

NextPharma invests millions in apprenticeship in Goettingen



NextPharma invests heavily in apprenticeship. Site Manager Georg Althaus (second from left), Head of Training & Apprentice Lisa Heldt and the Head of the Packaging Department, Daniel Washausen (right), guide you through the packaging lines with an employee.

NextPharma heavily expands its apprenticeship program in Goettingen

Drug manufacturer from Goettingen wants to triple the number of apprentices / 450 employees in Goettingen

By Tobias Christ

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Goettingen. The Goettingen-based company NextPharma is significantly expanding its capacity for apprenticeships. Beginning with this year, 18 new employees are to be trained at the site each year. So far there have been between 12 and 15 apprentices who have completed the three-year apprenticeship.

The contract manufacturer in the pharmaceutical sector, which according to its own information is one of the leading European companies in its sector, manufactures drugs for customers. In addition, there is also the development of pharmaceutical products and the production of clinical test samples. Site Manager Georg Althaus explains exactly what that means: "Pharmaceutical companies have us produce, test, package and ship." Among others, paracetamol and ibuprofen are manufactured, with a total of around 150 different products coming from Göttingen. This requires a lot of know-how, not only technically, but also personally.

In the past three years, NextPharma has invested around 20 million euros in the infrastructure in Goettingen, says Althaus. But it's not just the technology that matters, he adds. It is now planned to invest an additional million in apprenticeship every year. Lisa Heldt was hired as Head of Training & Apprentice at the beginning of the year, also in order for the apprentices to have a fixed contact person and a central coordination. The training program which has existed for many years is to be expanded, she says. Therefore, not only will the number of trainees more than triple but the quality of the apprenticeship is also to be further improved.

"Dialogue is important," says Heldt. "What do the apprentices want? What is important for the future of the company and for them?" she lists a few questions. There are also workshops and operational insight not only into one's own departments but into all of them. "Qualified personnel is hard to find," adds Althaus. It is therefore ideal to train future employees directly. The "critical mass" of trainees – as the plant manager calls it – should be achieved through the increase. "That's very important for the sense of being a team and identifying with the company," he says. The trainees could support each other - and benefit and learn from the "old hands" at NextPharma. Apprentices are wanted in all areas, apprenticeship starts after the summer holidays.

The Goettingen site is growing rapidly – just like the industry

The site is growing very quickly because the industry is doing the same. In recent years, NextPharma has recorded double-digit growth rates, and the number of employees in Göttingen is now 450. We want to expand that further. It is also important: "The market is changing, so there are new requirements for apprenticeship," says Althaus.

The apprenticeships at NextPharma are wide-ranging: The company, founded in 1946, trains pharmaceutical production technicians, chemical laboratory assistants, IT specialists, industrial clerks, warehouse specialists, industrial mechanics and electronics technicians for industrial engineering.

Heldt and Althaus provide an insight into the work: while the pharmaceutical production technicians, for example, work through the recipes for the individual drugs and manufacture them in this way, the chemists check and analyse the composition of the finished product. Because every tablet has to be exactly the same and, of course, have exactly the right active ingredients.

This process is also subject to constant change, says Althaus. "Drug therapy is becoming more and more tailored to the patient," he says. Here, too, you have to keep up with the times. At NextPharma there is an "exciting mixture" of veterans and young employees who could and would all learn from each other, he once again recommends apprenticeship at the Goettingen company.

Info *The apprenticeship at NextPharma, Hildebrandstrasse 12, will be presented at the Open House on Friday, January 27, 2023, from 2 to 6 p.m. Interested parties not only get a theoretical insight there but can also try out themselves with experiments in different departments.*

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