



Workplace

Eagle Star Life is a company with a customer service focus and a dynamic ethos, which currently employs 464 staff of which 225 are Male and 239 are Female (as at 31st December 2005).

When asked to give Eagle Star's Greatest Strength - "Friendly hard-working team environment, Good Company Spirit" Were some of the replies from Eagle Star Employees – Employee Attitude Survey December 2005.

Eagle Star employees have a strong work ethic and as a company, we understand that this means our employees need to be motivated and satisfied.

Employee Benefits

Eagle Star proactively complies with all employee legislation e.g. Maternity Protection Act, Adoptive Leave Act, Carers Leave Act and Parental Leave Act, and where possible the company goes above and beyond compliance in offering benefits to our employees. To this end, the company provides an extensive pay and benefits package to all employees incorporating:

- Competitive salaries
- Performance related bonus
- Share participation scheme
- Flexible working hours
- Market leading Company Pension Plan (Defined Benefits Scheme) with normal retirement at age 60
- Free Permanent Health Insurance
- VHI subsidy
- Exam support
- Personal Development Plans
- Staff discounts on financial and insurance products
- Health screening every two years
- VDU eye care programme
- Annual anti-flu vaccination.
- Long –Term Service Awards
- Sports and Social Club
- Health Screening is provided every two years for all employees and is

arranged with a reputable health screening company. Each year the company arranges a voluntary Anti-flu vaccination to be administered free of charge to interested employees. Permanent Health Insurance benefits are also in place for all employees who suffer a long-term serious illness.

Eagle Star Life also has a Group Pension Scheme which is a Defined Benefit Pension Scheme established by the Eagle Star companies in Ireland to provide benefits for employees and their dependants. The main purposes of the Scheme are:

- To give a secure income on reaching retirement age or in the event of retiring early on grounds of ill-health;
- To give dependants financial protection in the event of death either while employed by Eagle Star or after retirement.

Annual Travel Pass Scheme

Eagle Star offers an incentive to staff to use public transport through the provision of the Annual Travel Pass Scheme. This is a tax-free option to purchase train and bus tickets through monthly salary deduction as an alternative to traveling by car. 17% of employees availed of this scheme in 2006.

The company also endeavours to use car-parking spaces in its buildings to maximum effect and we offer managers the choice of a cash payment as an alternative to taking a company car.

Work Life Balance

“*The evidence shows that when work-life balance practices are effectively designed and successfully implemented they can...be a tool for recruitment or retention – they can also help companies organise their schedule to give better customer service.*”

Maria Cronin, Director Marketing, Communications & Member Relations, IBEC, 1st March 2006

Work Life Balance day is an annual event 'The day provides the opportunity for employers, trade unions and employee

representatives to recognise the importance of work-life balance policies in the workplace through information sessions and competitions.' (IBEC Website). In 2006, Eagle Star promoted Work/Life balance day by highlighting the various family friendly policies we operate and holding a fun competition for family-friendly prizes.

Eagle Star's family friendly policies are designed to assist workers in combining employment with their family life, caring responsibilities and personal life outside the workplace. Our family friendly initiatives include; flexible working hours, part-time working, paid maternity leave, parental leave, adoptive leave, compassionate leave, force majeure leave and carer's leave

Parental leave is granted to enable working parents to take care of their young children. Employees are entitled to a 14-week continuous block or in shorter 'broken' periods as agreed with the employer. Sixteen employees took parental leave in 2005, which accounted for a total of 269 days leave. Currently 7% of staff avail of the part-time working option.

These benefits, as with all Eagle Star employee benefits, are not gender specific. Both male and female employees can apply for parental leave and/or part-time working options but all employees who have availed of part-time working to the end of December 2005 have been female.

Eagle Star Employee
“*Just wanted to say thank you for all your support during my maternity leave and while I was pregnant. The flexibility that you gave me was fantastic and really helped me during this time. I believe that Eagle Star is a family friendly organisation. The company has greatly facilitated me during my maternity leave and during my transition back to work.*”



Facilitating my part time hours the way you have, has been of huge practical help to me. On top of time with my children I've been able to organise part time childcare which has reduced my costs significantly.



Eagle Star Employee

Equal Opportunities for Everyone

Eagle Star is committed to providing equal opportunities for its entire staff in accordance with current legislation.

