

Best Practice Forum wins the Sonae Indústria Innovation Prize

Sharing best operating practices, seeking continuous improvement, reducing costs and optimizing productivity, are the main objectives of Sonae Indústria's Project winner.

Maia, 12th October 2011 – On Monday, 10th October, another event of FINOV, the Innovation Forum of the Sonae Companies, took place at Casa da Música in Oporto.

FINOV aims to increase the value of innovation, encourage and support innovative projects in all Sonae Companies (Sonae MC, Sonae SR, Sonaecom, Sonae Indústria, Sonae Capital and Sonae Sierra), thus creating further value for all stakeholders.

This year's central theme was "Open Innovation: The Power of All", highlighting the Sonae Companies' openness to the Community in what innovation and working together in the development of new solutions and paradigms are concerned.

The event brought together hundreds of business partners, representatives from universities and research groups, institutions and employees from all business areas.

This year the format of the event underwent some changes, all three finalists by each Sonae Company were called on stage, and only then was the winner announced.

Sonae Indústria chose as finalists the Best Practices Forum for sharing best operational practices, the AGEPAN®THD Static isolation panels and the So Caring antibacterial decorative surface. The winner was the Best Practice Forum, represented by Luís Ferraz, from the IndBest Department - Industrial Competence Center.

Another innovation of this event was the Innovation Lounge, an exhibition space where innovative solutions developed by Sonae Companies and their business partners were presented.

In this space, other Sonae Indústria's projects were also presented, such as Codifresh (a project which aims to classify and codify maintenance spare parts and consumables),

Woodforce (a natural strength for plastics) and G2Cork (a water based glue developed for producing cork panels).

ABOUT SONAE INDÚSTRIA'S FINALISTS PROJECTS

Best Practice Forum

This Forum was an initiative started in May 2010, targeting cost performance optimisation as per "Best in class", promoting knowledge share to speed up closing gaps, leveraged on structured Benchmarking information available for core product lines of Sonae Indústria.

Giving priority to "Quick-Wins", without investment, promoting a continuous improvement culture, focused on quality, consumption and waste streamlining, as well as performance and availability optimization.

The Best Practice Forum meetings take place every two months via Webinar, and are attended by specialists in process engineering of all production lines, allowing capture value based on all knowledge available in the company.

Main Topics, related with common areas of opportunity, are the basis for development of specific actions plans. At meetings, each plant reports not only results, but also technical details and discuss developments, sharing and learning with peers, profiting from a wider base of knowledge to get and accelerate solutions.

Since the beginning of the Project, optimisations achieved with actions implemented according to the Main Topics defined by each Specific Forum, represent annual savings of 15 million euros, as a result from a higher motivation and engagement of the teams, enhanced networking between peers and development of improvement dynamic.

AGEPAN® THD Static

It is the most recent product innovation of the Sonae Indústria Group. A revolutionary innovation has been made possible by its unique combination of special characteristics: the production process only involves one processing step to produce this bonded wood fibre insulation panel, which is formaldehyde free and with an asymmetrical density profile. This kind of profile means this product has high solidity, allowing it to be used in load bearing walls and roof applications. In addition, due to its outstanding insulation properties, the AGEPAN® THD Static provides highly efficient protection against cold weather in the winter and heat in the summer. The product represents an important step towards encouraging construction using wood, as well as promoting the use of wood as a renewable raw material both in Europe and further afield.

Due to its proven potential for providing additional properties to protect against earthquakes, a new product is being developed as part of a European research project that will broaden the scope of application of this innovative product.

AGEPAN® THD Static was recently awarded the Schweighofer Foundation innovation prize, which is considered to be the most important innovation award in the forestry product industry.

So Caring

It is an excellent decorative solution with antibacterial properties.

Available in a wide range of patterns and colours in wood-based panels and in high pressure laminates, So Caring is the right material for furniture or interior decoration specifiers and designers concerned with the health and well-being of people who will use the spaces they create.

Walls, floors, partitions or furniture surfaces, such as tables and kitchen countertops, made of So Caring decorative panels effectively eliminate and prevent the proliferation of bacteria often present on those surfaces, especially in public areas. This antibacterial effectiveness of the product does not change with continuous use or cleaning and does not affect, in any way, the typical physical and mechanical properties of the panel, such as high resistance to stains, to water vapour, to moisture, to abrasion, to impact.

The excellent antibacterial performance of So Caring panels recommends their use in hospitals and health centers, gymnasiums and spas, schools and kindergardens, retirement homes, hotels, restaurants, shopping centres and, in general, in all places with high bacteria contamination hazard.

So Caring that passed all the independent relevant tests for antibacterial characteristics and contact with food stuff is a TAFIBRA product based on the latest and most human and environmentally friendly antibacterial technology.

Finally, So Caring is fully aligned with the position of Sonae Indústria towards sustainability.