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Physical exercise at the workplace: How do employees perceive such an offer and how is it related with their well-being?

Maren Wenker

Master of Science in Human Resources & Organizational Behavior

Supervisor:

Prof. Sílvia Costa Agostinho da Silva, PhD, Full Professor, ISCTE Business School, Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behavior

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Abstract

Many recent studies show that most adults do not exercise enough which causes massive health problems in society. Since most people spend a large part of their day at work, it seems applicable to offer physical activities there. Previous studies prove that there is a positive effect on the well-being, health, and fitness of employees when companies offer physical activity sessions at the workplace. However, it has not yet sufficiently been investigated whether such an offer also brings negative effects, for example participation pressure. The present qualitative study will close this gap in the literature. Furthermore, the relation to well-being will be investigated as well as the effect of a sports offer on the employer brand. For this purpose, 20 employees of a German software company, (in which professional stretching sessions, yoga and fitness sessions are offered) were interviewed. The results were examined with the help of a template analysis. The results show that sports in the workplace brings many positive effects. As exemplary effects can be mentioned: Likelihood of being able to concentrate better on work after an athletic break, health effects (for example, interruption of sitting behavior), and promotion of a sense of community through sports with colleagues.

No negative effects, such as reduced self-esteem among less athletic employees or pressure to participate among employees, were identified. However, this is probably due to the very good working atmosphere and togetherness within the team in this particular company, which was emphasized several times by interviewees. A sports program benefits a positive employer brand and shows employer care but would never be the sole reason for an application.

These results nevertheless show that every employer should invest in physical activity offers.

Keywords: employee well-being; physical exercises; workplace health; employer branding

JEL Classification:

Y4 Dissertations

I1Health

Resumo

Muitos estudos recentes mostram que a maioria dos adultos não fazem exercício físico suficiente, o que causa enormes problemas de saúde na sociedade. Uma vez que a maioria das pessoas passa uma grande parte do seu dia de trabalho, parece aplicável oferecer actividades físicas nesse local. Estudos anteriores provam que existe um efeito positivo no bem-estar, saúde e aptidão física dos trabalhadores quando as empresas oferecem sessões de actividade física no local de trabalho. No entanto, ainda não foi investigado se tal oferta também traz efeitos negativos, por exemplo, pressão de participação. O presente estudo qualitativo irá colmatar esta lacuna na literatura. Além disso, a relação com o bem-estar será investigada, bem como o efeito de uma oferta desportiva sobre a marca do empregador. Para este efeito, foram entrevistados 20 empregados de uma empresa de software alemã, (na qual são oferecidas sessões de alongamento profissional, sessões de yoga e fitness). Os resultados foram examinados com a ajuda de uma análise de modelos. Os resultados mostram que o desporto no local de trabalho traz muitos efeitos positivos. Como efeitos exemplares, podem ser mencionados: Probabilidade de se poder concentrar melhor no trabalho após uma pausa atlética, efeitos na saúde (por exemplo, interrupção do comportamento sentado), e promoção de um sentido de comunidade através do desporto com os colegas.

Não foram identificados efeitos negativos, tais como a redução da auto-estima entre os empregados menos atléticos ou a pressão para participar entre os empregados. No entanto, isto deve-se provavelmente ao óptimo ambiente de trabalho e de união dentro da equipa desta empresa em particular, que foi enfatizado várias vezes pelos entrevistados. Um programa desportivo beneficia uma marca positiva de empregados e mostra o cuidado do empregador, mas nunca seria a única razão para uma candidatura.

Estes resultados mostram, no entanto, que cada empregador deve investir em ofertas de actividade física.

Palavras-chave: bem-estar dos empregados; exercícios físicos; saúde no local de trabalho; marca da entidade patronal

Classificação JEL:

Y4 Dissertações

I1Saúde

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research background and research objectives

“My back hurts so much!”, “After work I feel so exhausted, I don’t find the motivation to go to the gym anymore.”. Sentences like these we all have heard already or maybe have even said by ourselves.

Not practicing enough physical activities is a big issue as “most of the population fails to meet the recommended levels of activity” (Abdin et al., 2018, p. 70).

This is also supported by the findings of the World Health Organization: “More than a quarter of the world’s adult population (1.4 billion adults) are insufficiently active; Worldwide, around one in three women and one in four men do not do enough physical activity to stay healthy; Levels of inactivity are twice as high in high-income countries compared to low-income countries; There has been no improvement in global levels of physical activity since 2001; Increased levels of physical inactivity have negative impacts on health systems, the environment, economic development, community well-being and quality of life. Globally, 28% of adults aged 18 and over were not active enough in 2016 (men 23% and women 32%). This means they do not meet the global recommendations of at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity, or 75 minutes vigorous-intensity physical activity per week” (WHO, 2020, Newsroom Section, para. 4).

One reason for the decrease of physical activity of people in the last century is that machines are taking over heavy work for humans such as automation of factories, mechanized transport etc. (Gil-Beltrán et al., 2020, p. 1). Another factor is the rise of long working hours (Grande et al., 2016, p. 479). The drop in physical activity is also partly due to inaction during leisure time and sedentary behavior on the job and at home. Likewise, an increase in the use of ‘passive’ modes of transportation also contributes to insufficient physical activity (WHO, 2020, Newsroom Section, para. 4). This goes in line with the wealth of a society: Insufficient activity increased by 5% (from 31.6% to 36.8%) in high-income countries between 2001 and 2016. In high-income countries, 26% of men and 35% of women were insufficiently physically active, as compared to 12% of men and 24% of women in low-income countries. Low or decreasing physical activity levels often correspond with a high or rising gross national product (WHO, 2020, Newsroom Section, para. 4).

Another big issue is the demographic change in societies. Knowing that populations are getting older, it is necessary to prolong active labor force participation. Because of that, prevention of chronic diseases and exit from the workforce is essential (Proper & van Oostrom, 2019, p. 546). Preventable illnesses often result when several modifiable health risk factors are not adequately addressed; examples include nutrition, weight control, physical activity,

blood sugar, blood cholesterol, blood pressure, tobacco use, safety and mental wellbeing (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work et al., 2012, p. 8).

Furthermore, the outbreak of the COVID-19 had a big impact on the mobility and physical activity of most people. Besides some specific groups like undergraduate students and runners/ cyclists, many studies show that the pandemic led to a big decrease in daily physical activities and increase in sedentary time (Park et al., 2022, p. 7). In some areas, physical activity decreased with up to a 50%. These trends bring new challenges to our health and healthy behaviors (Park et al., 2022, p. 2).

Looking specifically at Germany (as the population group of this study will be Germans, which will be furtherly explained in chapter 3.1), the life expectancy is around the EU average but lower than most western European countries. This is mainly due to causes of death that could be avoided (for example obesity and overweight) through more prevention and information policies. Although smoking and alcohol consumption rates have decreased, they are still above the EU average, and the number of overweight and obese adults is rising (OECD, 2019, p.10). Furthermore, Sammito is stating that “practically every second person in Germany does not undertake any sportive activity. Besides the classical known risk factors, an inactive lifestyle is also associated with a 1.9-fold increased risk of death due to cardiovascular diseases. Therefore, more and more health promoting activity offers at the workplace are being provided” (Sammito, 2018, p. 358).

As mentioned above, unhealthiness has a big negative impact on the cost effectiveness of companies. As an example, the number of sick days in Germany is increasing. In 2019, an average of 10,9 working days was reported (Destatis, 2022, para. 2). It is obvious that this is related to huge costs for companies who must compensate for the absent employee.

Furthermore, as most of the adults spend a large amount of their wake time at the workplace, it is an ideal place to promote health behaviors and to influence those (Jirathananuwat & Pongpirul, 2017, p. 385). Workplace directly influences the physical, mental, economic and social wellbeing of employees and is an optimal place for delivering the key messages of health and for performing health promotion, because the time the employees are spending at the workplace exceeds the one, they spent in other locations (Capra & Williams, 1993, p. 2). Hassard et al. are supporting this point of view: “Developing and sustaining a healthy work environment and workforce not only has clear benefits for both organisation and employees, but can also lead to an improvement in social and economic development at the local, regional, national and European level” (Hassard et al., 2012, p. 11).

In addition, the implementation of physical programs can help to keep the employees healthy and to reduce health care costs (Conn et al., 2009, p. 2). “The concept of promoting health in the workplace is becoming increasingly relevant as more organizations recognize the importance of a healthy workforce to obtain success across their organization. There are

several benefits for employers from investing in the health of their employees, such as reduced sickness absence, increased productivity, and better staff retention.” (Abdin et al., 2018, p. 71). Many service providers and employers have initiated workplace interventions designed to mitigate unnecessary work disability (White et al., 2016, p. 62).

Moreover, companies providing workplace health promotion for their employees are seen as attractive and responsible employers. In addition, the workplace offers an ideal setting and infrastructure for reaching a relatively large population; social networks support behavioral change, and opportunities exist for follow-up and for monitoring and reinforcing messages (Glanz & Seewald-Klein, 1986, p. 2). Workplace health promotion was defined by the European Network for Workplace Health Promotion (ENWHP) in the Luxembourg Declaration as “the combined efforts of employers, employees and society to improve the health and wellbeing of people at work” (ENWHP, 2007, p.2). The statement of Glanz & Seewald-Klein is supported by Hassard et al. from the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work who say that the additional benefit of an enhanced corporate image is the increased visibility to potential future employees (2012, p. 4).

Besides those implications for society and companies, this topic also contributes to the state of the art in the scientific literature. Until today, just very few studies investigated if there is also a negative effect in offering sports activities for employees. In addition, Zhang et al. also criticize that just little is known so far about the factors which influence participation in workplace exercise behavior (2021, p. 2).

Extracted from those current societal changes, needs for companies and gap in the literature, the following three research goals were established:

1. To explore how physical exercise at the workplace is related with the well-being and motivation of the employees
2. To explore how sports offer are perceived, either in a positive way or if it can also somehow generate stress on the employees
3. To explore if there a positive relation between a sports offer at the workplace and the likelihood to refer the employer to other people

1.2 Outline

The structure of the thesis is as follows: As the relevance and importance of the topic was already explained in the first chapter, the research goals were presented, an assessment of the existing literature will be made in the next chapter. It will also highlight how this study can contribute to Human Resource Science and fill in gaps in the literature. Previous studies will be taken into consideration. In the next step, the methodology of this thesis' qualitative

approach will be explained (chapter 3). The advantage of qualitative studies, the structure of the interview, the used tools and the access to the participants will be presented in that chapter. Moreover, the process of the code system creation will be explained. Following that, the results of the interviews will be presented (chapter 4). After every subchapter of the main chapter "Findings" a conclusive table can be found, summing up the main results. An overview with all results can be found in the annex. In the following chapter, findings will then be discussed. From that, theoretical and practical implications will be concluded. These then allow to formulate recommendations for companies (chapter 5). After that, in the same main chapter, limitations, and possible future adaptations will be explained. Lastly, final conclusions will be presented.

In the annex, the semi-structured interview guide, the codebook and the transcribed interviews can be found.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept Definitions

Repeatedly mentioned concepts in this study are employee well-being and workplace physical activity intervention/ physical exercise (also described as sports offer).

The concept of well-being is not clearly defined and is described in many ways. Even though the definitions are not contradicting, it is useful to compare several definitions to fully comprehend the idea behind it. Some authors see it from the hedonic perspective in which well-being is described as happiness (Ryan & Deci, 2001, p. 141). It is also described as the subjective well-being (Gil-Beltrán et al., 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, it includes "the belief that one is getting the important things one wants, as well as certain pleasant affects that normally go along with this belief" (Kraut, 1979, p. 178). Others see well-being from the eudaimonic perspective which views engagement in activities which foster human growth, such as autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery and positive relatedness (Ryff et al., 1995, p. 719). It also refers to feelings of personal expressiveness, where what is considered worth desiring and having in life is the best within us (Waterman, 1993, p. 679). The eudaimonic well-being is also called the psychological well-being (Gil-Beltrán et al., 2020, p. 2). Based on that, Keeman et al. combine both perspectives: "Well-being at work refers to a subjective perception of general satisfaction with and positive feelings toward work" (2017, p. 2). Also, in this study both perspectives are respected, and well-being therefore seen as a combination of happiness and human growth encouraging activities.

On the contrary, "workplace physical activity intervention" can be defined more clearly. According to Dishman et al. it is an intervention implemented in a workplace "that encourages the employees to increase their physical activity and fitness" (1998, p. 344). According to the WHO, physical activity is "any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires

energy expenditure. Physical activity refers to all movement including during leisure time, for transport to get to and from places, or as part of a person's work. Both moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity improve health. Popular ways to be active include walking, cycling, wheeling, sports, active recreation and play, and can be done at any level of skill and for enjoyment by everybody." (WHO, 2020, Newsroom Section, para. 1).

Sonnentag sees physical exercises as a recovery activity and, hence as a promoter of psychological well-being (2001, p. 200).

2.2. Effects of physical exercises

Health benefits resulting from physical exercising are listed in much research. The WHO is additionally giving some examples such as improvement of muscular and cardiorespiratory fitness, same as improvement of bone and functional health, the reduction of the risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, various types of cancer (including breast cancer and colon cancer), and depression; same as the risk from falling as well as hip or vertebral fractures; and it also helps to maintain a healthy body weight (WHO, 2020, Newsroom Section, para. 3).

Besides positive effects for oneself in the private life, there are striking effects at the workplace and therefore the employer. The European Agency for Safety and Health at work is summing up several sources which proof that there is a positive return on investment when promoting health initiatives at the workplace: "Comprehensive WHP initiatives have been shown to result in a return on investment of US\$3.40 (Golaszewski et al., 1992) or US\$3 to \$6 for each dollar invested by the employer (Koffmann et al., 2005). Similar results have been found by other researchers, with cost–benefit ratios of 1:2.3 to 1:5.9 regarding medical costs (Kreis & Bödeker, 2003), a ratio of 1:3.4 (Aldana, 2001), 1:2.3 (Schultz et al., 2002) and 1:2.1 regarding sickness disability absence rates, with lower disability costs outweighing the costs of the programme by the end of the first year (Bertera, 1990) and a return on investment of up to 1:8.8 (Pelletier, 1999). Overall, the results of implementing WHP initiatives are quite similar, and evidence can be found for a reduction to the employer of medical costs and costs related to absenteeism, despite the methodological shortcomings of most of the research studies (Chapman, 2005)." (Quoted by Hassard et al., 2012, p. 20).

Physical activities stimulate physiological and psychological processes, which contribute to individuals' increased health and well-being. Sonnentag explains that this is mainly the case because one is using different resources than in the job (assuming that the work itself is not physically active) (2001, p. 200). Therefore, she encourages workers to maximize time spent on physical activities. In addition, Brown also proved that physical activities have a positive effect on individuals' mood and well-being, including both short-term and long-term benefits (1990, p. 610). For example, during the process of working long hours, vigor decreases

whereas tension and fatigue increase. The influence of vigor will be picked up again later this chapter by a quote of Gil-Beltrán et al. Subsequently, individuals will strive to restore their drained resources. To restore one's resources, one must invest additional resources in oneself. Time periods during which one can draw on other resources (for example, additional time, social support) offer the opportunity to restore one's resources (Sonnetag, 2001, p. 197). As other recovery strategies from work stress, she also mentions social activities, household activities and low-effort activities (like watching TV, relaxing on the sofa etc.). Besides household activities, those also contribute to an improvement of well-being (p. 203). The author didn't measure a significant difference in the effects of physical activities and low-effort activities. This indicates that for distraction and restoration of one's resources, low-effort activities are as good as physical activities, besides that the second named are also contributing to one's physical health (Sonnetag, 2001, p. 207).

A meta-analysis about workplace physical activity interventions conducted by Conn et al. is indicating that there is a positive influence of health outcomes due to workplace physical activity interventions (2009, p. 1). The authors summarize health outcomes from intervention studies reported from 1969 through 2007. All their effect measures are significantly heterogeneous which indicate big differences in the measured outcomes of their consulted studies. In addition, studies used different methods and, in many cases, relatively small numbers of samples. Therefore, findings must be treated with caution and remark once again the necessity of continuing research in this field. Nevertheless, Conn et al. contribute with their summary to systematically synthesizing findings of single studies. The authors present that diabetes risk is significantly reduced by interventions, fitness outcomes (measured in oxygen consumption) are better in subjects who participated in activities, same as effect sizes for quality of life and mood. Moreover, the work attendance improves in participants of physical activity interventions. These findings are confirmed by Abdin et al. (2018, p. 70), stating that "exercise, yoga and walking interventions improve well-being as measured across workplace settings compared with no intervention".

This proposition is supported by Proper & Van Oostrom, proving that there is a small positive effect also on mental health and a significant positive effect for psychological well-being, including depression, stress, and distress (2019, p. 553). Also, Gil-Beltrán et al. found out in a study a workforce of 485 participants that there is a positive consequence for organizations when offering physical exercises for their employees. It makes it easier for the workers to recover from physical, mental, and emotional effort during the workday, hence showing higher levels of engagement the next day (2020, p. 1). One reason for this could be that happiness is made up of intentional activities. As physical exercises demand high energy level and invest effort, intention and motivation exists. Another explanation is that every human being has the basic need for autonomy, relationship, and competence. Those needs can be

satisfied through physical exercise as setting exercising goals can satisfy autonomy needs whereas exercising with others can satisfy relationship needs and if there is (healthy) competition, satisfy competence needs (2020, p. 7). Because of that the company builds a process of resource recovery and through the dynamism of those activities the employees experience a greater well-being at work (2020, p. 1).

In another paper the effect of physical exercise intervention on employees' perception of quality of life was analyzed. At the end it was found that a sports offer is related with an increase in quality of life and increased strength scores (Brand et al., 2006, p. 20). Another study, by Coury et al., examined the effect of workplace exercise on body pain (2009). The authors found out that workplace exercises can help to reduce neck and lower back but not shoulder pain. Furthermore, it seems that heavy training (which includes physical resistance through elastic bands, dumbbells etc.) is much more efficient than training without any auxiliary means. Moreover, exercises need be conducted 10 weeks or longer to show positive results (2009, p. 472). Also, Grande et al. support those findings in their study in which they investigated the effect on health behavior and degree of physical activity for workers who were part of a workplace exercise program for three months. Even 15min of stretching, three times a week may be enough to change some workers' stages of behavior (2016, p. 482 f.). Another result of Grande's et al. study is that employees who were physically inactive seemed to have changed their behavior positively towards exercising (2016, p. 483).

Burton et al. viewed the positive effects of the exercising at the workplace from a different perspective: they found out that it can buffer or minimize the negative effects of supervisor stress on their abusive behavior towards their subordinates. That means, already relatively moderate levels of exercise can help to minimize the effect of stress in supervisors (2012, p. 276). The exact mechanisms for this effect are unclear but the authors speculate that this can be referred to the relation between exercising and moods. People who exercise are less reactive to stressful events and are more relaxed, cognitively focused, and less anxious (Burton et al., 2012, p. 273 f.). This result is supported by Steptoe et al who are stating in their study that the mood of their participants was more positive on days on which they exercised. From that, they conclude an association of exercise with a temporary inhibition of stress-related mechanisms (1998, p. 371).

Almost all found studies present exclusively positive implications resulting from sports interventions. This was also criticized by Grande et al. on their own study: that in future research the barriers and facilitators for workplace exercise adherence should be analyzed, same as the factors influencing workers behavior towards physical inactivity (2016, p. 482). An exception builds the study of Hertting et al. who found out that it can cause stress for employees if they must work longer to compensate for leisure time they had before, as in their study, playing table tennis (2020, p. 7).

Another study contributing to finding negative implications, examined the obstacles participants might experience when it comes to doing team sports at work. It indicates that there is an influence of intrapersonal, interpersonal, organizational, environmental, and societal factors (Brinkley et al., 2017, p. 121). Even though the authors' focus is on team sports, results can be linked with physical exercises at the workplace in general. These findings will be compared with results of this study later.

Brinkley et al mention as intrapersonal factors for example the preference for the type of team sport being offered and the participants' feeling of enjoyment while practicing it but also when there is healthy competition taking place (2017, p. 100).

One interpersonal factor to participate is the relationship to colleagues and managers. Many participants highlighted that it is easier for them to get motivated to do sports when it happens in a group. Family commitment can instead prevent workers from participating as they rather spend their time outside work with their family and friends and not co-workers (Brinkley et al., 2017, p. 103). Another obstacle is, when the sports activity is not constantly taking place at the same time as this makes it harder to coordinate times with the family.

An organizational factor is the support for those activities from superiors and the workplace culture. A culture of acceptance functions as a facilitator for workplace team sport and flexible working time leads people to participating in activities (Brinkley et al., 2017, p. 111).

An environmental factor is the setting and place which means if there are accessible facilities at the workplace to do sports (Brinkley et al., 2017, p. 113).

Societal factors can be medical conditions which lead to inequality but also gender has an influence. Women could feel less competent when playing football (Brinkley et al., 2017, p. 114). As this study is focusing on team sports, it is interesting to see if the findings also apply to individual sports practices which are done together.

Barriers to physical exercise at the office are also listed by Zhang et al.: lack of time, work burden and performance concerns, workplace policies and norms, the influence of colleagues' and superiors' behaviors and attitudes, lack of public exercise spaces and facilities (2021, p. 2). As determinants of exercise behavior, they refer to Sallis & Hovell: exercise of self-efficacy (for example confidence in one's ability to exercise regularly), health knowledge, attitudes toward exercise and participation in moderate-intensity activity at regular intervals (1990, p. 313). To this, Sallis & Hovell add that to continue with exercising, self-motivation, behavioral skills, spouse support, available time, access to facilities, perception of good health and risk for heart disease are strong influences (1990, p. 313). As both authors refer exclusively to general determinants, Zhang et al. highlight that it is important to add the factor work environment (which includes work pace, policy of working company (like break time) and work burden). Zhang et al. conclude from their regression analysis that there is a positive influence

of office workers' exercise behavior intention in office environment coming from their intrinsic motivation, social and work environment (2021, p. 10).

Gil-Beltrán et al. also investigated that there is a higher level of well-being if physical exercises are practiced at the workplace, regarding the trait of vigor in particular. The authors consider vigor as a motivational measure, which drives the performance of physical exercise and the will to persistently invest effort in it. Their results indicate that workers are more satisfied and emotionally positive in their work as long as they feel vigor while doing it. The optimal levels of well-being at work can occur and the importance of physical exercises is evident if vigor is perceived to be reinforced (2020, p. 7 f.).

Even though most of the previously conducted studies about physical exercise at the workplace are primarily focusing on the return on invest (ROI) and most sources are mainly dedicated to the health and economic benefits of physical health. Few are also dealing with the perspective of the employee on the employer. As examples can be mentioned: Gronningsaeter et al. found out that a work site wellness program creates a positive attitude and makes the employees happier with the organization they are working for. This has a positive impact on their job satisfaction (1992, p. 160). Also, Zoller supports the belief that the presence of a workplace health initiative may help to show employees that the organization cares about them. This affects loyalty, productivity, and commitment (2004, p. 280).

The same is sustained by Ho, who analyzed the impact of corporate wellness programs, including fitness programs, in 1997. She also found out that those organizations are perceived more positively by employees (p.186).

As most research was conducted more than a decade ago, it would be interesting to analyze if those findings are still supported. Looking at the desire for work-life balance and an increased awareness of health issues, it can be expected that the perception of physical health interventions has become even more relevant. Moreover, all that previous research does not address the perception of the employer from the perspective of the employee offering a sports program in detail. This gap in the literature will be addressed on the following pages. Through a qualitative survey of employees in a German software company, it will be clarified how the employees perceive their employer due to the sports offer, how a physical exercise program at the workplace is related with their well-being and if it contributes to a positive employer branding. The methodology of the present study will be examined in the next chapter.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The IT-sector is a growing industry and analyzing their employees can be a way to create interesting workplaces for possible candidates and to win the war of talents in this field. The

software sector has a long-term future perspective: It is forecasted that not only will the number of jobs in the software sector increase by 2030 from 1.42 per cent in 2007 to 2.72 per cent by 45,000 newly created jobs to almost 1.016 million, but also the turnover and the volume of production. This also explains why the software and IT services sector is increasing its share of the gross added value and will continue to double this, while industries such as mechanical and vehicle will stagnate in the next 15 to 20 years. For the year 2030, it is also predicted that the software and IT services industry in Germany will already generate an annual gross value added of 90 billion euros (Fraunhofer-Verbund Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologie, 2021, p. 9). Software development will therefore overtake the mechanical engineering and vehicle manufacturing industry in Germany within just a few years. At the same time software-based innovation is becoming more and more important in these industries. In many workplaces, software is the basis for increased productivity, being the core of automation technology, reducing manual labor. In the period from 2016 to 2020, Germany had an GDP increase of 1.34%, the software industry shows a growth of 6.3%. With about 645.000 direct jobs (1.5% of all jobs in Germany) and 1.9 million indirect jobs (4.5% of all jobs in Germany), the direct job share is slightly above the European average (Fraunhofer-Verbund Informations- und Kommunikationstechnologie, 2021, p. 9)

Because of that, the sample from which findings will be generalized are office workers in a German IT company. As the researcher of the prevalent study is employed in a software company with around 50 employees who get sports activities offered by their employer, it was a great chance to reach those people. Despite, the participants were made aware that she acted as a neutral person with an outsider perspective who has no own perspective/ knowledge of the company. This is important to guarantee objectivity (Meyrick, 2006, p. 804).

The company was founded in 2008 and delivers software solutions to medium-sized companies. It is based in Germany and in non-Covid times it is not a remote company. Before the outbreak of Covid-19, the employees could participate in different sports activities on a weekly basis. Due to Covid, most employees work from home. The courses which were offered are yoga sessions in person after their work on Tuesdays and/ or participate in an active running session once per week in their lunch break. This running session consisted of a roughly 3km run through the city with several stops in between in parks and gardens to do exercises like lunges and squats. After the outbreak of Covid-19 and after several months in the home office having passed, an Active Break was being proposed to the employees. In a Google Meet Room they can meet Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:45am to participate together in some 10-15 min exercises that can be conducted at their desk and don't require sports equipment/ clothes. Instead of having a professional trainer, the instructions are coming from a YouTube video that is watched through the function of screen sharing. The sports activities are taking

place outside the working time, which means that the time spent on it, must be compensated with longer working time.

As the effect on employees will be analyzed, the sample unit are persons. The sample was divided in two groups: employees who participated in those activities and employees who didn't. This is important to compare effects and to also analyze if people who don't participate are feeling pressured to doing so and therefore experience a negative impact. People who were excluded from the study are those employees fewer than three times in a physical activity. To gain reliable results, they should have participated at these many times or not at all to count to the non-participants.

For accounting reasons, a participants list was kept for the yoga and offline Active Breaks. The participation in the online exercises was tracked in the chat application Slack, which is used for the employee communication within the company. With the response of an emoji, the employees would indicate an interest in joining the physical activity session. Those lists/ chat histories were used to recruit the people who participated at least three times. Comparing these participants lists with a list of all employees of the company, it was possible to identify employees who never participated. Each employee was given a number and was then selected randomly with the help of a computer program.

Therefore, the sampling procedure is probabilistic. The used technique is Stratified Random as the population will be first divided into two groups based on their participation and then a random simple sampling is applied.

After putting together two groups who each fulfilled the required criteria (minimum participation of three times/ never participated), nine/ eleven employees of each group were interviewed. In total 20 interviews were conducted. The initial goal was to interview ten people of each group. As one person answered differently than expected and said he/ she participated more than three times even though the opposite was validated according to the participation list/ history, said disbalance appeared.

Two pilot interviews were conducted on 25th of January 2022 as a pre-test. The participants were two former employees who left the company the year before and also participated in the sports offer. After the pre-test, a few corrections and adaptations were made in the interview guidelines.

The 20 participants inhabit different roles and positions at the company. They work in the fields of UX Design, Software Development, General Management, Human Resources and Office Management. Their working hours per week vary between 12-40 hours, as some of them are also studying at the same time. The youngest participant is 22 years old and the oldest 40 years, which makes an average of 30,08 years which is also roughly the mean age of the whole company. 14 men interviewed and six women were interviewed, which equals the

gender distribution inside the company. A table of the sample characterization can be found on page 13. The characteristics were extracted from the company's personnel data software.

The first interview was conducted on 31st of January 2022 and the last on 20th of February 2022. In total 298,9 minutes of interviews were recorded, whereas the average interview length was 14,94 minutes. The response rate for participation was very high. Two people denied participation due to time reasons. Therefore, the next two employees on the list were approached and agreed to participate. All interviews were held face to face online via Zoom in English language. Furthermore, all interviews were recorded and transcribed. All participants agreed in recording their answers. Not all these consents are recorded but can be proven when necessary.

Interviewee	Age (years)	Gender	Participant in sports activity or not (P/N)	Education level	Current job position	Seniority in current company (years)
I1	30	M	P	PhD	Project Manager	0,75
I2	35	M	N	Master's degree	CEO	12
I3	22	F	P	Secondary school	HR Assistant	1
I4	28	M	P	Master's degree	Software Engineer	4
I5	29	F	P	Bachelor's degree	Software Engineer	0,8
I6	25	F	N	Bachelor's degree	Software Engineer	1
I7	38	M	N	Master's degree	Software Engineer	4
I8	33	M	P	Master's degree	Software Engineer	4
I9	30	M	P	Master's degree	Software Engineer	3
I10	26	M	N	Bachelor's degree	Software Engineer	4
I11	40	M	P	Master's degree	Project Manager	8
I12	29	M	P	Master's degree	Software Engineer	0,75
I13	28	F	P	Bachelor's degree	UX Designer	1
I14	40	M	P	Master's degree	Software Engineer	4
I15	23	F	N	Bachelor's degree	Office Management	0,8
I16	36	M	N	Master's degree	Software Engineer	12
I17	39	M	P	Master's degree	Software Engineer	11
I18	24	F	N	Master's degree	Software Engineer	1
I19	33	M	P	Bachelor's degree	UX Designer	4
I20	25	M	P	Bachelor's degree	Software Engineer	5

Table 1: Participants' characteristics

3.2 Data Collection

A qualitative, semi-structured interview was chosen as the method to gain additional insights. Semi-structured interviews allow in-depth and context-related insights into phenomena. They are especially practical to capture individual experiences and subjective realities (Zutavern & Seifried, 2021, p. 6). “By the use of open-ended questions, we expect to gain more detailed and enriched qualitative data on the usage and acceptance of the multicomponent intervention, including both barriers and enablers to physical activity” (Schaller & Hoffmann, 2021, p. 9). Interviews are the most common method of data gathering in qualitative research (King, 2004, p. 11).

A semi-standardized interview is more or less structured while questions may be reordered during the interview and also questions can be differently phrased. The interviewer can answer questions and make clarification, same as adjust the level of language. Additionally, the interviewer can add or delete probes to interview between subsequent subjects. In contrast to that, standardized are the opposite and most formally structured (Berg & Lune, 2017, p. 68).

