention. The interviews also consistently highlight the substantial positive impact of an HFM-department on employee attraction and retention. The availability of WLB initiatives, including secondary services and facilities, significantly enhances the company's appeal to both existing and potential employees. This sentiment is emphasized across various interviews, where the flexibility of remote work and support services like childcare are particularly praised. Additionally, fostering strong relationships through team-building activities and a collaborative culture contributes to a positive perception of the organization (9 out of 10 interview).

*Participant Quote:* "These efforts aim to support stronger bonds and promote a positive work environment. Given the relevance of employer attractiveness due to demographic changes and a more competitive job market, these considerations are vital." (Interview: 2.15)

Cultivating a Positive Organizational Culture: As emphasized in the literature review, the integration of a Human-centric strategy within the FM sector has demonstrated transformative effects, enriching the broader organizational culture (Gragano et al., 2020a; Van Sprang & Drion, 2020). The insights drawn from the conducted interviews further underscore the significance of a workplace that places a premium on effortless work-life integration, proactive support mechanisms, and a robust emphasis on nurturing the work culture. Organizations embracing these foundational principles are well-positioned to enjoy advantages such as heightened employee engagement, improved rates of employee retention, and a fertile environment for cultivating innovation (6 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "They take employees very seriously here. I have never been in a company where there is such a strong focus on the well-being of employees. If they have any problems, they are addressed and solved. And you can feel it because it creates a Harmonious and respectful environment." (Interview: 9.39)

Employee-Centric Approach: Based on the coded quotes from the interviews, it's evident that the implementation of an HFM-department, focusing on an employee-centric approach, has led to significant insights and positive outcomes. The voices of 8 out of interviewees echo a consistent theme of valuing WLB and tailoring workplace facilities to their needs (8 out of 10 interviews). This is confirmed by Gillen & Pickering (2023), Hanc (2019), Kane (2022), and Van Sprang & Drion (2020), by saying that by understanding employees' needs and preferences, the HFM department can design facilities and services that support WLB and create a positive work experience.

*Participant Quote:* "Our approach is always dynamic. We constantly question whether certain things are still meaningful or not. We have a big meeting coming up soon to discuss the points we have offered and determine what is still meaningful and what isn't. It's really dynamic because times are constantly changing, and we can never predict what people will want." (Interview: 9.36)

*Personas:* Moreover, the outcomes gleaned from the conducted interviews shed light on the concept of an employee-centric approach, which can be further delineated through the lens of distinct personas.

To illustrate, consider the insight provided by interviewee 9, who articulated a notable example: "In the context of software development, the requirements and preferences of individuals markedly diverge from those of other staff members. Particularly within the development department, a pronounced contrast emerges. These professionals often display introverted tendencies, requiring a cautious approach. Engaging them in group activities such as sports poses challenges due to their limited inclination towards athleticism." (Interview: 9.28)

In essence, interviewee 9 underscores the variance in needs and behaviours within different employee categories, emphasizing the need for tailored strategies that accommodate these nuances. This insight highlights the intricate interplay between employee preferences, roles, and the design of initiatives aimed at cultivating an employee-centric environment.

Holistic Decision-Making: The integration of HR and FM perspectives ensures holistic decision-making regarding facilities, policies, and services. This comprehensive approach considers the impact of decisions on employee satisfaction and organizational performance (Jensen et al., 2013). Also, according to the quotes from 9 out of 10 interviews aptly reflect the department's commitment to fostering a Human-centric approach to FM. These insights underscore the significance of embracing holistic strategies in shaping the future of workplace management (9 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "We have a concept in place where we regularly correspond with our employees. We have precise job descriptions and clearly define tasks, responsibilities, and areas of work. [...] By constantly exchanging information and having better communication, it becomes easier to be closer to employees." (Interview: 8.30)

Agility and Adaptability: The conducted interviews have illuminated the central role of HFM in cultivating Agility and Adaptability within contemporary workplaces, a sentiment expressed in eight out of the ten interviews. The significance of work-life balance was accentuated, particularly when tethered to employees' autonomy within the organizational structure. Collaborative initiatives with departments such as Real Estate further bolster HFM's adaptability, amplifying social interactions and the equilibrium between work and personal life. The seamless amalgamation of IT and facility services serves as a striking illustration of HFM's nimbleness in catering to employees' requirements. HFM's comprehensive approach, forging connections between HR and various departments, serves as a catalyst for agile approaches to troubleshooting. The pandemic has vividly showcased HFM's adaptability in adeptly responding to ever-evolving demands (Interview: 8 out of 10).

Cost optimization: Furthermore, the integration of a Human-centric approach to FM also resonates Added Values for the organization as a pivotal strategy for cost optimization. Through effective budget allocation, collaborative synergy, and resource customization, organizations can achieve not only enhanced employee experiences but also realize tangible financial benefits.



As organizations continue to navigate the evolving landscape of workplace dynamics, the tenets of HFM offer a compass to guide them towards a Harmonious blend of human well-being and economic prudence (4 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "I think it allows for faster coordination among different departments within a company. You can quickly address issues and say, "Okay, let's tackle this here." The collaboration is more efficient, and it's not wasted money. When something is done, it's well thought out [...]. The collaboration is more efficient, and it's not wasted money." (Interview: 3.17)

#### 5.1.4 Results of having an HFM-department on the Work-Life-Balance

Incorporating an HFM-department that seamlessly integrates HR and FM functions yields noteworthy results, as underscored by the insights garnered from interviews. These outcomes encompass improved employee well-being, heightened productivity and performance, and increased employee attraction and retention. This integration also propels collaborative dynamics between HR and FM, fostering positive organizational culture, agility and adaptability.

Such a collaborative synergy leads to an employee-centric orientation, harmonizing HR and FM strategies to execute HFM initiatives coherently with the organizational vision, ultimately optimizing operational costs.

To delve deeper into how these Added Values influence employee WLB, it is beneficial to dissect them into two distinct facets. The enhanced employee well-being, increased productivity and performance, augmented employee attraction and retention, and the cultivation of a positive organizational culture collectively bolster the WLB of employees. This is due to the realization that a comprehensive view of work-life balance transcends merely time allocation – it encapsulates emotional well-being and contentment within the work environment. As aptly expressed by one interviewee, "Actually, in terms of work-life balance or work integration, I don't find any of the mentioned services to be the most important. I believe it's actually our values as a company that play a bigger role..." (Interview 4.18). This sentiment underscores the interconnectedness of employee satisfaction, organizational values, and the resultant work-life balance.

Moreover, there is a notable preference among interviewees for the term "work-life integration" over "Work-Life balance," with an interviewee explaining, "For example, we focus on work-life integration rather than just work-life balance. It's about finding ways for work and life to complement each other and integrating them..." (Interview: 4.7). This emphasizes the fluidity of the relationship between professional and personal commitments, underlining the importance of synergy between the two. Also interview 10 had some doubts about the term "Work-Life-Balance", by saying: "The second thing is the term "work-life balance," which I find fatal. It implies that there's work on one side of the spectrum and life on the other. But work is not the opposite of life; work is an integral part of life. So, I prefer the term "work-life integration." (Interview: 10.29)

Likewise, the other Added Values - Employee-Centric Approach, Holistic Decision-Making, and Agility and Adaptability - equally contribute significantly to an enhanced work-life balance. The Employee-Centric Approach tailors services to individual needs, fostering job satisfaction and motivation. Holistic Decision-Making ensures that decisions consider both business objectives and employee well-being, contributing to a balanced work-life equilibrium. Agility and Adaptability facilitate nimble adjustments, enabling flexible work arrangements and alleviating the stress of managing competing demands. In essence, the Employee-Centric Approach,

Holistic Decision-Making, and Adaptability converge to establish a conducive atmosphere where professional responsibilities and personal well-being harmoniously coexist.

Reinforcing these findings, and supplementing the insights from the literature review in Chapter 2, the coded responses from the interviewees intricately linked to WLB reaffirm the transformative potential of HFM in reshaping conventional perceptions of work-life balance. The HFM approach not only attends to immediate concerns but also contributes to cultivating a work culture that is attuned to the diverse needs and aspirations of the modern workforce (10 out of 10 interviews). As affirmed by an interviewee, "No, I think that the collaboration between Facility Management and Human Resource Management can provide real added value in terms of work-life balance and ultimately contribute to employer attractiveness both internally and externally." (Interview: 2.17).

## 5.2 The Impact of Providing Secondary Services and Facilities

The second sub-question of this study explores the impact of providing secondary services and facilities on Work-Life-Balance (WLB) in offices. The participants shared their experiences and perceptions regarding the influence of various secondary services and facilities on the employee's overall well-being. This paragraph answers the second sub-question:

**What is the impact on the added value called Work-Life-Balance when offices in the Netherlands and Germany provide secondary services and facilities?**

### 5.2.1 Range of Secondary Services and Facilities Offered

In order to know what impact secondary services and facilities have on the Added Values and therefore the WLB of the employee, it is necessary to know what is understood by these services and facilities. Thus, this paragraph shows the finding of the variety of secondary services and facilities offered by the interviewees contributed to diverse employee preferences and needs. Each category is also listed in the appendix with the fragments of the interviewees. Furthermore, a employees satisfaction survey on the food and beverage services of interviewee 5 can also be found in the appendix.

Throughout the interview process, no new categories emerged beyond the comprehensive 11 categories of secondary services and facilities outlined in the literature review.



Nr.	Category	Companies that provided these	Quoteexample of interviewee
1	Food and Beverage Services and Facilities:	Interview(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) = (9 of 10) (Interviewee 10 only partly, see appendix)	"We have an in-house company restaurant, which is not just an ordinary caterer. They provide top-quality food. I can even send you a review if you're interested. They have been chosen as the top franchise company nationwide for the second time this year. It's very high-class, sustainable, and offers a variety of vegetarian and vegan options. It contributes significantly to promoting awareness among our employees, and they can have excellent meals at a small cost since the company covers a major part of the expenses."
2	Fitness and Wellness Facilities:	Interview (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) = (8 of 10)	"We also collaborate with Gimbel Pass, which includes various fitness studios, swimming pools, physiotherapy centers, clubs, and more. With Gimbel Pass, a minimal amount is deducted from the gross salary each month, and the rest is subsidized by us. This allows us to promote physical well-being." (Interview 6.11)
3	Childcare Services and Facilities:	Interview (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) = (7 of 10)	"We do offer it. Well, we would like to offer it, but currently, the parents don't actually need it. We have a small group of parents, so we directly reach out to them and say, "Hey, if you need it, we can provide childcare at the office. Just let us know in advance." In this case, in advance means informing the provider 48 hours beforehand. So, it would be perfectly fine to say, "Next week, my daycare is closed due to a strike. Can I bring my child with me? I would need childcare." Because we offer mobile working, our colleagues tend to work from home rather than bringing their children to the office. But at the summer house, it is definitely used because people bring their children there. During the day, the children are taken care of, which is something they would normally do at home or maybe they have another person at home, like their partner, to help out." (Interview 7.26)
4	Transportation Services and Facilities:	Interview (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) = (9 of 10)	One such activity is the option to support a job ticket with a certain amount, which allows for discounted travel throughout Germany. In this regard, there are a lot of activities in the environmental management field, such as shared transportation programs, bike leasing, bicycle parking spaces, and facilities for bike maintenance, showers, and changing rooms. (Interview 2.5)
5	Technology and Connectivity Services and Facilities:	Interview (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) = (10 of 10)	We also have recreational options such as gaming consoles like PlayStation, Xbox, and Wii available for employees to use. (Interview 6.11) "Desk chair, monitor, stuff, everything you need. Also, I remember that not everyone might be familiar with all this, but for me, it's all normal. Each of us has an iPhone, which we can use without restrictions. It's pretty fun, isn't it? So, I only have one phone, and the same goes for my laptop. I don't need a personal laptop because my work laptop allows me to do everything I need to do." (Interview 10)

Table 7: Findings on the range of secondary services and facilities

6	Environmental Sustainability Services and Facilities:	Interview (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) = (9 of 10)	"We actually have two ladies who solely focus on environmental sustainability. I must say that this specific focus only started at the beginning of this year. However, we have always been committed to implementing various initiatives. For example, we have our own solar panels on the roofs of our buildings, and we also purchase green electricity voluntarily to support renewable energy sources. We even have a small area designated as a bee meadow, where we produce our own honey. The main purpose is to provide a habitat for bees and ensure there is enough green space alongside our buildings." (Interview: 6.19)
7	Concierge Services and Facilities:	Interview (2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10) = (6 of 10)	"We do have a package delivery service, so employees can also use it for their personal deliveries. Our front desk handles that, and employees can have their personal packages delivered to the office." (Interview: 9.17)
8	Health and Safety Services and Facilities:	Interview(2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9,10) = (9 of 10)	As for mental well-being, we provide various offerings related to mindfulness, time management, and personal development. We constantly assess how we can support our employees, detect early signs of any issues, and take preventive measures." (Interview 6.11)
9	Social and Community Services and Facilities:	Interview (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,10) = (10 of 10)	"We do have friday night drinks, well they're mostly on Fridays. We quit working around 4:00 when you have something to finish you can continue, but it's just sort of a social pressure to stop working and and to celebrate the weekend [...]." (Interview 1.1)
10	Personal Services and Facilities:	Interview (2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10) = (8 of 10)	"Yes, we actually have a pet-friendly office, and some colleagues bring their dogs. We have a list where colleagues with dogs have to register and specify the days when they bring their dogs. This is because there are colleagues who are afraid of or allergic to dogs, and they can check the list to decide whether to sit in a specific area or stay home." (Interview 7.28)
11	Flexible Working Arrangements:	Interview(1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) = (10 of 10)	"We offer flexible working hour models, which likely includes our use of a flextime account. The working hours are recorded in a flextime account, allowing employees to adjust their schedules to fit their personal circumstances. They have the option to start or finish later or earlier, based on what suits their private arrangements." (Interview: 8)

Table 7: Findings on the range of secondary services and facilities

Furthermore, examining the influence of different aspects on WLB, participants' insights highlight the intricate relationship between first and secondary services and facilities. As seen in chapter 2 first services and facilities is for instance salary. Overall, the findings suggest salary remains essential, but an exclusive focus may not guarantee sustained satisfaction or retention. A combination of salary tailored secondary services, facilities, and a supportive work environment emerges as a more comprehensive strategy for promoting work-life balance and long-term engagement.

*Participant Quote:* "I believe that many other factors contribute to work-life balance more than just salary. Of course, you can negotiate and sell yourself. However, if you ultimately lack flexibility and don't feel comfortable or are too exhausted, it doesn't matter what the salary is." (Interview: 8.28)

### 5.2.2 Added Values of providing secondary services and facilities

The provision of secondary services and facilities significantly impacted the employee's WLB and overall well-being.

Enhanced Well-being: Participants reported improved well-being as a result of accessing secondary services and facilities. The findings from 7 out of 10 interviews also emphasize that companies offering secondary services and facilities are positively impacting employee well-being. The diverse range of offerings, from remote work opportunities to on-site support, contributes to enhanced work-life balance, job satisfaction, and overall mental and physical health (7 out of 10 interviews). These findings resonate with current trends in creating supportive and holistic work environments that prioritize WLB and happiness. Feeling cared for and supported at work contributed to reduced stress and increased feelings of contentment (Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022; Drapkin, 2023).

*Participant Quote:* "I believe it has a significant impact on the well-being of employees because it provides a pleasant environment. They enjoy being in the office [...]" (Interview: 7.24)

Increased employee productivity and performance: The incorporation of secondary services and facilities, including sports facilities and flexible workspaces, can undoubtedly contribute to increased employee productivity and performance (Schlechter et al., 2015; Drapkin, 2023). The convenience, well-being enhancement, aesthetic appeal, and flexible work arrangements all collectively play a role in creating an environment that nurtures and empowers employees. These findings underscore the importance for companies to consider these supplementary offerings as strategic investments in fostering a more productive and engaged workforce (5 out of 10 interviewees have codes based on productivity and performance regarding secondary services and facilities).

*Participant Quote:* "I can simply grab my bag and go, knowing that I'll be taken care of here. It's very pleasant and, of course, it eases my personal life." (Interview: 6.28)

Increased Employee Attraction and Retention: The findings from 6 out of 10 interviews highlight the importance of these secondary services and facilities in shaping a company's image as an attractive employer, positively impacting employee satisfaction and retention. These insights align with existing research on the role of workplace facilities and support services in employee attraction and retention (Drapkin, 2023).

*Participant Quote:* "These are things that can attract and retain people, in addition to the salary, which isn't as flexible. In many cases [...] This happens automatically, and I believe that it offers a significant added value in terms of employer attractiveness." (Interview: 2.13)

Higher Job Satisfaction: The integration of secondary services and facilities within the work environment emerges as a catalyst for elevated job satisfaction, encapsulating the essence of work-life balance, collaborative synergy, and holistic employee support. These findings underscore the significance of investing in the well-being of employees as a potent driver of organizational success, according to 9 out of 10 interviewees. The overall workplace experience improved, leading to higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment (Jensen et al., 2013).

*Participant Quote:* "We continually receive feedback that it's great to see how much effort we put into finding individual solutions... It also has a positive external impact when you see that, hey, I believe we have like 4.4 or 4.6 stars out of 5, or even 4.8 now." (Interview: 7.35)

Positive organizational culture: The interviews conducted illustrate how secondary services and facilities play a pivotal role in nurturing a positive work culture. These services encompass various aspects, including social interactions such as Friday night drinks, barbeques, and team-building events, as well as designated areas for interaction. These elements collectively foster camaraderie, unity, and stronger bonds among employees. Simultaneously, the practice of open communication during meetings further cultivates mutual support. Additionally, the thoughtful design of diverse workspaces contributes to creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. This is, in line with the insights gleaned from the literature review, saying that WLB emerges as a central focus, underscoring its integration within the broader cultural framework (Al-Qutop & Harrim, 2011; McKinney, 2021; Hongal & Kinange, 2020). These findings underscore the paramount importance of cultivating an environment that not only draws but also retains a dedicated workforce (all 10 interviews highlighted the positive impact of the culture).

*Participant Quote:* "In general, I believe these services contribute to making individuals feel seen and heard. It allows them to express their needs and be involved in shaping their work environment to create a better place for themselves. I think this participatory approach is what contributes the most." (*Interview: 4.20*)

Reducing Work-related Stress: 7 out of 10 participants expressed that the availability of secondary services and facilities, such as relaxation areas and on-site facilities, allowed them to take breaks and recharge during the workday. This reduced work-related stress and improved overall Work-Life-Balance. Furthermore, through the voices of the interviewees, it becomes evident that these initiatives foster work-life balance, enhance engagement, enable detachment from work, and promote employee development. By integrating such measures, organizations can create a Harmonious and supportive work environment that empowers employees to thrive both professionally and personally (7 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "Employees have the opportunity, so to speak, to seek individual supervision if they feel particularly stressed and want to understand or work on it. They can request individual supervision as needed, essentially having the time and opportunity to exchange with a professional." (*Interview 4.16*)

Flexibility and Adaptability in the Workplace: Interview nr. 10 underscores the importance of continued exploration into flexible work arrangements and adaptable environments, highlighting their potential to reshape traditional notions of work. As workplaces continue to evolve, companies that prioritize such flexibility are better positioned to attract and retain a diverse and engaged workforce, ultimately fostering a culture of innovation and resilience.

*Participant Quote:* "If someone can arrange with their clients in a way that allows them to work remotely, and it's okay with the clients, why should we say no? [...] For example, there's a colleague here in Berlin who is practically abroad for three-quarters of the year, often sitting somewhere on the beach. So, it's doable." (*Interview 10.23*)

Cost Optimization: The findings from these interviews illuminate the intricate tapestry of cost optimization strategies employed by organizations to enhance workplace dynamics. These strategies showcase a delicate balance between financial prudence and the well-being of the workforce. By strategically allocating resources to secondary services and facilities, companies can create an environment that promotes employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall efficiency. As the modern workplace continues to evolve, the insights garnered from these interviews offer valuable perspectives for companies seeking to excel in the art of cost optimization without compromising employee welfare (5 out of 10 interviews).

*Participant Quote:* "Yes, at our office, we actually emphasize the various perks and additional services we can offer. We do this because, in return, we can't afford to pay exorbitant salaries like some of the large offices in the facility, for example. Our institution is too small for that." (Interview: 8.27)

### 5.2.3 Results of having secondary services and facilities on the Work-Life-Balance

The integration of diverse secondary services and facilities emerges as a key influencer in the realm of Work-Life-Balance (WLB), elucidated by the multifaceted outcomes gleaned from the interviews. This assortment of services can be grouped into 11 distinct categories, with contributions ranging from heightened well-being and increased employee productivity to greater job satisfaction, organizational culture enhancement, and stress reduction. This integration manifests as a transformative force within the workplace, generating an environment of harmonious collaboration and dynamism.

Exploring the profound influence of these additional values on WLB necessitates a granular examination. The direct impact of secondary services and facilities is most evident in the realm of employee well-being, extending beyond conventional job duties to address the comprehensive needs of individuals. As expressed by an interviewee, "When we talk about flexible working hours, childcare, and other aspects, they definitely play a significant role. They have a great impact, [...] On the other hand, there are also benefits that don't directly influence personal life or have a noticeable impact on work-life balance. For example, a company retirement plan is great and provides security, but in day-to-day life, you tend to forget about it. So, it's nice to have, but it doesn't significantly contribute to my work style or work-life balance." (Interview: 6.28).

Moreover, the presence of these provisions resonates powerfully in terms of job satisfaction and motivation. Employees deeply value an organization's commitment to fostering a conducive workplace environment. An interviewee aptly encapsulated this sentiment: "When you ask what they associate with work-life balance, for many, it's the ability to work from home. It saves a lot of time and allows them to pursue their hobbies and spend time with friends and family." (Interview: 2.13).

This positive momentum further radiates to employee attraction and retention, cultivating a more favorable organizational culture. Such amenities magnetize both current and prospective employees, underpinning loyalty and dedication. As one interviewee pointed out, "Well, for one, it (secondary services and facilities) creates employee satisfaction, leading to a better work atmosphere. This means fewer absences and all the benefits that come with it, such as reduced turnover, because when employees are satisfied, they show more dedication and motivation. This, in turn, benefits the employer as well." (Interview: 8.22).

In congruence with the evolving concept of work-life integration, these added values create a seamless synthesis between professional and personal realms. This progressive outlook acknowledges the interplay between work and life and champions harmony. A participant aptly expressed this: "So, I prefer the term 'work-life integration'. The goal is to have a flexible approach to doing things when you want to do them, and work is an essential part of life, not in opposition to it. This approach avoids many strategies and misunderstandings, both personally and professionally, by starting from the right premise." (Interview: 10.29).

In summation, the amalgamation of diverse secondary services and facilities profoundly bolsters work-life balance, spanning holistic well-being, job satisfaction, employee retention, and a positive organizational ethos. These revelations, when coupled with the insights from Chapter 2's literature review, underscore the pivotal role that secondary services play in sculpting workplaces aligned with the modern workforce's multifaceted needs.

It is clear that by nurturing an environment prioritizing WLB, organizations not only attract and retain top talent but also foster a culture of positivity and growth. The insights from this study illuminate the pivotal role that secondary services and facilities, including amenities like sports facilities, play in nurturing a work environment that holistically supports WLB. These provisions enable employees to seamlessly balance their personal and professional lives, becoming a cornerstone in nurturing a thriving and harmonious workforce (10 out of 10 interviews). The convenience of accessing a spectrum of services within the workplace empowers employees to more effectively manage their personal responsibilities (Jensen et al., 2012).

*Participant Quote:* "I believe it is the opportunity to work from home. Working from home is a significant factor for many employees and managers when it comes to work-life balance. It saves a lot of time and allows them to pursue their hobbies and spend time with friends and family." (*Interview 2.13*)

### 5.3 Analysis

In this section, the analysis of the findings from the interviews conducted with participants from offices in the Netherlands and Germany to gain deeper insights into the impacts of having a Human Facility Management (HFM) department with integrated HR and Facility Management functions, as well as the effects of providing secondary services and facilities on Work-Life-Balance (WLB). This analysis is the foundation of the conclusion in chapter 6.

#### 5.3.1 Holistic Approach to Workplace Management

The interviews revealed that the integration of HR and FM within the HFM department leads to a more holistic approach to workplace management. This approach considers the interconnectedness of various factors that influence WLB. By combining HR's expertise in understanding employees' needs and aspirations with FM's knowledge of creating functional and efficient workspaces, the HFM department can design workplace initiatives that cater to the overall employee experience which again improves the WLB of the employee. However, it is also improving the productivity of the employee which is beneficial for the organisation. According to Koinig & Diehl (2021), holistic approach ensures that employees' physical, mental, and emotional well-being are addressed, leading to higher levels of employee satisfaction and engagement.

*Participant Quote:* "It's a major focus for us to ensure our employees feel comfortable and have a solid foundation to balance their personal lives and work, to continue their personal development, and have exciting tasks. The overall work environment is also crucial, so they can say, "I enjoy being here, I enjoy working here," because motivated employees are at the core of any innovation. It's an essential element of our business model, as we thrive on being passionate and innovative." (*Interview: 6.29*)

#### 5.3.2 Employee-Centric Strategies

Participants highlighted that the HFM department's focus on integrating HR and Facility Management not only emphasizes operational efficiency but also fosters employee-centric strategies that align with individual needs and preferences. This approach encompasses a diverse range of personas, each with distinct requirements and expectations, as underscored by the findings concerning different employee categories.

By delving into personas such as those illustrated by interviewee 9, who noted the unique needs of individuals in software development compared to other staff members, the HFM department endeavors to tailor services and facilities accordingly. This attention to personas results in offerings such as personalized well-being initiatives, flexible work arrangements, ergonomic facilities, and more, all aimed at catering to diverse employee requirements.



The outcome of these targeted strategies is a work environment where employees perceive their distinct needs as valued and addressed. This not only contributes to an overall positive atmosphere but also significantly enhances WLB. Due to the findings, it can be said that the availability of specific facilities such as on-site childcare facilities and the emphasis on flexible working arrangements effectively bridge the gap between professional and personal commitments, bolstering employees' ability to manage both spheres seamlessly which is confirmed by Osoian et al. (2009).

It's worth noting that among the spectrum of strategies, flexible work arrangements emerge as particularly pivotal, echoing the sentiment expressed by interviewees regarding their importance in enhancing WLB. This multifaceted approach to employee-centricity, catering to varied personas, ultimately leads to improved employee retention, heightened productivity, and a thriving work environment (Gragnano et al., 2020a; Gragnano et al., 2020b).

*Participant Quote:* "Given the relevance of employer attractiveness due to demographic changes and a more competitive job market, these considerations are vital. We continuously explore new strategies to enhance Work-Life-Balance beyond the existing offerings." (Interview: 2.15)

### 5.3.3 Alignment with Organizational Values

One significant finding was the alignment of HFM strategies with the organization's values and goals. The interviews revealed that the collaboration between HR and Facility Management departments ensures that workplace initiatives are consistent with the organization's overarching vision. This alignment reinforces the importance of WLB in achieving the organization's broader objectives. Participants noted that when employees see how these initiatives contribute to shared goals, they are more likely to engage and participate in them actively. This is also confirmed by a study conducted by Pervaiz et al. (2021).

*Participant Quote:* "Actually, in terms of Work-Life-Balance WLB or work integration [...] I believe it's actually our values as a company that play a bigger role. Employee orientation is one of our core values, and it best describes our intention to always look out for what's best for our employees, so they can perform their jobs well." (Interview: 4.18)

### 5.3.4 Flexibility and Adaptability

The HFM department's integration of HR and Facility Management also brings forth increased flexibility and adaptability in responding to changing workplace trends and employee needs. Participants emphasized that this agility allows the organization to adjust its services and facilities quickly, ensuring they remain relevant and beneficial to employees. For instance, as the concept of WLB continues to evolve, the HFM department can swiftly adapt its offerings to better support employees' changing demands (Redlein et al., 2020).

*Participant Quote:* " Everything else is an added bonus, but without a solid foundation of flexible working hours, it's difficult to achieve a good Work-Life-Balance." (Interview: 6.25)

### 5.3.5 Employee Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Effective communication and collaboration between HR and Facility Management foster a culture of openness to employee feedback. The HFM department's emphasis on regular meetings and feedback mechanisms allows employees to express their needs, preferences, and concerns. This feedback loop is essential in identifying areas for improvement and enables the HFM department to continuously enhance its offerings. As a result, employees feel heard and valued, leading to increased satisfaction and a sense of ownership in the workplace.



According to a study by Avey et al. (2012), employees that feel heard also have a improved psychological well-being and job satisfaction.

*Participant Quote:* "It's actually a good idea because when they work together, the best possible facilities can be provided." (Interview: 5.2)

#### 5.3.6 Organizational Performance

Lastly, the findings indicated a positive correlation between the HFM department's initiatives and organizational performance. By fostering a work environment that prioritizes WLB, the organization benefits from higher employee engagement, reduced turnover rates, and increased productivity. A Happier and more engaged workforce leads to improved organizational performance and overall business success. A research by Hongal & Kinange (2020) also mention which positive function listening to the employees and providing benefits (secondary services and facilities) ahs on today's "War of Talents".

*Participant Quote:* "I believe that many other factors contribute to Work-Life-Balance more than just salary. Of course, you can negotiate and sell yourself. However, if you ultimately lack flexibility and don't feel comfortable or are too exhausted, it doesn't matter what the salary is." (Interview: 8)

#### 5.3.7 Work-Life-Balance

The integration of HR and Facility Management functions within the HFM department has been identified as a pivotal factor directly impacting WLB. Notably, the findings of the study emphasize the crucial role of secondary services and facilities in promoting WLB, which emerged as a consistent theme across participants' feedback.

The availability of facilities such as on-site childcare facilities, flexible work arrangements, and comprehensive well-being programs has demonstrably positive effects on employees' daily lives. These offerings play a significant role in empowering employees to effectively manage the delicate balance between their personal and professional commitments. The findings of the interviews align with the literature review, especially when looking at Gragnano et al. (2020a), Gragnano et al. (2020b) and Osoian et al. (2009).

Notably, among the diverse array of factors contributing to WLB, flexible working arrangements stand out as particularly paramount. This observation was reaffirmed through the interviews, wherein an overwhelming majority of participants, nine out of the ten, highlighted the significance of flexible work arrangements in bolstering WLB. While other categories certainly contribute, the resounding consensus among participants solidifies the prominence of flexible work arrangements as a cornerstone in enhancing overall work-life integration.

*Participant Quote:* "Working from home is a significant factor for many employees and managers when it comes to Work-Life-Balance. [...] It significantly improves the quality of life. When you ask what they associate with Work-Life-Balance, for many, it's the ability to work from home." (Interview: 2.10, 2.13)

As mentioned before in the findings of HFM, the one interview, that did not mention this as the most important one, think that having an employee-centric HFM-department is more important than the secondary services and facilities:

*Participant Quote:* "Actually, in terms of work-life balance or work integration, I don't find any of the mentioned services to be the most important. I believe it's actually our values as a company that play a bigger role. Employee orientation is one of our core values, and it best describes our intention to always look out for what's best for our employees, so they can perform their jobs well. We have

a simple formula: we believe that happy employees lead to happy recipients, and happiness can be contagious.” (*Interview 4.18*)

Moreover, the study's findings in 5.2.2 shed light on the implementation status of concierge and childcare services and facilities, revealing that they are comparatively less prevalent. However, it's crucial to avoid making broad generalizations based on these observations. As elaborated in section 5.1, the intricacies of the research participants' personas and the unique organizational contexts emphasize the nuanced nature of this scenario. This diversity of responses underscores a central motivation for this research: the imperative to adopt an FM employee-centric approach when delivering secondary services, rather than merely following prevailing trends. This approach gains further support from the insightful participant quote provided below, which resonates with the findings outlined earlier:

*Participant Quote* “I believe, that by offering these benefits through a good work-life balance, you can provide a certain advantage in order to score points in that aspect. These are things that can attract and retain people, in addition to the salary, which isn't as flexible. In many cases, these kinds of benefits are additional things that I have, which naturally help with retention and are therefore highly relevant. This also applies to things like childcare – if I make it possible to handle childcare, then people are naturally more bound to the company. This happens automatically, and I believe that it offers a significant added value in terms of employer attractiveness.” (*Interview: 2.13*)

## 6. Conclusion

Building upon a comprehensive review of the literature and the insightful discoveries from ten in-depth interviews, this study aimed to answer the main research question: **"What is the impact of the provision of secondary services and facilities by Human Facility Management on the Work-Life-Balance of employees working at offices in the Netherlands and Germany?"**

Through the analysis of interviews, this study has illuminated significant insights into the advantages of integrating Human Resource (HR) and Facility Management (FM), the significance of offering secondary services and facilities, and their combined influence on Work-Life Balance (WLB).

The interview findings underline the benefits of a collaborative approach between HR and FM within the HFM department. This partnership results in a work environment that places a premium on WLB. This collaborative synergy generates improved employee experiences, streamlined operations, cost efficiencies, and overall enhancements in workplace quality. Moreover, aligning HR and FM strategies ensures that workplace initiatives are congruent with the organization's values and objectives, fostering a positive work culture and bolstering employee engagement. It also allows the organization to adjust its services and facilities quickly, ensuring they remain relevant and beneficial to employees.

Furthermore, this research exposes the profound significance of secondary services and facilities, furnished by HFM, in nurturing a supportive and immersive work atmosphere. These services, spanning conveniences like gym memberships, childcare support, flexible working hours, and more, assume a pivotal role in elevating the overall employee journey and cultivating a robust WLB. This involves reduced stress levels due to the availability of these provisions. Notably, the capacity to manage time and responsibilities more efficiently witnessed a substantial boost, as employees managed to strike a more effective equilibrium between professional obligations and personal or familial duties.

Moreover, offering tailored well-being initiatives, flexible work arrangements, and ergonomic facilities, the HFM department can establish an employee-centred environment that addresses individual preferences and needs. The presence of such facilities cultivates a positive workplace atmosphere, leading to heightened employee contentment, retention, and productivity. Therefore, it can be said that organizations that prioritize secondary services and facilities while adopting an employee-centric orientation in their workplace strategies are better poised to attract and retain top talent, intensify employee engagement, and heighten overall organizational outcomes.

The fusion of HR and FM within the HFM department, coupled with the provision of secondary services and facilities, yields a notably positive impact on WLB. Employees reap the rewards of a comprehensive approach to workplace management that prioritizes their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The employee-centric strategies executed by the HFM department contribute to a constructive work experience, enabling employees to effectively juggle their personal and professional commitments.

Embedded within these findings is the concept of personas - distinct profiles that encapsulate diverse employee requirements and preferences. For instance, the differentiation between software developers and other staff members vividly illustrates the nuances inherent in varying employee categories. This distinction underscores a foundational principle of an inclusive workplace: customized services and facilities. Consequently, a range of offerings, spanning personalized well-being initiatives, adaptable work schedules, ergonomic facilities, and more, align with distinct employee personas.

Furthermore, it's worth noting that a few interviewees expressed a preference for the term "work-life integration" as opposed to "Work-Life Balance." This preference is rooted in the idea of harmonizing work and personal life, integrating them rather than pursuing a strict balance. Work and personal priorities may shift, sometimes necessitating more time for work, while other times requiring more personal time.

In summary, the integration of secondary services and facilities through HFM occupies a central role in advancing employees' WLB. The provisioning of these offerings bolsters overall well-being, mitigates stress, and amplifies job satisfaction, resulting in a more content, engaged, and productive workforce and culture. The findings of this research deliver valuable insights to the realm of Facility and Real Estate Management, offering a roadmap for devising workplace strategies that place WLB at the forefront, thereby enhancing organizational success in the fiercely competitive business landscape ("War of Talents") of today.

## 7 Discussion

The reliability and validity of the thesis are discussed in this chapter. Additionally, the research's limitations are discussed.

### 7.1 Reliability

Reliability, an indispensable facet of research, connotes the stability and consistency of measurements. The hallmark of reliability materializes when research findings can be replicated, yielding congruent results—an affirmation echoed by van Zwieten & Willems (2004). The pursuit of unwavering reliability encompasses a spectrum of endeavors, as articulated below:

**Standardized Procedures:** Central to engendering reliability is the embrace of standardized protocols. Interview questions, meticulously formulated, establish a uniform line of inquiry. This standardized foundation ensures consistent communication with respondents, minimizing potential deviations. Moreover, a meticulous approach to result processing ensures coherence and comparability.

**Navigating Semi-Structured Terrain:** The inherent semi-structured format of interviews introduces a degree of variation, a factor conscientiously addressed to mitigate bias. Interviews, overseen by a singular researcher, are both recorded and transcribed, fortifying objectivity and forestalling the pernicious influence of leading questions. Respondents are explicitly apprised of the anonymized utilization of their responses, encouraging unreserved feedback.

**Data Integrity Safeguards:** Rigorous measures to mitigate data collection errors include cultivating a Homogenous study environment for all participants. Concomitantly, data emanating from the intersection of the literature review and interviews undergoes scrupulous cross-validation to ensure fidelity. The research repertoire further encompasses diverse methodologies, encompassing peer feedback, iteration, and triangulation.

**Vigilant Peer Feedback:** The apparatus of peer feedback, facilitated by both academic and corporate mentors, engenders meticulous scrutiny of research outcomes, thus enriching the research's integrity (Verhoeven, 2011). To refine questions and coverage, trial interviews are strategically orchestrated prior to actual interviews.

**Internal Consistency:** Facilitating internal reliability, semi-structured interviews are rooted in the steadfast foundation of a consistent question set, deftly administered by a trained researcher. This methodological consistency begets data uniformity and reinforces the research's coherence.

**Strategic Participant Selection:** In bolstering external reliability, the selection of experts is a deliberate endeavor, aligning seamlessly with the research's focal pursuits (Verhoeven, 2011). Gatekeepers, instrumental in facilitating access to these experts, uphold the research's external reliability by judiciously curating the participant pool (Silverman, 2013).

**Cumulative Robustness:** Collectively, these multifaceted measures coalesce to fortify the research's robustness. The blend of standardized protocols, judicious interviewer oversight, data validation, peer scrutiny, and stringent thematic analysis melds into an intricate tapestry of reliability.

## 7.2 Validity

The degree to what is actually measured and what one intends to measure is known as validity. There is a difference between internal and external validity. Internal validity is concerned with the veracity of the research. The generalizability of research is a problem for external validity (van Zwieten & Willems, 2004).

### **Internal validity**

Assessing internal validity involves determining whether accurate conclusions have been deduced from the research (Verhoeven, 2011). To bolster internal validity, the study employed consistent questioning across interviews with diverse participants. Furthermore, the development of a professional product rooted in a case study supported this aspect. The literature review was conducted using dependable and up-to-date sources, encompassing both online and print materials. Relevance of a source was gauged by its alignment with main and sub-questions, resonance with research themes, shared terminology, and adherence to research methodology. These identified resources were also harnessed for crafting the questionnaire.

Internal validity pertains to how well the research accurately portrays the relationships between investigated variables. Steps were taken to enhance this aspect. Utilizing semi-structured interviews ensured uniformity in questioning across different experts, guaranteeing consistency in data collection. This approach aimed to yield accurate and coherent conclusions. Moreover, the incorporation of trustworthy and current sources in the literature review fortified the study's theoretical foundation, upholding its accuracy and validity. Pertinent information from reputable websites and books, in harmony with research inquiries, topics, and methods, was harnessed to reinforce internal validity.

### **External validity**

External validity, on the other hand, refers to the generalizability of the research findings to a larger population beyond the study's sample. In this study, external validity was strengthened by selecting appropriate participants who have experience with Human Facility Management and/or secondary services and facilities. By including participants from various offices in Germany and the Netherlands, the study sought to capture a diverse perspective and increase the transferability of its findings to similar workplace contexts. Furthermore, External validity checks the accuracy of the sample data (Verhoeven, 2011). External validity is increased by questioning the right experts. This means that requirements are placed on the experts. The requirements of the participants can be seen in the sampling approach in chapter 4.

### **Conceptual validity**

Moreover, the validity is divided into conceptual validity. Conceptual validity examines the measurement instruments used in the study, and the operationalization of the concepts in the research must be correct (Verhoeven, 2011). If not, incorrect conclusions may be drawn, and the questionnaire may be incorrectly designed, leading to a decrease in validity. This validity is increased by providing a definition of for instance HFM in the introduction and literature review. To achieve conceptual validity, the study provided a clear definition of HFM and secondary services and facilities in the introduction, literature review and during the interviews. By establishing a solid conceptual understanding of HFM, the study aimed to avoid drawing incorrect conclusions and designing flawed questionnaires.

### 7.3 Limitations

The pursuit of knowledge often encounters limitations, and this study is no exception. It is imperative to bear in mind the following constraints when interpreting the findings:

1. **Geographical Scope:** This study's exploration is confined to office environments in the Netherlands and Germany. Consequently, the generalizability of the findings to regions characterized by divergent workplace cultures and practices may be limited.
2. **Limited Company Selection:** A deliberate focus on companies providing secondary services and facilities may inadvertently omit organizations that lack such offerings. This selectiveness might impact the overall representativeness of the research outcomes.
3. **Variation in Services and Facilities:** The array of secondary services and facilities is diverse, potentially resulting in varying effects on perceived added value and Work-Life Balance. However, the study's parameters do not permit an exhaustive examination of each service's distinct influence.
4. **Employee Demographics:** Individual demographics, encompassing age, gender, education, and other factors, can colour the perception and valuation of secondary services and facilities. A lack of comprehensive consideration of these facets could potentially limit the depth of insights garnered.
5. **Organizational Culture and Support:** The magnitude of organizational support and the extent to which WLB is fostered within an organization can significantly influence the impact of secondary services and facilities on employees. Neglecting this aspect might curtail a Holistic understanding of the research outcomes.
6. **Methodological Constraints:** A timeframe of five months-imposed limitations on the study's methodologies. A more expansive temporal horizon could have facilitated a larger sample size or a more profound analysis.
7. **Focus on Added Values:** The study's purview concentrates on evaluating the added values of HFM and secondary services and facilities. Consequently, other variables that could potentially influence Work-Life Balance might not be fully explored within the current framework.

Despite these constraints, the study uncovers significant insights. While the majority of participants expressed contentment with the secondary services and facilities provided by HFM, certain challenges and prospects for enhancement were perceptible. These discoveries underscore the necessity of perpetual evaluation and enhancement of these offerings to optimize their efficacy.

Acknowledging these limitations, it is crucial to contemplate their potential ramifications. The findings may possess limited applicability outside the confines of the Netherlands and Germany. Future researchers, exploring diverse regions, can provide a more expansive panorama on the subject. Additionally, the utilization of a qualitative approach and a restricted sample size might hinder the extent of generalizability. Moreover, embarking on an exploration of WLB from a broader vantage point, inclusive of a wider spectrum of organizational and individual elements, could unveil a more multifaceted comprehension of its intricacies and determinants. In essence, these limitations channel valuable directions for subsequent research and underscore the prerequisite for a measured interpretation of the study's implications.



## 8. Recommendations and Further Research

This chapter presents a series of refined recommendations stemming from the comprehensive examination and analysis carried out across the research landscape, with a focus on the harmonization of Human Resources (HR) and Facility Management (FM) functions. Drawing strength from the insights garnered through interviews, an extensive literature review, and meticulous analysis, this chapter endeavors to proffer pragmatic counsel to organizations endeavoring to instigate and optimize the process of integration. These recommendations emerge at the nexus of empirical findings, gleaned from the research, and the expansive body of existing literature pertaining to Human Facility Management (HFM) encompassing secondary services and facilities.

These recommendations are designed to resonate with both companies already equipped with an HFM-department and those still in the process of establishing one. It is important to acknowledge, as underscored by the findings elucidated in the realm of Facility Management in section 5.1.1, that these entities might assume varying nomenclatures. In essence, these recommendations are founded on an employee-centred approach, emblematic of the perspective fostered by Facility Managers.

### 8.1 Recommendations

Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the implementation and impact of secondary services and facilities provided by HFM on Work-Life-Balance (WLB) in offices:

#### **Enhancing Services and Facilities:**

1. Customization of Services: Organizations should recognize the diverse needs of their employees and design secondary services and facilities that align with these preferences. Utilizing surveys and focus groups can aid in tailoring offerings to match employee expectations.

2. Flexibility in Service Access: To accommodate various work schedules and personal commitments, services should be made accessible during different hours and shifts. This promotes work-life integration and enhances employees' ability to utilize services effectively.

3. Personalization: Employers should consider offering personalized well-being initiatives and services to cater to individual employee needs and preferences

#### **Effective Communication and Collaboration:**

4. Communication and Awareness: Establishing clear communication channels, such as emails, intranets, and notice boards, is crucial to ensure employees are well-informed about available facilities. Regular updates enhance awareness and encourage engagement.

5. Foster Collaboration: Facilitate close collaboration between HR and FM to prioritize WLB within the context of HFM.

#### **Continuous Improvement and Adaptation:**

6. Evaluation and Continuous Improvement: Regularly assessing the impact and effectiveness of secondary services and facilities is essential. Employee feedback should be actively sought to identify areas for improvement and adapt offerings to changing needs.

7. Flexibility and Adaptability: Organizations should demonstrate flexibility in responding to evolving workplace trends and employee requirements. This adaptability ensures that services and facilities remain relevant and beneficial.

**Promoting Work-Life Balance:**

8. Emphasis on Work-Life Balance: Create a work culture that emphasizes the value of WLB. Leadership should actively support and encourage employees to utilize secondary services, reinforcing the organization's commitment to WLB.

**Considering Demographics and Alignment:**

9. Demographic Considerations: Organizations should recognize the demographic diversity of their workforce and tailor services to meet specific needs. Facilities targeting parents or older employees, for instance, might differ from those targeting younger employees.

10. Organizational Alignment: Ensure that HFM strategies align with the broader organizational values and goals. This alignment fosters a cohesive workplace culture that supports WLB.

**Feedback and Employee Involvement:**

11. Employee Feedback: Establish regular meetings and feedback mechanisms to gather employee input. This inclusive approach ensures that initiatives are well-received and continuously improved.

These recommendations, drawn from both the literature review and interview insights, provide a comprehensive guide for enhancing the integration of secondary services and facilities within the framework of HFM to support WLB.