Our equal opportunities policy extends to all aspects of employment including recruitment, training, career development, promotion and performance appraisal. Trained HR Staff ensure that the policy is implemented across the board and we do this by:

- Ensuring that no applicant or staff member receives less favourable treatment on any discriminatory grounds.
- Ensuring that no applicant or staff member is disadvantaged by any employment conditions or requirements, which cannot be shown to be justifiable.
- Basing selection and promotion decisions on suitability for the job. The individual's potential, ability and merit are the sole criteria.
- Providing an environment within which all staff members have an equal opportunity to progress within the organisation.
- Ensuring that conditions of employment and systems of determining pay do not favour any particular category of staff member on discriminatory grounds.
- Regarding any deliberate discriminatory action by individual managers or members of staff as a serious disciplinary offence.

All employees are familiar with our Equal Opportunities policy, available on our Intranet via the staff handbook.

O2 Ability Awards.

In February 2006 Eagle Star became an O2 Ability Award winner. The O2 Ability Awards recognise best practice in the employment of people with disabilities. They examine all aspects of employment and recognise progressive attitudes particularly in organisations that see diversity as a corporate opportunity and key to their success. Winning this award means we are recognised as an organisation with an open attitude to flexible employment arrangements.

Developing the Potential of Eagle Star Employees

Eagle Star is committed to achieving sustained success and growth by utilising and developing the skills, talents and potential of each staff member. One of the key instruments in developing these skills and maximising job performance is performance appraisal.

Performance Appraisal

Individual performance is reviewed against agreed personal targets or objectives. Thus the overall objectives of the company are cascaded down through functional levels, until they are ultimately translated into specific performance objectives for every staff member.

The Process

Before the annual Performance Appraisal discussion (December/January) the employee reviews their own performance against agreed objectives since their last assessment and completes a self-assessment form. The appraiser assesses the employee's performance against each objective for the past twelve months, following consultation with their manager. The Human Resources team play an important role in ensuring that standards of personal assessment are realistic and consistent company-wide.

Employee Training

Eagle Star is committed to maintaining a staff of highly professional and motivated people. Our employees are highly trained, highly educated and hold professional qualifications from various institutions

such as the Institute of Actuaries, Chartered Insurance Institute of Ireland, Irish Institute of Pension Managers, Institute of Chartered Accountants, Institute of Investment Management and Research, Marketing Institute of Ireland, Life Insurance Association and Institute of Personnel Development.

The company's approach to development and training is to:

- Ensure that every employee receives the development and training required to do their job.
- Recognise staff development and training as an integral part of the management function at all levels.
- Ensure every staff member is aware that they are ultimately responsible for their own development.

The identification of individual training needs takes place on an ongoing basis between the staff member and their manager, with appropriate assistance from the HR department. The matching of identified needs with corporate or departmental objectives forms an important part of this process.

Eagle Star offers every employee their own Personal Development Plan (PDP) and fosters staff development through many initiatives including sponsored training, education and other development actions and rewarding an employee's achievements in the provision of study leave, reimbursement of fees and payment of qualification awards. Eagle Star also provides in-house training.



The types of courses undertaken by staff range from ECDL courses to MBA's. Applications for full and part sponsorship for degree courses and professional qualifications are open to all staff regardless of area, role, and length of time with the company.

- The number of training days on average per person in 2005 was 1.56 based on a total number of employees of 445.
- The total number of training days undertaken in Eagle Star in 2005 was 694
- The total number of staff who attended training in 2005 was 1043.

Qualified and trained employees improve the quality and dynamics of Eagle Star's workforce while at the same time helping individual employees achieve their personal goals and aspirations.

Personal Development Plans

“ *I very much appreciate the support I've got from the company to go back and do exams, having joined as an ex-student.* ”

Eagle Star Employee

Personal Development Planning involves drawing up and discussing a development plan based on the technical and personal competencies of an employee's current position and future career aspirations. It requires direct input from both managers and employees to establish an action plan - encouraging an interactive shared approach.

There are three stages in a PDP, preparing the development plan; the development discussion and implementing the plan.

- Preparation involves employees determining their current role, strengths and development needs and considering their future aspirations.
- The discussion focuses on what employees need to do, the benefits of such action, how best to achieve their objectives and how on completion employees will apply their new skills.

- Implementation can involve a variety of training solutions that can take many forms, including; induction, desk-side training, internal or external courses, use of Eagle Star facilities, interactive technology-based methods, use of outside training consultants and others.

Employee Consultative Committee

Eagle Star has a number of systems in place which encourage communication and feedback from all members of staff.

One of the most important of these is an 'Employee Consultative Committee', the objectives of which is:

- To inform and consult employees on the progress of the business.
- To outline proposals for future developments.
- To provide a regular/structured forum to consult employees and to hear their views.

