



# Global Compact - Abena Group

## Foreword

“Abena is a privately owned, Danish company, operating since 1953. Our primary focus is on the production of absorbent products for both institutional and consumer markets. Our products are available in over 50 countries throughout the world. We have always acknowledged and embraced our environmental and social responsibilities’ – indeed these elements have always been a natural part of our business. Therefore, due to our companies’ presence in the global market and the various cultures associated, we became very interested in the terms of the ‘Global Compact Principals’ and have been an active part of the initiative since 2002. The management and employees of Abena continuously strive to improve and adjust to the global environment we coexist in and indeed daily efforts are made to involve and fulfil the 10 principals of the ‘Global Compact’ within Abena and our partners”.

*Arne Terp-Nielsen, Director.*

## The 10 Principles of Global Compact

The ‘Global Compact’ initiative asks companies to embrace, support and enact, within their sphere of influence, a set of core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption.

Abena joined the ‘Global Compact’ initiative because we wanted to support it. To demonstrate to society, employees, suppliers and others that we take our social responsibility seriously.

### Principle 1

Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights.

### Principal 2

Businesses should make sure they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

### Principle 3

Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining.

### Principal 4

Businesses should uphold the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour.



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## **Principal 5**

The effective abolition of child labour

## **Principal 6**

Businesses should uphold the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

## **Principal 7**

Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges

## **Principal 8**

Businesses should undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility

## **Principal 9**

Businesses should encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

## **Principal 10**

Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

**The Abena group and management have a well defined position of the principles:**

### **Management focus – 'Quality of life'**

**Quality of life for our customers:** 'Our ultimate group focus is to improve 'quality of life', not only for those suffering from functional disorders but also for their caretakers'. Through the latest innovative designs and technology we endeavour to develop and produce the highest quality and most versatile products possible.

Through our newly developed educational programmes and constant inter-communication between our nursing liaison team, the industry and our customers we feel that we have a better understanding for ongoing requirements and we continuously aim to improve products and knowledge bases to consistently 'delight our customers'.

**Quality of life in the workplace:** The composition of Abena employees reflects our local community. We do not discriminate against any person, regardless of race, sex, colour or religion.



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Our aim is to secure employees with reduced working capacity for various social or physical reasons by creating an easier, less pressurised working environment and job flexibility. Our "flexible department" comprises of employees who can, at a later date be transferred to fully functioning ordinary jobs by means of work test trials, on the job training, rehabilitation and trainee agreements.

The company policy is to encourage all our employees to actively engage in team building and strongly discourages any negative acts such as bullying or teasing. These acts are deemed to be highly inappropriate and are dealt with quickly and firmly.

Combining efficient and targeted work performance means coming to work each day should be an enjoyable experience. Employees participate in 'job planning' as a team building activity, we believe that this promotes successful teamwork as colleagues actively help each other to reach targets and remind each other of the companies' core principles, if and when required. At Abena we constantly strive to improve and be innovative, whilst at the same time maintaining our positive spirit. We respect the fact that all jobs within the company are meaningful and relevant.

In practical terms Abena has implemented many workplace practices which are atypical and that we believe vastly improves the 'quality of working life'. Some of these work place practices are outlined below for greater clarity.

1. Non smoking policy: Abena have implemented a non smoking policy in the company. Apart from the usual 'abstention policy' we also offer access to 'quit smoking' campaigns, whereby real help is afforded to any employee interested in giving up smoking.
2. Addiction to alcohol policy: Abena believes that it is better to nourish and rehabilitate those suffering from alcoholism rather than merely dismiss them due to associated behaviour. Therefore as with the non-smoking policy we proactively treat the problem and the person and work to rehabilitate and re-integrate the employee into the workplace over a very flexible period of time. Introducing them slowly back into the workplace with more gentle and less stressful tasks, using flexibility as a means to rehabilitate over a period of time. This has proved to be very successful and creates a win-win atmosphere.
3. Motion and massage: Abena offer their employees a unique opportunity to attend an in-house fitness and massage clinic located in the company grounds, during working hours. There is a minimal charge associated and is heavily subsidised by the company to make it attractive to all those willing to keep fit and to find time for relaxation.