## 8.2 Recommendations for Further Research

This study has shed light on the impact of secondary services and facilities on WLB within the specific context of offices in the Netherlands and Germany. However, further research can broaden the understanding and applicability of these findings:

1. Exploring the Impact of Essential Services and Facilities on Work-Life Balance: While this study delved into the influence of secondary services and facilities provided by HFM on WLB, a potential avenue for further research is to investigate the impact of primary and essential services on WLB. This could encompass critical factors such as salary, and core workplace facilities. Understanding how these fundamental aspects interplay with employees' perceptions of WLB could provide valuable insights into the foundational elements that contribute to work-life equilibrium.
2. Cross-Cultural Comparison: Expanding the scope of research to encompass cross-cultural contexts could yield intriguing findings. A comparative analysis of how HFM practices impact WLB across different countries or regions could reveal cultural nuances and variations in priorities. This could involve examining how cultural values, social norms, and economic conditions intersect with HFM strategies to shape employees' perceptions of WLB. This can also be used to explore how cultural norms and expectations influence the utilization and perception of secondary services and facilities.
3. Longitudinal Studies: Conducting longitudinal studies that track changes in employee perceptions of WLB over an extended period could provide a deeper understanding of the long-term effects of HFM interventions. Such studies would shed light on the sustainability

and effectiveness of HFM initiatives in the dynamic landscape of workplace needs and employee expectations.

4. Qualitative Studies on Different Employee Groups: To capture a more comprehensive view, future research could involve in-depth qualitative investigations tailored to specific employee groups or roles within organizations. This approach would offer insights into how HFM strategies impact distinct work categories and address the varying work-life dynamics they experience.
5. Quantitative Analysis of Return on Investment (ROI): While this study emphasized the qualitative benefits of HFM, a quantitative assessment of the Return on Investment (ROI) associated with HFM initiatives could be explored. This could involve measuring metrics like productivity, employee turnover, and overall job satisfaction against the financial investment in HFM services and facilities.
6. Exploration of Hybrid Work Models: The rise of hybrid work models, catalyzed by the pandemic, presents an opportunity for further research. Investigating how HFM can adapt to support the unique challenges and opportunities posed by hybrid work arrangements would offer practical insights for organizations navigating this evolving landscape.
7. Impact of Technological Integration: Given the increasing role of technology in the workplace, it would be valuable to examine how the integration of digital tools and platforms within HFM strategies influences WLB. This could encompass aspects such as remote collaboration tools, digital wellness platforms, and the management of virtual teams.
8. Stakeholder Perspectives: Further research could involve gathering perspectives not only from employees but also from other stakeholders such as managers, executives, and HFM professionals. This holistic approach would provide a comprehensive understanding of how different stakeholders perceive the impacts of HFM on WLB and organizational outcomes.
9. Inclusion of Different Industry Sectors: Extend the scope of the study to include various industry sectors to observe any sector-specific variations in the impact of secondary services and facilities.

By addressing these research gaps, future studies can build upon this research's foundation, providing comprehensive insights and guidelines for organizations seeking to create employee-centric workplaces that foster WLB and enhance employee satisfaction and productivity.

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## Appendix

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## Interview guideline

Name:

Company:

Position:

1. What do you understand by facility management and additional services? Could you provide me with your definition and does it align with mine?
2. Do facility management and HR collaborate within you company/office?
  - 2.2 If not, is that planned for the future?
3. What additional services and facilities do you offer to your employees and how do they contribute to a good work-life balance? (Check if all categories are included):
  1. Food and beverage services and facilities (e.g., cafes, restaurants, vending machines)
  2. Fitness and wellness services and (e.g., gyms, yoga rooms, meditation spaces)
  3. Childcare services and facilities (e.g., on-site daycare, after-school care)
  4. Transportation services and facilities (e.g., shuttle buses, carpool programs, bike storage)
  5. Technology and connectivity services and facilities (e.g., high-speed internet, video conferencing, charging stations)
  6. Environmental sustainability services and facilities (e.g., recycling programs, green roofs, energy-efficient lighting)
  7. Concierge services and facilities (e.g., dry cleaning, package delivery, travel planning)
  8. Health and safety services and facilities (e.g., first aid stations, emergency preparedness training, ergonomic assessments)
  9. Social and community services (and facilities e.g., volunteer opportunities, local events and activities, networking)
  10. Personal services and facilities (e.g., hair salons, dry cleaning, on-site banking services)
  11. Flexible working arrangements (e.g., flexible work arrangements like telecommuting, flexible hours, or shortened workweeks)
4. Which of these services and facilities do you consider the most important/useful for achieving a good work-life balance, and why?
5. In what ways are these additional services and facilities integrated into the daily activities of employees in these offices?
6. How do these additional services and facilities contribute to improving employees' work-life balance?
7. Have you observed measurable improvements in employees' work-life balance since implementing these additional services and facilities?
8. Have you conducted surveys or collected data to evaluate the satisfaction and effectiveness of these additional services and facilities in promoting work-life balance? If yes, what feedback have you received from employees?
9. Do you have plans to expand or modify the current offering of secondary services and facilities in facility management to enhance employees' work-life balance?

10. Any further additions?

- Value added by work-life balance:
- Value added by combining Facility and Human Resource Management:
- Value added by the secondary services and facilities:

## Interview transcript respondent 1

### **1.1 We talked about overworked and overstressed and also about workloads how do you ensure that there isn't something happening like a burnout?**

I think that's your manager plays huge part, because sometimes you don't even see it when you're completely hooked up in work and or getting overworked or stressed. So I think it's nice to have a public speaker and help you with that, but I don't think there should be like a policy or something about that because it differs in every organization on how and when you are overworked. The difference too much to my composition.

We also have green roofs, which is not only good for the environment but also for the employees to take a break in the nature.

### **1.2 What do you think about secondary services and facilities that could help with that (the work-life-balance)?**

An example in our company are the Friday night drinks, well they're mostly on Fridays. We quit working around 4:00 when you have something to finish you can continue but it's just sort of a social pressure to stop working and to celebrate the weekend so yeah I think maybe it can help.

### **1.3 Then we go to the next category not only ensuring the work life balance but maybe also approving. Have you noticed any trends or patterns in the employee's work-life-balance that could be improved?**

I know from some colleagues that they take work home a lot. So with that I mean that they work longer hours than they should, because they have too much work to do or because they are perfectionists. If you want to make everything too perfect and then slowly continue to work, so I sometimes notice it with my college. But as I said before we discussed those things and our observations in those weekly meetings together and we can help each other where we can.

### **1.4 So there isn't anything you think that the company could do to approve this?**

Code persona's: I think it's that it is really depending on the person. Like I really know my boundaries maybe I lowered my boundaries then that more than others because I know I tend to overcome those boundaries, so that's why I lowered standard but I don't think my colleagues often don't know their boundaries and that makes it difficult to see something and to act on it because it really depends on what type of person and also if you are a bit busy that that's not so bad either of course but it shouldn't take months.

### **1.5 I also have a question that maybe show secondary services emphasis duties within your company that you didn't maybe think of straight away and maybe you could describe your typical work day or work week including the work hours and what you do during the breaks?**

Mostly I tend to work from 9:00 or 8:30 to 17:00 or 17:30 but it really depends on when I go to the office and if I go to the office for several Mondays. I mostly wait till the traffic is over and then I go around 9 or 10 to the office and then start. I try to work two days for home and three days from the office. Let's take a Monday. So around 9:00 or 10:00 I go to the office and do some work I have a coffee with a colleague and then we have lunch together with all the colleagues in the common area.

Then I just go back to work and the end the lunch is just eating and talking with colleagues about everything you can imagine um sometimes but not that often we go for a walk. Then around 17:30 I go home again.

So that's one and maybe I can also talk you through the work from home day because when I work from home I'm mostly start around 8 a bit earlier and there were things made purchase of coffee and then around lunchtime I go out with my dog and have lunch that most I do when I'm at home from my computer because I go we usually go for a long walk with the dog so that I don't have time to lunch. So mostly I do lunch behind we had computer that's not good at all and then I work and then mostly I quit around 4:30.

**1.6 Do you feel like you and your employees have enough time outside of work and for your personal interests, hobbies, to spend time with family or anything else that improves wealthy you?**

I've read a lot of articles about this it's maybe because work 36 hours a week. So, every two weeks I have a day off and I really like that. It's really beneficial to my work-life-balance because that way I get to enjoy more of my personal interest, and I also like my work. I like what I do so it's not that it's a burden to go to work, but my personal interest differs a lot from what I do so with that extra day off every two weeks I really have enough time for it. I can imagine that if you work 40 hours a week, especially when you work far from your where you live, it is more difficult.

I work one hour away and that's just without traffic so if there's traffic it's longer. I can imagine that if you work 40 hours and you lived that far that it sometimes can feel like you don't have enough time to meet your friends and your family. So for me it's really good.

Code persona's: I think WLB could work if everybody in their companies have the freedom to do so. However, not everybody does it. Also in our company, but you can if you want to. I think it also depends on your persona and your situation at home.

I think in the in the future working 36 or 32 hours is getting more standard. I just don't see myself working 40 hours. I can of course but I want to do other things as well.

**1.7 If you could design your ideal environment or schedule what would it look like and what kind of programs or policies would be the most helpful, to achieve your best work life balance?**

I really like to have options and the freedom to be spontaneously. This is something that is important to me, because I have a dog and it's only 9 months old. Sometimes my boyfriend and I don't want to leave him alone all day and sometimes we just have to go to work. It would be great if we can take our dog to work. That would be something that would improve my work life balance, because sometimes I have been too stressed again where we take the dog. Sometimes it can cause a bit of stress we've managed every time, but they can cause their stress or it would be great if I could take my girl to the company.

For the other employees it is the same. It could improve their WLB if they could bring their dog or child. In our company as said we have a buddy. In this cause you could talk to your buddy about this. I did speak to my buddy about this and asked him if this was an option but it wasn't unfortunately.

I don't know if other people also desire this because we have a lot of people at the office that have a dog, but these are mostly older dogs. I do know one colleague that would like this and who has the same struggles as me with the dog and for child I didn't know if that would be similar.

### **1.8 You mentioned children. Do you have childcare services and facilities at your office?**

No, we don't. I think for children it might be a little bit different. For example, a mom has a Tuesday off and the dad has a Friday off and then it goes to school and then you take it to daycare. It's more of a add schedule you also have to facilitate it every time and with our situation it's like OK Monday I can go work from home OK fine then next week you work from home on Monday.

So it's it really depends on the schedule we have and with the child, I don't think it's that complicated anymore. Maybe if you want to pick them up from school but I know that it's really easy with the flexible hours, so you take your kid to school and then you work longer another day or going to pick up your kid that's awesome and sometimes there are employees who take their kids with them. It happened and it's also fine.

### **1.9 How do you measure your employee's well-being and work-life balance? Is it based on a survey?**

We don't have surveys or at least I didn't fill in the survey yet in my existence here. But every three quarter of the year you have a conversation with your people manager and it's about how you are feeling. It's not only about work but also private if you're feeling like yourself and if you have everything under control. Wo don't do surveys because we are small enough to have the opportunity for your small personal face to face contact to track those things down. It is more efficient than an anonymous survey.

In my last quarter conversation, we talked about it, and I was doing OK with everything. There was also a question about how you manage to stay like this. So, there's a tension to it not in the form of survey.

### **1.10 Have you retrieved feedback from employees on which secondary services and facilities and they would like to have?**

I know that some might like gym facilities. That's something because otherwise they have to go home and if there were facilities like that you can go out of your work when you're finished. So that would contribute to a better work life balance. Other facilities I don't think so. No, haven't heard.

### **1.11 For the last the last question: have you ever worked for an employer that provided secondary services or facilities such as onsite childcare, fitness facilities and/or concierge? If so did you find the services helpful in managing your life?**

We basically have a catering where we can eat all day, have drinks all day etc. it has a social space for social events, and we have flexible working arrangements. Due to the fact that the company is based in a building with other companies, we share the facilities. However, we have also rented the room for meetings etc. that is already provided with technology, so you don't have to bring your own. All in all, we rent the most spaces. Therefore, we also have a kicker and other advantages to have a good work environment. I think having a good work environment and having flexible working arrangements is one of the most important things for a Healthy work-life-balance.

Other facilities are just on top. However, for example as I told a gym membership or something like dog care or childcare is also enhancing the work life balance. I just think the other things are more important.

### **1.12 Do you think your company is too small for such facilities and services?**



Well maybe ours is too small but as I told, we are working in a building with other companies and share like the catering can be facilitated together and then it wouldn't be to show. Now we also share the catering, the shower and everything with the other people in the building and that's fine so I wouldn't see why we can't share those other things too. Like we could have a gym here and share it with the other companies.

If we only have two three or two people that want to take their dog to work for like a top care or something that would be maybe too low but if we look at the whole building you're probably more people want to make use of stuff like that.

## Interview transcript respondent 2

### **2.1 What is your position in the company?**

I work as an employee or specialist in corporate development in the human resources department.

*Before we move on to other questions, let me explain my definition again. The first part of my study focuses mainly on facility management. I question whether facility management and human resource management should perhaps collaborate to improve work-life balance by offering additional services. When I talk about facility management, I mean things like workplace concepts. It's not just about janitors and cleaning services. Facility encompasses the entire building and what can be offered within it. It could include flexible work options or facilities such as a fitness room, cafeteria, and other additional benefits that go beyond what is necessary for work.*

### **2.2 Does this definition align with yours?**

Yes, well, I'm coming from the perspective of working in the Textiles project, which means I deal a lot with work-life balance and the possibilities of remote work, working from home, or anywhere else. In that regard, there are various aspects we consider, and one of them is the workplace. It involves questions like where I work, how I work from there, and what infrastructure is provided to me. For me, that's where the topic of facility management fits into my definition. It encompasses the entire infrastructure framework that enables efficient remote work from home or on-campus. It involves creating the right conditions and providing tangible facilities such as workspaces and meeting rooms. It also includes maintenance services related to these areas. That's what I would spontaneously understand as facility management. For me, under the concept of New Work, there are broader aspects that fall into it, including cultural topics and leadership teams. That would be more of a differentiation, and I wouldn't categorize it as facility management, but rather as other facets of New Work.

### **2.3 Have you ever considered merging facility management and human resource management?**

Yes, they should collaborate closely.

We notice this collaboration very strongly in our work, especially in the context of the New Work and Future Workplace projects. We have two people from the Real Estate department in our core steering team because we often have questions related to real estate that require quick answers. We also consider how to shape our work environment on the campus, and real estate plays a significant role in that. We can provide input from the HR perspective, but it's a real estate topic. So, we experience this interconnection quite closely. From my position, I can say that merging these departments or having them work closely together is something I've seen in other companies. They might have a corporate development department that encompasses both aspects, while we have separate departments. However, we notice a strong collaboration in working groups because we often deal with similar topics and questions, which leads to close cooperation.

### **2.4 Do you think this merger will happen in the near future?**

That's a good question. I attended a lecture at another insurance company where they had implemented such a merger. It was the first time I thought about how it would be if we didn't have two separate departments. There are possibilities, for example, to use the company laptop for personal purposes if certain conditions are met, which could be included as an additional contract clause. Some individuals have company phones, but I'm not sure if that falls

under the same category. Internet usage and similar tendencies also exist, but I don't think they apply to everyone on a broad scale.

## **2.5 Are there environmentally friendly services, such as recycling programs, green roofs, or energy-efficient lighting?**

For example, we have solar panels, which are still in the planning phase. There is also the building called crystal with geothermal energy, or is it just precise degrees? I believe the building called crystal generates more energy than it needs, so that's definitely a positive aspect in terms of emissions impact. However, I think this applies specifically to the building called crystal and not the entire campus. It is a notable feature in the area of environmental management at XXX, and there are additional planned activities in the sustainability field. One such activity is the option to support a job ticket with a certain amount, which allows for discounted travel throughout Germany. In this regard, there are a lot of activities in the environmental management field, such as shared transportation programs, bike leasing, bicycle parking spaces, and facilities for bike maintenance, showers, and changing rooms.

Moving away from transportation, there are concierge services that include package delivery and travel organization. As for social and community services, there are various networks within the EU, including a women's network. These networks offer a range of services related to health and social issues, such as active breaks and social counseling. There is also a platform called Ever Mood, which allows for anonymous reporting of discrimination cases and access to counseling services.

Additionally, there are health-related offerings, such as themed activities focused on topics like sleep quality, nutrition, and physical exercise. These activities are promoted through the news channel, and participants have the option to freely join. The company also has a sports club, BSG, which offers sports courses, and there are facilities such as a gym and a bowling alley available.

## **2.6 Are there also events to improve the socialization of the employees?**

Well, yes, then that's obviously a topic. Carnival is celebrated once a year. It is actually organized by the company's sports association, BSG. And then, of course, there is this art and culture event. I believe there will be various artists because of the lathe, the man with the lathe, I'm not sure what his name is exactly. Also, the internal exhibitions change here.

The theme with the walls, that was also quite big with this opportunity to be creative before the renovation or as a guest, for example. So, I'm not the specialist in that area, I only know what I hear, and I know that there are opportunities to participate in such things, in such offerings. But there are also lecture series. I think there are also other possibilities for them to participate in such networking events, but also thematically oriented meetings.

## **2.7 How do these events fit into the workday?**

There's something called lunch, which comes from the fact that Exiles work here, so these midday gatherings. I meet with people every lunchtime and we keep meeting, so that's a bit dissolved now because more people are in the office, so we can maybe go for lunch together. I'm allowed to sit at the table and there's a special area for people who want to join others. It's a way to get to know each other anew, it's also an opportunity.

In the past, we had a flexible working project called Home Campus, where we had the opportunity to work completely on campus when the first relaxations came during the pandemic. We provided some spaces in collaboration with the Real Estate Department so that people could book slots in the cafeteria in the mornings and have coffee and donuts. My breakfast is also sponsored, so as a team, we can have breakfast together or have a coffee. It was actually a cool offering.

**2.8 Now, let's move on to the last category, which is personal services, such as hair salons, officeing services, or insurance services. Do you offer such services?**

We have the Employee Office, I believe that's what it refers to. We are an insurance company, so employees have the opportunity to receive insurance advice and actually save a trip to get insured here. Additionally, there is a office ATM available.

Regarding the gastronomy and care services, I also mentioned not only the cafeteria but also vending machines and a shop because I believe it can improve work-life balance. You can buy things in the shop, even for takeaway, such as preserved sauces or dishes, and cook them at home. So, there's an option to take food home, but of course, you can also eat on-site. There is a wide selection of bread rolls, homemade cakes, porridge, and various other options, but you also have the option to go home.

**2.9 What does the shop sell? Only food or also other things to improve the work-life-balance?**

Apart from food and gifts like cards there are many different things at the shop. For example, power offices or other items.

**2.10 We have now listed many additional services. Which additional service do you consider the easiest, most helpful, and most important in achieving work-life balance? And why?**

For me, I believe it is the opportunity to work from home. I'm not sure of the exact headings, but the idea is that I can look at it relatively voluntarily and individually to see how it fits into my workweek. Of course, this depends on the nature of my tasks, such as whether I have any in-person requirements, if my supervisor approves, and if it works for the team. But otherwise, I have the possibility to work a significant number of days per week from home, if it suits me.

Working from home is a significant factor for many employees and managers when it comes to work-life balance. For example, I can save two hours of commuting time per day by not having to travel by car or bus. Even if it's just a Hour, when you calculate it over the course of a year, it amounts to a considerable amount of time spent commuting. Not having to prepare for commuting, especially when biking, is also a major attraction. It significantly improves the quality of life.

So, I believe that would be the prioritization in this regard.

Please note that not every department allows or provides the option for employees to work from home. It depends on the nature of the job. For example, working from home is not feasible in service or culinary roles. However, in our department, home office is allowed.

**2.11 To integrate these additional services and facilities into employees' daily workflow and how they are perceived by the employees, it depends on how they become aware of them.**

Regarding using them during working hours, some services, like after-work activities such as company sports, are not considered working time. They are usually scheduled outside of work

hours or during breaks. However, the company enables flexible working hours, so employees can adjust their schedules accordingly.

The option of working from home is already facilitated through a works agreement, specifically the teleworking agreement at XXX. Employees can sign an additional contract to their employment agreement, which allows them to participate in flexible work arrangements.

Regarding communication and awareness, when employees join the company, they receive information about available options like job tickets. They can find relevant information in the news channels, such as corporate benefits, which are also available on the works council's website. It is essential for employees to proactively seek information and ask questions. Overall, the conditions are designed to facilitate participation, and the company is flexible in accommodating these services.

## **2.12 How well are these additional services are received and perceived?**

As for how well these additional services are received and perceived, it varies depending on the service. For example, the option of working from home is widely embraced, especially considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other offerings, like training programs for managers, are generally well-received. However, I'm not personally familiar with the reception of all the specific services.

Looking at some examples, the use of bicycles and the job ticket have been well-received. The availability of the new 40€ ticket has made it attractive for more employees to use it. Unfortunately, I don't have specific data for each service, but I can say that the Home Campus was in high demand and fully booked. It was extremely popular, with no available slots remaining during mornings and early afternoons for several weeks.

So we have both covered underground parking garages as well as electric charging stations in the basement for bicycles. Then there's the option to borrow a company bicycle for a business trip using a schedule. Down at the campus, there's also, I believe, a station where you can pump up your bike's tires and where you can, I think, do some repairs.

Then there are changing rooms and showers. This means I can ride my bike to work and not have to shower and change again for longer distances, so to speak. Then there's the leasing option, and now shifting away from the car towards transportation, there's the public transportation pass (Job Ticket) that you can get at a discounted rate.

Exactly, and in general, I think the infrastructural connection here, with the bus stop right at the doorstep and such, is really cool. It's great to be able to travel by bus, train, and bicycle around here. Overall, the acceptance and perception of these additional services may vary, but there are instances where they have been highly valued and utilized by employees.

## **2.13 How do these mentioned additional services and facilities contribute to improving employees' work-life balance in your opinion?**

Well, I think they contribute significantly. Now I'm back to working from home, but I believe that for many employees, it's a crucial factor. When you ask what they associate with work-life balance, for many, it's the ability to work from home. It saves a lot of time and allows them to pursue their hobbies and spend time with friends and family. I believe it's a relevant factor in perception for employees and ultimately leads to being perceived as an attractive employer, both internally and externally. It helps in retaining current employees and attracting new ones by offering the option to work from home. I also think that offering such additional services is becoming increasingly important for companies, as the local job market is highly competitive, especially with the rise of remote work.

So, if you ask what they associate with the topic of Work-Life Balance, then it is the topic for many. I can work from home. I really save myself some life time now. I have the opportunity to pursue my hobbies and spend time with my friends. I can spend time with my family. So, I believe that this is a very, very significant factor in the perception among the employees and ultimately leads to being perceived as a more attractive employer, both externally and internally. I mean, in terms of retaining existing employees but also attracting new ones, by saying that it's okay to work from home.

But I also believe that other factors are becoming increasingly important for a company, such as offering additional services, because the local job market is becoming significantly more competitive due to remote work. Now, companies like Microsoft say, "Yes, we're looking at the situation here in Münster and it doesn't matter to us if they only come once a year or even every 3 years for the Christmas party."

Working for us, and as a company, you need to see more strongly, I believe, that by offering these benefits through a good work-life balance, you can provide a certain advantage in order to score points in that aspect. These are things that can attract and retain people, in addition to the salary, which isn't as flexible. In many cases, these kinds of benefits are additional things that I have, which naturally help with retention and are therefore highly relevant. This also applies to things like childcare – if I make it possible to handle childcare, then people are naturally more bound to the company. This happens automatically, and I believe that it offers a significant added value in terms of employer attractiveness.

#### **2.14 Have you conducted surveys or collected data to measure satisfaction and effectiveness of these additional services and facilities?**

We always include questions about employee satisfaction with work-life balance in our employee surveys, as well as in our surveys on flexible work arrangements. We have received high satisfaction ratings in these areas, including positive feedback on the option of working from home. We also collect overall satisfaction data with the company as a whole and with the campus facilities, such as individual workspaces. Additionally, we evaluate specific initiatives or offerings, such as the "How to Campus" program, through qualitative and quantitative methods to assess employee feedback. These evaluations have yielded positive results, including free breakfast being well-received. So, in summary, we do cover these topics through regular evaluations and surveys.

#### **2.15 Are there plans to expand or adjust the current offerings of additional services and facilities to improve work-life balance?**

Yes, we are currently engaging in intensive discussions and collaboration with the Real Estate department to make the campus even more attractive. For example, we are considering improvements to our breakfast offerings and creating more opportunities for social interaction among team members. We also want to enhance networking and connections, particularly for new colleagues and student workers. These efforts aim to support stronger bonds and promote a positive work environment. Given the relevance of employer attractiveness due to demographic changes and a more competitive job market, these considerations are vital. We continuously explore new strategies to enhance work-life balance beyond the existing offerings.

#### **2.16 How do the work-life balance benefits through additional services and facilities compare to other approaches or strategies? Is there anything else, in your opinion, that could further improve work-life balance instead of such additional services?**

There are certainly other approaches being discussed, such as a four-day workweek or extended parental leave, which are currently hot topics. Additionally, working remotely from abroad is gaining attention due to the offerings provided by other insurance companies. However, I'm not sure to what extent these approaches apply to a company based in Münster like ours. They could be attractive options to consider, as they provide flexibility and support work-life balance. Overall, I believe there is still room for improvement in terms of work-life balance, especially when considering the evolving landscape and the practices adopted by other companies. It's crucial to continue exploring ways to attract and retain employees by addressing work-life balance concerns.

**2.17 In terms of the main question regarding how Human Facility Management and Real Estate Management, along with the HR department, can improve employees' work-life balance through additional services, do you have any additional comments?**

No, I think that the collaboration between Facility Management and Human Resource Management can provide a real added value in terms of work-life balance and ultimately contribute to employer attractiveness both internally and externally. In our project work, we have noticed the strong interdependence of these areas, and cooperation is often necessary. It's not solely the responsibility of one department or the Real Estate department alone, but rather a joint effort that offers greater benefits.



### Interview transcript respondent 3

#### **3.1 Then I'll start with the first question, and that is, can you describe your position at work at the moment?**

In short, I handle sales and marketing for XXX BDA. BDA stands for "Bureau Dakadvies," which is an advisory agency, and I handle the sales and marketing for the testing department, Skyla BDA Testing.

*First, let me explain what I understand by facility management and additional services. Facility management, to me, includes not only concierge and cleaning services but also aspects like workplace design or a new workplace concept. There are different directions you can take with it, and everyone has their own opinion about it. Additional services, for me, are things that the employer offers to employees to make their lives a little easier. It doesn't necessarily mean providing a kitchen where you can cook for yourself, but, for example, having a cafeteria where you can get food.*

#### **3.2 Does this align with your definition, or do you have a different definition?**

Yes. Actually, For me FM is also more than just janitor services. I was also thinking that we have initiatives related to health, and then you can reserve some time for a massage to relax in the chair at that moment.

Okay. Those are some financial matters. One theme is the trend of facility management and HR, so we see a lot of collaboration between facility management and HR management. Of course, it's nice to adapt the building and keep up with the times or offer concierge services. But if you don't know exactly what the employees want, then you don't know exactly what you should implement.

#### **3.3 Is it also the case at your workplace that facility management and human resources need to collaborate?**

Yes, I'm also thinking about workstations. For example, I have a Height-adjustable desk here, but I believe that is realized more from the facility side rather than from HR. I think HR is currently focused on recruiting staff and dealing with employee attrition. I don't see them much. It could be a possible solution to merge the two because, for example, if you let facility management and HR work together, it could also lead to getting more staff because you address what people want.

I do see it as a future advantage that you indeed don't lose contact with your own staff, and that's actually the task of HR to maintain contact with the work floor and answer the questions about the things people want. That made me realize the necessity and the need to ask questions on the work floor. I must say that it is being considered more and more. XXX itself has around 16,000 employees, so we don't have a one-on-one situation where the facility or HR manager says, "I'm going to visit those 16,000 people." But I do notice that there is more contact coming from HR to the divisions, and that connection is getting better.

Of course, when it comes to facility, it always thinks about things, not people, and that's a part of it. However, if facility management and human resource management collaborate and offer additional services as a result, then you would likely have the best additional services according to my understanding. If you simply say from facility management, "We have a gym or exercise equipment," it all comes from the facility side. But from HR, you realize that the staff doesn't actually have a need for it. In that case, it's better to do something else, so that's my understanding of it. It's better if you also know what the staff wants to have.

### **3.4 What additional services and facilities do you offer to employees, and how can they contribute to a good work-life balance?**

That is handled by the two departments. They take care of your computer, network, access codes, and such matters. If we have any problems, we go to the IT service desk, and facility management takes care of things like the Wi-Fi codes and Wi-Fi systems within the building. So, we have those facilities.

### **3.5 I have categorized them into 11 categories. For example, one category is catering services, such as a café, restaurant, vending machines. Do you have anything in that direction?**

We do have that. I can say it's a separate entity, not directly related to XXX itself. It belongs to BDA Opleidingen, which is located inside the building. They have their own catering services and organize lunch moments. We can make use of their services as well.

### **Regarding media, is that something you consider contributing to a good work-life balance, or is it more about social contact during the lunch break?**

Although I don't personally use it, my colleagues from testing are engaged in setting up tests every day. Despite the cost, around 3.5 euros or something, they go for lunch there every noon. It's noticeable that even though it may cost a bit more than bringing sandwiches, it is utilized at different levels. It's not just the management who eat there.

### **3.6 The second category is fitness and wellness facilities, such as gyms, yoga rooms, meditation spaces. Do you have those?**

Yes, we have them, but not everywhere. The XXX Fit program is being implemented, which means there are opportunities to sign up for bike routes or other sports activities. As I mentioned earlier, there's also a massage chair that is available for everyone to sign up for. I can assure you that the massages come from facility management or the HR department.

### **3.7 Do you have childcare services and daycare facilities for employees' children?**

Not that I know of. I assume XXX arranges that externally, so it's not internal. However, it is mentioned, so there might be an option to bring your children to childcare at work. I'm not sure about the details or whether there are specific arrangements. I believe childcare will be completely free soon if it's supported by the government, but I'm not sure about the specifics for people with children.

### **3.8 Do you provide transportation services like shuttle buses, carpool programs, or bike storage?**

No, we have a bicycle program. People who live a bit further away from the office can purchase bicycles through a bicycle plan. As for technology and connectivity services, such as fast internet connection, video conferencing, and charging points, we have already discussed those a bit earlier. They are taken care of by the IT department, if I remember correctly. It applies to all modern buildings, like the one in Apeldoorn that recently went through renovations. There, you can make use of meeting rooms or cubicles. If I have a meeting in that area, it means I can stay there. So, it sounds like a facility-related matter, and it is.

### **3.9 Do you have any environmentally friendly services, like recycling programs, green roofs, or energy-efficient lighting?**

Regarding lighting, well, it's different. For example, I work in a very old building in Rijswijk, and even the Kalita building is quite old. However, all the modern new buildings do have solar energy and LED lighting. I remember being somewhere else, and we had green roofs. That just crossed my mind, but I can't recall the details. Perhaps we have green roofs. I'm not sure. Well, we probably mentioned it before, but it must have dried up by now. I haven't looked into green roofs yet. However, BDA Opleidingen, which is located here, has a demonstration area with various developments related to green roofs. But that's more related to the nature of their work.

**3.10 I was thinking about other services, like concierge services, such as dry cleaning or package delivery. Something that makes work-life balance easier. Also, additional health and safety services, like ergonomic assessments or emergency preparedness training.**

We have some people trained as PAV employees for that purpose. So, in case of emergencies, there should be a plan in place. If the alarm goes off, we all need to evacuate. These are some of the older matters. When it comes to ergonomics, it does have an impact. I switched to working at Pedia after the COVID-19 period started. Kim, from the facility department, allowed everyone to spend €750.01 to set up their home office or use it for transportation expenses. Regarding the setup, I think it's mostly fixed desks. When I first arrived here, I saw numerous standing and sitting workstations, so I believe they also provided a small desk and a good chair for home use. This means that after the pandemic, the office is considerably emptier. Everyone is still working from home. However, I should mention that there are always people here in the lab and testing areas because tests need to be conducted. So, I find myself at the office more often. I'm currently in my office.

**3.11 Yes, that aligns with what you mentioned earlier, that people can work from home. That falls under the category of personalized arrangements, where you can have flexible working hours or even shorter workweeks. Besides working from home, do you have any other personalized arrangements available?**

Well, people mostly decide that for themselves. For example, the BDA advisory department is already quite flexible because they provide advice and conduct inspections on roofs. They often have two people working in the drafting room. However, you won't see everyone working from home at the same time unless there's a general meeting or departmental meeting. That usually takes about three hours, and then we go back to our respective places. Due to COVID-19, it's become clear that everyone actually prefers working from home, so I think in the future, facility-related matters can be scaled down, and we can have more flexible workstations. It also depends on the layout; when searching for a workstation, you usually choose the closest available desk.

**3.12 So, your solution for the empty office would not be to require more people to come to the office but rather to adapt the facilities accordingly?**

Yes, that's somewhat impacted by COVID-19. But you also see that some people haven't used their office spaces for months, and they enjoy working from home. So, they don't want to come back to the office.

### **3.13 Which of the mentioned services and facilities do you consider the most important or useful for achieving a good work-life balance?**

Well, when it comes to flexible scheduling and such, it means that you can say, "Well, I don't work strictly from 8 to 5 or whatever, but I can also do some personal things in between." We divide it that way. That has always been my preference, being able to determine when to work within those 40 hours per week. It's important, and I think that's why people currently value a Home workspace more than offices. Of course, you miss out on the social interactions and contacts that you often have in a regular office setting. However, you can still have contact through other means or by meeting up for coffee. It's fantastic when you can come back to the office once in a while. As for me, I no longer have to drive to meet colleagues because you are in Germany, and I am in Gorinchem.

### **3.14 Do you have any social or community facilities, such as local events and activities, to promote social cohesion?**

We do have some events, like our annual Christmas celebration, which is organized by the marketing department. They arrange parties and festivities, sometimes separately for different divisions. For example, we have a barbecue event coming up soon, which is a longstanding tradition. It has been around for 40 years, and everyone is expected to attend. We also have other activities like centrally organized gifts for children or grandchildren during Sinterklaas. Soon, there will be a big event at one of our locations in Apeldoorn. It's a location-based event, and all employees and their families are invited. However, not everyone attends these events, especially if they are far away or if there are other personal commitments. Only a few individuals go, and we may hear positive feedback from them the following Monday. It's a bit of a pity that not everyone gets to see each other, but considering the distance, such as traveling from Rijswijk to Apeldoorn or from Workum to Apeldoorn, people tend to prioritize their personal activities over company events.

### **3.15 In what ways are these additional services and facilities integrated into employees' daily work at the offices? Are they provided in a sufficient and well-organized manner? Do all employees know about them, and how are they received?**

We have a desk platform called "Mini Desk" where we store our internal information. Only XXX BDA employees have access to it, but there is also a general Mini Desk for all XXX employees. That's where all the activities and services are mentioned. We receive frequent emails announcing these activities with dates, and there are links to the Mini Desk for more information. We can also find information about services like massage chairs and the food options in the cafeteria. These announcements are sent to all 16,000 employees, specifying the dates for different locations like Gorinchem and Rijswijk. Employees can then reserve a date through the internet. Overall, this information flow is not missed, and whenever we see colleagues using the massage chairs, we ask them about it. So, the information reaches us effectively.

But the idea is indeed to look at it from a different perspective. Instead of buying individual desks that go up and down, we can ask the employees on the assembly line themselves if they find them useful. That would be the best solution because we already have them, and then we can ensure good collaboration or control. I can say that I find them helpful, but I would prefer to have the option to sit or use a bicycle underneath the desk where you can pedal. It's just a

good idea, and there are already several companies that have done it, that's what came to my mind.

**3.16 Yes, that actually has a new name, it's called HFM. Often, the IT department is also involved, so they still have their own tasks, but they are all sort of on one department so that they can communicate well with each other. The IT department knows what the Facility needs and the Facility knows what the IT department needs, so they can communicate effectively. They are seen as different departments, but they work together.**

Yes, well, we actually have that in the sales department. With the 16,000 employees and the various acquisitions over the years, we sometimes wonder what they are doing themselves in Bommel, in Belgium, and elsewhere. This led to the creation of sales packages or table discussions to see if there is any overlap. This allows us to cross-sell and say, "I can score through your company" or vice versa, by knowing what goes on behind those doors. That's what we call "George Marketing Café," which was originally founded by George to inspire sales and marketing to communicate with each other. Nowadays, it's more focused on sharing knowledge and expertise, learning from each other, and understanding what each division does. So, it's organized over time from a new location. I organized it here at XXX a month ago, and 55 people attended, saying, "Hey, it's nice to see what you do in practice." There was a tour, and we had a nice dinner in the evening. It allows for more contact between HR, facility management, and all the divisions.

**3.17 As for my questions, the last one is whether you have any further additions. When you think about my master thesis, has the influence of HR and facility management on work-life balance of employees through secondary services been mentioned? Do you have any additional insights?**

I think it allows for faster coordination among different departments within a company. You can quickly address issues and say, "Okay, let's tackle this here." The collaboration is more efficient, and it's not wasted money. When something is done, it's well thought out. I've discussed this before. In the past, there were separate maintenance and new construction departments. The new construction department aimed to be as cheap as possible, while maintenance required long-term durability. After three years, we faced problems with the roof, which should have lasted 15 years. This happened because they tried to cut costs during the construction phase. So, combining maintenance and facility budgets allows us to allocate funds wisely. You can invest some of the maintenance budget in new construction to improve quality, ensuring that you don't encounter issues shortly after maintenance work.

If you translate that to HR and facility management, I think there's still too much fragmented and ad hoc approach, like fixing small things that are broken. Okay, fine, let's fix it. But in HR, maybe there's not enough internal focus. And when you merge them, it also means that you might say, "In the cost-saving aspect, we're doing good things. We're not saying we need 600 bikes but only have 3." It's like trying to fit everything into a limited budget. That's a crazy example, but how often does it happen in reality?

Of course, sometimes people think, "Oh, well, let's buy in bulk because it's cheaper." But as you clearly pointed out, it's important to have conversations with the staff to understand what they actually want. So you don't end up buying something just because one person said, "Oh,

I have a great idea, let's do that." With 16,000 people, you can end up spending a considerable amount of the budget on strange things. I hope that makes sense.

**3.18 I haven't asked a question yet that is important to answer my question. I also wrote, if you add that to the added value, what are the added values when you create a better work-life balance?**

Yes, I consider that. However, let me share something personal. At this stage of my life, I'm 62 years old, and I don't feel the need to build a massive career anymore because I've already done that. There's also a difference in perspective that comes with age.

Now, I have five grandchildren. In the past, when I had two daughters, I would often come home very late and not see them because we had prior commitments, like having dinner and putting them to bed. That was more focused on weekends. But now, I have five grandchildren, and I spend time training one of my grandsons on the football field in the late afternoon. Although I do have some knowledge about football from watching it, he's actually better than me. But I can still guide him and provide feedback on his exercises. So, I dedicate my time to that. If I haven't finished my work, I can say, "Since my family situation has changed, I'll work on it later tonight." It brings me peace, even though I'm not fully immersed in a career and all that. I can also close the door a bit earlier and say, "I've done enough this week, and I'll pick it up again next week," whereas before, I would keep going. I discovered that it's not entirely finished, and you have to pick it up again next week, but it caused more stress. From the company's perspective, I believe it's more beneficial in the long term to have healthier employees, resulting in fewer absences. But that also means that HR needs to ensure that the department is adequately staffed and focuses on retaining employees.

We have been engaged in collective labor agreement (CAO) negotiations for a long time now, and one strike day after another has been organized by the labor union (FV). XXX, the employer, is far from reaching a resolution. You can see that XXX is not the type of employer who readily says, "Okay, the employees will receive a 10% salary increase." In the case of Albert Heijn, it was similar. We had a round of strikes, but the company didn't wholeheartedly say, "Alright, the employees will get a 10% salary increase." Instead, they provided a 4.5% increase in February-March and waited for the FV to initiate further actions. Now they're back at the negotiation table, but it's taking an incredibly long time. It's not the best approach for an employer to retain employees solely based on payments, salaries, and such, as it's not always perfect and effective. So, I think there's a perspective to consider from a HR standpoint. Why do many people switch employers? In the case of XXX, after a few years, people tend to leave suddenly. I don't think it's primarily the younger individuals because they often consider career opportunities and make calculated moves. Instead, it's mostly the middle-aged individuals who seize the chance to try something new elsewhere. So, that's the aspect to consider.

#### Interview transcript respondent 4

*Hello and thank you for the interview. I had already sent some information, but I thought I would explain my definition again before asking you questions, so that there are no discrepancies. As discussed, I am writing about whether Facility Management and the HR department should collaborate to achieve the best possible outcome for employees in terms of work-life balance. When I refer to Facility Management, I don't just mean janitorial work or cleaning staff, but also the workplace concept. Under additional services, I consider everything that the employer offers beyond what is necessary for work, such as a laptop, desk, etc.*

#### **4.1 Does that roughly align with your definition, or do you have a different perspective?**

That is a perspective that I haven't considered at all, so this is something that is coming together, where I have no idea until now, so to speak, to think about it.

#### **4.2 What do you understand by it? What does it mean for you, essentially?**

It's like Facility Management, so to speak. If we use this term, it does involve janitorial tasks and cleaning activities. It also encompasses the maintenance and upkeep of properties, but for us, it is not linked to... Well, let's say the development and adaptation of facilities to new circumstances, or how to make workplaces more valuable or something like that. Instead, it is primarily focused on our organizational culture, where we consider how our values align with our facilities, for example. It is about connecting the interactions, except for the area where we work in residential groups.

With children and adolescents who, for various reasons, cannot live at home anymore. But that is a very distant connection. In that case, the housekeeping staff are explicitly responsible not only for cooking for the children and keeping the premises clean but also for designing the spaces to offer them a Home-like environment. However, that is more related to the recipients, the employees, rather than the organization itself. It's a somewhat far-fetched connection, possibly.

#### **4.3 However, for me, it seems like you have already linked it a bit, as you mentioned the management and HR department, because other departments also take on what is typically seen under Facility Management.**

Yes, that's why I'm saying it could fit to some extent.

#### **4.4 Okay, I actually forgot the first question: What is your position in the company?**

Right, I am the deputy management and currently in the process of transitioning to the management position. I am in the process of taking over the management role.

#### **4.5 Do you see it as a possibility in the near future that specific management works closely with, for example, the HR department to achieve the best possible results in terms of space allocation, for example, a warm welcome?**



As I said, I find it an intriguing perspective, but I haven't thought about it to that extent yet. We already have an approach of fostering creativity and the idea that just because someone has a role, it doesn't mean they have to know everything best. It's also about working in a participatory manner and looking at the challenges and who has ideas about them. That's why we already implement it, and there is a connection between HR and Facility Management or other departments.

We try to keep the boundaries a bit more flexible and not tell someone that they are not responsible for something, so they cannot express their opinion. On the contrary, we always look for opportunities to open up processes and get more ideas, impressions, and different perspectives. So, we are pursuing that approach, but institutionalizing it and saying that it makes complete sense to always link them together is a new perspective for me.

I haven't stumbled upon that direct connection yet, but it sounds interesting. It's definitely stimulating for me.

**4.6 You are definitely ahead of many other companies in that regard. I think this is something many companies are currently considering, as they realize that the job market is becoming more competitive and interesting. They need to find ways to attract new employees, retain existing ones, and keep up with the competition. However, in most cases, the HR department, for example, is not necessarily connected to Facilities Management. The HR department is usually the department closest to the employees, but their responsibilities don't necessarily overlap because lighting, for example, falls under their jurisdiction, while management handles tasks like adjusting new desks or room layouts. They may not have a clear idea of what they want to achieve. That's why I think it's actually quite good in your company that there are no rigid boundaries and everyone can contribute in different areas.**

In our case, things are a bit different from the classic description you provided. The people closest to the employees in our company are usually the team leaders and the higher-level managers. When the teams want a change, such as modernizing the workspace or getting new desks, they communicate this to their respective areas, team leaders, or higher-level managers. Then the process usually starts. For example, the higher-level manager would say, "I've heard your request, let's take a look at it together. What is it exactly? What is the background?" The Facility Management team, for example, would be involved because they are the ones responsible for implementing the changes. They also have the opportunity to present their perspectives. In our case, we have a very small HR department as we are not a Huge company. We have a few employees, and the HR department consists of only one person, the HR representative, who handles all the HR-related tasks. However, the overall employee welfare is the responsibility of the managers. So essentially, all managers are also part of the HR department, but they have a wide range of responsibilities, including personnel care, specialized supervision, and taking care of both content and employees.

**4.7 Now, let's move on to the next topic, secondary services and facilities and work-life balance. What secondary services and facilities do you offer your employees to contribute to a better work-life balance?**

In our departments, I believe there are already standards that are not standard everywhere. For example, we focus on work-life integration rather than just work-life balance. It's about finding ways for work and life to complement each other and integrating them, rather than

striving for perfect balance because I believe it's a fluid relationship. Sometimes work takes priority, sometimes life does, and sometimes I need more work, and other times I need more personal time. That's why I find the concept of a balance a bit challenging, and I think work-life integration aligns better with our approach. In our company, we have standards such as supervision teams. Our educational staff members have the opportunity for supervision every four to six weeks. It's a chance for them to engage in psychohygiene, discuss cases, and create boundaries. But I wouldn't consider it an additional benefit; it's simply a standard practice in our industry.

Moreover, what sets us apart in our industry is our focus on creating pleasant workspaces. We put effort into the office setup, avoiding a bureaucratic look. We provide employees with functional workspaces where they can collaborate, interact, and have the flexibility to withdraw or take a break. We have well-equipped kitchens, provide beverages, and offer facilities like table tennis or football. This is something quite unique in our industry, as many companies either cannot afford it or choose not to invest in such facilities. For us, it's a standard practice, but for newcomers, it feels like an additional benefit.

And then there are things like... I don't know if this is what you're referring to, but for example, do you mean an additional company health insurance?

#### **4.8 Yes. Health insurance also counts.**

Yes, exactly. That's one of the additional benefits we definitely offer. We provide all our employees with supplementary health insurance, which we arrange for them with various coverage options. We also offer sports activities. We recently hired a yoga instructor who will be conducting yoga sessions for employees once a week for the next three months. What other types of additional benefits are there?

#### **4.9 I can list a few categories if you'd like. Usually, there are also things that employees or employers might not even be aware they can offer. One thing I haven't mentioned yet is childcare services. Are there any provisions for childcare or anything related?**

No, we don't have that. However, we do cover a certain expense related to childcare. In Hamburg and other states, employees are required to contribute a portion of the cost for kindergarten childcare. We cover that expense for our employees, so if they have childcare expenses, we reimburse them directly.

I actually think that's quite unique because I don't believe it's commonly practiced in companies, especially in our industry. I believe it becomes a significant factor when deciding whether to join or stay with a company, but for us, it's something really special.

#### **4.10 Then there are transportation services or jobs related to shuttle services or communal programs.**

We offer our employees job bikes if they are interested and all our employees receive a free public transportation ticket, currently the Deutschlandticket, regardless of their employment status (part-time, full-time) or department. We want all our employees to have mobility, and we cover the entire cost. This is actually not the standard practice. Often, companies contribute a portion of the cost, but we always cover it completely.

