



## Erste Bank launches major apprentice offensive and presents novel training project

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### Fight against excessive drinking, HPV, obesity and more

Yesterday afternoon Erste Bank Austria was launching "First Health", an entirely new apprentice project in which the bank is expanding its training programme to go far beyond just imparting financial expertise. According to Erste Bank Austria CEO Elisabeth Bleyleben-Koren's vision, apprentices in the bank will not only go through a traditional financial services training programme, but also gain an in-depth understanding of preventative health care and be given advice from professionals about social interaction. Federal Minister Andrea Kdolsky is a patron of the project.

"We are seeing more and more problems with alcohol abuse, eating disorders and postural deformities among youths today. The initiative 'First Health' is an important step towards tackling such health and social challenges. It demonstrates how companies can make a positive contribution to society by promoting healthy practices among its staff," said Kdolsky during the presentation of the project at Erste Bank's Vienna headquarters on Graben.

The project "First Health" includes training components for physical, mental and social aspects, including good etiquette and posture in cooperation with Thomas Schäfer-Elmayer, sports and exercise in cooperation with sports medicine and sports science experts, lifestyle training, self-marketing, breath, voice and speaking training, alcohol abuse and addiction prevention in cooperation with the Anton Proksch Institute, help with quitting smoking in cooperation with the Austrian Nicotine Institute, nutrition science information, and eating disorder prevention in cooperation with psychologists and dietologists. For the young women, the complete health check-up also includes a free immunisation against HPV. At the end of the programme, the apprentices receive a First Health passport. Erste Bank trains around 100 apprentices every year.

"Our apprentices should not only be able to calculate the compound interest on a savings account, they should be healthy above all else. And they should also be able to carry themselves with confidence in their national and international dealings. As a service provider, we want to offer them more than just traditional vocational training," said Erste Bank Austria CEO Elisabeth Bleyleben-Koren. The objective is to give all apprentices a good sense of inner balance. The youths aged 15 to 19 are to learn that sports can influence the personality, and that they can have a different effect on customers when they speak with a clear voice.

### Erste Bank is seeing more and more health and social problems among youths

A large number of physical and mental problems have been observed at the Erste Bank centre above all among apprentices in recent years. "Now, it's time to do something about it," said Eva Hörtl, director of the health centre. The project "First Health – Health Passport for Erste Bank Apprentices" is a comprehensive and holistic health promotion project that is targeted especially at commercial apprentices.

"Working from these observations made during medical and psychological consulting sessions and from the exchange of experiences with apprentices, we want to help young people develop and strengthen more healthy lifestyles and to establish long-term structures that are conducive to good health by investing in internal and external resources such as social networks, improved health awareness and positive self esteem," said Eva Hörtl, the project's initiator, in conclusion.



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