

# Quality Mindset sets the standard

Novo Nordisk puts quality front and centre. Even more so after the establishment of Quality Mindset as a fundamental in the Novo Nordisk Way of Management. As consumers and governments are raising the quality bar, quality is turning into a real competitive parameter.

Today's healthcare consumers are demanding; they know good quality from poor, and they expect the best for themselves and their loved ones. People living with a chronic condition expect outstanding quality from the products they use every day over a lifetime. When product safety is called into question, it leads to general mistrust from consumers and raises awareness about the need for vigilance on quality matters.

"It is not enough to simply comply with quality standards. We must ensure that the products we develop and manufacture meet the healthcare needs of the people we serve, and live up to their expectations for quality – every time, long term," says Lars Almbloom Jørgensen, executive vice president, Quality, Regulatory Affairs and Business Development at Novo Nordisk.

Trust takes time to earn, and comes from consistently showing a strong quality mindset in everything the company does; from the products it brings to the market to the responsiveness of people across the organisation, he adds.

## Strong focus on quality

A new fundamental principle has been added to the Novo Nordisk Way of Management: 'Everyone must continuously improve the quality of their work.'

This is being integrated through a Quality Mindset that encourages all employees to work across organisational barriers. Some 14,000 separate quality action plans are consistently tracked. There has been a significant improvement in timely adverse event reporting and

customer surveys indicate an improvement in the level of customer satisfaction.

Overall, Novo Nordisk follows a 'cut-no-corners' philosophy in the way it develops new products and makes improvements. Quality is part of the way the company builds on its core competences and knowledge. For example, customers' suggestions for improvement were instrumental in the development of the NovoPen® insulin device product line that celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2005 with the newest-generation pen, NovoPen® 4 (see p 15).

## Increased vigilance

Governments are becoming increasingly vigilant about ensuring that healthcare products live up to high quality standards in order to ensure safety for consumers and in the interest of society. Greater regulation and monitoring of product safety are being introduced worldwide, among other things through inspections to ensure that facilities employ Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP).

Novo Nordisk is in compliance with regulatory demands and averages approximately 50 inspections per year. None of the inspections in 2005 revealed any major non-compliance with regulations concerning customer health and safety.

In fact, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has used the Novo Nordisk production facilities in Clayton, US, as a sterile product-processing training site for its inspectors. During such inspections, the FDA trainers have identified some 'best practice' processes used by the operation. Novo Nordisk requires the same GMP standards wherever it operates in the world. "One important benefit from being vigilant about our quality standards has been the strengthening of relations with regulatory authorities. They've come to expect our facilities to be in good shape and in compliance,

and we do our best to live up to their trust," says Lars Almbloom Jørgensen.

Novo Nordisk has also introduced cLEAN®, the Novo Nordisk version of the LEAN production philosophy aiming at optimising flow and increasing productivity. It is a way of thinking, a new and smarter work culture being applied within quality, production, laboratories, processes, distribution channels and administrative units.

Within Product Supply its goal is optimisation throughout the supply chain by shortening lead times and focusing on zero defects, simplicity and continuous improvement. For Quality, it is also about improved monitoring of critical processes to prevent potential problems and allow effective communication.

The dedication to quality is a fundamental commitment to the millions of people using Novo Nordisk products every day.

**We have a tremendous responsibility to our customers. Every day, millions of people put their lives in our hands.**

Lars Almbloom Jørgensen  
executive vice president,  
Quality, Regulatory Affairs  
and Business Development,  
Novo Nordisk

## Faster response to customers

There are numerous examples of where cLEAN® has had positive results. For example, the Novo Nordisk Customer Complaint Center reduced the turnaround time from up to 20 calendar days

to only two working days through a dedicated cLEAN® effort involving all employees in the Customer Complaint Center. Furthermore, the effort to improve customer relations through optimising complaint-handling continues.

Increased productivity in insulin production means that Novo Nordisk affiliates rarely face product shortages. Solving a bottleneck in the dispensing unit on the filling line at the Clayton facility reduced downtime by 93%. At the Chartres production facility, technicians carry out maintenance on machines while their colleagues are at lunch, so no time is wasted.



See more about Novo Nordisk's Quality Mindset at [novonordisk.com/annual-report](http://novonordisk.com/annual-report)  
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## When lives hang in the balance

Every day, Signe Wenneberg juggles to keep her son Simon (centre), who is 10 and has type 1 diabetes, healthy and happy. And at the same time keeping family life as normal as possible for little brother Noah, who is five. Being able to trust the insulin and insulin pump her son uses to stay in control of his diabetes gives her one less thing to worry about.

"I know these products save my child's life every day," says Signe Wenneberg, a writer who lives in Denmark. "I rely on these products but I don't take them for granted. There are so many things that can go wrong when you have a child with diabetes. You have to consider how much your child will exercise each day, what he will eat, whether the insulin in his schoolbag will be left out in the sun and get too warm. It's a huge pressure. Anything that can ease that pressure makes our lives easier."