

INTERVIEW

Innovation makes money

Continental Automotive Romania sees innovation as a process of open-mindedness toward identifying future trends and product development. They set up a process, including several innovation workshops, to transform the trends into products. Camelia Postaru explains how the trainings helped to create a common sense of innovation.

by Alexandra Postolache and Mihai Svasta

What was the objective of the innovation workshops?

Camelia Postaru: I think that many people do not really know what »innovation« or »to be innovative« really means or that they have a wrong impression of it. Within our company, being innovative is the key to being successful; innovation makes money out of knowledge. So we gathered people from different areas like software and hardware development, mechanical design and functional development and asked them to participate in the workshops. We made sure, that they understand our new approach towards innovation. Further, we wanted everyone to learn a set of new creativity tools and how to apply them.

How would you describe the added value of the training?

Camelia Postaru: You see, innovation can be applied to so many levels of development and this is what I want my team to understand. The training helped me to better understand what innovation is. But what I think is more important is that the trainers taught me how to transmit the concept of innovation to my team. In my opinion, creativity is a personal quality that everybody has, but only few have the courage to show. There is no such thing as wrong ideas; there are only people who do not understand how or where to apply them.

What were the key differences compared to other workshops?

Camelia Postaru: I think the fact that the trainers succeeded in involving us right from that start with games and practical examples was the key to success. I have already participated in a lot of trainings; both technical and nontechnical. But I have never experienced a soft skills training where the atmosphere was so relaxed while at the same time allowing me to learn so much.

How did the facilitators support your learning?

Camelia Postaru: They got us involved in the training from the very beginning and this helped us to become a team right from the start. Usually, when we have soft skills training, we are very pleased because it gets us out of our daily technical routine and we just want to relax our brains a little. This training succeeded in making us very interested in the theoretical part as well as the practical tools. ●



Continental
The Future in Motion

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