

Mexico embraces dual commitment



To grow business in Mexico, DANONE is banking on our dual commitment—the conviction that business success goes hand in hand with social progress. Putting this into practice means combining attention to people with a realistic view of social conditions. Danone de Mexico first began tackling this challenge in the mid-nineties.

Social progress...

At the time, the situation was dire: Mexico was in the grip of a serious economic crisis, and the future of the business unit was in doubt. Rather than adopting a purely economic strategy to rebuild market share, Danone de Mexico turned to employee development, inspired by the simple idea that a business cannot grow unless its people prosper—the very heart of the dual commitment to business success and social progress expressed by Antoine Riboud in 1972. Danone de Mexico thus launched varied initiatives to forge closer ties with employees and motivate them in working towards business goals. More broadly, these programs were designed, in the words of one Mexican manager,

to make the company “a close-knit family” pulling together to overcome difficulties.

... yields business success

Today the economic crisis is only a memory, but the employee programs are still going strong, says Luis Olvera, Human Resources Director for Danone de Mexico. “In 2004, we donated a percentage of our sales to charities helping sick children, and the program was expanded to include the children of employees unable to afford particularly expensive medical treatments. During the year, Danone thus provided care for 34 youngsters.” Also in 2004, Danone de Mexico established partnerships with Mexican universities to meet the combined goal of recruiting tomorrow’s managers and preparing Mexican students for the job market, showing them what companies need and teaching them to interview successfully. The Mexican version of Groupe DANONE’s dual commitment has been a success: 99% of Danone Mexico employees say they are happy to work at DANONE, and surveys confirm that a large majority of consumers consider Danone a socially responsible business. More recently, Danone was voted the “best company to work for” in Mexico. All in all, a recipe for future success.

For more on Mexico, see also p.32.