#### **4.11 Technology and connectivity services, such as high-speed internet, video conferencing, and charging stations.**

We offer all of that. One thing that sets us apart, I believe, from other companies in this field is that all our employees receive a company phone. This is actually not the standard practice. There are still youth welfare providers where people have to use their personal phones to contact recipients. So, it's something I would still consider an additional benefit or our own defined standard, which sets us apart. And a group of employees also receive a tablet or laptop.

This is especially useful for the ambulance service, as they don't work fixed hours in an office but travel around Hamburg. In each office, there are charging stations and the ability to utilize high-speed internet. They can set up hotspots with their phones and work and browse while on the go.

#### **4.12 And to what extent would you describe this company phone, for example, as improving work-life balance?**

It's a crucial factor. People can switch off; they can finish work and turn off their phone, making themselves unreachable. This is particularly important in the field we work in, where the topic of professional proximity and distance, as well as setting boundaries, is significant. It addresses the needs of recipients, and it's essential. It may pose challenges for some, but by enabling employees to say, "You're on duty from this time to that time, afterwards, you can turn off your phone and be unreachable, and that's okay." It actually contributes considerably to a sense of work-life balance for many.

#### **4.13 Then I have a few other categories that are not as commonly represented, such as environmentally friendly services, including recycling programs, green roofs, or energy-efficient lighting.**

We try to pay attention to those aspects, but I can't claim that we have a full-fledged program in place. There were some efforts made in the past, where we formed a working group to explore how we could be more environmentally friendly. But I can't say we have a comprehensive program in place.

#### **4.14 And concierge services, such as things that are offered to employees so that they don't have to do them at home, like package delivery, cleaning services, or laundry.**

Unfortunately, that's not available. We lack the resources for such services.

#### **4.15 Health and safety services, I already mentioned them as part of the green market due to health insurance. Do you have anything else in mind? What other categories could fall under this, such as ergonomic workplace assessments or similar?**

We also try to pay attention to that, but I can't claim that we shine in that area. With the sports offerings, I would say it's another distinguishing factor or an additional benefit that we provide.

#### **4.16 Do employees have access to sports and fitness activities?**

Individual supervision. Employees have the opportunity, so to speak, to seek individual supervision if they feel particularly stressed and want to understand or work on it. They can request individual supervision as needed, essentially having the time and opportunity to exchange with a professional.

Oh, there's also an additional offering in terms of social interaction outside of work. We invite our employees to a joint dinner every 3 months, I believe. It's on our company's expense, with the idea of providing an opportunity to meet outside of the work routine, to get to know each other on a different level, and engage in other forms of exchange. That falls under company expenses. Hmm, yes, I think that can contribute to overall well-being, but I'm not sure.

#### **4.17 Yes, that was also a category we have—social and communal services, for example, events, activities, and networking opportunities—but we already mentioned those. Another aspect I have here is person-based arrangements, such as shortened workweeks, home office policies, flexible working hours—anything that makes it easier for individuals to balance their personal and professional lives.**

So, there's always an attempt and ongoing discussion about it. There are areas where it's easier to implement, and others where it's more challenging, but if it's feasible, we have home office policies. There's the possibility to work from home, and there's almost always an attempt to offer flexible working hours, except in cases where schedules need to be adhered to. There's always the value of trust-based working hours. Of course, it's challenging to continue implementing such measures given the new legislation.

Exactly, but efforts are always made to find flexible solutions, to see if someone says, "I don't know, I'm a single parent, and I can only work in the mornings," to try to accommodate those situations or similar stories.

#### **4.18 Which of the mentioned additional services do you find most important or helpful in achieving work-life balance, and why?**

Actually, in terms of work-life balance or work integration, I don't find any of the mentioned services to be the most important. I believe it's actually our values as a company that play a bigger role. Employee orientation is one of our core values, and it best describes our intention to always look out for what's best for our employees, so they can perform their jobs well. We have a simple formula: we believe that happy employees lead to happy recipients, and happiness can be contagious. It's a construct made up of many parts, and while all the services we mentioned contribute, it ultimately depends on understanding where the employees stand, what they need, and recognizing their autonomy and self-determination. They are the ones who know best what they require.

They should have the ability to communicate their needs and engage in dialogue. I think that's the crucial foundation upon which everything else can thrive and be helpful. It's through this approach that we can truly foster long-term commitment from our employees. It also circles back to what we mentioned earlier: employees don't necessarily need to communicate with a Human resources department; they can simply speak with their team leader or employer to express their wishes, if I understood correctly.

**4.19 Yes, that's right. Now, how are these services integrated into the daily workflow and how are they perceived, such as the sports offerings? Are they well-attended, including the dinner that takes place every 3 months?**

The dinner is very well-attended; it's always fully booked. Usually, it's difficult to find a restaurant table for more than 20 people, but we always manage to bring everyone together. The sports offerings are also well-received. If they aren't, we reflect on why that might be the case. Is it due to the setting or the timing? Can we change the schedule? Is there any dissatisfaction or lack of interest in this exchange? If necessary, we evaluate what needs to be changed to ensure a positive reception of these services.

**4.20 One of the most important questions is how these services contribute to improving the work-life balance of employees. We've already discussed the provision of company mobile phones, but not in general terms.**

In general, I believe these services contribute to making individuals feel seen and heard. It allows them to express their needs and be involved in shaping their work environment to create a better place for themselves. I think this participatory approach is what contributes the most.

And it can be integrated. If someone says, "I'm facing challenges, I'm pursuing further education, but it means this and that for me. Can I change my working hours?" Then we ask them how they envision it and how it can be implemented. We strive for flexibility and to ensure that people feel seen in their needs, and we always seek the best possible solution for everyone within the system. I believe that approach makes the greatest impact.

**4.21 I believe this also brings us to the topic of work-life balance, or as you mentioned earlier, work-life integration.**

Integration is more important in some situations than balance.

**4.22 How do you see work-life balance improving when one feels seen, in the sense that work and personal life can align better?**

No, I think if my work can be just work and if I have enough opportunities to feel secure there, to have the impression or the possibility to wrap up what's happening, discuss it, and sort it out, then I can approach my free time differently. And then I can use my free time in a Helpful way, namely, to recharge my batteries and for relaxation. I don't know, that's what I believe, somehow.

**4.23 Have you conducted surveys and gathered data on satisfaction, perhaps not just general satisfaction but also regarding these services?**

Yes, we have conducted online surveys, and every two years, we participate in the Great Place survey. It's a large benchmark where companies across Germany are surveyed in various categories, representing their organizational culture. In recent years, we have always scored very well and received good feedback from our employees.

**4.24 So, are you considered one of the best employers in Germany, in your industry?**

Yes, indeed. In the category of Best Employers in Health and Social Services, we achieved third place this time and even secured first place in some subcategories, I believe around 50 categories. We're proud of that. It's a rewarding response.

**4.25 Do you have any specific numbers or could you provide a summary of this survey?**

I can check if I can extract some information for you. It's managed through an online tool, and I don't think all the reports can be summarized comprehensively. Let me see if I can find something relevant to your area. I'll take a look.

**4.26 Okay, that would be great. How do you perceive the additional services and the collaboration between physical individuals and the HR department? How does it contribute to Barclay Philips compared to other things, other strategies, or approaches?**

Currently, I don't think it contributes significantly, but it would need more integration between them to have potential. That's how I would describe it at the moment. But there could be potential there, possibly. There might be potential in intertwining them more.

However, you also have to... I believe you have to think further about facility management, you know? You have to empower that area to some extent. Someone needs to be empowered and educated and able to see the possibilities. It's not just about being responsible for cleanliness and maintenance, but it's about giving these individuals that perspective and allowing them to have it, and perhaps even enabling them in their roles.

**4.27 Then I only have one more question. Besides work-life balance, what other added value do you see in management and the HR department jointly offering additional services?**

For me, it would be the concept of employee orientation. That's the value that aligns all roles and that everyone can or has already aligned with. I believe that creates the connection.

When everyone is constantly considering what employees need to do a good job and have good resources to do a good job, both the HR department and facility management, then that's the bridge.

**4.28 Do you have any additional insights or something you haven't mentioned yet that may be relevant to my master's thesis, something I should know?**

No, I don't think so. I think it's important that, in our case, everything revolves around the values of the organization and how they serve to implement work-life balance. And I believe that if the values don't align with work-life balance, it's bound to fail. There needs to be a strategy, a fit at that point, and I think that's why it works for us.

And I think it's good to always consider it from a top-down perspective, whether that fit is happening, whether the match is being created.

I'll see if I can extract some information from this survey for you. If I find anything, I'll share it with you.

**4.29 Great, thank you very much. That concludes the interview from my side.**

Could I take a look at your master's thesis when you're ready? It might be interesting for us to further develop ourselves in that area.

**4.30 Yes, so I have a topic as well. I'm studying Facility and Real Estate Management, so it also goes in that direction. How can properties contribute to achieving a better work-life balance? But I also find it important to involve the employees and not just focus on the perspective of the property. For example, you can create social spaces, set up sports facilities in the cafeteria, but it won't be beneficial if the employees don't want to use them. So, we need to know what the employees want and then adapt accordingly.**

Definitely, it's an interesting area.



## Interview transcript respondent 5

### **5.1 Let me start with the first question, which is about your position in the company.**

Yes, my position is BGM Manager and Mediator, but I am also the chairperson of the employee representation.

### **5.2 I ask because my master's thesis is not only about work-life balance and additional services, but also about the implementation of Human Resource Management and/or the combination of Human Resource Management and Facility Management. It's something that is being increasingly recognized nowadays.**

It's actually a good idea because when they work together, the best possible facilities can be provided.

### **5.3 Have you already thought about or implemented something like this in your company?**

Yes, in our case, Facility Management and Human Resources work very closely together. We have short communication channels within our organization, and they collaborate closely with the employee representation and the BGM Management.

### **5.4 Now, moving on to the next question about additional services. What additional services and facilities do you offer your employees, and how do they contribute to work-life balance?**

Let me start with something small. We have an in-house company restaurant, which is not just an ordinary caterer. They provide top-quality food. I can even send you a review if you're interested. They have been chosen as the top franchise company nationwide for the second time this year. It's very high-class, sustainable, and offers a variety of vegetarian and vegan options. It contributes significantly to promoting awareness among our employees, and they can have excellent meals at a small cost since the company covers a major part of the expenses. Additionally, as a service provider, we have an EAP (Employee Assistance Program). It's a 24/7 program that is accessible not only to our employees but also to their immediate family members and other household members. It's widely utilized within our organization, and we receive biannual reports on the usage rate, which is completely anonymous. Our usage rate is consistently around 20%, whereas the average for other companies ranges from 5% to 10%.

### **5.5 That sounds great. Could you tell me a bit more about this EAP? What exactly is it?**

Sure, the company is called Inside, and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) originates from the Anglo-Saxon countries, so you're in the right country. It provides anonymous counseling for various life issues, except for labor law matters, as they want to avoid conflicts of interest with employers. It covers addressing mental health problems, legal questions, coaching for managers, conflict resolution support, and pretty much everything that might arise. They help with scheduling doctor appointments and finding therapists. Essentially, they offer all kinds of support you can imagine. They address any inquiry or request brought to them. Employees can reach out to them through phone, email, or an app. Once they contact the EAP, they are asked about their specific concern, and from there, they are guided to the appropriate resource, whether it's a lawyer, coach, doctor's appointment scheduling, and so on.

**5.6 Do you have any additional services beyond that? I can give you some examples, as I have categorized them. For example, there are fitness and wellness facilities, childcare services, transportation services, or environmentally friendly services. Do you offer anything like that?**

Regarding sports and fitness, we have a provider called E-Gym Welp. They offer online options for sports and fitness activities. Additionally, employees can also train at local fitness studios nationwide. This means that if I'm on vacation in Munich and want to work out, I can find a studio on their website where I can do exactly what I want and avail of their facilities. We also provide regular information on health topics and conduct health days. The most recent one was on May 11th.

**5.7 And what does a Health day entail?**

During health days, we collaborate with various service providers. This time, we partnered with AOK Niedersachsen. Our occupational health department also offered a medical examination called ABI (Arm-Leg Index), which assesses the risk of stroke and heart attack. AOK covered different areas, including a lecture on recharging energy and stress management. There were also preventive services such as the Back Check, which assesses the condition of the back muscles and the entire core area.

We also offer transportation services and environmentally friendly services. We have our own transportation service called Woolpackers, which provides online offerings in the sports and fitness field. Employees can also train at local studios nationwide. So, if I'm on vacation in Munich and want to work out, I can find a suitable studio and utilize their facilities. We also regularly provide health-related information and conduct health-related activities. The most recent one was on May 11th.

**5.8 What does health-related activities mean?**

We collaborate with various service providers, including AOK Niedersachsen. Our occupational health department offered a measurement called ABI (Arm-Leg Index), which assesses the risk of stroke and heart attack. We had various areas covered by AOK, including a lecture on recharging energy and stress management. We also had preventive offerings such as the Back Check, which assesses the condition of the back muscles and the entire core area. We also had transportation services and environmentally friendly services.

During health-related activities, we collaborate with different service providers, including AOK Niedersachsen. Our occupational health department offered a measurement called ABI (Arm-Leg Index), which assesses the risk of stroke and heart attack. We had various areas covered by AOK, including a lecture on recharging energy and stress management. We also had preventive offerings such as the Back Check, which assesses the condition of the back muscles and the entire core area. We also had a point distribution coffee, for example, which measured drowsiness during the day. There were two increased offerings. We also had an offering in the company canteen. It focused on the AB direction, specifically on the Rhine vote. We had special meals prepared that employees could pick up, such as a Healthy option of salmon with salad and a side dish. We also set up a marketplace for information. We had representatives from DJ Wolters, a regional company that specializes in superfoods like spirulina. Employees could sign up for activities, gather information, and exchange ideas during work time.

**5.9 I also have a question about a service that is often offered but may not come to mind as the first option for replacement services. It pertains to flexible working hours, shortened workweeks, or reduced working hours. Do you offer such options? For instance, if someone wants to work part-time or have fewer hours or flexible arrangements, is that always possible?**

At our company, we face these challenges.

**5.10 Which services do you consider the most important or helpful?**

Especially during times of personal or professional struggles, it's essential to have experts around, and we have successfully addressed this through our program. We have carefully chosen services and made sure to implement them since 2020. They have been helpful during critical moments and large tasks. I believe they have greatly alleviated the burden because while a company can generate a lot within its operations, each individual carries their own personal load. Anyone can become overwhelmed and may need assistance, and a company cannot provide legal services.

However, we can assign someone to handle it. As mentioned before, we have embraced this program, and employees have the option to utilize it. We have provided relevant information and made it transparent, including the associated costs. The company restaurant is an essential part of it, and there is even a dedicated committee that reports annually to the employees. We strive for short and efficient communication paths. It's a program that every new employee receives immediately, and we mention its utilization during integration measures. It also serves as a solution when dealing with personal matters that may not be suitable for public discussions.

**5.11 How do you perceive the additional services and their integration into employees' daily work routines? Do you believe that offering these additional sessions has contributed to improvement?**

This improvement is of course not measurable. However, through such surveys, it becomes somewhat visible, the higher the satisfaction. And especially in the health area, which we surveyed at Great Place to Work, in order to update our psychological hazard assessment, it has become clear that we have very good ratings in this area of offerings. And then, of course, frequency also plays a role for us. So, if offers are not accepted, then we try to determine why, and if it simply doesn't fit us, then it will be removed from the program.

In the health sector, we have conducted extensive surveys, including assessments of psychological hazards, to ensure we have an accurate assessment of the current situation. It has become evident that we have received excellent ratings in this area. Frequency is also a factor for us. If services are not utilized, we try to understand why. If it simply doesn't fit our company, then we let it go.

**5.12 Are these additional services and facilities integrated into the daily work routines of the employees?**

Well, we have an internal employee portal digitally. All health-related information is stored there. Everything can be accessed there. All employees actually know who the contact person is in this area. If there are any questions, problems, who to contact. It's also made transparent what everything costs. That's also very important, and in the area of the company restaurant, we even have the whole kitchen committee, which also reports once a year in this employee portal.

So, we really try to keep the communication short and the paths minimal so that everyone knows where to go. With the EAP program, every new employee receives a flyer immediately, indicating what it is, how it works.

And we also like to use it in conversations, such as in the company integration management, where it is also offered as a solution, so that every absence has a different reason, and even if you don't want to talk about it with the representative, you might have something else in your back pocket that could be a solution.

**5.13 However, what you just mentioned can also be considered as additional services, that is, the ability to cancel from month to month, that can also contribute to the Work-Life balance?**

Flexibility is indeed important. No 6-month notice period and so on. So, you can start from month to month. You can cancel from month to month, so it's very straightforward.

**5.14 Have you also received feedback from employees about the work-life balance and in relation to the additional services?**

Yes, definitely. In the company restaurant, for example, you get feedback every day about the whole range of offerings we have, and what was particularly great, we also have a wishes and complaints box, but the whole kitchen team knows every employee who eats there by name, so it's very familiar.

For more information about the services of the EAP program, we ask our health goals again. So, there is a Health steering committee that meets twice a year, but we also have a smaller one, consisting only of the management, HR department, and me, and in the larger one, we are asked again about what happened in the last year, what feedback was received from the departments, because there are executives present, there are directors present, there is data protection present, but there is also someone from the archives present, and all of this is recorded and processed again for the next actions.

**5.15 Have you received feedback from employees regarding the benefits and services? Have you noticed any correlation with job satisfaction and engagement?**

Yes, definitely. We have regular health events at our company, and there is a Health Steering Committee that meets twice a year. Additionally, we have a smaller committee consisting of representatives from management, HR, and others. We collect feedback from different departments. Senior executives, directors, data protection officers, and someone from the activation team are also involved. We document everything and use it to improve our future actions.

**5.16 Are there any plans for additional services or any further remarks about trends or new offerings?**

We are considering adding additional services to our energy program as supplementary services. There is a High demand for childcare services, especially for parents with limited availability. The number of facilities accepting children is decreasing, and the quality of services is deteriorating. We are exploring the possibility of providing 24-hour support for individuals who require caregiving at home. This would ensure continuous care and support. We are currently examining this area to determine if it is necessary and if we can address this issue. Many people face similar challenges, such as having an elderly parent in Berlin while they reside elsewhere and struggle to provide adequate care. In such cases, additional service providers can be invaluable.

Right now, to see if it's necessary or if we can do something about it, because you hear from many sides that there's a problem, right? My mother lives in Berlin and I'm here, I can't take care of the care service that comes there, and that's definitely where an additional service provider comes in.

**5.17 Have you considered the perception of the additional services in comparison to other strategies or approaches? Are there any other aspects that have an impact on work-life balance and contribute significantly to work processes and structures?**

In 2018, I had the opportunity to lead a research project for AOK Niedersachsen involving 120 companies in Lower Saxony. I'm not sure if you have access to the findings, but I can gladly send them to you. One of the key areas we focused on was the psychological hazard assessment, as it had never been conducted before. We discovered significant issues such as unsatisfactory information flow, inadequate training opportunities, and poorly conducted employee-manager conversations. We delved into these major issues and conducted workshops with each department in the organization to understand the underlying reasons for both positive and negative evaluations. I don't know if you've heard of it before.

**5.18 No, but it's very interesting. Maybe you also have some links or something related to it?**

Yes, I have a link for that too. I'll be happy to send it to you. And we also focused on the psychological hazard assessment there, as it had never been done before.

And really significant topics emerged from there, such as unsatisfactory information flow. Unsatisfactory training, unsatisfactory leadership.

Things are certainly not designed well, and we looked at these major issues and I conducted a workshop with each department in the house. What's behind this, why are these things rated as good, why are they rated as bad? An example is, for instance, "Can you perform your work undisturbed?" and that was answered with many "No"s, but we are a service provider who can be reached by email and phone.

The employees rated it negatively, but they don't see it as a problem, as it's their job.

But it's good that we've worked these issues out. We've appointed new managers, restructured departments, developed conversation guides for employee discussions, brought training up to date. A lot has been done. I think that's why this time the employee survey has turned out even better than in 2018.

**5.19 However, as you listed earlier, many of these things, I also consider them as additional services or facilities, including redesigning departments. You probably mean the layout of the office or what exactly do you understand by that?**

No, we have created 2 departments completely new. Digitization is progressing rapidly, and in the insurance industry, it's like this: you have a department for applications, everything related to applications, certificates, and so on. Then there are the benefit departments, but there's also archiving, everything that comes in.

Then we installed an app and a lot came in through the app digitally, so we created 3 departments out of this benefit area and the archiving area, which now take care of incoming matters, projects, and digitization. How everything is continued.

**5.20 I would have understood it differently, I thought you meant like Facility Management, which is what I'm studying with Real Estate Management, and under that we also understand, for example, Workplace Design, how employees can work best in their offices without being disturbed by others' phone calls, etc. Do you have something like that, do you also look at how an employee can work best within the office spaces, or?**

Yes, definitely. We hardly have offices that are occupied by more than 2 people.

However, we are in the fortunate situation that we moved into our new building in 2010. And we were really careful that they don't become open-plan offices. Each office is equipped with a large glass door, which means communication can also be carried out quickly non-verbally, I want something, are you ready, can you be disturbed, that's also sometimes very important, and. Then of course we also have offices where only home office employees sit, who are only there occasionally, the full-time employees, so that they sit together as much as possible.

That's very important to us. We have project rooms where creative work can be done, which are also more colorful in design, and they are flexibly designed in terms of seating, chairs, raised seating, workstations, everything is available there.

**5.21 Do you feel that your employees have enough time outside of working hours to pursue personal interests and hobbies, or to spend time with friends and family?**

I believe that's different for everyone, because we are. We have an average age of under 40 among our 300 employees, and accordingly, there are many young parents among them, and I think young parents never have enough time, whether they are mothers or fathers, and the stress level is certainly higher than for people who are my age. I firmly believe that within the next 5 years, the 4-day workweek will become a topic.

**5.22 Is there anything you want to add, something you believe would also be good to answer my question about whether the additional services improve the work-life balance?**

I think it's appreciative communication, that's the most important thing, whether you're talking about the weekend or a serious problem, everyone can approach anyone, people are approachable, problems are resolved constructively, and an effort is made to include everyone.

Everyone is different, everyone is in a different phase of their life or their performance capacity, and we always try to cater to everyone, and not just family. Family is a bad word, because families can also have conflicts. We don't do that, but.

If people recommend us to other employees and say, come here because here. You're important. I think that's the most important thing an employer can offer, even if we didn't have all the other things, that would be the most important thing.

**5.23 You listed before what people found important in your project, probably you have something, like training opportunities. Do you offer something like that?**

Yes, we offer everything from training to become an insurance specialist to dual studies alongside your apprenticeship. We support employees with their doctoral theses.

But we also offer short training sessions that can be done online. We have a whole catalog for that, and we are in a great position there. We are part of the VGH Hannover group, which is much larger than us, and we can use their training catalog. It's also necessary that some other trainings, for example in my area of responsibility, employees come to us.

Because of conflicts. And some time ago, I found myself ill-equipped in that regard, and I said, a conflict seminar won't help me now.

And I trained as a mediator and that was fully financed. Also by the company. So it's not set in stone. We have a Huge range of training opportunities that we have to provide.

Because we are naturally legally bound to ensure our employees are up to date. But there are also many offerings for personal development. Just as we are trained in fire safety, first aid, etc. But that can also be done digitally, so anyone can do it when they have time. A gap.

**5.24 Okay, good thing I asked again, otherwise I might have written that you don't have that, which wouldn't have been good.**

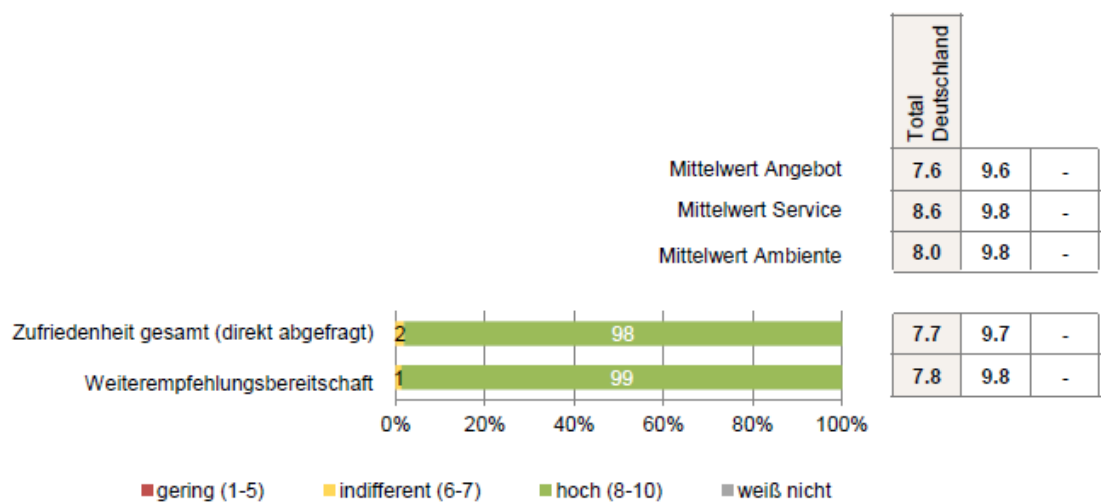
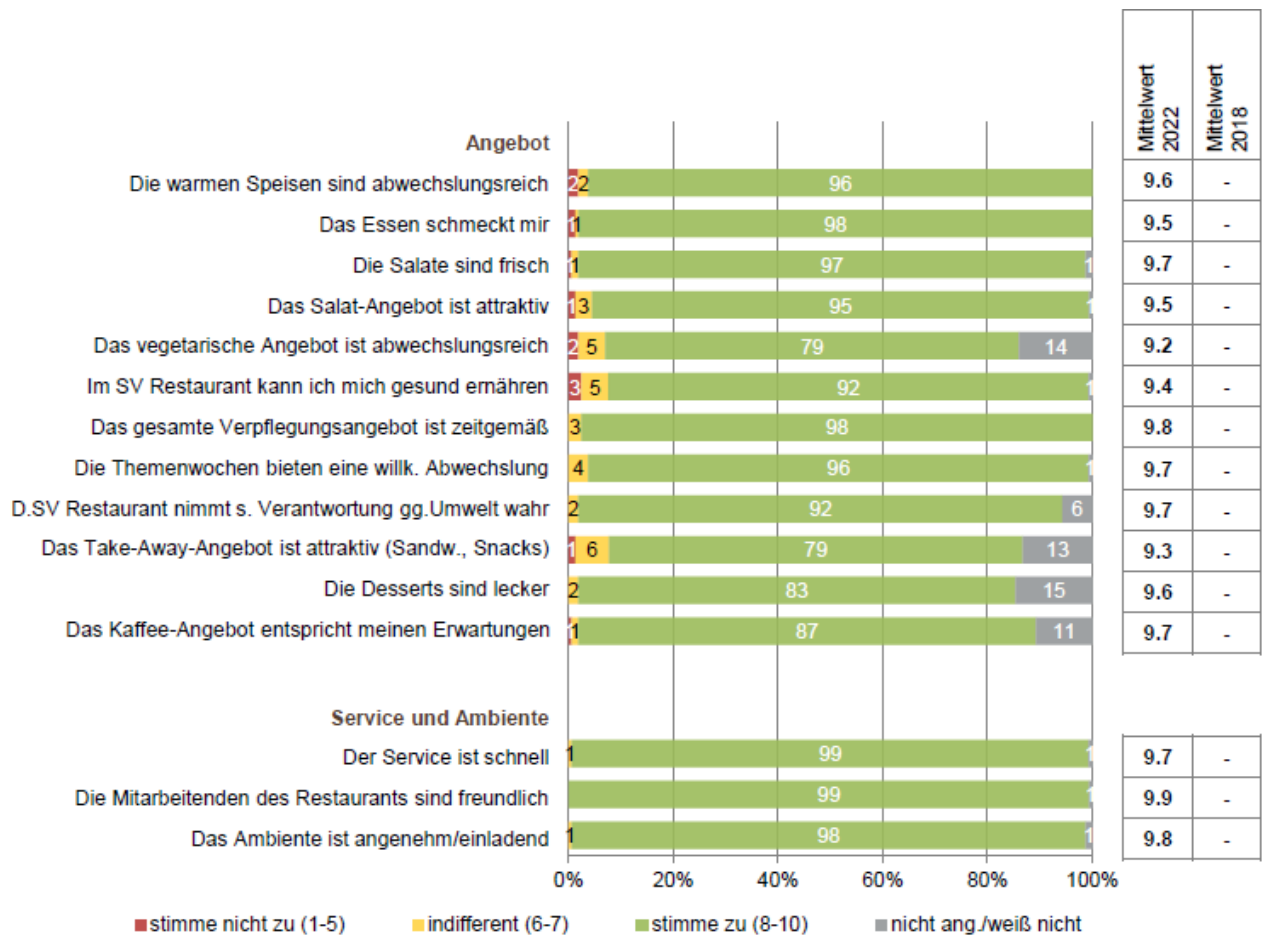
Yes, that was really from my side. Well, I'm glad you wanted to conduct the interview with me. It sounds very interesting.

I'll send you all the links, so you can browse through them. If you have any more questions, it's no problem, write me, call me, and if you're ever in the area you can visit us. Good luck.



## Provided employee survey analysis about food & beverage service & facilities

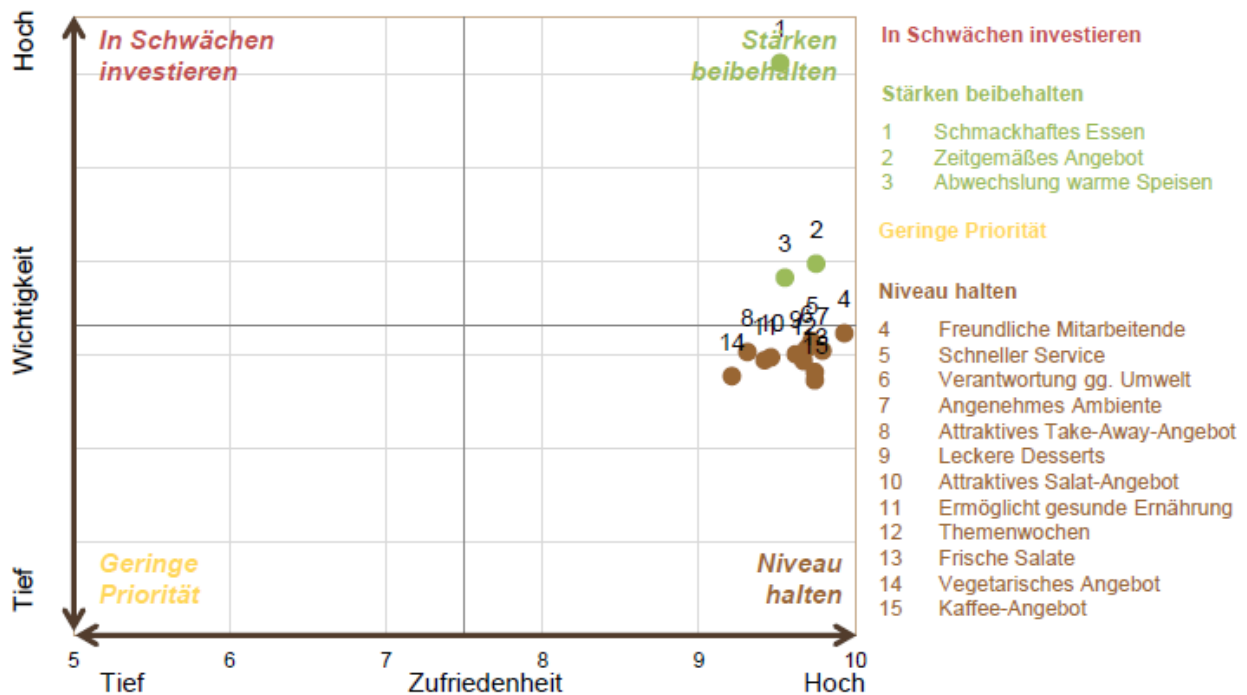
157 participants, Date: September 2022



# Handlungsportfolio (Stärken/Schwächen-Analyse)

Beim Handlungsportfolio wird pro Aspekt ein Punkt generiert: die Zufriedenheit mit dem Aspekt wird horizontal, die Wichtigkeit des Aspekts vertikal abgetragen. Je weiter rechts ein Punkt, desto besser wird also dieser Aspekt von den Gästen bewertet, je weiter oben, desto wichtiger ist dieser Aspekt für die Gesamtzufriedenheit. Die Wichtigkeit wird statistisch ermittelt: berücksichtigt wurden dazu alle bewerteten Betriebe aus dem Bereich «Business Deutschland».

Die Fläche wird mit zwei Geraden in vier Quadranten eingeteilt: Horizontal bildet der Zielwert zur Zufriedenheit von 7.5 die Grenze, vertikal der gemittete Wert der Wichtigkeiten aller Aspekte.



## Gästestruktur

Alter	
bis 16	- %
16-20	3.2 %
21-30	16.6 %
31-40	34.4 %
41-50	26.8 %
51+	19.1 %
keine Angabe	- %

Geschlecht	
männlich	42.7 %
weiblich	55.4 %
divers	- %
keine Angabe	1.9 %

Essenstyp	
innovativ	40.8 %
traditionell	22.9 %
nachhaltig	24.8 %
preiswert	11.5 %
keine Angabe	- %

## Interview transcript respondent 6

### **6.1 Thank you very much for the interview. Could you please start by telling us a bit about your position?**

I am a Senior Pillows Foam Manager, essentially working in the Human Resources department. Yes, the traditional Human Resources department has been part of my role for a few years now.

### **6.2 And how many people work in your organization?**

A total of 4000.

**6.3 Before we delve into the interview, I'd like to briefly explain what I do and how I define certain terms, as I've found it helpful in previous interviews with other companies. My thesis revolves around whether Facility Management and Human Resource Management should be merged to achieve the best possible outcome for the employees. When I refer to Facility Management, it includes not only caretakers and cleaning services, but also workplace design and everything related to the building. This encompasses aspects like new desks, the cafeteria, sports equipment, and basically anything that needs to be taken care of in and around the premises, aligning with your definition.**

Well, in our case, Facility Management actually focuses more on the classic services you mentioned earlier, such as caretaking tasks. We have a dedicated Campus Team that handles cleaning, campus organization, and assists with external meeting bookings. For the entire space design aspect, we have what I would call a Task Force comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds, including the Campus Manager. They are responsible for office furniture, writing on walls—essentially, all the things you mentioned earlier, including adding some decorative items to make the environment more lively. The team is called Campus Design & Creativity.

Their role involves assessing the campus's current situation, occupancy levels, the number of people present on-site versus working from home, and whether we have enough workstations available. They consider whether we need additional workspaces or if we should focus more on fostering a networked environment and creating suitable meeting points where people can come together in the buildings to collaborate creatively. All these thoughts and workstreams are part of their responsibilities.

**6.4 So, one could say that at your organization, Facility Management and the Human Resources department are essentially represented by this Task Force.**

Exactly.

**6.5 If we consider my definition, these aspects have actually been merged in a certain way?**

Not at all. We have them completely separate. The processes I described earlier have nothing to do with it. Of course, there are occasional inquiries from people, but we can redirect them accordingly. The responsibilities are clearly defined, and these are not typical HR tasks for us.

**6.6 Okay, and in this context, there isn't a specific person who is solely responsible for such matters, like personnel or something?**

In this Task Force, we have representatives from the People and Culture department, actually two individuals, just to ensure we have an overview and so on. But essentially, anyone can be part of it. We are quite open that way, but it's not a traditional HR topic for us.

**6.7 For me, the activities you just described seem to fall under facility management. That's why it's good to clarify this at the beginning so that the questions are answered appropriately. From now on, when I mention facility management, I mean this Task Force at your organization, right?**

Okay. Alright, I'll try to provide the best answers possible.

**6.8 So, the second topic is about the additional services offered and how they contribute to work-life balance.**

Okay, got it.

**6.9 Alright, let's move on to the second part. What additional services and facilities do you offer, and what added value do you see in each service?**

Could you briefly define what you mean by services in this context?

**6.10 Sure, I have actually listed 11 different categories, and usually, I ask an open question once and then move on to something specific. For example, one category is Gastronomy and Catering Services, such as cafes, restaurants, offering fruits and beverages.**

These are things that perhaps employees don't have to worry about separately at home, like lunch. Then it's a classic benefit.

**6.11 Exactly. And then there's the second category, Fitness and Wellness Facilities or childcare services.**

Okay, now I understand. Well, we have all those classic offerings. We currently have a campus cafeteria where employees can have subsidized and delicious freshly cooked lunches. In the morning, during breakfast breaks, they have the option to get fresh rolls. We also have a campus kiosk, so they can satisfy their sweet tooth or get a yogurt or ice cream whenever they want. We always have fresh fruits available as well, and sometimes we even offer cut-up vegetables as a Healthy option. As for meals, we regularly organize grilling events. Just last week, the entire company gathered after a staff meeting and had a barbecue. We also have an additional service where we can order from a local organic market, and the items are delivered to the campus. We, as a company, handle the pre-shipping process, and employees take care of their own selections at our campus cafeteria. In short, we have our own kitchen staff who pamper us every day. We offer everything from coffee, water, tea, cocoa, and whatever else the heart desires.

We also have childcare services. We provide childcare subsidies for parents who send their children to daycare centers, and we have our own campus daycare center available on-site.

We offer holiday care as well and generally support employees in taking care of their children, ensuring they have flexibility to balance work and family life.

We offer classic job bikes, which I think almost everyone offers nowadays. This means that every employee has the opportunity to participate in the job bike program. We also collaborate with Gimbel Pass, which includes various fitness studios, swimming pools, physiotherapy centers, clubs, and more. With Gimbel Pass, a minimal amount is deducted from the gross salary each month, and the rest is subsidized by us. This allows us to promote physical well-being. As for mental well-being, we provide various offerings related to mindfulness, time management, and personal development. We constantly assess how we can support our employees, detect early signs of any issues, and take preventive measures.

I'm trying to recall other options we have. We have so many possibilities, it's hard to remember them all. For instance, we offer sabbaticals, which allow employees to save up their hours and take an extended period of time off to travel or pursue personal goals. We also have flexible working hours and a flextime account. Additionally, we provide a traditional company pension plan in which we contribute. There are various insurance options available at discounted rates for our employees. We organize employee events such as summer parties, Christmas celebrations, and team events, within certain budget limits. All teams have the autonomy to decide what activities they want to pursue.

I still have a long list of offerings that I can mention. For example, we offer language courses and emphasize flexible working hours. It's important to note that for us, it's not just a battlefield. We have person-oriented arrangements that include flexible working hours, the option to work four days a week, and the ability to regulate working hours according to individual needs.

We also have a mobile office agreement, which means that each employee can decide where they want to work from. Essentially, you can work from anywhere in Germany or even go on a workcation, provided it is properly arranged and communicated to ensure insurance coverage.

We have a mentoring program where new employees receive comprehensive onboarding and are assigned a mentor who can address overarching topics and answer questions. The mentor provides support, especially during the initial days, to facilitate a smoother transition.

We also have recreational options such as gaming consoles like PlayStation, Xbox, and Wii available for employees to use. Although I haven't personally played them, I know they are somewhere around here.

## **6.12 Are the gaming consoles like PlayStation, Xbox, and Wii well-utilized?**

Yes, in the developer lounge. We all gather there, and people often visit. You can access the refrigerators and other facilities. For example, if you rent the developer lounge, you can also spontaneously decide to have a barbecue. There's a grill available, and you can pre-order meat through our staff members on campus. You can also grill vegetables or anything else you'd like.

Apart from that, we support numerous sports clubs. This includes our own football club, running group, cycling, badminton, volleyball, and more. We have company-sponsored teams participating in various sports.

Continuing education is a major focus for us. It's not just about allowing everyone to do something, but rather taking an individualized approach. We have coaches who engage in personal conversations and offer assistance. If someone reaches a point where internal support isn't enough and external help is needed, we have a wide range of options to choose

from. We also provide leadership training for team leads and department heads. We offer language courses as well.

**6.17 I wasn't sure if you were done, I wanted to let you finish. I wrote down a transportation service, specifically JobBike, but perhaps you have something else in mind, like a shuttle service or carpooling programs.**

We have carpooling programs. We actually have those. However, we don't have a shuttle service in the traditional sense. We do have company vehicles, but not everyone has access to them. Having four vehicles doesn't mean that everyone can configure their own company vehicle. So, I would exclude that aspect. Nonetheless, we do have a large fleet of company vehicles. However, it's not a standard benefit for every new employee.

**6.18 Okay, then I can imagine that you also offer technology and connectivity services, such as high-speed internet, charging stations, video conferencing, and other facilities that make it easier to work flexibly without having to bring everything with you all the time.**

Each of us has a complete hardware setup at home, including two monitors or an ultra-wide monitor, depending on personal preference. We also provide a docking station, mouse, keyboard, and a choice between Microsoft or Apple laptops, depending on the job requirements. We also offer company mobile phones and tablets. When you come to the office, whether it's in Münster, Neubrücke, or any other office location, all workstations are equipped. We have a clean desk policy, so all you need to do is connect your laptop and everything functions properly.

Furthermore, all meeting rooms are equipped with the latest technology for hybrid and digital meetings. This is definitely not an issue for us.

**6.19 You also mentioned environmentally friendly services. Nowadays, that's an important topic, such as green roofs or sustainability programs, or maybe even schools or similar initiatives.**

We actually have two ladies who solely focus on environmental sustainability. I must say that this specific focus only started at the beginning of this year. However, we have always been committed to implementing various initiatives. For example, we have our own solar panels on the roofs of our buildings, and we also purchase green electricity voluntarily to support renewable energy sources. We even have a small area designated as a bee meadow, where we produce our own honey. The main purpose is to provide a Habitat for bees and ensure there is enough green space alongside our buildings.

Honestly, I'm not deeply involved in these topics. The two ladies would probably be able to provide more information, but I would need to check with them.

**6.20 Do you offer any training, for example, related to the internet or ways to be environmentally friendly at home and even save money by being eco-friendly?**

We are always reminded, even during business trips, that ideally, we should travel back by train. Domestic flights are no longer an option for us. They are not approved or booked through our booking system anymore. Instead, we have our own booking system that excludes

domestic flights. So, when it comes to travel, you would take the train whenever possible. If train connections are not feasible or if the train option is not available, then you can choose a vehicle from our rental pool and drive. As for our home practices, we are generally encouraged to be mindful of the environment. Our company fleet, including company cars and the majority of our fleet, about 90%, consists of electric vehicles. We are gradually phasing out old diesel and gasoline vehicles and replacing them with electric cars or hybrid vehicles. The trend is more towards electric vehicles than hybrids. We also promote carpooling and encourage employees to consider cycling for short distances. We are reminded to shut down our computers when not in use, which helps save electricity and extends the lifespan of the PCs. These are some of the measures we have in place.

Yes, they are. In the developer lounge, where we all gather, people do make use of them. You can also access the refrigerators and such there. For example, if you rent the developer lounge, you can spontaneously say in the evening, "I want to barbecue," and there is a grill available. You can pre-order meat through our helpful staff on campus, or even grill vegetables or whatever you prefer. It can be grilled for you.

Apart from that, we sponsor many sports clubs. This means supporting sporting activities such as having our own football club. We have our own running group, as well as teams for cycling, table tennis, badminton, volleyball, and other sports, which we fully sponsor.

Continuing education is a big topic for us, and it's not just about allowing everyone to do something. We have coaches on board who engage in personal conversations and determine how they can assist. If there's a certain level where they can't provide further help, we have a wide range of external resources to offer. We also provide leadership training at our company, available to all team leads and department heads. Regarding language courses, do you have anything specific in mind?

#### **6.21 Regarding personal services and concierge services, such as cleaning services, officeing, or insurance services. Do you have those services?**

We do not provide those. Each individual is responsible for cleaning their own space and attending their own office appointments. However, we do have a designated package room where you can receive packages, but it's important not to abuse this service. We don't have extensive additional services, so individuals are responsible for managing their personal lives themselves.

In terms of benefits, we have a variety of services available through our pass system. We have different departments responsible for managing these benefits and ensuring they are provided fairly across different locations. For example, when it comes to the cafeteria, we have a dedicated crew that handles it. The same goes for other benefits like the BVG (public transportation), where there is a specific process involving the BRV (Benefit Representative) and the Allianz representative who interacts with authorized individuals. The JobBike program also has its own processes in place. Overall, we have various stakeholders involved in different areas to ensure the smooth running of these benefits.

#### **6.22 Does this department also participate in the task force for these benefits?**

No.

#### **6.23 Do you want them to be involved in any way?**

No.

#### **6.24 And why not?**

Because they are completely detached from it. The task force is specifically focused on the campus and the working environment. It's about shaping the workspace and finding ways to simplify meeting structures and improve the overall work environment. But the benefits they offer have no impact on someone's job, such as JobBike or other similar perks.

#### **6.25 And which additional benefit do you consider the most important and why?**

Oh, that's a good question. It may sound trivial, but I would say flexible working hours. It allows individuals to better integrate their work and personal lives. Everything else is an added bonus, but without a solid foundation of flexible working hours, it's difficult to achieve a good work-life balance.

#### **6.26 Do you have ergonomic seating arrangements or any health-related initiatives during work hours?**

We have height-adjustable desks, so everyone can adjust their workspace according to their preferences throughout the day. We make sure that all workstations are ergonomically set up. However, due to the nature of our work, where we often change desks, it also requires a certain level of personal responsibility. While the initial setup is done properly, if someone taller uses a desk, for example, they may need to readjust it lower. So, it's a combination of ensuring the basic setup and individuals taking responsibility for their comfort.

#### **6.27 Regarding the equipment for home and office, is that managed by the task force or HR?**

No, for the home office setup, it is handled through a Hardware form. When someone joins our company, they receive the hardware form and equipment before they start. So, they are already equipped and can set up their home office as needed, assuming they have a dedicated workspace. We provide the necessary hardware, such as desks and chairs. It is the individual's responsibility to make their home office functional. We aim to enable everyone to work from home, and if needed, they can visit any of our 15 locations nationwide to access additional equipment.

#### **6.28 How do secondary services contribute to work-life balance?**

When we talk about flexible working hours, childcare, and other aspects, they definitely play a significant role. They have a great impact, personally speaking. It's a Huge relief for me to know that when I come to the campus, I don't have to worry about packing food or any preparations in the morning. I can simply grab my bag and go, knowing that I'll be taken care of here. It's very pleasant and, of course, it eases my personal life because I don't have to spend hours making arrangements. On the other hand, there are also benefits that don't directly influence personal life or have a noticeable impact on work-life balance. For example, a company retirement plan is great and provides security, but in day-to-day life, you tend to forget about it. So, it's nice to have, but it doesn't significantly contribute to my work style or work-life balance.



