



INTERVIEW

DRIVING THE BEST VALUE FOR CUSTOMERS IS A MATTER OF TRUCK

STEFANO ALBAROSA, CEO, AIC

1 ■ What is your view for 2018 in your industry and what are your expectations for 2019?

In the “world of transport” 2018 is a comeback year. After the 20% slow down experienced in 2017 the market is back at the 2016 volume. I have mixed feelings in 2019 and expecting a demand in line with 2018 to remain on the safe side.

2 ■ As a CEO, what are the main challenges you perceive now in the large commercial vehicle distribution industry? How hard is it to reach a 5% market share? How many large commercial vehicles per day in sales would you define to be a success in a working year, in the Romanian economic environment?

The main challenge of the heavy commercial vehicle distribution industry is to be as close as possible to the customer. A capillary sale and after sale network able to capture any customer needs and promptly deliver an effective solution. Market share and the reach of the distribution network strictly connect, and the challenge is to always find the correct balance between the number of sale/after sale points and volume of sales and after-sale business. This is the second time we bring a brand to the market; we will manage in 2018, within 18 months from the start-up of our Ford Trucks operations, to exceed a 5% market share. I consider this result very positive also taking into consideration that, until now, we did not have a product able to fully satisfy the needs of the long-

haul international transport that still represent 70% of the overall demand.

We sold an average of 2+ units per working day and plan to double this in 2019. To be a successful market player you need to be among the 3-4 top brands. This is a target that we have set for the coming 24 months.

3 ■ As a CEO, you must also lead the transformation process. How do you do it in your company?

I always put customer needs at the center of our strategy, as well as the ways in which we can add value to their business and help them to be more competitive. Their success is our success. Any change we need to do in our organization to achieve this not only welcome but considered a need.

4 ■ About every industry in Romania is challenged by the zero pollution vehicles trend. How do you see this trend evolving in Romania?

I consider electricity the energy source of the future in the world of transport and very glad to see that Ford Truck vision is the same. Nothing compares, in my opinion, to the flexibility, endurance, and competitiveness of the electrical motor. It is only a question of overcoming the weight/volume vs power current limitations of battery packs. Having said this looking at the trend of their evolution I strongly believe that we will see electrically driven trucks for local transport within 5 years and for international long haul within 10 years.

5. We know that Ford Trucks has over 10 sales and distribution offices in Romania. How hard is it to find a specialized workforce in the present labor market?

It is very hard to find specialized sales force when you represent a new brand, the latest entrant in a crowded market (8 players when looking above 2% market share). Having said this, we have built on our experience and as sales volume grow more professionals become confident in our business proposition and thus recruiting become easier.

6. What is your biggest achievement for 2018? How do you measure your achievements – by how many trucks does a client buy or/and by other different criteria?

Our 5% market share achieved in such a short period of time (within 18 months) and the number of customers we have in our portfolio (more than 150 to date). Market share and customer reach are the parameters on which we base our sales performance.

team asking to bring the absolute best in class service to our customers and more (results) for less (resources) to maximize our competitiveness. Going out of my comfort zone is mostly about delegating something that I know I can do better. It is a necessary process to help my management team grow. As time pass, I am 50, the work-life balance question becomes more and more pressing. Caterina, my love and life partner, helped me a lot in understanding how important the “life” side of the equation is making our “modern” family a nest of serenity, fun, and out-of-work interpersonal relations/experience. This out-of-work focuses also allowed me to realize some of my (too) long-standing ambitions: I took the Private Pilot License and Coastal skipper license. Focusing (also) on “Life” not only give the right status of mind, power and the enthusiasm we need to work harder and more effectively but also help to look at one’s business from an “outside-the-box” perspective. After more than 20 years as a workaholic, I can see now how

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7. What is the impact of the fourth industrial revolution on your company, on your industry and in addressing your clients’ needs?

The advent of the “share economy” brought a much more transparent competition field to our customer. Transport tariff and virtual transport markets (e-platforms on which transport is bought and sold) dramatically increase the need to be competitive for our customer and the difference between winning or losing a transport order is often in the tens of euros. The need to be very competitive brought us much closer to our customer, practically in the same team. We, as truck and after sale service suppliers to our customer, become an integral part of their competitiveness.

8. Going personal now, how do you prepare yourself, to become better, as a leader? How do you get out of your comfort zone? How do you find the right work-life balance?

I try to listen to my customers and empower my

much more effective you can be at “work” when you give to “life” the same consideration.

9. In your opinion, as a CEO, which is the most important question to ask in the investment committee: what can go right or what mistake can we not afford to make? Why? Is there another question that you ask your investment committee for 2019?

What we need to do to bring more value to our customers without being afraid of making mistake (it is a learning curve after all). If our customer succeeds, we succeed to as we are an integral part of their value chain. We are also (financially) conservative having learned that the future is always uncertain, and we do not want the next crisis to find us overstretched.

10. What’s your “Be careful at...” advice for 2019?

Our customer’s needs. Despite the political uncertainty in Romania, I do not see room for a major crisis approaching.