

Talking to: Juergen Brokatzky-Geiger, Global Head of Corporate Responsibility at Novartis

In October 2013, we created a new, full-time position to lead our CR efforts. Juergen Brokatzky-Geiger, formerly Global Head of Human Resources and a member of the Executive Committee, took on this role effective in February 2014.

Dec 19, 2014

You were named Head of Corporate Responsibility for Novartis in February. Why did Novartis decide to create this position?

Brokatzky-Geiger: Novartis has for years been very active in corporate responsibility. We have activities running in countries worldwide, in all our divisions. What we were lacking was dedicated leadership and implementation of these many activities – which by the way were very successful. So late in 2013, the Board of Directors agreed that we should create a new, full-time position to lead our CR efforts. I am now fully committed to supporting our companywide CR efforts and better coordinating and leading our many ongoing activities.

With your background and experience, what do you bring to the role?

Brokatzky-Geiger: I joined Novartis more than 30 years ago as a chemist at Ciba-Geigy, and progressed through research and development. In 2003, I was appointed Head of Human Resources. I remained in that job until earlier this year, when I became Global Head of Corporate Responsibility.

I think my personal experience, my way to interact and communicate and my desire to make a positive difference will help drive both Corporate Responsibility strategy and implementation at Novartis.

After nine months on the job, what are your impressions? What is Novartis doing well in CR, and what can we do better?

Brokatzky-Geiger: I've had a chance to better understand what Novartis is doing in Corporate Responsibility, our programs, our initiatives – where we have succeeded and where we can improve.

Overall, I think we are doing well in several areas – improving the governance of Corporate Responsibility at a global level, upgrading our reporting to external stakeholders and continuing our strong commitment to expanding access to healthcare. We are also doing some excellent work in minimizing our environmental impact as a company. And we have taken several steps to strengthen our approach to integrity and compliance.

Our efforts were recognized in 2014: Novartis was one of the Global 100 Most Sustainable Companies by Corporate Knights, was included in the Dow Jones Sustainability World, FTSE4Good and UN Global Compact 100 indices, and achieved Silver Class status in the "Sustainability Yearbook" from RobecoSAM.



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At the same time, we need to keep making progress. We will continue to improve our transparency and disclosure, through better reporting. We will be doing more work to reduce our environmental footprint and reduce emissions – where we have some great programs already underway. We need to continue to ensure we create a culture of integrity at Novartis and demonstrate ethical leadership, because as a global leader in healthcare, we have a responsibility to serve as a role model. That means striving to go beyond the basic standards, regulations and the stipulations of the law to exceed expectations wherever we can.

In terms of access to healthcare, we are of course very proud that our products reach more than one billion people each year. But we need to be asking ourselves: what more can we do to improve access?

What are the biggest achievements for Novartis CR this year?

Brokatzky-Geiger: The Board of Directors Governance, Nomination and Corporate Responsibilities Committee met for the first time with its expanded mandate, and supported our proposal to enhance CR governance by creating a new Access to Medicine Committee. This committee, which includes leaders from each of the company's key businesses, will establish guiding principles for access programs and assess opportunities for Novartis to continue expanding access.

Transparent reporting has always been a central part of our commitment to corporate responsibility, and we have publicly reported on our performance through our Annual Report and several online and printed materials since 2000. In 2014, we have taken several steps to upgrade the company's reporting on Corporate Responsibility: publishing the company's first materiality analysis results report and the company's first CR Performance Report, which consolidates information previously published in our separate GRI; Health, Safety and Environment; and United Nations Global Compact reports.

We have also seen significant achievements in our major access programs: for example, the Novartis Foundation launched its new leprosy strategy, and the Malaria Initiative team drove a highly successful cross-divisional internal engagement campaign, with associates funding almost 500,000 treatments for Malaria No More's Power of One campaign. Both of these efforts are examples of how we are making real progress in helping people worldwide secure the medicine they need, regardless of where they live.

How do you see CR evolving in the future at Novartis?

Brokatzky-Geiger: As a science-based, innovative medicines company, we're proud of our role in helping people live longer, healthier lives. The combination of responsible business and a focus on science is what drives us, and is the core of our corporate responsibility efforts. We take this responsibility very seriously – because it's the right thing to do for society and the right thing to do for our business.

Corporate responsibility means building value for both our shareholders and for society. Our goal is to make Novartis the very best example in our industry – and beyond – of how these two goals come together.

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