Yes, and things like sports and psychological well-being also contribute to a balanced work-life. It's wonderful to have support on both levels. It keeps you engaged and fulfilled. You have the health promotion aspect, where you can exhaust yourself physically during the day and receive mental support when needed. It's about recharging your batteries in both directions, depending on your circumstances. It's truly valuable to know that after work, you can go for a workout at the gym, release your thoughts, and recharge mentally. It's beneficial for both the mind and body, and it's great to have the connection with work and enjoy attractive discounts for a super reasonable price. It all makes it enjoyable, right?

**6.29 Yes, what is the main reason why you offer so many benefits? Is it to improve work-life balance or maybe due to market competition?**

I would say it's a combination of both. But above all, it's important to us. We are on a growth trajectory, which means we need to attract and find new people, but we also want to retain our existing employees. It's a major focus for us to ensure our employees feel comfortable and have a solid foundation to balance their personal lives and work, to continue their personal development, and have exciting tasks. The overall work environment is also crucial, so they can say, "I enjoy being here, I enjoy working here," because motivated employees are at the core of any innovation. It's an essential element of our business model, as we thrive on being passionate and innovative.

**6.30 Do you have any feedback or perception regarding the secondary or additional services that are offered?**

Yes, well, you can tell that it has become somewhat commonplace. We were relatively early in offering a lot of them, around 40 in total. Nowadays, everything is already considered standard, even though there are still many companies that don't even provide a free cup of coffee or anything similar. So, in a way, on the job market, it's sometimes like competing with others who have nothing else to offer. That's something we've been noticing lately. Despite being well-established and offering a wide range of benefits, the expectations just keep increasing.

The initial impact and the variety of services offered had a very positive effect, both among existing employees and on the job market. However, that enthusiasm fades quickly. It's not really appreciated or valued anymore. The longer you have these benefits, the more they become taken for granted. It's a bit disappointing at times.

**6.31 Have you conducted any surveys or collected data on how satisfied people are with these services, or if there's anything missing, for example?**

Yes, we conduct regular surveys, and the responses are often the same. It's interesting. Most people are very satisfied with the offerings, but somehow, the topic of salary always comes up. It's fascinating because even if the salary is not bad when you consider salary ranges and conditions, people's subjective perception still heavily focuses on salary. It consistently comes up in surveys. They don't express gratitude for having access to various benefits. So, as I mentioned, I'm a bit concerned about the wear and tear of it all. It's a natural tendency, but also quite sad at times.

I'm sorry, but I can't provide you with that analysis or data. It's not something I have access to.

**6.32 Do you happen to have an idea of which benefits are highly appreciated and which ones are not as much?**

Everyone loves our comprehensive food offering. That's always a Hit, it's like an all-inclusive package. The four mentioned benefits are also highly valued: flexible working hours, childcare, Jobrad (job bike program), and employee development programs.

**6.33 Okay, are there any plans to expand or adapt the current offerings?**

Definitely. There are preliminary considerations in various directions. We're currently evaluating different options. We have two colleagues who are doing dual training and have dedicated their master's or bachelor's theses to this topic to assess our current situation and explore where we can go from here. Based on these studies, the ideas are already being discussed with the management.

We'll have to see what comes out of it. There are various thoughts, ranging from the much-discussed four-day workweek to expanding mobility options and implementing additional incentive systems to foster collaboration. These are all different starting points and thought processes.

**6.34 Is it also the case at your company that while employees appreciate being able to come to the office and have a designated workspace, they miss the personal touch? For example, if they clean up their workspace, it might look very basic without any personal pictures. But I could be mistaken.**

I've never heard anything negative about that, on the contrary, actually. It makes people feel more organized at work. However, there are cases where the surrounding areas are customized. For example, if you sit in a particular room with colleagues, they might hang up pictures or decorations. That kind of cross-departmental customization does happen. But overall, it's not a prevalent issue. It's more about personal preferences.

Some employees love coming to the office, some prefer working from home, and some enjoy a mix of both. It really varies on an individual basis. We haven't found a one-size-fits-all solution yet.

I believe it heavily depends on the company and the industry. Different workplaces have different ways of operating. For example, if you work in a software company, the working style and expectations are likely to be different compared to a creative agency or an office that thrives on brainstorming and collecting wild ideas. It really varies depending on where you are and the industry you're in.

So, there can definitely be different perceptions, but that also means having a diverse group of individuals who can thrive in different environments.

**6.35 Do you notice any differences in the various departments at your company?**

Yes, definitely. You can tell where the marketing and sales teams sit, as well as the developers. They belong to different groups with distinct needs and interests. Some prefer team spaces where they can meet and exchange ideas, while others prefer a quiet environment where they can put on their headsets and focus. It varies. We try to accommodate everyone's needs with the office layout, but it's not always easy.

**6.36 Who is responsible for addressing these needs, such as team spaces or individual requests?**

That would be the task force.

**6.37 But do you receive notifications when people request something or have any inquiries?**

If someone asks for something like team spaces, for example, we either already have an answer because we know the available options, or we inform them that it's in the planning stage. Then we direct them to the appropriate team for further information. However, such requests are rare. But when they do come, we try to handle them within two days.

**6.38 Does the work-life balance with additional benefits compare to other approaches or strategies like salary?**

Salary is crucial. Regardless of what is said out there about purpose and other factors, the salary must be competitive. If the salary is not right as a base, nothing else matters. It's really the fundamental aspect. I think every company should be aware of that.

Of course, work-life balance plays a role, but if the salary is right, it doesn't mean you can neglect other aspects. It's important to find a balance and complement each other with various measures.

**6.39 What value would you see if the task force worked closely with your team?**

None, to be honest. We have a representative from our team in the task force, and we are informed about their activities. However, how they design office spaces is not something we are particularly concerned about. We appreciate it if the spaces are modern and nice, but we have no stake in it.

We don't need to be involved because we are already fully occupied with our tasks. We wouldn't have the bandwidth to deal with facility management or space design, as it's not a traditional HR issue. While employee well-being is always important to us, those factors are not the main focus. We have dedicated individuals who take care of those areas.

**6.40 Okay, one more thing, maybe as an addition. So, if you look at my question, there might be something that hasn't been mentioned.**

Spontaneously, honestly, no.

**6.41 Alright then. I thought maybe I should mention why I kept asking about the task force and personnel management. I was thinking there might be something, um, that didn't come to mind immediately, something related to separations or individual issues that may arise. So, for safety's sake, I thought I'd ask.**

But actually, no. It's very strictly separated, and that's a good thing. It works perfectly for us, and we wouldn't do it any other way. Everyone has clear responsibilities, and it would be

completely misplaced for us to take care of facility management or space design because it's not a traditional HR matter. Of course, it's always related to employee well-being, and I'm fully on board with that, but in the end, those factors are not what's relevant for us. We have the people who focus on those areas.

They are the ones who take care of it, and they do a great job.

**6.42 For example, many companies have childcare facilities. Employees may go to the HR department and say they'd like to use it. However, the childcare facility itself, the room, or even the building, is operated by facility management. They do what they believe is best, even though the HR department may be closer to the employees and may have a better understanding of what they prefer or what the children need. That's how my question arose. Facility management doesn't really conduct employee surveys; that's typically done by the HR department, and they know the kind of people they work with. So, in your situation, when the task force or management decides what they think is nice or what the current trend is, it doesn't always match, and that's why it sometimes doesn't work.**

So, we can't really say, "We envision this." It all goes through the board, especially when it comes to childcare. For example, if employees want to enroll their children in an external daycare center, we provide a subsidy. Then it becomes a matter between the teachers and the employees, where you can decide which childcare system you want for your child. Here, on-site, we have our campus daycare operating under the Montessori program, so ultimately, it's an educational program, and everyone can assess if it fits their life situation.

Do I agree with it or is there another approach that suits me better? If everything aligns, we facilitate the registration process and so on. And that's how we handle it. Fortunately, it's not incredibly complicated for us. You could say that we have a lot of autonomy.

## Interview transcript respondent 7

### **7.1 Hello and thank you for participating. Can you start by describing your position in the company?**

I work in the People and Culture department. So, we handle everything related to personnel, such as inquiries for certifications or requests to work from abroad. Basically, anything that comes in on a daily basis. Of course, recruiting is also one of my responsibilities, and I usually handle the initial interviews before passing it on to the team leaders. Another major topic for us is payroll and absences. When someone reports sick, for example, I need a test result, and the issue of obtaining EU tests has become significant in Germany.

Since this year, when we have job vacancies, I usually conduct the first interviews before it goes to the teams and team leaders. Payroll is a significant focus for us because we consider it crucial to ensure that everyone receives the correct salary at the end of the month. Therefore, we have double and triple checks in place with a four-eye principle before it goes to the payroll office. We spend a day each month ensuring that it is properly prepared.

Additionally, I also conduct training and coaching internally, such as communication workshops. At the moment, I'm coaching a colleague to improve their communication skills during customer calls, making conversations smoother and more effective.

Furthermore, the entire team is responsible for employee satisfaction. We organize regular events and team-building activities. Last week, for example, we had an offsite event where we were in charge of the team-building slots. These are some of our group tasks.

### **7.2 And how many employees do you have?**

We currently have 85 employees. From September onwards, we'll have 86, so we're growing by one person. But for now, it's 85, including the management team.

### **7.3 Alright, then let's briefly discuss what I understand by Facility Management and additional services. Although I already sent this information, I just wanted to ensure clarity because I noticed some discrepancies in the definition with others, and it might lead to misunderstandings and different interpretations of my questions. So, under Facility Management, I understand not only janitorial or cleaning services, although they are part of it. It also encompasses workplace design and everything related to workplace layout, maintenance, for example, when new desks are needed or when offices remain vacant due to COVID-19, requiring a new concept. It covers everything related to facilities, including the cafeteria or sports facilities. Does this align with your definition of Facility Management?**

Yes, I can definitely work with that understanding. That's exactly how it functions in our company. It's not a problem since the Office Team and People and Culture share the same office space. I'm familiar with their tasks, and we often work hand in hand, so it fits perfectly. I can definitely provide you with information and assistance regarding that.

### **7.4 It's also one of the topics I'm investigating, whether Facility Management and the HR departments can be combined into one department, which would be called HFM (Human Resources and Facility Management). The question is whether they can achieve the best**

**possible outcome together. But if I understood correctly, this is already the case in your office, right?**

Yes, we sit together, and our tasks are clearly separated, but they often go hand in hand. For example, when it comes to birthdays, each person receives a voucher from us. We are responsible for organizing that, such as ordering the voucher. Until recently, it was also our responsibility to remember someone's birthday and communicate it to the team. The Office Team takes care of decorating the table and arranging something so that when the person comes to the office, they find a nice workspace. It's a collaborative effort, especially when someone gets married.

In such cases, we also arrange something from the company's side. For example, we provide a restaurant voucher so that the couple can have a meal together. However, the organization and table decoration are usually done by our Office Team, as they have divided the tasks among themselves. There is always someone present in the office every day. Today, for example, I am working from home, my boss is also working from home, and my colleague is using the flexible Friday option and is not physically present. So, there is always someone available to take care of things.

But we constantly communicate and coordinate closely with each other. It's not always clear-cut, like these are your tasks, and these are ours. Sometimes an inquiry comes to us, and we forward it, or we discuss together how to solve it. We are still relatively small, so we don't have the luxury of saying, "Go to the specialized department in the next room."

**7.5 What do you think about this division, where the HR department handles the organization and the Facility Management team takes care of the execution? How does it contribute to work-life balance or add value, in your opinion?**

Well, we actually have a core value called partnership, and I think it embodies a partnership-like behavior when HR and Facility Management work hand in hand. It's important to have clear responsibilities so that everyone knows who to approach. Otherwise, things may fall through the cracks or get neglected. Having a clear organization and being able to reach out to the person responsible directly is essential. When I receive a request, I can assess its feasibility, and if needed, I can go directly to the person in the company who is responsible and say, "Hey, can you take care of this?" Then I receive feedback like, "Yes, I'll handle it," and it gets done. I think it's great, it's a combination of collaboration and clear responsibilities, and it works well in our case.

**7.6 Can you also say something about it? Specifically, in Berlin, do you think it improves the work-life balance of employees, just to clarify?**

No, for the Club Alter (the organization), for example. Let's say because an employee wants to do flexible working. And then I assume that, well, the HR department would handle the organization and the Office team would perhaps take care of the equipment or something like that.

In general, at our place, let me explain a bit more. We generally love to exchange ideas and work together in the office. Nonetheless, we have a mobile working and remote working arrangement for everyone, which is set up through settings and calendars. This means that each person receives 120 days of mobile working and 20 days of remote working per year. The difference is that from Monday to Thursday, we have a core working hours period from 10

AM to 4 PM. During this time, every colleague should be available for questions. If someone is in a meeting, it doesn't mean they're not available. It means that within that time, I should receive a response if I message or approach a colleague. This core working hours period is mainly for customer-related matters that may not directly concern our department but are important for colleagues working with clients.

Now, remote working is a separate arrangement. For example, I can request to work from Bali. Of course, I would be in a different time zone and may not be able to adhere to the German core working hours. So, I can request to work remotely during that time. For example, I could be working while my colleagues are sleeping, and vice versa, I sleep while they work during the day. These 140 days per year can be utilized by each colleague. We use a personnel organizational program called Personio, maybe you've heard of it. Each employee has their own profile in Personio, and this working arrangement is recorded there. The employee can request a mobile working day for the following Monday, and it is approved by the team leader. This process doesn't involve the HR department directly, but rather goes through the team leader. The team leader says, "Okay, fine, you can do mobile working on that day." This basically means that I'm not working from the office but from a mobile workspace in my own time zone. It doesn't have to be Berlin; it could be Cologne, Amsterdam, or theoretically even Spain. The main point is that I can work on small tasks from Monday to Friday.

That's the basic structure that we offer to everyone. Anyone can make use of it, you know.

And to answer your further question about equipment, when employees join, they receive a laptop, which is portable and comes with a charger. In the office, we have docking stations, so you don't need to bring your charger to the office. Each meeting room is equipped with docking stations for various laptop models that we have.

Certain colleagues require laptops with higher graphics performance. That's why we have different models, and there are various chargers available in every meeting room so that everyone can connect their devices. Each workspace has a docking station, and for home office setups, we provide keyboards, mice, additional monitors, and of course, a HDMI cable is also needed. We ask about these requirements before the hiring process. We inquire about the equipment needed for their home office setup, so to speak.

In the office, each desk is equipped with two monitors. So, when I connect my laptop, I can use three screens in total. We recently made some updates. It might be interesting to note that we had 123 employees but only 76 seats because not everyone is present at the same time. We initially had 15 height-adjustable desks, but we expanded that number to 35. We made this improvement to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to come to the office and work while standing if they prefer. We don't have assigned seats; instead, we practice desk sharing. The departments sit together to some extent, but each colleague doesn't have a designated spot with their name on it. The desks are cleaned up every evening so that someone else can use the space the next morning. That's how it works at our office.

I believe this setup contributes to the work-life balance of our colleagues. For example, if someone wants to work from abroad, it doesn't necessarily have to be remote work. They can simply request to work from the Netherlands for two weeks, aligning with our time zone. In that case, it would be considered mobile working rather than remote working. However, it's important for the HR department to be informed. We have an internal policy that each employee signs when they join, outlining the procedures. They need to inform the HR department about the duration of their work and their location, whether it's a Hotel or private accommodation. We pass this information to the payroll department, and they apply for an A1 certificate for the employee through the health insurance company. This allows employees to

work freely in a foreign country for up to 180 days per year without incurring tax obligations. We do this for the employee.

### **7.7 How utilized is this service and which department is responsible for it?**

Yes, we have a policy in place. Employees need to submit their request to work from abroad six weeks in advance to allow sufficient time for the health insurance company to process it. This option is widely utilized by our colleagues. I have personally used it as well. Once approved, you receive the certificate, and if someone asks you about your presence in the foreign country, whether it's for vacation or work, you can present the certificate as proof. Just yesterday, we received two requests from colleagues who want to work from Tenerife in November.

So, yes, this option is well-utilized.

Now, let me briefly address the initial question again because I think I got carried away with the example of flexible working. The question was whether facility management and HR collaborate to contribute to the work-life balance of employees. I think that regardless of who is in the office, colleagues, even if they may not have certain access rights from the Office team, can still identify the processes and determine who the direct contact person is. They can either connect with that person directly, or sometimes they take note of things and inform us quickly. We then handle the tasks accordingly. It's beneficial when I'm not in the office because if an employee comes in with a question related to HR, for example, my colleagues can say, "I've heard that three times already, and this is how we handle it here." They can direct them to the appropriate person, like Dennis. If he's not available, they can offer assistance themselves.

### **7.8 So, I do believe that having shorter communication paths is good for the employees because it reduces their effort or workload, right?**

Yes, that's why I think it works well. We often receive feedback from people who say it's great here, especially those who have worked in other companies before. They appreciate that we respond quickly or promptly, and things are resolved efficiently. They've experienced situations in other companies where processes took forever. You would ask a question to the HR department and receive a response two weeks later. That's not the case with us. Yes, it's also because of our efforts. We want things to be resolved quickly. However, there are only three of us here: two full-timers and a student who works with us for 20 hours, but not every day. So, it's essentially like having 2.5 employees, yet we have a very short response time. I believe people value that.

### **7.9 In the past, I've encountered many people who said that facility management and HR are separate departments and don't work closely together. As a result, services offered by facility management, such as the cafeteria menu or sports activities, weren't utilized as effectively because while the HR department conducted surveys, they didn't pass on the information to facility management. Consequently, things were done without a clear understanding of what the employees specifically wanted. That's why I found this question so important.**

Okay, I understand. In our case, we actually take care of these matters. We genuinely care about employee satisfaction. For example, we organized a Health day last year in collaboration with the health insurance company Barmer, and we're planning to do it again this year because it was highly appreciated. But we involve the Office team in these matters because they relate to activities that take place in the office premises.



We also used to offer "active breaks" until recently. As you mentioned sports activities, we had a trainer who offered sessions at specific time slots via Teams. We needed to coordinate the availability of spaces, so meeting rooms might be blocked off if someone wanted to participate. They would bring their laptops, go to the designated room, and join the active break, which lasted about 15 minutes with some exercises. Additionally, every two weeks on Wednesdays, we had massages. For example, I, as part of the HR team, organized the massage sessions. A masseur would come to our office through a company called Vitalisten, which essentially rents out massage therapists. They have their own scheduling tool, and employees can book a time slot during the break. This falls under our responsibility because we also ensure that employees take their breaks properly. It shouldn't happen during working hours. On the other hand, the company covers a significant portion of the cost. A 30-minute massage session costs 25€, but the company pays 20€, so employees only need to pay 5€ in cash to the masseur. The room needs to be blocked off during those times, and that's where the Office management comes in. The room won't be available from 10 a.m until 4 p.m..

It's always challenging to cluster these things, that's what I mean. That's why it all overlaps and requires coordination; otherwise, it won't work. You see, they would stand there and say, "Hey, P and C, you organized the massage, but we needed the room for a completely different project, so we need to coordinate closely." On the other hand, the team leader from the Office team takes care of all the invoicing. The Vitalisten company, for example, sends us an invoice, and they want the difference to be paid. But we don't handle that; it's the Office team's responsibility. They come to us and ask, "Can you provide us with the names of all the massage slots?" Last week, for example, we had an issue. The masseur arrived late due to a train delay, and we didn't have a problem at first because the first massage slot couldn't be used. One of our colleagues wanted to use it but couldn't because the masseur was late. So, I dealt with the company and said, "Please cancel the first slot." They agreed to adjust the invoice, and I informed our accounting department that a corrected invoice was coming. In the end, we don't want to pay more than necessary. It's all interconnected in our system, but it requires a lot of communication. I think it's working quite well.

**7.10 Now, let's move away from the Facility and HR departments and shift a bit to the 4th category. Some have already been mentioned. I have written down 11 categories, but feel free to share any ideas that come to mind, and I can check which categories haven't been mentioned yet.**

So, let me go through what I have in my mind. First of all, there's flexible working, which includes working from abroad or remotely. Then we have "Flexible Friday," where employees have shortened working hours only from Monday to Thursday.

Quick explanation: We don't necessarily encourage overtime at our company as it's part of maintaining work-life balance. However, if overtime does occur, every employee has the opportunity to compensate for it on Fridays.

I ask my colleagues if we can schedule appointments together on Fridays and if they're available. I don't know if someone might say, "I have 6 hours of overtime, and I'll just take them on Friday and not work at all."

We used to have yoga and Pilates every Wednesday, and there's a yoga studio across from us. However, we paused it recently because the demand was low. We'll probably resume it in the fall. Last summer, we also had a lot of yoga sessions on our rooftop terrace. Additionally, we organize health days at least once a year.

I'm currently thinking about what exactly we offer our employees in terms of company pension plans. This is handled by the HR department, of course. It starts after the probationary period, and we collaborate with Allianz for this. Here, if someone leaves within the first 2 years, the money they contributed will be partially refunded. However, if someone stays longer than 2 years and then resigns, they will definitely receive the accumulated funds from this plan. They can either use it as a savings fund, where the company contributes, or they can choose to contribute their own portion and continue paying into it as an additional retirement benefit.

As a family-friendly employer, we also ensure that part-time work is possible, even in leadership positions. We have team leaders who are mothers or fathers and work part-time with us. We believe that balancing work and family life should not be a barrier to becoming a manager.

We organize various team events, starting with fun afternoons, summer parties, and Christmas celebrations. Twice a year, we have offsite events, one digital in winter and one on-site in summer. Last week, we spent 3 days in Brandenburg, where we also had a barbecue evening. We arrange several team events and fun activities, including yoga sessions, to ensure that leisure time is not neglected. We also engage in activities during working hours, such as regular office bingo games facilitated by a colleague from the Office Management team.

Every four weeks, we have a breakfast in the office that everyone can participate in. Cleo takes care of the arrangements, as part of the Office Management tasks.

Do we have anything else? Let me think.

Currently, for example, starting next week, Claudio is renting a summer house for the second year in a row. It's also located in Brandenburg. Last year, we had one in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. This serves as a regular office space where colleagues can go and work, and they can also use it during the weekends. We have a room reservation list, and they can bring their partners along. We rent it for a total of 6 weeks, and two of those weeks were coordinated with the parents in our company to determine the best time for them. During two weeks, we even provide childcare, so parents can go there and their children will be taken care of while they work. They don't need to use their mobile working quota for this, as it is considered the same as being present in the office. We ensure that the location is fully equipped with everything we provide in the office, including reliable internet, screens, docking stations, and facilities like fruit, coffee, and milk. We set up a cereal bar, similar to the one we have in the office. These are things we always offer, and I sometimes forget to mention them because they have become so commonplace that we take them for granted. I can't think of anything else at the moment.

**7.11 I recently heard about the gastronomy and catering services. Besides the fruit, coffee, and milk, I wondered if there was something else, like lunch or other meal options. Perhaps something that would replace the need to cook at home again.**

No, we don't offer that. Here's what we have: a cereal bar, fruit, and a well-stocked freezer for snacking. We provide drinks, including sparkling and still water from on-site water dispensers and a refrigerator with soft drinks, sugar-free beverages, and even beer. According to our company policy, it's allowed to drink beer in the office after 4:00 PM, but alcohol is not permitted during the core working hours.

In the past, we considered implementing a sustainable food delivery service, but the offer wasn't attractive enough for us, so we didn't proceed with it. However, we do care for our employees' well-being. Currently, we are actually planning to organize a cooking workshop.

The idea came up two days ago, suggesting that we all come together for a day of cooking. We have fully equipped kitchens with ovens, stoves, microwaves, freezers, and refrigerators.

The plan is to form a group and even hire a chef who can come on-site and share some tips and tricks for preparing quick and healthy meals in the office. For example, we have a Rewe store right next door, so the idea is to show how to quickly buy something and prepare a Healthy meal in the office. However, we don't provide complete meals on a regular basis.

**7.12 So this means that during lunchtime, employees have the option to prepare their own meals?**

Exactly.

**7.13 But this means they don't have to deal with cooking after work, right?**

Are you referring to the idea with the chef?

**7.14 In general, even if you don't offer catering services, do you provide the opportunity for employees to cook at your office?**

Exactly. We have two kitchens. The smaller one only has a microwave, refrigerator, and sink. There's also an espresso machine, but it's quite small. In the larger kitchen, we have a microwave, stove, oven, refrigerator, and even a fully automatic coffee machine. It's a complete kitchen setup. Some colleagues have even cooked themselves a schnitzel for lunch. I found it amusing because I wouldn't do that in the office as it would be too stressful for me. But they took half a Hour to prepare and then enjoyed a relaxed half-hour break. They simply allocated a Hour for themselves. Sometimes colleagues even arrange to cook together after work. We had a situation during Christmas time where colleagues baked cookies together in the office. They turned it into a small team event, and the next day, there were plenty of cookies available for everyone. I haven't noticed anyone cooking a full dinner in the evenings, as some colleagues stay in the office until 7:00 PM or 7:30 PM. But I have definitely seen colleagues cooking during lunchtime.

And breakfast, sorry, the breakfast at the office, which we have every 4 weeks, is also provided by us, but we see it more as a team-building measure where everyone comes together, eats, and exchanges ideas. However, it's a small cost, and Little O takes care of the organization completely.

**7.15 As for the cooking workshop, is it something that would happen once a year or on a weekly basis?**

That was just an idea because we noticed during the last health day that a nutritionist was overwhelmed by our colleagues. It received a great response, so it sparked the idea of doing something like that again. I mentioned that I have a very good friend who is a chef, and I suggested that we could ask her to come to our office and do it. I have already spoken to her, and she agreed to do it. We want to give it a try and communicate it to the team because we want to offer something new instead of the usual health day. Depending on how it is received, we'll see.

Of course, we also consider the costs and the interest of the team. For example, yoga is quite expensive. Clear Nero covers the cost of yoga classes, but the yoga studio charges us a substantial amount. However, if only two colleagues attend, and the yoga instructor still sends a High bill, we ask the team who is currently interested. We recently did this, and when only three responses came in, we contacted those individuals again and said it wasn't cost-effective for us at the moment. We suggested pausing it and restarting in September, and everyone was okay with that. We are mindful of the costs and adjust accordingly.

If, for example, we receive a bill from the kitchen for a certain amount, but only three colleagues attended, we might reconsider doing it again. If 30 people sign up, it's a different story. We might consider splitting it into two sessions. It depends on the response. We are flexible and responsive.

**7.16 Regarding the food delivery service that was considered, what if employees had to pay for it themselves, or would there be some contribution to reduce the cost? From my perspective, it would improve work-life balance by allowing for shorter breaks, maybe half a Hour, and then having more time after work for personal matters. It would address the work-life balance while still ensuring that people have something to eat.**

Mhm, yes, that's it. We looked into it. There is a specific monthly allowance that can be provided to each employee tax-free, and from the company's perspective, it's €50. I think it has been or will soon be increased a bit.

This delivery service could have been a plan. We could communicate what will be available to eat next week to the team, and then each person could place their order until the day before. They could choose what they want to eat for tomorrow, and it would be sustainably delivered to the office. However, the decisive reason why we didn't do it, and I must say, every employee would have received their own access, which could be topped up with credit through the company.

We thought about all the details, all these points, but then the sticking point came up. The company wanted a monthly provision cost of €1,500, even if no one ordered any food. So, even if no one ordered food for four weeks straight, we would still receive a bill for €1,500. That's why we decided against it. We said there are alternatives we are currently considering, so we'll have to see how we handle it. We definitely think about supporting it in the long run.

Exactly. Yes, that's what we're currently doing. We have our own merchandise shop, which includes a lot of clothing. Each employee receives a voucher every year that they can spend, for example, in this workshop. They all wear the clothes because the logo is relatively small, so they can also wear them privately. The clothes are really cool, good quality, so it's highly appreciated. For example, that's something we still have. Many people say, for example, that they always wear jogging pants when jogging, so they really use them privately. We still have that, for example. But with the food, we'll see how it develops.

**7.17 Okay, good to know. If you think about it, there are various delivery services, so maybe you'll find something.**

Yes, sustainability is still a consideration for us, and unfortunately, many people are still not very sustainable. We don't want to have a mountain of waste, and the service we had in mind would have delivered in reusable containers that could be returned for the next time, etc. That's why there was a certain provision amount, but in the end, it was just too high for us because

even if we said it could be dependent on the orders, even if no one ordered, the cost would still be too much for us. We said we won't do it. But you can still check it out if you want. They're called Bella and Bona, and the concept is really cool. You can surely find them online. They offer it specifically for companies. As I said, I was very excited about it, but in the end, the cost was a bit too high.

**7.18 I also have the category of environmentally friendly services. You've mentioned a few times before that sustainability is very important to you, so I thought I'd ask again. Maybe there's something you haven't mentioned yet that relates to environmentally friendly services.**

Definitely. It's good that you mentioned the category. So, we actually pay for public transportation tickets for our employees who want them. Some employees don't want it, but everyone is offered the option. We cover the €49 Germany ticket for people living in Berlin, and for those living a bit further outside in Brandenburg, we provide a different subsidy because they have a different ticket, but we still cover it.

We also provide the opportunity, through coordination, for colleagues who come to work on an e-bike or e-scooter. We have an eco-friendly energy provider on-site where they can charge their batteries. It doesn't have to be every day, but there is definitely the possibility to recharge their batteries at our location.

In general, all the food we buy in the office is organic. We make sure everything is organic, including milk, fruits, and coffee. We pay close attention to that.

I'm trying to think of any other sustainability topics.

**7.19 Maybe courses or something like that? I can imagine that you have a lot of resources or initiatives related to sustainability.**

Yes, we actually had something like that. We have many vegans in the team, and there was a colleague who conducted a training session on implementing a vegan lifestyle. It was a cross-topic training that counted as work time for everyone, and it received a lot of positive feedback. So, one colleague conducted the training, and others could participate if they were interested.

As I mentioned, during work hours.

We also have a learning platform called E-Learning. Our office management uploaded some videos on how to reduce electricity consumption in the office, such as turning off lights when leaving various rooms. We have telephone booths that also function as meeting rooms, and in addition to those, we have small telephone booths equipped with mini screens. The lights used to be on continuously, unless someone turned off the main switch in the evenings.

The office team made improvements and installed motion sensors in these telephone booths. So, when you leave, the lights go off because they don't need to be on when nobody is inside.

We have a policy and training on how to use the heating system in the office correctly and how to save water. We have an intranet with links to these training materials. The office management has put together a lot of resources. We call it "How to Use" guides.

For example, there are guides on which dishwasher program to use from Wish for the most environmentally friendly option. There are instructions on how to clean the coffee machine properly, so it lasts longer and we don't have to constantly buy new ones. And there are

guidelines on how to use the air conditioning most efficiently. So, there are various areas covered, and employees can access the information on the internet or through our learning platform.

The workplace is also efficient, and the office management has conducted various trainings, including those on occupational safety. That's an important aspect too, but now let's talk about how to use your workspace in a way that ensures you feel good at the end of your workday. For example, how to properly use an adjustable desk to avoid back pain and how to sit in a way that promotes good health. We also had a Health day where a trainer showed us in small groups how to sit correctly, especially for jobs that involve prolonged sitting. The goal was to ensure that we could go out in the evening without experiencing back pain due to sitting all day. Of course, everyone is ultimately responsible for themselves, but we can only offer guidance and support. There are many small things that happen to create a better work environment.

**7.20 Okay, let me quickly go through the other categories before you run out of time.**

No worries. Let me check my calendar quickly, but I don't think I have another important appointment until 1 PM, so we won't need that much time. Yeah, everything is fine. I have time.

**7.21 Great, this is an interview, and the duration can vary because if there's a lot to cover, it might take longer, and I might have some follow-up questions too. But if most categories don't apply, then I won't have much to ask.**

Sure, take your time. I can talk a lot, as always.

**7.22 Let me briefly go back to the fitness rooms and wellness facilities. I have a question regarding the rooms because my study is mainly focused on urban areas. Are the rooms empty and used for various purposes, or are they specifically dedicated fitness rooms? How does it work in your case?**

Well, our office is located on the 4th floor, which is accessible for everyone. We don't have a separate accessible toilet because there is one available downstairs in the building. So, during the building's construction and initial occupancy, it was decided not to include an accessible toilet in our office. As for the office setup, it was done by an interior designer in collaboration with the management and the HR department. The office team played a significant role in this as well. All the meeting rooms are furnished with seating options.

We aimed to create more of a living room atmosphere in our meeting rooms rather than the typical setup with a table and eight chairs, a white wall, and a flipchart. For example, we integrated some artwork to improve acoustics. One room even has a complete moss wall. The meeting rooms usually have carpeting to enhance the ambiance. We also have very comfortable chairs.

You'll find all the necessary technology in each meeting room. If I enter with my laptop and realize my battery is low, I can find a prepared box with a labeled charger because that's where it belongs. I can also find a microphone that can connect to multiple laptops for larger meetings. But sometimes, I like to sit in a comfortable chair and relax a bit with nice colors. Each meeting room has a slightly different theme. One might have a green theme, while another is more blue. And the names of our meeting rooms reflect our values and our company's mission. For

example, one meeting room has a large, cozy seating area and even a football table. It also has a very large table where I believe 14 people can sit. This particular meeting room is not available for booking during lunchtime as it is blocked off for colleagues to take their break from 12 to 1 PM.

Through Outlook, we also have a room called "Partnership," which is used for larger meetings or when colleagues want to brainstorm together. In this room, there is a sofa and a bean bag where you can sit wherever you want, whether it's at the table, on the sofa, or on the bean bag. We have caricatures of every employee hanging in this room, which adds to the atmosphere. These caricatures are created by an artist who draws each employee. It creates a cozy environment where you can lounge on the sofa and feel comfortable.

### **7.23 How do you think this contributes to Berlin's image?**

I believe it does contribute because our colleagues don't just sit rigidly at their workstations. Oh, I also forgot to mention, we have breakout areas located between different work areas. These areas are not enclosed but have tables and a large window frontage. They are separated by tall partitions. We have many plants in the office, giving it a green and jungle-like appearance, which creates a warm atmosphere and good acoustics. For example, we have a sofa in the breakout area where colleagues can sit and have a brief exchange without needing to book a meeting room. It is well-received, especially when people are thinking about how to work with clients or tackle projects. They often sit together in the kitchen, grabbing a drink or having a coffee and discussing various projects or ideas. It's not rigidly confined to their workstations. They say, "Let's go to the kitchen" and have informal discussions. The breakout areas are utilized quite a lot.

Regarding the meeting rooms, they are primarily designed for meetings. However, when we have a massage session, it always takes place in the one meeting room without glass walls. The meeting rooms are usually transparent, except for this one. Before the massage session, we rearrange the room by moving the table to the side and preparing towels for the masseuse to place their oils without damaging the table. The massage room is located next to a toilet so that the masseuse can wash their hands, and they are provided with drinks and snacks. When you enter the room, it feels like a mini massage studio rather than a meeting room or an office.

### **7.24 Can you briefly explain why you think this atmosphere, the layout of the office or meeting rooms, contributes positively? You mentioned earlier that it's not just about fixed workstations. Is there anything more you can add to that?**

I believe it has a significant impact on the well-being of employees because it provides a pleasant environment. It doesn't feel like a typical large open-plan office. We have split the space in a way that allows plenty of natural light to come in. This contributes to the success of our plants as well. When colleagues come to the office, they often say they enjoy being there because they feel comfortable in the atmosphere. They can leave their work behind and not bring it home with them. Everyone handles this differently. I can easily separate myself from work by tidying up my workstation, but other colleagues often say, "Even though I'm at home, work is still present." So they prefer coming to the office and appreciate the beautiful environment. They enjoy being in the office.

What we often have is people saying, "Hey, where are you?" and I reply, "I'm sitting in one of our meeting rooms." They then say, "Oh, it doesn't look like a typical meeting room." I tell them that it has a bit of a living room vibe. It's fun to sit in such a comfortable chair and think, "Okay,

I'm not sitting rigidly at my desk, but I'm here in a cozy setting, attending a meeting." It's quite pleasant, and I still have access to the technology I need if I want to use it. That adds to the comfort because I don't have a big TV hanging on the wall in every room at home that I can use for presentations. So, in that sense, yes.

**7.25 Do you also offer childcare services as you briefly mentioned in this summer house?**

At the summer house, yes, we do.

**7.26 Is it available at your office or when you are in Berlin?**

We do offer it. Well, we would like to offer it, but currently, the parents don't actually need it.

We have a small group of parents, so we directly reach out to them and say, "Hey, if you need it, we can provide childcare at the office. Just let us know in advance." In this case, in advance means informing the provider 48 hours beforehand. So, it would be perfectly fine to say, "Next week, my daycare is closed due to a strike. Can I bring my child with me? I would need childcare." Because we offer mobile working, our colleagues tend to work from home rather than bringing their children to the office.

But at the summer house, it is definitely used because people bring their children there. During the day, the children are taken care of, which is something they would normally do at home or maybe they have another person at home, like their partner, to help out.

For example, my boss often brings her son. We don't need formal childcare because he can usually entertain himself. He's five and a Half years old, and my boss manages the situation accordingly. On the days when the aquarium service comes to maintain the aquarium we have in the office, she brings her son with her. The woman from the aquarium service keeps him occupied near the aquarium. It's another interesting aspect.

But she hasn't actually used the formal childcare service because her son is very independent and can entertain himself well.

But we do offer it.

**7.27 Are there other employees who bring their children as well?**

Yes, of course. Anyone can bring their children, but it's quite rare, I must say, because people usually prefer to stay at home.

**7.28 Can pets, like dogs, also be brought to the office?**

Right, I haven't mentioned that yet. Yes, we actually have a pet-friendly office, and some colleagues bring their dogs. We have a list where colleagues with dogs have to register and specify the days when they bring their dogs. This is because there are colleagues who are afraid of or allergic to dogs, and they can check the list to decide whether to sit in a specific area or stay home.



They say it's okay, but the dog shouldn't sit near them. They prefer to stay home on days when a dog with long hair is present. We have organized this as well, and it's well-received. The dogs feel comfortable, but of course, the dog should be office-friendly. For example, yesterday we had three dogs in the office. I think we have six or seven dog owners. Yesterday, three of them brought their dogs. One colleague, for instance, has a small terrier who is quite possessive of her territory. When you approach her area, he might growl a bit, but overall, he is office-friendly.

Another colleague has recently acquired a puppy. She needs to make sure he becomes a bit more house-trained before she can bring him to the office because it's important that the dog is house-trained. We don't want him running around the office all the time and potentially bothering people who may be afraid of dogs. Most of the dogs in our office respond well to commands, and they sometimes play together around the table when another dog arrives. It's quite amusing, but otherwise, they stay with their owners in their designated areas and enjoy being petted when someone passes by. It's lovely, and I find that colleagues often take the opportunity to interact with the dogs and get their cuddle session because a dog's presence emits a different kind of warmth than a calm human presence. It contributes to a positive atmosphere in the office, for sure. And when one of them gets elected as "dog of the day," everyone gets excited. It's interesting and nice.

### **7.29 Do you have transportation services? For example, carpooling programs or bike parking? I'm not sure, maybe even a job bike?**

Good point. Yes, we offer Jobrad, that's what we have.

And in general, we have bicycle parking downstairs. There are parking spaces on the premises of the building where many other tenants, offices, and companies are located. There are bike racks, but there is also an area that is only accessible to employees, a slightly secured area with a key, so they can safely park their bikes there. Yes, Jobrad is available too. We offer that as well.

And carpooling. Yes, when it comes to going somewhere, definitely, but not necessarily for commuting to work. The colleagues can organize that themselves.

For off-site visits, for example, there have been carpooling arrangements. People were asked if they would take the train or drive by car. Those who opted for driving would ideally take their colleagues along to avoid one person sitting alone in a five-seater car. The cost of the trip is covered, and we organized it so that no car would arrive empty in the end.

Exactly. I also remembered something before I forget. We also offer social days per year. Each employee can take two social days, and they are paid according to their hourly rate. It's up to them how they use those days. We have a small group that organizes this internally and reaches out to various companies, asking if we can contribute. For example, we have already cleaned park facilities with the BSR, packed food packages with the Tafel, and supported the Berlin Homeless Aid. Another colleague has collected donations from colleagues and friends, totaling €1,880. They used their social day for that purpose.

He had previously obtained a list from the food office and homeless aid organization of urgently needed items, actual requested donations that are always needed. He purchased those items, including toothbrushes, toothpaste, tampons, sanitary pads, and similar items for the homeless aid organization. These are things that people tend to donate less often, but are still necessary. He used his car to buy all these things and then handed them over to the two institutions. He

was given credit for his working hours on that day. We offer this to everyone. Each user has a quota of two days per year that they can use for this purpose.

**7.30 Do you also have convenience services, like package delivery, cleaning service, or laundry? Things that make daily life easier or even travel organization, things that are used by the office for work and can also be used privately.**

Yes, everyone can have their packages delivered to the office. That's completely fine. The only requirement is that they are clearly labeled with the recipient's name so that we can identify them.

Mhm, the equipment that is provided, like laptops, is clearly specified and can be used privately as well. For example, if someone doesn't have a personal laptop, they can use their work laptop. I personally use my work laptop after working hours because I don't have a personal one anymore. And I also use the company's licenses, like for Word or PowerPoint.

Exactly, we don't have cleaning or laundry services. You mean more like services for employees, right? That would make their workday easier. No, we don't have those, but we do have the package service and the technology that can be used.

**7.31 I have one more category, and that is personal services, like office ATMs or officeing services, insurance services, or hair salons.**

We did actually consider a Hair salon but haven't implemented it yet. It's something we've thought about. Apart from that, there's currently nothing in that area that we offer. However, we do support our employees. For example, we have people from Ukraine who work with us, who have come from Ukraine to Germany. We have supported them with language courses, for example. We also have two Ukrainian colleagues who grew up in Germany, and we paid for their working hours so that they could take care of bureaucratic procedures. They needed to apply for work permits, and KLA NEO, one of the colleagues who grew up in Germany, was given a day off to accompany them and help with the paperwork. We handled it on an individual basis.

Yes, at the very beginning, you had a general question about office usage, especially during the time of the pandemic. I had a thought that comes to mind now. Of course, there was a mandatory work-from-home policy, and we had to send everyone home. And then gradually, things started to loosen up, but many people still stayed at home. By the way, during that time, we naturally suspended the mobile working quota. It wasn't applicable for that period, so nobody had to use it.

Our office is divided into two sections. In the first section, you'll find the large kitchen, and it's separated a bit by a fire door, which is why we refer to it as Section 1 and Section 2. By the way, the first section also has a shower. So if colleagues go jogging in the morning and come straight to work, they are allowed to shower here, freshen up, and even lock themselves in the room completely. They have the space all to themselves.

In the second section, we have the large partnership area, two toilets, a smaller kitchen, and two meeting rooms that can be completely closed off. When the war in Ukraine broke out and not many colleagues were in the office, we opened up the first section for employees and essentially closed off the second section. We accommodated refugees and provided them with a basic supply of groceries that we purchased.

They could then use the lockable meeting room, for example, where we had a mother with a newborn. She could completely close off the room, giving her privacy with the baby. They made good use of the shower at the front, and our Ukrainian colleagues also supported them. For official matters, KLA NEO accompanied the two girls as an interpreter and helped with any questions. We allowed them to take time off and we paid for their work, for example.

That's what we wanted to do as part of our social commitment. We had a total of four families and one individual stay with us for varying periods. Sometimes they were there for a week, and sometimes for six weeks, until they moved on to other places in Germany. Some went to Heidelberg, while others stayed in Berlin. It was important to those two colleagues to be able to help, and I simply said, "Yes, of course, let's do something. We'll make it happen, and you'll have the time to take care of it."

### **7.32 Which of the additional services do you find most helpful or important for work-life balance?**

From all the ones we offer? Oh, that's a tough one.

Well, I personally find the Flexi Friday really great, I must say. I work 37.5 hours myself but I'm more of an early bird. I like to come in at 7:30 am and naturally stay until 4:00 pm. With the flexible working hours, I usually finish around 4:00 pm. But of course, I gladly take advantage of Flexi Friday when I have accumulated overtime, like next week. I simply scheduled some personal appointments on Friday because I already have overtime hours, which I will use next Friday. I'll work from 8:00 am to 10:00 am, and then I'll have the weekend.

Yes, I think that's really nice. Having three consecutive days off is definitely nicer than having to work until 4:00 pm on Fridays. For example, today, it's raining outside, but I don't mind. I'll just stay here and work the whole day.

### **7.33 How do these secondary services and facilities contribute to improving work-life balance in general?**

I think they provide a sense of well-being on one hand and a sense of connection with the company on the other hand, yes. It's a give and take. I receive something, and maybe I give something in return, or yes. And I believe that it really represents satisfaction for the people in the end.

When I come to the office in the morning, I don't have to think about whether I need to stop by the bakery for a roll because I know everything is available at the office. I can have cereal, grab some fruit, the coffee is there. I can just arrive, relax, enjoy my cereal, and not worry about my breakfast, for example. It's like heaven, yes.

### **7.34 What is your definition of work-life balance? What do you understand by it?**

For me, work-life balance is when it doesn't escalate into stress. It means that I don't feel like I can't manage my personal life while being in work mode. I can combine things I enjoy with work. For example, I enjoy doing sports, and I attend fitness classes that have fixed schedules. That means I can't be flexible. The fitness class doesn't change just because I have to work longer. But I can adjust my working hours a bit to ensure that I can attend my fitness classes

on certain days. That's what I find important. I can plan and say, "Hey, on that day, I won't be here, but I still have overtime hours. Goodbye." I can simply organize my life.

I also have a garden, so I can work from there. I can enjoy fresh air. I don't have to be constantly in the office, even in my position. I have the option to work from somewhere else. That's the great thing about it. It's about how well my private and professional life fit together, that they are compatible. That's the greatest gift for me, that it works, and I don't leave on Fridays and think, "What have I actually done all week? I've just been working." I don't have that feeling, no. It's about adapting work to life and not the other way around, as it may have been in the past.

Exactly. Yes. If I were to go to my boss now and say, "Hey, I can't manage it anymore. I only want to work 35 hours," she would say, "Okay, let's see how we can make that work. We'll figure out a way for you to feel good because ultimately, if I'm stressed due to work and we can't find a solution, then I'll eventually leave, and that won't benefit the company at all, right?"

**7.35 Have you noticed an improvement in the work-life balance of employees since we started offering these additional services? Sorry for switching to English, but I'm referring to the secondary services provided in combination with the HR and Facility Management.**

As long as I've been here, I wouldn't say there has been a noticeable improvement because there have already been some benefits. We continually receive feedback that it's great to see how much effort we put into finding individual solutions. For example, during our off-site, we recently re-evaluated our benefits and asked what more we can do, and we consistently receive feedback that people appreciate the fact that we really look for individual solutions and ensure everyone is doing well. Our kununu score has definitely improved since I started working at the company, by 20.4%. We have a good score because we encouraged colleagues to evaluate the application process and onboarding, and we received good ratings, which naturally pleased us.

