

COVER STORY

ELENA TURANSKAYA

An Inspiration for Emerging Women Leaders



Every inspiring story has different touch of inspiration. Sometimes, it is all about taking a stance, being a survivor, having compassion and sometimes it is dedication, hard work and unwavering focus. Elena Turanskaya's success journey is one such story which shows sheer dedication, compassion, and result of constant learning.

Elena started her journey when she was a first-year student at the university. She joined the ADD Grup. as an assistant marketing manager. She was the youngest worker in the organization, no experience, no knowledge, but a lot of desire to learn, to bring a fresh breath, new ideas and new vision. With hard work, lots of criticism, fights with the Soviet heritage and 2 years later she had her own section consisting of 3 people, including her. After that she became the head of the department, then general manager of the production plant, and she is CEO of the holding. She asserts "It was a long and exciting way and still a lot to achieve ahead."

In an interview with Insights Success, Elena Turanskaya shares the insight of her version of leadership, challenges she faced and gives advice to upcoming leaders.

Below are the highlights of the interview:

What were the challenges you came across since founding the organization in 1992?

I joined the company in 1998 and I was very proud to be a part of the innovative company. People in Moldavia in the late 90's were still Soviet-minded, meaning short sighted, very conservative and were not very open to any new adventures. I had to break that somehow. It was not easy, but I love people, I listened and learned from them, and that was the way to their hearts and their minds.

Being an experienced business leader, what is your opinion regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the electronic manufacturing industry? And how has ADD Grup managed to overcome this significant challenge?

COVID-19 has indisputably created a slow-down of economies and industries worldwide. Electronic industry is not an exception, especially that it all started in China, - the biggest supplier of the electronic components in the world. Besides component delivery delays due to lock-down we had to face supply chain issues related to cancellation of flights, as well as land and sea transport routes. COVID-19 itself did not come unnoticed at our company as we had to shut down for a while due to large quantity of infected employees. Still,

we recovered and managed to catch up with our obligations towards our customers and partners.

Despite the negative effect of COVID-19 over economies worldwide we still are able to see some potential positive outcomes. We are in smart metering industry and COVID-19 being on the one hand a stopper of smart metering deployments and a reason for delay or postponement of many projects is at the same time a trigger for smart metering rollouts for the countries that were previously reluctant to prepare their smart metering roadmaps.

In the lockdown period it was determined that usage of smart meters greatly facilitates life for consumers as well as for electricity distributors. With mandatory social distancing and isolation smart metering removes necessity for personal presence of the controller to check the indications, disconnect or reconnect consumer due to payment issues. Electricity distributors can easily determine load peaks, check every user indication and avoid accidents on lines.

Thus, in the next few years we expect business to grow again and maybe at a much higher pace than it was expected a year ago.

What is your thought on the necessity of a positive

work culture? In what ways do you implement it at your organization?

Because people are spending a lot of their time at work, certainly there should be the positive culture within an organization. Coming to work we need to enjoy the work, communication with the colleagues and get satisfaction from what we do. The company has created an internal Code of Ethics that describes company values (professionalism, mutual respect, openness for dialogue, etc). It governs relationships between company management and employees preventing abuse and discrimination, encouraging and appreciating initiative, as well as relationships between employees encouraging team building inside specific departments as well as between the departments.

According to you, what could be the next big change in the electrical manufacturing industry?

Certainly, it is difficult to assess electrical manufacturing industry as a whole, given that we are just in a specific segment of Smart Metering and Smart Grid. But if we speak about our domain, we expect times of deep integration between Smart Metering and Smart Grid components, enabling precise and safe adaptation of electrical grid to dynamic change of demand and supply of electricity.

Last few years there is a discussion about possible introduction of AI (Artificial intelligence) into smart