Kvale defines the qualitative research interview as; “an interview, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena” (1983, p. 174). This means to understand the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee and why they have gotten to that point of view. To meet this goal, qualitative research interviews will generally have the following characteristics: a low degree of structure imposed by the interviewer; a preponderance of open questions; and a focus on ‘specific situations and actionsequences in the world of the interviewee” (Kvale, 1983, p. 176). Open questions allow the participants to answer in which direction they want, as the answer is not supposed. One example can be to let participants reconstruct what they experienced in the past about a certain event to also ask how the experience felt for them (Granot et al., 2012, p. 551).

Before the first interview was conducted, some advice and recommendations by Berg and Lune were considered to achieve a good quality of interview answers. The authors list the following:

- always having some small talk with the subject in advance and never beginning an interview cold;
- keeping the subject on track and always remembering the purpose;
- being natural, relaxed and affirmative;
- demonstrating aware and interesting hearing which means accordingly reacting to subject's sayings;

- thinking about appearance and clothes (important as the interviews were conducted in video calls);
- interviewing in a comfortable place where interviewees can talk freely (all participants were at home);
- asking further questions when monosyllabic answers were given;
- being respectful and appreciate any given answer;
- practicing interviewing in advance (two pre-tests were made);
- being generally cordial and appreciative (2017, p. 88 f.)

Qualitative research should be made transparent so that quality is assured (Meyrick, 2006, p. 805). After collecting the data, it will be analyzed in the next chapter.

3.3 Data Analysis

To conceptualize the collected data, a template analysis, which is a form of thematic analyses, was done. The approach of a thematic analysis identifies, organizes and interprets themes in detailed qualitative (textual) data, in order to highlight and convey key messages (King et al., 2017, p. 181). This confirms the definition by Braun and Clarke, saying: thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Boyatzis states that ‘thematic analysis allows the interpretive social scientist’s social construction of meaning to be articulated or packaged in such a way, with reliability as consistency of judgment, that description of social “facts” or observations seems to emerge’ (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 13). Thematic analysis is consistent with Denzin and Lincoln’s definition of qualitative research which states that “qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3). In a thematic analysis, the researcher defines themes as a recurrent and distinctive feature of participants' accounts, perceptions and experiences which they see as relevant to their research question (King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 150). This explanation also highlights that a single statement is not constituting a theme. It should be distinguished between inductive and deductive approaches to analysis. An inductive form of reasoning (concerned with moving from specific observations to more general propositions about the research topic) emphasizes a ‘bottom-up’ approach to coding, whereby coding categories and themes are not determined in advance but developed through engagement with the data. The deductive form can be very strongly theory-led, in which case coding categories and themes are more likely to be constipated in advance and a ‘top-down’ approach to coding is utilized (King et al., 2017, p. 182 f.).

To better classify template and thematic analysis, the quote by Brooks et al helps: „Template Analysis is a form of thematic analysis which emphasizes the use of hierarchical

coding but balances a relatively high degree of structure in the process of analyzing textual data with the flexibility to adapt it to the needs of a particular study. Central to the technique is the development of a coding template, usually based on a subset of data, which is then applied to further data, revised and refined. The approach is flexible regarding the style and the format of the template that is produced. Unlike some other thematic approaches to data coding, it does not suggest in advance a set sequence of coding levels. Rather, it encourages the analyst to develop themes more extensively where the richest data (in relation to the research question) are found. Equally, Template Analysis does not insist on an explicit distinction between descriptive and interpretive themes, nor on a particular position for each type of theme in the coding structure“ (Brooks et al., 2015, p. 203).

The steps that are normally followed in Template Analysis and which were used in this study are:

- Familiarization with the data (reading through it several times),
- Preliminary coding (highlighting information that is relevant to the research question),
- Clustering (beginning to identify themes and possible relationships, merging under one title very similar codes, constitute themes that are more clearly defined),
- Developing the initial template, Modifying the template (iterative process of trying to code data with it),
- Defining the ‘final’ template,
- Using the template to interpret the data (pattern-finding and prioritization) and
- Writing-up (selection and focus on specific themes) (King et al., 2017, p. 186 ff.).

Only in the late stages, the researcher should include and connect the data to previous research, theories and concepts (Deterding & Waters, 2021, p. 712). Pattern finding means that data appears more than twice which makes it repetitive, regular and consistent (Saldaña, 2015, p. 5). Hatch thinks of patterns more as varying forms which can be characterized by: similarity, difference, frequency, sequence, correspondence and causation (2002, p. 155). They help to explain (inter)relationships and serve as the basis for themes, whereas categories represent patterns which help to develop thematic statements (Lochmiller, 2021, p. 2032). As the main aspect is to find out about relations between data, contradicting statements and discrepancy is not a negative sign but quite the contrary: it helps to investigate dependencies (ib.).

The main advantage of thematic analysis is the great flexibility it gives. This refers to the big range of research questions it can be applied to, the different types of data (focus groups, interviews etc.) and also the size of the data set plus it can be used to produce data-driven or theory-driven analyses (Clarke & Braun, 2013, p. 3). Another advantage is that it is quite simple

to learn and apply as there is no required theory use (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 28). The great flexibility is at the same time also the biggest disadvantage: it seems to be more inconsistent as compared with other methods with less flexible frameworks. In addition, it is more challenging for the researcher to decide which data is worth being coded and taken into consideration (ib., p. 23 f.). The problem of subjectivity can be minimized by explaining very transparent how codes and themes were established, also by using categories (Lochmiller, 2021, p. 2032)

Moreover, due to modern technology and the help of programs like MaxQDA, coding is much more organized than in the 60s when paper and pencil were used (Deterding & Waters, 2021, p. 712). But Linneberg and Korsgaard are also warning about the use of technology: „Using software is not without its dangers. The ease with which new codes can be generated often results in the creation of too many codes. Also, as using software can easily become mechanical in nature, the coding can end up being too rapid and perhaps lacking in reflective analytical depth and focus“ (2019, p. 6). But having the pitfalls of software use in mind, it is possible to avoid those. Due to efficiency reasons, the decision to use MaxQDA was still taken and found to be appropriate.

3.4 Codebook

As previously explained, a codebook is used as a guide to help to analyze interview data and is a set of codes, definitions, and examples (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011, p. 138).

Due to a more compact number of codes, each item in the codebook has specified a short description (the name of the code itself), detailed description (a 1-3 sentence description of the coded datum's qualities) and a typical example (few examples that represent the code best), according to Bernard and Ryan (2010, p. 99). The authors name further specifications such as inclusion and exclusion criteria and atypical examples but to keep the codebook less complex and in a more structured way, those were left out (Bernard & Ryan, 2010, p. 99). The more specificity there is in a codebook, the easier it is for coders to distinguish between codes (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011, p. 138)

Codes are created from three different areas, naming theory-driven, data-driven or based on the research goals. There are separate procedures to create theory- and data-driven codes (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 29). As in this study the codes are generated based on the research goals and collected data, rather than on theories, just the latter process is described. The steps to inductively create data-driven codes are: reduce raw information, identify subsample themes, compare themes across subsamples, create codes and determine the reliability of codes. Reliability means similar results generated by different researchers (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 29). The reliability in this study is guaranteed as the supervisor Mrs. da Silva took care of the second

coding and concluded similar findings. From these codes a structured codebook was retrieved, see annex.

4. Findings

4.1 Well-being offers

In general, no participant voiced a negative attitude or feeling towards the existence of sports offers at the company. An overview about the main results can be found at the end of this chapter. Also, for all the following sub-chapters, under this main chapter 4, "Findings". An overview of all the main results is presented as a table in the annex.

Even non-participants were mentioning benefits they are hypothetically seeing in participating. A few employees were pointing out negative implications they see for the company but also for oneself. This will be further explored in chapter 4.4 about the second research goal.

As existing well-being offers, employees mentioned for example free fruits and water, (remote) events, an easy and open communication just as flexible working times and the possibility to work remotely. The last two aspects were especially highlighted by many employees. Participant 10 is stating:

"I think I work at a company that is pretty relaxed about like the rules when you have to work and stuff. I think if I would work in another company that would be much more strict about that. Like wanting me to come into the office every day to a set hour or something, then I would be, I would be less happy."

Another important aspect picked up by sixteen (out of twenty) interviewees is the existence of a kind atmosphere at the workplace. The employees seem to get along very well with each other but also with the management. Whenever a problem arises it appears to be guaranteed to employees that a colleague will help or when a mistake happens that there is no punishment from the upper level. This confirms another finding: some employees also went into remarking that there are very flat hierarchies within the company structure.

For reference, see Interview 4:

"But I think about the atmosphere. I think that the very important part of that is also just the lack of hierarchy."

And Interview 2:

"well-being has something to do with also being accepted as a human with the faults you might have with your insecurities, and so on. And it's important in a workplace, that there's a

secure space where you can make mistakes, where you can be open about things. Yeah, you don't feel good about or yeah, we're welcoming to each other and the interactions with others is really important for well-being that you don't have any conflicts, fights, and hierarchy competitions and so on, so that you can really focus on the things you want to do and do it in a way with the others, you like to do and there are no forces and no games you have to succeed in."

Interviewee 1 also saw a relation between the atmosphere and the sports offer:

"That's because the atmosphere or I mean, that's part of this atmosphere that there is room for these things (physical activities)."

Besides a friendly atmosphere, many interview participants also highlighted that the work environment is constructive and that they learn from each other. It seems like the company is a very family friendly employer which was welcomed by some employees as well:

"...I mean, this isn't so much important for me, but just, it feels good to know like the family friendliness. Right? It could just be, like you notice someone has a problem at home, and it's completely fine with everybody to just deal with it a couple of days..." (Interview 4).

Those findings correspond to other actions the company is taking for the well-being of their employees, and which were mentioned as well. Those are, for example, monthly company briefings during which the management is giving financial and operational status quo updates. Furthermore, there are employee appraisals in which the CEOs take time to discuss the individual development together with the employee. On top of that and positively highlighted as well was the existence of mentoring for new employees and the establishment of a regular remote coffee break same as paid working time (2 hours per week) to work in teams on private software development projects (Hackteams).

The existence of a sports offer, regardless which one (yoga, Active Break, Run&Fit, cycling trip) was mentioned by almost all interviewees. Even though some had to be asked explicitly if there are offers regarding the physical well-being. The reason for that can be that they are not giving so much value to this offer. This is supported by the fact that those interviewees were employees who didn't participate in any of the sports offer. Besides one participant (participant 13), no one was involved in the decision and organization of the sports offer but three people (participants 3, 9 and 19) answered that they could imagine getting involved into the planning or that they at least know that it is easy to bring in own ideas to help to shape the sports offer's design and that this is welcomed as well.

Table 2; Main findings Well-being offers:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No negative feeling about existence of sports offer expressed by anybody besides few exceptions (see chapter 4.4) 	<p><i>“No, not really. I mean, you're not forced to participate. So, if you don't want to participate, you don't have to.” (I8)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most mentioned offers: flexible working times, home office, relaxed atmosphere & lack of hierarchy 	<p><i>“But I think about the atmosphere. I think that the very important part of that is also just the lack of hierarchy.” (I 4)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of sports offer mentioned by most employees, even though explicit question about it was necessary in some cases 	<p><i>“I think they are offering a lot of extra programs to the work like they are some health things like doing a break with some exercises, some sporty exercises or so on.” (I18)</i></p>

4.2 Missing well-being offers by the employees’ perspective

Participants were also asked for other benefits they wish for and what they are still missing. It is remarkable that most people answered that they don’t have any further wishes towards their employer. This shows that the company is, in the eyes of most employees, already offering a sufficient well-being offer that corresponds to their needs. Nevertheless, some additional needs were still expressed. The most mentioned was more encouragement by the CEOs to participate in sports offers and eventually to also offer more activities that can be done together with the whole team. By more encouragement it is meant that the management level should announce the possibility and acceptance of sports at the workplace more explicitly. Participant 1 says about this:

“I guess, what the employer could do most about this is reserve the time for such things to happen. And also, for this active pause we have, if it's accepted company wide, which I think it is in our company, then that helps people to like engage in it and say, Yes, I will participate because they know it's okay. And they don't have to fear that it will be seen in a bad way somehow that you participate and you don't have time to work during that time or whatever. So yeah, things like giving a bit more structure to this and giving room for those events to happen. That's maybe a structural kind of aspect which an employer can do.”

The same aspect is refuted by another employee who says:

“I don't see it as like what an employer has to do for you. It is just a bonus if they offer you these things to make it easier to incorporate it in your everyday life” (Interview 9).

In general, the encouragement wasn't a big point for many employees, just four more people expressed the wish to have more public announcements about it. It is important to notice that those two aspects were dominantly expressed by participants rather than non-participants. One reason can be that they like the sports offer so much that they want it to be expanded and to also encourage non-participants furtherly. More about reasonings can be found later, in chapter 4.6 and 4.7.

Another issue for some employees is the absence of height-adjustable desks to prevent common office-work health issues, such as back pain. The wish for adjustable furniture was mentioned almost equally by participants and non-participants, as in Interview 20:

“At the moment, I would like to have a desk that can go up and down. But I'm always thinking about buying it myself. But it would be nice, if the company would pay it and support it.”

Just one person answered that he/ she would like to spend less time in meetings and to have more focus time for the actual work, same as having a bike (partially) paid by the company. A few people wished for a paid gym membership. Two interviewees answered that they would like to have a more suitable space to do sports, like a dedicated room in the office building.

Table 3; Main findings Missing well-being offers:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most people answered that they don't have any further wishes 	<p><i>“I'm sure there is. But it's not something specific that I would be missing. And I think they are doing a lot already. So, I don't know. So basically, no, even though I said yes, at the beginning.” (I4)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most expressed wish by employees: More encouragement and structure by the employer to develop physical activities furtherly 	<p><i>“I guess, what the employer could do most about this is reserve the time for such things to happen. And also, for this active pause we have, if it's accepted company wide, which I think it is in our company, then that helps people to like engage...” (I1)</i></p>

4.3 Research goal 1

To explore how physical exercise at the workplace is related with the well-being and motivation of the employees, which is also the first research goal (see chapter 1), it is useful to have a further look into the answers coded with C2.3 *Personal motivation*, C2.4 *Feeling/ emotion about participation*, C2.5 *Catalysator for participation* and C2.8 *Opinion about sports offer*.

Findings show there is a positive relation between physical exercise at the workplace and well-being. Increased well-being and motivation can be led back to exercising at the workplace. These positive effects will be described as benefits, employees see for themselves. Even people who didn't participate in the sports offer were seeing those benefits. One of those benefits is the possibility to take a break from work and to refocus better on it later:

"...have a real break and do some activity that help you to refocus again on mind work later on" (Interview 2).

In total, this aspect was mentioned four times by non-participants and six times by participants. Regarding this positive impact, participant 5 says:

"...To get a small break from work, like get my head free from all the thinking that I do all the time. Mostly, when you like, get a little bit of distance to a problem that you have, when you come back to it afterwards... You are like, it's easily or maybe you get a new idea in the meantime".

Another benefit which was seen by many interviewees was the chance to get away from their desk and their sitting position. As caused by their profession, all interviewed people remain in a sitting, static position in front of their screen during their whole working time. This health issue was pointed out much more by participants than non-participants. Maybe because those who are aware of the problem, are much more willing to change it. But also, non-participants are aware of this issue. Like the interviewee 10 is telling:

"in my field of work, there's a lot of problems with, for example, people sitting at a desk all day and having back problems or something like that".

As a supplement to this point, interviewee 13 shall be quoted:

"One is that I'm sitting a lot. I don't have a moveable desk. So, I always sit in the same position. So that is a good way to get out of the chair and to move to prevent pain as well."

Because when I don't do a lot of physical exercise, and I'm working, even though I'm working four days a week, I get back pain“.

This already includes another important motivation employees have to participate, or at least to hypothetically do that: to do something well for their health. This can be to prevent or relieve back pain and general health issues, like to do little movement (which supports the findings by the WHO, to be found in chapter 1), but also to contribute to their mental well-being. For example, Participant 19 can be seen as a reference:

“I think it's physically health and mental health is always like a combination. So, if you have this period of time where you can just do something, like just one task, for example, running or doing an exercise, then you switch off your mind a little bit.”

Same as the previously explored benefit, this one is also mentioned predominantly by participants. That back pain is a common problem among office workers is picked up by interviewees 1, 8, 9, 10 and 13. Same as the previously explored benefit, this motivational factor about health reasons is also mentioned predominantly by participants, rather than non-participants. The aspect to lose weight was mentioned by just one participant.

The most mentioned motivation for all interviewed people was to meet their team colleagues in another setting than at work. They were mentioning that it contributes to a stronger connection between each other and to the overall team building. See Interview 11:

“And for me, it was really a chance to get some of my colleagues to get to know them in a different way, and see them in a different way, talk about different things. So personally, I could generate a bit more energy for the afternoon, for example, when the sport took place, during lunch breaks. And also, for me, personally, it was really a good chance to get to know some of my colleagues better and from a different perspective as well.”

Most answers coded with the title C2.3 5) “Meeting the team outside projects” came from participants, while only three non-participants were also seeing this benefit. Participant 3 is pointing out his/ her motivation regarding this:

“And I can also see the other people in my company again, and it's like a thing that doesn't have to do with work which is also nice to have in between.”

Similar answers were given by the other interviewees (for example 2, 6, 7 etc.).

That sports can help to reduce stress was mentioned by just two people, one participant and one non-participant. Therefore, this aspect doesn't seem to be a big incentive for people to participate. The contrary builds the argument of personal participation motives: many interviewees answered that they have fun while exercising and almost the same number of non-participants answered that they can imagine that it is fun.

All those findings indicate that the existence of a sports offer is generally positive and leads to desirable outcomes regarding the well-being, both for the employee and for the company. If the sports offer is generally and exclusively perceived in a positive way or if it can also generate stress on the employees will be analyzed in the next chapter.

Table 4; Main findings Research Goal 1:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General positive relation between physical exercise and well-being 	<p><i>“I think it's physically health and mental health is always like a combination. So, if you have this period of time where you can just do something, like just one task, for example, running or doing an exercise, then you switch off your mind a little bit.” (19)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most mentioned benefit of exercising 1): refocus on work afterwards 	<p><i>“have a real break and do some activity that help you to refocus again on mind work later on” (12)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most mentioned benefit of exercising 2): contrast to seated position 	<p><i>“So I always sit in the same position. So that is a good way to get out of the chair and to move to prevent pain as well.” (113)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most mentioned benefit of exercising 3): meeting colleagues/ team building 	<p><i>“get to know people you don't know any projects, where you just have another context besides work. Which can be very refreshing and you get to know each other better and it is kind of team building thing.” (12)</i></p>

4.4 Research goal 2

In this chapter, research goal number 2 will be presented. It questions how the sports offers are perceived at the company. Special focus is given on the possibility whether a sports offer can also somehow generate stress on the employees.

The most frequently given answer was the sports offering issuing positive emotions to the employees. This statement was exclusively voiced by participants of any of the sports offers.

This makes sense as it is a feeling that arises from a specific event or action which brings joy (in the personal perception) and usually not without any stimulus. As participant 5 remarks that he/ she always feels better afterwards than before.

Just two participants also used words like refreshment and relaxation to describe how they feel afterwards. A lot of times it was stressed that the sports offers are a great idea in their general opinion, and that people are associating positive emotions with their existence. Participant 8:

“I find them good. And I didn't participate that often, which is more like a problem on my side, maybe. But whenever I did participate, it was good. I liked it.”

It also didn't really make a difference if people participated or not in order to say that they like the offer. Even if they wouldn't participate themselves, they said that it is great for others who like it; non-participant (10):

“I think it's a great idea for those who enjoy it. I mean, I don't do yoga. But I think it's a great idea.”

Besides generally liking the idea, all positive emotions can be exclusively attributed to participants. Because of that, it is interesting to have a look at how the others have felt. It is remarkable to see that almost none of the non-participants has any negative feeling about not participating. Most of them have a neutral feeling or at least don't feel bad. As reasons they are for example saying that they are already doing exercises in their free time and that they don't care so much about forgetting it or not finding the time for it. Just one person answered that he/ she feels a bit disappointed about not participating but that this feeling wouldn't be too strong nor serious. All those feelings are also true for people who usually participate but sometimes miss a class. The motives to participate or not will be further explored in chapter 4.6 and 4.7.

No one, either participating or not, felt excluded. But many employees said that they could imagine that some feeling of force to participate could hypothetically be felt. But this is nothing that they really felt themselves; participant 7:

“You might still feel pressured to, at least I don't know, keep your, your image or your social standing in the company or something. So, there might be some peer pressure generally to join these activities that are hypothetically purely optional from participating. But apart from that, I don't really see... even if I mean, so far, I haven't joined it, I didn't feel the pressure to do

so. So, it's not that it is more like a theoretical problem so far, I think. And I think it's a good thing. Even if I'm not participating, it's nice to know that there are these things."

The same participant also said that he/ she never heard anything negative regarding this by any of his/ her co-workers. Quite the opposite: they told him/ her, they were looking forward to participating. The same concern is for example also expressed by interviewee 12 but who then also adds:

"I always felt like those activities are appreciated by some people and who doesn't, who's not interested in doing this kind of activity just doesn't do it."

The same point was made by many more participants and also non-participants. No one in the company seems to have any negative feelings if they don't participate. Reasons for that can be also found in chapter 4.6 and 4.7. Participants 15 and 19 are also adding the point that a feeling of pressure would harm the initial idea of the employer to do something good to their employees.

Just one participant (Interview 12) answered that he/ she has the feeling to be watched if he/ she does the exercises in the office together with others or when he/ she shares the home office with his/ her partner. Conclusively, He/ she is just participating when he/ she is alone in front of the camera at home because otherwise, he/ she would feel unwell. But he/ she also says that he/ she never heard anything negative or similar from a co-worker, it would be just a personal preference and there is no problem in simply not participating. Another non-participant (16) says that feeling watched is a hypothetical problem which would probably arise in a company with stronger hierarchies. He/ She can imagine that it is harder to do sports with people you don't know so well on a personal level and that he/ she could think of issues arising from showing your personal weaknesses "to the boss of the boss". However, this doesn't apply in the prevalent case, as the company is lacking hierarchical structures to a greater extend.

Summing up, there were no findings indicating that the existence of sports offers causes negative feelings amongst the employees in this company and therefore also didn't cause stress. (Non-) participants could think of hypothetical negative feelings but they cannot be applied to his company as will be analyzed in the chapter 4.8.

In the next chapter, the third research goal will be examined and clarify if the existence of a sports offer has a positive influence on employer branding.

Table 5; Main findings Research Goal 2:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive emotions after working out 	<p><i>“It was nice. So I feel good about it.” (I4)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No bad emotions like guilt when not participating or force felt by anybody 	<p><i>“When I don’t participate? I don’t feel anything at all. Because it’s mostly because I don’t have time or forget it.” (I17)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just one participant voiced that he feels watched when exercising with others 	<p><i>“And I think also it might, yeah, it might look silly. And then there’s always this feeling. Then what people do think about you and probably it doesn’t even matter, but there is still some kind of yeah ...the boundary line?” (I12)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of hierarchy and relaxed atmosphere can be reasons for feeling no obligation in participating 	<p><i>“the atmosphere in the company is that like everybody can and isn’t forced to do anything. I never feel like anybody feels like you slipped out or something.” (I9)</i></p>

4.5 Research goal 3

Moving on to the topic of employer branding, this chapter examines if employees are talking positively about the sports offer with people outside the company. The goal of the research question is to find out if there is a positive synergetic effect for the employer in offering sport activities.

In five interviews, employees said they are mentioning the sports offer to other people when they talk about their employer. Interview 1:

“these, like team events and physical events and these extra benefits on top of that”.

Most similar answers came from participants. Probably because the sports offer is not seen as so important for non-participants. Four people even explicitly said that they haven’t ever mentioned those sports offers to others. As a reason they stated that other well-being offers are more important to them; like participant 12:

“I don’t really talk that much about these other activities (physical exercises). I talk about those two hours in a week [Hackteams]. I like that one very much.”

One person also answered that he/ she thinks that because he/ she is young, sports at the workplace is not an important benefit he/ she would tell others about.

Benefits which were much more mentioned by the employees were, for example, the kind atmosphere and the team spirit. By the explanations and seeing with what affection almost everybody mentioned those two points, it was made clear during the interviews that this is the most important factor and reason for people to work at the company. It is also what they predominantly tell others about. As examples:

“like an overall benefit, like the atmosphere in the company is very good. And people act very kind with effect to each other.” (Interview 1);

“And team culture is also something which I definitely really appreciate about our company. And I would also mention every time someone asks me about what this company makes special.” (Interview 11);

“I think what I really like is, it's not especially what we are doing, but we have a great team. So great, great community, great colleagues” (Interview 8).

When asked about the relation and if they see a positive, reciprocal influence between a good atmosphere and the sports offers, those people answered that this can have a positive impact but is rather just one part of many well-being offers;

“there's some relation, but all fits together and fits in the bigger picture of taking employee well-being as important“ (Interview 14).

What seems to contribute much more to the atmosphere is the effort of the managers and that they show care.

“I am telling them I that I feel really good at the company. I'm very happy that I get to work there. Because it's like, they do care for us. They do their best to make you feel welcome.” (Interview 15).

“I tell all the people about the company that it's a company I really like to work at. And that's really because I have the feeling that the company is interested in a healthy, long-term relationship with its employees and really takes things...yeah, well for the company it's really important that the employees feel well.” (Interview 14).

One reason how this is expressed through the lens of the company's employees is, for example, the absence of stress and that the managers consider work-life-balance as important.

"And I think most we have like good bosses who listen to everything and are really reasonable if you have any requests or help happy with stuff. For example, if you like have your children at home during the pandemic, I think they were really generous and said we will always find some kind of solution. So that the employees are important to them." (Interview 8);

„Christian, and probably also Julian, but a bit more Christian (Christian and Julian are the CEOs), that they really want to be good at and have the company be good at and have a nice company to actually mention, for example, that his work life balance is one of the goals of the company that I don't think that's something that's I think that's special about the company." (Interview 7).

Individuality seems to be a very important aspect and many employees emphasized the fact that they have the feeling they can be themselves;

"The company appreciates you as a person and benefits your work and also gives you this freedom that's nice" (Interview 19).

Adding to this, one person also made known that he/ she also tells others about the flat hierarchies (interview 10). One interviewee said that he/ she is even somehow showing off to others about what the company provides which shows pride to work at this company:

"And they say this company's nice that they're offering all this stuff. So, um, yeah, it has a very good, like actual marketing effects for recruiting. Because if I talk to people who are also in my field, and then I show off with all the benefits, they said, 'Wow, cool. I want that too.' So actually, it's also like a..., you show off in kind a way "We are doing this and this and it's nice and they take care so much." (Interview 19).

Moreover, flexible working times are something many people highlight when talking with others about their employer. They also said that this is the most important point for them, as one example:

"the most important thing is definitely there that I'm very free to structure my workday and also where I work and how I work, that I also get, like, the possibility to decide for myself, which is very important, because I know from other people that the employer wants them really to go

into the office, they cannot do kind of work from home, for example, or they need to start at eight and then finish at five and have like a very, like structured day. Yeah, I think that's the most important thing. Really.“ (Interview 5).

Another highlight for some people is also the existence of the Hack Teams project at work and team events like parties. Just very few people mention the free fruits and office equipment to others outside the company.

As previously mentioned, offering sports at the workplace can have a positive impact on attracting applicants but it would never be the only reason why one would apply. It is rather a mix of benefits and / or is the benefit which makes the difference to a company which doesn't provide it. Summed up, there are many more benefits employees of this company are mentioning to others. The most highlighted part is a great team spirit and company culture which is supported by the understanding and caring of the managers and the value for work-life-balance. Nevertheless, the existence of physical activities can contribute to the experience of care through the employers.

After presenting the results of the three research goals, the catalysts and inhibitors for participation will be explored.

Table 6; Main findings Research Goal 3:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical exercise would never be the only reason one would apply to the company but can be one part of the benefits 	<p><i>“So I think it's a nice to have, but it's not that I would choose a company because of it. Yes, because I'm not using it so much, and it's not that important for me. But when I would read it or something, I would think, yes, it's, or it would be a positive thing, but I wouldn't apply because of it“ (I18)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports offer implies care of employer which attracts applicants 	<p><i>“there's some relation, but all fits together and fits in the bigger picture of taking employee well-being as important“ (I14)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employees rather tell about great team atmosphere and work culture than sports offer to others 	<p><i>“like an overall benefit, like the the atmosphere in the company is very good. And people act very kind with effect to each other“ (I1)</i></p>

4.6 Reasons for participation in sports offer

The biggest reason for most interviewees to participate in sports offer was the opportunity to meet their colleagues outside the work context. Most of them also highlighted that this would lead to a better team building experience. As participant 12 is saying:

"It's great to see some people outside of the daily calls you got in inside of the projects. And therefore, it's not only the spot, sporty aspect, but it's also the social aspect that yeah, is delivered by those activities."

Meeting the team might have been especially important during the Covid time as well, as interviewee 5 points out:

"Yeah, also maybe talk to other people and see how they are doing or the days are going for them, especially when you're in home office, and you don't see them in the office."

This aspect was also seen by three non-participants, as an example see Interview 7:

"even if I don't know anything about the contents, I think it's good having some events that are not tied to some specific work meetings, or whatever sort of get getting to, together with other co-workers, just for something that's hopefully fun."

The aspect of training together seems to be a great motivation for many participants. Having colleagues joining and encouraging each other to participate, convinced many of them to doing so. Participant 9 stresses:

"And some people like me can't get motivated to do it in the morning or evening. And then maybe it's good to do something in between and yeah, if you see that, like other colleagues are also doing something in between, then you feel like, okay, then I can do it, I can also do it."

As previously pointed out, this shouldn't be seen as a form of pressure, but rather as a motivational factor. No participant felt pressured into participating (C2.7 1), but some could imagine that others could feel it. Participant 18, for example, is saying that he/ she isn't feeling this kind of pressure but could imagine that less sporty coworkers might feel bad if they don't participate but think they should. Participant 5 is adding as a reason that it could pressure people with a family who have less time in general. If they talked about feeling pressure, then just hypothetically speaking about others and most of them were also stressing that they don't

think that this is the case specifically at their company. They referred this to the friendly and open atmosphere within the team, as participant 11:

“the greater amount of people or employees in our team, I guess, didn't took place in the events. I don't know actually, why. Maybe sometimes it's maybe a bit scary if you have some people who were really.... if they think they are not this kind of persons who should do sports with others. I mean, even for some people, it's hard to exercise sports in private, go for a jog or something because they're like ‘Oh, this is not something for me, I have to start with something a bit easier and not in a group.’ And this may be also very, maybe, let's say frightening for others to do this in the office. Which is also of course, always a mixture of whether you're there to work and not to have fun and not to... depends on how you see it. I mean, at our company we're hopefully enjoying a very friendly team culture. And that shouldn't be such a great deal.”

