

News

Mona Pappafava-Ray, General Carbide Corp. President & CEO, Named Diamond Award Winner

Greensburg, PA, May 2, 2012

In a ceremony held recently in the Lexus Club at PNC Park, General Carbide Corp. achieved an important win as **Mona Pappafava-Ray**, the company's president and CEO, received a Diamond Award from the *Pittsburgh Business Times*. The honor is in recognition of her leadership, customer service philosophy, relationship with employees and community involvement.

"I am extremely proud to receive the Diamond Award, but I did not do it alone," says Ms. Pappafava-Ray, whose company manufactures more than 50 grades of tungsten carbide for a variety of industrial wear and metal forming applications. "This award really belongs to everyone at General Carbide because our success is a result of everybody working together each day to meet our customers' needs. I am fortunate to be leading a team of dedicated professionals who take a great deal of pride in everything they do."

To help ensure that employees have the best available resources to carry out their responsibilities, the company invests more than \$1 million in capital improvements each year.

Ms. Pappafava-Ray has been with General Carbide for 26 years, after graduating from Carnegie Mellon University with a degree in industrial management. Her first assignment when working for her father, Premo Pappafava, was to set up a computer inventory system for the company.

"From the beginning, I had to learn about all the different sections of the plant, and the jobs being performed in those areas," says Ms. Pappafava-Ray. "It was great training because 26 years later, there are things I learned then that I use in my decision-making today."

Challenging the Conventional Wisdom

One of the most important decisions she has made in her ten years of running the company was to weather the recession without choosing to lay off any employees. Instead, Ms. Pappafava-Ray reduced salaries and wages from 10 to 30 percent, including her own, between October 2008 and September 2009. This bold decision was a risk, not knowing how long the recession would last. She knew, however, that a long-term commitment to her employees would pay off when business conditions improved, largely due to the management team and production employees working aggressively to develop new business opportunities when production levels were low.

The financial implications were great, and a slow recovery would have been detrimental to the bottom line, and to the company's survival. Instead, General Carbide has been well-prepared to take advantage of new opportunities due to the workforce remaining intact while many competitors have cut their employment levels, or have gone out of business altogether.

In appreciation of employees' loyalty during difficult times, Ms. Pappafava-Ray gave back part of the salaries and wages in December 2010 which were sacrificed in 2008-09, providing an unexpected "Christmas bonus" to the company's salaried employees. As orders continued to climb during the first half of calendar year 2011, Ms. Pappafava-Ray gave back the remaining

amounts of salaries and wage cuts in mid-June of that year, pleasantly surprising employees once again by completely repaying them for their lost wages.

Ms. Pappafava-Ray's commitment to the local community parallels her concern for her employees. Her involvement includes support of the Westmoreland Community College Scholarship Program; serving on the board of the Westmoreland Cultural Trust; support of Excelsa Health's Westmoreland Hospital Foundation's Hospice Program; and membership in the Young Presidents Organization, Pittsburgh Chapter.

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