

Mechanics – not medication: how Ronja Fontein ended up preferring mechanical engineering over veterinary medicine.

Every day, Kampf GmbH's Ronja Fontein bears proof of the fact that the future is not set in stone when you start your vocational training. Before becoming a service product manager in January 2022, the 30-year-old from Overath, Germany, had already held several positions in the company.

Ms. Fontein, in your private life you like to be in the outdoors. How come you turned to mechanical engineering and thus to Kampf?

Actually, it was rather by chance when I came across the company eleven years ago. Originally, I was going to study art or got to medical school to become a veterinarian, but I didn't get a place at the university. In the end, it was my uncle who called my attention to the opening for a vocational training as an industrial mechanic in combination with part-time studies in mechanical engineering. I spontaneously visited the company to find out more about the training. At that point, I didn't even know what Kampf manufactures, but by the end of the day I had successfully completed my job interview. I was the first woman to complete a training in mechanics at Kampf, by the way!

From art and veterinary medicine to mechanical engineering - how did this decision come about?

What convinced right away was the friendly and competent manner of the trainers. I am really a family person, and it was obvious that I would feel at home in a „family company“ like Kampf GmbH. The collegial, appreciative environment persuaded me - I was keen for this to become my training center. The colleagueship is also something I still appreciate a lot about Kampf today.



Ronja Fontein, service product manager

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After completing your training and studies, you held various positions at Kampf. How did you get to your current position as Service Product Manager?

After training at the assembly shop, I started as a design engineer in the retrofit area. However, I quickly realized that this area was too limited and too technical for me. That's why I decided to take a second degree in industrial engineering with a focus on mechanical engineering. Meanwhile, I participated in the company's internal talent development program „Kampf um Talente“ ("Fight for talents"), which helps young talents integrate into the company and develop further. Here, I found out that my strengths lie in cooperating and organizing across departments and in teamwork. During another internal program to develop our digital customer solutions, I got to know Maik Krüger, the Head of Business Development at Kampf. By way of him, I found the topic for my bachelor's thesis, which focused on our new customer portal „my@vanced“. In the portal, our customers have full control over their machine, can view relevant information, and order spare parts.

At the same time, I familiarized myself with „the@vanced“ our digital, integrative platform. It connects machine processes along the entire value chain and thus increases productivity. This was the first professional step towards Industry 4.0 for me.

Then, at the beginning of 2022, I joined the newly established DCS team, which stands for Digital Customer Solutions. Since then, I have been responsible for service product management at Kampf and Atlas Converting.

What are the functions and topics you cover in your current position?

My team and I act as an interface for Kampf GmbH. In addition, we are also a link to our customers. I set up work processes and evaluate the requirements which the customer has for our machines and services. It's particularly important to get customer feedback regularly and evaluate it in order to further develop our product and service portfolio according to our customers' requirements. Another important area of responsibility is supporting marketing measures, organizing interdisciplinary workshops, and ensuring internal communication. So, my tasks are very varied and interesting.



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What do you find exciting about your work?

I get to work across departments, so I'm always meeting people from other areas and with different focuses. I find that fascinating and exciting! It helps the customer and us in equal measure if my team and I can contribute to the further development of our products. This close networking creates trust and enables cross-departmental work.

What would trainee Ronja Fontein think about your career so far?

Probably „how could that have happened!?” (laughs) I never wanted anything to do with electronics or the like and always had respect for new challenges. But I don't regret any of my decisions! There are no boring jobs at Kampf. No matter in what function you work, it's always exciting! That's why I hope I can stay here for a long time.

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We hope so, too! Is there anything you would still like to achieve in the company?

I would like to work even closer to the customer. It would be nice if customers could participate in the development process of our products to ensure we come up with the best result.

From an internal point of view, I would like to expand the collaboration with our other departments. Our digital topics are becoming increasingly present and there is a lot of work waiting for us. I'm looking forward to it all ambitiously and with excitement, and I'm looking forward to what's to come!