And interview 9:

“And in general, like, the atmosphere in the company is that like everybody can and isn't forced to do anything. I never feel like anybody feels like you slipped out or something.”

Besides those hypothetical concerns, many people also answered that they don't see any negative implication of the sports offer. Especially because the participation is optional; Interview 19:

“Not really. No, not in the first place. Also, if think about a little bit more.... No, not really. I think it's good. It's like it's optional. No one's forcing you, you can do it or not.”

Coming back to the reasons why one participates, another peculiarity was to do something well for the body and own health. To get fitter and in a better shape was an important point for some participants. What also encouraged some, was the conception of the class. They found it for example short enough, not too difficult and of high quality as there was a professional trainer guiding. It is remarkable that this was also pointed out by one non-participant (10):

“it's not just, not because I'm not in good shape, I think I would think anyone can could do it”.

This leads to the idea that one’s own sportiness level shouldn’t be an inhibitor to participate. It was also pointed out as a benefit that the sports activity takes place/ starts at the office. Therefore, it would be easier to incorporate the activity into the daily life.

Another catalysator for two employees was also the fact that some of the sports offers were conducted outside:

“I don’t like inside events in front of the computer. I don’t know why but it’s... sport has to be outside for me and I have to go out or at least... Yeah, have to stop looking at the screen the whole day because as a software engineer, you look like eight hours a day on the computer and it’s just too much” (Interview 20).

After having a look at what encourages employees to join the physical activities, it is compelling to check for the obstacles people feel which prevent them from participation.

Table 7; Most mentioned reasons to participate (in sports offer):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting colleagues outside work context/ team building 	<p><i>“I think it’s great for the company, if the employees connect with each other, because that strengthens some kind of team feeling, I guess.” (I12)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing well for one’s body/ health 	<p><i>“I feel that it’s, it’s healthy, and I need this.” (I17)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sportiness level of course and oneself aligned 	<p><i>“So, this is like, pretty easy to do for everyone. And therefore, I don’t really see that is like stressing, so. And we had, we had also like this yoga class at some point, before the pandemic started, which was also I think, low key enough and like everybody can join.” (I9)</i></p>

4.7 Reasons for non-participation in sports activities

One explanation can be that the participation is not so important to them, as participant 15 is saying:

“I wouldn’t say I don’t care. But it’s not that I don’t feel included because of that. So, um, if I would care more, I guess I would have participated by now.”

One reason for this can be that they are already doing sports in their free time; participant 18:

“I don't really have a feeling. I think I don't care really because I know that I'm doing a lot of sports and I think it's fine.”

“When I don't participate? I don't feel anything at all. Because it's mostly because I don't have time or forget it” (participant 17).

Not having enough time was the most mentioned reason to not participate in a sports activity. The most named problem was that they are focused on a work project or need to finish something work related, so they can't make it on time to the sports activity (like in Interview 8):

“And sometimes it's also like, you really focus on something or want to finish some work. Like ‘aah not now, maybe later’, but then it's over and yeah”.

A few interviewees also noted that they have meetings during that specific time. Another big impact is the amount of weekly working hours an employee got. Many employees who work less than 40 hours per week said that they are not making big breaks in between and have to get work done in less time which is why there is less time left to eventually participate in a sports activity. Interview 19:

“Yeah, actually, because also because I reduced the time, working six hours a day now. I just have to fit in a little bit more of stuff, because it's still in this. Yeah. And this changing mode from eight hours a day to six hours a day. So yeah, I'm quite efficient right now.”

This was especially true for working students whose weekly working hours are never more than 20h per week. Moreover, many employees don't work any day of the week. If the sports activity is always taking place on a day on which they don't work, they are also never participating. Another time related issue was the balancing act between family and sports activity for some people; Interview 11:

“They were taking after the regular business hours where I had to take my children to bed or for a family this was bad timing.”

In addition to not having enough time in general for the mentioned reasons, many employees also didn't like the fact that they would need to add the time of the sports activity at the end of their workday. As an example, participant 3:

“I also wouldn't want to do it too much every day, because it's also time that, I mean, you also need to work obviously, and you don't want to stay at work until like, I don't know, 10pm.”

Another issue for many was that they often forget about the physical activity. They didn't set any calendar entry nor alarm and therefore missed the activity;

“I forget that it's there, then. So, my work.... How I work is I just work like in a tunnel and suddenly, ‘oh, it's 1pm.’ And then I also switch on the focus mode on Mac [which prevents notifications to show up], so I don't get disturbed. Then usually it's too late“ (Participant 19).

A few employees also complained that the sports activity was not exhausting and extensive enough. In those cases, they were talking about the Active Break (10-15min Stretching) or the yoga class. Interview 18:

“I think for me, the lessons have to be a little bit more sportive like really doing a longer yoga session or something which yes, because for me, I think like doing just 10 minutes something I don't really feel like it's... It benefits so much. So, for me, I think it has to be a little bit more.”

“So just in my head, I think that it's just a little bit like moving around. And I don't know if this helps that much.” (Interview 15).

So, their own sportiness level was too high which is why they felt underchallenged. Or for some, they said that they can imagine that a reason to not participate is to be not fit enough (for the Run&Fit). Interestingly, nobody said that about themselves besides one person who said he/ she thinks he/ she looks silly and another person who said he/ she is not in the best shape which is why 10-15min exercises are not enough. Interviewee 16 explicitly mentioned that he/ she knows he/ she wouldn't be judged even though he/ she personally thinks that he/ she is not very sporty;

“I'm really sure they wouldn't judge me. But I'm also like, okay with how it is. It's never been a social thing for me to exercise. But that's an outlier. Outlier perspective, probably. But I am not really. I don't think I am missing anything.”

All others were participants who thought the little fitness level of oneself could be a reason for non-participants. This phenomenon, to think oneself is better/ fitter than others but with this

eventually overestimating oneself, is called Dunner-Kruger-Effect. It shows that the sensation of the own fitness level/ difference to others is very subjective and can be overestimated, same as underestimated (Pennycook et al., 2017, p. 1774). This makes it impossible to neutrally measure the (non-) participants' fitness levels through self-inquiry.

As already mentioned regarding time issues, having a family makes it harder to participate. Moreover, many also prefer doing sports with their family, friends or on their own. Interview 14:

"I have my own sports activities with my family or friends after work. And yeah, just because I also have my activities there, and I have family and the kids are in the sports clubs, and I do my sport there. I don't take part in any after work or off site activities organized by the company."

A few also said that the amount of sports they are doing in their free time is already extensive:

"I do a lot of this stuff. Like sometimes in the evening, on the weekend. So, I have a lot of movement there." (Interview 8).

Some also answered that they generally prefer to do sports on their own;

"Like I've never done team sports or something. And there's probably a lot of psychological reasons why, but that would probably go too far. But I do exercise alone. But it's not a social thing for me." (Interview 16).

For a few others, another factor supporting this was that they like to separate private and office events, as participant 19 says:

"You didn't participate because you also wanted to do sports with other people than just your colleagues".

Same is supported by interviewee 12:

"And I know people they don't like this kind of activities, because they separate work and private activities strictly."

Another inhibitor that some people felt was the fact that the Active Break is happening remote and not together face-to-face:

“Maybe that's the reason why I haven't participated by now. Like, because I imagine that as you sit in front of your phone, you have your camera and like nobody's talking and you do the sports and then it's done.” (Interview 15).

In all answers there was no measurable difference between participants and non-participants. People who at least sometimes participate and sometimes not had the same reasons like people who never joined.

After having a look at the personal feelings, motivations and motives of the employees, the next chapter will present their thoughts on the implications physical activities have for the company.

Table 8; Most mentioned reasons to not participate (in sports offer):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of time 	<p><i>“Yeah, that's a question of time, and I only have a limited amount of time and ah, yeah.” (I14)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wanting to distinguish work/ private activities 	<p><i>“Apart from that, I have my own sports activities with my family or friends after work. And yeah, just because I also have my activities there, and I have family and the kids are in the sports clubs, and I do my sport there.” (14)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient activity level outside company's sports offer 	<p><i>“I was active by myself with a lot of yoga and different sports. So, this was too much for me.” (I19)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forgetting sports activity/ lack of priority 	<p><i>“It really often is that I forget about those meetings. So, it's not like, oh, today's is exercise day.” (I8)</i></p>

4.8 Implications for the company in the employee perspective

The most mentioned benefit employees think the employer gains from offering physical activities is the healthiness of the employees. Many of those already included this fact in their thoughts that having healthy employees means economic efficiency as they don't take sick leave so often:

“The health benefits are also of course beneficial for the company in the long run. Because if people are, if the employees are healthier, then that’s a good thing, because they don’t take off sick leave so often“ (Interview 7).

“I think, healthier, happier, and employees are more productive” (Interview 16).

“I like the sports offer very much, because it’s also you just feel better at the end of the day, and if you have employees that feel better at the end of the day, it’s always return of investment“ (Interview 20).

Regarding explicit physical issues and potential reasons to not being able to work, some were mentioning that they get back pain or a headache easily; Interview 20:

“More balance in my life. Because if I sit the whole day on the computer, it happens to me that I get headaches. And I don’t feel very well in the evening. If I know, I’m the whole day before the computer, in front of the computer.“

One person was also making a reference to the prevention of a burn out:

“And maybe also, like the burn out rate could fall probably, if you do it regularly.” (Interview 19).

Most people said that physical and mental health belongs together with their mind; Interview 15:

“(…) feel good within themselves and are fit and sports helps getting fit in physical and in your head, mental.”

In addition to that, another benefit employees were seeing for the company is having happy employees. This influences the general atmosphere at the workplace.

“And even my colleagues who said ‘Oh, I’m not that sporty kind of person’, was always smiling in the end. And I guess this kind of happiness coming out of the sports event was really, is really something which lightens up the team culture and the energy in the office. So, this is something I guess every company should look for and should be happy about. So, there are definitely some benefits concerning the healthiness and the happiness of your employees” (Interview 11).

It also contributes to the atmosphere as employees could feel more welcomed, as interviewee 15 says:

“And I think they also feel more welcomed. More wanted in the company, which is important, it's important that the employees are healthy. And yeah, just happy.”

Furthermore, having happy employees also binds them more to the company as they are satisfied there;

“I think, just if you do things to keep your employees happy, that's a good thing for a company because you get to keep people happy and keep them at that job at your company. For example, if they think there are nice activities, interesting activities, or the people are nice, there are some activities where I actually can get to know the colleagues there“. (Interview 11)

Showing care for the employees and making them more committed to the company is another major advantage employees are seeing for the company.

“You can see they care about the employees and it's not like “Okay, you earn your money. It's also a bit like you can improve your life and we care about you” (Interview 20);

“It's just, yeah, kind of a well-rounded relationship. Like more than just, Hey, you come to work and you do the thing. And then I don't know you anymore“ (Interview 4).

From their point of view, it connects them closer to work seeing that somebody cares for them:

„have employees doing things in the work time that they like and have a stronger connection to their work.“ (Interview 17).

Besides having a stronger connection to work, almost half of all the interviewed employees answered that also team building is supported through doing sports together which also benefits the company itself;

“I think these can help strengthen relationships, maybe? Or just build relationships between people you don't normally work well.“ (Interview 4).

“But also, yeah, the social aspect of it, let the employees come together, even though they're working remotely. And just to talk shortly and to see each other faces, so that you feel connected to the company and that you identify yourself.” (Interview 13);

“I guess if you're trying to achieve a good or a great team culture, you're always looking for possibilities to maintain or to improve the team culture. And if you think about it, you come across all kinds of activities you can offer and sports is maybe just one of them. But it's definitely one that is driven by the interest in generating and keeping up a great team culture“ (Interview 11).

Another contribution to the company's economic well-doing is that the employees can refocus better again after having a break; participant 3:

“And I also think that it's very important because when people have like a short break, like we do that 15 minutes during lunchtime, you can focus better afterwards, because we just keep staring at the screen, eight hours straight, that's not really productive.”

So, the increase of perceived productivity is a big gain for the company. It can also help to improve the work quality in general by the eyes of the employees. Interview 20:

“I think it's gives you the opportunity to think different about problems you challenged in the morning.”

People said that it helps them to distract their mind from work and that they can think better afterwards. One person also said that sometimes he/ she also talks about something work related while doing sports with colleagues which brings him/ her new ideas as well:

“also maybe when you talk with your colleagues and with which you're also working, then you might also get some new ideas or talk about something work related“ (Interview 5).

Just one participant warned that the sport exercises shouldn't be too exhausting otherwise there wouldn't be enough energy left to continue working afterwards (Interview 11). That improvement of work is a benefit for the company was recognized by both participants and non-participants. That it is easier to refocus after doing sports on work tasks again was just seen by participants.

Moreover, offering sports activities can attract potential new employees to the company. The aspect of using this to strengthen the employer branding was also seen by many interviewees.

“If you can mention this, let's say on your website and in your recruiting process, this is also quite nice. So, it's like a marketing factor, I guess for companies today, because these perks are, in a lot of ways, quite important for, from my perspective for a lot of people, especially people we like to attract. So, this is definitely also something beneficial for the company in total.” (Interview 11).

It would attract people to the company (for example Interview 10 & 16). Besides attracting candidates, it would also contribute to the retention of good consistent employee-employer-relationships.

But when they were asked if they would apply to a company because of a sports offer, nobody said they would do so. Everybody who was mentioning it, was just seeing it as an extra benefit but no particular incentive to apply.

“I think for me personally, not. So I think it's a nice to have, but it's not that I would choose a company because of it. Yes, because I'm not using it so much, and it's not that important for me. But when I would read it or something, I would think, yes, it's, or it would be a positive thing, but I wouldn't apply because of it” (Interview 18).

Interviewee 17, for example, answered similarly:

“I think this can be part of something but this wouldn't be the one point why I would apply for a company. But yeah, it's part of what we can tell about the company the employing process. But I don't think that's that would be the one point where they will decide themselves for or against us“ (Interview 17).

Furthermore, the expression of showing care through the offer seemed to have a bigger impact on the decision to apply than the actual activity:

“I think it's not the reason I would send an application to the company but I think it's... if I have to decide between two companies, I would rather go to the company with cool benefits like sport breaks, etc. Because it's not just the thing that you have a program or a benefit. It's also they... you can see they care about the employees” (Interview 20).

Besides seeing those advantages for the company and the benefit to use it for the employer branding, interviewees were also pointing out negative implications for the employer.

The most mentioned disadvantage was that it costs the employer money. But all people who acknowledged this were also pointing out that it would still pay off for the employer to invest

money in this. The reason for this is that they said that in return the company makes sure about the employees' happiness and healthiness. Interview 3:

“But also, like I said, before, if it costs a bit more, I think it is a good investment, because it makes sure that your employees are healthy and happy.”

And interviewee 20: *“if you have employees that feel better at the end of the day, it's always a return of investment”*.

The same person also came up with the idea that companies can deduct those offers from the taxes which is why it is less expensive than it seems. Only one person said that it is hard to validate if the employee's happiness comes explicitly from the sports offer as there are many more benefits offered by the company, like free fruits (Interview 11). This interviewee also pointed out, as the only person, that another negative implication for the company is the requirement of a certain infrastructure. That means that for example a shower needs to be provided.

A few employees also spoke about the fact that productive working time might be interrupted to be able to participate in a sports program. It is remarkable that this was only said by participants. One reason could be that they already experienced this feeling while non-participants just didn't participate because they were afraid of this to happen and wanted to prevent it but didn't experience it. It seems like the benefits for participants were still higher, so they were willing to “sacrifice” constructive working time;

“So, you just when you then participate, then you need to, like leave the work as it is. And sometimes that's maybe difficult because you need more time than to get back into the problem or the things you're working on”;

Interview 13: *“sometimes when I'm in the workflow, I have to stop working, even though I'm concentrated. I have to interrupt this. But I think the benefits are higher or bigger”*.

Regarding this, one participant (11) also made aware of the fact that working times need be synchronized/ clearly communicated:

“something which may be a bit difficult, because you have some people who cannot attend meetings, for example, when they have quite a long lunch hour lunch break, and maybe others are already at home, when they still have to work to compensate for the longer lunch hours. And I guess you have to take care of that.”

As previously mentioned in chapter 4.5 and 4.8, some employees were also noting that a sports offer can help the employer to attract recruiting candidates.

After presenting all the results and findings of the research goals, they will be referred to the existing literature.

Table 9; Most mentioned implications for the employer in offering sports activities:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Mentally and physically) healthier and happier employees, therefore less sick leave 	<p><i>“healthy employees are better than sick employees. And while it's not something that might be very apparent, if someone participates in these exercises or not, I think it always helps in yeah, just having more healthy employees“ (18)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved mental health 	<p><i>“And maybe also, like the burn out rate could fall probably, if you do it regularly.” (19)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher employee retention/ commitment to the company 	<p><i>“And also Yeah, just you know, look, connects view me, or employees in general, more to the company. Like, you know, you feel like, that's also a part, that you get out of this. So, it's maybe just... can also just be a benefit in terms of employee retention or something (14)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved relationships and team building 	<p><i>“I think it's great for the company, if the employees connect with each other, because that strengthens some kind of team feeling, I guess.” (112)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved quality of work due to recreational time through exercising 	<p><i>“like the contact to the team, getting some movement in that could help with my concentration and actually my productivity maybe.“ (16)</i></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting possible candidates to the company 	<p><i>“And it's also a good employer branding, probably.” (116)</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative: costs money, time, infrastructure and eventually interruption of concentrated working employee 	<p><i>“Yeah, I wouldn't call it negative. Yeah, there are costs to it, right? Cost, like the trainer or opportunity costs with the time spent on that, but I can't think of real negative impacts of that.” (I2)</i></p>
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5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical and practical implications

As already mentioned in the beginning, the finding by Zhang et al. that lack of time can be one barrier to prevent employees from participating, can be also confirmed in the examination of this population as well. Furthermore, they found as intrinsic motivation the determinants competence and enjoyment, perceived health, and break time (Zhang et al., 2021, p. 9). Same can be confirmed in this present study: most people participate for personal reasons like fun, to get a break from work and to do something well for their body. Moreover, Zhang et al state that family, friends, and colleagues also have an influence on the exercise behavior. This is also true for the employees in this company as some say it motivates them to see that coworkers are participating but also that they prefer to do sports in their free time with family and friends.

Grande et al found out that low intensity exercise may not encourage physically active employees enough (Grande et al., 2016, p. 482). This lack of motivation because of too little stimuli was also given as an answer a few times in this study. Same finding has been confirmed by the prevalent experiment.

It is remarkable that also all facilitators found by Brinkley et al were mentioned by employees in this present study, even though, Brinkley's et al study focused primarily on team sports. The same results could be confirmed for people practicing singular physical exercises at the workplace together with the team (see chapter 4.3). Those are: more motivation to do sports when others do it as well, an open and accepting culture at the workplace, easy access to the sports facility and flexible working time. Also, the obstacles were the same: the preference of spending time out of the office rather than with family and friends and coordination problems with the date and time of the physical exercise.

When the organizational commitment is high, the employee's turnover intention is much lower (Thatcher et al., 2002, p. 245). Retaining employees in a company saves a lot of recruitment costs. As described in the first chapter, physical exercise is one way to attract and retain people at the company. In addition, it can contribute to a positive employer branding. This is both proven by the present study but also other sources, as Hassard et al. from the

European Agency for Safety and Health at work in chapter 1 shows. Moreover, a study by MetLife reports that for 60% of the respondents the sports program as benefit was an important reason to stay with the company and it encouraged 49% of the interviewees to start working at the company (MetLife, 2011, p. 15). This is partially confirmed with the present study as well – even though no one of the employees would start working for the company just because of the fact of having a sports program, a lot confirmed that it has an impact on their decision.

Some participants said they can refocus better after working out. This effect is listed by Hassard et al. as well (Hassard et al., 2012, p. 16). As also introduced in chapter 2, same is confirmed by Gil-Beltrán et al. To recapitulate: All authors found that physical exercise can recharge cognitive resources.

Doing sports at the workplace and not having to go to an external place, like a gym was seen as a catalysator to participate by many employees. Same was also proposed by Gil-Beltrán et al in their study to attract more employees to exercise (Gil-Beltrán et al., 2020, p. 7).

The problem of staying in a seated position most of their working time was brought up by many interviewees. Sedentary behavior is an independent risk factor for many chronic diseases (Taylor et al., 2018, p. 1).

It is proven that employee health risks can be lowered by as much as 5% per year if the health promotion program includes cultural elements (Taylor et al., 2018, p. 2). In this study, the most highlighted characteristic of the company was the friendly and open culture. People feel welcomed there, which is very likely to have a positive influence on their participatory behavior in the sports offering and exercise programs. It seems like it is important for the employees to meet their coworkers outside of the working time and to motivate each other. Therefore, a positive impact of the work culture on the acceptance of a corporate benefits program can be confirmed. Taylor et al. also showed that highlighting employees' health as important is essential to build a culture of health at the workplace (p. 13). Through the wish of more official encouragement and internal advertising, employees of this company were also made aware of this importance. Having the managers showing care, supports a culture of health mutually. This is also confirmed by Karkula, quoting a study by OptumHealth stating that 84% of the interviewed people feel that workplace programs show caring through the employer (Isnar, 2011, p. 7).

As a negative implication the stressor “working time needs to be added” by Hertting et al. (see chapter 2) is confirmed by the participants in this study as well. Furthermore, this thesis replies to Zhangs' et al. explaining the need to explore factors of participation furtherly. To sum these up: time issues (working time needs to be added, having no time due to previously explored reasons, no workdays), personal reasons (laziness, own fitness level, preference of doing sports outside the work context) and characteristics of the physical activity (online setting, difficulty level) were found.

In addition to that, Gronningsaeter et al, Zoller and Ho's results of increased happiness of participants in a sports program at the workplace can be confirmed. Also, almost two decades after their studies, increased happiness is a major motivation to offer physical exercises. Even though work policies and the work environment were already picked up in other studies as influences, this study emphasizes the importance of a good work atmosphere even further. Because they don't feel strong hierarchies and a great team spirit, it seems to be less difficult for them to participate or that it at least makes them less uncomfortable. For this, the statement of non-participant 16 is a representative summary: "if I imagine like there's a different company, there's like, the boss of my boss, and we will have to do yoga together or something. I've could feel that that would not go that well. Because if you do physical exercise, you're also somehow showing your weaknesses, I think and that has to be supported in a way. Yeah, it's hard to do with people you don't really know or harder. Or maybe it's even harder for people who you have to work with but don't actually know that well on a personal level. Probably the hardest way." Trust and comfort between the co-workers has a big impact on participation and on the possibility of feeling pressure. This has not been experienced by any employee in the prevalent study. Instead, the workplace atmosphere is described as a relaxed and friendly, nurturing the participant's commitment to participating in the sports offering.

Furthermore, providing physical exercises contributes to a successful employer branding. However, it should be noted that it is more effective as part of a package with several benefits and would probably never be the only reason why anyone would apply. As the sports offer is not important to some employees, it is not guaranteed to be mentioned by employees to outsiders of the company – hence the "word of mouth" principle does not apply.

In conclusion, this work supports the previous body of research in that sports exercise strengthens team building, elevates employer-commitment and reduces office-induced physical health issues, such as sedentary seating behavior. In addition, reasons to not participate are concordant with findings in this study. As mentioned previously, those are for example, lack of time, family obligations and non-appropriate fitness level (to the course/ participant).

5.2 Recommendations

All those findings indicate that having a good work and team atmosphere is the basis for having a successful physical exercise intervention. This, then, can bring several benefits with it. It is highly recommended for every company to offer physical exercise at the workplace. The return on investment is well-worth the money spent on it. It can also be used to retain employees at the company and to attract new hires. This is especially beneficial in the IT sector in which a constant demand for skilled talents exists and the labor market is highly competitive. Besides offering the sports intervention itself, it could be an idea to even offer it as paid working time.

This could function as an incentive for those employees who would like to participate but don't want to add working time at the end of their day because they participated in a sports program in-between. Even if that would generate higher costs, it is worth a thought if the return of investment is not even higher as the employees are fitter, less sick etc. It is also the proposition of employee 13: "Another negative point is I think the company could book it as working hours. Or it could be part of the working hours. It's I think it's not a lot of time. And the benefits for the companies are clear. So yeah, it would be cool if it's part of your workday and not part of your breaks".

One idea is to guarantee a higher success of such physical intervention is an additional previous assessment of the employees' physical health condition and happiness at the workplace. In an anonymous survey they could be asked to rate the work atmosphere, communication at work etc. If the results show that improvement should be undertaken in those matters, other interventions elevating employee's workplace satisfaction should take place before implementing additional sports offers. If in such a survey social misconduct, such as bullying or misunderstanding between coworkers would be detected, physical exercises are counterproductive and facilitate such negative workplace experiences. Instead, measures improving the team cohesion should be implemented.

Another recommendation is to always keep the physical exercises voluntary. It wouldn't benefit the employees' happiness feeling forced to participate. Otherwise, they could feel pressured and that the company is taking over their private decisions.

To make it easier for employees to participate, the days on which physical exercises are happening, should be switched. That means that in one week the sports program could take place on Mondays and Wednesdays and in the following week on Tuesdays and Thursdays and then again on other days. This way, it is ensured that employees who don't work on all those days (especially working students) have the chance to participate.

To avoid confusion and to remind the employees of the sports exercise, an entry to the work calendar for all employees should be added. In this way, everybody has an alarm popping up 10 min before the sports exercise and meetings can be planned around it. If the employee doesn't want to participate or another work activity is more important, he/ she can click on "Not participating" and the entry is deleted from the calendar. This was also proposed by participant 9:

"it would help to have like, an extra calendar event, which reminds me of, because of how it's organized, just in Slack [the company's used communication tool] I was just like, "Okay, today, we are doing this kind of exercise thing". And I'm often thinking, 'A, okay, maybe I will join', and then five minutes before 12. I'm like, 'Oh, okay, they already', because usually I need like, 10 minutes before to stop my work or coming close to an end".

This emphasizes the need for appropriate timely coordination of the sports offering. Additionally, it is beneficial to offer different kinds of sports interventions, in order to vary the fitness levels required for the physical activity. Very fit employees wouldn't feel underchallenged, whilst others who just want to stretch a little bit, can participate in another course. Also, the duration of the courses should differ. In this way, employees can choose the workout that fits best to their personal needs and time availability. Another idea could be to allow every two weeks or once a month to also bring their kids or partner to the sports exercise. Clearly, the required fitness level would need to be adapted to children in these courses. But in this way, the family friendliness and importance of work-life-balance can be stressed as well while it brings people together.

5.3 Limitations

There are a few limitations regarding this study. First, the methodology of data collection brings issues with it. One limitation of interviews is that self-reported data is often not so reliable. Memories can fade or change. Furthermore, each interview is its own experience. Even though participants have similar experiences, they can give very different answers which makes it very complex to analyze the data (Berg & Lune, 2017, p. 93). This risk could have been reduced with handing out questionnaires. But it also limits the possibility of receiving new answers the researcher wasn't thinking about when developing the questionnaire including closed questions. This is the reason why interviews in this mode still seemed to be the better option.

Another difficulty was the language in which the interviews were conducted. All interviewees were German native speakers and many of them had difficulties finding the right English vocabulary sometimes. This could limit their answers as they eventually didn't express explicitly what they really wanted to say.

Moreover, just a small number of people were interviewed. They were drawn by lot and approached via Mail/ Slack message. Also, if they were not drawn by lot but were interested in participation, they could do so by approaching the interviewee. Even though the sample was representative for the characteristics of the company, it would also be interesting to examine furtherly, if the same results can be found in a bigger population. For this, more researchers or a bigger time frame would be needed.

Another limitation is that due to the way how the questions were asked, it is difficult to distinguish between the impact of several different physical activities. No conclusions can be made if a yoga intervention is for example better received than the Run&Fit program. It would be also interesting to find out which exercises (yoga, Run&Fit, Active Break) bring the best health benefits. People were just asked if they participated at least more than three times in any of the offers. As some tried out all but one more than others, it is difficult to separate the impact of participation.

In addition, objectivity cannot be completely guaranteed. Even though the participants were made aware that the interviewer acts as a neutral outsider of the company, they obviously knew that she still is an employee of the company. This might have had an impact on their answers. In another setting, a different person who really has no relation to the company and employees should conduct the interviews. Moreover, it would be also beneficial to have more than one additional coder working on the data. With this, reliability can be even better guaranteed.

5.4 Further research

As headaches and back pain from a seating position appear specifically in an office environment, it could be a new contribution in future research to investigate if the same results can be found in other job sectors. It would be another contribution to HR science to compare blue collar vs. white collar jobs in the scope of physical exercises at the workplace.

Furthermore, it could be investigated if health issues are the same. Problems in health for people in this company were mainly named with back pain while employees in another kind of job might have different issues. The type of health problem is substantial to know as sports interventions can be tailored to those issues to help better. Theory suggests, that in blue collar jobs, sports offerings might help alleviate their workplace-specific health impacts.

For example, stretching exercises can specifically approach back problems to avoid sick leave of employees because of that.

Another important comparison is to investigate the possible difference between genders. As Brinkley, referenced in chapter 2, indicates (women feel less competent playing football), it is very likely that the content of the sports program is experienced differently. Therefore, it would be interesting to analyze the influence of gender on the decision which sports program is best received by the employees. In addition to that, the difference between people with kids and without can be further analyzed. Results of those findings could help to manifest to which degree the timing of sports offers should be planned around family times (when kids are in bed, need to be picked up from school / kindergarten, etc.) and, also the content of sports as, for example, pelvic floor training could be attractive to women who just gave birth etc.

As already pointed out previously, the work atmosphere has a huge impact on the participation and perceived pressure of participation. The atmosphere in this present company seems to be very good which is why it would be interesting to conduct the same interview in a company where several team issues are known or where health doesn't seem to be so valued. This would help to confirm the relevance of a functioning work and team environment.

In addition to that, it would also be interesting to find out to which degree participating management would encourage or discourage employees from participation in the sports exercises. One thought is that they could function as role models who could encourage the

employees to participate. But it could also happen that employees feel intimidated and observed and transfer their abilities in the sports course to how they think they are perceived doing their actual work.

The small number of interviewees was already brought up the previous chapter. In future research, it should also be examined if the size of the company has an impact on perceived pressure of participation, the catalysts, and inhibitors to participate etc. It can be hypothesized that working in a much bigger company either encourages employees to participate as it is more anonymous, and they feel less watched as they are just one out of many. But the opposite could also be the case and the loss of the feeling of belonging together minimizes the positive effects of working out in a team.

When extending the scope of this study it might also be interesting to add and measure KPIs of the health outcomes. The health status of the employees could be recorded, including data about their heartbeat, back pain issues, sick days etc. and to compare it with the status after/ during physical exercise intervention.

