

## News Release

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## **2020 State of Curiosity Report: Survey Analyzes the Curiosity of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, Employees**

- **Cultural Differences in the expression of curiosity are not identified**
- **Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, employees believe curiosity is important for addressing global problems**

Darmstadt, Germany, January 28, 2021– Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, today announced the publication of its [2020 State of Curiosity Report](#). This report is now being published for the third time. After the first study was published in 2016, it was updated in 2018. In both of these reports, employees from various industries in the U.S., Germany and China were asked to share their thoughts on the importance of curiosity in the workplace – for this year's edition, the survey was internal.

### **New employees are particularly curious**

“At Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, curiosity is an important part of our DNA and an innovation driver. We are proud to see in the 2020 State of Curiosity Report that our efforts to promote it have already had an effect,” says Dietmar Eidens, Chief HR Officer of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany. In August 2020, the company launched the survey about the curiosity of its employees. 9,000 of its staffers took part in it, with them working in three different business sectors and being from 23 countries, including the USA, China, and Germany.



## News Release

All of them – regardless of their background, expertise or location – were given several questions about the role of curiosity in the workplace. Their answers do provide the following insights:

- The Curiosity Index for employees at Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, is 79.9, i.e. 9.6 points higher than the score of employees at external companies (as revealed by the [2018 State of Curiosity Report](#)).
- The report revealed that curiosity was strongest among 35- to 45-year-olds. Hierarchy also appears to play a role. The higher the hierarchical position of a Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, employee, the greater his or her curiosity. Cultural differences in the expression of curiosity could not be identified.
- Employees who have only been with the company for around six months are particularly receptive to new ideas. Here, the new working environment appears to be conducive to the urge to learn and experience something new.
- The report also shows that curiosity can decrease when employees have been with the company for many years. This speaks to the importance of helping mid-career employees by offering special programs to foster creative and innovative thinking, such as the Activate Curiosity Program.
- The curiosity of Generation Z career starters, i.e. those who are 24 years old or younger, is also noticeably lower. Especially the dimension Distress Tolerance, which is required for example in unknown situations, should be particularly promoted in this generation.

### **Curiosity to solve global problems**

The survey participants also gave their thoughts about whether they felt free to be as curious as they wanted to be – or whether there were any obstacles and hindrances keeping them from their full potential. Their response was very clear:

- Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, employees feel that they have the space to feel autonomous. 61% believe the workplace offers them personal ownership of their projects.

## News Release

- They believe that the ability to work independently actually promotes their own initiative. Many of the employees have the positive impression that sufficient time is available for fostering their own creativity.
- Digitization and curiosity go hand-in-hand. The employees with the highest curiosity scores also achieved top marks in the questions relating to digitization.
- Employees believe that curiosity is important for addressing global problems, thinking that it is essential to be curious with regard to the battle against cancer (87 %) or sustainability solutions (86 %).

This strong belief is also a result of the company's consistent promotion of curiosity as the most important factor in innovation processes, for example with appointing a so-called Curiosity Council, formed around leading experts who are known for their pioneering work in the field of curiosity. In addition, the Activate Curiosity Program was implemented in the company, which aims to help teams solve business innovation challenges by training participants through specific team exercises with the objective of increasing curiosity.

### **Curiosity Initiative**

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt Germany, launched the Curiosity Initiative in August 2016 to promote curiosity. Over the past 350 years, curiosity has driven the company's growth beyond its own means. It has taken paths that have led to scientific and technological breakthroughs, many of which have not only driven economic growth, but also mastered significant societal challenges.

Their research shows that highly curious individuals, i.e. high performers with the greatest potential to innovate in organizations, possess four distinct characteristics, or curiosity dimensions, which together form the basis of our new Multi-Dimensional Work-Related Curiosity Scale:

**Joyous Exploration:** Gaining great pleasure from recognizing and seeking out new knowledge and information at work, and the subsequent joy of learning and growing.

**Deprivation Sensitivity:** Recognizing a gap in knowledge and pondering abstract or complex ideas to try to solve the problem and reduce the gap (offers a sense of relief when solved).

**Openness To People's Ideas:** Valuing diverse perspectives and ideas from others, and intentionally seeking out different approaches at work.

**Distress Tolerance:** Willingness to embrace the anxiety and discomfort that come from exploring the new, unfamiliar and uncertain.

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, believes that cultivating a culture of curiosity leads to an open, innovation-friendly environment in which passionate teams can effectively contribute to business success. This belief catalyzed the ambition of the leading science and technology group to define the role and value of curiosity in the workplace. Further information about the initiative can be found here, at [curiosity.emdgroup.com](http://curiosity.emdgroup.com). The complete study is deposited [here](#).

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### **About Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany**

Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, a leading science and technology company, operates across healthcare, life science and performance materials. Around 58,000 employees work to make a positive difference to millions of people's lives every day by creating more joyful and sustainable ways to live. From advancing gene editing technologies and discovering unique ways to treat the most challenging diseases to enabling the intelligence of devices – the company is everywhere. In 2019, Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany, generated sales of € 16.2 billion in 66 countries.

The company holds the global rights to the name and trademark "Merck" internationally. The only exceptions are the United States and Canada, where the business sectors of Merck KGaA, Darmstadt, Germany operate as EMD Serono in healthcare, MilliporeSigma in life science, and EMD Performance Materials. Since its founding 1668, scientific exploration and responsible entrepreneurship have been key to the company's technological and scientific advances. To this day, the founding family remains the majority owner of the publicly listed company.