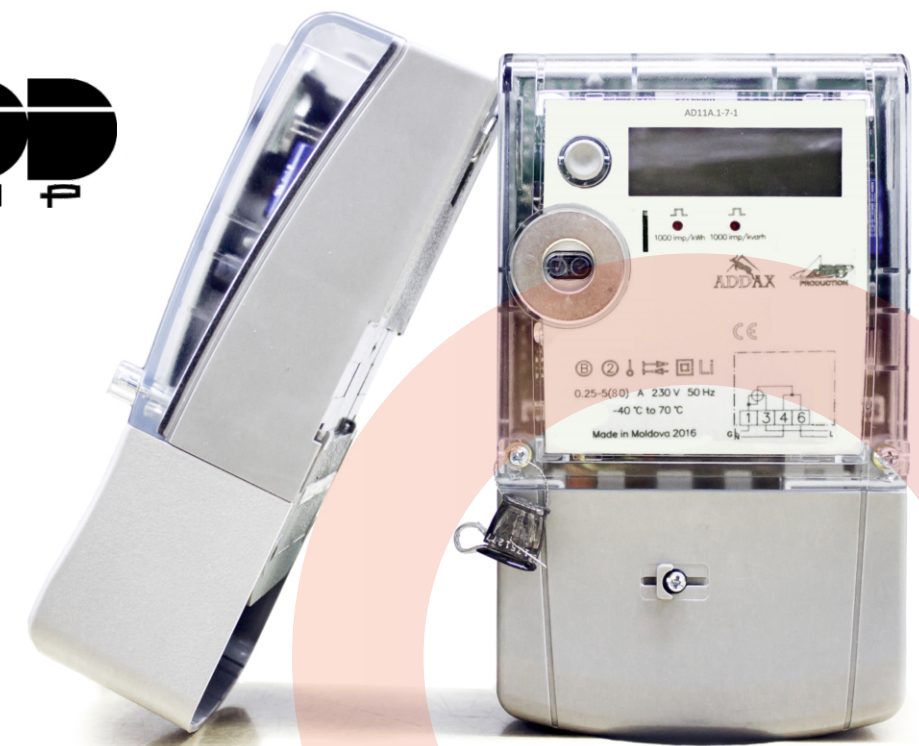
meters to enable inferring when and how often particular appliances are used in the home through load disaggregation or non-intrusive load monitoring algorithms. This will make even deeper integration already on the level of Smart Home with the ultimate goal to help consumer use electricity in most optimal way. Increased resource efficiency will result in lower utility bills for homeowners, with the opportunity to repurpose savings toward healthcare, education, and other needs.

In what ways have you or ADD Grup contributed to the community? If given a chance, what change would you bring to help other utility companies?

Probably here we could speak about global and local contribution. On a global scale where we delivered around 7 million smart meters to more than 30 countries, our smart metering solution has a multipurpose contribution. Below are few of them-

- Detection and prevention of electricity theft.
- Remote metering and accurate bills
- Load management
- Multi-tariff metering.
- Detailed energy consumption pattern
- Power quality control
- Integration of renewable generation.

On a local scale we have created jobs to almost 400 people. We are among the largest exporters in our



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home country contributing to country GDP growth and to decreasing negative balance in trade deficit. We are for many years the third largest taxpayer in electronic industry in our home country thus contributing to improvement of economic situation of our country. We are an active participant in Alliance of Electronics Manufacturers in Moldova and contribute with our advice and initiatives for improvement of legislation and regulations that would help the electronic industry become more competitive on global scale.

What would be your advice for aspiring and emerging women entrepreneurs in the electronic management industry?
This advice will be for all women: Love people, enjoy what you do, appreciate your good and bad experience, always be yourself and never stop, no matter what!

Have you in any ways contributed towards the cause of women empowerment.
Probably not in a direct way. Smart Metering and Smart Grid is a men’s world given that most decision-makers are male. I am one of those women who with own example can show that men and women have equal potential in any industry.

What people, what books, what life factors have influenced and impacted you?
I would characterize myself as an old-school person used to learn from books and great authors digging deep into analysis and making my own conclusions rather than looking on the web for easy answers. Besides personal preferences for books a great variety have been read through mandatory programs at the universities and as I have graduated from several universities in Moldova as well as studied in US, this created opportunities to learn from many great

Russian, European and American authors and better understand cultures, mentality and values. This has created a positive impact on interaction with partners and customers from more than 30 countries, where our company has implemented smart metering projects.

Probably the most relevant to mention for today would be “Only the paranoid survive” by Andrew Grove that teaches how to use crisis period as a launch pad for growth.

What is your vision for the company for the next five years?
Europe is closing in terms of smart electricity metering as most of countries have already decided over their smart metering rollouts and have chosen the suppliers. Now it is time to move to Middle East and Latin America where the processes have just started, and we are able not only to become part of those but given a vast experience can also become influencers in regard to technology and standards that shall finally be demanded in the projects.

For the water metering we are just making first steps in the industry. Despite this, we already have raised a lot of interest among potential partners in Europe and Middle East through the innovative approach in design of water metering solution and they are impatiently waiting for the product to be certified.

Despite a big quantity of projects, we are expecting from the B2B market segment an aggressive pricing policy from Chinese competitors makes it less and less attractive. Therefore, we are seriously investing into B2C solutions where innovations play the most important role. 🇷🇺



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Disciplining yourself to do what you know is right and important, although difficult, is the highroad to pride, self-esteem and personal satisfaction.

- Margaret Thatcher