6. Conclusions

Accordingly, the research field has not yet been fully explored. Based on the present work, however, it can be recommended that every company should act regarding the physical activeness of their employees. As a result, the company will benefit through the commitment of the employees and a positively reinforced reputation and employer branding (as a company which is taking care of their employees which results in a stronger employer brand). This will also contribute to an improved team building and better ability to work (refocusing, less sick leave). Due to these actions, we can eventually prevent or at least minimize statements like complaints about back pain, as given in the introduction, and build a healthier work environment.

The prevalent study shows that employers who offer physical exercise at the workplace have an increased overall return on invest and an elevated employee satisfaction, in addition to a reduced employee churn rate and elevated average employee health, reducing overall operative costs.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What is your company doing about your well-being?
 - a. *If not mentioned by interviewee: and about your physical well-being?*
 - b. *Have you participated in any of those physical activity offers?*

2. What do you think is the benefit of your employer in offering such physical interventions?

3. For participants: What is your motivation/ reason to participate in a sports offer provided by your employer?

For non-participants: What is the reason/ obstacle for you to not participate in a sports offer provided by your employer?

4. Why is that (that you participate/ don't participate)?
 - a. *If not mentioned by interviewee (or not so well): Can you give me examples/ more information about that?*

5. How do you feel about it (the reason to participate/ to not participate)?

6. Do you also see any negative side in the initiative?

7. What could your company do more for your well-being?

8. When you talk with other people about your company, what do you say about your employer?

- a. *If not mentioned by interviewee (or not so well): ...and linked with well-being?*

9. Is there anything you didn't mention yet but that you would like to add to your answers?

Appendix B: Codebook

C1: Programmes and offers

Code	Definition	Code Instruction	Explanation Definition of the Code
C1.1	Type of sports programme	Coded when the participant is mentioning a physical activity as part of benefits offered by the employer	<p>1) Active Pause 15 min exercises, twice a week before the lunch break, remotely in front of the laptop without sports clothes, organized by two employees who show a YouTube video via shared screen</p> <p>2) Cycling Trip Bike Tour as an employee event in the summer</p> <p>3) Yoga Once a week before Covid in the upstairs floor of the office, with a professional instructor</p> <p>4) Run&Fit Once a week before Covid 3-4km run around Münster with exercises like squats with a professional instructor</p>
C1.2	Well-being offer	Coded when participant mentions an action by the employer, he/ she sees as a benefit for his well being	<p>1) Team Events (also remote) Events organized by the company (e.g. summer party, games nights)</p> <p>2) Conference Budget Time and money offered by the company to participate in educational events&conferences</p> <p>3) Educational resources Books and literature offered by the company for free</p> <p>4) Office Equipment Chairs and tables adjusted to employees needs</p> <p>5) Technical equipment Laptop, software etc.</p> <p>6) Sports offer See C1.1</p> <p>7) Flexible working times Employees can choose their own working times</p> <p>8) Open communication Frequent and open communication among the co-workers but also from and to management</p> <p>9) Free fruits/ coffee/ water</p>

		<p>10) Family/ Work-Life Balance</p> <p>11) Kind atmosphere Feeling of a harmonic environment where everyone gets along well</p> <p>12) Monthly company briefings Presentation by the management, once a month, remotely to share Status Quo and future planning of the company</p> <p>13) “Hack-Teams” Once a week, two hours of paid company time for private software development projects to work on together with co-workers</p> <p>14) Home Office</p> <p>15) Dedicated People&Culture Person Employee who is specifically responsible for employee happiness</p> <p>16) “Projects and Breakfast” Every 6-7 weeks one project team presents what they are currently working on while all co workers are having breakfast together, paid by the company (since Covid it is happening remote)</p> <p>17) Employee appraisal Regular feedback meetings with managers about status quo of the employee & future plans same as wishes and needs</p> <p>18) Mentoring Senior employee who onboards new employee and mentors him/her</p> <p>19) “Coffee-Calls” Remote calls every day, 10-15min in which the employees can talk about private things (no paid time)</p> <p>20) Trust</p> <p>21) Zwalk Challenge The employees count (voluntarily) their daily steps, track them and the weekly winner gets a price</p> <p>22) Flat hierarchies Work roles are openly structured, CEOs are levelled with employees</p>
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			<p>23) Mindfulness App App to do meditation and exercises regarding mental well-being</p>
C1.3	Needs for further well-being activities	Programmes/ initiatives the employee wishes for his well-being which doesn't exist yet at the company	<p>1) Time offered by the employer for sports activities Paid working time to do sports</p> <p>2) Room dedicated to do sports Explicit room/ space in the office just for sports</p> <p>3) More encouragement for sports activities Official announcement from management to do sports</p> <p>4) Movable desks</p> <p>5) Co-Working Space Paid co-working space for remote employees</p> <p>6) Bike Sponsored e-bike leasing</p> <p>7) Gym membership Paid membership to go to gyms</p> <p>8) Sponsorship of sports activities Sponsorship of marathons (paying starting fee, t-shirts etc.)</p> <p>9) None The participant doesn't have any further wishes/ isn't missing any more well-being offer</p> <p>10) Less meetings Less calls/ meetings with co-workers and instead more focus time to work alone</p> <p>11) More group experiences More events (sporty or social ones) together with the team</p>

C2

Personal participation and perception of physical activities (also hypothetically for non-participants)

Code	Definition	Code Instruction	Explanation Definition of the Code
C2.1	Participation in sports programme	It is coded if the employee participated in the sports offer or not	<p>1) Yes</p> <p>2) No</p>
C2.2	Involvement in organization of sports programme	It is coded if the employee is/ was part in the organization of the physical activities	<p>1) Yes</p> <p>2) No</p>
C2.3	Personal motivation	Coded when the participant is giving reasons for his/ her	<p>1) Personal Participation Motives</p> <p>2) Health reasons</p>

		participation in sports activities	For example, against back pain, to lose weight etc. 3) Contrast to sitting position at desk/ computer 4) Refocus afterwards on work/ productivity improvement 5) Meeting the team outside projects (team building) 6) Reduce stress
C2.4	Feeling/ Emotion about (non-) participation	Feelings the participant has, when he/ she (doesn't) participate in sports offer	1) Positive Emotions Like Happiness 2) Neutral 3) Feeling forced 4) Feeling excluded 5) Refreshed/ relaxed 6) A bit disappointed 7) Not bad 8) No pressure 9) Feeling watched
C2.5	Catalysator for participation	Positive reasons that are seen for oneself in participating in sports activities	1) Official acceptance by the employer to participate Management encourages and accepts employees doing sports 2) Meeting the team/ team building 3) Location The sports programme happens/ starts&finishes at the office 4) Short duration of activity Activity is taking an appropriate amount of time 5) Low-Key Level The level of exercises suits also beginners 6) Fresh air 7) Reducing weight/ body shape/ health 8) Quality of exercises The employee likes the quality and professionalism of exercises and the trainer and eventually also has the feeling to learn new exercises 9) "Peer pressure" to participate It motivates the employee to see that other co-workers are joining, in a positive way he/ she is feeling peer pressure 10) Timing The timing of the physical activity suits the participant
C2.6	Inhibitor for participation	Negative aspects that are seen for oneself in	1) None

		<p>participating in sports activities</p>	<p>2) Working time needs to be added Sports programme doesn't count as work time and the missed time needs to be added at the end of the day</p> <p>3) No time For one or many reasons the employee doesn't find time to participate. This can be because he/ she has work duties to do or private obligations</p> <p>4) Not a worktime-day Sports programme is happening on a week day on which the employee isn't working (mainly for working students)</p> <p>5) Laziness</p> <p>6) No reminder Employees forget to participate and are missing a reminder in their calendar</p> <p>7) Sportslevel of the course Sports programme is either too easy or too hard according to the employee's sportiness</p> <p>8) Preference of practicing sports with family/ friends Employee prefers to do sports in their free time alone or with family/ friends</p> <p>9) Fitness level of the participant The employee's physical condition doesn't align with the level of the course, either the participant feels underchallenged or not fit enough</p> <p>10) Online Setting The employee doesn't like the physical activity being online and prefers a face-to-face setting without screen</p>
<p>C2.7</p>	<p>Negative implications of sports offer</p>		<p>11) Difference between participants and non-participants Employee is comparing himself with others who (don't) participate</p> <p>12) Feeling pressured to participate Employee feels obligation to join sport programme</p> <p>13) None</p>

			No negative implications caused by the offering of a sports programme are seen by the employee
C2.8	Opinion about sports offer		1) General opinion The employee likes the sports programme

C3

Perspective from employee on company

Code	Definition	Code Instruction	Explanation Definition of the Code
C3.1	Benefit of the company/ management	Coded when the participant is mentioning benefits he/ she thinks the company has when offering sports activities	1) Happiness of Employees 2) Improvement of Work Quality/ productivity 3) Team Building 4) Refocus on work 5) Healthiness of employees (mentally & physically) 6) Commitment to the company Employees are less likely to resign and feel “attached” to the company 7) Showing care With offering a sports programme, management shows that they care about well being 8) Attraction to company/ recruiting Employee sees the sport offer as a benefit which could attract potential applicants to the company and supports the recruiting
C3.2	Negative implications for employer	Negative aspects that are seen for the company in offering sports activities	1) Unavailability of employees for meetings during that time Employees are not available for meetings during that time 2) Costs money 3) Interruption of productive working time Employees stop working to participate in sports programme even though they might have been in a focused and productive phase before 4) None 5) Tiredness after working out Employees feel exhausted and tired after working out 6) Requires infrastructure The company needs to provide a location where the activity can

			take place, where clothes can be changed and a shower taken
C3.3	Employer Branding	Activities/ actions/ feelings/ opinion about and from the company that the employee shares with people outside the company	<p>1) Freedom to express oneself Employees can talk freely and have the feeling they can be themselves</p> <p>2) Kind atmosphere Feeling of a harmonic environment where everyone gets along well</p> <p>3) Constructive environment Employees encourage and learn from each other</p> <p>4) Team events See C1.2</p> <p>5) Physical exercises See C1.1</p> <p>6) Flexible working times Employees can choose their own working times</p> <p>7) “Hack-Teams” Once a week, two hours of paid company time for private software development projects to work on together with co-workers</p> <p>8) Importance for recruitment Employee acknowledges that the benefits he/ she mentions is contributing to a positive image to the outside which helps in the recruiting of new employees</p> <p>9) Effort of managers Managers show care to employees</p> <p>10) Free fruits</p> <p>11) Not talking about sports offer The employee isn’t mentioning any of the sports offers as a benefit to others</p> <p>12) Office Equipment Work material like hardware and office furniture are mentioned as a benefit</p> <p>13) Flat hierarchies Work roles are openly structured, CEOs are levelled with employees</p>

Appendix C: Transcribed Interviews

Interview 1

Maren Wenker

Okay, so hi, Participant 1. Thanks so much for being available today and for participating in my interview. If you're ready, I would like to start with my first question now.

Participant 1

Yeah.

Maren Wenker

Okay, perfect. So, I would like to know, what is your company doing about your well-being?

Participant 1

Um, many different things like... I'm missing the vocabulary..., but we're having team events, like outside of work, but also during work times. Before noon, two days a week, there's an active pause with. Yeah, some kind of sports intervention. 15 minutes. And there's benefits like the conference budget, so we can go for conferences, and the company pays for it and pays for travel. So yeah, different kinds of educational resources also available within the company like books and ebooks, and yeah, okay, probably I have forgotten lots of things.

Maren Wenker

Um, you already started mentioning the physical activities. What were those? And have you also participated in any of those physical activity offers?

Participant 1

Um, yes, I have. So one was, I wasn't actually working at the company yet. And we had a summer event, and were cycling to the location. So it was a cycling trip for maybe an hour. And then during work, we have these active pause thing where it's kind of 15 minutes stretching yoga phase, and I've participated somewhat regularly.

Maren Wenker

And what do you think is the benefit of your employer in offering such physical interventions?

Participant 1

Um, well I guess so one benefit surely is like, well-being and happiness of employees, but of course, like physical activities also, are beneficial for the mind and for Yeah, working in a kind of thing worker-like environment, that the work quality, I think actually profits from physical activities.

Maren Wenker

And your own personal motivation or reason to participate in such a sports offer. What was that? Or what is it?

Participant 1

The first thing I guess, is fun. I just like to participate in these things. Yes, and, for example, this active pause between working on the desk, at the desk all day all the time the whole day. There's also relaxing and kind of Yeah, I feel that it benefits my, my well-being, my physical well-being like my back is... I have some back pain in the morning maybe because I sit in a weird position in front of my computer all day and then this leg activation helps with it.

Maren Wenker

Okay, can you maybe explore this a little bit further like concrete examples of what's especially the benefit for you? So you already mentioned the back pain but is there maybe anything besides that or more than that?

Participant 1

Yeah, so So of course, it's nice to, to get the head free of like, only thinking this thing worker based activities like of course having a regular lunch break also does that but I think it's even better when there's some physical activity involved and you really move yourself and you, you move your body to yeah, have a yeah, some alternative to this just sitting and writing and reading work, which only happens in your head basically.

Maren Wenker

Yeah. And were you also involved in the process of deciding for those initiatives? Or did you organize them somehow?

Participant 1

No, not really.

Maren Wenker

Okay....

Participant 1

I was an early adopter, maybe (laughs).

Maren Wenker

(Laughs) True. So my next question is, do you also see any negative side in those initiatives focused on the physical exercises that you mentioned?

Participant 1

Negative for myself, or for the employer?

Maren Wenker

Both. Can be both. Maybe focusing first on the employer and then you move to you.

Participant 1

Well, one, one negative aspect might be that, so it's not working time. So it's not that the employer pays for that somehow. But one negative aspect still might be that people who want to participate are not available for meetings during that time. Why usually, of course, like important meetings will still happen. And then when you can't participate in the active pause. But yeah, maybe eventually, people decide to go for the active pause, rather than for some meeting or something. But I don't really see any real negative aspects. And for myself, I hardly find any, I can't think of a negative aspect.

Maren Wenker

So how do you feel in general about participating? Just as a summary, actually, of what you said before?

Participant 1

Um, yeah, I enjoy it. I think it helps me get through the workday in a more positive, more, like better way, all in all. And yeah I really enjoy it. That's the summary.

Maren Wenker

Is there also something that your company could do more for your well-being?

Participant 1

Regarding the physical activities or in general?

Maren Wenker

Can be also both again. Maybe we focus first on the physical part, and then in general, what you could wish for?

Participant 1

Okay, so one thing I can think of concretely, because we kind of discussed this in smaller groups already, is going for a run during the lunch break. And that's, like, privately organized between a couple of people, but could maybe also be more structured to get more people involved. And, like, yeah, I guess, what the employer could do most about this is reserve the time for such things to happen. And also for this active pause we have, if it's accepted company wide, which I think it is in our company, then that helps people to like engage in it and say, Yes, I will participate because they know it's okay. And they don't have to fear that it will be seen in a bad way somehow that you participate and you don't have time to work during that time or whatever. So yeah, things like giving a bit more structure to this and giving room for those events to happen. That's maybe a structural kind of aspect which an employer can do.

Maren Wenker

Do you also see a negative side in that, in giving more structure from the employer?

Participant 1

Well, of course, I mean, too much structure can result in, in it being less optional somehow and people might feel forced to do it. So too much structure might be bad, but I guess giving a little structure and giving like room for these things to grow and then leaving the details to the people who participate or who organize it. This may be a good, like way in between.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and when you talk with other people about your company, what are you telling them about your employer, with the aspect of the well-being?

Participant 1

So, yeah, okay, one aspect we didn't really talk about yet, I guess is for well-being the well being in general, the most important thing for myself is like being able to express myself in the work and having freedom to do that. And I guess that's one thing, which in my company works pretty well. And I would tell people about these benefits that I mentioned, like an overall benefit, like the the atmosphere in the company is very good. And people act very kind with effect to each other. And, and it's very constructive. So these are, like the general atmosphere kind of things, which are, I guess, most relevant for the well being. And then these, like team events and physical events and these extra benefits on top of that.

Maren Wenker

And do you think that there's a relation between that atmosphere that you just described and the physical activities that are offered?

Participant 1

Um, yes, I would, I would say so. Namely, I mean, just what I said that there is room for these things to happen. That's because the atmosphere or I mean, that's part of this atmosphere that there is room for these things.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Um, is there anything you didn't mention yet? Or something that we didn't talk about before, but you would like to add to your answers?

Participant 1

I don't think so.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great, then thank you so much for taking the time and to participate in my interview. That's it. Thank you for your answers. And we talk soon. Thank you.

Participant 1

Yeah, thank you.

Interview 2

Maren Wenker

So hello, thanks so much for taking the time for my interview today. Before we start, I would like to highlight again that this interview is not on behalf of the company, and just for my personal research for the master thesis, and I'm treating all the information you're giving me anonymously, of course, and highly confidential. Are you okay with me recording this interview?

Participant 2

Yeah, I'm okay with that.

Maren Wenker

Okay, thank you. So, I would like to start with the first question. What is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 2

I'm sorry, for my well-being?

Maren Wenker

Yeah, exactly.

Participant 2

Yeah, we have a workplace where, yeah, we got everything we need to work with the technical equipment. And also, an office chair and office table and so on that suited to my needs. And besides, we have some sports offers. If it's not in Corona times.

Maren Wenker

You already mentioned these sports offers, what are those? For example?

Participant 2

We had yoga and some sessions for running at lunchtime. Now, we have some small video clips. We share twice a week. Yeah, just for relaxing, doing some courses.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great. And have you participated in any of those physical activities sports offers?

Participant 2

No, I haven't.

Maren Wenker

Okay, but were you involved somehow? Or did you participate in the decision or organization of those practices?

Participant 2

No, not really, was more that I was informed about it. But not that I was part of the decision process.

Maren Wenker

And what do you think about those activities that are offered?

Participant 2

I think there have multiple purposes. The main purpose of course, is Yeah, to have some movement, some sport during the day, where you can have another context, have a real break and do some activity that help you to refocus again on mind work later on. On the other side, it has a function for the team. You got some other rounds where you can, yeah, get to know people you don't know any projects, where you just have another context besides work. Which can be very refreshing and you get to know each other better and it is kind of team building thing.

Maren Wenker

So you already mentioned the purpose or the benefits for the team and also for yourself, like you said that you can refocus on yourself. Do you also see any benefits for your employer in offering those sports activities?

Participant 2

Yeah, I think basically they are the same. I don't know. What other purpose the employer could have besides the one that the employees profit from?

Maren Wenker

Yeah, okay. And the reason or let's maybe better say the obstacle for you to not participate in those offers, what are those personally for you?

Participant 2

Yeah, my days, are already kind of packed. And I try to fulfill all my hours of the day and to participate in one of these offers would mean to drop to do items and I'll let people wait longer on so yeah, I prioritize to do the work stuff and not to do sports within the day.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything that could be done for you that would make it easier for you to participate? Or are you missing somehow the support for that?

Participant 2

No, I don't think so.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and how do you feel about it like that you cannot really find the time for it or that you would have the feeling that you would drop other items in your day?

Participant 2

Yeah, I'm, I'm used to it. I'm fine with that. Yeah, I guess, sports in general, should take a bigger place in my life. But yeah, it would be one more thing that I have to schedule that just doesn't fit in this phase with kids and so on.

Maren Wenker

Okay, so do you also see any negative side in those initiatives and offering that to the employees?

Participant 2

Yeah, I wouldn't call it negative. Yeah, there are costs to it, right? Cost, like the trainer or opportunity costs with the time spent on that, but I can't think of real negative impacts of that.

Maren Wenker

Okay. So you would consider it worth it, to also spend money on that, or you have a budget for that?

Participant 2

Yes.

Maren Wenker

Is there anything that could be done more for your well-being that you would wish for, that would be done? Can be related to physical exercises or something in general, for you to feel good.

Participant 2

Yeah, actually, I think it would be better to have an area, a room or outdoor area where you can really relax. And in the last office, we were situated in an area where you could go for a walk and really have quiet water around you. This is not given here. This urban region. And also don't have room where you can just yeah, have a pause. That's missing somehow. Also, we don't have yeah, a desk that is adjusted. That would also be an improvement for the physical well-being.... Yeah.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Now we already have the second last question. It might sound a little bit strange as you're like the CEO of the company, but when you talk with other people about your company, what do you tell them about the company, especially regarding the well being part? Do you tell other people about what they're offering? Or not? And if so, what are you saying about it?

Participant 2

Yeah, well, of course, I tell about the benefits that we provide. Maybe the most important, most thing we have discussed about is more about how we organize, work and manage the expectations for our employees. So for us, it is important that we don't have a work schedule that's overwhelming that we don't do overtime systematically. So yeah, really try to establish a work context where you can be yourself when you there's no burden, no reason for stress that comes to our way we organize projects and work. Okay. And I also, yeah, try to bring this message to people that are interested, and who are seeking the differences between our company and other maybe consultancies, where they have another model where you have to work more, to earn more.

Maren Wenker

You already mentioned the atmosphere like that there's no stress, that people can be who they are. Do you also see a linkage or a relation to physical activity there as well, that it could be somehow related? That one influences the other?

Participant 2

I think physical activities can help to reduce stress. But yeah, I don't see any special relationship between those.

Maren Wenker

Okay, so is there anything you didn't mention yet? Or something we didn't talk about before, but that you would like to add to your answers?

Participant 2

Yeah, maybe we could expand on the topic I just mentioned before. I think well being has something to do with also being accepted as a human with the faults you might have with your insecurities, and so on. And it's important in a workplace, that there's a secure space where you can make mistakes where you can be open about things. Yeah, you don't feel

good about or yeah, we're welcoming to each other and the interactions with others is really important for well being that you don't have any conflicts, fights, and hierarchy competitions and so on, so that you can really focus on the things you want to do and do it in a way with the others, you like to do and there are no forces and no games you have to succeed in.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great. If there's nothing else that you would like to add to your answers, that was already the last question and that's the interview. Thank you very much.

Interview 3

Maren Wenker

Okay, so, hello, thanks so much for agreeing and participating on my interview and also for agreeing for the recording. If you're ready, I would like to start with the first question. So, um, what does your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 3

We have an active break, which is twice a week, 15 minutes long, where you can stretch and do stuff, which is nice for your physical health. And whether in general, or just stuff like that?

Maren Wenker

Both, both you can explore further.

Participant 3

We are also working right now on doing something in regards to the mental health of our company, which I think is a great opportunity, especially during Corona times. And we also used to have a longer lunch break where you can do sports, which is now also not possible because of Corona. But besides, if there wouldn't be Corona right now, I think we would even do more, but I am pretty happy with how it is at the moment for the situation.

Maren Wenker

And in which form are they happening? So you mentioned that active break? So I assume this is like online activity?

Participant 3

Online, 15 minutes, and we all watch a video together and a camera on.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and have you participated ever in any of those physical activities?

Participant 3

Yeah, I do it every time when I don't have a meeting or something like that. But I try to always participate.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and were you involved or did you participate in some way in the decision or organization about those practices?

Participant 3

At the moment, but I'm pretty sure that we could always, if we have a video that we really like, you could always put that in the chat. And then we can also go for that one. So it's not I mean, we have two people organizing it, but it's not like no one else couldn't say their opinion, basically.

Maren Wenker

But you're also somehow involved in the decision about, like, what practices could be implemented also, when you were just talking about the future. So if they wouldn't be Corona.

Participant 3

So in general, we always have the opportunity to talk to our boss or also HR colleagues, if we have anything, especially as an HR department, that we think would be also good for the mental and physical health, stuff like that, everything that also has to do with work life balance, that is a pretty good, that's pretty well handled in our company, I would say, you always have the chance to give feedback.

Maren Wenker

And what do you think about the physical activities or initiatives that your company is offering?

Participant 3

Yeah, so like I said, I think it's great because we are a smaller company, there's, I mean, although like I said before, not that much is possible at the moment, but I really feel like everyone is trying their best to make everyone else feel included. And also make sure that everyone's not just sitting on the screen by themselves doing their work, but also get to exchange with the other people for a little bit.

Maren Wenker

So now, you just mentioned the benefits for you personally, or for the employees. In your opinion, what are the benefits of your employer in offering such physical interventions?

Participant 3

I think it's good for one path, physical health, that people will stay healthy longer. And also, then in the long run, don't have as many problems. And I also think that it's very important because when people have like a short break, like we do that 15 minutes during lunchtime, you can focus better afterwards, because we just keep staring at the screen, eight hours straight, that's not really productive. So it doesn't get more productive. So I think it's very important to have such breaks. We also just totally get like, I mean, we do it online right now, but when you kind of get away from the screen, yeah.

Maren Wenker

And your personal reason to, to participate. What's that?

Participant 3

I don't know. It just feels good, and it's fun. And I can also see the other people in my company again, and it's like a thing that doesn't have to do with work which is also nice to have in between.

Maren Wenker

How do you feel about your reason to participate? So you just said, Yeah, to see the other employees, to kind of get away from the screen. So how do you feel about that?

Participant 3

Not sure. Right. Right. I feel about that. Besides that, I think it's fun. And yeah.

Maren Wenker

Do you also see any negative side in the initiatives?

Participant 3

No, not from this perspective. Of course, if you do like more stuff that also costs money, but something like that is very simple and very short and doesn't really cost you anything, basically. But also, like I said, before, if it costs a bit more, I think it is a good investment, because it makes sure that your employees are healthy and happy. So I don't really know. I don't see any negative thing.

Maren Wenker

Yeah, that would be a negative side, from the employer perspective. Can you also imagine that they could be any negative side from the employees?

Participant 3

I don't really know. I mean, maybe if you try to offer something like for mental health, maybe there's also some people that don't really feel comfortable with talking about it. And maybe they feel forced to do something, although they don't really want to. But I don't think that's the case at our company. And I don't know how, yeah, who would see a negative side to that. But I could imagine that maybe for some people, this is also not such an important topic.

Maren Wenker

You just referred that to the mental well being, what you just said. Do you also see any relation to the physical well-being or the physical exercises that are offered?

Participant 3

The negative aspects? No.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything that your company could do more for your well being?

Participant 3

Yeah, I mean, like I said, before, right now, we're not doing as much. So I think it could be a little bit more activities. But also on the other hand, it's, if you like, I also wouldn't want to do it too much every day, because it's also time that, I mean, you also need to work obviously, and you don't want to stay at work until like, I don't know, 10pm. So I think if you just keep it short, like just 15 minutes, 15 minutes a day, I think that's great. And then you can do something there, like a lunch break that some people can participate, but don't have to participate and they can just decide by themselves, that they want to join or not. Yeah, but before about a negative aspect, maybe of the physical stuff would be that also some people maybe don't feel so happy and confident in their body. And then they feel like when they, I mean, not really work out, but do sports with other people or like we went for a run, then they maybe feel a little bit excluded, because it is not really their thing.

Maren Wenker

Do you think that this is likely to happen in your company?

Participant 3

In my company, not, I think because we have like, it's very, it's not, it's very informal, and everyone is super cool with each other, at least from what I feel like. So there's no real judgement but I could imagine that in some other companies where it's not so easy going in a little bit more hierarchy and a bit stricter, then maybe people don't feel so comfortable also in general to participate in things like that.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And when you talk with other people about your company, what do you tell them about them, related to the well-being?

Participant 3

I would say that, like you have these opportunities, like face to face but also in general, I mean, well-being I think also has a lot to do with their work life balance, which is also great here because you always have the opportunity to quit a bit earlier or stay longer, depending on your schedule and you can... if you can't come in for a day because something is going on in your private life, that's totally accepted and no one will ever like judge you because of that or you feel like you have to go because everybody is very understanding and I think that's a very awesome, in general very important point when it comes to the well-being of the employees that they just understand that you also have a life outside of work. Yeah.

Maren Wenker

Is there anything that you didn't mention yet but that you would like to add to your answers or a topic that we didn't talk about before, but you think is important related to that topic?

Participant 3

Hm... (thinking) no.

Maren Wenker

Nothing. Okay, good. Then this is already it. That was my last question. Thanks so much for taking the time today. And yeah, thank you again. We'll talk soon bye.

Interview 4

Maren Wenker

So hello!

Participant 4

Oh my God, it is recorded, haha.

Maren Wenker

Haha yes, thank you again for that. And as I said before, I'm treating all the information that you're giving me an anonymously and highly confidential. And then I would like to start with my first question, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 4

I think mostly they just have a general awareness. I feel like that well-being being important. And so, for example, especially like during COVID, it was very, like they try to communicate a lot about what the company does in general, I think that actually, it's a part of...just to know what like the, I'm missing out on the words like...

Maren Wenker

Don't worry, just talk.

Participant 4

...like what they're up to. And, I mean, when we were in the office, we got like, you know, little perks like fruits and that sort of stuff. And this yoga classes, office or after hours, I think, now in the office workspace.

Maren Wenker

You already said before, that the well-being was put as a very important part, and also through the communication. Can you maybe think of some other examples, how it was, yeah, stressed or shown that the well-being is important to your employer?

Participant 4

I think this shows also in time management, I mean, this isn't so much important for me, but just, it feels good to know like the family friendliness. Right? It could just be, like you notice

someone has a problem at home, and it's completely fine with everybody to just deal with it a couple of days. So you just have this. Yeah, you just know, whatever happens, the company is not going to be make a problem out of that. And we have, like, yearly review meetings with at least one of the bosses, where, yeah, we just talk about personal development stuff, but also, you know what, just really, they just really listen to what you have to say and try to... try to figure out what's bothering you and what your problem is with something and how we can deal with these. Maybe particular but also maybe general situations. And yeah, again, with communication, the weekly ääh monthly briefings that we've started, like for last couple of years, we just get a status update, but also get like updates on maybe the company vision and stuff like that and just also always being encouraged to speak up if something is wrong or something like that. It's also just good for the climate in the working environment, like how you feel about working there.

Maren Wenker

So you were talking about the communication part and before you already started talking about physical well-being, you said that there were yoga classes. Were there any other activities as well offered?

Participant 4

Oh, we had, I didn't participate though. In these ones, I think there was some running stuff, like running and doing fitness with an instructor, like once a week. But that was not for me, so haha.

Maren Wenker

Okay, but from your answer, it sounds like that you participated in the yoga classes?

Participant 4

Yeah. Yes.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And were you also involved in some way in the decision about those sports offers? Or did you just participate?

Participant 4

No, I just participated.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and what do you think about those offers? Like the yoga classes? And also the running lunch break?

Participant 4

No, I think these are fantastic. Basically, like, yeah, just to have this motivation. But also, I don't think maybe would have even tried yoga, otherwise. So just, you know, to have this pay, you don't even have to go to some other place and something. And you can just do it with a couple of colleagues who also think now maybe, let's try this. So I think it's great. To get the chance, pick up the chance to this.

Maren Wenker

And in your opinion, what are the benefits of your employer in offering such physical interventions? Like the yoga class or the running lunch break?

Participant 4

Sorry, for my employer?

