

Brussels, 1 March 2011

Tessenderlo Group Leadership Team Summit

“We just need to keep on communicating”

The Leadership Team Summit 2011 brought together executives of Tessenderlo Group from all over the world, not only to listen to inspirational sustainability stories but also to talk and listen to each other. During two workshops the participants generated valuable ideas on how Tessenderlo Group could implement sustainable solutions for water, food, energy and other challenges that mark our future.

Before going into the sessions, the goal of the sessions was pointed out by the two funny hosts of the day, “doctors” Irina Materialov and Vladimir Energii. They started with an experiment. Everyone had to write down a tool and a colour very quickly, without thinking. Afterwards the doctors showed the combination Hammer and Red on the big screen. At least one third of the audience had written down this combination as well. The doctors made clear that this was not the way to think in the next few hours. They needed to think outside the box.

► Two sessions, many more ideas

During the first session the first assignment was to generate sustainable ideas in domains such as water, food, energy and transparency. The executives had to answer two questions: how can Tessenderlo Group incorporate the theme in a sustainable way? And what can I do in my own job to incorporate the theme in a sustainable way? The ideas were gathered on post-its on a large board. A second assignment was to make a selection: which ideas are the most feasible, valuable or innovative? A task which appeared to be quite difficult.

After the break, the best ideas that had been selected for every domain were elaborated on. The participants had to write down the exact idea and how they would realise it. They had to present interesting showcases that are already being done by the group and propose new innovative projects which could be implemented to make Tessenderlo Group a more sustainable company.

► Exchanging knowledge and expertise

The issue of how to be a sustainable company was clearly taken very seriously. During the generation of ideas the silence of individual thinking was often only broken by the rumpling of paper because an idea had to be reformulated. By the end of the exercise the board with post-its was already full up, but even then the last participants were encouraged to add more ideas: “These are too many red hammers. We’re looking for the green drill.”

In other groups heavy discussions were held about the exact problems we are facing and possible solutions for them. About energy for example: “Involve all operators and staff in energy efficiency projects”. “Use the heat of process water to heat the offices in winter time”.



Bringing Chemistry to Life

And about the use of molecules: "Expand technology to collect and valorise organic waste". Or about customers and suppliers: "Work together with suppliers and customers to create an efficient value chain."

Especially during the second session it became clear that the participants were learning from each other. Ideas and insights were exchanged and knowledge and expertise were shared, which resulted in a fruitful collaboration. Because in the end all problems on the table need to be solved together. Or as one of the participants put it: "We just need to keep on communicating."