

Leading through example, experiences and adding value to others

Interview with *Alexandru Chiru*, Country Manager,
Romania & Hungary, HL Display



Q: In your opinion, as a Romanian what is the CEO role in leading transformation and what are the drivers of change in the retail industry?

Alexandru Chiru: As a CEO (either from Romania or other country), the main role is to develop your team members, and if do so, the business you sustain will grow. This is the most important driver in leadership. To add value to people and through them, to your business and your customers. As a Commercial Director/CEO of the company, leading a transformation (a change, a behavior) within your team and business is key to change, key to growth, key to development, so one of the drivers of change in our industry is to add value to your customers, consumers, partners and suppliers. Another driver, in my opinion, is constant learning.

Our industry is changing year by year, we feel and sense this directly from the field. To conclude, the transformation is ongoing, coming from new behaviors, new expectations and new results obtained.

Q: If you put yourself in the customer's perspective, what are the trends in 2018 in retail?

Alexandru Chiru: When it comes to customer perspective of the trends and changes in the industry it all depends on the type of business each client has. Still, the trend for expansion and more store openings is ongoing; more proximity format stores are on a rise and really coming towards the market needs. Moreover, the development of e-commerce is another growing trend. The shopping experience combined with technology is growing fast, as well.

Also, none the less, the healthy/BIO trend (from consumer point of view- healthy eating/shopping, from customers point of view- partnerships with more local suppliers/producers) is covering more and more areas of our industry.

Q: What did "the better shopping experience in 2018" mean in terms of your customers and in terms of your customers' clients?

Alexandru Chiru: Such a great question! A better shopping experience is, practically, composed of the already mentioned entities- HL- customer-consumers/clients.

We expanded our area of expertise in order to provide the best experience in store and not only, for both customers and our customers clients. So, for 2018, the "better shopping experience" was about bringing more value in our industry, more projects and more partnerships with our customers. Was about opportunities, about growth and about helping others to achieve the best results.

Q: We know that in the retail industry a wide product range is not enough. How do your solutions maximize the shopping experience as it plays an important role in the choice of where to shop?

Alexandru Chiru: Indeed, coming back to trends, a wide portfolio is not enough, so our solutions also developed along with the markets needs and trends. A new part of our innovations is coming towards the healthy and fresh needs, so many proximity stores are starting to respond to this need, together with us. To

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use a detailed example, we noticed that shoppers tend to pick the place where they shop judging by the freshness of the fruits and vegetables (or judging by the fact that if the store has or doesn't have fresh fruits and vegetables). Here is our responsibility, to support our customers in responding to this trend/need, and maximizing the store experience with our innovations.

Q: How does HL Display solutions really stand out from its competition?

Alexandru Chiru: Besides utility, efficiency, productivity, quality and timing, it all comes to value. Which is the added value that the customer will receive?

This is the real difference between HL Display solutions and competitors. We go beyond what is expected from us. We create long time partnerships and experiences together, and aiming for the same result: answering the needs of the consumers, creating a better shopping experience and developing businesses.

Q: How do you focus on real-life customer cases and how do you perceive the people's changing needs?

Alexandru Chiru: Everything is moving fast nowadays. Actually, faster and faster than before. So, what we do is to stop time for some moments and, together with the client, get the best we can out of any experience we developed, warm feedback and actual conclusions, benefits, financial figures and emotions. These are real-life customer cases, in this fast-moving business.

In the end, people's needs are changing along with our industry. Along with e-commerce, along with technology. So, we can only perceive these changes as drivers to development.

Q: As we know, HL Display Romania helps its clients to deliver increased sales, staff savings and a better shopping experience. What do your customers need more from those three goals in 2018 and why?

Alexandru Chiru: Our customers need all these aspects to be achieved and exceeded, as it's essential to be an industry leader.

But if needed to point out from these three, it will be increase sales and delivering a better shopping experience.

Q: What is the project you are most proud of from 2018 and why?

Alexandru Chiru: I am proud of all our projects! All our projects and partnerships have grown and developed further and will continue to do so. Every project developed in a different direction or from different point of view.

Still, I am most proud of the projects where business has evolved into long time partnerships, and teams were connected for one goal.

I am proud of my team members for pursuing this goal together with the customer, and I am also proud of our customers for leading this mutual development.

Q: What is the CEO's role in leading transformation and what does a business oriented CEO represent in the digitalization era?

Alexandru Chiru: The CEO is leading transformation through a strong team, being people oriented, goal focused and strong involvement. From my point of view, nothing should change this mindset.

In the digitalization era, or any other time period, a leader adopts a personal approach and adds meaningful value to other: people and businesses.



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