



DMT

Stefanie Steinmeier

Women in Leadership

Stefanie Steinmeier has been with the DMT Group for 16 years. Here she has been able to stringently and successfully pursue her dream of assuming responsibility and leadership for her business segment. Her last promotion to Deputy Manager of DMT's Plant & Product Safety Division was not so long ago. We asked her about her career path and why she values her work here so much:

When did you realize that you would like to take on a management position and what encouraged you to do so?

Even as a child, I always wanted to be class president, I was often team captain in sports as well, and I was class president again at vocational college. My inner confidence grew more and more with the technical and business-specific knowledge I gained. My good technical understanding, the passion to work with people and my desire to really make a difference shaped me and were greater than any mental obstacles. Over time, I have further developed my communication skills and now apply them in an addressee-oriented manner. This is especially important when communicating with customers, but of course also when dealing with my own employees.

How did your career develop?

As is the case with many high school graduates, it was not clear to me at the beginning how exactly I should pursue my future career path, so I decided to study sports and biology to become a teacher. After a certain period of study, I realized that I would not like a teaching job in the long run. During my studies, I was able to successfully apply my passion for handicrafts at a small timber construction company, so I was offered an apprenticeship there as a wholesale and export merchant, which I gladly accepted. During this apprenticeship - which was greatly shortened due to my good performance - I started studying civil engineering at the Technical University of Braunschweig.

Unfortunately, the timber construction company had to file for insolvency. So I was forced to look for a new field of activity as a student assistant at the MPA Braunschweig, where I was also taken on after my studies. There, I quickly worked my way up to head of department and was even offered the position of managing director for a company. However, opinions differed, so I decided to take a closer look at the other offers available at that time. One came from a Siemens subsidiary and one from DMT, both in the area of fire protection.

"The friendly and open discussions with the DMT interviewers won me over so much that I even turned down a financially higher offer for a management position from the Siemens company."

So in 2007 I became a sales engineer at DMT, but already with the indication that I would like to take on more responsibility in the future. My opportunity to do so came quite early as a test center manager and arose again when the expansion process in the area of product testing was pushed forward and thus additional and different testing areas were added. Since then, the new areas of activity have grown steadily, so that I was entrusted with the deputy departmental management of 2 locations in addition to the test center management. Since one of the sites came into being in the first place thanks to my always well-maintained network, I was already the main person responsible for the development and management of this site.

In 2020, I then became the sole segment manager for both sites, and on 01.10.2022, I was named deputy division manager of the Plant and Product Safety division, a position I accepted with great pleasure.

How has DMT supported you in your journey?

I received a lot of support from DMT's program for promoting young talent. Here I received important input and was able to grow into my role as a manager both practically and theoretically. It was important for me to hand over more and more of the operational activities and to focus more on strategic orientation. The recognition for my achievements also motivated me, of course, and then the confidence to help build up my own site was great. Thanks to the support I always received from my managers and their feedback, which was both open and helpful, I was able to take on more and more responsibility with a good feeling and, as a result, I developed an even greater passion for leadership.

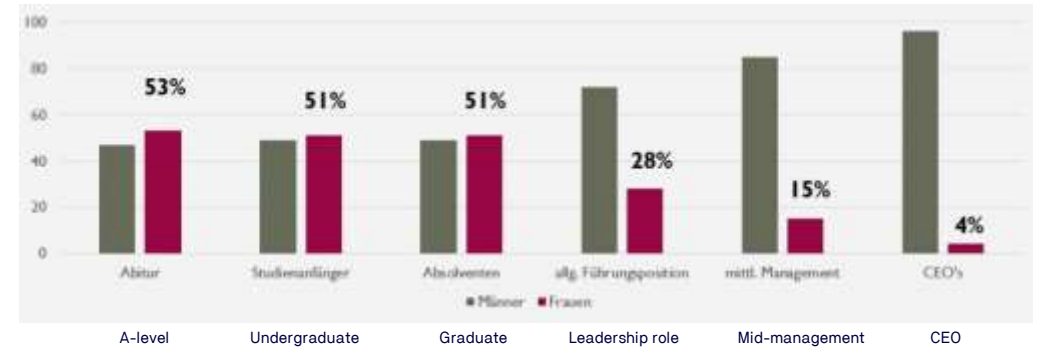
What do women need to advance into a management role at DMT?

To start with, unfortunately there are still too few female graduates in the technical professions that are relevant to us. The number of women is therefore lower than in other professions.

"However, once women are with us, the development path is no different for them than it is for men, because it's the performance, know-how and desire of each employee that counts."

Nevertheless, we regularly look at our internal development opportunities and then also discuss individually what options we have for promoting our employees.

What is also important is that the change in the mind-set regarding women in leadership is evolving. I think it will simply take time for it to become the norm, as women are increasingly progressing into leadership positions. Creating opportunities for this and questioning one's own belief patterns or biased thinking every now and then helps to ensure that this can happen.



Education vs. business: More women than men complete A-levels in Germany, but in the workforce, the proportion of women declines as management levels rise.

Source: [Frauen in Führungspositionen](#)

How do you try to attract women to your field of work?

In the interviews, I try to show my own enthusiasm for the more technical environment. The combination of theory and practice is particularly exciting. On the one hand, a new employee can contribute her communication skills as an expert consultant, and on the other hand, she is actively involved in the practical tests. This excites all those people who want to do both. In addition, the women who have already worked with us as student assistants are often impressed by our work and the work-life balance possibilities. As a result, we have been able to recruit some of them as permanent employees.

"I enjoy my job incredibly much and I wouldn't currently know of a better place to contribute my skills."



Work life balance - how do you make this possible for your employees?

We really try to do everything that is possible within the company. In addition to flexitime, we have made it possible for everyone to take their children to daycare beforehand or pick them up in the afternoon, for example. Of course, we also allow our employees to work on a mobile basis wherever this is appropriate. Here at DMT, we experience a very high level of loyalty and gratitude for this. Fathers have also been able to take parental leave. Reducing or increasing hours is a frequent occurrence here and reflects our flexibility with regard to professional and private life.

What do you value about your work at DMT? What has kept you at this company for 16 years?

I have a lot of freedom and so implementing my own projects and ideas really works out very well. There is a great openness to new things here and the managers and the executive board are always behind you if the ideas make economic sense and are well founded. I also enjoy the trust of being involved in personnel decisions from the very beginning and value that my advice in this regard has always been listened to and considered in the decision-making process. I enjoy my job incredibly much and could not think of a better place to contribute my skills.

Stefanie Steinmeier, Segment Manager for Product Fire Testing