



Custom solution gets results

Bringing worldwide executives together to connect, collaborate and grow profitably

Kemin Industries built a reputation for innovation manufacturing more than 500 specialty ingredients that deliver nutrition and health benefits to people and animals around the world. To continue meeting aggressive growth goals, Kemin leaders realize they need to ramp up innovation everywhere — in the lab, in their business models, and in their marketing, sales, and customer communications.

So the company kicked off its 2014 Worldwide Executive Conference with a fiercely competitive Celemi Tango™ seminar. Ninety participants learned a common financial language, took on new roles, and learned why it is crucial to take smart risks, develop and retain employees, and align resources wisely to support rapid growth.

Why Celemi Tango?

Celemi Tango's customizable business simulation proved to be the perfect vehicle for bringing together executives from across the organization, challenging them to look outside of their primary roles and showing them how their individual and group decisions affect business. Kemin Group President Anita Norian worked with Celemi partner and training consultant Dan Topf and his Management Development International, Inc. (MDI) team to integrate Kemin's goals and challenges into a realistic two-day experience that drove home the importance of the following:

- Innovating
- Developing talent
- Growing wisely



"Celemi Tango™ was especially valuable for new executives because it gave them a broader understanding of other people's roles and helped them build connections quickly through the shared experience."

– Tammi Guldenpfennig
Chief Financial Officer, Kemin Industries

Tracking results

Kemin measures innovation in several long-term ways including ROI on R&D and percentage of sales from new products. While less tangible, several lessons learned through Celemi Tango are already changing the ways that employees work together to achieve their goals.

Hiring and developing

One of the most immediate Celemi Tango takeaways was the importance of getting the right people on board and well-trained. "Teams that didn't go after as many people couldn't go after customers and grow," says Norian. "I think that message hit home clearly. After Celemi Tango, I heard several executives talking about how they needed to fill positions quickly to better serve their customers."



Building consensus

Mixing teams functionally and geographically built strong relationships between people who don't normally work together. This was particularly apparent for Chief Financial Officer Tammi Guldenpfenning's team, which struggled to gain consensus and got off to a rocky start. "At first we didn't think broadly enough," says Guldenpfenning. "Our team, which included U.S. and international sales directors, was made up of strong-willed, opinionated people with a predetermined mindset about how to do things. We spent too much time trying to figure out what we were supposed to be doing and fell behind. Eventually, we utilized Celemi Tango tools to step back, look at the big picture, consider mutual goals and strategies, and work together."

Guldenpfenning's team worked late planning a merger, only to find out the next morning that the regulatory environment had changed and merging was no longer an option. After they got over their initial frustration, they regrouped, took out a bank loan, and pulled the company out of near-bankruptcy. "We regained control by reviewing options, building consensus and moving forward as a unit," says Guldenpfenning. "This is a valuable lesson for a company that is spread out around the world with colleagues from different cultures who speak different languages. I see people who went through Celemi Tango continuing to take this approach."

Appreciating others

Another lesson learned: other people's jobs may be harder than you think. A sales director on Guldenpfenning's Celemi Tango team who took on finances struggled with recording numbers correctly. Consequently, the team spent too much time rectifying finances instead of growing the business's profits.

"It was hard to see him struggle," says Guldenpfenning. "Later, he told me he didn't realize how difficult and involved it was to manage all the aspects of a business's finances. Now, people seem to have a better sense of finances, are not as demanding about asking for things right away, and are making more informed requests with better background information."

Tangoing together

Kemin broke their large group into three markets. Each market had its own MDI facilitator that supported six teams of five. The facilitators encouraged interaction, placing three reporting boards around the ballroom that allowed teams to track and discuss what other markets were doing. The corporate executive team, which had previewed Celemi Tango beforehand, circulated and served as bankers, loan sharks, and general helpers.

Business unit teams who were separated during Celemi Tango came together at the end to discuss what they could take back to their areas and how they could utilize what they learned to move business forward faster. The executive team plans to have regular progress checks and help teams build goals and actions into their strategic plans.

"Celemi Tango was so easy for us because the facilitators were so well-prepared," says Norian. "We did a lot of pre-work together. Dan helped us communicate concepts, rules, and financial terms ahead of time, so people could focus on deeper learning during the simulation. He and a team of master facilitators already knew their teams going into the event, so they could quickly understand and emphasize key business needs and learning. I was really impressed with that. It was quite fun."

Topf concurs. "Anita Norian and the entire Kemin team were extremely collaborative in planning this event. Our working together in partnership assured our success," he stated.

About

Kemin Industries, based in Des Moines, Iowa, employees more than 1,800 people in business units around the world. The company aspires to double in size by 2018, increasing revenues to more than \$520 million. After several years of double digit growth, they are well on their way.

Management Development International, Inc. is a business learning consulting company based in Ames, Iowa, and Suffield, Connecticut. MDI, Inc. has been a Celemi Solution Provider since the early 1990s. Dan Topf, CPT has facilitated over 100 Celemi Tango seminars. www.MDI-Learning.com | 860-668-6020



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