Maren Wenker

Yeah. Like, what do you think could those benefits be for your employer in offering that?

Participant 4

Yeah, well, just maybe me not getting a Bandscheibenvorfall haha.

Maren Wenker

I also don't know the English term for that, haha. I will look it up later. (It is Herniated disc)

Participant 4

So yeah, you know, I mean, like, in that respect, just, of course, I also have a responsibility as an employee to try to get, stay healthy. But we can achieve some synergy there. That might be nice. And also Yeah, just you know, look, connects view me, or employees in general, more to the company. Like, you know, you feel like, that's also a part, that you get out of this. So, it's maybe just... can also just be a benefit in terms of employee retention or something. Yeah, so that's the thing. So yeah, but I mean that's a lot of stuff, you know, where we just, you know, also are just friends. But we have this this feeling like, you're just friends with some people. So I don't want to use the word family, obviously. Yeah, it's kind of itchy, but and also too much, but yeah, it's just more than just being a job, I guess.

Maren Wenker

So you mean, in between the employees, but also between the employees and the employer?

Participant 4

Yeah, exactly. It's just, yeah, kind of a well-rounded relationship. Like more than just, Hey, you come to work and you do the thing. And then I don't know you anymore.

Maren Wenker

You already mentioned before, like, for your personal like back problems or Yeah, things like that, that this is a benefit for you. What is your reason in general, or your motivation to participate in those yoga classes? Like, why did you choose to participate?

Participant 4

At first? Maybe I can just try it out. No. So just because it was offered basically, this could be fun and and then also, it was just, you know, it was always just after directly after work, so it's just a nice way to wind down. Yeah, basically that.

Maren Wenker

And how do you feel about, like the reason to participate? How is your feeling in general? About the yoga classes in particular now.

Participant 4

I don't know. It was nice. So I feel good about it.

Maren Wenker

Okay, yeah. But do you also see any negative side in the initiative?

Participant 4

Not really. I mean, I kind of, you know, I think you can go too far with this kind of stuff. I thought this about, like, just what you hear about, like Google campuses, and something but I don't think that's a problem for an employee or company of our size. But, you know, when, as I said before, you know, you've just get this feeling of belonging together, I don't think this, I can think this feeling should have an upper limit, to some extent, right. So you don't want start to live just for the company. So I mean, if I've heard these things, I haven't seen them, you know, they can get to go away just have this duty that you have a flat that's just owned by your employer, and you have the hairdresser there, and you basically just live at work. At some point, I think that's when this can go too far.

Maren Wenker

Okay, that is what you mean, we've gone too far. Otherwise, I don't know what you mean with what is going too far?

Participant 4

Yeah, that's like, this would be too far. But I think just having a couple of offers like this, where this is not a mandatory thing or anything, just say, hey, we have this, is anybody interested? And if enough people are interested, you can do it together? I think I don't see any downside to that.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything that your company could do more for your well-being?

Participant 4

I mean, I'm sure there is. But it's not something specific that I would be missing. And I think they are doing a lot already. So, I don't know. So basically, no, even though I said yes, at the beginning haha.

Maren Wenker

So, so maybe you can tell me what, which offer you like the most what they are already doing? Because you said that they're doing a lot already. And you mentioned them at the beginning. But what's the most important for you?

Participant 4

I think actually the communicating part in the in the broadest sense. And maybe I feel like at least in the last couple of months, just the weekly, ääh monthly, like briefings and just you know, getting some insights. It has become pretty important to me.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And when you talk with other people about your company, what are you telling them about your employer? Related to the well being?

Participant 4

I think I'm mostly talking about the atmosphere, like how we relate with each other. I mean, and not directly well-being, but I mean, the hack team events that we have or like, fixed two hours per week work where we can just work on not directly work related projects.

Maren Wenker

That's the hack teams, right?

Participant 4

Exactly. Where, you know, I think that's a big part that that always talk a lot about when I talk to other people. You know, that's also just another thing that I think will be important. Actually, maybe so important that I'm kind of forgetting about it. Because I only think about it just now but actually that's the part that I've mentioned a lot to other people and yeah, the transparency also.

Maren Wenker

You were talking about the atmosphere which you like a lot there. Do you see any relation between having a good atmosphere at work or in between the colleagues and offering of physical activities such as the yoga or running breaks?

Participant 4

I don't think that much, actually. I think these can help strengthen relationships, maybe? Or just build relationships between people you don't normally work well.

Maren Wenker

So you, you just said that it can strengthen relationships in between people who maybe also not work with each other?

Participant 4

Yeah, for like, you know, just to just see other people from a company that you normally don't work with, but they're also in this yoga class or something. So you start to relate a bit more. So that's, that can help. But I think about the atmosphere. I think that the very important part of that is also just the lack of hierarchy. You know, that you just, you know, well, in German, say, the "Du form" to Yeah, instead of the formal and informal address. Yeah. Even with the owners of the company, you can just talk to them like any other colleague. So it just gives it a really, yeah, not fear driven... Just, you know, you always know they got your back. And so you just can be pretty relaxed in what you do, like not in not caring about it way, obviously. But I know if I'm doing everything I can into it to a reasonable degree, then it's not going to be like, you don't get any problems or something like that. You don't have to hide anything or something like that. But you can be just really open.

Maren Wenker

Okay, is there anything you didn't mention yet? But that you would like to add to your answers or talk about?

Participant 4

No, I don't think so.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great. Then that was it. Thanks so much for the answers. And yeah, have a great day. Bye.

Interview 5

Maren Wenker

Okay, I hope you're ready. So, let's start with the first question. What is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 5

I think one thing, which is important, which you would maybe normally not at the first point, think often it is about well-being is like, having a nice space and a quiet space, like I can work from home, which is very nice for me, because I can just be in my office, and everything is quiet, and I'm not interrupted. And I also have the possibility to work at home when I want to work at home. So, I'm very free there, I can go into the office to meet with other people, like when there is not Corona, but otherwise I can. So I think that's really nice that you can switch. And yeah, basically decide for yourself where you want to work. Also, another thing, which we do at the company is doing small breaks of movement where we meet with other people, normally before lunch, and then we watch a YouTube video and move a bit, which is nice. Yeah, let me think I think another thing is, which is really important is the balance between privacy, private life and work life. And I think my employer is very good at this, like there is a strict balance between both. If you're not working, when you're not working within, you don't have to be available all the time, just have your free time. And that's fine. And also, you are very free with your work time. So you can start when you're ready in the morning, and then you can work as long as it takes or as you want. So yeah, you're free in your time when you want to work and how you want to work.

Maren Wenker

You mentioned before those movement breaks before the lunchtime, have you also participated in those?

Participant 5

Yeah. Not super regularly. But yeah, a couple of times.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And were you also involved in structuring them or organizing them?

Participant 5

No.

Maren Wenker

Okay. But what do you think about them?

Participant 5

Um, I think it's nice, because basically of two things, like the first thing is to see other people. So to do something together with other people, to meet outside of business meetings, just like a more private space. And the other thing is to get up and get moving and do something else instead of sitting in front of the computer the whole day, because that's basically my day otherwise, like sitting for eight hours. And if you have like a small break, we watch like nice and fun videos. Not something boring.

Maren Wenker

So what is your personal reason or motivation to participate in those movement breaks?

Participant 5

To get a small break from work, like get my head free from all the thinking that I do all the time. Mostly, when you like, get a little bit of distance to a problem that you have, when you come back to it afterwards... You are like, it's easily or maybe you get a new idea in the meantime. And yeah, just get your head free and start again on a problem that you have. Yeah, also maybe talk to other people and see how they are doing or the days are going for them, especially when you're in home office, and you don't see them in the office.

Maren Wenker

And besides your personal benefits, what kind of benefits do you see for your employer?

Participant 5

Of course, it could be that with a small break, after that you're more productive, maybe because yeah, you get the fresh, new ideas for something at work. Also, of course, if you stay fit and healthy, you might get less sick. So that might also be something and also maybe when you talk with your colleagues and with which you're also working, then you might also get some new ideas or talk about something work related.

Maren Wenker

And how do you feel in general about participating?

Participant 5

What do you mean?

Maren Wenker

Like your feeling like afterwards or right before like, doing those active breaks. How is your feeling about it?

Participant 5

Okay. Yeah, sometimes it's like I'm not super motivated to go because I'm working on something difficult or want to finish something really bad because there's like a deadline or something. But then when you really participate and do it and get the motivation, then

afterwards you definitely feel like refreshed, a little bit more relaxed. And yeah, it's always a better feeling than before.

Maren Wenker

Do you also see any negative side in this initiative?

Participant 5

Sometimes it's difficult when you are in the middle of something, and you just break out of it. Because there's like a fixed time when you meet with other people. Because when you do it together, you need to agree on a time when you want to meet, and sometimes maybe that doesn't really fit into your schedule. So, you just when you then participate, then you need to, like leave the work as it is. And sometimes that's maybe difficult because you need more time than to get back into the problem or the things you're working on.

Maren Wenker

Is there anything that your company could do more for your well-being?

Participant 5

Yeah, probably. I mean, yeah, that could be maybe something different than just some YouTube videos, maybe there could be like a running group or something on the long term, which focuses on a goal like participating in an event or something, just then organized by the company or the city where we work. Yeah, other than that, I think being active is a good thing that the company can do. And providing a good environment and otherwise, yeah. Breaks. But because we are so freely in spending the time as we want, we could also do breaks ourselves. Yeah. But maybe the employer could enforce it more and say, Okay, we're going to do a little coffee break in the afternoon, which is possible, but maybe they can force it more.

Maren Wenker

Could there also be a downside, or like, negative side of enforcing this more or giving more structure?

Participant 5

Yeah. Yeah, probably. Maybe some days people feel like, okay, I really like this or it works good for my day. But other days, it might not. And that might not be possible for your own schedule. And then when all the others meet you feel left out. Or if you do not want to participate, you're also a little bit left out in that. So yeah, enforcing it might also be yeah, might also be difficult, because everybody has their own schedule, and maybe also kids... family, which they need to structure around work. And then it's probably always difficult with a lot of people to find a time in a day where that would work.

Maren Wenker

Yeah. When you talk with other people about your company, what are you telling them about your employer? Related to the well being?

Participant 5

Yeah, I think the the most important thing is definitely there that I'm very free to structure my workday and also where I work and how I work, that I also get, like, the possibility to decide for myself, which is very important, because I know from other people that the employer wants them really to go into the office, they cannot do kind of work from home, for example, or they need to start at eight and then finish at five and have like a very, like structured day. Yeah, I think that's the most important thing. Really.

Maren Wenker

Is there anything you didn't mention yet, but that you would like to add to your answers or that we didn't talk about before, but that you would like to mention?

Participant 5

Yeah, if I think about it, maybe another thing is like, which is also part of well-being, it's like the whole team. For example, we have like team events, which the employer is organizing, which I think is also very important, because like you work with the people like for many hours of the day, and if you do not know them that well or yeah, there's like not a good, not a good team spirit then you can definitely feel it in the outcome of the work but also when you work together. So, I think like those team events where you get to know each other outside from work are also really important.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great, then thank you for all your answers that were already all my questions. And yeah, have a good afternoon. Thank you.

Participant 5

Thank you.

Interview 6

Maren Wenker

Okay. Okay, so hello, thank you for taking the time today to participate in my interview. If you're ready, I would like to start with the first question. So, what is your company doing for your well being?

Participant 6

They are very flexible in terms of time. So, when I can work, also very flexible in terms of where I can work. So, I can come to the office if I really need to, or I can work from home or even work from another country, I think. So, and I really like the flexibility because of my studies. I'm still a student. So actually, flexibility is very important for me. Also, like the atmosphere is very nice. So, there's not a lot of hierarchies. And you really, it really feels like you can come to the people and if you have a problem and really talk about it. I think there's also some sports group, but I think there was even more before Corona. So right now, that's not such a thing. However, like the other stuff, like health or something like that, I don't really know, because I don't work so many hours. But that's, like important for me.

Maren Wenker

Okay, so you were already mentioning the Sports Group and Health offers. Are there any examples that you can give of sports offers that come to your mind? For the company?

Participant 6

Yeah, there's an active break on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Although I don't really participate so much, because I don't work on these days. And the health stuff I don't really know.

Maren Wenker

Okay. So, from your answer, I already heard that you're normally not participating or didn't participate. But were you involved in some way in the decision about offering those practices?

Participant 6

I don't know. I mean, I wasn't involved. But I think that it was like, some people were doing it and just offering it for fun, I think, but I'm not sure that's not like, dedicated information from my side. So, I also miss a lot of stuff because I only work two days a week.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And what do you think about those physical activities that your company is offering?

Participant 6

I like that. I would love it if they would just like use different days, but I don't work on exactly the days where they activity is. Yeah, I really like that. Am I only supposed to talk about my current employer also to about, like companies I've already worked for?

Maren Wenker

Just your current employer. Exactly. Talking about it, what do you think are the benefits of your employer in offering those initiatives or physical interventions?

Participant 6

I think it's a little bit further than just like health, more like, also teambuilding. It's very funny. Being there with everyone. And I think, especially in this really remote times, it's important to have some non-formal activity with your coworkers. And yeah, still in terms of health, I would like that could be done more, though. I think.

Maren Wenker

For example, what would you like to have more?

Participant 6

Like, for example, tables that are... that you can pull up or pull down for the height, like so you can stand up and work and also sit down and something like that. Like more how the office is currently yeah...not managed, but like the furniture and stuff like that.

Maren Wenker

Any other examples or things that you could wish for?

Participant 6

No, actually, I don't know.

Maren Wenker

Okay, fine. Um, so before we were talking about the benefits of your employer, what kind of benefits do you see in yourself in participating in those offers? If they would be on the days that you would be also working?

Participant 6

Like how I could benefit from it?

Maren Wenker

Exactly yeah.

Participant 6

Yeah, I think what I already mentioned like the contact to the team, getting some movement in that could help with my concentration and actually my productivity maybe? Yeah.

Maren Wenker

Okay. So you already mentioned before that the reason for you to not participate is because it's on the "wrong days". Are there any other reasons for you, that would prohibit you from participating?

Participant 6

No, actually not. Because they even I think moved the time. Where they do it, we're doing these activities to do it like a little bit before lunch time, so everyone could just participate. And I really liked that idea. Because I think the lunchtime although many work remotely is still always at 12 and all people, like, do it at 12 at home too, because then it's easier to be available for your colleagues. And by moving like the time of the physical activities, it's really easy to really participate.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and how do you feel about not being able to participate? Because it's on the wrong days in the week.

Participant 6

Of course, like a little bit disappointed, but nothing, nothing serious. For me, since I'm also working student, I think it's totally fine for me.

Maren Wenker

Okay, um, do you also see any negative side in the initiative?

Participant 6

No, actually, I don't.

Maren Wenker

Okay, um, then second last question. When you talk with other people about your company, what are you telling them about your employer regarding the well-being?

Participant 6

That it's very flexible, what I've already said. And maybe that is also very good, like for people who want to build a family and have like, small children, due to this flexibility also. And for students there is a lot to learn. And they are really accepting your learning process, and that's really nice.

Maren Wenker

Okay, um, and regarding the well-being, are you also telling them anything about that, like the health initiatives, or is that not so important for you?

Participant 6

It's not so important for me, maybe because also I'm so young.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything that you didn't mention yet, but that you would like to add to your answers or something that we didn't talk about before?

Participant 6

Regarding the well-being, nope.

Maren Wenker

Okay, then thank you so much for taking the time today. That was already the interview. And yeah, we talk soon. Thank you.

Interview 7

Participant 7

Okay, so I have to confirm that you actually are recording this. Okay.

Maren Wenker

Oh, okay, interesting. Okay, then thank you for confirming and I can record the audio. Then I would like to start right away with my first question. What is your company doing for you well-being?

Participant 7

So the company is actually quite good at organizing some, in these years, remote events like getting together. And I don't know playing some games via zoom calls or similar things, or

even some more exotic things like beer tastings, and things like that. And I liked that. There were always some, some creative ideas. Last time, they surprised us with actually a live musician playing some songs. So, these kinds of special events. We're all remote, of course, in this Corona times. But for that, there were always some more often, some nice events. And there are also some other activities, like some more sports-oriented things, but I don't participate in them. So, I can't really say anything about them. But there is more stuff that I could do, but I'm just not doing.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Why is that that you're not participating in those sports offers?

Participant 7

Probably mostly because I'm lazy. Could be the main reason, also may be that it's always like, it's right before the typical time of the lunch break at noon, around noon. And I'm mostly at that time, I'm more in the mood to finish something and then I can get to lunch. And I don't want to cram something, that's neither work nor the actual lunch break in between them for time reasons.

Maren Wenker

Okay, but what do you think in general about the offer of those active lunch or before lunch break activities?

Participant 7

I think it's a good idea. And I think if maybe the situation wasn't that special with Corona in video conferences and things like that, maybe I would be more tempted, if I was just something that I could, I don't know, go to, could just walk by and take a look at what people are doing. And in a room in the office or something like that, then maybe I would be more... And maybe at some point, I will try it. But I think it's good that it's that it's there. And I think it's from what I gather that they are always people participating. And it's I think it's also, even if I don't know anything about the contents, I think it's good having some events that are not tied to some specific work meetings, or whatever sort of get getting to, together with other co-workers, just for something that's hopefully fun.

Maren Wenker

So besides having fun and getting together, do you see any more benefits that could be there in participating?

Participant 7

Especially for this "Aktive Pause" (=Active break) thing? There, it's, of course, health and fitness related, and that's also a good thing in general to keep at least... get some even, especially in this home office times to get some sport or some at least activity to have some exercise and some motivator for that. Depending on, like, your type of personality, but for a lot of people having a group motivates you to actually do something that you probably maybe wouldn't do regularly enough if you just had to motivate yourself.

Maren Wenker

Um, so that were the benefits of the employees. Do you see also any benefits from the company's perspective, so by your employer in offering those initiatives?

Participant 7

I mean, for any activity like that, I think, just if you do things to keep your employees happy, that's a good thing for a company because you get to keep people happy and keep them at that job at your company. For example, if they think there are nice activities, interesting activities, or the people are nice, there are some activities where I actually can get to know the colleagues there. And if that's there, then it's I don't know, I think it's like retention of good people in the company. So that's that's one thing. Maybe, I don't know if it's the health

benefits are also of course beneficial for the company in the long run. Because if people are, if the employees are healthier, then that's a good thing, because they don't take off sick leave so often. So, I think that's also for good for my employer. But in general, I think it's the most important point, I think, would be keeping your employees happy. And that's, I mean, that's good for the employees, but also good for the company as a whole.

Maren Wenker

Of course. There was one question that I forgot to ask before, but I think I already heard that from your answers. Were you involved in some way, or did you participate somehow in the decision about those practices or exercising?

Participant 7

No, not really, it was just I noticed that it was offered there. I thought about joining at some point, but so far, I haven't joined one of those sessions, and I wasn't really involved in any planning, or however that came to be.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Do you also see any negative sides in the in offering those physical activities?

Participant 7

Generally, at some point, people might feel pressured to, for any activity that's like, not your actual normal job responsibilities. You might still feel pressured to, at least I don't know, keep your, your image or your social standing in the company or something. So there might be some group pressure generally to join these things. But apart from that, I don't really see... even if I mean, so far, I haven't joined it, I didn't feel the pressure to do so. So it's not that it is more like a theoretical problem so far, I think. And I think it's a good thing. Even if I'm not participating, it's nice to know that there are these things.

Maren Wenker

Do you have the feeling that any other of your colleagues could sense this feel of pressure or somehow that they feel negative influence coming from that?

Participant 7

Not that I know of, no. I mean, I haven't really talked much about these activities with others. So I, but I noticed with one or two colleagues that they were like, keen to, oh, I have to leave a bit earlier because I want to join this thing there, but they neither sounded like they didn't sound like it was... they sound like they were really, they wanted to do that sort of fun thing, that they were looking forward to. So um, but apart from that, I haven't heard any opinion good or bad about it or so.

Maren Wenker

And talking about talking with others about it, how, when you talk with other people outside the company about your employer, what are you telling them about the company, your employer, linked with the well-being?

Participant 7

That maybe the general focus on work life balance seems to be something that the company or especially, I mean, the company is made up of the people, but it's not only something that seems to like, oh, we have to do this, but it's seems to be something that actually for example, Christian, and probably also Julian, but a bit more Christian (Christian and Julian are the CEOs), that they really want to be good at and have the company be good at and have a nice company to actually mention, for example, that his work life balance is one of the goals of the company that I don't think that's something that's I think that's special about the company and that this is an explicit goal. And an explicit thing that's not only because we have to do this, but I think they actually want to do it from like their own ideas or what they think would be a nice company to work at, for example.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And is there anything that your company could do more for your well being? That you would like to wish for, that you would like to have?

Participant 7

Mm hmm. Nothing specifically that I know of right at the moment. Maybe... I don't know. In the long run, for example... That's something specific. So if I wanted to work in like some shared office space, how is it called, like, co working space? I'm still not sure if that would be something that I would have to pay myself, or if that was something that could be at least partly sponsored, for example. But it's like, it would be a good thing for people who would otherwise be in the home office and I don't know want to get out of their home a bit more. And, like, specially for myself. I'm not in Münster. So, it's not that easy to just go to the main office. So, and I know that for the majority of people, they could just go to the main office, but they are still, there are more and more people in the company, who live far enough away from that it's not a possibility to just come over to the office. And so it's still something I always thought about. That would be something that I want to do at some point now that I moved away from Münster, but then because of Corona I never did. So maybe when Corona is over then I will go to some co working space, but so far, I didn't do that. Because, like I still didn't think it's a good idea. Right now with this high rate of incidence.

Maren Wenker

Is there anything you didn't mention yet? But that you would like to add to your answers or that we haven't talked about but what you think is important to mention?

Participant 7

Not that I know of right now. No.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Otherwise, you can also contact me later and let me know. Because that was already the interview. Thank you so much for participating and for your answers and your insights. And then I wish you a great day. Bye.

Participant 7

Thank you.

Interview 8

Maren Wenker

Okay, so hello, thank you so much for taking the time today for my interview. If you're ready, I would like to start with the first question which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 8

What is my company doing? My company offers... Let's start with like, free coffee, water in the workplace. It offers two hours a week of more or less leisure time, in which we can like pursue work related stuff, but not actual projects from our work but like things that we are interested in and wanted to try out something like that, called hack teams; my company offers....let me think....

Maren Wenker

Yeah, take your time.

Participant 8

Okay. We always have a with a big I don't know if that counts as like well-being but always have like team events where we can communicate and get together like one big event in the summer and one for Christmas, as well as other small events.

Maren Wenker

Is your company also doing something for your physical well-being?

Participant 8

Not at the moment, we had maybe a bit due to the pandemic, but like we had sessions with an exercise trainer, where we were able to like have a session about 30 minutes to go running and do some exercises after lunch or before lunch. Also, we once had an offer for an online video exercise workout. Like for one month, which we tested out. And currently we have an informal or unofficial meeting like on Tuesday which is organized by one of our employees. But we also do like 15 minutes of small workout and everybody can participate if you want. Yeah, that's the offers we have.

Maren Wenker

And have you ever participated in any of those sports offers?

Participant 8

Yes, I participated. I think once in the on-location exercise. I think that was about the last time before it was cancelled due to the Corona pandemic. And I participated once in the online workout or no, three times in different workouts. Yes, so not that much, but I tested it out.

Maren Wenker

And were you somehow also involved in the decision or definition or organization about those practices? Or did you just participate?

Participant 8

Yeah.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And what do you think about those physical activities that your company is offering?

Participant 8

I find them good. And I didn't participate that often, which is more like a problem on my side, maybe. But whenever I did participate, it was good. I liked it.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and why did you exactly like it? So what kind of benefits do you see there for yourself?

Participant 8

Well, it's, I guess it's not that much about... Yeah, I mean, how good the exercises or the instructor is, but more like, just about doing something. Doesn't matter so much what but just that you get to move yourself and get to have some exercise and it's always good to have a meeting like that because, um, I don't go running alone often. Yeah. And I cannot motivate myself that often in the home office or an office.

Maren Wenker

What kind of especially what kind of benefit to your see they're in participating? So, what do you get from that? If you participate?

Participant 8

Yeah, just good. I mean, I have a job where I'm sitting most of the time. So, it's just getting exercise, being more healthy. Yeah, more like relaxing a bit.

Maren Wenker

And so that were the benefits for you, like you said, relaxing and health and fitness. Do you also see any benefits there for your employer?

Participant 8

Yeah, probably I mean, healthy employees are better than sick employees. And while it's not something that might be very apparent, if someone participates in these exercises or not, I think it always helps in yeah, just having more healthy employees. And also, I mean, maybe especially in the home office, some people might tend to not make many breaks and just work like straight, and eat before the laptop. And so I guess, if they are not forced, but motivated to have like, 15 or 30 minutes of exercise, it gets the head a bit free. And yeah, makes you think, better again.

Maren Wenker

Before you said that, you didn't participate so often. What's the reason for that? Or like, what are the obstacles that are there for you that you cannot participate so much?

Participant 8

It really often is that I forget about those meetings. So, it's not like, oh, today's is exercise day. Then I think like I could maybe... I can participate today. And then I look at the clock again. And it's like, oh, it's 12:30. Too bad. I already missed this. So maybe it would help if I just made a reminder for myself, which I really can't miss. And sometimes it's also like, you really focus on something or want to finish some work. Like "aah not now, maybe later," but then it's over and yeah.

Maren Wenker

And how do you feel about it, when you don't participate?

Participant 8

I don't don't feel too bad. Because I do a lot of activities, like DIY in the house.

Maren Wenker

Yeah, like working in the household or fixing and repairing stuff building.

Participant 8

So, I do a lot of this stuff. Like sometimes in the evening, on the weekend. So I have a lot of, of movement there. So, it's not like I wouldn't move the whole week at all. We have like, a big house, a big garden. So, if I walk, I already have some steps on my, my watch. So that's, that's not too bad. But I still always think so why not spend those 15 minutes to just do a bit of exercise, especially in this, I don't know, eight hours workday where I don't move too much.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Do you also see any negative side in the initiative and offering those sports activities?

Participant 8

No, not really. I mean, you're not forced to participate. So, if you don't want to participate, you don't have to. And so it's your choice. I mean, it's not work time, at least. So, you have to work longer. But that also is like a personal choice. If it's perfect for you, I mean, you can go running after your work, then you still have the same outcome.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything that your company could do more for your well-being?

Participant 8

Like physical or...?

Maren Wenker

Can be both, maybe we start first with the physical matter.

Participant 8

Yeah, I mean, I would think it would be nice to have this on-site exercise again, soon as the pandemic allows it. So I really like that. And maybe we could have like, adjustable desks. Like would be really good if you just can get this up and work standing for a while. Other than that, I do not have more things right now. Oh, maybe a job bicycle. I mean, that's like, probably everyone has a private bicycle, but especially the job bike, many people buy themselves like an electric bicycle, which is nice because you might be able to go longer distances and use the bicycle more instead of the car.

Maren Wenker

You said you wish there would be more onsite exercises, again. What is for you the main difference between the onsite exercises and the offline exercises, which are offered still?

Participant 8

Well, the onsite exercises in this case, were like really outdoors. So that's nice, at least, if it's not raining like hell. And yeah, you can like go running, which is difficult, like remote in front of your laptop. Yeah, and it's a bit nicer to have the other people in the same room and see them directly, not just on camera, like, always in the office. Same with video calls. But I mean, those remote exercises aren't too bad either.

Maren Wenker

So you would say that, doing sports together like that the fact that you do it in a group together is also important for you.

Participant 8

Yeah, that's nice, because it's motivating. And it's like you have that reminder. So let's do this now. And like, you don't, you have to motivate yourself less.

Maren Wenker

But could you imagine that there could be also some kind of pressure, maybe when it's in a in a group? Or just a positive incentive that you do it all together? Like a motivation? Like you said?

Participant 8

Yeah, might be, I mean, depending on the person. Some might be intimidated, if others do the exercises a lot better, say or are maybe not that sportive and might have trouble with it. Personally, I don't care too much. I just do the exercises, as well as I can. But I can imagine this as a problem.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And when you talk with other people about your company, what do you tell them about your employer; what they're doing about your well-being?

Participant 8

Yeah, mostly, I think what I really like is, it's not especially what we are doing, but we have a great team. So great, great community, great colleagues. We can do a lot of home office and have like, quite flexible working hours. Which is especially nice for me, since I have a

daughter and can take some time, in the middle of the day to go on a walk with or something like that. And just work longer. It's no problem. And home office is also nice, because I have quite... I travel, like one hour to work for one direction. And so I'm already two hours if I go back and forth the office, so it's nice to have the possibility to do home office like two-three times a week. And just go to the office two times a week. Yeah, then I like our hack teams, which I mentioned before. Yes, and in general, it would be possible... I never, I never took that possibility but to reduce hours. So we have some people who just don't work on Fridays, just four days a week. You have things like that. And I think most we have we have like good bosses who listen to everything and are really reasonable if you have any requests or help happy with stuff. For example, if you like have your children at home during the pandemic, I think they were really generous and said we will always find some kind of solution. So that the employees are important to them.

Maren Wenker

Okay, then thank you for your answers. Is there anything that you didn't mention yet or that you would like to add to your answers or talk about?

Participant 8

No, I can't think of anything.

Maren Wenker

Okay then thank you so much again. That was it, that were all my questions. I wish you a great evening and we talk soon. Bye.

Participant 8

Thanks.

Interview 9

Maren Wenker

Okay, hello, thank you so much for taking the time today for my interview, I would then like to start with the first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 9

Um, for my well-being, I guess that they give me, or at least they say to me that I can manage my time as I want to, and that I can take breaks basically whenever I want to. And I guess that's it already. We have now a special role in form of no, what was name? What is the role?

Maren Wenker

You mean people and culture manager?

Participant 9

Yes, so someone who's taking care of us or are trying to take care of us, but it's just a new role. And I get that we, as part of as our teams working, we have something like a retrospective, where we talk about things like, how was last month for us? Is there anything on our mind? So that everyone on the team can adjust to how we're feeling or what's going on in our lives?

Maren Wenker

Is there also something related to your physical well-being, any activities that are offered to you?

Participant 9

Yes, we have. Every Tuesday and Thursday, we have like 15 minutes before lunch, workout session, where everyone who can wants to join can join and we do like stretching exercises,

and something for the back. Like the typical things you should take care of, if you're working at the desk most of the time.

Maren Wenker

Have you ever participated in any of those activities?

Participant 9

Yes, but not every time. I think a few times.

Maren Wenker

What's the benefit for you when you're participating? Or which benefit to see in participating?

Participant 9

I think it's the time of the day where you try to yeah, do something for yourself. Because quite often, especially in home office, and in the pandemic times, it is kind of often forgot to stand up and do some sporty things. And, yeah, this helps to remind yourself of "you should move again".

Maren Wenker

Okay, um, do you also see any benefits there for your employer in offering those initiatives?