There are a number of constituencies for which employee representatives are elected. Each constituency represents a particular section of the company. The ECC is complimentary to other communication systems in place throughout the company such as an annual staff survey, team briefs, an employee intranet and notice boards. The ECC also provides a member Trustee to the staff pension scheme. Eagle Star also recognises Amicus-MSF, the fourth largest union in Ireland, which represents skilled and professional people in all sectors. Information and news from AMICUS-MSF is communicated to staff through a dedicated web page on the employee intranet.

How the ECC Works

The committee consists of seven employee representatives who are selected by the employees for a two-year term. They meet regularly, at least quarterly, with management including the Managing Director.

Zurich European Forum

Eagle Star Life as part of the Zurich Financial Services Group also has a representative on the Zurich European

Forum. The ECC provides support to this representative and assists in the effective carrying out of his/her role. The term of office is four years and it is here that anything of a trans-national nature or an issue that significantly affects the interests of employees in at least two countries in Europe, can be discussed.

The Eagle Star Annual Employee Survey

An annual employee attitude survey takes place in December of each year. Employees complete the survey electronically via our intranet during working hours.

Some of the results of the Annual Staff Survey

- The 2006 employee survey had a response rate of 67%. This indicates employee willingness to continue to contribute to the ongoing development of Eagle Star.
- There was a good deal of consensus in the answers to the survey, a positive result, as it means employees across Eagle Star see the company in a relatively similar way.
- There were improvements in the areas of 'understanding company goals' and the climate of the organisation which indicate management listened and responded positively to staff perceptions in the previous survey.
- Employees in Eagle Star believe there is a high priority on customer satisfaction and that the organisation has a bright future. They are clear about their departmental and individual goals, and report that their terms and conditions are fair. Employees feel there is a need for more opportunities for upward communication in the organisation.
- Overall satisfaction levels continue to be high. The survey was first run in 1999. In December 2005 an important survey question was: "Taking everything into account how satisfied are you with Eagle Star as an employer?" The finding here was that the overall satisfaction rating among Eagle Star employees is 63%.
- 60% of our staff were aware of our commitment to Corporate Responsibility.

A Safe & Healthy Work Environment

Eagle Star has always been committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all staff members and to meet our duties to contractors and members of the public who may be affected by our operations. Eagle Star's safety policy is set out in our Safety Statement which is issued to all staff members on joining the company and is available on our employee intranet. All new members of staff receive induction training, an integral part of which is concerned with Health and Safety issues and policies.

A Health and Safety committee, which includes staff representation, meets quarterly to consult on Health and Safety issues. An accident procedure is in place and everyone is obliged to co-operate with any investigations in order to establish the circumstances surrounding an accident. Details of the accident must be advised to the HR department. A central record of all accidents at work is kept in an Accident Report Book.

There are trained Fire Wardens and First Aiders in our premises. There is also a high level of safety awareness and our procedures and equipment including clear evacuation instructions are maintained up to date in all of our premises.

A list of the persons at Eagle Star who are trained in First Aid is available on the staff intranet and clearly identifiable First Aid boxes are provided in all buildings.

Ergonomic Assessments of the workplace are carried out on a regular basis. This assessment involves a full examination of all workstations to ensure the comfort, health and safety of all concerned.

Eagle Star also runs in house "Quit Smoking" courses for staff.

Community Involvement

Our most obvious point of contact with the community is through our employees. Often employees will approach either management or the Sports and Social committee for support, either financially or through publicity. In the past we have helped many local and national charities

by simply having a casual day in the office, and gathering donations. In 2005 we have raised money for Irish Cancer Society, Irish Youth Foundation and the Laura Lynn Foundation.

Preventing Bullying/Harassment

Eagle Star is committed to providing all of its employees with an environment free from bullying/harassment.

The policy applies to employees both in the workplace and at work associated events such as meetings, conferences and work related social events, whether on the premises or off site.

The policy applies to bullying/harassment not only by fellow employees but also by a customer or other business contact to which an employee might reasonably expect to come into contact with in the course of their employment.



Workplace Summary

Eagle Star Life as a company and employer goes beyond providing a basic commitment in the 'Workplace' by providing an extensive range of benefits for all employees. We feel we can pride ourselves in our policies on employee training and development, equal opportunities and work/life balance. We place a high value on one of our key assets - our employees. We have practices in place to deal with issues like absenteeism or staff grievances so that were any difficulties to arise, they can be identified and addressed early on. Looking to the future, Eagle Star - an employer of choice, will strive to continually measure and improve and to share our examples of good practice with other companies and act as a leader in this area.

Marketplace Objectives

Eagle Star aims to:

- Learn from the employee attitude survey and to address specific items arising.
- To maintain and increase employee participation in the survey.
- To communicate findings across the organisation.
- To regularly communicate to employees updates on changes in business objectives and progress towards achieving these objectives.