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SÉRGIO BRITO

Maria Lucia Ginde: "In the pulp and paper sector, professionals need to seek continuous innovations, think of new possibilities throughout the entire production chain and, most importantly, in a sustainable manner"



Career plan in the sector

Even though Brazil's economic growth was lower than expected last year, many positive results were registered, such as the reduction in unemployment. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), the average unemployment rate for 2011 amounted to 6%, which was 0.8 percentage points lower than in 2010 (6.7%).

As such, 2012 started out on a positive note. "The labor market continues very well," says Maria Lucia Ginde, Human Resources Director at Kimberly-Clark. Just look at the opportunities available in pulp and paper companies. Like in other sectors, the search for professionals

with different and unique backgrounds is evident, says Maria Lucia. Such is the case regarding the search for professionals specializing in the design of sustainable materials and new technologies – among other job positions –, which has been on the rise. "Companies seek this knowledge to gain competitive advantages and stay ahead of the competition", says Kimberly-Clark's HR Director.

The executive provides an analysis of the main changes observed lately in the labor market and lists all the requirements necessary for professionals who wish to be prepared for the constant challenges imposed by the market.

O Papel – What are the main characteristics of the current labor market?

Maria Lucia Ginde – I see the use of technology growing continuously within the operational environment of plants. Not by chance, more and more companies seek qualified professionals, ready to deal with all these technologies. At present, professional qualification is indispensable. I would say that a good technical background is no longer a competitive advantage, but rather a prerequisite. Additionally, for companies, it is important to select professionals with a profile of competencies and values that are similar to those of the organization, in order to create more engagement and identification.

O Papel – Also regarding peculiarities of the current job market, do you see any aspects that you did not identify in the market a few years ago?

Maria Lucia – Yes. The first clear change is that, today, the labor market is much more dynamic than a few years ago. At present, there are many opportunities, which make good professionals to be highly coveted. I consider this a relatively new characteristic and a very good one, both for professionals as well as the economy as a whole. However, from the perspective of desired profile, requirements are also on the rise. In practice, I see that companies are always searching for the best professional. Today, behavioral aspects have the same importance as technical competence. In other words, a person needs to be qualified and have the correct posture to conquer a job.

O Papel – How can professionals prepare themselves to satisfy all these demands?

Maria Lucia – Professionals should be tuned in to changes and movements in the market in order to shape their behavior. Being flexible, adaptable, having resilience, networking, good knowledge of information technology (including relationship networks), being innovative and focusing on results are fundamental attributes. In summary, the technical knowledge of a professional must always be aligned with the latest in terms of technology and methodology, as an example. For such, employees must take advantage of all opportunities they have in a company to learn. If a person has stopped learning, this is a sign that it is

time to change, to consider the possibility of changing job positions or going to another area. In this case, it is wise to talk to one's superior to see whether there are opportunities within the same company. If there aren't, it is worthwhile to search for another company, since staying up to date is one of the most important things nowadays. Professional updating in a time of constant changes, where knowledge can become obsolete from one moment to another, is fundamental. Therefore, professional development should be a continuous process.

O Papel – Speaking specifically about the pulp and paper industry, does the sector have its own characteristics? What orientation is given to professionals in the sector to satisfy the current market?

Maria Lucia – In this field, being able to differentiate your products from the competition and be profitable is the main challenge of companies. Therefore, professionals should seek continuous innovation, consider new possibilities throughout the entire production chain and, most importantly, in a sustainable manner (relying on less environmental resources and ensuring greater return after the production process). Within this context, one positive fact that stands out is that companies need the contribution from all their employees. Here at K-C, for example, we have programs that encourage employees to manifest their innovation capabilities in different ways. In fact, the work model we adopt actually simulates this. Employees have the opportunity to discuss work practices and suggest innovative solutions. Therefore, it is up to the company to create a way to stimulate employees to contribute with innovative solutions. The companies that will remain in the market down the road will be those that know how to analyze and put into practice ways of encouraging the contribution of all their employees.

O Papel – What are the best ways today to outline a career plan in the pulp and paper sector?

Maria Lucia – Not only in the pulp and paper sector, but in all other industries, professionals need to establish their career objectives and take on responsibility for each step taken. In the past, people deposited responsibility for their career in the hands of companies and followed the steps imposed by them.

All professionals need to analyze their competencies, qualities and desires in order to envision opportunities and manage their career paths



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Flexibility, adaptability, resilience, networking and good knowledge of information technology are some of the prerequisites for professionals today

This no longer exists, since opportunities have multiplied by a thousand. A company is still the place where employees find practical mechanisms for their development, but companies no longer determine where a professional begins and ends the career plan. Today, an employee who joins a company to operate a machine, does not mean that he will end his career as a senior operator. Companies that have job opportunity programs publish openings internally and encourage employees to participate in the selection process, allowing people to migrate from one area to another. This is why I say it is very important for each professional to analyze his or her competencies and qualities, as well as desires and yearnings, in order to envision opportunities and manage one's career paths.

O Papel – It has become unusual to find professionals who outline and follow a career plan within a single company. In the pulp and paper industry, however, such practice is still observed. Are there more positive or negative factors in remaining a long time within a same company?

Maria Lucia – I believe there are only negative factors when an employee is stagnated, no longer envisions development and learning or sees no more growth opportunities. These signals make it clear that a change seems necessary. Now, if the permanence of a person in the company is positive, the employee is undergoing a learning process, is developing and growing as a professional and person, then I see no inconvenience – on the contrary, I see many positive factors. To remain in a same company for a long time is an opportunity for doing a good job and developing in a continuous manner.

O Papel – What are your expectations regarding the pulp and paper sector? Is it a promising job market or will it tend to slow down over the next years?

Maria Lucia – Brazil's pulp and paper sector is very strong and has a very promising market. The current moment is very positive and will tend to last for some time, since the country's growth perspectives continue quite optimistic, with big opportunities in various sectors of the economy. Of course, like all other industries that deal with commodities, it is a sector that faces certain instabilities, such as price fluctuations, however, the relevance the sector has towards Brazil's economy is already well consolidated. ■