Participant 9

I think it's for the well-being of everyone. This kind of workouts. And because everyone is doing remote work, this is another chance that you see each other and other team members or not team members, but other people, colleagues who aren't working the same project. And so they have like, more chances to get in touch with each other.

Maren Wenker

And what do you think in general about those initiatives, the offer itself?

Participant 9

I think it's great. It's a nice option to have like, because it's just 15 minutes, usually before the break, and sometimes it depends on the day if because, for me why, and I'm not joining that often is that kind of shortly before the lunch break, that's always like, something's you quickly want to do, because then you're like, one hour away, and then send the last messages. But because it's like, yeah, pretty easy to join just 15 minutes, and sometimes, I think it is a good time in the day where you're like, "Okay, before I go and have lunch, I do something". And it's like, low, low key to join. It's pretty easy. Just hop in.

Maren Wenker

Okay. There's one question that I forgot to ask in the beginning, were you're also involved in some way in the decision about those activities or in the organization?

Participant 9

Not that I know haha. Okay, so I think there was at some point there was a question if they are like people are interested in. Or doing something like, like, a workout together. And then just started and everybody who wants to join has the chance to join.

Maren Wenker

Okay, yeah. Is there anything that could be done for you to make it easier for you to participate or so that you would participate more often?

Participant 9

I guess for me basically, it would help to have like, an extra calendar event, which reminds me of, because of how it's organized, just in slack I was just like, "Okay, today, we are doing this kind of exercise thing". And I'm often thinking, "A, okay, maybe I will join", and then five

minutes before 12. I'm like, "Oh, okay, they already", because usually I need like, 10 minutes before to stop my work or coming close to an end. And then, thanks to a typical reminder, for every event I have in my calendar, it's like 10 minutes before and then usually, I manage to hop in at the right time. But yeah, it's like, this is why I often misses.

Maren Wenker

And how do you feel about often missing it or like joining too late or seeing it too late?

Participant 9

Doesn't bother me too much. It's just like, "Oh, okay, my bad". Basically, it's because it is my fault that I, I see it, and then I forget about it. And then I know, before I go to break, I see, okay, yeah, I remember I've just forgot. Because it is basically on my side, my part that I forget to hop in.

Maren Wenker

But do you have negative feelings then? Or...?

Participant 9

No.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Talking about negative, do you see any negative side in the initiative in such an offer to the employees?

Participant 9

No, I think it's cool. I'm not sure it's what it's like. Because like I said it is based on your own time, it's like we can make breaks when we want to. And if it's something we want to do, then we can easily join. And it's our decision, but I think it's just a great thing, to have this kind of repeating activity, because it's how you should build habits on a regular basis, doing things. And I think that's great for goals, but I'm not good at building habits.

Maren Wenker

Is there anything - you said before already that maybe a calendar reminder would help you to maybe participate a little bit more often - Is there anything else that your company could do more for you well-being in general and also related to physical activities?

Participant 9

I'm not sure because I think it's not... it's basically a nice to have if you have an employer who cares about giving you the option. But usually, it is on yourself to look out for you. And I think when your employer can give you the option to remind you about doing something for yourself or what's also part of basic creating culture of what's and talking about things you could do for yourself. But it's... I don't see it as like what an employer has to do for you. It is just a bonus if they offer you these things to make it easier to incorporate it in your everyday life. Because sometimes to come, you can't bother after work. Some people are like in the morning like to do some stuff. Some people enjoy it more towards the evening. And some people like me, can't get motivated to do it in the morning or evening. And then maybe it's good to do something in between and yeah, if you see that, like other colleagues are also doing something in between, then you feel like, okay, then I can do it, I can also do it. But I know of others who like to like longer breaks, lunch breaks and then go for a run or something. And this is nothing, if you see it, when other do it, then it gets like, normal for everyone. We also have like, some, like, one colleague was sometimes offering to go for a run in the lunch break. And this is also like, yeah, a nice thing to get together and do something.

Maren Wenker

So how would you describe the spirit or atmosphere coming from that? Is it like, rather encouraging or could it maybe also cause some stress, if you like, compare yourself to the others, and they're doing sports?

Participant 9

I know, we have like some people really into sports, like they are really sports enthusiasts. So that you, when they ask is with them, then I might feel that I would like maybe not because I don't know, I am not in the best shape and in like, 10 minutes, I'm done. But in general, like this 15 minutes, workout session in between, this is not like muscle building, just like stretching and stuff. So, this is like, pretty easy to do for everyone. And therefore, I don't really see that is like stressing, so. And we had, we had also like this yoga class at some point, before the pandemic started, which was also I think, low key enough and like everybody can join and you don't need to be like, super into shape to join. And in general, like, the atmosphere in the company is that like everybody can and isn't forced to do anything. I never feel like anybody feels like you slipped out or something.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and when you talk with other people outside the company, about your employer, what are you telling them about your employer, maybe linked to the well-being as well and the physical exercises?

Participant 9

Not that often that I would tell like okay, we're doing like this session between it's more general that the atmosphere is pretty relaxed and what we do for this and this is also part of okay we have the hack teams on more like the knowledge base, but we also have like this small interactions where we do something together and... but it's not that I'm like, "Hey, we're doing super crazy sports stuff together".

Maren Wenker

So it's rather that you're talking about other things that your company is offering or the way how the company is?

Participant 9

Yeah, from more the working perspective and what I'm mainly doing for my job.

Maren Wenker

Of course, makes sense. Okay, is there anything that you didn't mention yet or that we didn't talk about before but that you would like to add to your answers?

Participant 9

In regards to the well-being, um I don't think so. I said that we have a new role where we don't know yet how it's going to work out but for a pretty small company as we still are, I think this is pretty great that we have this on our watch and that we are still planning to grow but we already have like, try to have mechanisms in place that it's easier for us and that it's not like when it's too late and everybody starts to complaining about that they feel stressed or something that they are reacting too much and that we already have tried to have something in place then and this makes their contributes for what I would say pretty relaxed atmosphere usually and that the people in front of us... that they have our backs basically. I think this helps in the everyday work. That you know that you are not left alone.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great, then thank you so much for your answers that were already all my questions. Yeah, thank you again and have a great evening. Bye.

Interview 10

Maren Wenker

So hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview, if you're ready, I would like to start with the first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 10

That's a good question. I think for my well-being my company is providing good work equipment, letting me work from home. Providing company events, that some people like more some people like less, but I enjoy them most of the time. And I like that too. And I think it's just a good work environment, because they have very flat hierarchies, and you can just talk to anyone, and anyone will take time for you if you ask them. And yeah.

Maren Wenker

Is there also something which is related to physical activities?

Participant 10

Yes, we have yoga classes, I think every week, but I never went there because I'm not such. Yeah, I don't know. I'm not in such good shape. But I think it's a great idea. But I do think that it's just a private initiative of an employee, not something the company does. But I think the company likes it, if we do it. In the pause.

Maren Wenker

So by your answer, I hear that you were not involved in some way of the organization or decision about those activities, right?

Participant 10

No, not at all. It was someone else all the time.

Maren Wenker

And what do you think in general about those activities?

Participant 10

You mean, sports activities, or activities in general?

Maren Wenker

The sports activities offered at your company's place.

Participant 10

Okay. I think it's a great idea for those who enjoy it. I mean, I don't do yoga. But I think it's a great idea. But I don't know, I don't think it's something that the company does. I, I would rather think of it as something that's an employee does because they like to do it. That's from what I've understood, at least.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Before the pandemic has started, or has happened, was there some activities off site provided by your company?

Participant 10

Off site as in, like...?

Maren Wenker

Offline. So in person.

Participant 10

Oh. You mean, sports activities? Still, right?

Maren Wenker
Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Participant 10
I don't think so. Okay, I think we went for biking trips for the, for the summer. Summer party. I don't know the word right now. But yes, yeah. Yeah, we did that. But there was no regular activity as far as I can think of.

Maren Wenker
Okay, um, in your opinion, what are the benefits? You said, it's not offered by your company, but what could be benefits of your employer in offering such physical activities?

Participant 10
Well, I think especially in our... or in my field of work, there's a lot of problems with, for example, people sitting at a desk all day and having back problems or something like that. And I think it could be very beneficial for the employer to know that people are in good health. And I think that's also many of the big tech companies are like offering or having a fitness studio on site, which, of course, is not possible for the company of our size, but I think that's in a bigger company, that's kind of the norm right now. And I think that's a good idea, because then you can stay in shape. And yeah, I think for the employer, it's good to, and it's probably a benefit for the employer to attract people to that company, because people know okay, I can have a gym membership there and I can maybe go in and in the post time of work, and I don't have to commute to the gym or something like that. And yeah, I think that could be the benefits for the employer.

Maren Wenker
Would that be something that would also attract you?

Participant 10
Yes, I think so.

Maren Wenker
And why exactly? Like what would you like to have there or what do you like about them?

Participant 10
I think well, I'm... I have a gym membership, but I never go because I was too lazy to leave the house. And if I if it was like part of my work routine, I think it would be better integrated into the day and therefore, more easily integrated. And therefore, it would be just the obstacle of doing it wouldn't be so high. And I think I would do it more regularly and maybe even doing it together with other colleagues would be great.

Maren Wenker
Okay, you mentioned before that the reason for you that you didn't participate on that regular yoga, lunch breaks, whatever is that you're not in a good shape. You said, are there also any other reasons why you are not participating?

Participant 10
Maybe it's not just, not because I'm not in good shape, I think I would think anyone can could do it. But generally, I'm, I don't know, like my work schedule. Right now, I'm not really making making a pause, I just work like four or five hours in the day. And there's no time that I take a pause and when I'm done with work, I don't want to take a yoga class, or go to go to do this activity with the others, because then I'm already done with the work and I want to enjoy my time off or have to do something for the university or something like that. So I think I just don't have... don't want to take the time for it.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And how do you feel about that?

Participant 10

Not... I think that's for the people that want to attend to that it's great. And for people that don't want to attend, it's, I mean, no one's forced to go to that. Right? So...

Maren Wenker

You just said no one is forced to do that. But could you imagine that, even if it's not like mandatory to participate, that some kind of like, pressure could be felt among the colleagues or coworkers?

Participant 10

I think in our case, definitely not. Because as I said, it's, at least from what I can, from what I feel is that it's organized by some person, and she just writes in our message messenger application, "Hey, does anyone want to participate?" And if you want to participate, it's fine. If not, it's totally fine too, I could imagine that if it's offered by the company and if it's advertised as benefits in the job, the job posting somehow that there might be some kind of pressure, but I don't know what the employer would have to gain from that. I think there's more pressure to go to the work...events in the evening, for example, there might be pressure for that, but I don't think there would be any for sporting activities.

Maren Wenker

And this applied to your company, could you imagine that some sort of this pressure could be felt explicitly at your company?

Participant 10

I don't think so. Not for the yoga event, at least not for the yoga activity.

Maren Wenker

But for some other events?

Participant 10

Um, well, I, sometimes I kind of felt like I had to go to the events. But no one ever told me like, "Oh, we're all going, why don't you come" or something like that. So, I don't think so. I've heard stories from other people on the internet. That someone said like, they had to sign a paper when they didn't want to go to an event, for example. But I'd never felt pressured like that at my company. No.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And with those events, you mean the events in the evening? Right?

Participant 10

Exactly, yes.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Okay, going back to the sports activities. Do you also see any negative side in offering a sports activity at the workplace?

Participant 10

Hmm, not really, I think, maybe like, if you if you, well, if you are offered a job, and you have that as a benefit, and you don't want to participate in that at all, maybe you'd rather just have the money that they would spend otherwise on you having a gym membership, but that's probably not going to be possible, it's probably going to... well, not make you angry, but even a feel like "Oh, just give me the money instead. I'd rather take that. But I don't think that's... I

would be like put off by that or something. If they offered me a gym membership as a benefit and I wouldn't want that then I just wouldn't go and that would be it.

Maren Wenker

Okay, you already mentioned the gym membership that you could imagine to have. Is there also anything else that your company could do more for your well-being?

Participant 10

I think I work at a company that is pretty relaxed about like the rules when you have to work and stuff. I think if I would work in another company that would be much more strict about that. Like wanting me to come into office every day to a set hour or something, then I would be, I would be less happy. But right now I'm pretty content. I mean, they could of course always give me more money haha. But other than that, yeah, I am happy.

Maren Wenker

So related to the well-being, besides flexible hours that you're already having, you don't have any other wishes?

Participant 10

Not that I can think of right now.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Before, at the beginning of our interview you already mentioned when you're talking with other people outside the company, what are you actually telling other people about your company related to the well-being? Are you talking about those practices or health related offers?

Participant 10

I don't think I've ever mentioned that someone is offering those yoga classes to anyone. I think, for the well-being in general, I just, I tried to convince a few people to come work at my company and said that it's very, you can just work from home if you want or you can come in whenever you want. And at least you're very flexible with the hours. And yeah, that the hierarchy is flat, like I mentioned, and that was the things that I said for the well-being. I didn't focus so much on this sports activity that we have.

Maren Wenker

Okay, that's already the end of the interview. Is there anything you didn't mention yet? Or that you would like to add to your answers or that you think that we forgot to talk about?

Participant 10

No, I don't think so.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great. If anything later comes to your mind again, you know how to reach out to me. So thanks so much for all your answers, and I wish you a great afternoon.

Participant 10

You too.

Interview 11

Maren Wenker

Okay. So hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview. If you're ready, I would like to start with the first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Interview 11

Um, my company or our company is working in the sector of IT and software development and consulting in the first place. Yeah, so we're working for clients, and developing individual software components and develop software systems, apps, and technologies. And also, we're consulting in the sector of startups and technology driven digital products. We are consulting about the strategies, the overall business plans concerned with these projects and apps and technologies.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and what is your company doing for your well-being for you as an employee?

Interview 11

Aaah sorry. For my well-being! Well, that there are different aspects, which they are doing. Actually I have to divide it into, before Corona and after Corona phases. Because before Corona, let's start with this one. There was a lot of personal face to face meetings and events. And also divided in some of them, driven by the company itself. So, we have team meetings and special events after the business hours. But also in between. For example, there were some meetings every week, or all four weeks, where we came together had a breakfast, for example, or a lunch, where we were discussing on the one hand project related issues and things about it and on the other hand, also, just shit chat among the people who were there. And then of course, on the other hand, there were a lot of meetings and meetings, yes; which were privately arranged, but also in somehow in a business related content. Because we were meeting in the office, we were working sometimes on projects, from our company from our daily business, sometimes on private projects. But it was not like we were watching soccer or anything like that, but also very business related. So, development or talking about the business opportunities, what was going on in the media in the technology scene, in the startup scene. So, these two things happened there. For our well-being, I mean, there are also other things, of course, which I would count to well-being as well. For example, let's start with the minor things like free coffee or water, which is, I think, also not very, it's not common for every company. And we have, for example, food once a week. There was during a certain time period, also, a sports course, which the company sponsored and took place once a week, I guess it was a like a run. And I forgot the name... Run and fitness or something like that. There were some people every week who attended this as well. But all this was, well, a bit crushed by Corona, I have to say. So personal meetings, personal sports events and something like that. Of course, everything wasn't possible after well, this happened. And this is of course, something that affected all the company's well-being efforts as well. At the beginning, I guess the effort was quite high and everyone in the company was looking for perspectives, and how to take our normally more offline company culture to an online remote world like remote team events in the evening during the office hours, regular coffee meetings, and stuff like that. So from time to time business related, but on the other end, casual meetings as well, like gaming events in the evening or something like that. Of course, you cannot replace the coffee, the free coffee and the free greens, and also the sports event. Whereas replaceable in a remote atmosphere. But there was a lot of effort going on in the first period. I guess what we, as a company learned during the last two years, we have to say now is that it's quite hard to keep up the team culture, the offline team culture in the remote scenario, and also what we learned, I guess, as a company, and this also led to reduced efforts, I would say that everyone was a bit tired of even more remote meetings in the evenings, when you had to sit in front of your notebook or PC throughout all day. So yeah, okay. I guess the efforts in our company are quite high, I guess I for sure forgot about certain of them, for example, or day or year yearly, summer event or Christmas party, and stuff like that. What, what drives me throughout the last two years is that we really are facing an interesting time now in a company that always highlighted its culture, or always put it on a very high desk.

Maren Wenker

Okay, you were mentioning before the physical activity offers, I would like to get back to that. So you were mentioning, first of all the run and fit before COVID has happened. And you also said it was shifted online, or like something similar now as the pandemic is happening? Have you ever participated in any of those offers?

Interview 11

I guess, offline, I would say all of them. Most of them. There were some yoga sessions. I guess I attended just once. They were taking after the regular business hours where I had to take my children to bed or for a family this was bad timing. But the run and fit, for example, I guess I never missed one.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And were you also involved somehow in the decision about it? Or in the organization of those run and fit? Or yoga classes?

Interview 11

No, not really. I mean, someone asked for feedback, of course, after a certain period of time, but the decisions and also the efforts to arrange something like that came from somewhere else.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and what do you think about those offers?

Interview 11

I found them great. Because on the one hand, I always appreciate the physical activities in contrast to, our other daily business, which happens a lot at the desk. And also, it's a different setting where you can meet your colleagues, and in a different kind of way, and have a little chat and talk about other things. And especially, I guess, sports is a bit different even than other things cause everyone maybe is a bit struggling with, for example, the training and you get more laughters or something and it's a really nice atmosphere in contrast to the other business work, I would say.

Maren Wenker

Now, you were also already starting to mention some benefits that were there for you. Maybe you can go even a little bit further about that like so what kind of benefits do you see there for yourself, but also maybe for your employer so from the company's side or perspective?

Interview 11

I mean personally, I really love sports and I need it as real relief in contrast to my daily work. And it's like really recreational time for me sometimes alone, sometimes I love to do this in a group. And if you're doing this in the office, of course, it's with a group. And for me, it was really a chance to get some of my colleagues to get to know them in a different way, and see them in a different way, talk about different things. So personally, I could generate a bit more energy for the afternoon, for example, when the sports the sport took place, during lunch breaks. And also, for me, personally, it was really a good chance to get to know some of my colleagues better and from a different perspective as well. And I guess for the company, the benefits, well if people are doing sports and not in an extreme way so in a moderate way, I guess....Personal Fitness is always good, they hopefully won't get as quickly ill and as often as people who don't exercise sports. I guess most of them were really happy about what we were doing. And even my colleagues who said "Oh, I'm not that sporty kind of person", was always smiling in the end. And I guess this kind of happiness coming out of the sports event was really, is really something which lightens up the team culture and the energy in the office. So, this is something I guess every company should look for and should be happy about. So, there are definitely some benefits concerning the healthiness and the happiness of your of your employees.

Maren Wenker

Right, so you were already kind of quoting other colleagues, is there anything else that you still remember that other people or your colleagues were talking about those activities?

Interview 11

Um, I guess there were three maybe kinds of person. The ones like like me, who were always like, "Okay, let's do it. If I can, I will attend." Then there were some people who said "I would like to, but hmm I'm not sure, I'm not that good at sports." But took the effort and were happy in the end. And then while there was quite a you, the greater amount of people or employees in our team, I guess, didn't took place in the events. I don't know actually, why. Maybe sometimes it's maybe a bit scary if you have some people who were really.... if they think they are not this kind of persons who should do sports with others. I mean, even for some people, it's hard to exercise Sports in private, go for a jog or something because they're like "Oh, this is not something for me, I have to start with something a bit more easy and not in a group". And this may be also very, maybe, let's say frightening for others to do this in the office. Which is also of course, always a mixture of whether you're there to work and not to have fun and not to... depends on how you see it. I mean, at our company we're hopefully enjoying a very friendly team culture. And that shouldn't be such a great deal. But I guess from some people's perspective, this might be a barrier of where it's hard to take play or hard to take part in such activities.

Maren Wenker

Did you also feel that in your team? That it could be scary for some people? Or did some people mentioned that they don't participat because they feel uncomfortable maybe between the others?

Interview 11

Yeah uncomfortable I guess is better word than scary or something. I would say yes. But I never got a direct feedback in this way.

Maren Wenker

Okay. I'm coming back to you. How do you feel about participating?

Interview 11

I feel great about it. I'm, I started to miss it quite fast when the pandemic started. And, I mean, now I have my other activities, but it was really enjoyable to do this in the group with colleagues. Okay. I mean, we also, like maybe this is interesting to mention, some, some of us arranged these meetings, the sports events privately, after the pandemic started, and when we were still in the office with some guys. And we, for example, went for a run or something. But not organized from the company itself.

Maren Wenker

Okay, going back to the company, do you see any negative side in the company offering sports activities, like the active lunch break, or yoga classes?

Interview 11

I guess, as a company, you have to be, of course, a bit more flexible concerning your office hours, for example, you need to have the infrastructure for it, maybe if the sports for example, is quite sweaty, you need a shower or something. So there are some arrangements you have to take care of. And also, of course, if not everybody is taking place, you have to take care that they are not different team groups, maybe the one who was enjoying a lunch break of one and a half hours or maybe even longer, of course, having the time later on in the evening, to get to your normal office hours. But this is of course, something which may be a bit difficult, because you have some people who cannot attend meetings, for example, when they have quite a long lunch hour lunch break, and maybe

others are already at home, when they still have to work to compensate for the longer lunch hours. And I guess you have to take care of that. It's not too... that the sports is always on a moderate or easy level cause from my personal experience, if you're training too high something, I guess this can also be a negative for your energy level. In the, in the later afternoon. Maybe something what an extensive or not so healthy, big meal can also do. But yeah, this is... I guess something you have to take care of somehow. Of course, then it costs you money. And it's quite hard to measure if the money is well spent, I guess. I mean, you can look at illness rates. You can use customer happiness, employee happiness, KPIs or something. But I fear that all these KPIs are... there are so many other factors and so many other things going on throughout the year or through a certain period of time so that it's hard to measure this one tiny, or this this one factor, I guess. One benefit I should mention as well, I guess, if you offer something like this, so it's like these little perks. Coffee, like drinking free water and stuff. Of course, this is also something concerning, of course, your employee happiness, I guess, if you have these offerings, but of course, on the recruiting side, if you can mention this, let's say on your website and in your recruiting process, this is also quite nice. So, it's like a marketing factor, I guess for companies today, because these perks are, in a lot of ways, quite important for, from my perspective for a lot of people, especially people we like to attract. So, this is definitely also something beneficial for the company in total.

Maren Wenker

Talking about the recruiting, or also the marketing, what are you telling other people, when you're talking about your employer, linked to the well-being?

Interview 11

I guess, most of the time, only good things. Cause I got to know this in other companies in a different kind of way. So, I appreciate also these, maybe they might seem for some people like minor things like just free drinking water or something or free coffee. And I really, what I'm really mentioning, I guess all the time is the effort, the struggle for the employee happiness, which the company in total is trying to achieve. But there are also a lot of people from, I guess, the recruiting team, but also throughout the entire company, who are trying to keep up and improve the overall team culture, which is really, really nice. And team culture is also something which I definitely really appreciate about our company. And I would also mention every time someone asks me about what this company makes special, I mean, this is something which the pandemic made, also very, very hard to maintain. And this is really something I guess we are struggling about, to strangle this. And I'm really curious to see how this is going to work out and how this is going in the in the next couple of months and years, maybe when the pandemic hopefully, is not that kind of big topic anymore. But I guess there are some really big changes that have happened throughout the last two years. But still, there's still this is something I would definitely say about the company, because everybody I guess all the companies are struggling with the pandemic as well. And so this is still something special, I would say.

Maren Wenker

Do you see also a linkage between the team culture and the offer of sports activities?

Interview 11

I guess if you're trying to achieve a good or a great team culture, you're always looking for possibilities to maintain or to improve the team culture. And if you think about it, you come across all kinds of activities you can offer and sports is maybe just one of them. But it's definitely one that is driven by the interest in generating and keeping up a great team culture.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great. That was already my last question. Is there anything that you didn't mention yet or that you would like to talk about, add to your answers, that we forgot to mention?

Interview 11

No, maybe one thing I already mentioned a few minutes ago that there are a lot of people throughout the company who are interested in having a great team culture. And this is I guess something which is really important. You cannot enforce everything from my standpoint of view from top down. A great team culture is always something where you definitely need your employees to get active as well. And it's great for a company if you have people who really try to do so. So, and it doesn't matter if they are from the HR department or if they are in the development team or they work for yeah, something else. It's really important to have a lot of people offering different things and trying to maintain this team culture and to improve. So, this is also something I guess, if you recruit new people, always to look for it. If you get people who are really not only willing to work and just to earn money, but also to... who are interested in the company itself, and in the team and the colleagues. Yeah, from my point of view business, this is really something to look for and we can be really happy about.

Maren Wenker

Okay, interesting. Okay, great. If there's nothing else that you would like to add, I would finish the record now and thanks a lot for your answers.

Interview 11

You are welcome.

Interview 12

Maren Wenker

Okay, so hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview. If you're ready, I would like to start with the very first question, which is, what is your company doing for you well-being?

Participant 12

My company's doing for my well-being... Yeah, some out of work activities. So there is a break, which is done to interact with others in doing some sport, sporty activities. So, you can just casually do some activities without having to go to some sports place yourself after work. Furthermore, there are two hours in the week, I can use for not private, but my own interest in technologies. So that is just a casual meetup, where we can talk about technologies we not use in our daily work. And that is a great time of the week to relieve some stress.

Maren Wenker

Do you have more examples?

Participant 12

I think that it is for now.

Maren Wenker

Getting back to the sports activities. Have you ever participated in any of those?

Participant 12

Yeah, I took part in few of those. But I got a problem that I often have some calls in this particular time frame. And then I just can't get out of there and can take part.

Maren Wenker

Okay, where you're also involved or did you participated in some way in the organization of those activities, or you just participated as like doing the exercises with the others?

Participant 12

I just did the exercises. There are normally two other people involved when for organized those activities. And therefore that is more than enough.

Maren Wenker

And what do you think about those activities that your company is offering?

Participant 12

I like it, especially now with this kind of home office corona situation. It's great to see some people outside of the daily calls you got in inside of the projects. And therefore it's not only the sporty aspect, but it's also the social aspect that yeah, is delivered by those activities.

Maren Wenker

You already mentioned their social aspect. Are there any more aspects or benefits that you see for yourself in participating?

Participant 12

Huh, except this sporty and the social aspect?

Maren Wenker

Yeah. Oh, what do you mean, for example, with sporty aspect?

Participant 12

So the one meeting is about doing some sport activities. And so therefore, it's great to, to, relief, release yeah, it replaces some kind of sport activity I would, I should have done on the day otherwise.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And so that were your benefits. What kind of benefits do you see for your employer, for the company, in offering such activities?

Participant 12

I think it's great for the company/ employer, if the employees connect with each other, because that strengthens some kind of team feeling, I guess. And, yeah, therefore, I think the employees accept those offerings and so I think it's something the employees would like to do and it emphasizes the positive feeling.

Maren Wenker

Okay, um, and what is your personal reason? Or your personal motivation in participating?

Participant 12

Oh, yeah, I think it's those both aspects. It's for once, it's the social aspect and the other is the sporty one. And I think there's no other reason. So.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And you already said before that sometimes you cannot participate, because you have calls during that time. Are there any other obstacles, why you sometimes cannot participate, or maybe also don't want to participate?

Participant 12

At the beginning of my time at this company I've been to the office, and I didn't always feel comfortable doing these activities in an office with three or four other people where maybe two others are not participating. So if everybody is doing it, maybe I'm feeling more comfortable, but if I'm the only one, I wouldn't do it in the office.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And why is that exactly that you wouldn't like to do it in the office? When others are there? Like because you compare yourself or why is that?

Participant 12

I don't want to disturb them. And I think also it might, yeah, it might look silly. And then there's always this feeling. Then what people do think about you and probably it doesn't even matter, but there is still some kind of yeah ...the boundary line?

Maren Wenker

Yeah, obstacle. So for you, there's a big difference if you do it in the home office, or if you're physically at the office, at the headquarter?

Participant 12

Yeah, I bet. I think I wouldn't do it here as well, if my girlfriend would be in the same office as well, and I would start doing some exercises. I don't know, I wouldn't do that.

Maren Wenker

Okay, interesting. So do you also see any negative side in the initiative that it's offered?

Participant 12

I don't, but I think that it could seem some kind of force to other people, maybe because there's always some kind of, of group dynamics, if those kind of private activities are offered at the workplace. And I know people they don't like this kind of activities, because they separate work and private activities strictly. And, yeah.

Maren Wenker

Do you also have the feeling that this happened in your team, that what you said before, like you said, you know, people who would prefer to separate work and private activities? Were that friends outside the company? Or was that at the company?

Participant 12

That were friends outside of the company. I never talked to anyone inside the company who said that he doesn't like those kinds of activities. I always felt like those activities are appreciated by some people and who doesn't, who's not interested in doing this kind of activity just doesn't do it.

Maren Wenker

And did you also feel or heard what you also said before that some people might feel silly or don't like to do it like next to other people? Did you hear that also from other colleagues at your company?

Participant 12

No, that's just my own feeling.

Maren Wenker

Okay, um, is there anything that your company could do more for you well-being that you would like to have, any benefits?

Participant 12

No, I don't think so.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and we already mentioned this aspect before when you're talking with other people. Let's get back to when you talk with other people outside the company, what are you telling them about your company, your employer, regarding the well-being?

Participant 12

Regarding the well-being? Well, I don't really talk that much about these other activities. I talk about those those two hours in a week. I like that one very much. And I know that the company is offering that but else I'm I just feeling comfortable doing my job at this company because it's the people are really nice and it's not stressful and it's harmonic kind of work. And therefore it's fine for me.

Maren Wenker

Do you see any relation between this harmonic atmosphere and the activities that are offered by your employer?

Participant 12

Hmm, I don't know. Because I know other employers are also offering those kind of activities and it was kind of another atmosphere I experienced and therefore I don't know if it's directly related, but I think for some people it definitely can help.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything you didn't mention yet? Or that you would like to add to your answers something that we didn't talk about before but that you think is important?

Participant 12

Nope.

Maren Wenker

Okay, perfect, then thank you so much for all your answers. That was already the interview. Have a good day. Bye.

Participant 12

Bye.

Interview 13

Maren Wenker

Hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview, if you're ready, I would like to start with the first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 13

I think my company does different things for my well-being. There is, for example, the coffee break, we have, I think every day. So, we are working at the moment remote first. So we don't see each other very often. And so we can meet for a coffee for 10 or 15 minutes in visual video chat. And when we are at the office, so before Corona, or in the summer, when Corona wasn't that high, we had fruit, the fruit package in the office, everybody could get some fruits, fresh fruits and vegetables. We have always coffee and tea in the office. That is for our well-being. We have sometimes events like team events, we can do every several months. And we also have... I and a colleague of mine, we have introduced a workout break. And we asked everybody who wants to join to come into video chat and we play a YouTube video exercise video for 10 or 15 minutes. And we do this twice a week. Do you want to hear more?

