

Interview with Amy Ard

Chief Financial Officer, Advanced Metallurgical Group N.V.

by Lindi von Mutius, GACC



Amy Ard
Chief Financial Officer, AMG

GAT: AMG operates globally. Has this always been the case?

Amy Ard (AA): AMG has always been a global company. The AMG Processing unit traces its origins in the development and production of specialty metals to 1911, when Gesellschaft für Elektrometallurgie mbH (GfE) was founded as a producer of vanadium alloys and chemicals in Nürnberg, Germany. In 1937, GfE expanded its products and operations by establishing a United Kingdom subsidiary, London & Scandinavian Metallurgical Company, Ltd. In the 1940s, GfE reincorporated in the United States under the name Metallurg, Inc. In the late 1970s, Metallurg expanded its operations to Brazil. AMG Engineering unit traces its origins to the predecessor companies of ALD Vacuum Technologies GmbH (ALD), founded in Germany during the mid-1800s. The AMG Mining unit was formed in 2013, although it can trace its roots back over 140 years. The unit produces critical materials utilizing its secure raw material sources in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America. AMG was ultimately incorporated in the Netherlands in November 2006 formed from a combination of specialty metals businesses.

GAT: Do you find operating globally brings any special challenges?

AA: AMG's 3,275 employees operate in fifteen countries. Our biggest issue is communication across countries, segments, and teams. Specially, I find that consistently communicating expectations not only for how our business operates, but also how the global economy is moving to be critical. For example, Germans view AMG's operations in light of Germany's role in the global economy and these are different views from the way Americans see our company's role. I enjoy learning about all these different viewpoints, but it's also challenging.

Our business is linked very closely to the global economy. For example, in 2012, global steel production grew only 1.2%, and AMG's markets, particularly for the European centric businesses, remain challenging. We had to maneuver through these challenges so that we could increase revenue and profits in certain sectors such as aerospace.

GAT: How has your background prepared you for the metals industry?

AA: Metals is a man's world. Few women leaders exist in the metals

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industry, but I think my work ethic has really helped me to gain the experience necessary to feel comfortable. Work has always come first for me, and sometimes I have to remind myself to balance work and other demands. I learned this work ethic and balance from my mother. She was very hard working and for most of my childhood, she worked more than one job. That work ethic helped me to succeed in college and as an accountant at PWC. After I became a manager at PWC, I moved to PQ Corporation. My mentor at PQ eventually moved to AMG, and he encouraged me to do the same. I then worked full time and earned my MBA from Villanova at night. I've worked with AMG since 2005, and working those long hours has allowed to me have a deeper understanding of the industry as well as communicate with all of AMG's teams.

GAT: What is your proudest accomplishment at AMG?

AA: In late October, AMG's Board of Directors will make a formal announcement stating their intention to nominate me to the Management Board. If the shareholders approve the nomination, I will be the first female member of AMG's Management Board.

GAT: How does AMG contribute to advancing global sustainability?

AA: AMG measures itself not only in terms of revenue, but also in sustainable development. Since 2011, we have invested more hours training employees not only in their job performance, but also in human rights, health and safety, and business ethics. We plan to continue investing in our employees as we grow. One of AMG's growing sectors is green economy, and we are a key link in the supply chain for the solar, nuclear, advanced materials and recycling industries, each of which will play a vital role in addressing the ongoing challenges of climate change, waste reduction and pollution elimination. At the same time AMG is committed to measuring and minimizing the environmental footprint associated with its own manufacturing operations. So, in addition to growing profits, we are increasing our commitment to the safety and productivity of our workers, and our commitment to the environment. ■

