

## EMPLOYEES

# A CULTURE THAT PROMOTES COURAGE

"No sparks without friction", this is how Eva Hansdotter, Director, People & Organisational Excellence, Stena AB, summarises the importance of work-force diversity at a time when both the world in general and the conditions for Stena's different business units are changing rapidly.

Since the start, the strong entrepreneurial spirit has been the locomotive for both growth and success at Stena. This has been promoted by an inclusive culture that promotes courage and in which it is permitted to make mistakes. With an organisation comprising 15,700 employees, and which is continuously increasing with new types of employees and companies, it is important to nurture this culture – and also be open to new impulses, according to Eva Hansdotter.

"The world around us is changing rapidly, which means that we need new competences and insights – in particular to be able to handle the new opportunities presented by digitalisation. One challenge is to connect the new with the established, without seeking to smooth away the differences. You can compare this to a sailing boat of which our existing models, structures and working methods are the keel, and the new needs and expectations of both customers and employees are the sail. We need to find a way of interacting, since both elements are necessary.

There must be a red thread to guide employees' conduct, while promoting a spirit of initiative and taking responsibility," she continues.

### CONTINUOUS LEARNING

According to Eva Hansdotter, the ability to handle future conditions is based on creating leadership that is facilitative, rather than controlling, and that encourages different ways of thinking, and signals an open approach to

new knowledge. Both learning and knowledge sharing are encouraged within the Stena Group, which is characterised by a deep respect for knowledge.

"Our approach is that learning must be continuous, and that each individual must be encouraged to find new knowledge. We need to stay in control of what is happening in the world around us, in order to identify both threats and opportunities," says Eva Hansdotter

"It is important to create new tools to seek knowledge – and that we encourage network building and knowledge sharing between the various business units in the Group. This is an area in which we have improved in recent years, but we still have a lot to do."

### MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE NETWORKING

A key aspect of this is the Ready 4 Anything leadership programme, developed for this entire sphere. The programme comprises a series of training courses for managers, experts and their teams, to develop the skills needed to create and use new ideas and business opportunities in a rapidly changing world. The programme is based on six modules with different themes, and which are held on a rolling basis. It involves both physical attendance and digital training, as well as practical and theoretical exercises.

In one module – Envisioning the Future – there is focus on how new technologies, behaviour patterns and megatrends are creating new business opportunities, and how Stena



**People with different ways of thinking drive innovation and create new solutions – but for this to be effective, facilitative leadership is needed.**

Eva Hansdotter, Director, People & Organisational Excellence



can utilise these. Other modules concern how diversity contributes to greater innovation and better results, how to create positive energy and motivation, and new ways of networking, and how we can all become leaders that others will follow, in the face of a changing world.

#### **READINESS FOR CHANGE IS VITAL**

So far, around 400 managers, representing different business units within the Group, have attended training courses in groups of 20 people. The aim is to mix people from different

companies and countries, with various different experience and expertise. This helps to create new networks.

“It isn’t that easy to change your way of working and become open to new impulses. Yet this is necessary to ensure Stena’s continued success – with our leadership development initiative as one of the tools to achieve this. The most difficult aspect is not to achieve success – but to stay successful. We need to be open and receptive towards change,” Eva Hansdotter concludes.