Maren Wenker

Whatever comes to your mind. Yeah, just mention the things.

Participant 13

Okay, I'm missing the English word right now. Mitarbeitergespräch?

Maren Wenker

Employee meetings and like face to face feedback meetings.

Participant 13

So we have feedback meetings, I think every 100 days. That is, for me, it's a good way to recapitulate, yeah, the the last working month. And to think about the points I'm good at. But also, points I can improve. I'm also getting feedback from my boss in this meeting. And when I started, I started working at my company, I had a mentoring going on. So, I had two mentors who are working in a similar field. And they gave me feedback as well, I think a bit more often. I'm not sure every month, maybe or every two or every two weeks. And that was very helpful as well. So that was important for my well-being as well. And I think a very important point for well-being is that the colleagues are being nice to each other and if somebody's coming new to the company, that they try to integrate you to the team and try to get to know you. That is not really a thing, the company or the leaders do alone. That's I think a very important point.

Maren Wenker

Getting back to those physical activities that you already mentioned before that you were participating but also involved in their organization and like putting twice a week the video there. What is your motivation to do that?

Participant 13

I have different motivations to do that. One is that I'm sitting a lot. I don't have a moveable desk. So I always sit in the same position. So that is a good way to get out of the chair and to move to prevent pain as well. Because when I don't do a lot of physical exercise, and I'm working, even though I'm working four days a week, I get back pain. So to prevent this, and I think it's also a nice social event. So even if it's only for 10 or 15 minutes, when I'm working from home, I don't see a lot of my colleagues accepting in meetings. But that's a way to stay in contact with colleagues, I'm not always having contacts.

Maren Wenker

So that were your benefits? And what kind of benefits do you receive for your company in offering something like that?

Participant 13

Several. I think one benefit is that the employees get less sick, because of pain. So this is a good benefit. Or a large one. But also, yeah, the social aspect of it, let the employees come together, even though they're working remotely. And just to talk shortly and to see each other faces, so that you feel connected to the company and that you identify yourself.

Maren Wenker

And how do you feel about participating? And also, how do you feel about organizing it?

Participant 13

Oh, I feel very well about it. I don't remember when it started. But I think we're doing it for several months now. And even though we're not always a lot of people we're around five or six people usually. I really like it. And I think one important point that I liked is that I also get good feedback from my colleagues. They enjoy it too. And they said they're thankful that my colleague and I am reminding them... last week, they reminded me haha that was also helpful.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great. Do you also see any negative side in the initiative?

Participant 13

Um, sometimes, um, because we do it twice a week. And at the same time, sometimes when I'm in the workflow, I have to stop working, even though I'm concentrated. I have to interrupt this. But I think the benefits are higher or bigger. Another negative point is I think the company could book it as working hours. Or it could be part of the working hours. It's I think it's not a lot of time. And the benefits for the companies are clear. So yeah, it would be cool if it's part of your workday and not part of your breaks.

Maren Wenker

So you mean if the company would kind of like sponsor this time, like for example, the hack teams like the two hours on Thursdays that they're offering.

Participant 13

Yeah.

Maren Wenker

Besides giving this time is there anything else that the company could do more for the well-being? Regarding the physical well-being?

Participant 13

There and in bigger cities, I'm not sure... it is possible in Münster too, I'm sure....there are sponsorings and cooperations between companies and for example, fitness clubs. Or like, oh, I forgot the name....

Maren Wenker

You can say in German, doesn't matter. I can translate it.

Participant 13

-Explaining it in German-

Maren Wenker

So it's like a subscription that you're having. And with this subscription, you can do several offers. You can go to different gyms, different fitness clubs, and you can do courses like yoga or pilates or, like general fitness working out. Yeah, like you can decide where to go with a little bit like a flat rate for some sports offers.

Participant 13

Yeah. Yeah. Okay, and the company could sponsor this or could give a bonus if you do this, like this. And then of course, you won't always do it with your colleagues. But it will be good for your physical health. And one aspect could be, especially if you're working a lot from home, it could be a better equipment like office chairs and moving desks. Yeah. That would be helpful for you and physical health, as well. And I heard before I started working for the company, there was a yoga lesson once a week in the office. So I would really like this too. If it's when it's possible, again, because of Corona.

Maren Wenker

Would you also like to be involved in the organization of something like that as well? Or do you prefer just participating?

Participant 13

Both is fine for me. But because I helped organizing the workout breaks, I realized that I also like it to organize it. And of course, I can decide a little bit which kind of videos we do on the break so I can decide it on my needs. I haven't gotten a lot of feedback, what kind of videos my colleagues want to do. I asked them but there was not a real response. But it seems to be alright as they are still participating haha. And I usually ask them after the lesson, after the

workout break, if they liked it, they always said yes. So I'm not sure if they are honest, but I like organizing it.

Maren Wenker

Okay, you said before that sometimes you have to stop working for it even when you're like in a workflow and you're quite busy. So, is it also sometimes stressful for you?

Participant 13

Not really. Not really stressful. If I really don't have time I skip it. I can also post the video and Google meet link in the chat and say "Hey, guys, I don't have time for it". So, if I would really get stressed I would skip it.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And when you talk with other people about your company, what are you telling them about your employer?

Participant 13

Regarding what?

Maren Wenker

Regarding general well-being and physical well-being.

Participant 13

Okay. Um I, I tell them that I am organizing with a colleague the workout break um, I think I told my boyfriend that I like the chairs we have in the office. But I was surprised that we don't have moving desks in the office. I expected this at first because I think it's ...it became kind of a standard in innovative companies and maybe younger companies or companies who care about the physical well being or trying to anticipate aspects of new work. Okay. I think my company does this, but...hm.

Maren Wenker

Is there anything more you can think of? Or...?

Participant 13

Oh, I really like the fruit basket. The fruits and vegetables, the fresh ones. Healthy food, this is definitely part of staying healthy. I think I told friends about this too.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything else that you didn't mention yet or that you would like to add to your answers? Something we didn't talk about before?

Participant 13

No, no, not really.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great, then thank you so much for all your answers. That was the interview. And I wish you a nice evening. Thank you.

Participant 13

Thank you, too.

Interview 14

Maren Wenker

So hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview, if you're ready, I would like to start with the first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 14

Okay, so that's an interesting question. What's my company doing for my well-being? I think the most important part is how they handle pressure or how they handle work assignments. And how they handle the general expectations or expectation management regarding project teams. So, I have the feeling throughout the company throughout the workforce, it is understood and it is made clear by our managers that there should be no pressure and that we have the time to do good work to deliver quality work and make, stating these expectations clearly helps to avoid pressure and that we feel the safety to take our time when needed. Apart from that, and I think that's really the most important thing. We have activities that should work against feeling lonely, especially now in the times that almost everybody is in home office. All Time. That means that you can feel lonely, quickly. And yeah, well, we have some activities to work again that like regular meetings with the whole company or like a coffee call, to meet colleagues just to have a chat. And sometimes we also have activities in our free time organized by the company, then over remote, like let's say a wine tasting or a game evening. And yeah, that they do this and that they also employ a person specifically for taking care of the well-being of the employees. Yeah, that's another sign that they take this as important.

Maren Wenker

Besides that, are there also some offers about the physical well-being?

Participant 14

Yeah. I don't know if there are still offers. Okay. So, we have one thing that's organized by employees regular physical fitness call two times a week so doing some domestics while being on remote, so that... but I would say that's a private initiative, but it's also welcomed by the company. Apart from that, I know there were offerings like doing yoga fitness and so last year or the year before, I don't know if they are... or I think now in pandemics they aren't continued right now. And apart from that, I don't know of offerings for physical well-being.

Maren Wenker

Have you ever participated in any of those activities?

Participant 14

Not in those organized ones, with my yoga fitness where they are... where there was an external company that provided a real trainer and instructor but in these internally organized remote fitness sessions... Yeah, I took part in these.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and what kind of benefit do you see in participating?

Participant 14

Yeah well...have a nice break from work giving your mind something else... getting a little bit of movement and yeah of stretching I wouldn't count the physical effect that high. I think that doing it twice a week is not enough to see a real effect but it's good to have a little bit stretching and yeah well to see some colleagues, not talking about work for 15 minutes.

Maren Wenker

Before you said that it's also welcomed by the company. Why do you think is that? What could be the benefit for the employer?

Participant 14

That's always good if the employees feel okay if they feel good working at the company and well the other way around if something like that would be prohibited, I think it would be bad for the employer reputation and yeah, well for the employees feeling well at work.

Maren Wenker

How would you personally feel if it would be prohibited; what would be your reaction to that?

Participant 14

Yeah, then I really would doubt if they want a good relationship with us employees. Because I think it's always: you given take and so as an employee, you give time and often it's also you give a lot of brain capacity, a lot of power into your work at phases and in other phases, I think time to take and to say it's also okay to see colleagues and to just talk and chat and relax a little bit and that's part of life and that should be a part of work life too. So, concentrating and giving all the best you can and then at other times, yeah, relax and fill up your battery again.

Maren Wenker

Were you also involved somehow in the organization of those initiatives, or you just participated?

Participant 14

I just participated.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and we already got a little bit into that about like your feeling to participate so maybe you can sum up again why it is exactly that you participate?

Participant 14

Because I like to get in contact with different colleagues apart from the current project I'm working on and because I yeah, I like doing a little bit for my body and I think it benefits me doing some stretching and relaxing the mind at the same time.

Maren Wenker

Do you also see any negative side in the initiative?

Participant 14

(thinking) No.

Maren Wenker

Okay, um, we already talked a little bit about that before you mentioned the term employer reputation. So what is it what you tell other people about your company?

Participant 14

Huh, I tell all the people about my company that it's a company I really like to work at. And that's really because I have the feeling that my employer is interested in healthy, long-term relationship with its employees and really takes things...yeah, well for my employer it's really important that the employees feel well. So, the well-being of all people and working there is a concern for management, they clearly expressed this, they state this in companywide meetings. And yeah, that gives a certain atmosphere so that you can feel this, and this attitude then makes working there nice, like, no stress and pressure.

Maren Wenker

Do you think that there's a relation between the atmosphere that feeling of feeling no pressure and the offer of physical activities?

Participant 14

Yeah, of course, there's some relation, but all fits together and fits in the bigger picture of taking employee well-being as important.

Maren Wenker

Is there also anything that your company could do more for you well-being?

Participant 14

That's a good question.

Maren Wenker

So it could be anything like you could wish for something and they would fulfill it for you?

Participant 14

No, I don't know anything that I would wish. I'm sure there might be things, but I don't have the ideas what that could be. But I'm really sure that if somebody has an idea, then and would bring that to the table, I would welcome that. So, I think, of course, they can be done some more things for the well-being. And yeah, it's all difficult in that home office only remote work setting. And with a pandemic...I think once the pandemic is over, and all those restrictions, or all those carefulness we have at the moment, can be lifted, then something like regular on-site meetings could be good, just for more social interaction between all of the workforce. And yeah, well, organizing that could be a thing that the company could do, could take care of. So, I'm just prospecting into the future that the current setting that many people are working remote that will stay on for the future, also, when the pandemic is over, and because Yeah, well, now people can work at home and we are used to it. And of course, it's nice also to see other people in the office, but working at home also has other advantages. So, I have the feeling we are developing into a partly remote company, so we are not a fully remote company, but partly remote company where many people are working remote for some share or some bigger share of the working time. And in that setting, I think the company can support yeah, getting to know each other, social interactions and so on by organizing regular on site, meetings, events, whatever.

Maren Wenker

Does it make a big difference for you if the sports offers are on site or off site?

Participant 14

Yeah, no... talking specifically about sports offers, I tend to just take part in those spots offers like that 15 minute break that we do now remotely. Apart from that, I have my own sports activities with my family or friends after work. And yeah, just because I also have my activities there, and I have family and the kids are in the sports clubs, and I do my sport there. I don't take part in any after work or off site activities organized by the company.

Maren Wenker

And why exactly? Because you think what you're doing in private, that's enough for you?

Participant 14

Yeah, that's a question of time, and I only have a limited amount of time and ah, yeah.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything else that you would like to mention, something that we didn't talk about before, but that you think is important to add to your answers?

Participant 14

So, regarding the topic or scope of physical well-being because that's the scope here... No, there was nothing I would add.

Maren Wenker

And anything besides to physical activities, anything that you would like to say? Or still add to your answers?

Participant 14

No, I think they were extensive.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great, then thanks so much for all your answers and for participating and I wish you a nice day. Thank you.

Participant 14

Yeah. Thank you.

Interview 15

Maren Wenker

So hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview, if you're ready, I would like to start with my first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 15

What we have is that we can schedule our own time. So we can work whenever we want, of course it needs to be planned and you're organized with our colleagues, but I'm glad we are quite free to plan our days, which is quite good for the work life balance. Um, yeah, that's the thing I would say.

Maren Wenker

Is there anything more? Some other examples that you can think of?

Participant 15

We have like free fruit on normal days. When it's not a pandemic. We have free water. And like we do a lot of, of team building things like events and which is quite important that we talk to our colleagues. So the thing that's important in our company.

Maren Wenker

What kind of events are that?

Participant 15

Like, in summer time, and, and winter time we would come together. But also, like smaller events.

Maren Wenker

For example?

Participant 15

We meet up remote. And I don't know, I'm not as long in the company as far as I know, so quite difficult to say. But we did, we did an event with all the students. And that was quite cool. We, we send out packages with food, and then we cooked together and talked. It was all remote, but it was kind of cool anyways.

Maren Wenker

And is there also some or are there also some offers about your, for your physical well-being?

Participant 15

Um, we have on Tuesdays and Thursdays I guess, a thing that's called "Bewegte Pause" (Active break), were you get to see a video of someone or someone doing sports like small sports...You can say that, where you can participate? And yeah, I don't know.

Maren Wenker

And have you ever participated in any of those activities?

Participant 15

Uh, no. Not. No, I haven't.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and what is the reason for that?

Participant 15

I seriously have no reason for it. Oh, no, I've never been in the Slack channel. I just never did that. Mm hmm. I don't know. I know that you do it. But, um, it's like, I don't think that if Kim did it or not. But I never felt like it's the thing in our company.

Maren Wenker

Okay, but is there anything that could be done for you so it would make it easier for you to participate? Or that you would feel more motivation?

Participant 15

To do the "Bewegte Pause"?

Maren Wenker

Yeah. I'm talking about the Active Break. Like, why is it that you're not participating?

Participant 15

Maybe if someone.... that's kind of selfish, but maybe if someone just invited me in the channel, like if someone sent me an invitation, hey, do you want to participate? That would help, I guess. Like, maybe, maybe I can go, I can invite myself and then I can just click on the link. But I would maybe feel more welcome if I get invited from anyone who's participating in it.

Maren Wenker

But you are in the channel. Right? You are in the chat.

Participant 15

No.

Maren Wenker

You're not in the channel. So, do you think it's a matter of communication?

Participant 15

I think the... what do you call it? Active...? Active break?

Maren Wenker

Yeah.

Participant 15

It's important. I think it helps a lot. But like I said, I think it's not a thing in the company. I think it's, it could be more important. So yes, I guess it's, it's a matter of communication.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Um, you said it is important, and it helps. For what exactly?

Participant 15

To feel better, to feel better at work to not like, get "eingerostet" haha.

Maren Wenker

Yeah, I know what you mean, difficulties to move.

Participant 15

Um, and it's also like, I know, there is happening, a lot of team building. But I guess it could be fun if you do it together with your colleagues. And it's just like, something else during your day. Not that you always work or always do stuff that you need to do, you can also do something else.

Maren Wenker

So that are the benefits that are there for the employees. Can you also think of some benefits that are there for the employer, for the company?

Participant 15

From which perspective?

Maren Wenker

From the perspective of the management, for example, like why would they allow or say, like, okay, let's, let's allow this active break, let's offer yoga, let's do something for the employees, why would they do that?

Participant 15

Because I think it's more and more important for companies to have employees who are... who feel good, you know, who feel good within themselves and are fit and sports helps getting fit in physical and in your head, mental.

Maren Wenker

Mental well being, yeah.

Participant 15

It helps a lot. And I think they also feel more welcomed. More wanted in the company, which is important, it's important that the employees are healthy. And yeah, just happy.

Maren Wenker

And how do you feel about not participating?

Participant 15

In the active break? Um, it's hard to say, I mean, I wish I would be already more included in like the whole company. And I would say I'm kind of an extrovert, but also introvert, I think.... Can you repeat the question?

Maren Wenker

The question was how you are feeling about not participating?

Participant 15

How do I feel about not participating? I wouldn't say I don't care. But it's not that I not feel included because of that. So, um, if I would care more, I guess I would have participated by now.

Maren Wenker

And that you don't care so much is why?

Participant 15

Because I think, personally, it's maybe not that important. I mean, it is. I think it's good that employees do that and that it's offered, but I don't see the active sports in there. Like, for me, um, sports like about sweating and about yeah, giving your best, etc. But this is like, I think I

never participated. So just in my head, I think that it's just a little bit like, moving around. And I don't know if this helps that much. It's kind of irritating because I said that it's quite important. But I just, I have mixed feelings about that.

Maren Wenker

Okay, before you said that you wish that you would be more included in the company? What could be done for you that you would feel more included?

Participant 15

Maybe a little more communication, I think the most reason, the biggest reason because the biggest reason why I don't feel included is because of Corona. Because we don't meet up, we do not talk as often as it used to be, like, I see colleagues, they come into the office. But not every day, I don't talk to them every day, I talk to them every second week or something. And it's kind of hard for me, I need to get in touch with them, like every day. So, it takes me some time to open up and to talk about me. And I don't do that before I really know them. And I guess I think I know that it's on me that I don't feel that much included. Because I think the company gives like really much to feel, to make you feel included and all the employees do, they talk to me and yeah. But I don't talk to everyone like that. I don't know what to ask, what to talk to them because they have like, topics that I can't talk about. But I'm personally not interested in like all of this IT software stuff. Um, and other than that, they do have kids, I think it's kind of hard for me to find topics that everyone can talk about.

Maren Wenker

Do you have the feeling that a sports offer could help you to get closer to the others or to connect with them?

Participant 15

No. I don't think.... maybe that's the reason why I haven't participated by now. Like, because I imagine that as you sit in front of your phone, you have your camera and like nobody's talking and you do the sports and then it's done.

Maren Wenker

So how do you feel about imagining that it is like that?

Participant 15

How do I feel about that?

Maren Wenker

Yeah. So, because you said, you imagine that the people are sitting there, maybe they're not communicating so much. So what kind of feeling comes up then inside of you that you think like, Okay, I rather not participate?

Participant 15

Like I guess maybe it's boring. Other than that. I am stressed but I think about talking to so many people at a time. Like, yeah, I have mixed feelings for that. In all parts of this.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And in general, do you see any negative side in the initiative?

Participant 15

No, no, why? I don't. I think it's good, but it's not.... I've always wanted to participate. Yes. It just never happened.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And in general is there... you already said before that you would like to have more communication, but is there also besides that, anything that your company could do more for your well-being?

Participant 15

Right now, I don't think so. Um, like I said, again, it's, um, I think it's different when you don't have a pandemic around. Like, um, Kim said that she felt really included after her first, the first event with the company. So I like, wait for that, I guess, that this happens. But I can't. So I don't think that right now.... They're doing everything they can but just... we have to wait what's coming next.

Maren Wenker

Kim is the person who was before in your position, right?

Participant 15

Yes.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Um, when you're talking with other people about your employer about the company, what are you telling them about them?

Participant 15

I am telling them that I that I feel really good at the company. I'm very happy that I get to work there. Because it's like, they do care for us. They do their best to make you feel welcome. And it started right when you when "bewerben"?

Maren Wenker

Apply.

Participant 15

Yeah, when you apply for the job. You get an email, you immediately feel like you're part of it, even though you are not at the moment. Um, that's kind of cool. I talk about that. And yeah, because it's like it's like a young company. You don't have to discuss with old people who have like a different meaning of everything. And grew up differently. That's cool. Yeah.

Maren Wenker

So besides, not feeling so included, you feel happy and good to work there?

Participant 15

Absolutely. I love my job. I love that I can be creative. I can be, um, yeah, I can work on my own. And there's no one watching or checking if I do my job or not. That's the thing I like most. But yeah, mostly, I feel good. Besides of not feeling like that included. I feel included. It's not like I feel like I'm in the wrong place. Because I have some really cool colleagues that I connect with. But I feel like at my company it's like you connect with everyone, that's what they talk about. That's what they always tell you, but I don't really feel that. So besides that, I am feeling happy.

Maren Wenker

Talking about your job: Would you also like to be involved in the organization of those physical activities?

Participant 15

I would. I would do that. Yeah.

Maren Wenker

And why and what would you come up with for example?

Participant 15

You mean new ideas for that or?

Maren Wenker

For example, or how you would like to get involved in the organization?

Participant 15

Like, firstly, I would do it to help you. To make the people who participate, my colleagues who participate in the active break, I would mostly do it for them. Not really for me, but I know that there are many people who participate in that. And I would love to give them the opportunity to do that, like every day more. Not because of me, but because of them. I guess, like 15 minutes, it's not that much time.

Maren Wenker

Is there anything you didn't mention yet? But that you would like to add to your answers?

Participant 15

No, I think I said everything.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great, then thank you so much for all your answers. That was the interview. Thank you for your time. Bye bye.

Interview 16

Maren Wenker

So hello, thanks so much for taking the time today to participate in my interview. If you're ready, I would like to start with the first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 16

I guess they try and actually achieve a Yeah, no crunch time. So, I'm very free in ...yeah. Now, the first thing is, I'm not really that stressed at work to do any overtime. Usually, if I say, Yeah, would be nice to finish it today but I don't really have the time because I already had a lot of hours yesterday or something that usually okay, and there's actually, I don't remember an incident where somebody from higher up forced us maybe not forced, but suggested that we do more work than we do need to. Well, at least in the contract. Yeah. That's one thing, I'm very free with moving my work time around the day and doing what I can like, usually there, there's never been an issue with going to a doctor's appointment at some point in the day or, like, doing anything, which is better during the day, then after work. So I'm usually... also can shift hours from one day to the other. That's really nice. So it's a... I guess it's a good working atmosphere, and I'm free to do a lot and there's good trust towards me. Beyond that, of course, there's like the usual festivities, or parties or whatever. You want to say but there's no like, on a week-to-week basis, I think some care for the individual and. I guess that there's good work, trusted working environment from both parties.

Maren Wenker

You already mentioned, like week-to-week activities. Are there any physical well-being offers?

Participant 16

Yeah, they are. Although I don't participate. Because I've got my own physical well-being. There's some kind of I'm not sure... video, which presents instructions where everyone joins, or not everyone, but some people do. I'm not sure.

Maren Wenker

And why is it exactly that you don't participate in that offer?

Participant 16

I guess I never done exercise with other people. Like I've never done team sports or something. And there's probably a lot of psychological reasons why, but that would probably go too far. But I do exercise alone. But it's not a social thing for me. But it's something where I like do consume content in a different way or, like, listen to an audio book, or watch a movie or something. Or when it's like...I got a rowing machine here where I watch TV or something while doing it. I do yoga, which is more like, I guess it's more spiritual or something I do alone. Like it's closer to meditations and probably than when you do it in a team.

Maren Wenker

So the reason that you just mentioned is that because of the team, like the colleagues, or do you have that feeling in general that you prefer doing sports on your own?

Participant 16

No, in general. Like, I've never done like team sports. I'm not sure. I also... when I think about it, I don't have a reason against it. I just probably I'm not sure whether I prefer it actually, I just never done it.

Maren Wenker

Okay. But what do you think about the activities in general that are offered by your company? Like this, like, for example, like right now there's this active break like twice a week like Tuesdays and Thursdays and before the pandemic, there was like a running around like in the lunch break. Even though you didn't participate or you don't I like it so much or you prefer doing it on your own - What do you think about the initiatives that are offered?

Participant 16

I think it's good. Because it shows that the employer, in a way cares about well-being of the employees. I think it's one thing I guess it's also really cool to socialize with people you're not directly working with in a different fashion. And, yeah, really good way to, of course spend time with colleagues.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and what kind of benefits do you see there personally, for the employees in participating?

Participant 16

I guess it's fun for most people. I hope so. It's fun, it's healthy. Yeah, it probably also improves the productivity if you don't go too far. So, what I experienced is there's like more active break, rather than just sitting alone in the home office and eating lunch and watching TV, or something that's way more, you're way more productive. Because you've done something like exercise in the end, it's also nice for oneself. It's nice, because for the company, but of course workers might... it is more fun as you're more productive, I think. Yeah, I think that helps but also makes you more happy to exercise. And so if the company is providing ways to do that in a better way that is of course, good for everyone I think.

Maren Wenker

And what could be or what do you think is the benefit for your company/ employer in being interested in offering those initiatives?

Participant 16

Yeah, for one, I think, healthier, happier, and employees are more productive. So, I guess in a way, there's actually a clear way to say we will be more successful in the end. And that's

also monetary gains or something. And it's also a good employer branding, probably. Yeah, but it's also Yeah. I mean, there's no, there's no real like, company entities separate from the employees. So, it's hard to distinguish that I guess also, people who decide we will spend some money on these activities are also colleagues in a way, and they will also probably like to maybe participate or maybe have happier colleagues in the end. So, I guess the results, the monetary benefits, which might be there at the top, they are there. But yeah, it's hard to measure, probably, but I guess people are happier or more satisfied. And also, it shows that companies somehow care about these attributes, which are not that closely related to financial gains, then, like, say, we will pay for your education for your further education. If you want to have something that's more closely related to day to day works and (not understandable). You can probably be healthier, and that's also good for us. But yeah, of course, you can twist everything to say it's for our financial values, maybe healthier colleagues are not as sick as often so they can work more. But I guess it shows just that. Yeah. People like to work in a healthier and happier environment probably and that's everyone.

Maren Wenker

You already said that it probably makes the people happier, even though you decided to not participate. So how do you feel about not participating?

Participant 16

Um, I'm pretty okay with that. Yeah, I don't have a big history of exercising at all. Like, for the last, for this pandemic years, I've taken this on for myself, and so I don't really miss anything in these years now, it's just it's more of a game for me to actually do any exercise. And that already makes me much happier to do it the way I do. I'm not sure just how different it would be but I probably... and I am one of the few people at the company who like I don't know, I guess have very little history with exercise and sports in general. At least it often feels that way.

Maren Wenker

So you have the feeling that the other... like your coworkers are more sporty?

Participant 16

Yeah. Of course. So it's not like I'm really embarrassed, or something. It's, but I feel Yeah, I think so. Okay. In general, the average employee, at least from probably, like five years ago, or something I don't I haven't thought about it recently. But like five years ago, when we did any events that were like sporting related also, I was so... or so sure that I would be like, have the least points or anything, to finish last or like get hurt or something (laughing). And I'm really okay with it. It's not anything like embarrassing for me. But that's probably one of the reasons why I prefer to exercise alone.

Maren Wenker

So, do you feel any pressure or that you feel like you're comparing yourself too much with the others?

Participant 16

No, I'm pretty okay with that. That's how it has always been.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And why do you think is that? Because of you personally? Or maybe because of the other people; because you know that they wouldn't judge you? Or why?

Participant 16

I'm really sure they wouldn't judge me. But I'm also like, okay with how it is. It's never been a social thing for me to exercise. But that's an outlier. Outlier perspective, probably. But I am not really. I don't think I am missing anything.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and do you see any negative side in general in the initiative, in offering sports?

Participant 16

I don't feel that there is a negative aspect to it. I guess if you think about it, there's probably people who are not able to exercise, maybe have a disability, they may just not be fit enough or something like that. Or be embarrassed because whatever, they are not as fit, or they are just... people are embarrassed for various reasons. But that might be something where you can see that in a negative light. But I don't.

Maren Wenker

Do you think in general that this could be a problem in the Zeitag team? So do you have the feeling that some colleagues could feel that they're not fit enough that they feel embarrassed, especially or explicitly in this company's team?

Participant 16

I don't think so. It's because there's very little pressure to participate. I think it's always been formulated like it's an offer. Also, I don't actually know how many people participate or who. So I don't feel like that would be an issue. It's more we've done like more sporting events in the past, I think where, like people are more or less expected to participate in like in the Summer fest or something. That would be different, I think. But there's also not been like, we did canoeing, we did this golf thing. Everybody was pretty bad at it. Like, I don't think there's a high pressure but I guess people who really care about like or feel embarrassed already would feel even further embarrassed, but it's also not a problem for me.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything that your company could do more for your well-being?

Participant 16

Yeah, but that's probably more closely related to work. And I guess I would like to have fewer meetings or like meetings matched together, or like a maximum amount of time I'm allowed to spend in meetings per day or something like that. Because the more like responsibilities that... I'm primarily a software developer, but the more responsibilities there are, the more experience I gain the more time I spent in meetings. And that is often not helpful when trying to actually work two hours or something focus on single tasks that happens very little in my day-to-day work, to be able to focus on something that I'm actually expected to work. So that's something I would like to see any work on, like doing focus time or something. But I guess it's not that closely related to the well-being like physical well-being.

Maren Wenker

But regarding the physical well-being, is there anything that could be done for you?

Participant 16

Yeah, of course, I could imagine that. Like, it's hard to do, but if the company would, like, say, Okay, we are interested in that you keep, like being healthy, and so on. You will get, I don't know, one hour per week that we pay and you that we pay your usual what you make in an hour, and that you can spend it on sports or something. I don't know how that would work. But of course, that would show that they're actually into that and see the benefits, that would be nice. Because now doing exercise in the break and having lunch and so on will often stretch the...yeah, will take like one and a half hours or something. But of course, it's like a pretty big ask.

Maren Wenker

Yeah, but I asked you what you can wish for haha. So when you're talking with other people outside your company, what are you telling them about your company?

Participant 16

I will mostly talk about how much we like each other in a way, like most friends of mine work in bigger companies where there's also much bigger age gaps, of course. But where there are also much more institutionalized rules, I think, and I will often just have, they will say, tell a story and will say and the following is how it should be done. And then I will most of the times..., I will just say that's how we actually do it. And somehow there's very little, I feel like distance between colleagues. And that's, yeah, the best thing I think. So also, I'm not sure that the "No bullshit claim" is that good. It's something in that in the way there, there's a truth in that and that like and I also do often say that I get along with almost everybody and that people are all nice, all are funny, and that's a good work environment.

Maren Wenker

Do you think that being so close to the others and getting along really well has an impact on you not feeling embarrassed, doing sports with them together?

Participant 16

Probably would yeah. Okay, so yeah, of course, if I imagine like there's a different company, there's like, the boss of my boss, and we will have to do yoga together or something. I've could feel that that would not go that well. Because if you do physical exercise, you're also somehow showing your weaknesses, I think and that has to be supported in a way. Yeah, it's hard to do with people you don't really know or harder. Or maybe it's even harder for people who you have to work with but don't actually know that well on a personal level. Probably the hardest way.

