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France's Tarkett and Italy's Cosberg Win International IMP³rove Award in Innovation Management 2015

- Dr. Kai Engel, lead partner of A.T. Kearney's innovation and R&D management practice presents third International IMP³rove Award during Turkish Innovation Week in Istanbul.
- The award recognizes companies that have demonstrated sustainable growth based on systematic innovation management.
- French company Tarkett, a leader in innovative and sustainable flooring solutions, has won the International IMP³rove Award 2015 in the category for large companies.
- Italian company Cosberg, a producer of machinery for the automation of assembly processes, has won the International IMP³rove Award 2015 in the category for small and medium-sized enterprises.

Eva Diedrichs, managing director of IMP³rove – European Innovation Management Academy, a subsidiary of A.T. Kearney, says, "The innovation award recognizes companies that have demonstrated sustainable growth based on systematic innovation management. This year, more than 100 nominations from 2,000 applicants based in America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Oceania were considered. The winning companies stand out for the distinctiveness and performance of their innovation management practices and are an inspiration for other companies around the globe."

Kai Engel, lead partner of A.T. Kearney's innovation and R&D management practice, says, "Innovation is the key to organic growth. Companies that continually innovate their products, services, processes, organizations, and business models achieve higher revenue and profit growth than their peers and build their long-term competitiveness. Increasingly, successful innovation arises from effective collaboration between large corporates and small, young, pioneering firms. That's why we're especially interested in understanding the constraints and best practices on both sides."

The winner for large corporations is **Tarkett (France)**, a leader in flooring and sports surface solutions that combines strategic foresighting with collaborative innovation methods. Based on this approach, Tarkett successfully launched a smart flooring solution for the healthcare and aged care sector: invisible sensors that monitor patients' movements and can alert a nurse in case of a fall.

"Tarkett's creative and agile organization, coupled with our innovation and creativity processes that combine strategic foresights, open innovation and user-centricity, have changed the game of the traditional flooring industry," says **Anne-Christine Ayed, executive vice president of research, innovation, and environment at Tarkett Group**. "Our teams are constantly exploring new ways of thinking and are pushing known boundaries. All of us at Tarkett are proud of receiving this award, which acknowledges the commitment of our teams."

Facts about Tarkett:

Headquarters: Paris-La Défense, France

CEO: Michel Giannuzzi

Year founded: 1886

Products: manufacturer and distributor of flooring products, including vinyl, linoleum, wood, laminate, carpet, rubber, turf, and tracks

Employees: 12,000

Revenue (2014): €2.4 billion

Ownership: listed

Cosberg (Italy), the winner for small and medium-sized companies, makes machines to automate production processes. Cosberg receives the award for its knowledge management platform that systematically merges feedback from suppliers and customers with lessons learned from the Cosberg teams to form a unique database of improvement suggestions.

Michele Viscardi, business development director at Cosberg, says, “At Cosberg, we believe each employee can generate innovation. Over the years, this has resulted in a continuous knowledge-creation process. The management of such a great heritage is carried out daily as the company’s core business. The outcome is the real enhancement of this knowledge, which is guarded, filed, and shared among all staff. This innovative approach is based on the willingness to call ourselves into question every day to pursue continuous improvement, both in terms of process and product.”

Facts about Cosberg SPA:

Headquarters: Terno d'Isola (BG), Italy

General manager: Gianluigi Carlo Viscardi

Year founded: 1983

Products: machines and modules to automate manufacturing processes

Employees: 59

Revenue (2014): €16 million

Ownership: private

The jury of the International IMP³rove Award 2015 in Innovation Management consists of Nicholas Davis, member of the World Economic Forum Executive Committee; Giuseppe Gramigna, U.S. Small Business Administration expert and chief economist; Francis Gurry, general director of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO); Stefan Kapferer, deputy secretary general of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); Frank Piller, professor at RWTH Aachen University/MIT; Elisabeth Stampfl-Blaha, vice president of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO); and Gündüz Ulusoy, professor at Sabanci University.

Finalists in the category for large companies are:

- **Arçelik (Turkey)** for its user-oriented innovation practices
- **Fleury (Brazil)** for its game-based approach to gather and process innovative ideas
- **People’s Insurance Company of China (PICC) (China)** for its systematic innovation process that enables all employees to engage in innovation projects
- **Rosenbauer (Austria)** for its all-encompassing approach to foster and maintain an innovation culture

Finalists in the category for small and medium-sized enterprises are:

- **Action Manufacturing Hamilton (New Zealand)** for its design-based cultural transformation
- **Fidko (Macedonia)** for its interdisciplinary innovation practices that make it a player in a number of industries
- **Labris Networks (Turkey)** for its agile, issue-centered, and iterative innovation methodology
- **Solwa (Italy)** for its needs-based stakeholder involvement in using innovative technologies

Koç Holding Board Member Ali Y. Koç says, “**Arçelik A.Ş.** is continuously developing its muscles that foster innovation, with its rooted and long-lasting focus on creating value for our ecosystem, through collaborating widely and globally.”

Dr. Dieter Siegel, CEO of Rosenbauer, says, “The ever-changing requirements of our customers in the fire services require a high level of innovation and it is at the core of the Rosenbauer brand to continuously improve our products and to increase our clients’ fascination with them. Rosenbauer integrates customers actively into the new product development process, and regularly discusses future needs with users. Basis for the success of Rosenbauer are independent and autonomously acting employees who are fully engaged and committed to their daily work and are encouraged to fully develop their potential.”

Borce Sahpaski, CEO of Fidko, says, “Fidko’s innovation management rests on three pillars: First, we build a 10 percent buffer into all our project work, which is used for innovative subprojects to enhance output. Second, we promote and encourage innovation at all levels of the business, and every team member is invited to present an innovative idea, and a panel decides if it is worth implementing. Third, we reinvest one quarter of our profits into R&D to find out how the project could have done better.”

Chris Devoy, General Manager at Action Manufacturing Hamilton, says, “It is a great honor to have been selected as a finalist. The Action way, our culture, has organically grown from the simple idea that everyone adds value in the design process and that opportunity comes from an open mind. Solving problems has always been at the center of the human spirit so by offering current and future customers access to innovators seemed a natural step. It’s not an easy journey! You have to believe that following it really will make a difference. You have to have the confidence to ask why, to explore all the options, to seek new ideas and engage people not only as a sale, but an opportunity to extend your learning and apply your joint experiences to create and add value. Like Henry Ford said if you always do what you’ve always done you’ll always get what you’ve always got. I believe innovation is not only key to a successful business but a better society and a total life experience.”

Seçkin Gürler, CEO Labris Networks, says, “Innovation is the driving force behind healthy growth and competitive advantage. In the cybersecurity business, it is the unique superiority required in the battlefield of intelligent minds. The IMP³rove Assessment should be experienced by every player competing globally and act as an objective innovation measurement framework.”

Ferdinando Businaro, president at Solwa’s parent organization Santex Rimar Group, says, “Solwa’s slogan is ‘Tradition is our strength, innovation is our mission.’ Solwa boosts sustainability and social responsibility thanks to its green technologies and innovation management, promoting a business that is always based on environmental protection and the prosperity of future generations.”

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