

Four millennials explain the Whirlpool factory to students

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“Study, study, study.” The message to eighth-graders from **the middle school in Caravate**, who were visiting **Whirlpool in Cassinetta, on SME Day**, came from four young managers at the American multinational corporation. Francesca **Tomassi**, Marco **Frasson**, Stefano **Miggiano** and Francesco **Dossi** are all millennials with model career paths. It was ideal to welcome the young students, who, next year, will have to face a fundamental choice about their futures.

“I was working as an unskilled employee here in **Whirlpool**,” said **Frasson**, the safety and environmental officer at the Cassinetta factory, “and at the same time, I was studying at university. Today I have a very stimulating job, that’s less monotonous than before. My studies and commitment enabled me to achieve this result.”

Francesca Tomassi, the human resources manager, explained to the students the organisation in the **Cassinetta di Biandronno** plants, where **1600 manual** and another **300 administrative employees and research officers** work. **Whirlpool produces electrical built-in appliances**, microwave ovens, refrigerators and ovens for the European, Middle Eastern and African markets. In one of the slides shown to the students, the Swedish brand **IKEA**, which, in the microwave oven market, alone accounts for no less than **35% of purchases**, more than **France, Germany and Italy** combined, strangely appeared among various states.

The eighth-graders had a tour of the company’s production plant. The Cassinetta factory produces **two thousand microwave ovens every day**, one every 45 seconds. The process is only partly automated, because the operators (employees) still carry out many manual tasks, from painting to assembling the various components, to quality control.

Francesco Dossi explained how each step of the production lines works. These are not dangerous processes, but it is necessary to pay a lot of attention. On entering the factory, it is clear that safety at work is an essential value.

“**Safety is for you and for the others**,” reads a large sign at the beginning of the production line. Incidentally, accidents at work never happen by accident. And it is no accident that the **Whirlpool factory in Cassinetta** has not had one for over **900 days**. “In our analysis, reporting near-miss accidents is more important than the accidents themselves,” **Stefano Miggiano**, the head of safety at the microwave plant, explained to the students, “because they help us to understand better what happens in those situations. The difference between a near-miss accident and a real one is only a matter of luck. And nobody who does this work can cross their fingers and hope that nobody gets hurts. A near-miss accident provides an extraordinary opportunity to come up with technical countermeasures so that it doesn’t happen.”

The **circular economy** is one of the topics discussed during SME Day, an opportunity for companies and students to see how they fare in of the main areas for development. To emphasise their commitment to the topic of recycling, Whirlpool gave all of the participants a key ring made by **Ecodom**, from recycled materials from the scrapping of refrigerators.

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