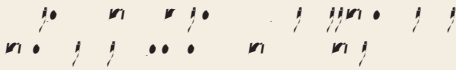


### In this Issue:



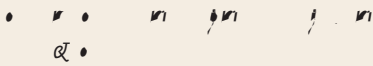
#### Authored by:

Martin L. Stolz, Ph.D.



#### Special thanks to:

Christian Hug



Anne Schiefer



#### Contributing Staff:

Jennifer Sabatini Fraone

Danielle Hartmann

Iyar Mazar

#### Executive Director:

Brad Harrington



## Work-Life in Germany

Germany is one of the largest economies in the world, having rebounded quickly from the global recession, and organizations working in Germany or in cooperation with German companies are seeking to find ways to better understand the factors that may affect the employer-employee value proposition. This briefing provides background information on the demographic, political, economic, social and cultural environments in Germany, as well as implications for organizations planning to implement work-life initiatives there.

### Demographic, political, economic, social and cultural contexts in Germany

Socioeconomic Indicators in Germany (July 2011)	
Population	81,471,834
Infant Mortality	3.54/1,000 births
Fertility Rate	1.41 children born/woman
Life Expectancy	80.07
GDP Growth Rate	3.6%
GDP Per Capita	\$35,900
Unemployment	7.4%
Literacy Rate	99%

Germany lies in the heart of Europe. Comparable to the size of the US state of Montana (Central Intelligence Agency World Fact Book, 2010), it is surrounded by nine neighbors: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland (N.U., 2010). In the north, Ger-



Family is considered very important in Germany, although traditional gender roles continue to change (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2010a). About 65 percent of mothers participate in the labor force, and the number of dual income couples without children has increased (Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2010a). This is evident in that over 40% of German women between ages 25-49 reside in childless households, which is well above the OECD average of 34%. Germany and the United Kingdom also share the record for highest average age at which women choose to have their first child, which, at 30, places them above all other OECD countries (OECD, 2011b).

## Political Context

Germany has been a democratic parliamentary federal democracy since 1949 (N.U., 2010). It is divided into 16 federal states called *Länder*, with six *Länder* located in the former East-German territory and 10 in the former West-German territory. All *Länder* have their own constitution, parliament and government (N.U., 2010). Therefore, Germany is also known as the Federal Republic of Germany.

Germany is considered a welfare state with “an all-embracing system of health, pension, accident, long-term care, and unemployment insurance” (Giehle, 2010). Approximately 27% of the GDP is channeled into public wel-

Companies are also striving to find ways to improve women's integration and equality in the workforce. In Germany, it is the norm for mothers to leave the workforce when her children are young. However, more women are graduating from university and an increased percentage of women, especially mothers, are participating in the labor force. The proportion of women in senior management, however, remains very low (Kienbaum, 2011). Women make up only about 7.7 % of the board or supervisory board members, on average, in the 160 biggest German companies/DAX-160 (FidAR, 2011). Political pressure to support a requirement of women serving on Boards has increased, with most organizations preferring a more flexible approach than a rigid quota.

## **Work-Life**

The following section contains information on current and future government policies and programs, as well as nongovernmental programs and company based initiatives, linked to foster work and family integration in industries throughout Germany.

## **Governmental Support & Regulations**



The general framework of working hours for blue and white-collar workers is first defined by law and then by labor agreements, which is negotiated between the employer and representatives of trade unions. A normal working day is not allowed to exceed 8 hours as averaged over 6 months. Work is generally allowed from Monday to Saturday (Bundesministerium der Justiz (BMJ) & juris GmbH, 1994). After work, employees must be guaranteed 11 hours of continuous rest (BMJ & juris GmbH, 1994). Exceptions for working hours and days do exist and are also regulated by law. For example, working on Sundays and holidays is allowed if a minimum of 15 working free Sundays are also guaranteed. This regulation is mainly limited to fire stations, restaurants, and medical centers that require continuous operation (BMJ & juris GmbH, 1994). Current average working hours per week are 37.4 hours in the Western part of Germany and 38.8 hours in the Eastern part of Germany (2009; Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft, 2010). As a whole, Germany has the third lowest total work time





The structure of the German school system serves as an obstacle for working parents, specifically, mothers, as they are expected to care for their children once classes