It also has a positive external impact when you see that, hey, I believe we have like 4.4 or 4.6 stars out of 5, or even 4.8 now. I don't really know, but of course, that made us happy because it's always nice when people provide feedback and it's not just taken for granted.

**7.36 Have you conducted any other surveys or collected data to evaluate the satisfaction or effectiveness of these secondary services?**

We did conduct a survey using forms once. We asked about the benefits and ranked them, like which one is your favorite benefit, which one is second, which one is third, and which one could you do without. We evaluated the results. For example, the favorite benefit for over 80% of the employees was the flexible Friday. And I think what everyone criticized was that there were too many team events offered, but those are always optional. So, in response to that, we made changes for this year. We said, "Okay, let's eliminate the activity day from last year and also the afternoon office party." This way, if someone wants to participate, they can do it directly from their workplace without having to go somewhere else. We take those feedback into account and respond accordingly. At the moment, we are considering personalized benefits as well, but it's just an initial thought.

**7.37 Are there any other changes or improvements that you have planned for the future regarding these additional services?**

Currently, we are working on a project. We need to discuss it further. It's about when parents with a sick child report their absence, it shows on the insurance, so the employer is off for the day, and the payroll department deducts the salary for that day, and the employee retrieves the money from the insurance. However, this only applies to 62% of cases, so we are considering how to address the remaining 33%. And if we do, what advantage could we offer to people who don't have children? We want to avoid situations where sick leave is requested every time. Oh, and sick leave is also a relevant topic for us. Legally, it can be requested from the first day, but for us, it's from the third day. So, if you're not feeling well, you don't have to rush to the doctor right away. You can take a day off to recover, and maybe you'll feel better tomorrow. That's also something we consider.

**7.38 Would it be possible to obtain the evaluation you conducted regarding the additional services? I believe it would be very helpful for me, but I'm not sure if there are any privacy concerns preventing it.**

Well, I can't just give out the data like that. I didn't come prepared with it because I didn't know it would be needed. So, I can't send you the survey, but it was a simple query asking which benefits are ranked first, second, third, and which one you don't want. All our benefits were listed there.

I can check if I can find the anonymized analysis afterwards and send it to you. Let me make a note of that. We're always very cautious with data, so we need to handle it carefully.

**7.39 Sure, I don't need all the data. Maybe just the rankings or the overall analysis that was done.**

Let me check if I can find it. It was probably at the beginning of the year, so it's been a while. I'll see if I can locate it. I think I know where to look, and my colleague also worked on it. I'll check and let you know.

**7.40 I still have one question here: Do you see any other collaboration between Facility Management and the HR department that contributes to work-life balance as additional services? If there's anything you haven't mentioned yet.**

I don't think there's anything else that comes to mind right now.

**7.41 Then I have just two more questions. The first one is, do you think there is anything else, apart from these additional services and the collaboration between Facility Management and HR, that contributes to work-life balance? For example, salary or any other strategies?**

Of course, salary should definitely be appropriate. It's crucial for everyone's livelihood. I also think individual development is a good point. We have a learning tool, and right now, one of our annual goals is to focus on how we can support the individual growth of each team member. For example, all our team leaders went through the Tamm Academy last year because leading a team is different for everyone. So, we sent them all to leadership seminars. Personally, I

conducted internal communication workshops and feedback workshops. By the way, we also offer the services of a psychologist, I almost forgot to mention that.

That's an external psychologist who doesn't work exclusively for us, but she is available. She provided us with a tool through which employees can book appointments. The first three sessions are even covered by our company, and if they need further sessions, they would have to pay for them themselves. But just having the opportunity to quickly access a psychologist is valuable. Now your battery is running low, probably.

**7.42 I just wanted to quickly ask about salary. So, you mean that it is more important than these additional benefits, like individual development, which is actually considered an additional service, a service that brings benefits.**

Yes.

**7.43 The point is, is there anything more important than these additional benefits, for example, is salary more important?**

Well, I think salary is fundamentally important; otherwise, there wouldn't even be a Hiring process. However, we do consider it during annual development discussions. We have certain conversations that every team leader has with their employees, and there are annual development discussions as well as semi-annual check-ins to assess progress. Salary increases are also determined based on these development discussions every year, so the salary is reevaluated annually.

We evaluate how projects have been executed, what can be done for different individuals, and so on. It's not like you're hired with a certain salary and then we don't address it for years. We review it every year. This is done by the team leaders and the respective employees in their teams. I believe all these other benefits contribute to retaining people in the long run because they feel comfortable working with us, right?

And of course, they also need to deliver corresponding performance when they are balanced and satisfied. That's when the quality of work is good. But it's hard to prioritize one over the other on a scale. Salary is crucial, and it's important to discuss it regularly because everything becomes more expensive. As an employer, we shouldn't forget that. Of course, we always have to consider our financial situation. For example, this year, it was openly communicated to the staff that there would be no salary increases because we went through a difficult phase, but now things are improving. Customers are returning, and we're getting new orders as well.

We also gained new clients, but there were also clients who demanded discounts. Naturally, the management has to consider the financial aspect, ensuring our sustainability. Therefore, for 2023, salary increases have been temporarily frozen. However, there was support money, so the company also provided everyone with a €1,000 tax-free bonus, which was mandated as tax-free by the government. There will also be another payment, I know that, the inflation adjustment, right? So, we're still going to do that. But there won't be a salary increase this year.

**7.44 Do you think it's a different issue in big cities like Berlin? Salary-wise? Because I've heard from most interviews that sometimes salaries can be lower than in other places, but they offer these additional benefits, which are considered more important than the salary. I can imagine that in Berlin, it could be a different matter.**

I do believe that there are regional differences in Germany. Berlin is always a bit at a disadvantage compared to, let's say, if we were sitting in Bavaria, then I know our salaries would definitely be higher. I think salary is a short-term motivator and it remains that way for a short period, but eventually it becomes the norm. Even if I give someone a substantial salary increase, they will be happy about it, but in the next month, they will check if it really arrived, and by the following month, it becomes part of the normal routine. And I think when you have various benefits, different events, and so on, it's always something new and it shows, "Hey, I have a cool employer." My salary continues to be paid regularly every month, and it's not viewed in the same way as, "Wow, I earn this and that," which I don't think everyone thinks about every month. Well, in my opinion, salary is also important for work-life balance.

## Interview transcript respondent 8

**8.1 Ok, as mentioned earlier, explain something to me that I understand about Facility Management. When the question arises whether we can combine them or if we already know, it's not just about janitorial services or cost-effectiveness, but also about the overall workplace design and work concept. It also includes questions like whether you prefer the current way of working or not.**

Yes, specifically about the setup of office spaces. Exactly, yes, the layout and so on. In some departments, it's not just computers and such, but also desks, chairs, and things like that.

**8.2 Yes, I didn't go into detail. I actually initially thought about the janitorial job, but that fits well, I think. Do you have some things in place for that? Do you have a dedicated department for it?**

No, we don't have a separate department solely dedicated to it. It's more or less covered by the HR department, except, of course, for the janitorial staff who are responsible for maintenance, and maybe a bit in collaboration with our IT department. But we don't have a separate independent department for it. We handle it like that.

**8.3 So, one could say that you have merged the tasks of facility Management and the HR department. Here, I'm a bit uncertain about these tasks. How closely do you work with the IT department?**

Actually, very closely. We have regular exchanges, especially when it comes to HR-related matters. Definitely, or when there is a need.

**8.4 How is it coordinated? I don't know. Is it coordinated with the HR department? I imagine there is close collaboration with the board.**

Yes, there is always close communication, I would say. I can't imagine it being two separate areas, but rather that it's merged with the current setup, to be honest. Maybe we don't have the size for that. It's not something that happens often where IT needs to be involved. Maybe as we continue to grow, it could be considered in the future. Currently, we have around 100 employees. And, of course, they adhere to what we say; that's clear.

**8.5 Now, let's move on to the second category, which is about additional services and facilities provided to the employees and how they contribute.**

Mhm, well, I'm not sure where to start, but we definitely have many health offerings in place. I would say that we provide healthy food options such as fruits and water, which are always available. This allows employees to intake vitamins and maintain a Healthy diet. We pay attention to that. Additionally, we have a partnership with a local gym here at XXX where we offer a sports class once a week for interested employees. It's a way to create a balance from the office routine and keep fit with the team. Sitting in the office for long hours can strain the back, so it's good to find a balance, you know.



## **8.6 Do we have ergonomic workstations?**

We have checks by an occupational health physician who visits regularly, and our staff has been trained to walk around the offices to ensure the workstations are set up properly. Employees can also approach us and ask for a review if they feel their workstation can be improved.

## **8.7 Can my workstation be improved to prevent back problems and such?**

Yes, we have that in place. We also have a reintegration program called NM Program for employees returning from extended periods of illness. We assess how we can improve their work environment to make it more comfortable and prevent further health issues. Additionally, we offer leisure activities and team-building initiatives. For example, we organize bike tours or football matches to encourage physical activity.

We also had the DVB Small Academy. It has been scaled back a bit this year due to our anniversary celebrations and other focus areas. However, last year, we organized workshops for our employees, offering sports courses and cooking classes for healthy eating. Nutritional advice was provided, and it provided an opportunity for employees to participate in small groups and exchange ideas.

Another aspect I would like to mention is our Brutto-Netto salary optimization program called Valuenet. For example, we offer jobrad (company bicycle) as an option to encourage employees to commute by bike. It supports the idea of cycling to work, especially since many employees live in Gescher, where commuting by bike is feasible. These are some of the health aspects that come to mind.

Then we also have many development opportunities. I would also say that this contributes to the well-being of employees, as they are professionally and personally promoted through various training programs. We also provide support for studies, both financially and through reduced working hours, allowing employees to pursue their studies while maintaining a work-life balance. It enables them to combine both aspects effectively.

We offer flexible working hour models, which likely includes our use of a flextime account. The working hours are recorded in a flextime account, allowing employees to adjust their schedules to fit their personal circumstances. They have the option to start or finish later or earlier, based on what suits their private arrangements.

We also have provisions for remote work or home office for employees who prefer or need to work from their private environment. This allows for individual customization of workdays and working hours. For example, we offer a shortened workweek for mothers who can only work two or three days a week. It provides flexibility in arranging the days and also includes part-time options.

Additionally, we have a life work-time account called "Lrz." I'm not sure if you're familiar with it. It's a model in cooperation with R and v Insurance. Employees can start accumulating credits in this account, for example, from overtime pay, instead of taking the payment or time off. They can save these credits in the life work-time account and eventually use them for a sabbatical or potentially retire early if they have saved enough. It allows the accumulated credits to be converted into leisure time.

**8.8 These are the points we have noted that align well with work-life balance. Now, let me address a few questions related to this. Regarding the time account, it may sound good in principle, but I wonder if it adds extra pressure. For example, if I can accumulate overtime, it might tempt me to work more. Have you encountered such situations?**

Actually, it's entirely voluntary, so there is no obligation for anyone to participate. Not many employees opt for it, and we generally aim to avoid accumulating overtime. However, sometimes it cannot be avoided. Instead of taking time off immediately, employees have the option to accumulate up to a maximum of 30 overtime hours. After reaching this limit, the excess is paid out. So, it generally operates within this limited scope. The employee has the freedom to decide how they want to utilize the accumulated hours. We see it more as a flexibility measure, allowing employees to choose what they want to do with the hours they have accumulated, rather than feeling pressured.

**8.9 But if someone accumulates 30 overtime hours, how can they utilize them?**

Well, it takes time to accumulate a significant amount of hours. In practice, a certain value is determined, such as €150 per month, which represents the regular overtime hours worked. We then discuss with the employee how they would like to allocate this value, such as depositing €150 into their savings account or their "Irz" account on a monthly basis. It naturally takes some time, perhaps several months or even years, to save up enough hours to be able to take a sabbatical or use the hours for other purposes. Overall, I think it's a positive approach.

Sure, of course, I thought the same. It can't be that way if you have this dream of getting fit and healthy, and then you think that putting pressure on yourself can lead to illnesses.

**8.10 You have prepared very well and touched on many topics. Regarding the sports courses, are they only for employees, or can outsiders join?**

Yes, we have a trainer who prepares the course every Monday at a nearby studio. All employees who want to attend can go and take turns participating in the sports activities.

**8.11 Can you join during working hours?**

No, it's outside of working hours. It's voluntary and not considered working time. However, the company covers the costs. I think there might be a small fee to contribute, but ultimately, the employer bears the expenses, so employees have the opportunity to participate in sports for free.

**8.12 Is it well-attended?**

It's so-so. It would be better if it could be done during working hours, I can imagine that. If someone wants to do it, right?

But with the company covering the costs, it's already a nice gesture towards the employees, and then it's up to each individual to take advantage of it.

Later, we can quickly go shopping and take care of the kids at home after work. It would be nice if we didn't have to pay for it, but if time is lacking, it can't wait either.

Yes, but sometimes when you truly feel the need, it's also beneficial for your well-being and can help prevent problems caused by sitting all day in our office jobs. It's about creating a balance, even just through physical activity.

**8.13 For the overall atmosphere and to prevent problems that often come with a typical office job. For example, having movement breaks or something like that.**

That's also valid. It would be a good idea, but we haven't tried it yet. I could imagine that if we find someone in our team who wants to go for breakfast early, we could implement it. That's another aspect we could consider. For example, having adjustable desks so that we can stand and work, as well as considering other options during working hours.

**8.14 Yes, they mentioned that we have a reintegration program that can help prevent illnesses. This includes illness-related conditions and even burnout, for example. Can you provide more information about the specific illnesses that are targeted?**

Actually, we haven't had such cases here yet. We try our best to minimize stress, but what I meant was that if someone has a physical illness, we assess how we can adapt the workplace to accommodate their needs and support them. It may involve starting with reduced work hours or gradually increasing their workload until they are fully back on track. In the long term, we look at how we can design the workplace to facilitate the employee's recovery.

**8.15 I believe most categories were mentioned earlier when I listed 11 categories for support services. However, I still have a few additional questions, such as regarding the food and catering services, including coffee and such. Did you mention that you have drinks and the continuation of providing fruit? Are there any other options available?**

Currently, those are the main options. We have a program for optimizing gross-net salary, and through our partner Value, employees can access discounted food purchases in supermarkets. However, this is an optional program that employees can choose to participate in.

It's more about the convenience of not having to cook or shop at home during work hours, but unfortunately, we don't have that option available.

**8.16 Then there's a topic that I'm sure you've heard of, which is childcare services. Do you have any kind of afternoon care?**

No, unfortunately not. Maybe that will change in the future when we have a connection to the campus. We are planning to build a new office building there, and they have a daycare center on the campus. We hope that in the future, our employees will be able to benefit from it and send their children there.

But that's just a plan for now, and it will still take some time.

**8.17 Technology and connectivity services. I'm not sure if you have something like that, but having high-speed internet and video conferencing facilities would make work a lot easier, right?**

Yes, definitely. We already have good equipment in place. We provide mobile workstations for remote work, and most employees are equipped with laptops so they can work from home and have flexibility in the office, being able to work from any workstation. As for benefits, let me check for specific details.

Everything is also somewhat related to sustainability. We have recently launched a sustainability project, which was also encouraged. Each department is encouraged to take on projects related to sustainability within their own areas.

For example, we have completely revamped our waste separation system throughout the building. We have implemented measures to encourage alternative modes of transportation instead of driving cars, such as promoting public transportation or carpooling, to be more mindful of the environment. We also use eco-friendly materials, such as biodegradable cornstarch-based cards for customers.

Monthly newsletters are sent to employees with sustainability tips, encouraging them to apply these practices at home as well. We have previously conducted courses on creating a plastic-free bathroom, but now we are taking the topic more seriously and have formed a project team in each department to implement sustainability projects. We aim to achieve certain milestones within a three-year cycle, ensuring that we continuously become more sustainable.

**8.18 Do you happen to have any caretaker services that make life easier, such as package delivery for personal items or cleaning, travel arrangements, anything that can be taken care of during work hours or something that employees can delegate at work that they can't do at home?**

No, that's not common here. It's not something we offer or facilitate. We don't have caretaker services for personal matters or tasks like package delivery or cleaning. Employees are expected to handle their personal affairs outside of work hours.

As for mail, occasionally someone might take a letter with them or have a package delivered to the workplace, but that's more of an exception and not encouraged. It's not a regular service provided by the company.

There are other services available, though. For example, some holidays allow for sending out letters or borrowing stamps if someone needs them. But it's not something actively promoted or part of our regular operations.

**8.19 Do you have social and community services, including events, on-site activities, networking opportunities?**

Yes, we have various team-building initiatives and events throughout the year, which I believe is what you meant. We organize celebrations and gatherings, such as company-wide parties and large-scale Christmas events. Each department also arranges team dinners to foster closer relationships. We also have special events and meetings to facilitate networking opportunities.

Regarding online platforms or intranets, where information is shared and employees can ask questions or engage, that typically falls under our communication channels. For example, we have a shared WhatsApp group where employees can communicate and exchange information. However, specific networks or platforms, such as a women's network, are not currently in place.

Overall, we focus on team-building activities and provide opportunities for employees to connect and engage with each other. Also, something like an intranet or so. Maybe things are posted there.

**8.20 So, in my understanding, it's about how employees get their information, knowing what's happening and what events are taking place. For example, there's this women's network, where the idea is that as a woman, you sometimes need a little support and can say, 'Hey, I'm dealing with this and that problem.' It's about not feeling so alone, you know?**

No, we don't have anything like that here. But I think it would be really helpful.

Regarding questions about having children, there's this feeling that one has to prioritize their career first or how it is perceived at work if someone holds high positions and then takes two years off. This is where the women's network comes in, to make you feel less alone and get a different perspective than what male colleagues might provide. They might not always understand certain issues.

In our case, we are about 70% women, so it would make sense. Men are indeed in the minority, but we do have several men in leadership positions.

In this context, there are always two people who have contact with the works council. In my department, for example, if there is an issue that needs to be addressed, and the leadership team might not be aware of it, there are women who speak up and discuss it with the works council. It gives some comfort because sometimes, you might be afraid to talk about certain things, and then it gets addressed, like having a feminine hygiene product in the bathroom. So, it's not an issue. It's just a company and having that network where you can speak up.

I find it nice. So far, I haven't faced any problems where I felt suppressed or not confident to speak up.

**8.21 Hmm, yes, then comes the question of which one do you consider the most important, or what bridges the gap most easily. You listed quite a few there.**

For me, it's quite clear that flexible working hours are the most important. Being able to adjust your work to fit your leisure time or personal life, as circumstances require, is what matters most.

Most of the time, yes. That's what I prefer. Having the option of Home Office, childcare, or caring for an elderly person, so that your job fits more around your leisure or private life rather than the other way around.

**8.22 Regarding the first question, how do these additional services contribute to improving employee satisfaction?**

Well, for one, it creates employee satisfaction, leading to a better work atmosphere. This means fewer absences and all the benefits that come with it, such as reduced turnover, because when employees are satisfied, they show more dedication and motivation. This, in turn, benefits the employer as well.

### **8.23 Do you also feel the pressure at work, in the job market, or is it different for you?**

Here in the job market, definitely. We can clearly feel that we need to take better care of our employees. Otherwise, they'll leave. The job market is such that employees can choose where they want to work, and if there's a better opportunity elsewhere, especially for younger people, they have no problem switching jobs. It's just not the same as before. Young people nowadays are much more flexible. So, we have realized that we need to take care of our personnel.

### **8.24 Have you noticed any differences then? You mentioned earlier that employee satisfaction has increased and there are fewer absences. Have you seen measurable improvements since implementing these additional services?**

It's hard to quantify, but the overall mood has significantly improved, in my opinion. We have had several activities where employees and even customers participated, like team-building measures, which helped improve the atmosphere.

Regarding absences, I don't have specific data, but in the past, the number of overtime hours has decreased, and there has been a tendency for fewer absences. It hasn't increased. In the past, with the increase in workload and the addition of new staff, there was a need for training and familiarization. It was all quite chaotic, with colleagues constantly asking questions or work-related issues, which may be related to these additional services. It's not a direct cause-effect relationship, but from the questions I've heard, it seems that we should pay more attention to that.

We also have employee surveys where they can anonymously provide their feedback on how satisfied they are with the company. We encouraged our employees to participate, and some of them did. The response was generally positive, with good feedback. I remember when I started, the HR department conducted a survey on employee satisfaction, and they received anonymous responses. It allowed employees to express themselves, and as far as I can recall, the satisfaction ratings were quite good. I think it's important to regularly conduct such surveys and ask more questions, especially regarding these additional services. Other companies are also offering them more and more, and things are constantly changing. Different generations have different needs. For example, older employees may value stability, while younger ones prioritize work-life balance. So, it's essential to adapt and listen to your employees. The age group between 35 and 50 is actually the largest segment of our workforce, and their opinions matter. The younger generation tends to be more open to change and innovation.

### **8.25 Do you also want to make changes, but are there some people who need to be approached differently? Are there any plans to expand or adjust the current offerings and make them easier to improve?**

This year is a bit special due to various activities we've already organized with the employees. Because of that, we had to approach things a bit differently. But next year, we definitely want to go back to our usual approach.

We have something called the "Kleine Akademie" (Small Academy) where we offer small workshops, and we plan to offer a wide range of flexible workshops where employees can sign up. That will be happening again next year. Additionally, in terms of employee discussions and development, we are working on better positioning ourselves to be closer to our employees. We want to have regular exchanges and be able to react more quickly and effectively,

especially if someone is not doing well or if someone plans to further their education. We want to provide better support and focus on the whole area of personnel development.

As for the mention of relocation, it's true that we are planning to move. The main reason is that our current building is becoming too small to accommodate all our staff due to our growth in recent years. We simply don't have enough office space available, so a new building is necessary. The new building will have more room, including a larger cafeteria for the increased number of employees. All departments, except the service department, will be relocating. The service department needs to remain in the facility center due to customer interactions. However, all other departments, including internal departments such as Finance and Marketing, will move.

Regarding facility management, we don't have a separate department for that. It's a collaboration between multiple departments. We haven't defined exactly which departments are responsible for it. It's not strictly facility management anymore; it's more related to infrastructure. The term "facility" itself is very broad. I asked because I believe it could be useful for me since my focus is more on real estate than personnel-related studies.

**8.26 At the end of the day, it's about added value. How do these additional benefits relate to the supplementary services and possibly to the facility management? Are there any other strategies or approaches?**

Let me think for a moment. Well, sometimes the pursuit of goals can be a bit contradictory. On one hand, you want to engage and provide a lot to your personnel to ensure their well-being. On the other hand, it requires spending money. It can affect the sales goal or the desire for maximum profitability. There's a small conflict there, but you need to find a balance where both aspects can be reconciled. In recent years, there has been a growing understanding that employees are a valuable resource. The mindset has shifted to doing more for employees and wanting to retain them. I'm not sure if I fully understood your question.

**8.27 Another topic, not just costs, but something I've considered is what is good for employees. Have you had any experiences with important additional services or salaries?**

Yes, at our office, we actually emphasize the various perks and additional services we can offer. We do this because, in return, we can't afford to pay exorbitant salaries like some of the large offices in the facility, for example. Our institution is too small for that. However, we focus on retaining employees through these additional services and a positive working atmosphere. We want employees to enjoy working here and feel that we are flexible. By doing so, we can retain employees even if they could potentially earn more elsewhere. It's part of our strategy to offer as much as possible to make employees feel comfortable and listened to. We have many discussions about this because we may not be able to compete with astronomical salaries that are discussed elsewhere.

**8.28 Do you think a Higher salary could contribute more to a better work-life balance for you? I mean, not to downplay the importance of benefits.**

I believe that many other factors contribute to work-life balance more than just salary. Of course, you can negotiate and sell yourself. However, if you ultimately lack flexibility and don't feel comfortable or are too exhausted, it doesn't matter what the salary is.

### **8.29 What impact does this flexible working or work-life balance have on your building? Do you need to rearrange or modify spaces?**

We have adjusted our working days, for example, in private customer consultations, so that office spaces can be shared. This way, there's always someone sitting in the office. Since everyone has laptops, we can use any office space flexibly.

We don't have any vacant offices or similar issues. If such a situation arises, we offer alternatives. For example, someone who needs a quiet space but doesn't have an office might be offered a room where there are no children. We try to accommodate everyone's needs and ensure a Harmonious work environment.

### **8.30 In terms of added value, if there's no specific facility department, what about the local management and HR department working together to provide additional services?**

By constantly exchanging information and having better communication, it becomes easier to be closer to employees. The HR department can act more quickly. It's challenging to define exactly how things are structured. However, I believe that when there are any issues or concerns, the integration between the departments allows for faster response and action.

In the end, it's about overlapping and saying that one of the most important things is to have good collaboration and communication. Reacting and implementing things may be easier because it depends on who is investing and managing. If they have expertise in office or workspace design, they can quickly put ideas into action.

At the beginning, you may only need to move a few things around. I don't know, it's just an addition that may not have been mentioned, but I still want to look at my topic with the different categories or something like that.

Another thought that came to mind or something I had considered is that we definitely want to avoid overburdening our employees in our company. We want to distribute the workload fairly. I don't think we've discussed this yet. We have a concept in place where we regularly correspond with our employees.

We have precise job descriptions and clearly define tasks, responsibilities, and areas of work. We also regularly monitor stamping times to see if overtime has been incurred. If that happens, we address it directly and try to avoid it. We can identify and report overtime to the management so that if there is an excessive workload, we can intervene quickly.

For example, this is one of the reasons why we collaborate with IT, as they receive notifications when someone exceeds their working hours. In our department, we can see the workload by checking the stamping times. We analyze who is present for extended periods and how much overtime accumulates. We can generate reports for all employees to show how many overtime hours are being worked. We handle these reports ourselves, so we don't need the department for multitasking.

### **8.31 Is there anything else you would like to add?**

No, but there were some good ideas there we will consider to use within our company.



## Interview transcript respondent 9

### **9.1 Could you briefly mention your position within the company again?**

I'm an Office Manager. Until a year ago, I also handled Facility management, but then we moved to our own office building and now we have a dedicated manager. However, I also partially work in the HR department. I provide organizational and support services there.

### **9.2 How many employees do you have approximately?**

280. I think it's almost 290, but I'm sure about 280.

### **9.3 Is your company also located in other countries?**

Yes, that's the total count because we also have branches in the USA and Austria. So, if you mean the total number for our company, then it's 280.

### **9.4 Let me briefly describe my definition of Facility Management because I realized that if someone has a different understanding of it, they may not be able to answer properly. For me, Facility Management includes not only caretaking services, maintenance, or repairs but also workplace design. It involves organizing things like ordering desks and chairs for employees, managing facilities like a cafeteria, and taking care of everything related to the building and its surroundings. It also includes managing contracts with service providers. That's how I understand it. Does that align with your definition?**

Yes, it does. That's interesting. I also handle purchasing, so desk and chair orders come through me. However, when it comes to design, we have a different department for that. Since we moved to this new building, the design aspects were taken care of by another colleague.

### **9.5 Okay, from what I gathered, it seems like Facility Management and the HR department are somewhat separate, right?**

Yes, they are completely separate. We have a Facility Manager who solely takes care of the building, everything related to the premises. And then we have the HR department, which focuses on the employees.

### **9.6 And as an Office Manager, what are your tasks?**

I handle organizational aspects, such as controlling and replenishing office supplies. If something comes up in the building that doesn't fall under Facility Management, I take care of it. Yeah, I don't know. It's difficult to grasp at the moment. It's always small things, like someone wanting a tour of the building. We've had that occasionally, especially because we're in a new building, so we have to organize it. Or when people from our parent company come for a meeting, we have to take care of that kind of stuff.

### **9.7 When I mention Facility Management, I mean a bit of your three departments, Facility Management, your position, and the designs involved, so it's more understandable. Yeah, if it's an option for you in the future, to have the personal and HR departments collaborate more closely or even become one department.**

I don't think so.

### **9.8 Now let's move on to the second part, which is about additional services. What services do you offer employees that contribute to a work-life balance? And could you also mention which department is responsible for each service?**

Generally speaking, Edgar is responsible for that. Anything related to well-being and employee health falls under his responsibility. They also consider what can be offered to employees, what makes sense, what may no longer make sense after a while, and what can be removed. These include simple things like the ability to work partially from home and partially in the office,

various flexible working hour models, sabbaticals if someone desires one. We have also reduced the workweek from 40 to 37 hours.

Then there's the other aspect, which is health management. In our new building, we have a fitness room where employees can exercise. For example, yoga classes are offered, and currently, we have kickboxing classes five times a week, which is quite exciting.

We also have a group called the B3 Group, consisting of employees who organize sports activities such as hiking, snowshoeing, or running groups. And that's what it was about, the sports activities. Oh yeah, and we also have biking contracts, which means employees can lease a bicycle through their work.

The fitness rooms are maintained by the HR department, including the acquisition of new equipment and organizing classes. And all of that is done by the HR department. It's a bit complicated. So, the courses offered, yeah, that's managed by HR. It falls under this health management, which is responsible for the fitness room.

As for maintenance, that's taken care of by a colleague from the B3 Team, the sports team, because they are knowledgeable and actively involved in fitness. But when it comes to purchasing new items, like yoga mats and cushions, that goes through the HR department again.

**9.10 Then I have a few more categories that are open. So, I've written down 11 categories that are commonly found. I've already marked a few, like fitness and wellness facilities, which have already been mentioned. I also wrote down transportation services, Job Bike, and person-based arrangements, which is basically flexible working or sabbaticals.**

Exactly.

**9.11 But I also have gastronomy and catering services, for example, a café or restaurant, right?**

Yes, we have that too. We have an in-house restaurant and a cafeteria, complete with a barista. So far, all coffee and cold drinks are free for employees. Currently, the cost of lunch is also covered. And we provide snacks like fruits, which are also available for free.

**9.12 Okay, then I have childcare services, like an on-site daycare or after-school care.**

We don't have that. We have one "Kids' Day" per year. I believe we provide childcare on that day. But it's not a regular service.

**9.13 Okay, I've noted that down as a separate category, social and community services. These could be events or activities on-site. Are there any other initiatives or measures to foster a sense of community and collaboration despite flexible work arrangements?**

We have summer parties, an annual Christmas party, and team events every two months. Each team receives a certain budget that they can use for any activities they want. Essentially, they can organize events, go out for meals, go to the movies, or do anything they like. Just recently, I saw a post where a large group went to a climbing forest. So, those kinds of things are possible. We have these team events every two months.

**9.14 Regarding the summer party or Christmas party, if there's a need for decorations or any arrangements, is that also handled by the HR department, or is there another department responsible?**

No, that's actually done by our team. I just remembered I'm involved in that team as well. It's a specialized team specifically for the summer party and Christmas party. A colleague from the event team takes the lead because they have the expertise in organizing events. There are a few people from different departments, including us, who support and help out.

**9.15 Then I have technology and connectivity services, which include things like high-speed internet or video conferencing, or providing employees with the opportunity to work effectively from home, equipping them so they don't have to carry everything to work or something similar.**

At our company, this is a bit divided. We are a software company, so we have good equipment and the ability to work from anywhere, whether it's outside, inside, at home, or here. However, for those who don't have an official workplace in the office, such as our sales team who are usually out and about, they are provided with equipment for working from home, allowing them to do their paperwork there. But for those who have a designated workspace here, they don't have equipment for home use. They have to purchase it themselves.

However, we do have excellent desks, some of which are height-adjustable, and ergonomic office chairs. Each person also has two screens, so we do pay attention to that aspect.

**9.16 Now, you mentioned the next category, which is related to health and safety services, ensuring that employees are physically and mentally healthy. This includes things like sports activities, ergonomic desks, and possibly psychologists or support services that employees can turn to, anything that contributes to their well-being.**

Ah, yes, I mentioned some of those aspects earlier. We have ergonomic workstations, and we also have a new retreat room at the office, which is a quiet space where one can take a break if needed. We have meeting rooms that are more like lounges, with couches and chairs, where people can work in a more relaxed manner because we have an open concept here. We no longer have individual offices, everything is open on each floor, but there are also spaces where one can retreat if needed. We also offer coaching sessions, including psychological support if someone requires it, and that is organized by the HR department. We also provide various trainings, especially for our managers, with a focus on health. It's not just about how to work effectively but also about maintaining one's own health, especially during stressful times.

**9.17 Then I have categories like concierge services or personal services that make life a bit easier. For example, package delivery, where employees can receive their personal packages at work, or services like a Hair salon or officeing services, something along those lines.**

We do have a package delivery service, so employees can also use it for their personal deliveries. Our front desk handles that, and employees can have their personal packages delivered to the office.

I'm considering it. I can't think of anything right now. Mhm. a Hair salon is a good suggestion, I can bring that up.

**9.18 Yes, for example, hair salons, office services, or pharmacies. Some places have them in the building, and they are often rented out. So even people who don't belong to**

**or work at the workplace can still go there, but employees can access those services for free, for example.**

Interesting. Good suggestions, thanks. As I said, I can't think of anything right now.

**9.19 Then I have another category, which is eco-friendly services. This includes recycling programs and green roofs, as well as further training programs that employees can also benefit from at home.**

Well, we have partially green roofs, not entirely. It's also part of well-being. Maybe we could have a rooftop terrace with a grill, where employees can grill if they want. In terms of sustainability, yes, we are making progress. We even have a colleague dedicated to that area.

We also have regular presentations, which we call "Lunch and Learn." During lunch breaks, employees can attend these presentations. Recently, we had a former colleague of mine who worked elsewhere and offered something related to environmental protection and sustainability. We focused on proper waste separation because apparently many colleagues struggle with it. We emphasized what individuals can do to act more sustainably. For example, our cafeteria organized a garbage collection campaign, and we encourage the use of refillable products.

**9.20 Do you also use change management to introduce employees to new initiatives?**

Yes, we have change managers. For smaller matters like the ones we just discussed, they are not necessarily required. But in general, we have change managers for significant events such as office relocations, implementing new software programs, and other similar situations.

**9.21 Then I'm actually done with all the categories. Now the question is, which ones do you consider the most important or helpful in achieving a work-life balance, and why?**

Oh, that's tough. I find all of them very important. So I can only speak from my personal perspective. I find the additional offerings, like everything related to wellness, very valuable. It means taking a break in the classes, for example, in sports classes. Also, this flexible working time model, for example, where you don't always have to be physically present but can say, "No, I have a doctor's appointment today, so I'll work from home."

And also the flextime concept, where I can start really early in the morning but can leave earlier as well, especially when I'm not working in a department with fixed working hours. I find that personally very beneficial. It contributes to both health and work-life balance.

We should also not underestimate the importance of development programs, like coaching, for instance, where you know that if you have a problem, you can turn to someone for support. And I also think that food is not unimportant.

Having really good food is important because... Personally, I think it's important to know that I can go to a restaurant and be sure that I'll get something good to eat, instead of having to choose from three options, all of which are lousy or terrible, to put it frankly.

**9.22 And with this flexible working arrangement, do you require fewer on-site workspaces as a result? Or how did you manage that?**

Theoretically, yes. However, the entire building was designed and planned before the pandemic, so everyone still got their own workspace because back then, there was no concept of working from home.

That's why basically everyone has their own workspace. But it's true that we are constantly growing, and now we have part-time employees who share a workspace.

**9.23 In what ways do these additional benefits contribute to improving work-life balance, such as the ones you mentioned as being important?**

Well, first of all, to create some distance and disconnect from the work flow and to recharge. And yes, also to sometimes create distance when you're stuck on something and not making progress.

**9.24 Do you also notice, for example, a sense of pressure in the job market, where offering additional services is no longer just an extra but perhaps even becoming a standard?**

Yes, absolutely. And personally, I think that's a great development.

**9.25 Now I have basically already given an answer to the question. Can you maybe elaborate further on it yourself?**

Well, it's true that, well, I don't have much insight into this because recruiting handles it, but it is constantly questioned what we can offer as standard benefits to make them stand out for applicants. Especially for those who are fortunate enough to have multiple offers, we want to be able to say, "Hey, we are an excellent employer," and we have personally prioritized that, hence our focus on work, etc., and taking care of our employees. And of course, that includes such offerings.

**9.26 During the interview, I have already heard about many different teams. There's Recording... Then there's the Management Office Manager. Could you please name some of the teams for my overview, specifically those that are relevant to this topic or in general within the company, if that's easier? I'd like to have an overview of all the teams you have.**

Yes, Learning and Development, which involves the workshops, trainings, and such. Then the Facility Manager. Also, Office Management. Change Manager. B3 Team, that's what we call our sports team. And, well, in a way, also the Front Desk, as they take care of things like packages.

In the broadest sense, yes. We are not a department that organizes summer parties or Christmas events, for example. I would refer to them as event management, generally speaking. Okay, I hope I didn't forget anything, yes.

**9.27 Have these additional services been well received by the employees?**

Yes, Mhm. Food and drinks are always popular, but also the various workshops, seminars, and coaching sessions, there's a High demand for them. And these sports activities are also very popular, yes.

**9.28 Have you noticed any differences among employees, for example, those involved in software development having different needs compared to other employees?**

Yes, definitely. There are differences among employees. For instance, those in software development have different needs compared to other staff members. They are very, very different types, especially in the development department. They are often very introverted individuals, to put it cautiously. They are not really inclined to participate in group activities like sports because most of them are not necessarily athletic. However, it is important for them to have their soft drinks like cola, for example, and other facilities in the building. They need quiet spaces where they can concentrate and work.

Exactly. And then there are those who are very sociable and outgoing within the team, such as the event or marketing teams, inside sales, or sales representatives who interact with people a lot. They have different needs and enjoy group activities like sports teams.

**9.29 So, how do you manage to satisfy everyone's needs?**

The A Team, they always try to listen to the employees' needs. The employees can always come forward with their wishes and suggestions. For example, after the move, we had a concept board where everyone could write down what was missing or areas for improvement. The employees are very much involved in decision-making and changes.

There is always a focus on ensuring that everyone is taken care of and genuinely trying to make everyone happy. Of course, it's not always possible, and there will always be some who feel something is missing, but overall, it is taken very seriously. We also have a few colleagues in the A Team who really go the extra mile to find solutions when there are problems or difficulties. They are very supportive.

**9.30 Have you also conducted surveys, perhaps anonymously, to collect data on satisfaction with the building or additional services and facilities available?**

We have conducted surveys from time to time. It was more frequent during the move, but recently, for example, there was another survey regarding the use of an outdoor field we have. The survey asked what people would like to see there, whether it's a beach volleyball court or something completely different. Employees are always involved and consulted.

**9.31 Actually, this is one of the most important questions in my master's thesis because it's the reason why facility management and facility management should collaborate. For example, if facility management is responsible for setting up a beach volleyball court, it's not just a matter of saying, "Okay, let's find an operator." It's about being closely connected to the employees, as the HR department often is. That's the essence of my thesis. It's not about facility management and HR working separately, but about exchanging knowledge and determining who would be responsible for implementing such changes, including the HR department, right?**

So, in a collaboration like the one mentioned earlier, it's probably necessary. Yes, it must be because the Facility Manager has a different perspective on what is allowed and what is not.

And in terms of structural changes, the Facility Manager must be involved. In our case, we work very closely together in this area because our Facility Manager is part of our upper management structure. We are attached to the Office Management and other departments that my colleagues handle. We have been somewhat split up, but ultimately, our boss is from the Asia team, and our Facility Manager reports to her. So, we already work very closely together, especially when it comes to employee inquiries regarding issues with the building or improvements that can be made. We collaborate closely with the Facility Manager to discuss and determine potential changes.

**9.32 What added value do you see in this close collaboration where everyone works together?**

Shorter communication paths lead to faster implementation. In the past, when we were just tenants, if something was wrong, we would inform the Facility Manager and then have to wait to see if anything happened or not. We had no influence because the landlord's Facility Manager handled everything. But now, we can take the direct route and say, "Hey, there's an issue, and you can quickly take care of it," and it gets resolved.

**9.33 Another value is that, as I mentioned earlier, we can be closer to the employees or something similar, right?**

Yes, that definitely comes into play. When employees come to us and say, "Hey, this isn't working, or this should be different," we have a direct line to the Facility Manager. They can also communicate with the A Team to clarify whether it falls within their area of responsibility or if it's something that can be changed as planned.

**9.34 Yes, let's talk about the additional services again. I didn't ask if there might be a measurable value to indicate whether the work-life balance of employees has improved since offering such services.**

Unfortunately, I don't have insight into that because it's handled by... They could say, "Yes, we have fewer sick leaves, perhaps," but I'm not involved in that. From a data privacy perspective, I don't have access or insight into it. I can imagine that it brings relief, for example, not having to commute to the office every day, as that can be a source of stress. Many employees come from far away, so I think that's definitely an added value.

**9.35 As for the overall impact, I can't estimate that, as I don't have insight into it. Or maybe you have no personal opinion? Has your work-life balance improved, or have you noticed any changes?**

Yes, definitely. As a working mother almost full-time, I enjoy being in the home office because it gives me an extra hour in the day that I don't have to spend commuting. It personally reduces my stress level, and I gladly take advantage of activities such as yoga classes or kickboxing because I find it enjoyable to have a Hour just for myself, especially when it's on-site at work with nice colleagues. I find that very pleasant. And yes, I also appreciate the food service. It's great to be able to go downstairs and get something to eat without having to bring my own lunch. In the old office, it wasn't as convenient, so this change is really interesting and relieving.

**9.36 Thank you. Are there any plans to expand your additional offerings or target specific trends that employees might be interested in? Is there anything that is currently unavailable?**

Our approach is always dynamic. We constantly question whether certain things are still meaningful or not. We have a big meeting coming up soon to discuss the points we have offered and determine what is still meaningful and what isn't. It's an ongoing process. It's really dynamic because times are constantly changing, and we can never predict what people will want. During the COVID-19 period, there were different needs, and now things have shifted again. That's why it's always very dynamic, and we continuously question whether something makes sense or if we should offer something different.

**9.37 Now I only have one last question. How do these benefits of additional services, as well as the close collaboration between facility management and the HR department, compare to other approaches or strategies such as salary or office design, like having plants, for example?**

Can you rephrase it differently? I don't quite understand.

**9.38 Sure, do you think that the importance of additional services and the collaboration between facility management and the HR department is greater for employee well-being than salary or other factors?**

It's a combination of both. Salary is always a good motivator, I think that's probably the case for everyone. However, the work environment is extremely important, in my opinion, because it has a significant impact on one's mental well-being. I've had many jobs in my life, and I can tell you that working in an environment where you don't feel comfortable at all contributes to

lower productivity. It's a symbiotic relationship, and that's why having a good working relationship between the HR department and facility management to make the workplace as pleasant as possible is crucial. I believe that some employees would even be willing to forego a small increase in salary for that.

**9.39 Why do you think you rank so high on the employee-satisfaction?**

It's because they take employees very seriously here. I have never been in a company where there is such a strong focus on the well-being of employees. If they have any problems, they are addressed and solved. And you can feel it because it creates a Harmonious and respectful environment. We also have a flat hierarchical structure, which means we address each other informally, even with the CEO. Anyone can approach the CEO, who sits on the open floor just like any other employee. They don't have a separate office at the top, as is often the case. They are accessible and engaged with everyone.

I believe that's what sets it apart, this perception of employees not as mere numbers or, to put it bluntly, slaves who are expected to deliver their work and that's it, but as human beings. And you can feel that. These additional services definitely contribute to it as well. Like you mentioned, the job bike and the coffee, those are extra services.

**9.40 Yes, that's it from my side. Do you have any other additions or points that haven't been mentioned yet?**

No, you asked many good questions. I think everything has been covered. Yeah.



## Interview transcript respondent 10

**10.1 I am studying Facility and Real Estate Management, and in my master's program, I would like to contribute something to the topic of Work-Life balance because many people are experiencing burnout more quickly, which is also related to today's job market. Many employers need more workers, but there aren't enough available on the market. So, those who are already employed have to take on additional responsibilities, and I hope that my master's thesis can help alleviate some of that pressure. Otherwise, I don't know what else to do.**

Yes, that's definitely an interesting topic, and we'll certainly have a lot to discuss. Just a Heads up, I tend to be quite talkative, especially when it comes to such topics. So, please feel free to interrupt me or signal if you feel like we are going off track. I need clear signs. That's just how I am.

Well, I've been with XXX for 12 years, originally from a media background, quite different from consultancy. Over the years, I have worked a lot in the automotive and telecommunications sectors, dealing with companies like Mercedes Benz and Telekom. I grew up as a classical project and program manager, which was the standard training at XXX back in my time before the war. I managed a lot of international IT projects, and since 2015, I have primarily been working under the banner of Change Management, although the boundaries often blur with what I do. The mantra is always to focus on what brings the most value to the customer. You can have all sorts of exciting and fantastic things in the Change Management domain, but if the project is poorly managed, it's all for naught. That's why I'm quite flexible in my roles, depending on the situation.

I've been working a lot in Berlin for Mercedes Benz in recent years, and now I'm mainly at Amprion, one of the power grid operators in Germany. They have billions of investments ahead of them due to the so-called energy transition, where they need to constantly upgrade their infrastructure, especially to transport electricity from offshore facilities to southern Germany, where it's needed. We are currently working on a project there that is primarily an organizational development and culture project. In the last 12 months, they have grown by about 100%, from 1200 to 2500 employees, and this growth is expected to continue over the next 2-3 years. New people are joining the organization every week, and that can be quite challenging for an organization that wasn't prepared for such rapid expansion. So, we are involved in various aspects like leadership development, process modeling, team development, and many other exciting and diverse topics. It's really fun, and on top of that, I have my own team, my own group of "battle smurfs," as I affectionately call them, here in Berlin.

Although, no one else from my team is actually based in Berlin anymore. That was different two years ago, but now we are spread across the entire country.

And, yes, I am also responsible for internal recruiting within our company. We don't have a dedicated HR department; instead, it's done by consultants like me. It's because we are an employee-led company, and it's a privilege to be able to choose our own colleagues. So, I've been handling the recruiting for some years now. And just to add, you might see a couple of furry creatures moving around in the background. With the current heat, they are just lying exhausted in the corner. If you want to get my attention, just hand me a kitten or a puppy, and I'll turn into a 2-meter-tall, screaming Disney princess. Well, that's it for now, addressing your initial questions.

**10.2 Yes, but I have one more question about personnel-related matters. How many people work at XXX in total?**

Answer: We have around 100, give or take. But that number remains relatively stable.

**10.3 Alright, now let's move on to the interview questions. I noticed in other interviews that it's better if I briefly explain some terms before asking questions, so everyone knows what I mean. For example, under Facility Management, I don't only mean janitors and cleaning services.**

You can skip that part. My very first project was in Facility Management for Telekom with a budget of one billion per year, so I'm familiar with the broader aspects.

**10.4 Okay, could you give me your definition of Facility Management then?**

Answer: Sure, Facility Management deals with all aspects related to facilities. This includes much more than just janitorial work. It involves planning workspaces, interior design, acoustics, infrastructure maintenance, and various other aspects relevant to the workplace.