Maren Wenker

But can you also imagine that the other way around there's a relation? So that it could bring people closer together when they're doing sports?

Participant 16

Yeah, I think so. Yeah. I guess it always brings people together somehow. Yeah, are able to show their weaknesses and also be like, find that they are accepted and from, by the others or show their strengths and be accepted. But yeah, I guess it always brings people together. Why not that way?

Maren Wenker

Okay, great. Um, is there anything that you didn't mention yet but that you would like to add to your answers? Something that we forgot to talk about but that you think is important?

Participant 16

No.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Great, then thank you so much for all your answers. That was the interview. I wish you a great day. Thank you.

Interview 17

Maren Wenker

So hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview. If you're ready, I would like to start with the first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 17

Good question. I think it's providing a good overall experience regarding giving me some nice colleagues. And yeah, allowing the ability to chat with each other and not to be too stressful within the job, but to do my job, as good as I want to do it.

Maren Wenker
Are there any other examples?

Participant 17
You mean, what the company does specifically to increase one's well-being?

Maren Wenker
Maybe you can think of physical activities.

Participant 17
Physical activities? Yeah. Before we had the pandemic, we used to have a coach, which did some sports with us in the lunch breaks, like, every week or every other week, I'm not sure. And now I don't think it's official, but there has been some movement to do an active lunch break. As you might know haha. You can filter that out. Which meets twice a week for like, a quarter an hour, and we watch a YouTube video with some exercise.

Maren Wenker
Have you ever participated in any of those offers?

Participant 17
Yes. I did. In both of them both in the activity before the pandemic as well as in the lunch break?

Maren Wenker
And were you also somehow involved in the organization of those practices? Or you just participated as a participant?

Participant 17
I just participated.

Maren Wenker
And what do you think about those activities?

Participant 17
I really liked them. So I also do some sports besides being... besides the work, but I like having fixed times to do some extra exercise and also meeting some colleagues out of the normal workspace experience.

Maren Wenker
Besides that, like seeing colleagues outside the working time, what are the other benefits? You see for yourself?

Participant 17
Again? Can you can you repeat this?

Maren Wenker
Like what are the benefits for you in participating? Why are you participating?

Participant 17
I always have to persuade myself to do this kind of exercise. But I feel that it's, it's healthy, and I need this. So this is quite a real good opportunity to actually do this. When I have fixed times, and sometimes someone's even calling me and saying hey, will you participate? And yeah, I like that.

Maren Wenker

Do you also see any benefit for your employer in offering sports activities?

Participant 17

I don't think this is an official thing. So, I think they approve of doing that. Do I see benefits? Yes, I think the simple most obvious is having healthy employees is quite a good thing for a company. But maybe the bigger advantage is to have happy employees or have employees doing things in the work time that they like and have a stronger connection to their work.

Maren Wenker

How do you feel about participating?

Participant 17

Good? I don't think I get the question haha.

Maren Wenker

Yeah. So, um, you said that you sometimes have to motivate yourself to participate. And that you're maybe also not always participating. But so how do you feel when you participate? And also when you don't participate?

Participant 17

When I don't participate? I don't feel anything at all. Because it's mostly because I don't have time or forget it. But if I do participate, it's fun, and it's a good feeling afterwards.

Maren Wenker

And do you also see any negative side in the initiative?

Participant 17

No, no. Nothing.

Maren Wenker

Okay haha, that was a fast answer. Okay. Is there anything that your company could do more for you well being?

Participant 17

For my physical well-being?

Maren Wenker

Yes.

Participant 17

Yeah, of course, they offer, like, some money for activities or for a club for some participation in fitness studios or something. They could offer company time to do this. Also, more, I don't think they actually did this before. Then we also quite a few years ago, we had some runners within the company. And then my... the company offered some free shirts, and also paid the fee to participate in some, in some runs. I think they would do this, if I asked, but I haven't asked for a long time. So now there's also some initiatives or some colleagues asked whether we want to participate in a marathon. So in a "Staffellauf", I don't know.

Maren Wenker

Yeah. "Relay race".

Participant 17

Yeah. And I think we could ask the company to pay for the fees. And I'm pretty sure they would, but we haven't.

Maren Wenker

Back in the time, when there was this this run, did you also participate in that one?

Participant 17

Yes. Yes, there were some 10 kilometer runs, where, like a handful of us participated.

Maren Wenker

But that was organized privately?

Participant 17

I think it was organized by some employees, the company paid for the shirts and the fees, and also organized the shirts. I can show you if you want to see.

Maren Wenker

Yeah, please. And how was the communication at that time? Like, there were some employees and they approached like the managers and showed them the idea, or do you remember?

Participant 17

Okay, I think it's, if you have the idea and you wanted, it's quite easy to get them to do this. Okay, walking to the next office and asking.

Maren Wenker

Okay, do you have the feeling that maybe it could cause some differences between the colleagues, because there are obviously some who love to run and do 10 kilometers run and some don't like to do sports at all? So do you feel that there could be like some, yeah, difficulties come up?

Participant 17

Yah. maybe? Like the, the pre pandemic lunch break thing was for like one hour, but it was clear that it was paid by the company but that was not working time. So it was in our free time, and we had to work, work longer in the evenings. Maybe if this would have been different. So like, it's, if it had been an hour of our working time, maybe this would have caused issues? I'm not sure.

Maren Wenker

But regarding the physical conditions, do you think that would have caused some problems that colleagues are maybe comparing themselves to the others and think they're like, less sporty?

Participant 17

No, it was all in a fun environment. And we ran like slower, and when we participated in the 10k runs, everyone ran for themselves. We had a beer afterwards. So no, this was no, quite the opposite. I think it makes rather stronger. It's... I think it connects stronger if you participate together.

Maren Wenker

So do you have the feeling that the offer of physical activities can have a positive influence on the work environment as well?

Participant 17

Yes. It's not mandatory, but it's, yeah. It's like every everything that you do outside works, connects you stronger, and leads to a better experience. Not sure if it's better than having a party, but it's just doing some things outside the office together.

Maren Wenker

When you're talking with other people outside the company, what are you telling them about your employer?

Participant 17

Sorry, if I am telling other people of my employer?

Maren Wenker

Yeah, and what are you telling them? So, when you're talking with family and friends, and they're asking about like, your job, or maybe also especially the physical activities? Are you telling other people about it as well?

Participant 17

Some friends with whom I run on weekends, yeah, I tell them that we do this, that we did this during company time. In a neutral or positive way. So just that we're doing this.

Maren Wenker

And how was the reaction of your friends who you told about this?

Participant 17

They liked it.

Maren Wenker

Yeah. Do you think it can also motivate other people to apply at this company for a job?

Participant 17

Yeah, no, I think this can be part of something but this wouldn't be the one point why I would apply for a company. But yeah, it's part of what we can tell about the employing process. But I don't think that's that would be the one point where they will decide themselves for or against us. Also, my friends not really as they have other jobs, they wouldn't apply.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything you didn't mention that yet but that you would like to add to your answers anything that we were missing out?

Participant 17

No, I don't think so.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great. Then that was already the interview. And my last question, I wish you a great day.

Participant 17

Thank you very much.

Interview 18

Maren Wenker

So hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview, if you're ready, I would like to start with the first question, which is what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 18

Okay. Yes, I think they are offering a lot of extra programs to the work like they are some health things like doing a break with some exercises, some sporty exercises or so on. And they are doing some events for their employees.

Maren Wenker
What kind of events?

Participant 18
At the moment they're mostly online some, some playing some games or I don't know. Or, but sometimes also, like, just going in a restaurant, eating, celebrating? I don't know. Yes. Healthy food in the office.

Maren Wenker
And regarding those extra programs, like you already mentioned this active break, have you ever participated?

Participant 18
No. No, actually, I didn't. Because I'm doing a lot of sportive things in my free time. And yes, I don't really think I need it. But of course, I like that they're offering it. But yeah, I didn't participate.

Maren Wenker
And why do you like that they're offering it?

Participant 18
Because if I want to, I can join. And also, I think a little bit because it already feels like they want us to be healthy.

Maren Wenker
So what kind of benefits do you see in the initiative? For yourself?

Participant 18
I think yes, of course, that I could do some sportive things in between my work, which is good for my body, and also for my mind to get off work for a little time. And also to see my colleagues and do something fun, maybe.

Maren Wenker
So besides that you're already doing a lot of sports in your free time. Is there any other reason why you don't participate?

Participant 18
I think at the beginning it was on the other days, so not my working days, but the other days in the week, so I couldn't really participate and maybe also a little bit because I am I'm not working that many hours. And so I feel like I can just do this 10 hours without doing something in between so much.

Maren Wenker
Okay, do you also see any benefits there for the company? Like for the employer in offering sports activities?

Participant 18
Yes, I think so. I think many of the employees appreciate that they're offering it and they are a little bit more happy and maybe there are also advantages like for their healthiness, so they don't get ill so much.

Maren Wenker
Okay. Is there anything that could be done to motivate you to participate?

Participant 18

I think for me, the lessons have to be a little bit more sportive like really doing a longer yoga session or something which yes, because for me, I think like doing just 10 minutes something I don't really feel like it's... It benefits so much. So, for me, I think it has to be a little bit more.

Maren Wenker

And how do you feel about not participating?

Participant 18

I don't really have a feeling. I think I don't care really because I know that I'm doing a lot of sports and I think it's fine.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Do you also see any negative side in the initiative?

Participant 18

Actually not, no.

Maren Wenker

And besides like that you would wish for longer or more active breaks, is there anything that your company could do more for you well-being?

Participant 18

Asking in German: just quickly: it's just about health related well-being?

Maren Wenker

Explaining in German: Yeah what could be done for you, not focusing on the financial aspect. What could be done for your well being? Can be sports offers or any other offers.

Participant 18

Okay. I think maybe a little bit more of like, group experiences in personal, in person. But yeah, maybe a little bit difficult at the moment.

Maren Wenker

What, what kind of group experiences for example?

Participant 18

I don't know. So maybe for the working students, or things like just doing lunch together or afterwards, or whatever.

Maren Wenker

And also more physical activities in a group?

Participant 18

Would also be cool.

Maren Wenker

Okay, do you see any problem in offering something like that?

Participant 18

I don't know, maybe. Maybe for others when they don't feel like sport or not so much. And they feel like they have to join, but they don't really want to, or they want to see the people but they don't really want to do some sportive things, and then they maybe feel a little, a little bad and don't know what to do. Yeah. Could be a problem.

Maren Wenker

Do you think that this could also be a problem in your team?

Participant 18

I'm not sure. A little bit maybe.

Maren Wenker

Have you talked with colleagues about it? Or why do you have this sensation that this could also be a problem in your team?

Participant 18

I never talked to someone about it. I just think maybe there are some people who are not that sporty or don't like sport that much and feel like it's a little pressure to do this. But yeah, I just think that I don't know, really, for sure.

Maren Wenker

And for you personally, would you ever feel this kind of pressure?

Participant 18

No, I don't.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and why?

Participant 18

I don't know. I think for me, I like sports. And I also don't think that it's a problem when you are not that good. I think it's always always good to try and just to do a little bit. And yes, for me, that's it.

Maren Wenker

When you're talking with other people outside the company about your company, what are you telling them?

Participant 18

I often tell them that we have a lot of cool offers like this or like events, or I think I always talk very positive about this kind of things.

Maren Wenker

So you do tell other people also, especially about the sports offer?

Participant 18

Yes.

Maren Wenker

And how was the reaction of the other people you're telling about this?

Participant 18

I think they also would like it or they tell me that that's a cool idea. And yes, but actually, the ones I talked to they are working in often... they work in companies that are a little bit the same They also offer this kind of things and just...

Maren Wenker

So do you think it could be also a motivation to apply for jobs specifically at a company where sports is offered?

Participant 18

Um, I think for me personally, not. So I think it's a nice to have, but it's not that I would choose a company because of it. Yes, because I'm not using it so much, and it's not that important for me. But when I would read it or something, I would think, yes, it's, or it would be a positive thing, but I wouldn't apply because of it.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything that you didn't mention yet, but that you would like to add to your answers or something that we haven't talked about before, but is important to your mind?

Participant 18

Hmm, no.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Great. Then that was the interview. Thanks so much for all your answers. And I wish you a nice day. Thank you.

Participant 18

Thank you.

Interview 19

Maren Wenker

So hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview, if you're ready, I would like to start with the first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 19

Yes, my company, actually, they're very individual, I would say like they have broad actions to do like, events, for example, or also a lot of personal stuff. So this is what that's what's special about this company, I would say. So there's, like, I start with the global actions. Yeah, team events, this is like a good thing for building up like team, the team spirit. And then they have team events are, for example, summer parties, winter parties, online games, like online remote games, or also for better team communication, "Projects and breakfast". So we can, so everyone is on the same page when it's about the projects. And, and it's nice that you can eat a little bit in this and it's easy. Yeah, come together. Before COVID there was also stuff like "Frontend Freunde" and this was also an event which builds up like a team feeling because you, as a team go out and speak to the outside and tell what you know. And you connect and network, like these kind of things. Yes, I think this, this for the global situation with global events, probably they're much more about for a broad feeling these are the first things and like, the personal stuff is very nice. Because in this company it is like that because of the HR. Like I had a feeling they do a lot for the HR and for the individual situation of the personal employee. And I really enjoy it. Yeah, that I heard from other colleagues also, it's like everyone like for example, you have kids and then they check out that you have... if they're sick, you also can get some time to manage all the stuff or yeah, in case if you want to reduce your own working load or working time. It's also very Yeah, they're very understanding and listen to your personal situation and then during a little conversation, new contracts are pretty fast made and that's it. So also my case was pretty cool. So just before 2021 ended I decided this whole year of Corona was a lot of work. And I felt I need to reduce a little bit; just a quick Slack message and one day later "Yes, you can do it." So it was very easy peasy. Without there was not so much bureaucracy which you say it. So, this is what I enjoy about this company.

Maren Wenker

And is there also something related to your physical well being that is offered?

Participant 19

Physical well being... Yes, of course we have this... there was more last year before Corona also there was every week I think once or twice like a personal coach came during the lunchtime and we had the opportunity to go there and make some workout for one hour. And after this we could, we had the opportunity to shower at the office and then continue working. This was pretty cool. Of course for the team building, but also for your physical well being and, and during the corona situation we had these opportunities to have 15 minutes physical actions before lunchtime, by remote video call then we just do some workouts and your stretches and stuff like this.

Maren Wenker

Besides those two things like this active lunch break, and there's you call it yoga stretches. Was there any other sports offer?

Participant 19

Yes, they also had the yoga classes, I think yes, but I never participated. Because in these times, I was active by myself with a lot of yoga and different sports. So, this was too much for me. Okay, if I wouldn't have, I wouldn't have participated. I think if I like my private sport wouldn't be so much. I think this is a nice opportunity because it's for free. It was free. I think it's usually for free. And it's nice. Yeah. But also on the other hand, sometimes it's also cool not always to be with the colleagues doing everything together. You're working. Sometimes you drink beer, then you go and have sports together. So, I also choose like this. I want to do my sports with some other people, not always colleagues. This was also important for me.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And have you participated at this running lunch break? Or the 15 minute break now? Because you said you didn't participate in the yoga classes. But did you participate in the other offers?

Participant 19

Yeah. The lunch break, the one-hour lunch break, I participated. Yes. Actually. Yeah. Every time, I think one time I missed. So, it was pretty cool. Because also the quality of the training was very, very nice. So, you had a personal trainer, he, you had good exercises. And yes, for the before lunch break, like the 15 minutes remotes workout I participated once cause I usually forget it. I forget that it's there, then. So, my work.... How I work is I just work like in a tunnel and suddenly, "oh, it's 1pm". And then I also switch on the focus mode on Mac, so I don't get disturbed. Then usually it's too late. Yeah, but actually I did it once, it was cool. I felt a little bit loosed up, the shoulders and some stretches.... They're always pretty good, I think.

Maren Wenker

Okay, you already started mentioning it. That would be my next question as well. What do you think about those activities and initiatives like the active lunch break? This 15 minutes stretches, the yoga classes?

Participant 19

I think it's very nice that people have this opportunity. And of course, you're free to choose. And if you have time, or if you can manage it, then I think it's good to participate in it. Like in my case, I don't know. I think it's just a personal thing. I just forget it. If I wouldn't forget it. Yeah, actually, because also because I reduced the time, working six hours a day now. I just have to fit in a little bit more of stuff, because it's still in this. Yeah. And this changing mode from eight hours a day to six hours a day. So yeah, I'm quite efficient right now. Unless I don't. Yeah, I don't take these little breaks right now.

Maren Wenker

Were you also involved in some way in the decision about those practices, or in the organization of them? Or you just participated?

Participant 19

Yes, I was also included, but more that, "let's promote it a little bit internal speak a little bit about it. And in the end, we need you have to submit at this kind of session. But that was not... I think I was not promoting it. Like not... I don't remember actually. But I think I helped to promote it internal.

Maren Wenker

So how was that, like the organizers of the activities they approached you and like said, "Okay, please spread the word or like you could try it out first." And then you started talking with others about it? Or how was it?

Participant 19

I think it was just the organizers they said, "Hey, this is our... we're doing this and if you like it, participate and if I think at one point, there were like three, four participants, and we needed to get then... it was better to get more so.... It was like from both sides. I also wanted that more people are coming and the organizers wanted this too so just spread it and spread it within a company.

Maren Wenker

So how did you feel about having this task to do in promoting it?

Participant 19

Okay. No problem. It was not so time consuming. Just some slack or in these days, just mouth to mouth. And then at lunch break: "Hey guys, what about you come on next week? Stand up and do something for your fat butt" haha.

Maren Wenker

Okay, so you already mentioned some of it before, like the benefits that you see there for yourself. So you said to move your body in the active lunch break. What kind of other benefits do you see there for yourself? In participating?

Participant 19

Yeah, so like the first benefit, of course, is physical health. Secondly, I think it's physically health and mental health is always like a combination. So, if you have this period of time where you can just do something, like just one task, for example, running or doing an exercise, then you switch off your mind a little bit. And it's, I think, improving also the concentration if you do this, so after, like this little breaks, it's also a little break for the mind. And like a little refresher.

Maren Wenker

And besides your personal benefits, what kind of benefits do you see there for the company? For your employer?

Participant 19

Yeah, so one thing would be people come together. If you have a task, or with a group together, it's like a small achievement, like social wise, and you stick together more as a group, probably? And, yeah, also for the productivity. It could be in the long term, it could be better. And maybe also, like the burn out rate could fall probably, if you do it regularly.

Maren Wenker

And why do you think is that? Like, why would it help against burnout, for example?

Participant 19

Yes, I said this, I think the balance between the physical and mental health in these little breaks, I think it's just important to also just take a break. If you work, just like, without a break for hours, and you just, your brain is just fried. So, I think if you do this for a long time, you probably get very just fried, and after work, you're super tired. And then you try to do your sports and everything and try to fit it in all the stuff. And then you feel stressed. I think if you get the space and the room from a company to do this, and you don't have the feeling that I'll have to squeeze it, squeeze it in somehow. And it's accepted by the company that there's a space for the employees, I think it's just nice, because you don't have to stress after work.

Maren Wenker

And how do you feel when you cannot manage to participate or don't want to participate? You said in the beginning, like the yoga classes, you didn't participate because you also wanted to do sports with other people than just your colleagues and the active lunchbreak it's a matter of time and that sometimes you're also forgetting about it. And yeah, then it's already after 1pm. So how do you feel about that when you cannot manage to participate?

Participant 19

Like canceling in a remote way is more easy. Actually, I don't feel too much. It's just okay, this, there was this event, I missed it. It's okay. If you are in the office, and then everyone's like, "Come on, let's come." This is like another drive. Then you have more these, like group feeling. Because everyone pushes each other. I think then it's hard to say no. Than in the remote situation.

Maren Wenker

And this group situation, do you feel it's motivating or it's also pressuring?

Participant 19

It depends. More, it's motivating on my case. But if you have too much offer also it could become contra productive. Because you have the yoga you have the running, you're stretching and as I said I already had like my four days of sports next to the company then I wanted to participate in one thing. So like the running I said, that's cool. But the rest is too much for me so it was not bad. Just didn't feel like pressure or something and just too much. In my case, it was too much. Too much opportunities to participate.

Maren Wenker

Did you also hear that from any other colleague that they said it's too much offer? Or that this is a reason for them to not participate?

Participant 19

No.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Do you also see any negative side in those initiatives?

Participant 19

Let me think. Not really. No, not in the first place. Also if think about a little bit more...No, not really. I think it's good. It's like it's optional. No one's forcing you, you can do it or not.

Maren Wenker

So do you think that this is maybe also related to the atmosphere in general in the team that you don't feel forced to do it? So could you imagine that in another company, this could be different?

Participant 19

No, I can't imagine because I don't think a company can force someone to do this. So it would be weird, because if you force the people, then I think, then it's contra productive? Probably. Because they don't want to do it then and you're spending money for this kind of time you offer them. So I think it's... should be... you have to feel the vibe of people in the company. If they're appreciating this or not. If you go to like, "The office", or "Stromberg" (TV series about people working in an office), I think maybe probably the people don't appreciate it. And you can, you shouldn't do it as a company.

Maren Wenker

Yeah, talking about the company, are you also telling other people outside the company, about your employer and what they're doing for your well-being there?

Participant 19

Yes, I'm talking about this. And people say "Wow, that's very cool." And they say this company's nice that they're offering all this stuff. So, um, yeah, it has a very good, like actual marketing effects for recruiting. Because if I talk to people who are also in my field, and then I show off with all the benefits, they said, "Wow, cool. I want that too." So actually, it's also like a..., you show off in kind a way "We are doing this and this and it's nice and they take care so much." Like these things I would say are almost as important as good projects, like 50:50. So you need good projects, which are... where you can put in your skills, but you also need to say it like... that the company appreciates you as a person and benefits your work and also gives you this freedom that's nice.

Maren Wenker

About which benefits are you're telling them or can you give some examples? What are you talking about?

Participant 19

Like the sports things of course. Then yeah, just also when I talk about my personal stuff, and I say they're really cool they adjusted to my situation. So they tell me "Oh" or the friends tell me "Cool, very nice company that they're not just... they're just not looking for the money, just looking for like more sustainable growing I would say. So, the people grow with the projects and with the company and not just like profit profit profits. Oh yes and anything also, we are talking about the parties. And the events in general, especially I'm so full of Corona events now. Because when everything started with the remote office, so everyone is at home and has to adjust to the new situation. It's very nice how fast like a company can come up with new ideas to make for example, this remote games or, or remote events. This is quite cool to see that then just so... another company could also let's save money and just like be happy that we don't have to do events, but like a company like mine say, "Cool, let's invest more time and ideas to make things happen." And it shows that they care. That's nice to see.

Maren Wenker

Is there something that your company could do more for your well-being?

Participant 19

Not like this kind of things. I don't know. I don't have an idea right now.

Maren Wenker

Or maybe any sports activity that you would like to have, some examples in that area?

Participant 19

Sports. Yeah, they could offer like, for example, let's have a basketball team or something like this, or let's play football. But I think this is one point is also a thing where the employees have to organize themselves, like...a company is not a fitness studio. So if you want to play

football with the colleagues, and I think at this point, this is something they have to organize themselves. For example, I, two weeks ago, I played laser tag, then I thought, "Oh, this would be a cool event." So especially if I have ideas like this, it's also easy like the, the way to get this, maybe this idea can come true. So you just have to go to the office management and say "Hey, I played this, maybe this is a thing we could do one day." So they gonna say "Yeah, we try we check out some prices and see if there's interest. And if not, you can still go there and manage by yourself. Yeah, and chat with people in person." But these are this is also like a very easy way to drop an idea.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything you didn't mention yet but that you would like to add to your answers, something that we didn't talk about before?

Participant 19

Yeah, I think the last question...what was it about again?

Maren Wenker

The last question was, what your company could do more for your well being? And if you can come up with some examples, maybe also related to the sports field?

Participant 19

And then I forgot something, I think but I don't still don't remember there was something they also do. I think I forgot to mention it. Was something about sports...? No. No, but there was also an app, they developed an app. Right, where they had these episodic and something for "Achtsamkeit" I forgot what it means?

Maren Wenker

Mindfulness.

Participant 19

Yeah like a mindfulness app mixed with activities, resource, like a small internal project. Also, good example, that thing. Now, this is a topic they're interested in. And I think there are a few more things I forgot to mention about these events and activities. But yeah, I should need more time to think about it.

Maren Wenker

About that mindfulness app. Have you also used it?

Participant 19

Yeah, in the beginning a little bit. But then, I think this was exactly in the beginning of Corona. And then I had my own routines. So this was nice ideas. Like "oh, stand up to do this and this challenge and do this this." I did this for fun, one, two times. But I had my own thing and just went for long walks in the lunchtime, and just I didn't need it actually.

Maren Wenker

Would you like to have this more introduced into the company again, as well? Like not just related to the physical well-being but more activities and incentives about the mental well-being?

Participant 19

Not personally, for me, not actually. Could be interesting for some people, maybe, maybe if you're like a more introvert and also if you're, if you're not so much into this topic, and maybe you can learn something like stuff you haven't heard before. I think in my personal situation, I read a lot about mental health and I'm active in sports, everything so it is just for me, a little reminder, we can think about this again. But all in all, I think I'm doing it most of all. So, yeah,

could be nice. Maybe for some... also for some younger people who are just not so. I don't know. Not so interested in these topics. Maybe they can learn something from it.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great, then thanks so much for all your answers. If something else comes back to your mind later on, you can also message me about it. And yeah, thanks again and have a great day. Bye.

Participant 19

Okay, bye.

Interview 20

Maren Wenker

So hello, thanks so much for taking the time today for my interview. If you're ready, I would like to start with the first question, which is, what is your company doing for your well-being?

Participant 20

Oh, that's a good question. We are doing regular events for our well-being, like wine tastings, beer tastings, also some game nights and also Some come together with the team, the product team. Also, also there is a sport break before the lunch, but I've never taken part on that. And there's a coffee break every day. But I'm not there every day, just twice a month or something like this.

Maren Wenker

You already mentioned the sports break before the lunch? Were or are there any other physical activity offers?

Participant 20

Some time, like three years ago, we made a "Zwalk challenge" where everyone was walking as much as he can. And yeah, they... it was a kind of a healthy challenge. And also there was "run and fit", a combination of jogging and making some exercises outside. The last one I really liked and took part, like every time.

Maren Wenker

And why is that you participated in that one, but not in the break before the lunch nowadays?

Participant 20

I like the fact that I can go outside. The sports break before the lunch is inside and in front of the computer. And I just like it more to make sports outside because you can go away from the computer and see some real people and some fresh air. I like that very much.

Maren Wenker

Besides getting fresh air, what kind of benefits do you see in participating?

Participant 20

Reducing weight - The first part. Also talking with people and learning new exercises.

Maren Wenker

And besides those benefits for you, what kind of benefits do you see for your company in offering something like that?

Participant 20

More balance in my life. Because if I sit the whole day on the computer, it happens to me that I get headaches. And I don't feel very well in the evening. If I know, I'm the whole day before the computer, in front of the computer.

Maren Wenker

Okay, and how do you feel about participating?

Participant 20

Good. It's always nice to take part in the outside events. I don't like inside events in front of the computer. I don't know why but it's... sport has to be outside for me and I have to go out or at least... Yeah, have to stop looking at the screen the whole day because as a software engineer, you look like eight hours a day on the computer and it's just too much.

Maren Wenker

So if the initiative would start again in the office, you would participate again?

Participant 20

If I wouldn't work remote, I would participate again.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Do you also see any negative side in the initiative?

Participant 20

Just for the employer because it costs money. But there's no... I don't see any negative points. I think it's quite good for the employees to get outside and do something for the health. It's not just physical health, also mental health I think.

Maren Wenker

And why also mental health?

Participant 20

Because if you go outside and don't look on the screen anymore your head becomes "ein bisschen frei, keine Ahnung?".

Maren Wenker

Yeah. Get your head free if you go outside.

Participant 20

Yes, yes, yes. Yes, exactly. Yeah, it's switching contexts. And I think it's gives you the opportunity to think different about problems you challenged in the morning.

Maren Wenker

Okay. You said before that it costs the company money. But do you think that what they are gaining from that, what you also mentioned the benefits there, like, you have like less headache, you maybe look from a different perspective to the problems that you were facing before? Do you think that there's a return on invest for the company?

Participant 20

Of course. Just... it would also be okay, if you go outside on a walk, maybe. But I like the sports offer very much, because it's also you just feel better at the end of the day, and if you have employees that feel better at the end of the day, it's always return of investment, I think. And I also think that you can, okay, "von der Steuer absetzen?"

Maren Wenker

That you can deduct it from the taxes, as well.

Participant 20

Yes, yes, yes. Okay. So it's no costs at the end for the company.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there something that your company could do more for your well-being?

Participant 20

I am a remote worker. At the moment, I would like to have a desk that can go up and down. But I'm always thinking about buying it myself. But it would be nice, if the company would pay it and support it.

Maren Wenker

Okay. And besides that, do you have any other examples?

Participant 20

You can always do more, like giving free things, but I think it's quite okay how it is at the moment. I also like the fresh food in the office some time ago. And I think they are doing quite well. But you can also always do more, but I think it's quite good state at the moment.

Maren Wenker

Okay. When you're talking with other people outside the company, what are you telling them about your company?

Participant 20

In context of well being, okay. For example, I told my girlfriend about the "Run and Fit program" and we then tried that out at home. So we took away some of the exercises, and also could use it at home. And I'm always talking positive to my friends about this additional benefits because some friends of mine also working at a software company, and they don't have those benefits. And they are just like, "I would like to have too" and yeah, it's always positive I think.

Maren Wenker

Do you think it could motivate also people to apply for a company where something like that was offered?

Participant 20

Of course. I think it's not the reason I would send an application to the company but I think it's... if I have to decide between two companies, I would rather go to the company with cool benefits like sport breaks, etc. Because it's not just the thing that you have a program or a benefit. It's also they... you can see they care about the employees and it's not like "Okay, you earn your money. It's also a bit like you can improve your life and we care about you."

Maren Wenker

Okay, you said before that you wanted or that you tried the "Run and Fit program" with your girlfriend together so is it like that you need or like to have other people doing sports together with you or are you also doing it on your own?

Participant 20

I'm also doing it on my own but it's always more motivating if someone else joins and you do it together because yeah, it's just...you motivate each other and you do one squat more or something like that and I like that. But I have to say that I also like to go jogging, walking alone and have my music with me because it's just like I go out for an hour and I have done my sports and it's fine. I think there are advantages at both sides.

Maren Wenker

Okay. Is there anything you didn't mention yet but that you would like to add to your answers, something that we didn't talk about before but which you think is important?

Participant 20

Let me think about... Ah, no, I think it's fine.

Maren Wenker

Okay, great, then that were already all my questions. Thanks so much for taking the time. And I wish you a great day. Bye.

Participant 20

Bis dann haha.