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4. Employee health checks are encouraged, if an employee finds that they are becoming ill on a regular basis, Abena will assist them in targeting the problem. Indeed if required we will help the employee to implement a 'health programme' including organising access to a nutritionist and a trainer for solid, practical advice.
5. Fresh Fruit, free of charge is offered to all employees during the working day, to promote healthy living and eating habits. It has been very popular and successful to date.
6. Filtered fresh water is also freely available to all – all at points throughout the company, both in the production facility and the offices. Employees are encouraged to drink approximately 3 litres per day.
7. 'Cycle to work' campaigns are launched in the company each spring. We strive to actively entice employees to cycle to work rather than to drive. This campaign has proved to be an overwhelming success. Each year a biking race is organised in the local area of the head office in South Denmark and is widely attended by employees.
8. As part of Abena's hiring strategy we hire a large number of foreigners and help to integrate them into their local environs by means of weekly language classes. These classes are offered to all employees who do not speak Danish as a first language. It raises motivation and builds team spirit amongst Danish nationals and foreigners alike.
9. Ergonomic work stations are in place and the office environment is assessed on a regular basis to make sure that the highest standards are being adhered to. Ergonomic desks allowing employees to sit or stand whilst working during the day are already in place. Computer monitors and lighting are of the highest standard to ensure a comfortable work zone for the desk bound employee.

## **Safety**

We aim to maintain a high degree of safety for all employees and visitors by consciously working within our safety department and safety groups to form a comprehensive safety system and to develop a happier and more secure working environment, this includes areas such as ergonomic work stations, in-house gym facilities, massage facilities and membership of the eclectic social club. All of this coupled with systematic workplace evaluations and continuous improvements, ensures that Abena receives an extremely high score from the Danish factory inspection.



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An important element in the process of understanding workplace safety and making changes for the better, is the attitude of the management, plus constant information given on a drip feed basis and ongoing training of all employees.

In order to demonstrate our dedication to this principle we have achieved OHSAS 18001 certification. These standards help to prove our seriousness in relation to employee worth. The certification has formed an integral part of our working company strategy, where clear standards and procedures are formalised and followed on a daily basis to enhance the Abena culture and promote employee awareness and well being.

## **Environmental status**

We reduce the use of energy, chemicals and dangerous substances by means of an efficient energy management and an environmentally friendly evaluation. We strive continuously to reduce our waste quantities and production waste by an active quality control.

Due to our goal-directed environmental work Abena is the only producer of incontinence products who can ecolabel their products with the Nordic Swan label [www.ecolabel.dk](http://www.ecolabel.dk) Furthermore, our company is certified according to ISO 14001.

## **Suppliers/Partners**

Abena products are sold all around the world through a wide distribution network of subsidiary companies and specialist distributors. Bearing this in mind, Abena have proactively suggested and strongly recommend to suppliers and business partners alike that they should live up to and participate in the 10 principles as outlined by the 'Global Compact' initiative. We encourage our internal and external customers to participate in the initiative in order to make it an all encompassing success.

Most recently Abena have appointed a new representative in Greater China who will actively seek out potential suppliers in China and audit Abena's existing suppliers. The representative will deal with quality and environmental issues from a local perspective. Part of the remit will include stringently auditing suppliers to make sure that they comply with the 10 principals. Any supplier found lacking in this regard will have to rapidly amend their non conformances and radically adjust their working practices to come in line with the 10 principals or risk losing business altogether.



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## Conclusion

Environmental product certification forms a natural part of our work. Focusing on the 10 principles, we have achieved an even better work place with focus on and respect for the individual employee.

For further information please consult our website at: [www.abena.com](http://www.abena.com)