**10.5 You mentioned before, and I also saw it on your website, that Change Management is frequently mentioned at XXX?**

Answer: Yes, it's our core business.

**10.6 Do you also have specialized Change Management teams? For instance, in our studies, we've learned a lot about Change Management and how different teams might be involved.**

Answer: Yes, we are completely independent of specific industries or topics when it comes to Change Management. The core of Change Management is always about dealing with people, and that applies universally, at least in similar patterns across different industries. However, every company is unique, and what makes sense in one organization may not apply to another. So, we don't have a dedicated team focused solely on Change Management for specific industries like automotive, telecommunications, or insurance. We're very flexible and broad in our approach.

**10.7 I just wanted to explain briefly why I was probing a bit. My master's thesis consists of three different topics. The first one is whether FM (Facility Management) and HR (Human Resources) should be combined into one area to tell the best possible story. Because if Facility Management implements something that the personnel might not want, it makes sense to communicate with each other. There is also a lot of work done like this, for example, in your case, I see that the collaboration is not even mentioned as a separate department. That means the tasks are simply...**

Answer: Yes, yes, I understand. If this is not very helpful for your work, we can also shift the spotlight towards our clients. I might not have intimate insights into that, but over the years, I have gathered a lot of information about it. So, depending on what you think would be more useful for you.

**10.8 No, it's alright. The first part is now completed for me, whether FM and HR should collaborate, or if they should be two separate areas. Should I ask you whether you think they should collaborate or remain separate?**

Answer: I have never really thought about it. I think it's an absolutely fantastic idea because there were many problems when I started. The trend was to establish open-plan offices and move away from individual offices, and I already experienced how disastrous that was for the employees. It happened without really talking to the people working there, and fancy architects and interior designers came up with ideas that completely overlooked the employees' needs and the reality of how they work.

I believe that nowadays, there is probably a Higher maturity level in approaching such projects. So yes, from my perspective, I associate FM and HR with companies that have around 5000 employees or more, where there is a need for proper coordination and interaction with people.

**10.9 Indeed, many companies have not yet merged the two areas, but I think the trend is moving in that direction. There will eventually be a department where it is not clear who is responsible for what, but it will also better address the needs of the employees. Now let's move on to the second category. These are the additional services. What additional services do you offer to your employees, and perhaps you could also explain how they contribute to work-life balance?**

Answer: I'm afraid you'll have to press me a bit harder on that because after 12 years, I have developed some blind spots. Things that are obvious to me may not be so obvious elsewhere, as I notice during the Great Place to Work evaluations. I hear people on stage talking about offering flexible working hours and equal pay for everyone, and I think to myself, well, of course, that's a given, right? It's difficult for me to pinpoint the exact additional services because they are just a natural part of our company culture. But I'll try to recall some examples.

For instance, due to the pandemic, we now have a contract with an office supplier, and each employee can order furniture and office equipment according to their needs for their home workspace. That would fall under this category. We also have a company health insurance, which is quite standard. Every year, there are discussions about what more we can offer, and I'm glad that we usually come to the conclusion that it's not necessary. My personal conviction is that if we have to offer superficial perks to attract talent, then we haven't understood the concept of employer attractiveness.

What truly makes us attractive as an employer, and why I have been with the company for 12 years and many others have stayed for a long time, is simply because we are a crazy and enthusiastic team that enjoys doing great things together. All these extra services and goodies that are often used for recruitment are just extrinsic motivation, which is unnecessary if you have intrinsic motivation and are genuinely passionate about what you do. For me, that is a much more valuable form of employer attractiveness than any other external benefits.

**10.10 Alright, let me go through the various categories once more.**

Answer: Sure, check if I've missed anything.

**10.11 The first category is gastronomy and catering services, including coffee, restaurants, and vending machines. However, since you don't have a fixed office, I guess that doesn't apply to you?**

Answer: That's right.

**10.12 Next is fitness and wellness facilities. I heard you mention sports, but those facilities are not currently available, right?**

Answer: We tried that, but 99% of the majority said no, just give us more money instead.

**10.13 Do you have childcare services, such as on-site kindergartens, after-school care, and holiday care?**

Answer: The same applies to locally-bound services like this; it doesn't make sense for us.

**10.14 What about transportation services, such as carpooling programs, bicycle parking, and the like?**

Answer: We usually take taxis together when we arrive in Dortmund and need to go to the client.

**10.15 I have something that I already heard partially, and that is about technology and connectivity services. You briefly mentioned the office setup; could you tell me a bit more about it?**

Answer: Desk chair, monitor, stuff, everything you need. Also, I remember that not everyone might be familiar with all this, but for me, it's all normal. Each of us has an iPhone, which we can use without restrictions. It's pretty fun, isn't it? So, I only have one phone, and the same goes for my laptop. I don't need a personal laptop because my work laptop allows me to do everything I need to do.

**10.16 Okay, do you have any environmentally friendly services, like recycling programs or further education that employees can use privately and contribute to work-life balance?**

Answer: Interesting concept. No, we don't have that. We are somehow CO2 neutral and we recycle our old laptops, but it's not that structured. However, we don't have anything dedicated to such things like nutritional courses or similar.

**10.17 For example, yes. Or it could be things that help employees in both work and private life, like knowing how to lead a sustainable lifestyle, like when to shut down your laptop, etc.**

Answer: No, honestly, that falls under common sense, which we ensure through our support. Everyone can seek coaching from more experienced colleagues. At the Manager Level and

above, we have training in systemic coaching, which we use for customer projects, internal development, and support.

**10.18 I think, as you mentioned, your company is involved in helping other companies with change management and project management. So, you need to have some knowledge about these things to assist others.**

Answer: Possible.

**10.19 That way, you can also use it for yourself, of course. Do you have any concierge services, like private package delivery or travel organization, cleaning services?**

Answer: I think most of us would feel quite spoiled with that. That's too fancy for us because we are more down-to-earth. I mean, not that I personally wouldn't find it great, but most people would say, "Hey, I'm an adult; I can take care of myself." I can already hear the individual colleagues saying that. It's clear.

**10.20 It's about reducing the time you have to spend on private tasks so that you can improve your work-life balance. Now, let's move on to the next category: health and safety services. Anything related to health, like ergonomic movement or what we talked about earlier, food plans, first aid courses, etc.**

Answer: We don't have specific programs related to nutrition, but some teams occasionally organize cooking workshops as an event. It depends a lot on the teams, what they find useful and what they're interested in. There are always options.

**10.21 I believe we are now coming to the category that is most important for your company, or almost the most important - social and community services. I can imagine that you have a strong sense of community, so do you undertake anything together as a company? Are there any company regulations for supporting social and community services, like events, activities, networking opportunities?**

Answer: Yes, yes, even there, we don't have strict regulations because we are not fans of rules, but more of guiding principles. We have a contract with Regus and some other place, which allows us to use office spaces whenever and wherever we need them. Coworking is common among us. For example, here in Berlin, people often visit, and someone might suggest, "Hey, shall we rent an office space for a day?" and then 3-4-5 people gather there. Our team meets once a quarter in person, and we spend a day together, focusing on reviews and evaluations but also having fun together. Additionally, once a quarter, we arrange networking sessions, like in February, when 12 of us rented a place in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. We skied in the morning and attended workshops in the afternoon, followed by dinner or cooking together. I was part of a group that went skiing on Saturday. So, we do everything and nothing. Other colleagues spent a week in Portugal and worked from there. From my perspective, unless you were personally affected by family deaths or something, I believe that COVID-19 had a positive impact on the work environment. Many things that were unthinkable before COVID are now possible, not necessarily for us internally, but mostly from the customer side.

**10.22 Now let's move on to the last category of additional services which is people-based arrangements. This includes flexible working, shortened workweeks, or part-time work arrangements. Are there any other options?**

Answer: Yes, that is a category where I wouldn't even think of making a suggestion. Since I joined XXX, I can more or less do what I want when it comes to working hours, of course, within reason depending on client demands.

Let me tell you about my typical workweek. On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, I work in the morning from home, and I have my first appointment around 10:30 am. During the pandemic, I successfully developed a Habit of taking a nap during the lunch break. It has reduced a bit now, but I still do it occasionally. And then I work again in the evening or even on the weekends. There are no restrictions from XXX's side. We coordinate within the team. I am more of a night person, but I have two colleagues in the team who are terrible early birds, starting work at 7:00 am. So, we just need to find a way to communicate effectively, but there is no centralized rule for this.

For me personally, this flexibility is one of the most important positive factors and reasons why I plan to continue working with XXX for an indefinite time. It allows me to do things during the day, like doing laundry, going to the doctor, or running errands. So, I've been quite flexible from a young age.

**10.23 Can you use these flex options individually? For example, can you decide to work remotely?**

Answer: Yes, that's possible. For instance, there's a colleague here in Berlin who is practically abroad for three-quarters of the year, often sitting somewhere on the beach. So, it's doable. It comes down to ensuring that you can still perform your job effectively. If someone can arrange with their clients in a way that allows them to work remotely, and it's okay with the clients, why should we say no? There are some legal limitations like the requirement to work within Europe, but other than that.

**10.24 Which of these additional services do you find most important and helpful for work-life balance?**

Answer: For me personally, it's definitely the flexibility, the ability to decide at any time whether I want to work or not. Others might answer differently. For example, colleagues with young children might value the option to reduce their working hours to 90%, 80%, or whatever percentage suits them. So, I think it varies, but this cultural understanding is a crucial factor. We all consider ourselves as responsible and mature adults who know what work-life balance means to us.

That makes up around 90% or maybe 80% of the importance, and the rest is about care for well-being at the leadership level. However, it's not a formal task; it's more of a natural outcome of the personal relationships we maintain with each other. If you like the people you work with and have more of a friendly than just a professional relationship with them, then caring for each other's well-being comes naturally.

**10.25 Do you conduct surveys to gather employee feedback?**

Answer: We used to have surveys, but they didn't provide much actionable data. For example, if one month people gave a satisfaction rating of 4.7 out of 5, and the next month it was 4.3, it didn't trigger specific actions. Also, the qualitative comments we received were often too individualized to make general improvements. So, we stopped conducting surveys on my suggestion. Instead, it's the responsibility of account leads and team leaders to be sensitive to their team members' well-being and address any concerns. That system works perfectly fine.

**10.26 Are there any plans to improve the current offerings? You mentioned that everyone provides their own feedback. How do you check if there's something new or any changes?**

Answer: Sometimes someone has a brilliant idea in the middle of the night and discusses it with people. If there's a critical mass of people who think it's good, then it's developed and presented for decision in the management circle.

**10.27 Are there differences in the teams?**

Answer: No, absolutely not. All the teams are highly homogenous. Well, of course, there are differences in teams. What do you mean by the question?

**10.28 I mean differences in the needs for work-life balance and additional services. For example, a team with parents might have different needs compared to a team without parents.**

Answer: We do have teams with mostly part-time working mothers and fathers, and some with singles. It's true that there are discussions about how to handle situations where parents frequently have to take time off due to their children's needs. It's time for a serious conversation about this. Just because someone is a parent doesn't mean that everyone else should constantly cover for their spontaneous absences due to sick kids. I sometimes play the devil's advocate and say, "You are all adults; you chose to have children, and that can't be everyone else's responsibility." It's not fair. I fully understand that it's not an easy life, which is one of the reasons I decided not to have kids. But it can't be my responsibility to ensure that you manage your children better. I don't see it as my job.

**10.29 Is there anything else you'd like to add regarding work-life balance and additional services?**

Answer: Absolutely. Regarding what companies can do to contribute to work-life balance for their employees, it depends on the culture and maturity of the organization. In our bubble, there are some fundamental things. Firstly, it's about individual responsibility. It's a dramatic misdevelopment when the impression is given that companies are responsible for people's lives. The second thing is the term "work-life balance," which I find fatal. It implies that there's work on one side of the spectrum and life on the other. But work is not the opposite of life; work is an integral part of life. So, I prefer the term "work-life integration." The goal is to have a flexible approach to doing things when you want to do them, and work is an essential part of life, not in opposition to it. This approach avoids many misstrategies and misunderstandings, both personally and professionally, by starting from the right premise.

## Code tree

Axial code		Open code	Fragments	Sources
Impacts of having a HFM-Department	Facility Management	Different definitions of FM	2.2, 3.2, 4.1, 6.3, 7.2, 8.1, 9.4, 10.4, 10.8	(ISO, 2017; van der Voordt, 2017)
		Added value of FM	2.2, 4.1, 6.3	(Deery, 2008; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Gragano et al, 2020; Jensen, 2010; Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022)
		Different roles withing FM	2.2, 3.8, 4.1, 6.3, 7.9, 9.5	(Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; van der Voordt et al., 2022; Van der Voordt, 2017; Groen et al., 2019)
	Added Values of HFM	Enhanced Employee Well-being	1.1, 2.10, 3.4, 3.13, 3.17, 3.18, 5.4, 5.5, 5.11, 6.34, 7.9, 7.10, 7.22, 7.24, 8.30, 9.21, 9.29, 10.9	(Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; Jensen et al., 2014)
		Increased employee productivity and performance	1.3, 2.12, 2.14, 3.3, 3.15, 3.17, 4.20, 5.3, 5.11, 5.12, 5.15, 6.20, 7.8, 7.16, 7.24, 7.28, 8.20, 8.24, 10.24	(Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Laksmana & Wijayaningtyas, 2019)
		Increased Employee Attraction and Retention	2.13, 2.15, 2.17, 3.3, 4.18, 5.10, 5.22, 6.29, 7.8, 8.23, 9.25, 9.39, 10.9, 10.10, 10.24	(Atkin & Brooks, 2021)
		Positive Organizational Culture:	1.2, 4.7, 6.11, 7.8, 7.24, 8.20, 8.27, 9.16, 9.29, 9.38, 9.39	(Gragano et al., 2020)
		Work-Life-Balance	1.6, 2.14, 2.15, 2.17, 3.3, 4.7, 5.2, 5.3, 5.22, 6.29, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 8.27, 8.30, 9.39, 10.24, 10.29	(Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Clark, 2000; Johnson & Lee, 2016; Roberts et al., 2019)
		Cost Optimization:	3.17, 5.13, 6.20, 6.30, 7.6, 7.15	NEW
		Employee-Centric Approach:	2.11, 3.3, 4.17, 5.20, 6.11, 6.35, 7.9, 7.22, 9.28, 9.29, 9.36, 9.39, 10.8, 10.24, 10.26	NEW
		Persona's	1.4, 3.11, 5.21, 5.22, 6.24, 6.34, 6.35, 7.6, 9.28	NEW
		Holistic Decision-Making:	1.6, 2.15, 3.18, 4.2, 5.12, 5.18, 7.26, 8.30, 9.29, 9.39, 10.26	NEW
		Agility and Adaptability:	1.6, 2.3, 2.15, 3.4, 4.5, 5.16, 7.15, 8.27, 9.36, 9.39	NEW
	Alignment of HR and FM	Collaboration	2.17, 3.3, 3.17, 7.4, 7.7, 9.31, 9.38, 10.22, 10.24, 10.26	(Van Sprang & Drion, 2020; van der Voordt et al., 2022; Van der Voordt, 2017)
		Gathering feedback	1.9, 2.5, 2.14, 3.4, 4.23, 5.11, 5.12, 5.14, 6.31, 7.4, 7.35, 8.19, 9.29, 9.30, 9.36, 10.25, 10.26	(Gragano et al., 2020)
		Streamlined Processes	1.4, 3.15, 3.17, 5.3, 5.10, 5.12, 7.5, 7.22, 8.30, 9.29, 9.32, 9.36, 10.26	NEW
		Shared Goals and Objectives	2.17, 3.3, 5.10, 5.16, 6.29, 7.4, 9.36, 10.8, 10.22, 10.29	NEW
		Mutual Understanding and Appreciation	4.5, 5.14, 5.22, 7.9, 7.33, 8.27, 10.8	NEW
		Consistent Organizational Vision	3.18, 4.20, 5.22, 8.17, 9.36, 10.24, 10.29	(Jensen & Van der Voordt, 2020a)
		Seamless Implementation	6.30, 6.37, 7.5, 7.9, 8.20, 10.25	NEW



Impacts of providing secondary services and facilities	Added Values of secondary services and facilities	Enhanced Employee Well-being	2.13, 3.4, 3.5, 3.13, 4.7, 5.10, 5.13, 5.14, 5.23, 6.28, 6.30, 7.19, 7.24, 8.24, 8.27, 9.38	(Kämpf-Dern & Will-Zocholl, 2022; Drapkin, 2023)
		Positive Organizational Culture:	1.2, 1.3, 2.7, 2.14, 2.15, 3.5, 3.13, 3.14, 3.18, 4.19, 4.20, 5.20, 6.11, 6.12, 6.29, 7.10, 7.19, 7.22, 7.23, 7.28, 8.19, 8.22, 9.13, 9.19, 9.39, 10.9, 10.24	(Al-Qutop & Harrim, 2011; McKinney, 2021)
		Increased employee productivity and performance	3.4, 6.28, 7.24, 8.27, 10.21	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Drapkin, 2023)
		Reduced stress	1.7, 3.3, 4.12, 5.23, 6.28, 7.9, 9.8, 9.16, 9.35	(Schlechter et al., 2015)
		Higher autonomy	10.9, 10.21, 10.22, 10.23, 10.24	(Schlechter et al., 2015)
		Work-Life-Balance	1.2, 1.6, 1.7, 1.10, 1.11, 2.8, 2.10, 2.13, 2.15, 2.16, 3.5, 3.13, 4.7, 4.28, 5.6, 5.13, 6.25, 6.28, 7.6, 7.10, 7.24, 7.33, 7.34, 7.44, 8.5, 8.21, 8.28, 8.30, 9.16, 9.21, 9.35, 10.22, 10.23, 10.29	(Jensen et al., 2012)
		Increased Employee Attraction and Retention	2.13, 5.13, 5.16, 6.30, 7.8, 8.27, 9.39	(Drapkin, 2023)
		Higher Job Satisfaction	1.6, 2.17, 4.7, 5.23, 6.11, 6.33, 7.8, 7.32, 7.35, 8.21, 9.30, 10.22, 10.24	NEW
		Cost Optimization	4.10, 5.4, 5.6, 6.30, 7.15, 7.29, 8.27	NEW
	Range of secondary services and facilities	Food and beverage services and facilities	1.11, 2.7, 2.8, 3.5, 4.7, 5.4, 5.10, 6.11, 7.16, 7.19, 7.33, 8.5, 8.7, 9.11, 10.20	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Tulshyan, 2021; Felch, 2020; Fleck, 2023)
		Fitness and wellness services and facilities	1.10, 1.11, 2.5, 3.6, 4.8, 5.6, 5.11, 6.11, 6.28, 7.9, 8.7, 8.10, 9.8, 9.35, 10.12	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Aktin & Brooks, 2021; Apple inc, n.d; Salesforce, 2019)
		Childcare services and facilities	1.8, 1.11, 2.13, 3.7, 4.9, 5.13, 6.11, 7.25, 7.26, 8.16, 9.12, 10.13	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Patagonia, n.d.; Zimmerman, 2015)
		Transportation services and facilities	2.12, 3.8, 3.10, 4.10, 5.7, 6.11, 7.18, 7.29, 8.6, 9.8, 10.14	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Krenz, 2023)
		Technology and connectivity services and facilities	1.11, 2.4, 2.8, 3.8, 4.11, 5.12, 6.18, 7.30, 8.17, 8.29, 9.15, 10.15	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Drapkin, 2023)
		Environmental sustainability services and facilities	1.1, 2.5, 3.9, 4.13, 5.8, 6.19, 7.11, 7.17, 7.18, 7.19, 8.17, 9.16, 9.19, 10.16	(Schlechter et al., 2015; BMW, n.d.; Salesforce, 2019)
		Concierge services and facilities	2.5, 4.14, 6.21, 8.18, 9.17, 10.19	(Schlechter et al., 2015; BMW, n.d.)
		Health and safety services and facilities	2.5, 2.8, 3.10, 4.15, 4.16, 5.8, 5.13, 6.11, 6.27, 7.9, 7.19, 7.41, 9.16, 10.9, 10.20	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Drapkin, 2023)
		Social and community services and facilities	1.2, 1.11, 2.6, 2.7, 3.14, 4.16, 5.15, 6.11, 6.20, 7.10, 7.29, 8.7, 8.19, 9.13, 10.22	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Drapkin, 2023)
		Personal services and facilities	2.8, 3.11, 4.17, 5.13, 5.19, 5.23, 6.11, 6.16, 7.16, 7.30, 7.31, 8.19, 10.9, 10.22	(Schlechter et al., 2015; Intel, n.d.; Salesforce, 2019)
		Flexible working arrangements	1.6, 1.7, 2.11, 2.13, 3.10, 3.11, 4.17, 5.21, 6.25, 7.6, 7.26, 7.32, 8.7, 8.29, 9.35, 10.21, 10.22, 10.23, 10.24	(Andrzejczyn, 2023; Schlechter et al., 2015; Reisinger, 2022; ODOT, 2019)

## Fragments

### **Codes for Integrating an HFM-department – Page: 148 - 169**

1. Facility Management
  - 1.1 Definition of FM
  - 1.2 Added Value of FM
  - 1.3 Different roles within FM
2. Added Values of HFM
  - 2.1 Enhanced Employee Well-being
  - 2.2 Increased employee productivity and performance
  - 2.3 Increased Employee Attraction and Retention
  - 2.4 Positive organizational culture
  - 2.5 Work-Life-Balance
  - 2.6 Cost Optimization
  - 2.7 Employee-Centric Approach
  - 2.8 Persona's
  - 2.9 Holistic Decision-Making
  - 2.10 Agility and Adaptability
3. Alignment of HR and FM
  - 3.1 Collaboration
  - 3.2 Gathering feedback
  - 3.3 Streamlined Processes
  - 3.4 Shared Goals and Objectives
  - 3.5 Mutual Understanding and Appreciation
  - 3.6 Consistent Organizational Vision
  - 3.7 Seamless Implementation

### **Codes for providing Secondary Services and Facilities – Page: 170 - 196**

1. Added Value of secondary services and facilities
  - 1.1 Enhanced Well-being
  - 1.2 Increased employee productivity and performance
  - 1.3 Positive organizational culture
  - 1.4 Reducing Work-related Stress
  - 1.5 Flexibility and Adaptability in the workplace
  - 1.6 Work-Life-Balance
  - 1.7 Increased Employee Attraction and Retention
  - 1.8 Higher Job Satisfaction
  - 1.9 Financial Well-being support
  - 1.10 "First" services and facilities
2. Range of Secondary Services and Facilities Offered
  - 2.1 Food and beverage services and facilities
  - 2.2 Fitness and wellness services and facilities
  - 2.3 Childcare services and facilities
  - 2.4 Transportation services and facilities
  - 2.5 Technology and connectivity services and facilities
  - 2.6 Environmental sustainability services and facilities
  - 2.7 Concierge services and facilities
  - 2.8 Health and safety services and facilities
  - 2.9 Social and community services and facilities

- 2.10 Personal services and facilities
- 2.11 Flexible working arrangements

## Codes related to integrating FM and HRM-> HFM:

### 1. Facility Management

#### 1.1 Definition FM

**2.2** For me, that's where the topic of facility management fits into my definition.

**2.2** It encompasses the entire infrastructure framework that enables efficient remote work from home or on-campus. It involves creating the right conditions and providing tangible facilities such as workspaces and meeting rooms. It also includes maintenance services related to these areas. That's what I would spontaneously understand as facility management.

**2.2** For me, under the concept of New Work, there are broader aspects that fall into it, including cultural topics and leadership teams. That would be more of a differentiation, and I wouldn't categorize it as facility management, but rather as other facets of New Work.

**3.2** Yes. Actually, For me FM is also more than just janitor services.

**3.2** Those are some financial matters. Of course, it's nice to adapt the building and keep up with the times or offer concierge services. But if you don't know exactly what the employees want, then you don't know exactly what you should implement.

**4.1** That is a perspective that I haven't considered at all, so this is something that is coming together, where I have no idea until now, so to speak, to think about it.

**4.1** It's like Facility Management, so to speak. If we use this term, it does involve janitorial tasks and cleaning activities. It also encompasses the maintenance and upkeep of properties [...] Well, let's say the development and adaptation of facilities to new circumstances, or how to make workplaces more valuable or something like that. Instead, it is primarily focused on our organizational culture, where we consider how our values align with our facilities, for example. It is about connecting the interactions, except for the area where we work in residential groups.

**6.3** For the entire space design aspect, we have what I would call a Task Force comprising individuals from diverse backgrounds, including the Campus Manager. They are responsible for office furniture, writing on walls—essentially, all the things you mentioned earlier, including adding some decorative items to make the environment more lively. The team is called Campus Design & Creativity.

**7.2** Yes, I can definitely work with that understanding. That's exactly how it functions in our company. It's not a problem since the Office Team and People and Culture share the same office space. I'm familiar with their tasks, and we often work hand in hand, so it fits perfectly. I can definitely provide you with information and assistance regarding that.

**8.1** Yes, specifically about the setup of office spaces. Exactly, yes, the layout and so on. In some departments, it's not just computers and such, but also desks, chairs, and things like that.

**9.4** Yes, it does. That's interesting. I also handle purchasing, so desk and chair orders come through me. However, when it comes to design, we have a different department for that. Since we moved to this new building, the design aspects were taken care of by another colleague.

**10.4** Sure, Facility Management deals with all aspects related to facilities. This includes much more than just janitorial work. It involves planning workspaces, interior design, acoustics, infrastructure maintenance, and various other aspects relevant to the workplace.

**10.8** So yes, from my perspective, I associate FM and HR with companies that have around 5000 employees or more...

### 1.2 Added value FM

**2.2** For me, under the concept of New Work, there are broader aspects that fall into it, including cultural topics and leadership team.

**4.1** Well, let's say the development and adaptation of facilities to new circumstances, or how to make workplaces more valuable or something like that. Instead, it is primarily focused on our organizational culture, where we consider how our values align with our facilities, for example. It is about connecting the interactions, except for the area where we work in residential groups.

**6.3** [...] including adding some decorative items to make the environment more lively.

### 1.3 Different roles within FM

**2.2** It encompasses the entire infrastructure framework that enables efficient remote work from home or on-campus. It involves creating the right conditions and providing tangible facilities such as workspaces and meeting rooms. It also includes maintenance services related to these areas. That's what I would spontaneously understand as facility management.

**3.8** "If I have a meeting in that area, it means I can stay there. So, it sounds like a facility-related matter, and it is."

**4.1** In that case, the housekeeping staff are explicitly responsible not only for cooking for the children and keeping the premises clean but also for designing the spaces to offer them a Home-like environment. However, that is more related to the recipients, the employees, rather than the organization itself. It's a somewhat far-fetched connection, possibly.

**6.3** Well, in our case, Facility Management actually focuses more on the classic services you mentioned earlier, such as caretaking tasks. We have a dedicated Campus Team that handles cleaning, campus organization, and assists with external meeting bookings.

**6.3** Their role involves assessing the campus's current situation, occupancy levels, the number of people present on-site versus working from home, and whether we have enough workstations available. They consider whether we need additional workspaces or if we should focus more on fostering a networked environment and creating suitable meeting points where people can come together in the buildings to collaborate creatively. All these thoughts and workstreams are part of their responsibilities

**7.9** "On the other hand, the team leader from the Office Team takes care of all the invoicing. The Vitalisten company, for example, sends us an invoice, and they want the difference to be paid. But we don't handle that; it's the Office Team's responsibility."

**9.5** We have a Facility Manager who solely takes care of the building, everything related to the premises.

## 2. Added values of HFM

### 2.1. Enhanced Employee Well-being:

**1.1** "I think that's your manager plays a Huge part because sometimes you don't even see it when you're completely hooked up in work and or getting overworked or stressed."

**2.10** "For me, I believe it is the opportunity to work from home... It significantly improves the quality of life."

**3.4** "If we have any problems, we go to the IT service desk, and facility management takes care of things like the Wi-Fi codes and Wi-Fi systems within the building. So, we have those facilities."

**3.13** "Well, when it comes to flexible scheduling and such, it means that you can say, 'Well, I don't work strictly from 8 to 5 or whatever, but I can also do some personal things in between.' That has always been my preference, being able to determine when to work within those 40 hours per week."

**3.17** "I think there's still too much fragmented and ad hoc approach, like fixing small things that are broken. Okay, fine, let's fix it. But in HR, maybe there's not enough internal focus. And when you merge them, it also means that you might say, 'In the cost-saving aspect, we're doing good things. We're not saying we need 600 bikes but only have 3.'"

**3.18** "I believe it's more beneficial in the long term to have healthier employees, resulting in fewer absences."

**5.4** "Our usage rate for the Employee Assistance Program is consistently around 20%, whereas the average for other companies ranges from 5% to 10%. It's widely utilized within our organization."

**5.5** "Having an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) like Inside has been a game-changer. It provides anonymous counseling for various life issues and covers addressing mental health problems, legal questions, coaching for managers, conflict resolution support, and pretty much everything that might arise."

**5.11** "And especially in the health area, which we surveyed at Great Place to Work, in order to update our psychological hazard assessment, it has become clear that we have very good ratings in this area of offerings."

**6.34** "I believe it heavily depends on the company and the industry. Different workplaces have different ways of operating. It really varies depending on where you are and the industry you're in."

**7.9** "We genuinely care about employee satisfaction. For example, we organized a Health day last year in collaboration with the health insurance company Barmer, and we're planning to do it again this year because it was highly appreciated."

**7.10** "We believe that balancing work and family life should not be a barrier to becoming a manager. We ensure that part-time work is possible, even in leadership positions."

**7.22** "Well, our office is located on the 4th floor, which is accessible for everyone. We don't have a separate accessible toilet because there is one available downstairs in the building... We aimed to create more of a living room atmosphere in our meeting rooms rather than the typical setup with a table and eight chairs, a white wall, and a flipchart."

**7.24** "We have split the space in a way that allows plenty of natural light to come in. This contributes to the success of our plants as well. When colleagues come to the office, they often say they enjoy being there because they feel comfortable in the atmosphere. They can leave their work behind and not bring it home with them."

**8.30** "By constantly exchanging information and having better communication, it becomes easier to be closer to employees. The HR department can act more quickly."

**9.21** "Having really good food is important because... Personally, I think it's important to know that I can go to a restaurant and be sure that I'll get something good to eat, instead of having to choose from three options, all of which are lousy or terrible, to put it frankly."

**9.29** "The A Team, they always try to listen to the employees' needs. The employees can always come forward with their wishes and suggestions."

**10.9** "What truly makes us attractive as an employer...is simply because we are a crazy and enthusiastic team that enjoys doing great things together."

**10.9** "For example, due to the pandemic, we now have a contract with an office supplier, and each employee can order furniture and office equipment according to their needs for their home workspace."

## 2.2. Increased employee productivity and performance:

**1.3** "I know from some colleagues that they take work home a lot. So with that, I mean that they work longer hours than they should, because they have too much work to do or because they are perfectionists."

**2.12** "As for how well these additional services are received and perceived, it varies depending on the service... There are instances where they have been highly valued and utilized by employees."

**2.14** "We always include questions about employee satisfaction with work-life balance in our employee surveys, as well as in our surveys on flexible work arrangements. We have received high satisfaction ratings in these areas, including positive feedback on the option of working from home."

**3.3** "I do see it as a future advantage that you indeed don't lose contact with your own staff, and that's actually the task of HR to maintain contact with the work floor and answer the questions about the things people want."

**3.15** "We have a desk platform called 'Mini Desk' where we store our internal information. Only XXX XXX employees have access to it, but there is also a general Mini Desk for all XXX employees. That's where all the activities and services are mentioned."

**3.17** "But that also means that you might say, 'In the cost-saving aspect, we're doing good things. We're not saying we need 600 bikes but only have 3.' It's like trying to fit everything into a limited budget... With 16,000 people, you can end up spending a considerable amount of the budget on strange things."

**4.20** "I believe these services contribute to making individuals feel seen and heard. It allows them to express their needs and be involved in shaping their work environment to create a better place for themselves. I think this participatory approach is what contributes the most."

**5.3** "Facility Management and Human Resources work very closely together in our company. We have short communication channels, and they collaborate closely with the employee representation and the BGM Management."

**5.11** "Surveys are particularly useful for gauging satisfaction. In the health sector, we have conducted extensive surveys, including assessments of psychological hazards, to ensure we have an accurate assessment of the current situation. It has become evident that we have received excellent ratings in this area."

**5.12** "And we also like to use it in conversations, such as in the company integration management, where it is also offered as a solution, so that every absence has a different reason, and even if you don't want to talk about it with the representative, you might have something else in your back pocket that could be a solution."

**5.15** "We have regular health events at our company, and there is a Health Steering Committee that meets twice a year. Additionally, we have a smaller committee consisting of representatives from management, HR, and others. We collect feedback from different departments."

**6.20** "Continuing education is a big topic for us, and it's not just about allowing everyone to do something. We have coaches on board who engage in personal conversations and determine how they can assist."

**7.8** "We often receive feedback from people who say it's great here, especially those who have worked in other companies before. They appreciate that we respond quickly or promptly, and things are resolved efficiently."

**7.16** "We are relatively small, so we don't have the luxury of saying, 'Go to the specialized department in the next room.' Sometimes an inquiry comes to us, and we forward it, or we discuss together how to solve it."

**7.24** "I believe it has a significant impact on the well-being of employees because it provides a pleasant environment. They enjoy being in the office... When one of our dogs gets elected as 'dog of the day,' everyone gets excited. 'Oh my God, what's happening? Why is everyone going to Belgium?' It's interesting and nice."

**7.28** "We have a pet-friendly office, and some colleagues bring their dogs. We have a list where colleagues with dogs have to register and specify the days when they bring their dogs... Most of the dogs in our office respond well to commands, and they sometimes play together around the table when another dog arrives."

**8.20** "Regarding questions about having children, there's this feeling that one has to prioritize their career first or how it is perceived at work if someone holds high positions and then takes two years off. This is where the women's network comes in, to make you feel less alone and get a different perspective than what male colleagues might provide."

**8.24** "It's hard to quantify, but the overall mood has significantly improved, in my opinion. We have had several activities where employees and even customers participated, like team-building measures, which helped improve the atmosphere."

**10.24** "That makes up around 90% or maybe 80% of the importance, and the rest is about care for well-being at the leadership level."

**10.24** "We all consider ourselves as responsible and mature adults who know what work-life balance means to us."



### 2.3. Increased Employee Attraction and Retention

**2.13** I believe it's a relevant factor in perception for employees and ultimately leads to being perceived as an attractive employer, both internally and externally. It helps in retaining current employees and attracting new ones by offering the option to work from home. I also think that offering such additional services is becoming increasingly important for companies, as the local job market is highly competitive, especially with the rise of remote work.

**2.13** So, I believe that this is a very, very significant factor in the perception among the employees and ultimately leads to being perceived as a more attractive employer, both externally and internally. I mean, in terms of retaining existing employees but also attracting new ones, by saying that it's okay to work from home.

**2.13** But I also believe that other factors are becoming increasingly important for a company, such as offering additional services, because the local job market is becoming significantly more competitive due to remote work.

**2.13:** Working for us, and as a company, you need to see more strongly, I believe, that by offering these benefits through a good work-life balance, you can provide a certain advantage in order to score points in that aspect. These are things that can attract and retain people, in addition to the salary, which isn't as flexible. In many cases, these kinds of benefits are additional things that I have, which naturally help with retention and are therefore highly relevant. This also applies to things like childcare – if I make it possible to handle childcare, then people are naturally more bound to the company. This happens automatically, and I believe that it offers a significant added value in terms of employer attractiveness.

**2.15:** These efforts aim to support stronger bonds and promote a positive work environment. Given the relevance of employer attractiveness due to demographic changes and a more competitive job market, these considerations are vital. We continuously explore new strategies to enhance work-life balance beyond the existing offerings.

**2.15:** It's crucial to continue exploring ways to attract and retain employees by addressing work-life balance concerns.

**2.17** No, I think that the collaboration between Facility Management and Human Resource Management can provide a real added value in terms of work-life balance and ultimately contribute to employer attractiveness both internally and externally.

**3.3** It could be a possible solution to merge the two because, for example, if you let facility management and HR work together, it could also lead to getting more staff because you address what people want.

**3.3** However, if facility management and human resource management collaborate and offer additional services as a result, then you would likely have the best additional services according to my understanding.

**4.18** They should have the ability to communicate their needs and engage in dialogue. I think that's the crucial foundation upon which everything else can thrive and be helpful. It's through this approach that we can truly foster long-term commitment from our employees. It also circles back to what we mentioned earlier: employees don't necessarily need to communicate with a Human resources department; they can simply speak with their team leader or employer to express their wishes, if I understood correctly.

**5.10** We strive for short and efficient communication paths. It's a program that every new employee receives immediately, and we mention its utilization during integration measures. It also serves as a solution when dealing with personal matters that may not be suitable for public discussions.

**5.22** If people recommend us to other employees and say, come here because here. You're important. I think that's the most important thing an employer can offer, even if we didn't have all the other things, that would be the most important thing.

**6.29** I would say it's a combination of both. But above all, it's important to us. We are on a growth trajectory, which means we need to attract and find new people, but we also want to retain our existing employees. It's a major focus for us to ensure our employees feel comfortable and have a solid foundation to balance their personal lives and work, to continue their personal development, and have exciting tasks.

**7.8** Yes, that's why I think it works well. We often receive feedback from people who say it's great here, especially those who have worked in other companies before. They appreciate that we respond quickly or promptly, and things are resolved efficiently.

**8.23** Here in the job market, definitely. We can clearly feel that we need to take better care of our employees. Otherwise, they'll leave. The job market is such that employees can choose where they want to work, and if there's a better opportunity elsewhere, especially for younger people, they have no problem switching jobs. It's just not the same as before. Young people nowadays are much more flexible. So, we have realized that we need to take care of our personnel.

**9.25** but it is constantly questioned what we can offer as standard benefits to make them stand out for applicants. Especially for those who are fortunate enough to have multiple offers, we want to be able to say, "Hey, we are an excellent employer," and we have personally prioritized that, hence our focus on work, etc., and taking care of our employees. And of course, that includes such offerings.

### **9.39 Why do you think you rank so high on the employee-satisfaction?**

It's because they take employees very seriously here. I have never been in a company where there is such a strong focus on the well-being of employees. If they have any problems, they are addressed and solved. And you can feel it because it creates a Harmonious and respectful environment.

**9.39** I believe that's what sets it apart, this perception of employees not as mere numbers or, to put it bluntly, slaves who are expected to deliver their work and that's it, but as human beings.

**10.9** What truly makes us attractive as an employer, and why I have been with the company for 12 years and many others have stayed for a long time, is simply because we are a crazy and enthusiastic team that enjoys doing great things together.

**10.10** All these extra services and goodies that are often used for recruitment are just extrinsic motivation, which is unnecessary if you have intrinsic motivation and are genuinely passionate about what you do. For me, that is a much more valuable form of employer attractiveness than any other external benefits.

**10.24** However, it's not a formal task; it's more of a natural outcome of the personal relationships we maintain with each other. If you like the people you work with and have more of a friendly than just a professional relationship with them, then caring for each other's well-being comes naturally.

#### 2.4. Positive organizational culture:

**1.2** "An example in our company are the Friday night drinks, well they're mostly on Fridays. We quit working around 4:00 when you have something to finish you can continue but it's just sort of a social pressure to stop working and to celebrate the weekend so yeah I think maybe it can help."

**4.7** "For example, we focus on work-life integration rather than just work-life balance. It's about finding ways for work and life to complement each other and integrating them, rather than striving for perfect balance because I believe it's a fluid relationship. Sometimes work takes priority, sometimes life does, and sometimes I need more work, and other times I need more personal time. That's why I find the concept of a balance a bit challenging, and I think work-life integration aligns better with our approach."

**6.11** "We constantly assess how we can support our employees, detect early signs of any issues, and take preventive measures."

**7.8** "They appreciate that we respond quickly or promptly, and things are resolved efficiently."

**7.24** "The meeting rooms usually have carpeting to enhance the ambiance. We also have very comfortable chairs. What we often have is people saying, 'Hey, where are you?' and I reply, 'I'm sitting in one of our meeting rooms.' They then say, 'Oh, it doesn't look like a typical meeting room.'"

**8.20** "Regarding questions about having children, there's this feeling that one has to prioritize their career first or how it is perceived at work if someone holds high positions and then takes two years off. This is where the women's network comes in, to make you feel less alone and get a different perspective than what male colleagues might provide."

**8.27** "We focus on retaining employees through [...] and a positive working atmosphere."

**9.16** "We have ergonomic workstations, and we also have a new retreat room at the office, which is a quiet space where one can take a break if needed."

**9.29** "The employees are very much involved in decision-making and changes."

**9.38** "It's a symbiotic relationship, and that's why having a good working relationship between the HR department and facility management to make the workplace as pleasant as possible is crucial."

**9.39** "They take employees very seriously here. I have never been in a company where there is such a strong focus on the well-being of employees. If they have any problems, they are addressed and solved. And you can feel it because it creates a Harmonious and respectful environment."

## 2.5. Work-life-balance

**1.6** "I think WLB (work-life-balance) could work if everybody in their companies have the freedom to do so. However, not everybody does it."

**2.13:** Working for us, and as a company, you need to see more strongly, I believe, that by offering these benefits through a good work-life balance, you can provide a certain advantage in order to score points in that aspect. These are things that can attract and retain people, in addition to the salary, which isn't as flexible. In many cases, these kinds of benefits are additional things that I have, which naturally help with retention and are therefore highly relevant. This also applies to things like childcare – if I make it possible to handle childcare, then people are naturally more bound to the company. This happens automatically, and I believe that it offers a significant added value in terms of employer attractiveness.

**2.14** "We always include questions about employee satisfaction with work-life balance in our employee surveys, as well as in our surveys on flexible work arrangements. We have received high satisfaction ratings in these areas, including positive feedback on the option of working from home."

**2.15** "We are currently engaging in intensive discussions and collaboration with the Real Estate department to make the campus even more attractive. We continuously explore new strategies to enhance work-life balance beyond the existing offerings."

**2.15:** These efforts aim to support stronger bonds and promote a positive work environment. Given the relevance of employer attractiveness due to demographic changes and a more competitive job market, these considerations are vital. We continuously explore new strategies to enhance work-life balance beyond the existing offerings.

**2.15:** It's crucial to continue exploring ways to attract and retain employees by addressing work-life balance concerns.

**2.17** "No, I think that the collaboration between Facility Management and Human Resource Management can provide real added value in terms of work-life balance and ultimately contribute to employer attractiveness both internally and externally."

**3.3** "I do see it as a future advantage that you indeed don't lose contact with your own staff, and that's actually the task of HR to maintain contact with the work floor and answer the questions about the things people want."

**3.3** However, if facility management and human resource management collaborate and offer additional services as a result, then you would likely have the best additional services according to my understanding.

**4.7** "For example, we focus on work-life integration rather than just work-life balance. It's about finding ways for work and life to complement each other and integrating them, rather than striving for perfect balance because I believe it's a fluid relationship. Sometimes work takes priority, sometimes life does, and sometimes I need more work, and other times I need more personal time. That's why I find the concept of a balance a bit challenging, and I think work-life integration aligns better with our approach."

**5.2** It's actually a good idea because when they work together, the best possible facilities can be provided.

**5.3** Yes, in our case, Facility Management and Human Resources work very closely together. We have short communication channels within our organization, and they collaborate closely with the employee representation and the BGM Management.

**5.22** If people recommend us to other employees and say, come here because here. You're important. I think that's the most important thing an employer can offer, even if we didn't have all the other things, that would be the most important thing.

**6.29** "It's a major focus for us to ensure our employees feel comfortable and have a solid foundation to balance their personal lives and work, to continue their personal development, and have exciting tasks."

**7.6** Well, we actually have a core value called partnership, and I think it embodies a partnership-like behavior when HR and Facility Management work hand in hand. It's important to have clear responsibilities so that everyone knows who to approach. Otherwise, things may fall through the cracks or get neglected. Having a clear organization and being able to reach out to the person responsible directly is essential. When I receive a request, I can assess its feasibility, and if needed, I can go directly to the person in the company who is responsible and say, "Hey, can you take care of this?" Then I receive feedback like, "Yes, I'll handle it," and it gets done. I think it's great, it's a combination of collaboration and clear responsibilities, and it works well in our case.

**7.7** The question was whether facility management and HR collaborate to contribute to the work-life balance of employees. I think that regardless of who is in the office, colleagues, even if they may not have certain access rights from the Office team, can still identify the processes and determine who the direct contact person is. They can either connect with that person directly, or sometimes they take note of things and inform us quickly. We then handle the tasks accordingly. It's beneficial when I'm not in the office because if an employee comes in with a question related to HR, for example, my colleagues can say, "I've heard that three times already, and this is how we handle it here." They can direct them to the appropriate person, like Dennis. If he's not available, they can offer assistance themselves.

**7.8** Yes, that's why I think it works well. We often receive feedback from people who say it's great here, especially those who have worked in other companies before. They appreciate that we respond quickly or promptly, and things are resolved efficiently. They've experienced situations in other companies where processes took forever. You would ask a question to the HR department and receive a response two weeks later. That's not the case with us. Yes, it's also because of our efforts. We want things to be resolved quickly. However, there are only three of us here: two full-timers and a student who works with us for 20 hours, but not every day. So, it's essentially like having 2.5 employees, yet we have a very short response time. I believe people value that.

**8.27** By doing so, we can retain employees even if they could potentially earn more elsewhere. It's part of our strategy to offer as much as possible to make employees feel comfortable and listened to.

**8.30** In the end, it's about overlapping and saying that one of the most important things is to have good collaboration and communication. Reacting and implementing things may be easier because it depends on who is investing and managing. If they have expertise in office or workspace design, they can quickly put ideas into action.

**8.30** Another thought that came to mind or something I had considered is that we definitely want to avoid overburdening our employees in our company. We want to distribute the

workload fairly. I don't think we've discussed this yet. We have a concept in place where we regularly correspond with our employees.

**9.39 Why do you think you rank so high on the employee-satisfaction?**

It's because they take employees very seriously here. I have never been in a company where there is such a strong focus on the well-being of employees. If they have any problems, they are addressed and solved. And you can feel it because it creates a Harmonious and respectful environment.

**10.24** "We all consider ourselves as responsible and mature adults who know what work-life balance means to us."

**10.29** "The second thing is the term 'work-life balance,' which I find fatal. It implies that there's work on one side of the spectrum and life on the other."

**10.29** Absolutely. Regarding what companies can do to contribute to work-life balance for their employees, it depends on the culture and maturity of the organization. In our bubble, there are some fundamental things. Firstly, it's about individual responsibility. It's a dramatic misdevelopment when the impression is given that companies are responsible for people's lives. The second thing is the term "work-life balance," which I find fatal. It implies that there's work on one side of the spectrum and life on the other. But work is not the opposite of life; work is an integral part of life. So, I prefer the term "work-life integration." The goal is to have a flexible approach to doing things when you want to do them, and work is an essential part of life, not in opposition to it. This approach avoids many misstrategies and misunderstandings, both personally and professionally, by starting from the right premise.

