



Werner & Mertz offers a healthy alternative to the car

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More physical exercise for better health and a good turn for the environment is a winning combination. At the family-owned Werner & Mertz, employees have been riding to work on JobRad "job bikes" for the past few months. In cooperation with bike-leasing firm JobRad, the Mainz-based manufacturer offers employees the chance to lease high-quality bicycles and e-bikes at reasonable monthly installments with a purchase option at the end of the leasing period. Since the program began, 66 employees have accepted the offer. When they cycle to work, they reduce the strain on the environment and avoid the stress of looking for a parking space.

"The JobRad is a good offer in our preventive healthcare program and a perfect match to our corporate sustainability philosophy," said Katharina Fulczyk from the Human Resources department, which coordinates the bike leasing plan. "Biking relieves congestion in our parking lots and eases the commute for employees who live nearby since they are a lot faster by bike than by bus and train."

The suggestion about using the JobRad at Werner & Mertz came from an employee. Management was quickly convinced by the sustainable idea and put the program in place just a short while later. Employees learned about the offer at the annual company meeting and at two information sessions held by JobRad at the Mainz headquarters of Werner & Mertz. Success followed right away. After a brief preparatory phase, the first employees pedaled to work on their JobRad bikes in June.



A classic bicycle or a dashing e-bike? Werner & Mertz employees can choose their JobRad to suit their personal needs. Photo: Werner & Mertz

How JobRad works

According to the JobRad company bicycle concept, employees can obtain the bike of their choice, including tax benefits, via their employer, which is Werner & Mertz in this case. The leasing installment is conveniently deducted from the employee's monthly salary statement. What's special at Werner & Mertz is the employer's 50 percent contribution to the leasing fee, which is an extra, attractive advantage for the employee. After three years the bike can be returned or purchased at a price equal to its residual value. During the life of the lease the employee can use the bike like any other and not only for the way to work. Furthermore, the bike is insured against theft and accidents.

Bicycles with a purchase price of about €750 or more can be leased. After the employee has selected a bicycle at a bike shop, a leasing contract is made via Werner & Mertz. Once JobRad has inspected the bicycle, it can be picked up and used. "As a rule, the process takes just a few days from the selection of the bike to its pickup," said Fulczyk. Employees can decide whether to lease a classic bicycle or an e-bike with a top speed of 25 km/hr.



The demand for the JobRad bikes has continued into autumn. "Our expectations have been exceeded," said Fulczyk happily. "We are still receiving new registrations. It was a good idea to introduce JobRad in the early summer." Feedback has been positive, with special praise given to the quick access to the new bicycles. Many employees chose an electric bicycle known as "pedelec" (pedal electric cycle), which can be recharged for free on company premises.

The JobRad program is just one of several offers in the Werner & Mertz preventive health services. Others include regular physical fitness activities, presentations and flyers on health issues, company sports groups and yoga courses.

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