

Interview of Nathalie Duquesne

Introduction of Liebherr:

Liebherr is a family-run Technology Company with almost 50 000 employees

Liebherr-Aerospace Toulouse is part of the Liebherr-Aerospace & Transportation division, which is one of the divisional control companies within the Liebherr Group. They coordinate all activities in the aerospace and transportation systems sectors.



LIEBHERR



Liebherr-Aerospace is a leading supplier of systems for the aviation industry and has more than six decades of experience in this field. The range of aviation equipment produced by Liebherr for the civil and defense sectors includes flight control and actuation systems, gears and gearboxes, landing gear and air management systems as well as electronics. These systems are deployed in wide-bodied aircraft, single aisle and regional aircraft, business jets, defense aircraft, defense transporters, defense training aircraft and civil and defense helicopters.

Liebherr's aerospace and transportation systems division employs around 6,000 people. It has three aviation equipment production plants at Lindenberg (Germany), Toulouse (France) and Guaratinguetá (Brazil). These production sites offer a worldwide service with additional customer service centers in Saline (Michigan/USA), Seattle (Washington/USA), Montreal (Canada), Hamburg (Germany), Dubai (UAE), Bangalore (India), Singapore and Shanghai (People's Republic of China).

Number of persons to manage

Liebherr-Aerospace Toulouse is the center of excellence for air systems and employs 1500 people. In direct report, only 4 people: 2 Technical Directors (1 dedicated to Products, 1 dedicated to R&T), 1 Program Director, 1 expert fellow

Management style: Collaborative style.

The company management of each division is based on a German management style which encourage collaboration.

Therefore there is no CEO (Chief Executive Officer) but a Board composed of 4 Members which took their decision based on consensus. This Board is composed of:

- 1 CTO: Chief Technical Officer
- 1 CFO: Chief Financial Officer
- 1 CCO: Chief Customer Officer
- 1 CPO: Chief Operation Office

The same model is reproduced on each entity and there on Liebherr-Aerospace Toulouse entity with 4 Managing Directors:

- 1 Technical MD (Managing Director)
- 1 Financial MD
- 1 Customer MD
- 1 Operation MD
- All Managing Directors are responsible for the overall company and not only for their domain of expertise

This collaborative board helps to take better decisions for strategic topics considering all aspects and impacts of those decisions

How do you manage conflicts in your team ?

Conflicts are mainly due to miscommunication or organization difficulties (mainly process not adapted or lack of resources).

It is important to solve them very fast and not to let them last.

Most important to solve them: stay neutral, calm and listen to people

For miscommunication: listening and understanding are keys. To help each of the party to understand the other person's difficulties solves most of miscommunications issues

For Process difficulties, it is important to support the people to solve the issue by themselves (the solution should come from them working together, with your support)...

Support to establish priorities and tools like RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Contributor, Information) to define "who is in charge to do what" are very powerful and solve most of the conflicts

What metrics do you use to measure team performance ?

In a company, everything is measured

Process are key.

We look the performance of each process (example: prospection and sales, development process, manufacturing process, customer services ...) and support processes (Human resource, Administration and finance, ...). Each process has its own KPI (Key Performance Indicator)

At company level we use the Hoshin-Kanri matrix to ensure a good visualization for all the detailed strategic planning

For each program with main customer (Airbus, Boeing, Dassault, Embraer...), we follow them with the OBEYA Method for animation and Program Dashboard

Have you ever had to make a difficult ethical decision and how did you decide ?

Ethics is for me situations where values and principles are in opposition

The Liebherr company is based on strong values. Trainings about ethic are regular and values are key for the family

We keep a great coherence between our decisions and values, which means that we do not accept all markets. This is a family business (even if it is a big company) and this is their name in the real life ! so values are above any business.

How do you evaluate success ?

We check success with figures of course, customers satisfactions and our shareholder (family) satisfaction

Figures are revenue growth, revenue per client, profit margin and of course customer satisfaction (regular meetings with customers) and family shareholder satisfaction (regular meetings). Long term perspectives (as this is a family business): investment to prepare the future and Research and Technology investments are key so the annual result is not the most important indicator for the family.

What is important is that the company still exists in 20-30 years and this is the role of the today-managing director not only to have a profitable company but also to ensure the long term business

This long term business is particularly true in Aeronautics where the development for a new aircraft takes almost 7 years for a big aircraft (single aisle) and needs technologies ready at the start of the development. To develop a technology in aeronautics, it can take between 3 to 10 years or more ! This is why customer relationship, retention and satisfaction are key.

What advice can you give to future leaders ?

- To listen
- To learn fast
- To delegate
- To have a great team (find the right people, people you can trust...your team will make you a great leader)
- To always support your team and when they are in difficulties, you should take the pressure and responsibility
- To be humble (always !)
- To develop the trust in your team and with your customers: this is key
- To always learn and ask question

