

## **L PRESS RELEASE**

### **Women in industry: Patricia at Safran Transmission Systems**

In celebration of International Women's Day, we take a closer look at the career of Patricia, an engineer who has held a series of management positions at Safran Transmission Systems, spanning both production and support functions. She shares her experience as a woman in the traditionally male domain of industry.

Right from her childhood, Patricia loved everything mechanical and scientific – especially math and physics. So it was only logical that, after earning her baccalaureate (high school) degree in the science track, she continued her studies at the MATMECA engineering school, majoring in fluid mechanics.

Patricia built up her experience in the automotive sector for nearly 15 years, prior to joining Safran Transmission Systems in 2013, as continuous improvement manager on a production line. She seized a new opportunity in January 2017, namely to deploy the QRQC(1) and One Safran(2) initiatives, in line with parent company Safran's strategic objectives. In this new position her main duties are to oversee performance improvement, conduct a team approach to problem-solving and foster commitment to continuous improvement.

#### **Women in industry: from oxymoron to pleonasm**

Patricia never considered her gender as a professional obstacle. On the contrary, she believes that she's lucky to be a woman, and wants to emphasize that she has always worked in a welcoming environment. "I've always enjoyed complete respect, whether on the shop floor or in the office. I've always been firmly convinced that respect is a two-way street, and not just something you get by chance. By respecting others, you also earn their respect. Patricia cultivates this approach day after day as the company's QRQC coach, which entails explaining what's at stake, describing the tools available, setting an example, encouraging and supporting her teams, transmitting knowledge and more. Patricia rises to the challenge of these vital missions to help train and convince her staff. "I feel most comfortable working in the field, in direct contact with people. Convincing everybody and inspiring them to improve on a daily basis is an exciting challenge, and one that I tackle alongside my teams. It also means that you can never rest on your laurels: you have to challenge yourself at all times."

To ensure that "women and industry" is no longer an oxymoron, we have to change mentalities, so that women realize that everything is possible. At Safran Transmission Systems, increasing the percentage of woman in the workforce is supported across the board, by providing forums for discussion and sharing experiences, and by a mentoring process: all new employees and all employees promoted to a management position are assigned a mentor, who provides support and advice. For Patricia, mentoring is vital, since she largely benefited from this support structure herself and is now carrying on the tradition. "One of the best memories of my career was mentoring an intern: day after day, I saw her improve and fulfill her promise, until she was

hired by the company!"

## Striking a balance

If women are held back professionally, it's often because of a certain form of self-censorship. According to Patricia, "What's important is above all to have self-confidence, to shed feelings of guilt and to assume your decisions about work-life balance." As the mother of two young girls, Patricia has chosen to strike a balance between her career and her private life. She adds, "Despite making this choice, finding the right balance is undoubtedly the main difficulty I face as a woman." As a participant in meetings of the Women@Safran(3) support network, Patricia heard testimonials from other women in management positions, a critical channel for sharing experiences. "Talking things over is undoubtedly the best way to help women dare to express themselves. By listening to women describe their exemplary career paths, we realize that it's possible to succeed in our chosen careers," concludes Patricia.

(1) (Quick Response Quality Control) is an operational performance improvement initiative applied by many different industries, including a number of Safran companies. It's based on a simple principle: as soon as a problem is detected, it is addressed and resolved immediately and locally.

(2) One Safran: A project designed to define a common language and processes for all Safran companies. It means we have to transform our management system, as well as deploy best practices via Operational Excellence projects.

(3) : An initiative launched in 2016 that entails organizing lunches for several dozen women working for Safran companies. An invited guest describes her career path, including any difficulties due to being a woman in this environment. She then fields questions from the audience.



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