## 2.6. Cost Optimization

**3.17** "But that also means that you might say, 'In the cost-saving aspect, we're doing good things. We're not saying we need 600 bikes but only have 3.' It's like trying to fit everything into a limited budget... With 16,000 people, you can end up spending a considerable amount of the budget on strange things."

**3.17** "So, combining maintenance and facility budgets allows us to allocate funds wisely. You can invest some of the maintenance budget in new construction to improve quality, ensuring that you don't encounter issues shortly after maintenance work."

**3.17** "If you translate that to HR and facility management, I think there's still too much fragmented and ad hoc approach, like fixing small things that are broken. Okay, fine, let's fix it. But in HR, maybe there's not enough internal focus."

**3.17** The collaboration is more efficient, and it's not wasted money.

**3.17** "Of course, sometimes people think, 'Oh, well, let's buy in bulk because it's cheaper.' But as you clearly pointed out, it's important to have conversations with the staff to understand what they actually want."

**5.13** "Flexibility is indeed important. No 6-month notice period and so on. So, you can start from month to month. You can cancel from month to month, so it's very straightforward."

**6.20** "We are reminded to shut down our computers when not in use, which helps save electricity and extends the lifespan of the PCs."

**6.30** "That's something we've been noticing lately. Despite being well-established and offering a wide range of benefits, the expectations just keep increasing."

**7.6** "Certain colleagues require laptops with higher graphics performance. That's why we have different models, and there are various chargers available in every meeting room so that everyone can connect their devices."

**7.15** "We are mindful of the costs and adjust accordingly."

## 2.7. Employee-Centric Approach:

**2.11** "Employees can sign an additional contract to their employment agreement, which allows them to participate..."

**3.3** "Of course, when it comes to facility, it always thinks about things, not people, and that's a part of it. However, if facility management and human resource management collaborate and offer additional services as a result, then you would likely have the best additional services according to my understanding. If you simply say from facility management, 'We have a gym or exercise equipment,' it all comes from the facility side. But from HR, you realize that the staff doesn't actually have a need for it. In that case, it's better to do something else, so that's my understanding of it. It's better if you also know what the staff wants to have."

**4.17** "If someone says, 'I'm facing challenges, I'm pursuing further education, but it means this and that for me. Can I change my working hours?' Then we ask them how they envision it and how it can be implemented. We strive for flexibility and to ensure that people feel seen in their needs, and we always seek the best possible solution for everyone within the system."

**5.20** "We hardly have offices that are occupied by more than 2 people."

**5.20** "Each office is equipped with a large glass door, which means communication can also be carried out quickly non-verbally."

**6.11** "We also have a mobile office agreement, which means that each employee can decide where they want to work from. Essentially, you can work from anywhere in Germany or even go on a workcation, provided it is properly arranged and communicated to ensure insurance coverage."

**6.35** "We try to accommodate everyone's needs with the office layout, but it's not always easy."

**7.9** "We genuinely care about employee satisfaction."

**7.22** "Each meeting room has a slightly different theme. One might have a green theme, while another is more blue."

**9.28** "For instance, those in software development have different needs compared to other staff members. They are very, very different types, especially in the development department. They are often very introverted individuals, to put it cautiously. They are not really inclined to participate in group activities like sports because most of them are not necessarily athletic."

**9.29** "The employees can always come forward with their wishes and suggestions. For example, after the move, we had a concept board where everyone could write down what was missing or areas for improvement."

**9.36** "Our approach is always dynamic. We constantly question whether certain things are still meaningful or not. We have a big meeting coming up soon to discuss the points we have offered and determine what is still meaningful and what isn't. It's really dynamic because times are constantly changing, and we can never predict what people will want."



**9.39** "They take employees very seriously here. I have never been in a company where there is such a strong focus on the well-being of employees. If they have any problems, they are addressed and solved."

**10.8** "The trend was to establish open-plan offices and move away from individual offices... It happened without really talking to the people working there..."

**10.24** "We all consider ourselves as responsible and mature adults who know what work-life balance means to us."

**10.26** "Sometimes someone has a brilliant idea in the middle of the night and discusses it with people. If there's a critical mass of people who think it's good, then it's developed and presented for decision in the management circle."

## 2.8. Persona's:

### **1.4 So there isn't anything you think that the company could do to approve this?**

I think it's that it is really depending on the person. Like I really know my boundaries maybe I lowered my boundaries then that more than others because I know I tend to overcome those boundaries, so that's why I lowered standard but I don't think my colleagues often don't know their boundaries and that makes it difficult to see something and to act on it because it really depends on what type of person and also if you are a bit busy that that's not so bad either of course but it shouldn't take months.

**3.11** Well, people mostly decide that for themselves. For example, the BDA advisory department is already quite flexible because they provide advice and conduct inspections on roofs. They often have two people working in the drafting room.

**5.21:** I believe that's different for everyone, because we are. We have an average age of under 40 among our 300 employees, and accordingly, there are many young parents among them, and I think young parents never have enough time, whether they are mothers or fathers, and the stress level is certainly higher than for people who are my age. I firmly believe that within the next 5 years, the 4-day workweek will become a topic.

**5.22** Everyone is different, everyone is in a different phase of their life or their performance capacity, and we always try to cater to everyone, and not just family. Family is a bad word, because families can also have conflicts. We don't do that, but.

**6.24** Some employees love coming to the office, some prefer working from home, and some enjoy a mix of both. It really varies on an individual basis. We haven't found a one-size-fits-all solution yet.

**6.34** I believe it heavily depends on the company and the industry. Different workplaces have different ways of operating. For example, if you work in a software company, the working style and expectations are likely to be different compared to a creative agency or an office that thrives on brainstorming and collecting wild ideas. It really varies depending on where you are and the industry you're in.

**6.34** So, there can definitely be different perceptions, but that also means having a diverse group of individuals who can thrive in different environments.

**6.35** Yes, definitely. You can tell where the marketing and sales teams sit, as well as the developers. They belong to different groups with distinct needs and interests. Some prefer team spaces where they can meet and exchange ideas, while others prefer a quiet



environment where they can put on their headsets and focus. It varies. We try to accommodate everyone's needs with the office layout, but it's not always easy.

**7.6** We use a personnel organizational program called Personio, maybe you've heard of it. Each employee has their own profile in Personio, and this working arrangement is recorded there. The employee can request a mobile working day for the following Monday, and it is approved by the team leader.

**9.28** Yes, definitely. There are differences among employees. For instance, those in software development have different needs compared to other staff members. They are very, very different types, especially in the development department. They are often very introverted individuals, to put it cautiously. They are not really inclined to participate in group activities like sports because most of them are not necessarily athletic. However, it is important for them to have their soft drinks like cola, for example, and other facilities in the building. They need quiet spaces where they can concentrate and work.

**9.28** Exactly. And then there are those who are very sociable and outgoing within the team, such as the event or marketing teams, inside sales, or sales representatives who interact with people a lot. They have different needs and enjoy group activities like sports teams.

## 2.9. Holistic Decision-Making:

**1.6** "I think in the future working 36 or 32 hours is getting more standard. I just don't see myself working 40 hours. I can of course but I want to do other things as well."

**2.15** "We are currently engaging in intensive discussions and collaboration with the Real Estate department to make the campus even more attractive. We continuously explore new strategies to enhance work-life balance beyond the existing offerings."

**3.18** "So, I think there's a perspective to consider from a HR standpoint. Why do many people switch employers? In the case of XXX, after a few years, people tend to leave suddenly. I don't think it's primarily the younger individuals because they often consider career opportunities and make calculated moves."

**4.2** "It's a somewhat far-fetched connection, possibly. However, for me, it seems like you have already linked it a bit, as you mentioned the management and HR department, because other departments also take on what is typically seen under Facility Management."

**5.12** "We collect feedback from different departments through various committees, including the Health Steering Committee, which meets twice a year. This information is used to improve our future actions and decisions."

**5.18** "We've appointed new managers, restructured departments, developed conversation guides for employee discussions, brought training up to date. A lot has been done."

**7.26** "We have a small group of parents, so we directly reach out to them ..."

**8.30** "We have a concept in place where we regularly correspond with our employees. We have precise job descriptions and clearly define tasks, responsibilities, and areas of work."

**9.29** "The employees can always come forward with their wishes and suggestions. For example, after the move, we had a concept board where everyone could write down what was missing or areas for improvement."

**9.39** "If they have any problems, they are addressed and solved."

**10.26** "Sometimes someone has a brilliant idea in the middle of the night and discusses it with people. If there's a critical mass of people who think it's good, then it's developed and presented for decision in the management circle."

#### 2.10. Agility and Adaptability:

**1.6** "I think WLB (work-life-balance) could work if everybody in their companies have the freedom to do so. However, not everybody does it." Interview 1

**2.3** We have two people from the Real Estate department in our core steering team because we often have questions related to real estate that require quick answers.

**2.15** "We are currently engaging in intensive discussions and collaboration with the Real Estate department to make the campus even more attractive. We continuously explore new strategies to enhance work-life balance beyond the existing offerings and creating more opportunities for social interaction among team members."

**3.4** "If we have any problems, we go to the IT service desk, and facility management takes care of things like the Wi-Fi codes and Wi-Fi systems within the building. So, we have those facilities." Interview 3

**4.5** "We already have an approach of fostering creativity and the idea that just because someone has a role, it doesn't mean they have to know everything best. It's also about working in a participatory manner and looking at the challenges and who has ideas about them. That's why we already implement it, and there is a connection between HR and Facility Management or other departments."

**4.5** We try to keep the boundaries a bit more flexible and not tell someone that they are not responsible for something, so they cannot express their opinion. On the contrary, we always look for opportunities to open up processes and get more ideas, impressions, and different perspectives. So, we are pursuing that approach, but institutionalizing it and saying that it makes complete sense to always link them together is a new perspective for me.

**5.16** "We are considering adding additional services to our energy program as supplementary services. There is a High demand for childcare services, especially for parents with limited availability."

**7.15** "We want to give it a try and communicate it to the team because we want to offer something new instead [...]."

**8.27** "We focus on retaining employees through [...] and a positive working atmosphere. We want employees to enjoy working here and feel that we are flexible."

**9.36** "During the COVID-19 period, there were different needs, and now things have shifted again."

**9.39** "If they have any problems, they are addressed and solved."

### 3. Alignment of HR and FM

#### 1. Collaboration

**2.17** "No, I think that the collaboration between Facility Management and Human Resource Management can provide real added value in terms of work-life balance and ultimately contribute to employer attractiveness both internally and externally."

**3.3** "Well, I do see it as a future advantage that you indeed don't lose contact with your own staff, and that's actually the task of HR to maintain contact with the work floor and answer the questions about the things people want."

**3.3** "Yes, I'm also thinking about workstations. For example, I have a Height-adjustable desk here, but I believe that is realized more from the facility side rather than from HR. I think HR is currently focused on recruiting staff and dealing with employee attrition. I don't see them much. It could be a possible solution to merge the two because, for example, if you let facility management and HR work together, it could also lead to getting more staff because you address what people want."

**3.3** "I do see it as a future advantage that you indeed don't lose contact with your own staff, and that's actually the task of HR to maintain contact with the work floor and answer the questions about the things people want. That made me realize the necessity and the need to ask questions on the work floor. I must say that it is being considered more and more."

**3.17** "So, combining maintenance and facility budgets allows us to allocate funds wisely. You can invest some of the maintenance budget in new construction to improve quality, ensuring that you don't encounter issues shortly after maintenance work."

**3.17** "You can quickly address issues and say, 'Okay, let's tackle this here.' The collaboration is more efficient, and it's not wasted money. When something is done, it's well thought out. I've discussed this before. In the past, there were separate maintenance and new construction departments. The new construction department aimed to be as cheap as possible, while maintenance required long-term durability."

**3.17** "But in HR, maybe there's not enough internal focus. And when you merge them, it also means that you might say, 'In the cost-saving aspect, we're doing good things.'"

**7.4** Yes, we sit together, and our tasks are clearly separated, but they often go hand in hand."

**7.5** "We have a core value called partnership, and I think it embodies a partnership-like behavior when HR and Facility Management work hand in hand. It's important to have clear responsibilities so that everyone knows who to approach."

**7.4** "But we constantly communicate and coordinate closely with each other."

**7.7** "I think that regardless of who is in the office, colleagues, even if they may not have certain access rights from the Office team, can still identify the processes and determine who the direct contact person is."

**9.31** "In our case, we work very closely together in this area because our Facility Manager is part of our upper management structure."

**9.31** "We (HR) collaborate closely with the Facility Manager to discuss and determine potential changes."

**9.38** "It's a symbiotic relationship, and that's why having a good working relationship between the HR department and facility management to make the workplace as pleasant as possible is crucial."

**10.22** "There are no restrictions from XXX's side. We coordinate within the team."

**10.24** "We all consider ourselves as responsible and mature adults who know what work-life balance means to us."

**10.26** "Sometimes someone has a brilliant idea in the middle of the night and discusses it with people. If there's a critical mass of people who think it's good, then it's developed and presented for decision in the management circle."

## 2. Gathering Feedback:

**1.9** "We don't have surveys or at least I didn't fill in the survey yet in my existence here. But every three-quarter of the year, you have a conversation with your people manager and it's about how you are feeling."

**2.5** "There is also a platform called Ever Mood, which allows for anonymous reporting of discrimination cases and access to counseling services."

**2.14** "We always include questions about employee satisfaction with work-life balance in our employee surveys, as well as in our surveys on flexible work arrangements. We have received high satisfaction ratings in these areas, including positive feedback on the option of working from home."

**2.14** "Additionally, we evaluate specific initiatives or offerings, such as the "How to Campus" program, through qualitative and quantitative methods to assess employee feedback. These evaluations have yielded positive results, including free breakfast being well-received. So, in summary, we do cover these topics through regular evaluations and surveys. "

**3.4** "If we have any problems, we go to the IT service desk, and facility management takes care of things like the Wi-Fi codes and Wi-Fi systems within the building. So, we have those facilities."

**4.23** Yes, we have conducted online surveys, and every two years, we participate in the Great Place survey. It's a large benchmark where companies across Germany are surveyed in various categories, representing their organizational culture. In recent years, we have always scored very well and received good feedback from our employees.

**5.11** "In the health sector, we have conducted extensive surveys, including assessments of psychological hazards, to ensure we have an accurate assessment of the current situation. It has become evident that we have received excellent ratings in this area."

**5.12** "We collect feedback from different departments through various committees, including the Health Steering Committee, which meets twice a year. This information is used to improve our future actions and decisions."

**5.14** "For more information about the services of the EAP program, we ask our health goals again. So, there is a Health steering committee that meets twice a year, but we also have a smaller one, consisting only of the management, HR department, and me."

**6.31** "We conduct regular surveys, and the responses are often the same. It's interesting. Most people are very satisfied with the offerings, but somehow, the topic of salary always comes up."

**7.4** "We constantly communicate and coordinate closely with each other."

**7.35** We continually receive feedback that it's great to see how much effort we put into finding individual solutions. [...] Our kununu score has definitely improved since I started working at the company, by 20.4%." "

**8.19** "Regarding online platforms or intranets, where information is shared and employees can ask questions or engage, that typically falls under our communication channels."

**9.29** "The employees can always come forward with their wishes and suggestions. For example, after the move, we had a concept board where everyone could write down what was missing or areas for improvement."

**9.29** "The employees are very much involved in decision-making and changes."

**9.30** "We have conducted surveys from time to time."

**9.36** "It's an ongoing process. It's really dynamic because times are constantly changing, and we can never predict what people will want. During the COVID-19 period, there were different needs, and now things have shifted again. That's why it's always very dynamic, and we continuously question whether something makes sense or if we should offer something different."

**10.25** "It's the responsibility of account leads and team leaders to be sensitive to their team members' well-being and address any concerns."

**10.26** "Sometimes someone has a brilliant idea in the middle of the night and discusses it with people. If there's a critical mass of people who think it's good, then it's developed and presented for decision in the management circle."

### 3. Streamlined Processes:

**1.4** "I think it's really depending on the person. Like I really know my boundaries maybe I lowered my boundaries then that more than others because I know I tend to overcome those boundaries, so that's why I lowered the standard."

**3.15** "So, the information reaches us effectively. But the idea is indeed to look at it from a different perspective."

**3.17** "It allows for faster coordination among different departments within a company. You can quickly address issues and say, 'Okay, let's tackle this here.' The collaboration is more efficient, and it's not wasted money."

**5.3** We have short communication channels within our organization [...].

**5.10** "Our company strives for short and efficient communication paths, which has been beneficial in integrating facility management and human resource management initiatives."

**5.12** "We really try to keep the communication short and the paths minimal so that everyone knows where to go."

**7.5** "Having a clear organization and being able to reach out to the person responsible directly is essential. When I receive a request, I can assess its feasibility, and if needed, I can go directly to the person in the company who is responsible and say, 'Hey, can you take care of this?' Then I receive feedback like, 'Yes, I'll handle it,' and it gets done."

**7.22** "Through Outlook, we also have a room called 'Partnership,' which is used for larger meetings or when colleagues want to brainstorm together. In this room, there is a sofa and a bean bag where you can sit wherever you want, whether it's at the table, on the sofa, or on the bean bag... It's quite pleasant, and I still have access to the technology I need if I want to use it."

**8.30** "We have precise job descriptions and clearly define tasks, responsibilities, and areas of work. We also regularly monitor stamping times to see if overtime has been incurred. If that happens, we address it directly and try to avoid it. We can identify and report overtime to the management so that if there is an excessive workload, we can intervene quickly."

**9.29** "For example, after the move, we had a concept board where everyone could write down what was missing or areas for improvement."

**9.32** "Shorter communication paths lead to faster implementation."

**9.36** "It's an ongoing process."

**10.26** "Sometimes someone has a brilliant idea in the middle of the night and discusses it with people. If there's a critical mass of people who think it's good, then it's developed and presented for decision in the management circle."

#### 4. Shared Goals and Objectives:

**2.17** "No, I think that the collaboration between Facility Management and Human Resource Management can provide real added value in terms of work-life balance and ultimately contribute to employer attractiveness both internally and externally."

**3.3** "Well, I do see it as a future advantage that you indeed don't lose contact with your own staff, and that's actually the task of HR to maintain contact with the work floor and answer the questions about the things people want."

**5.10** "Our short and efficient communication paths help in sharing and aligning the organization's goals and objectives across departments."

**5.16** "We are currently examining this area to determine if it is necessary and if we can address this issue. Many people face similar challenges, such as having an elderly parent in Berlin while they reside elsewhere and struggle to provide adequate care."

**6.29** "It's a major focus for us to ensure our employees feel comfortable and have a solid foundation to balance their personal lives and work, to continue their personal development, and have exciting tasks."

**7.4** "We sit together, and our tasks are clearly separated, but they often go hand in hand. It's a collaborative effort."

**9.36** "Our approach is always dynamic. We constantly question whether certain things are still meaningful or not."

**10.8** "I think it's an absolutely fantastic idea because there were many problems when I started... It happened without really talking to the people working there..."

**10.22** "We coordinate within the team."

**10.29** "The goal is to have a flexible approach to doing things when you want to do them, and work is an essential part of life, not in opposition to it."

#### 5. Mutual Understanding and Appreciation:

**4.5** "We always look for opportunities to open up processes and get more ideas, impressions, and different perspectives. So, we are pursuing that approach, but institutionalizing it and saying that it makes complete sense to always link them together is a new perspective for me."

**5.14** "We understand the challenges our employees face [...]."

**5.22** "It's appreciative communication, that's the most important thing, whether you're talking about the weekend or a serious problem, everyone can approach anyone, people are approachable, problems are resolved constructively, and an effort is made to include everyone."

**7.9** "We genuinely care about employee satisfaction."

**7.33** "I think they provide a sense of well-being on one hand and a sense of connection with the company on the other hand, yes. It's a give and take. I receive something, and maybe I give something in return, or yes. And I believe that it really represents satisfaction for the people in the end."

**8.27** "We have many discussions about this because we may not be able to compete with astronomical salaries that are discussed elsewhere."

**10.8** "I think it's an absolutely fantastic idea because there were many problems when I started... It happened without really talking to the people working there..."

#### 6. Consistent Organizational Vision:

**3.18** "So, I think there's a perspective to consider from a HR standpoint. Why do many people switch employers? In the case of XXX, after a few years, people tend to leave suddenly."

**4.20** "In general, I believe these services contribute to making individuals feel seen and heard. It allows them to express their needs and be involved in shaping their work environment to create a better place for themselves."

**5.22** "If people recommend us to other employees and say, come here because here. You're important. I think that's the most important thing an employer can offer, even if we didn't have all the other things, that would be the most important thing."

**8.17** "We have recently launched a sustainability project, which was also encouraged. Each department is encouraged to take on projects related to sustainability within their own areas."

**9.36** "Our approach is always dynamic. We constantly question whether certain things are still meaningful or not. We have a big meeting coming up soon to discuss the points we have offered and determine what is still meaningful and what isn't."



**10.24** "We all consider ourselves as responsible and mature adults who know what work-life balance means to us."

**10.29** "The goal is to have a flexible approach to doing things when you want to do them, and work is an essential part of life, not in opposition to it."

## 7. Seamless Implementation

**6.30** "That's something we've been noticing lately. Despite being well-established and offering a wide range of benefits, the expectations just keep increasing."

**6.37** "However, such requests are rare. But when they do come, we try to handle them within two days."

**7.5** "It's important to have clear responsibilities so that everyone knows who to approach." **7.8** "We often receive feedback from people who say it's great here, especially those who have worked in other companies before. They appreciate that we respond quickly or promptly, and things are resolved efficiently."

**7.9** "It's always challenging to cluster these things, that's what I mean. That's why it all overlaps and requires coordination; otherwise, it won't work."

**8.20** "Regarding questions about having children, there's this feeling that one has to prioritize their career first or how it is perceived at work if someone holds high positions and then takes two years off. This is where the women's network comes in, to make you feel less alone and get a different perspective than what male colleagues might provide." Interview 8

**10.25** "It's the responsibility of account leads and team leaders to be sensitive to their team members' well-being and address any concerns."

## Codes related to secondary services and facilities:

### 1. Added Values of secondary services and facilities

#### 1. Enhanced Well-being

**2.13** "I believe it is the opportunity to work from home. Working from home is a significant factor for many employees and managers when it comes to work-life balance. It saves a lot of time and allows them to pursue their hobbies and spend time with friends and family."

**3.4** "If we have any problems, we go to the IT service desk, and facility management takes care of things like the Wi-Fi codes and Wi-Fi systems within the building. So, we have those facilities."

**3.5** "Despite the cost, around 3.5 euros or something, they go for lunch there every noon."

**3.13** "But you also see that some people haven't used their office spaces for months, and they enjoy working from home. So, they don't want to come back to the office... It's important, and I think that's why people currently value a Home workspace more than offices. Of course, you miss out on the social interactions and contacts that you often have in a regular office setting. However, you can still have contact through other means or by meeting up for coffee. It's fantastic when you can come back to the office once in a while."

**4.7** "In our company, we have standards such as supervision teams. Our educational staff members have the opportunity for supervision every four to six weeks. It's a chance for them to engage in psychohygiene, discuss cases, and create boundaries."

**5.10** "Especially during times of personal or professional struggles, it's essential to have experts around... Anyone can become overwhelmed and may need assistance..."

**5.13** "By considering additional services like 24-hour caregiving support, we aim to enhance the overall well-being of our employees and address their unique needs."

**5.14** "In the company restaurant, for example, you get feedback every day about the whole range of offerings we have, and what was particularly great, we also have a wishes and complaints box."

**5.23** "Yes, we offer everything from training to become an insurance specialist to dual studies alongside your apprenticeship. We support employees with their doctoral theses."

**6.28** "It keeps you engaged and fulfilled. You have the health promotion aspect, where you can exhaust yourself physically during the day and receive mental support when needed."

**6.30** "That's something we've been noticing lately. Despite being well-established and offering a wide range of benefits, the expectations just keep increasing."

**7.19** "The office management has put together a lot of resources. We call it 'How to Use' guides... There are guidelines on how to use the air conditioning most efficiently. So, there are various areas covered, and employees can access the information on the internet or through our learning platform."

**7.24** "I believe it has a significant impact on the well-being of employees because it provides a pleasant environment. They enjoy being in the office... When one of our dogs gets elected as 'dog of the day,' everyone gets excited. 'Oh my God, what's happening? Why is everyone going to Belgium?' It's interesting and nice."

**8.24** "Regarding absences, I don't have specific data, but in the past, the number of overtime hours has decreased, and there has been a tendency for fewer absences."

**8.27** "We want employees to enjoy working here and feel that we are flexible."

**9.38** "It's a combination of both. Salary is always a good motivator, I think that's probably the case for everyone. However, the work environment is extremely important, in my opinion, because it has a significant impact on one's mental well-being."

## 2. Positive Organizational Culture

**1.2** An example in our company are the Friday night drinks, well they're mostly on Fridays. We quit working around 4:00 when you have something to finish you can continue but it's just sort of a social pressure to stop working and to celebrate the weekend so yeah I think maybe it can help.

**1.3** If you want to make everything too perfect and then slowly continue to work, so I sometimes notice it with my college. But as I said before we discussed those things and our observations in those weekly meetings together and we can help each other where we can.

**2.7** I meet with people every lunchtime and we keep meeting, so that's a bit dissolved now because more people are in the office, so we can maybe go for lunch together. I'm allowed to sit at the table and there's a special area for people who want to join others. It's a way to get to know each other anew, it's also an opportunity.

**2.14:** These evaluations have yielded positive results, including free breakfast being well-received.

**2.15:** For example, we are considering improvements to our breakfast offerings and creating more opportunities for social interaction among team members. We also want to enhance networking and connections, particularly for new colleagues and student workers. These efforts aim to support stronger bonds and promote a positive work environment.

**3.5** Although I don't personally use it, my colleagues from testing are engaged in setting up tests every day. Despite the cost, around 3.5 euros or something, they go for lunch there every noon. It's noticeable that even though it may cost a bit more than bringing sandwiches, it is utilized at different levels. It's not just the management who eat there.

**3.13** Of course, you miss out on the social interactions and contacts that you often have in a regular office setting. However, you can still have contact through other means or by meeting up for coffee. It's fantastic when you can come back to the office once in a while.

**3.14** For example, we have a barbecue event coming up soon, which is a longstanding tradition. It has been around for 40 years, and everyone is expected to attend. We also have other activities like centrally organized gifts for children or grandchildren during Sinterklaas. Soon, there will be a big event at one of our locations in Apeldoorn. It's a location-based event, and all employees and their families are invited. However, not everyone attends these events, especially if they are far away or if there are other personal commitments. Only a few individuals go, and we may hear positive feedback from them the following Monday. It's a bit of a pity that not everyone gets to see each other, but considering the distance, such as traveling from Rijswijk to Apeldoorn or from Workum to Apeldoorn, people tend to prioritize their personal activities over company events.

**3.18** "I think there's a perspective to consider from a HR standpoint. Why do many people switch employers? In the case of XXX, after a few years, people tend to leave suddenly."

**4.19** The dinner is very well-attended; it's always fully booked. Usually, it's difficult to find a restaurant table for more than 20 people, but we always manage to bring everyone together. The sports offerings are also well-received.

**4.20** In general, I believe these services contribute to making individuals feel seen and heard. It allows them to express their needs and be involved in shaping their work environment to create a better place for themselves. I think this participatory approach is what contributes the most.

**5.20** However, we are in the fortunate situation that we moved into our new building in 2010. And we were really careful that they don't become open-plan offices. Each office is equipped with a large glass door, which means communication can also be carried out quickly non-verbally, I want something, are you ready, can you be disturbed, that's also sometimes very important, and. Then of course we also have offices where only home office employees sit, who are only there occasionally, the full-time employees, so that they sit together as much as possible.

**5.20:** That's very important to us. We have project rooms where creative work can be done, which are also more colorful in design, and they are flexibly designed in terms of seating, chairs, raised seating, workstations, everything is available there.

**6.11** As for meals, we regularly organize grilling events. Just last week, the entire company gathered after a staff meeting and had a barbecue.

**6.12** Yes, in the developer lounge. We all gather there, and people often visit. You can access the refrigerators and other facilities. For example, if you rent the developer lounge, you can also spontaneously decide to have a barbecue. There's a grill available, and you can pre-order meat through our staff members on campus. You can also grill vegetables or anything else you'd like.

**6.29** The overall work environment is also crucial, so they can say, "I enjoy being here, I enjoy working here," because motivated employees are at the core of any innovation. It's an essential element of our business model, as we thrive on being passionate and innovative.

**7.10** We organize various team events, starting with fun afternoons, summer parties, and Christmas celebrations. Twice a year, we have offsite events, one digital in winter and one on-site in summer. Last week, we spent 3 days in Brandenburg, where we also had a barbecue evening. We arrange several team events and fun activities, including yoga sessions, to ensure that leisure time is not neglected. We also engage in activities during working hours, such as regular office bingo games facilitated by a colleague from the Office Management team.

**7.19** We also had a Health day where a trainer showed us in small groups how to sit correctly, especially for jobs that involve prolonged sitting. The goal was to ensure that we could go out in the evening without experiencing back pain due to sitting all day. Of course, everyone is ultimately responsible for themselves, but we can only offer guidance and support. There are many small things that happen to create a better work environment.

**7.22** We aimed to create more of a living room atmosphere in our meeting rooms rather than the typical setup with a table and eight chairs, a white wall, and a flipchart. For example, we integrated some artwork to improve acoustics. One room even has a complete moss wall. The meeting rooms usually have carpeting to enhance the ambiance. We also have very comfortable chairs.

**7.22** Through Outlook, we also have a room called "Partnership," which is used for larger meetings or when colleagues want to brainstorm together. In this room, there is a sofa and a bean bag where you can sit wherever you want, whether it's at the table, on the sofa, or on the bean bag. We have caricatures of every employee hanging in this room, which adds to the atmosphere. These caricatures are created by an artist who draws each employee. It creates a cozy environment where you can lounge on the sofa and feel comfortable.

**7.23** It is well-received, especially when people are thinking about how to work with clients or tackle projects. They often sit together in the kitchen, grabbing a drink or having a coffee and discussing various projects or ideas. It's not rigidly confined to their workstations. They say, "Let's go to the kitchen" and have informal discussions. The breakout areas are utilized quite a lot.

**7.28** It's lovely, and I find that colleagues often take the opportunity to interact with the dogs and get their cuddle session because a dog's presence emits a different kind of warmth than a calm human presence. It contributes to a positive atmosphere in the office, for sure.

**8.19** Yes, we have various team-building initiatives and events throughout the year, which I believe is what you meant. We organize celebrations and gatherings, such as company-wide parties and large-scale Christmas events. Each department also arranges team dinners to foster closer relationships. We also have special events and meetings to facilitate networking opportunities.

**8.19** Overall, we focus on team-building activities and provide opportunities for employees to connect and engage with each other.

**8.22** Well, for one, it creates employee satisfaction, leading to a better work atmosphere.

**9.13** We have summer parties, an annual Christmas party, and team events every two months. Each team receives a certain budget that they can use for any activities they want. Essentially, they can organize events, go out for meals, go to the movies, or do anything they like. Just recently, I saw a post where a large group went to a climbing forest. So, those kinds of things are possible. We have these team events every two months.

**9.19** Well, we have partially green roofs, not entirely. It's also part of well-being. Maybe we could have a rooftop terrace with a grill, where employees can grill if they want.

**9.39** I believe that's what sets it apart, this perception of employees not as mere numbers or, to put it bluntly, slaves who are expected to deliver their work and that's it, but as human beings. And you can feel that. These additional services definitely contribute to it as well. Like you mentioned, the job bike and the coffee, those are extra services.

**10.9** "What truly makes us attractive as an employer...is simply because we are a crazy and enthusiastic team that enjoys doing great things together."

**10.24** "We all consider ourselves as responsible and mature adults who know what work-life balance means to us."

### [3. Increased employee productivity and performance](#)

**3.4** "If we have any problems, we go to the IT service desk, and facility management takes care of things like the Wi-Fi codes and Wi-Fi systems within the building. So, we have those facilities." Interview 3

**6.28** "I can simply grab my bag and go, knowing that I'll be taken care of here. It's very pleasant and, of course, it eases my personal life."

**7.24** "The meeting rooms usually have carpeting to enhance the ambiance. We also have very comfortable chairs. What we often have is people saying, 'Hey, where are you?' and I reply, 'I'm sitting in one of our meeting rooms.' They then say, 'Oh, it doesn't look like a typical meeting room.'"

**8.27** "We want employees to enjoy working here and feel that we are flexible."

**10.21** "We do everything and nothing. Other colleagues spent a week in Portugal and worked from there."

**10.21** "We have a contract with Regus and some other place, which allows us to use office spaces whenever and wherever we need them."

#### 4. Reducing Work-related Stress:

**1.7** "That would be something that would improve my work-life balance because sometimes I have been too stressed again where we take the dog."

**3.3** "Well, I do see it as a future advantage that you indeed don't lose contact with your own staff, and that's actually the task of HR to maintain contact with the work floor and answer the questions about the things people want."

**4.12** "It's a crucial factor. People can switch off; they can finish work and turn off their phone, making themselves unreachable. This is particularly important in the field we work in, where the topic of professional proximity and distance, as well as setting boundaries, is significant. It addresses the needs of recipients, and it's essential."

**5.23** "Yes, we offer everything from training to become an insurance specialist to dual studies alongside your apprenticeship. We support employees with their doctoral theses."

**6.28** "I can simply grab my bag and go, knowing that I'll be taken care of here. It's very pleasant and, of course, it eases my personal life because I don't have to spend hours making arrangements."

**7.9** "We genuinely care about employee satisfaction. For example, we organized a Health day last year in collaboration with the health insurance company Barmer, and we're planning to do it again this year because it was highly appreciated."

**9.8** "The ability to work partially from home and partially in the office, various flexible working hour models, sabbaticals if someone desires one. We have also reduced the workweek from 40 to 37 hours."

**9.16** "We also provide various trainings, especially for our managers, with a focus on health. It's not just about how to work effectively but also about maintaining one's own health, especially during stressful times."

**9.35** "As a working mother almost full-time, I enjoy being in the home office because it gives me an extra hour in the day that I don't have to spend commuting. It personally reduces my stress level, and I gladly take advantage of activities such as yoga classes or kickboxing because I find it enjoyable to have a Hour just for myself, especially when it's on-site at work with nice colleagues. I find that very pleasant."

## 5. Flexibility and Adaptability in the Workplace

**10.9** "For example, due to the pandemic, we now have a contract with an office supplier, and each employee can order furniture and office equipment according to their needs for their home workspace."

**10.21** "We have a contract with Regus and some other place, which allows us to use office spaces whenever and wherever we need them."

**10.21** "We do everything and nothing. Other colleagues spent a week in Portugal and worked from there. From my perspective, unless you were personally affected by family deaths or something, I believe that COVID-19 had a positive impact on the work environment."

**10.22** "We coordinate within the team. I am more of a night person, but I have two colleagues in the team who are terrible early birds, starting work at 7:00 am."

**10.22** "From my perspective, this flexibility is one of the most important positive factors and reasons why I plan to continue working with XXX for an indefinite time."

**10.23** "If someone can arrange with their clients in a way that allows them to work remotely, and it's okay with the clients, why should we say no?"

**10.23** "For example, there's a colleague here in Berlin who is practically abroad for three-quarters of the year, often sitting somewhere on the beach. So, it's doable."

**10.24** "For me personally, it's definitely the flexibility, the ability to decide at any time whether I want to work or not."

## 6. Work-Life-Balance:

**1.2** An example in our company are the Friday night drinks, well they're mostly on Fridays. We quit working around 4:00 when you have something to finish you can continue but it's just sort of a social pressure to stop working and to celebrate the weekend so yeah I think maybe it can help.

**1.6** I've read a lot of articles about this it's maybe because work 36 hours a week. So, every two weeks I have a day off and I really like that. It's really beneficial to my work-life-balance because that way I get to enjoy more of my personal interest, and I also like my work. I like what I do so it's not that it's a burden to go to work, but my personal interest differs a lot from what I do so with that extra day off every two weeks I really have enough time for it. I can imagine that if you work 40 hours a week, especially when you work far from your where you live, it is more difficult.

**1.6** "I can imagine that if you work 40 hours and you lived that far that it sometimes can feel like you don't have enough time to meet your friends and your family."

**1.6** "I think WLB could work if everybody in their companies have the freedom to do so. However, not everybody does it."

**1.7** It would be great if we can take our dog to work. That would be something that would improve my work life balance, because sometimes I have been too stressed again where we take the dog.

**1.7** It could improve their WLB if they could bring their dog or child.

**1.10** I know that some might like gym facilities. That's something because otherwise they have to go home and if there were facilities like that you can go out of your work when you're finished. So that would contribute to a better work life balance. Other facilities I don't think so. No, haven't heard.

**1.11** "Other facilities are just on top. However, for example, as I told a gym membership or something like dog care or childcare is also enhancing the work-life balance."

**2.8** Regarding the gastronomy and care services, I also mentioned not only the cafeteria but also vending machines and a shop because I believe it can improve work-life balance. You can buy things in the shop, even for takeaway, such as preserved sauces or dishes, and cook them at home. So, there's an option to take food home, but of course, you can also eat on-site.

**2.10** Working from home is a significant factor for many employees and managers when it comes to work-life balance. For example, I can save two hours of commuting time per day by not having to travel by car or bus. Even if it's just an Hour, when you calculate it over the course of a year, it amounts to a considerable amount of time spent commuting. Not having to prepare for commuting, especially when biking, is also a major attraction. It significantly improves the quality of life.

**2.13:** When you ask what they associate with work-life balance, for many, it's the ability to work from home. It saves a lot of time and allows them to pursue their hobbies and spend time with friends and family.

**2.13** So, if you ask what they associate with the topic of Work-Life Balance, then it is the topic for many. I can work from home. I really save myself some life time now. I have the opportunity to pursue my hobbies and spend time with my friends. I can spend time with my family.

**2.13** "I believe it is the opportunity to work from home. Working from home is a significant factor for many employees and managers when it comes to work-life balance. It saves a lot of time and allows them to pursue their hobbies and spend time with friends and family."

**2.13** "I believe it contributes significantly. Now I'm back to working from home, but I believe that for many employees, it's a crucial factor. When you ask what they associate with work-life balance, for many, it's the ability to work from home."

**2.15** "We continuously explore new strategies to enhance work-life balance beyond the existing offerings."

**2.16:** They could be attractive options to consider, as they provide flexibility and support work-life balance. Overall, I believe there is still room for improvement in terms of work-life balance, especially when considering the evolving landscape and the practices adopted by other companies. It's crucial to continue exploring ways to attract and retain employees by addressing work-life balance concerns.

**3.5** Although I don't personally use it, my colleagues from testing are engaged in setting up tests every day. Despite the cost, around 3.5 euros or something, they go for lunch there every noon. It's noticeable that even though it may cost a bit more than bringing sandwiches, it is utilized at different levels. It's not just the management who eat there.

**3.13** Well, when it comes to flexible scheduling and such, it means that you can say, "Well, I don't work strictly from 8 to 5 or whatever, but I can also do some personal things in between." We divide it that way. That has always been my preference, being able to determine when to work within those 40 hours per week. It's important, and I think that's why people currently value a Home workspace more than offices.



**4.7** "We focus on work-life integration rather than just work-life balance. It's about finding ways for work and life to complement each other and integrating them, rather than striving for perfect balance because I believe it's a fluid relationship."

**4.12** It's a crucial factor. People can switch off; they can finish work and turn off their phone, making themselves unreachable. This is particularly important in the field we work in, where the topic of professional proximity and distance, as well as setting boundaries, is significant. It addresses the needs of recipients, and it's essential. It may pose challenges for some, but by enabling employees to say, "You're on duty from this time to that time, afterwards, you can turn off your phone and be unreachable, and that's okay." It actually contributes considerably to a sense of work-life balance for many.

**4.28** No, I don't think so. I think it's important that, in our case, everything revolves around the values of the organization and how they serve to implement work-life balance. And I believe that if the values don't align with work-life balance, it's bound to fail. There needs to be a strategy, a fit at that point, and I think that's why it works for us.

**5.6** They offer online options for sports and fitness activities. Additionally, employees can also train at local fitness studios nationwide. This means that if I'm on vacation in Munich and want to work out, I can find a studio on their website where I can do exactly what I want and avail of their facilities.

**5.13** "Flexibility is indeed important. No 6-month notice period and so on. So, you can start from month to month. You can cancel from month to month, so it's very straightforward."

**6.25** Oh, that's a good question. It may sound trivial, but I would say flexible working hours. It allows individuals to better integrate their work and personal lives. Everything else is an added bonus, but without a solid foundation of flexible working hours, it's difficult to achieve a good work-life balance.

**6.28** When we talk about flexible working hours, childcare, and other aspects, they definitely play a significant role. They have a great impact, personally speaking. It's a Huge relief for me to know that when I come to the campus, I don't have to worry about packing food or any preparations in the morning. I can simply grab my bag and go, knowing that I'll be taken care of here. It's very pleasant and, of course, it eases my personal life because I don't have to spend hours making arrangements. On the other hand, there are also benefits that don't directly influence personal life or have a noticeable impact on work-life balance. For example, a company retirement plan is great and provides security, but in day-to-day life, you tend to forget about it. So, it's nice to have, but it doesn't significantly contribute to my work style or work-life balance.

**6.28** Yes, and things like sports and psychological well-being also contribute to a balanced work-life. It's wonderful to have support on both levels. It keeps you engaged and fulfilled. You have the health promotion aspect, where you can exhaust yourself physically during the day and receive mental support when needed. It's about recharging your batteries in both directions, depending on your circumstances. It's truly valuable to know that after work, you can go for a workout at the gym, release your thoughts, and recharge mentally.

**6.28** "It's a Huge relief for me to know that when I come to the campus, I don't have to worry about packing food or any preparations in the morning."

**6.28** "Yes, and things like sports and psychological well-being also contribute to a balanced work-life. It's wonderful to have support on both levels. It keeps you engaged and fulfilled."

**7.6** "I believe this setup contributes to the work-life balance of our colleagues."

**7.6** I believe this setup contributes to the work-life balance of our colleagues. For example, if someone wants to work from abroad, it doesn't necessarily have to be remote work. They can simply request to work from the Netherlands for two weeks, aligning with our time zone. In that case, it would be considered mobile working rather than remote working. [...] This allows employees to work freely in a foreign country for up to 180 days per year without incurring tax obligations. We do this for the employee.

**7.10** "We ensure that balancing work and family life should not be a barrier to becoming a manager."

**7.24** When colleagues come to the office, they often say they enjoy being there because they feel comfortable in the atmosphere. They can leave their work behind and not bring it home with them. Everyone handles this differently. I can easily separate myself from work by tidying up my workstation, but other colleagues often say, "Even though I'm at home, work is still present." So they prefer coming to the office and appreciate the beautiful environment. They enjoy being in the office.

**7.33** When I come to the office in the morning, I don't have to think about whether I need to stop by the bakery for a roll because I know everything is available at the office. I can have cereal, grab some fruit, the coffee is there. I can just arrive, relax, enjoy my cereal, and not worry about my breakfast, for example. It's like heaven, yes.

**7.34** For me, work-life balance is when it doesn't escalate into stress. It means that I don't feel like I can't manage my personal life while being in work mode. I can combine things I enjoy with work. For example, I enjoy doing sports, and I attend fitness classes that have fixed schedules. That means I can't be flexible. The fitness class doesn't change just because I have to work longer. But I can adjust my working hours a bit to ensure that I can attend my fitness classes on certain days. That's what I find important. I can plan and say, "Hey, on that day, I won't be here, but I still have overtime hours. Goodbye." I can simply organize my life.

**7.34** That's the great thing about it. It's about how well my private and professional life fit together, that they are compatible. That's the greatest gift for me, that it works, and I don't leave on Fridays and think, "What have I actually done all week? I've just been working." I don't have that feeling, no. It's about adapting work to life and not the other way around, as it may have been in the past.

**7.34** "I think work-life balance is when it doesn't escalate into stress... It's about how well my private and professional life fit together, that they are compatible. That's the greatest gift for me, that it works, and I don't leave on Fridays and think, 'What have I actually done all week? I've just been working.'"

**7.44** "Well, in my opinion, salary is also important for work-life balance."

**8.5** We pay attention to that. Additionally, we have a partnership with a local gym here at XXX where we offer a sports class once a week for interested employees. It's a way to create a balance from the office routine and keep fit with the team. Sitting in the office for long hours can strain the back, so it's good to find a balance, you know.

**8.21** For me, it's quite clear that flexible working hours are the most important. Being able to adjust your work to fit your leisure time or personal life, as circumstances require, is what matters most.

**8.28** "I believe that many other factors contribute to work-life balance more than just salary."

**8.30** "If that happens, we address it directly and try to avoid it. We can identify and report overtime to the management so that if there is an excessive workload, we can intervene quickly."

**9.16** We also offer coaching sessions, including psychological support if someone requires it, and that is organized by the HR department. We also provide various trainings, especially for our managers, with a focus on health. It's not just about how to work effectively but also about maintaining one's own health, especially during stressful times.

**9.21** And also the flextime concept, where I can start really early in the morning but can leave earlier as well, especially when I'm not working in a department with fixed working hours. I find that personally very beneficial. It contributes to both health and work-life balance.

**9.35** "I enjoy being in the home office because it gives me an extra hour in the day that I don't have to spend commuting."

**10.22** "There are no restrictions from XXX's side. We coordinate within the team."

**10.23** Yes, that's possible. For instance, there's a colleague here in Berlin who is practically abroad for three-quarters of the year, often sitting somewhere on the beach. So, it's doable. It comes down to ensuring that you can still perform your job effectively.

**10.29** "The goal is to have a flexible approach to doing things when you want to do them, and work is an essential part of life, not in opposition to it."

## 7. Increased Employee Attraction and Retention:

**2.13** I believe that this is a very, very significant factor in the perception among the employees and ultimately leads to being perceived as a more attractive employer, both externally and internally. I mean, in terms of retaining existing employees but also attracting new ones, by saying that it's okay to work from home.

**2.13** These are things that can attract and retain people, in addition to the salary, which isn't as flexible. In many cases [...] This happens automatically, and I believe that it offers a significant added value in terms of employer attractiveness.

**4.7** Moreover, what sets us apart in our industry is our focus on creating pleasant workspaces. We put effort into the office setup, avoiding a bureaucratic look. We provide employees with functional workspaces where they can collaborate, interact, and have the flexibility to withdraw or take a break. We have well-equipped kitchens, provide beverages, and offer facilities like table tennis or football. This is something quite unique in our industry, as many companies either cannot afford it or choose not to invest in such facilities. For us, it's a standard practice, but for newcomers, it feels like an additional benefit.

