



VDM Metals wins St. Gallen Leadership Award

Werdohl, Germany. The VDM Metals Group, part of the Acerinox Group and world market leader for nickel alloys and high-alloyed special stainless steels, has won this year's St. Gallen Leadership Award. The award is presented annually by the Institute for Leadership and Human Resource Management (I.FPM) at the University of St. Gallen and the German Association for Human Resource Management (DGFP) to honor successful leadership initiatives.

The aim of the St. Gallen Leadership Award is to strengthen the visibility of exemplary behavior and successful leadership techniques, tools and strategies. At the beginning of 2018, VDM Metals set out to adapt its own leadership culture to the increasingly complex requirements of today. The starting point was the intensifying battle for talent, employees' changing expectations regarding corporate culture and leadership, and the question of how the Group can best promote motivation and loyalty in the future. Several workshops were held to critically examine the practices that had been in place to this point and a so-called Leadership Compass was developed, which was released throughout the company in May 2019. Among other things, it includes guiding principles for cross-hierarchical interaction, error culture, continuing education and the design of the working environment. Managers are required to adhere to the principles and employees can demand compliance. As part of the implementation of the Leadership Compass, the range of continuing education courses for managers was expanded in a targeted manner and, among other things, a digital learning platform was introduced via which multimedia content can be provided.

"The Leadership Compass was developed by our managers themselves. It virtually hangs in every office. The focus of our approach is on elements of transformational leadership, on transferring and accepting responsibility, and on reflecting on one's own behavior. We want to enable our managers to play the full range of leadership styles," explains Dr. Niclas Müller, CEO of VDM Metals. Transformational leadership, according to Dr. Müller, does not mean that it is not possible to talk turkey in the company: "However, the expectations regarding an employer and its managers are more diverse today and in some cases fundamentally different from how they were just a few years ago. As an employer, we want to offer our employees more than just

the opportunity to earn a living – by conveying the real meaning of their own work. 'Creating value through appreciation' describes this approach very well."

VDM Metals received the award in front of two well-known competitors in the final of the St. Gallen Leadership Awards: Daimler AG and the Swiss Re Group. A jury of nine experts had previously nominated the three finalists from the TOP 10 (e.g. Lufthansa, Porsche, Allianz, VW, etc.). Following the presentation of the projects, the winner was determined on 16 November in a live vote by around 80 participating HR managers and executives. The fact that the award ceremony had to take place online due to pandemic conditions did not cloud the excitement at VDM Metals. "We are very proud that the jury praised our project and that our approach was honored with the St. Gallen Leadership Award. Our HR department, above all the HR Development department, has done a very outstanding job here," explains Dr. Müller.

Further information

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About VDM Metals

VDM Metals, headquartered in Werdohl, Germany, is part of the Acerinox S.A. Group. The company develops and manufactures nickel, cobalt, copper and zirconium alloys as well as high-alloyed special stainless steels. For over 90 years, VDM Metals has been supplying sheet, strip, bar, wire, welding consumables and powder to customers in the chemical and plant engineering, power generation, oil and gas, electrical and electronics, automotive and aerospace industries. VDM Metals employs around 2,000 people worldwide.

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