

Fact Sheet

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2020 State of Curiosity Report – Fact Sheet

The Most Important Results at Glance – All Markets

The Curiosity Index for Employees at Merck Is 79.9 – 9.6 Points Higher Than That of Employees of External Companies: Among Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, employees, the score of 87.6% shows their particular Openness to People’s Ideas. Their score for Deprivation Sensitivity is 79.4%. Joyous Exploration ranks close to the top of the list at 78.3%. With a score of 74.5%, Distress Tolerance is a little less pronounced.

Employees in Management Functions Are More Curious: The higher the hierarchical position, the greater the curiosity potential. This was shown particularly in the case of project managers. Their curiosity scores were 5.2% higher than those of their subordinates for Deprivation Sensitivity and 7.6% higher for Joyous Exploration. Above all in the case of Distress Tolerance, their score was 8.2% above the average.

Does Age Play a Role? Curiosity Is a Matter of Age: The highest curiosity scores were achieved among 35- to 45-year-olds. In comparison, Generation Z (under 25) typically had lower scores, which may be explainable by their lack of experience and new working conditions that can tie up important resources. To a certain extent, interest in tackling new issues and ideas seems to decline in the age group 55 and older. Above all in Joyous Exploration, the scores of this age group are 3% lower than average. This is where we find the greatest potential for the implementation of focused measures such as the company’s own “Activate Curiosity” program to increase curiosity and, in turn, promote innovative thought processes.



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Job Tenure: Fewer Years, Greater Curiosity: Employees who have been with the company for only six months or so are particularly eager to learn: in their case, Joyous Exploration and Openness to People's Ideas are particularly prevalent. The high score for Joyous Exploration (+5%) is particularly impressive. Here, the new working environment appears to be conducive to the urge to learn and experience something new. As this character trait can diminish with time, the promotion of curiosity begins to play a special role as job tenure increases.

Merck Employees Believe That Curiosity Is Particularly Important for Addressing Global Problems: 87% of them believe that curiosity is essential in the battle against cancer. In the case of sustainability solutions, 86% of them see curiosity as an important driver. The ratings are also high for issues such as clean water (82%), climate change (81%), world hunger (73%), and infertility (71%). These ratings are considerably higher than the results recorded in the 2018 State of Curiosity Report: there, the issue of clean water achieved 58%, the highest rating among the participants in the survey. At that time, only 38% of the participants believed that global problem of infertility could be addressed by curiosity.

The Promotion of Curiosity Is Seen as Potential: A very promising development: while 31% of the employees surveyed for the 2018 State of Curiosity Report stated that projects were unduly managed from the top down, and that own ideas were rarely realized, 48% of the Merck employees saw no barriers to their curiosity within the company. They feel that they can develop freely and retain the intellectual ownership of their projects. They believe that a climate of personal responsibility and the ability to work independently actually promotes their own initiative. 45% of the employees have the positive impression that sufficient time is available for fostering their own creativity.

Digitalization and Curiosity Go Hand-in-Hand: The employees with the highest curiosity scores also achieved top marks in the questions relating to digitalization.

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The 2020 State of Curiosity Report | What the Experts Say

- “More than anything, organizations must invest not just in technologies, but in fostering a culture of curiosity and innovation where people are open and free to experiment with new ideas and concepts, unlocking their full potential.” (Dietmar Eidens, Chief HR Officer at Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany,)
- “In an increasingly fast-paced business environment, innovation is a decisive driver for progress. At Merck, we believe that cultivating organizational curiosity leads to an environment in which passionate teams can thrive and innovate.” (Stefan Oschmann, Chairman of the Executive Board and CEO of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany)
- “Two of the results at Merck stand out: (1) highly curious Merck employees achieved higher scores on digitalization questions, and (2) Merck employees believe that curiosity is particularly important for addressing global problems, ranging from the battle against cancer and infertility to the fight against world hunger and climate change. Stimulating employees’ curiosity will inevitably help companies and organizations maximize digitalization and is a key driver for achieving business results and delivering on CSR ambitions.” (Dietmar Eidens, Chief HR Officer at Merck)

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Quote Originator | Germany

Dietmar Eidens, Chief HR Officer at Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is available to answer requests for interviews and provide statements on the 2020 State of Curiosity Report.

Survey Facts

Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 questions on the dimensions of curiosity • 4 additional sets of questions, e.g. about digitalization • Online survey for Merck employees
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total of 9,217 employees from 23 different countries
Segments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Business Units • Generations: Generation Z (born 1995 and later), millennials (born 1981–1998), Generation X (born 1966–1980), baby boomers (born 1956–1965)
Survey Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August 17 to September 4, 2020
Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average, 12 minutes per participant
Test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Descriptive characteristics • Variance analyses • Correlations • Regression analyses
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SAP Qualtrics Experience Management Platform