**4.9** I actually think that's quite unique because I don't believe it's commonly practiced in companies, especially in our industry. I believe it becomes a significant factor when deciding whether to join or stay with a company, but for us, it's something really special.

**5.13** "We are considering adding additional services to our energy program to meet the high demand for childcare services, especially for parents with limited availability."

**5.13** "Providing 24-hour support for individuals who require caregiving at home is a potential solution to support employees facing challenges with caregiving responsibilities."

**5.16** "Many people face similar challenges, such as having an elderly parent in Berlin while they reside elsewhere and struggle to provide adequate care. In such cases, additional service providers can be invaluable."

**6.30** "The longer you have these benefits, the more they become taken for granted. It's a bit disappointing at times."

**7.8** "We often receive feedback from people who say it's great here, especially those who have worked in other companies before."

**8.22** This means fewer absences and all the benefits that come with it, such as reduced turnover, because when employees are satisfied, they show more dedication and motivation. This, in turn, benefits the employer as well.

**8.27** "We focus on retaining employees through these additional services and a positive working atmosphere."

**9.25** but it is constantly questioned what we can offer as standard benefits to make them stand out for applicants. Especially for those who are fortunate enough to have multiple offers, we want to be able to say, "Hey, we are an excellent employer," and we have personally prioritized that, hence our focus on work, etc., and taking care of our employees. And of course, that includes such offerings.

**9.39** "They take employees very seriously here."

## 8. Higher Job Satisfaction

**1.6** "It's really beneficial to my work-life-balance because that way I get to enjoy more of my personal interest, and I also like my work."

**2.17** "No, I think that the collaboration between Facility Management and Human Resource Management can provide a real added value in terms of work-life balance and ultimately contribute to employer attractiveness both internally and externally."

**4.7** "We put effort into the office setup, avoiding a bureaucratic look. We provide employees with functional workspaces where they can collaborate, interact, and have the flexibility to withdraw or take a break."

**5.23** "We offer everything from training to become an insurance specialist to dual studies alongside your apprenticeship. We support employees with their doctoral theses."

**6.11** "We constantly assess how we can support our employees, detect early signs of any issues, and take preventive measures."

**6.33** "We have various thoughts, ranging from the much-discussed four-day workweek to expanding mobility options and implementing additional incentive systems to foster collaboration."

**7.8** "We often receive feedback from people who say it's great here, especially those who have worked in other companies before. They appreciate that we respond quickly or promptly, and things are resolved efficiently."

**7.32** "I personally find the Flexi Friday really great, I must say... For example, today, it's raining outside, but I don't mind. I'll just stay here and work the whole day."

**7.35** "We continually receive feedback that it's great to see how much effort we put into finding individual solutions... It also has a positive external impact when you see that, hey, I believe we have like 4.4 or 4.6 stars out of 5, or even 4.8 now."

**7.35** "Our kununu score has definitely improved since I started working at the company, by 20.4%. We have a good score because we encouraged colleagues to evaluate the application process and onboarding, and we received good ratings, which naturally pleased us."

**8.21** "For me, it's quite clear that flexible working hours are the most important. Being able to adjust your work to fit your leisure time or personal life, as circumstances require, is what matters most."

**9.30** "We have conducted surveys from time to time. It was more frequent during the move, but recently, for example, there was another survey regarding the use of an outdoor field we have. The survey asked what people would like to see there, whether it's a beach volleyball court or something completely different. Employees are always involved and consulted."

**10.22** "We coordinate within the team. I am more of a night person, but I have two colleagues in the team who are terrible early birds, starting work at 7:00 am."

**10.24** "For me personally, it's definitely the flexibility, the ability to decide at any time whether I want to work or not."

## 9. Cost Optimization

**4.10** "We offer our employees job bikes if they are interested, and all our employees receive a free public transportation ticket, currently the Deutschlandticket, regardless of their employment status (part-time, full-time) or department. We want all our employees to have mobility, and we cover the entire cost. This is actually not the standard practice. Often, companies contribute a portion of the cost, but we always cover it completely."

**5.4** "By offering top-quality food at our in-house company restaurant, we can provide excellent meals at a small cost since the company covers a major part of the expenses."

**5.6** "We provide regular information on health topics and conduct health days, which is a cost-effective way of promoting employee well-being."

**6.30** "That's something we've been noticing lately. Despite being well-established and offering a wide range of benefits, the expectations just keep increasing."

**7.15** "Of course, we also consider the costs and the interest of the team. For example, yoga is quite expensive. Clear Nero covers the cost of yoga classes, but the yoga studio charges us a substantial amount. However, if only two colleagues attend, and the yoga instructor still sends a High bill, we ask the team who is currently interested. We recently did this, and when only three responses came in, we contacted those individuals again and said it wasn't cost-effective for us at the moment. We suggested pausing it and restarting in September, and everyone was okay with that. We are mindful of the costs and adjust accordingly. "

**7.15** "If, for example, we receive a bill from the kitchen for a certain amount, but only three colleagues attended, we might reconsider doing it again. If 30 people sign up, it's a different story. We might consider splitting it into two sessions. It depends on the response. We are flexible and responsive. "

**7.29** "We offer Jobrad, that's what we have. And in general, we have bicycle parking downstairs. There are bike racks, but there is also an area that is only accessible to employees,

a slightly secured area with a key, so they can safely park their bikes there... Yes, Jobrad is available too. We offer that as well."

**8.27** "Yes, at our office, we actually emphasize the various perks and additional services we can offer. We do this because, in return, we can't afford to pay exorbitant salaries like some of the large offices in the facility, for example. Our institution is too small for that."

#### 10. First services and facilities

**3.18** It's not the best approach for an employer to retain employees solely based on payments, salaries, and such, as it's not always perfect and effective.

**6.31** Most people are very satisfied with the offerings, but somehow, the topic of salary always comes up. It's fascinating because even if the salary is not bad when you consider salary ranges and conditions, people's subjective perception still heavily focuses on salary. It consistently comes up in surveys. They don't express gratitude for having access to various benefits. So, as I mentioned, I'm a bit concerned about the wear and tear of it all. It's a natural tendency, but also quite sad at times.

**6.38** Salary is crucial. Regardless of what is said out there about purpose and other factors, the salary must be competitive. If the salary is not right as a base, nothing else matters. It's really the fundamental aspect. I think every company should be aware of that.

**6.38** Of course, work-life balance plays a role, but if the salary is right, it doesn't mean you can neglect other aspects. It's important to find a balance and complement each other with various measures.

**7.44** I think salary is a short-term motivator and it remains that way for a short period, but eventually it becomes the norm. Even if I give someone a substantial salary increase, they will be happy about it, but in the next month, they will check if it really arrived, and by the following month, it becomes part of the normal routine. And I think when you have various benefits, different events, and so on, it's always something new and it shows, "Hey, I have a cool employer." My salary continues to be paid regularly every month, and it's not viewed in the same way as, "Wow, I earn this and that," which I don't think everyone thinks about every month. Well, in my opinion, salary is also important for work-life balance.

**8.27** Yes, at our office, we actually emphasize the various perks and additional services we can offer. We do this because, in return, we can't afford to pay exorbitant salaries like some of the large offices in the facility, for example. Our institution is too small for that. However, we focus on retaining employees through these additional services and a positive working atmosphere. We want employees to enjoy working here and feel that we are flexible. By doing so, we can retain employees even if they could potentially earn more elsewhere. It's part of our strategy to offer as much as possible to make employees feel comfortable and listened to. We have many discussions about this because we may not be able to compete with astronomical salaries that are discussed elsewhere.

**8.28** I believe that many other factors contribute to work-life balance more than just salary. Of course, you can negotiate and sell yourself. However, if you ultimately lack flexibility and don't feel comfortable or are too exhausted, it doesn't matter what the salary is.

**9.38** It's a combination of both. Salary is always a good motivator, I think that's probably the case for everyone. However, the work environment is extremely important, in my opinion, because it has a significant impact on one's mental well-being. I've had many jobs in my life, and I can tell you that working in an environment where you don't feel comfortable at all contributes to lower productivity. It's a symbiotic relationship, and that's why having a good

working relationship between the HR department and facility management to make the workplace as pleasant as possible is crucial. I believe that some employees would even be willing to forego a small increase in salary for that.

**10.29** Absolutely. Regarding what companies can do to contribute to work-life balance for their employees, it depends on the culture and maturity of the organization. In our bubble, there are some fundamental things. Firstly, it's about individual responsibility. It's a dramatic miss development when the impression is given that companies are responsible for people's lives.

## **Range of Secondary Services and Facilities Offered:**

### 1. Food and beverage services and facilities

- Interview 10 does not (really) provide it.

**1.11** "We basically have a catering where we can eat all day, have drinks all day etc. it has a social space for social events and we have flexible working arrangements."

**2.7** "We provided some spaces in collaboration with the Real Estate Department so that people could book slots in the cafeteria in the mornings and have coffee and donuts. My breakfast is also sponsored, so as a team, we can have breakfast together or have a coffee. It was actually a cool offering."

**2.8** "Regarding the gastronomy and care services, I also mentioned not only the cafeteria but also vending machines and a shop because I believe it can improve work-life balance."

**3.5** "They have their own catering services and organize lunch moments." Interview 3

**3.5** "Despite the cost, around 3.5 euros or something, they go for lunch there every noon."

**4.7** "We have well-equipped kitchens, provide beverages, and offer facilities like table tennis or football. This is something quite unique in our industry, as many companies either cannot afford it or choose not to invest in such facilities. For us, it's a standard practice, but for newcomers, it feels like an additional benefit."

**5.4** "Let me start with something small. We have an in-house company restaurant... offers a variety of vegetarian and vegan options."

**5.10** "Especially during times of personal or professional struggles, it's essential to have experts around, and we have successfully addressed this through our program. We have carefully chosen services and made sure to implement them since 2020."

**5.10** "The company restaurant is an essential part of it, and there is even a dedicated committee that reports annually to the employees."

**6.11** "We currently have a campus cafeteria where employees can have subsidized and delicious freshly cooked lunches. In the morning, during breakfast breaks, they have the option to get fresh rolls. We also have a campus kiosk, so they can satisfy their sweet tooth or get a yogurt or ice cream whenever they want. We always have fresh fruits available as well, and sometimes we even offer cut-up vegetables as a Healthy option."

**6.11** "As for meals, we regularly organize grilling events. Just last week, the entire company gathered after a staff meeting and had a barbecue. We also have an additional service where we can order from a local organic market, and the items are delivered to the campus."

**6.11** "We offer everything from coffee, water, tea, cocoa, and whatever else the heart desires."



**7.16** "We looked into it. There is a specific monthly allowance that can be provided to each employee tax-free, and from the company's perspective, it's €50. I think it has been or will soon be increased a bit. [...] This delivery service could have been a plan... They could choose what they want to eat for tomorrow, and it would be sustainably delivered to the office."

**7.19** "We have many vegans in the team, and there was a colleague who conducted a training session on implementing a vegan lifestyle. It was a cross-topic training that counted as work time for everyone, and it received a lot of positive feedback."

**7.33** "When I come to the office in the morning, I don't have to think about whether I need to stop by the bakery for a roll because I know everything is available at the office. I can have cereal, grab some fruit, the coffee is there. I can just arrive, relax, enjoy my cereal, and not worry about my breakfast, for example."

**8.5** "We provide healthy food options such as fruits and water, which are always available. This allows employees to intake vitamins and maintain a Healthy diet."

**8.7** "However, last year, we organized workshops for our employees, offering sports courses and cooking classes for healthy eating."

**9.11** "We have an in-house restaurant and a cafeteria, complete with a barista. So far, all coffee and cold drinks are free for employees. Currently, the cost of lunch is also covered. And we provide snacks like fruits, which are also available for free."

**10.20** "We don't have specific programs related to nutrition, but some teams occasionally organize cooking workshops as an event."

## 2. Fitness and wellness services and facilities

- Interview 1 and 10 does not provide it.

**1.10** "I know that some might like gym facilities. That's something because otherwise they have to go home and if there were facilities like that you can go out of your work when you're finished. So that would contribute to a better work life balance."

**1.11** "Other facilities are just on top. However, for example, as I told a gym membership or something like dog care or childcare is also enhancing the work-life balance."

**2.5** "As for social and community services, there are various networks within the EU, including a women's network. These networks offer a range of services related to health and social issues, such as active breaks and social counseling."

**2.5** "Additionally, there are health-related offerings, such as themed activities focused on topics like sleep quality, nutrition, and physical exercise. These activities are promoted through the news channel, and participants have the option to freely join."

**3.6** "The XXX Fit program is being implemented, which means there are opportunities to sign up for bike routes or other sports activities." Interview 3

**4.8** "We offer sports activities. We recently hired a yoga instructor who will be conducting yoga sessions for employees once a week for the next three months."

**5.6** "Regarding sports and fitness, we have a provider called E-Gym Welp. They offer online options for sports and fitness activities. Additionally, employees can also train at local fitness



studios nationwide. This means that if I'm on vacation in Munich and want to work out, I can find a studio on their website where I can do exactly what I want and avail of their facilities."

**5.11** "And especially in the health area, which we surveyed at Great Place to Work, in order to update our psychological hazard assessment, it has become clear that we have very good ratings in this area of offerings."

**6.11** "We also collaborate with Gimbel Pass, which includes various fitness studios, swimming pools, physiotherapy centers, clubs, and more. With Gimbel Pass, a minimal amount is deducted from the gross salary each month, and the rest is subsidized by us. This allows us to promote physical well-being."

**6.28** "It's truly valuable to know that after work, you can go for a workout at the gym, release your thoughts, and recharge mentally."

**7.9** "We also used to offer 'active breaks' until recently. As you mentioned sports activities, we had a trainer who offered sessions at specific time slots via Teams."

**8.7** "We offer leisure activities and team-building initiatives. For example, we organize bike tours or football matches to encourage physical activity."

**8.7** "We also had the DVB Small Academy. It has been scaled back a bit this year due to our anniversary celebrations and other focus areas. However, last year, we organized workshops for our employees, offering sports courses and cooking classes for healthy eating."

**8.10** "Yes, we have a trainer who prepares the course every Monday at a nearby studio. All employees who want to attend can go and take turns participating in the sports activities."

**9.8** "In our new building, we have a fitness room where employees can exercise. For example, yoga classes are offered, and currently, we have kickboxing classes five times a week, which is quite exciting."

**9.8** "We also have a group called the B3 Group, consisting of employees who organize sports activities such as hiking, snowshoeing, or running groups."

**9.35** "As a working mother almost full-time, I enjoy being in the home office because it gives me an extra hour in the day that I don't have to spend commuting. It personally reduces my stress level, and I gladly take advantage of activities such as yoga classes or kickboxing because I find it enjoyable to have a Hour just for myself, especially when it's on-site at work with nice colleagues. I find that very pleasant."

**10.12** "We tried that (Sport services and facilities), but 99% of the majority said no, just give us more money instead."

### 3. Childcare services and facilities

- Interview 1, 8 and 10 does not provide it.

**1.8** "For example, a mom has a Tuesday off and the dad has a Friday off and then it goes to school and then you take it to daycare. It's more of a add schedule you also have to facilitate it every time and with our situation it's like OK Monday I can go work from home OK fine then next week you work from home on Monday."

**1.11** "Other facilities are just on top. However, for example, as I told a gym membership or something like dog care or childcare is also enhancing the work-life balance."

**2.13** “ ... these kinds of benefits are additional things that I have, which naturally help with retention and are therefore highly relevant. This also applies to things like childcare – if I make it possible to handle childcare, then people are naturally more bound to the company.”

**3.7** "I assume XXX arranges that externally, so it's not internal. However, it is mentioned, so there might be an option to bring your children to childcare at work. “

**Provides it indirectly: 4.9** "No, we don't have that. However, we do cover a certain expense related to childcare. In Hamburg and other states, employees are required to contribute a portion of the cost for kindergarten childcare. We cover that expense for our employees, so if they have childcare expenses, we reimburse them directly."

**5.13** "We are considering adding additional services to our energy program as supplementary services. There is a High demand for childcare services, especially for parents with limited availability. The number of facilities accepting children is decreasing, and the quality of services is deteriorating."

**6.11** "We provide childcare subsidies for parents who send their children to daycare centers, and we have our own campus daycare center available on-site. We offer holiday care as well and generally support employees in taking care of their children, ensuring they have flexibility to balance work and family life."

**7.25** "At the summer house, yes, we do offer childcare services."

**7.26** But at the summer house, it is definitely used because people bring their children there. During the day, the children are taken care of, which is something they would normally do at home or maybe they have another person at home, like their partner, to help out.

**7.26** "Yes, we do offer it. Well, we would like to offer it, but currently, the parents don't actually need it... We have a small group of parents, so we directly reach out to them and say, 'Hey, if you need it, we can provide childcare at the office.'" Interview 7

**8.16** "Regarding childcare services. No, unfortunately not. Maybe that will change in the future when we have a connection to the campus. We are planning to build a new office building there, and they have a daycare center on the campus. We hope that in the future, our employees will be able to benefit from it and send their children there."

**9.12** "We don't have that. We have one 'Kids' Day' per year. I think it's always on 'Buß und Betttag' because that's a school holiday but not a work holiday. I believe we provide childcare on that day. But it's not a regular service."

**10.13** "The same applies to locally-bound services like this; it doesn't make sense for us."

#### 4. Transportation services and facilities

- Interview 1 does not provide it.

- Interview 10 only partly provides it.

**2.12** “Looking at some examples, the use of bicycles and the job ticket have been well-received. The availability of the new 40€ ticket has made it attractive for more employees to use it. [...] Then there are changing rooms and showers. This means I can ride my bike to work and not have to shower and change again for longer distances, so to speak. Then there's the leasing option, and now shifting away from the car towards transportation, there's the public transportation pass (Job Ticket) that you can get at a discounted rate.”

**3.8** "No, we have a bicycle program. People who live a bit further away from the office can purchase bicycles through a bicycle plan."

**3.10** "Kim, from the facility department, allowed everyone to spend €750.01 to set up their home office or use it for transportation expenses."

**4.10** "We offer our employees job bikes if they are interested and all our employees receive a free public transportation ticket, currently the Deutschlandticket, regardless of their employment status (part-time, full-time) or department."

**5.7** "We have our own transportation service called Woolpackers, which provides online offerings in the sports and fitness field."

**6.11** "We offer classic job bikes, which I think almost everyone offers nowadays. This means that every employee has the opportunity to participate in the job bike program. We also collaborate with Gimbel Pass."

**7.18** "For example, we actually pay for public transportation tickets for our employees who want them. Some employees don't want it, but everyone is offered the option"

**7.29** "Good point. Yes, we offer Jobrad, that's what we have. [...] We also have bicycle parking downstairs. There are parking spaces on the premises of the building where many other tenants, offices, and companies are located."

**7.29** "And carpooling. Yes, when it comes to going somewhere, definitely, but not necessarily for commuting to work. The colleagues can organize that themselves. For off-site visits, for example, there have been carpooling arrangements. People were asked if they would take the train or drive by car. Those who opted for driving would ideally take their colleagues along to avoid one person sitting alone in a five-seater car. The cost of the trip is covered, and we organized it so that no car would arrive empty in the end."

**8.6** "Another aspect I would like to mention is our Brutto-Netto salary optimization program called Valuenet. For example, we offer jobrad (company bicycle) as an option to encourage employees to commute by bike. It supports the idea of cycling to work, especially since many employees live in Gescher, where commuting by bike is feasible. These are some of the health aspects that come to mind."

**9.8** "And we also have Jobrad, which means employees can lease a bicycle through their work."

**10.14** "We usually take taxis together when we arrive in Dortmund and need to go to the client."

## 5. Technology and connectivity services and facilities

**1.11** "Due to the fact that the company is based in a building with other companies, we share the facilities. However, we have also rented the room for meetings etc. that is already provided with technology so you don't have to bring your own."

**2.4** "There are possibilities, for example, to use the company laptop for personal purposes if certain conditions are met, which could be included as an additional contract clause. Some individuals have company phones, but I'm not sure if that falls under the same category. Internet usage and similar tendencies also exist, but I don't think they apply to everyone on a broad scale."

**2.8** "Additionally, there is a office ATM available."

**3.8** As for technology and connectivity services, such as fast internet connection, video conferencing, and charging points, we have already discussed those a bit earlier. [...] It applies to all modern buildings, like the one in Apeldoorn that recently went through renovations. There, you can make use of meeting rooms or cubicles. If I have a meeting in that area, it means I can stay there. So, it sounds like a facility-related matter, and it is."

**4.11** "We offer all of that. One thing that sets us apart, I believe, from other companies in this field is that all our employees receive a company phone. [...] So, it's something I would still consider an additional benefit or our own defined standard, which sets us apart. And a group of employees also receive a tablet or laptop. This is especially useful for the ambulance service, as they don't work fixed hours in an office but travel around Hamburg. In each office, there are charging stations and the ability to utilize high-speed internet. They can set up hotspots with their phones and work and browse while on the go."

**5.12** "We have an internal employee portal digitally. All health-related information is stored there. Everything can be accessed there. All employees actually know who the contact person is in this area."

**6.18** "Each of us has a complete hardware setup at home, including two monitors or an ultra-wide monitor, depending on personal preference. We also provide a docking station, mouse, keyboard, and a choice between Microsoft or Apple laptops, depending on the job requirements."

**7.30** "Mhm, the equipment that is provided, like laptops, is clearly specified and can be used privately as well. For example, if someone doesn't have a personal laptop, they can use their work laptop. I personally use my work laptop after working hours because I don't have a personal one anymore. And I also use the company's licenses, like for Word or PowerPoint."

**8.17** "We already have good equipment in place. We provide mobile workstations for remote work, and most employees are equipped with laptops so they can work from home and have flexibility in the office, being able to work from any workstation."

**8.29** "We have adjusted our working days, for example, in private customer consultations, so that office spaces can be shared. This way, there's always someone sitting in the office. Since everyone has laptops, we can use any office space flexibly."

**9.15** "However, for those who don't have an official workplace in the office, such as our sales team who are usually out and about, they are provided with equipment for working from home, allowing them to do their paperwork there."

**10.15** "Desk chair, monitor, stuff, everything you need... Each of us has an iPhone, which we can use without restrictions."

## 6. Environmental sustainability services and facilities

- Interview 4 does not provide it.

**1.1** "We also have green roof which is not only good for the environment but also for the employees to take a break in the nature."

**2.5** "For example, we have solar panels, which are still in the planning phase. There is also the building called crystal with geothermal energy, or is it just precise degrees? I believe the building called crystal generates more energy than it needs [...] it's a notable feature in the area of environmental management at XXX."

**3.9** "Regarding lighting, well, it's different. For example, I work in a very old building in Rijswijk, and even the Kalita building is quite old. However, all the modern new buildings do have solar energy and LED lighting. I remember being somewhere else, and we had green roofs."

**4.13** "We try to pay attention to those aspects, but I can't claim that we have a full-fledged program in place. There were some efforts made in the past, where we formed a working group to explore how we could be more environmentally friendly. But I can't say we have a comprehensive program in place."

**5.8** "Our transportation services, environmentally friendly services, and health-related activities contribute to the range of secondary services and facilities we provide."

**6.19** "We actually have two ladies who solely focus on environmental sustainability. We must say that this specific focus only started at the beginning of this year. However, we have always been committed to implementing various initiatives." Interview 6

**7.11** "In the past, we considered implementing a sustainable food delivery service, but the offer wasn't attractive enough for us, so we didn't proceed with it."

**7.17** "Yes, sustainability is still a consideration for us... That's why there was a certain provision amount, but in the end, it was just too high for us because even if we said it could be dependent on the orders, even if no one ordered, the cost would still be too much for us."

**7.18** "We also provide the opportunity, through coordination, for colleagues who come to work on an e-bike or e-scooter... It doesn't have to be every day, but there is definitely the possibility to recharge their batteries at our location."

**7.18** "In general, all the food we buy in the office is organic. We make sure everything is organic, including milk, fruits, and coffee. We pay close attention to that... For example, there are guides on which dishwasher program to use for the most environmentally friendly option." Interview 7

**7.19** "We have a learning platform called E-Learning. Our office management uploaded some videos on how to reduce electricity consumption in the office, such as turning off lights when leaving various rooms... There are many small things that happen to create a better work environment."

**8.17** "Everything is also somewhat related to sustainability. We have recently launched a sustainability project, which was also encouraged. Each department is encouraged to take on projects related to sustainability within their own areas."

**8.17** "For example, we have completely revamped our waste separation system throughout the building. We have implemented measures to encourage alternative modes of transportation instead of driving cars, such as promoting public transportation or carpooling, to be more mindful of the environment. We also use eco-friendly materials, such as biodegradable cornstarch-based cards for customers."

**8.17** "Monthly newsletters are sent to employees with sustainability tips, encouraging them to apply these practices at home as well. We have previously conducted courses on creating a plastic-free bathroom, but now we are taking the topic more seriously and have formed a project team in each department to implement sustainability projects. We aim to achieve certain milestones within a three-year cycle, ensuring that we continuously become more sustainable."

**9.16** "We also provide various trainings, especially for our managers, with a focus on health. It's not just about how to work effectively but also about maintaining one's own health, especially during stressful times."

**9.19** "Well, we have partially green roofs, not entirely. It's also part of well-being. Maybe we could have a rooftop terrace with a grill, where employees can grill if they want. In terms of sustainability, yes, we are making progress."

**9.19** "We also have regular presentations, which we call 'Lunch and Learn.' During lunch breaks, employees can attend these presentations. Recently, we had a former colleague of mine who worked elsewhere and offered something related to environmental protection and sustainability."

**10.16** "We are somehow CO2 neutral and we recycle our old laptops, but it's not that structured. However, we don't have anything dedicated to such things like nutritional courses or similar."

### 7. Concierge services and facilities

- Interview 1, 3, 5 and 7 does not provide it.

**2.5** "[...] there are concierge services that include package delivery and travel organization."

**4.14** "Unfortunately, that's not available. We lack the resources for such services." Interview 4

**6.21** "We do not provide those. Each individual is responsible for cleaning their own space and attending their own office appointments. However, we do have a designated package room where you can receive packages."

**8.18** "No, that's not common here. It's not something we offer or facilitate. We don't have caretaker services for personal matters or tasks like package delivery or cleaning. Employees are expected to handle their personal affairs outside of work hours."

**9.17** "We do have a package delivery service, so employees can also use it for their personal deliveries. Our front desk handles that, and employees can have their personal packages delivered to the office."

**10.19** "I think most of us would feel quite spoiled with that... I mean, not that I personally wouldn't find it great, but most people would say, 'Hey, I'm an adult; I can take care of myself.'"

### 8. Health and safety services and facilities

- Interview 1 and 8 does not provide it.

**2.5** "Additionally, there are health-related offerings, such as themed activities focused on topics like sleep quality, nutrition, and physical exercise."

**2.8** "We have the Employee Office, I believe that's what it refers to. We are an insurance company, so employees have the opportunity to receive insurance advice and actually save a trip to get insured here. Additionally, there is a office ATM available."

**2.8** "We have the Employee Office, I believe that's what it refers to. We are an insurance company, so employees have the opportunity to receive insurance advice and actually save a trip to get insured here."

**3.10** "When it comes to ergonomics, it does have an impact."

**4.15** "We also try to pay attention to that, but I can't claim that we shine in that area."

**4.16** "Individual supervision. Employees have the opportunity, so to speak, to seek individual supervision if they feel particularly stressed and want to understand or work on it."

**5.8** "Our occupational health department also offered a medical examination called ABI (Arm-Leg Index), which assesses the risk of stroke and heart attack."

**5.8** "We had various areas covered by AOK, including a lecture on recharging energy and stress management. We also had preventive offerings such as the Back Check, which assesses the condition of the back muscles and the entire core area."

**5.13** "Flexibility is indeed important. No 6-month notice period and so on. So, you can start from month to month. You can cancel from month to month, so it's very straightforward."

**6.11** "As for mental well-being, we provide various offerings related to mindfulness, time management, and personal development."

**6.27** "We aim to enable everyone to work from home, and if needed, they can visit any of our 15 locations nationwide to access additional equipment."

**7.9** "We genuinely care about employee satisfaction. For example, we organized a Health day last year in collaboration with the health insurance company Barmer, and we're planning to do it again this year because it was highly appreciated."

**7.19** "We have a policy and training on how to use the heating system in the office correctly and how to save water... There are various areas covered, and employees can access the information on the internet or through our learning platform."

**7.41** "That's an external psychologist who doesn't work exclusively for us, but she is available... Just having the opportunity to quickly access a psychologist is valuable."

**9.16** "We have ergonomic workstations, and we also have a new retreat room at the office, which is a quiet space where one can take a break if needed."

**9.16** "We also offer coaching sessions, including psychological support if someone requires it, and that is organized by the HR department."

**10.9** "We have a company health insurance, which is quite standard... Every year, there are discussions about what more we can offer..."

**10.20** "We don't have specific programs related to nutrition, but some teams occasionally organize cooking workshops as an event."

## 9. Social and community services and facilities

**1.2** "An example in our company are the Friday night drinks, well they're mostly on Fridays. We quit working around 4:00 when you have something to finish you can continue but it's just sort of a social pressure to stop working and to celebrate the weekend so yeah I think maybe it can help." Interview 1

**1.11** "We basically have a catering where we can eat all day, have drinks all day etc. it has a social space for social events and we have flexible working arrangements."



**2.6** "Carnival is celebrated once a year. [...] And then, of course, there is this art and culture event."

**2.7** "We provided some spaces in collaboration with the Real Estate Department so that people could book slots in the cafeteria in the mornings and have coffee and donuts. My breakfast is also sponsored, so as a team, we can have breakfast together or have a coffee. It was actually a cool offering."

**3.14** "We do have some events, like our annual Christmas celebration, which is organized by the marketing department. They arrange parties and festivities, sometimes separately for different divisions. For example, we have a barbecue event coming up soon, which is a longstanding tradition."

**3.14** "There will be a big event at one of our locations in Apeldoorn. It's a location-based event, and all employees and their families are invited."

**4.16** "We invite our employees to a joint dinner every 3 months, I believe. It's on our company's expense, with the idea of providing an opportunity to meet outside of the work routine, to get to know each other on a different level, and engage in other forms of exchange."

**5.15** "We have regular health events at our company, and there is a Health Steering Committee that meets twice a year. Additionally, we have a smaller committee consisting of representatives from management, HR, and others."

**6.11** "As for meals, we regularly organize grilling events. Just last week, the entire company gathered after a staff meeting and had a barbecue."

**6.20** "Yes, they are. In the developer lounge, where we all gather, people do make use of them. You can also access the refrigerators and such there. For example, if you rent the developer lounge, you can spontaneously say in the evening, "I want to barbecue," and there is a grill available. You can pre-order meat through our helpful staff on campus, or even grill vegetables or whatever you prefer. It can be grilled for you."

**7.10** "We organize various team events, starting with fun afternoons, summer parties, and Christmas celebrations. Twice a year, we have offsite events, one digital in winter and one on-site in summer."

**7.29** "[...] also offer social days per year. Each employee can take two social days, and they are paid according to their hourly rate. It's up to them how they use those days. We have a small group that organizes this internally and reaches out to various companies, asking if we can contribute."

**8.7** "We offer leisure activities and team-building initiatives."

**8.19** "Yes, we have various team-building initiatives and events throughout the year, which I believe is what you meant. We organize celebrations and gatherings, such as company-wide parties and large-scale Christmas events."

**8.19** "Each department also arranges team dinners to foster closer relationships. We also have special events and meetings to facilitate networking opportunities."

**9.13** "We have summer parties, an annual Christmas party, and team events every two months. Each team receives a certain budget that they can use for any activities they want. Essentially, they can organize events, go out for meals, go to the movies, or do anything they like. [...] We have these team events every two months."



**10.22** "We coordinate within the team. I am more of a night person, but I have two colleagues in the team who are terrible early birds... There are no restrictions from XXX's side."

#### 10. Personal services and facilities

- Interview 1 and 9 does not provide it.

**2.8** "We have the Employee Office, I believe that's what it refers to. We are an insurance company, so employees have the opportunity to receive insurance advice and actually save a trip to get insured here. Additionally, there is a office ATM available."

**3.11** "Well, people mostly decide that for themselves. For example, the XXX advisory department is already quite flexible because they provide advice and conduct inspections on roofs. They often have two people working in the drafting room. However, you won't see everyone working from home at the same time unless there's a general meeting or departmental meeting. That usually takes about three hours, and then we go back to our respective places. Due to COVID-19, it's become clear that everyone actually prefers working from home, so I think in the future, facility-related matters can be scaled down, and we can have more flexible workstations."

**4.17** "So, there's always an attempt and ongoing discussion about it. There are areas where it's easier to implement, and others where it's more challenging, but if it's feasible, we have home office policies."

**5.13** "We understand the challenges employees face in balancing work and personal life, and that's why we are exploring options like 24-hour caregiving support."

**5.19** "We have created 2 departments completely new. Digitization is progressing rapidly, and in the insurance industry, it's like this: you have a department for applications, everything related to applications, certificates, and so on."

**5.23** "We offer everything from training to become an insurance specialist to dual studies alongside your apprenticeship. We support employees with their doctoral theses. But we also offer short training sessions that can be done online."

**6.11** "We also have a mentoring program where new employees receive comprehensive onboarding and are assigned a mentor who can address overarching topics and answer questions."

**6.16** "We have our own merchandise shop, which includes a lot of clothing. Each employee receives a voucher every year that they can spend, for example, in this workshop. They all wear the clothes because the logo is relatively small, so they can also wear them privately. The clothes are really cool, good quality, so it's highly appreciated. For example, that's something we still have. Many people say, for example, that they always wear jogging pants when jogging, so they really use them privately."

**7.16** "Exactly. Yes, that's what we're currently doing. We have our own merchandise shop, which includes a lot of clothing... The clothes are really cool, good quality, so it's highly appreciated."

**7.30** "Exactly, we don't have cleaning or laundry services. You mean more like services for employees, right? That would make their workday easier. No, we don't have those, but we do have the package service and the technology that can be used." Interview 7

**7.31** "We did actually consider a Hair salon but haven't implemented it yet. It's something we've thought about."

**7.31** We accommodated refugees and provided them with a basic supply of groceries that we purchased... They could then use the lockable meeting room, for example, where we had a mother with a newborn."

**8.19** "Yes, we have various team-building initiatives and events throughout the year, which I believe is what you meant. We organize celebrations and gatherings, such as company-wide parties and large-scale Christmas events."

**10.9** "We do have a company health insurance, which is quite standard... Every year, there are discussions about what more we can offer..."

**10.22** "It allows me to do things during the day, like doing laundry, going to the doctor, or running errands."

### 11. Flexible working arrangements

**1.6** "I've read a lot of articles about this it's maybe because work 36 hours a week. So, every two weeks I have a day off and I really like that. It's really beneficial to my work-life balance because that way I get to enjoy more of my personal interest, and I also like my work."

**1.6** "I think in the future working 36 or 32 hours is getting more standard. I just don't see myself working 40 hours. I can of course but I want to do other things as well."

**1.7** "I really like to have options and the freedom to be spontaneously."

**1.11** "We basically have a catering where we can eat all day, have drinks all day etc. it has a social space for social events and we have flexible working arrangements."

**2.11** "The option of working from home is already facilitated through a works agreement, specifically the teleworking agreement at XXX. Employees can sign an additional contract to their employment agreement, which allows them to participate in flexible work arrangements."

**2.13** "It helps in retaining current employees and attracting new ones by offering the option to work from home. I also think that offering such additional services is becoming increasingly important for companies, as the local job market is highly competitive, especially with the rise of remote work."

**3.10** "[...] the facility department, allowed everyone to spend €750.01 to set up their home office or use it for transportation expenses."

**3.11** "Well, people mostly decide that for themselves. [...] Due to COVID-19, it's become clear that everyone actually prefers working from home, so I think in the future, facility-related matters can be scaled down, and we can have more flexible workstations. It also depends on the layout; when searching for a workstation, you usually choose the closest available desk."

**4.17** "[...] we have home office policies. There's the possibility to work from home, and there's almost always an attempt to offer flexible working hours, except in cases where schedules need to be adhered to."

**4.17** "Exactly, but efforts are always made to find flexible solutions, to see if someone says, "I don't know, I'm a single parent, and I can only work in the mornings," to try to accommodate those situations or similar stories."

**5.21** "For people who are my age. I firmly believe that within the next 5 years, the 4-day workweek will become a topic."

**6.25** "Oh, that's a good question. It may sound trivial, but I would say flexible working hours. It allows individuals to better integrate their work and personal lives. Everything else is an added bonus, but without a solid foundation of flexible working hours, it's difficult to achieve a good work-life balance."

**7.6** "Now, remote working is a separate arrangement. For example, I can request to work from Bali."

**7.6** "So, I can request to work remotely during that time. For example, I could be working while my colleagues are sleeping, and vice versa, I sleep while they work during the day."

**7.26** "Because we offer mobile working, our colleagues tend to work from home rather than bringing their children to the office."

**7.32** "Well, I personally find the Flexi Friday really great, I must say... For example, today, it's raining outside, but I don't mind. I'll just stay here and work the whole day."

**8.7** "We offer flexible working hour models, which likely includes our use of a flextime account. The working hours are recorded in a flextime account, allowing employees to adjust their schedules to fit their personal circumstances. They have the option to start or finish later or earlier, based on what suits their private arrangements."

**8.7** "We also have provisions for remote work or home office for employees who prefer or need to work from their private environment. This allows for individual customization of workdays and working hours. For example, we offer a shortened workweek for mothers who can only work two or three days a week. It provides flexibility in arranging the days and also includes part-time options."

**8.7** "Additionally, we have a life work-time account called "Lrz." I'm not sure if you're familiar with it. It's a model in cooperation with R and v Insurance. Employees can start accumulating credits in this account, for example, from overtime pay, instead of taking the payment or time off. They can save these credits in the life work-time account and eventually use them for a sabbatical or potentially retire early if they have saved enough. It allows the accumulated credits to be converted into leisure time."

**8.29** "We have adjusted our working days, for example, in private customer consultations, so that office spaces can be shared. This way, there's always someone sitting in the office. Since everyone has laptops, we can use any office space flexibly."

**9.35** "As a working mother almost full-time, I enjoy being in the home office because it gives me an extra hour in the day that I don't have to spend commuting."

**10.21** "Other colleagues spent a week in Portugal and worked from there. From my perspective, unless you were personally affected by family deaths or something, I believe that COVID-19 had a positive impact on the work environment."

**10.22** "Yes, that is a category (flexible working arrangements) where I wouldn't even think of making a suggestion... It allows me to do things during the day, like doing laundry, going to the doctor, or running errands."

**10.22** "We coordinate within the team. I am more of a night person, but I have two colleagues in the team who are terrible early birds... There are no restrictions from XXX's side."

**10.23** "For example, there's a colleague here in Berlin who is practically abroad for three-quarters of the year, often sitting somewhere on the beach. So, it's doable."

**10.24** "For me personally, it's definitely the flexibility, the ability to decide at any time whether I want to work or not."

## Information letter

This letter is intended to inform the participants about the following: the goal of the research, how it will be carried out, the contribution that participants are required to make; how the collected data will be handled; potential risks associated with participation; that participation in the research is completely voluntary; and that the collected data will only be used for this research purpose, unless further permission is requested.

### Introduction

Dear participant, please answer the questions of the interview which is about the secondary services and facilities, and the well-being of employees within your company. Participation is voluntary. In order to participate, your permission is required. Before you decide if you want to do this, it will be explained why this questionnaire is necessary for the research. Please read this information carefully. If you have any questions, please contact. See contact information at the bottom of this information letter.

### **"What is the impact of the provision of secondary services and facilities by Human Facility Management on the Work-Life-Balance of employees working at offices in the Netherlands and Germany?"**

#### **Background and purpose of the research**

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of Work-Life-Balance (WLB) for employees, as it is closely linked to their well-being, job satisfaction, and productivity. Employers have responded to this by providing various secondary services and facilities to their employees, such as health and wellness programs, flexible work arrangements, and childcare services. These services aim to support employees in balancing their work and personal lives and can also provide added value to the organization by improving employee retention and recruitment.

HFM (Human Facility Management) is an approach that integrates various disciplines such as HRM, facility management, and real estate management to provide a better working environment for employees. HFM aims to create a work environment that is conducive to employee well-being, productivity, and job satisfaction. In this context, it is important to investigate the impact of providing secondary services and facilities within the added value of HFM on the Work-Life-Balance (WLB) of employees who work at an office in the Netherlands and Germany.

The purpose of this master thesis is to investigate the impact of providing secondary services and facilities within the added value of HFM on the Work-Life-Balance (WLB) of employees who work at an office in the Netherlands and Germany. This study aims to contribute to the understanding of the relationship between the provision of secondary services and facilities, HFM, and Work-Life-Balance.

By exploring the impact of secondary services and facilities on Work-Life-Balance, this study can provide insights into how organizations can better support their employees' well-being while also improving productivity and overall performance. Additionally, the study can contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of facility and real estate management by examining the relationship between secondary services and facilities and employee well-being. This is part of graduating from the master Facility and Real Estate Management of Saxion University of Applied Sciences and of the University of Greenwich.

#### **Execution of the research**

The nature of the study will be qualitative, utilizing semi-structured interviews to gather data. The purpose of the study is to investigate the impact of providing secondary services and facilities within the added value of HFM on the Work-Life-Balance (WLB) of employees who work at an office in the Netherlands and Germany.

To achieve this, 10 interviews will be conducted, with 4 interviews taking place in the Netherlands and 6 interviews in Germany. The interviews will be conducted with employees who work in offices where secondary services and facilities are provided and will focus on their experiences and perceptions of how these services and facilities affect the employees Work-Life-Balance.

### **Contribution required from the participant**

Participants will be asked to discuss the availability and utilization of auxiliary services and facilities at their place of employment as well as the results of an employee survey conducted by their employer evaluating the influence on their Work-Life-Balance. It will take you between 30 and 45 minutes to complete the interview. Depending on the participant's preference, the interviews will either be done in-person, over the phone, or via video conferencing.

There are no limitations on what you can eat or drink before the interview. The research findings will be more accurate and of higher quality if participants are open and honest in their responses.

The study will guarantee the participants' confidentiality and privacy at all times. All information collected during the interviews will be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Participants will also have the option to remain anonymous if they so choose.

### **Advantages and disadvantages of participating in the survey**

#### **Pros:**

- Personal benefits: Some studies may offer personal benefits to participants, such as free access to services, education or therapy.
- Opportunity to share experiences: Some studies allow participants to share their experiences and perspectives, which can be therapeutic and empowering.
- Improved awareness: Participation in research can raise awareness of important issues, and may provide an opportunity for individuals to reflect on their own beliefs and attitudes.
- Contribution to knowledge: By participating in research, individuals can contribute to the advancement of knowledge and scientific discoveries in their field of interest.

#### **Cons:**

- Discomfort: Participation in research can sometimes involve physical or emotional discomfort, such as undergoing medical tests or answering personal questions.
- Time commitment: Participating in a study can require a significant time commitment, which may interfere with other obligations and responsibilities.
- Privacy concerns: Participants may be required to share sensitive information, which could potentially be misused or disclosed without their consent.
- Potential risks: Some studies may carry risks, such as exposure to harmful substances or emotional distress.

### **Use, storage and reuse of data**

We do not collect any personal data in this survey. The stored data cannot be traced back to individual participants.

For this survey I ask for your gender and age. In order to protect your data and to limit privacy risks as much as possible, as a student I comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Ordinance (AVG): <https://autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl/nl/over-privacy/wetten/algemene-verordening-gegevensbescherming-avg>.

For this research we collect data on ethnicity and philosophy of life. In accordance with the AVG, we ensure that the specific requirements are met.

### **Voluntary participation**

You always have the option to change your mind and refuse to participate in this study. When you cease, we will stop using your data. If you disagree, email the students listed below.

### **Costs or fees**

You can take part in this research for free, and there are no fees or rewards associated with it.

### **Ethical review or advice**

The Saxion Ethical Advisory Committee has been consulted on this research.

### **Contact**

For more information or questions about this study, please contact us: Melanie van Heck, [melanie\\_vanheck@hotmail.com](mailto:melanie_vanheck@hotmail.com), 004915140123982, and Sandra Borghuis, [s.m.borghuis@saxion.nl](mailto:s.m.borghuis@saxion.nl), 0031880193453. In case of complaints about data management you can contact Saxion via the Complaint and Dispute Desk: <https://www.saxion.nl/over-saxion/organisatie/klachtenloket>.

### **Reference to the statement of consent**

On the next page you will see a statement of consent. This form provides you with information on how we process the data you enter in this questionnaire. By digitally signing this form, you give us permission to use (anonymously) the data you have entered. Whether or not you participate in this survey has no effect on your further study progress and no assessment will be given for it. Click through to the next page for the statement of consent to give your permission to participate in this study. After signing, you can proceed to the questionnaire.

## Consent form

This consent form is used to ask for permission to participate in the research as well as to provide potential participants with information about the study.

### **Consent form: "What is the impact of the provision of secondary services and facilities by Human Facility Management on the Work-Life-Balance of employees working at offices in the Netherlands and Germany?"**

Please indicate below whether you consent to participate in this survey. It is asked to read the following points carefully.

As a participant in this research:	yes	No
Have I been informed about the nature, method and purpose of this research in a way that is clear to me.		
Got enough time to decide on participation		
Have I had the opportunity to ask questions about this investigation		
Do I know that participation is voluntary		
I know I can stop participating at any time. I don't have to give a reason.		
I consent to the collection, retention and use of my data for the purpose of answering the research question in this study.		
Do I know that the results of this interview can be incorporated in a report or (scientific) publication?		
I consent to the re-use of my data after this research for as yet unknown research that falls within the scope of this research. In doing so, the recognised ethical standards for this form of research will be observed.		
I know that only for the purpose of verifying the scientific integrity of the research, some people can access my collected data.		
I understand that any information I provide in relation to this study will be collected anonymously and will not be traceable to me.		
Do I know that I can inspect the way in which the data is processed and stored.		
Do I know that if I withdraw, my data can be used until then, unless I also ask for the data already collected to be deleted.		
<i>Optional</i>		
Permission to make audio recordings. These can only be listened to by the researcher(s) and to check the scientific integrity.		
Permit me to make video recordings. These can only be viewed by the researcher(s) and to check the scientific integrity.		
Give me permission to take pictures. These can only be viewed by the researcher(s) and to check the scientific integrity.		

Name:

Signature:

Date:

## Interviewer

As an interviewer, I declare that I have given oral explanations about the nature, method and purpose of the investigation. I declare that I am willing to answer any questions that may arise regarding the research into ability.



Name: Melanie H. L. Van Heck

Signature: 

Date:

Email: melanie\_vanheck@hotmail.com