



INTERVIEW

TOGETHER WE MOVE FORWARD

MR. STEFANO ALBAROSA, CEO, AIC Trucks

1. It has clearly been a challenging year, full of changes and uncertainties. What has been your company's dynamic for the first part of 2020 and how do you expect the year will end, regarding the financial results?

We have been relatively untouched, in terms of performance by the Covid 19 pandemic. The segments of the market where we are market leader, for two consecutive years (Municipal and Construction vehicles) have grown as percentages in the total mix of commercial vehicles (>16 T. GVW). Overall, we are continuing to grow in 2020 and thus did not modify our investment plan, in particular the development of our after sales operations. We have achieved our objectives announced at the start of the year, of having a Market Share above 10% (at the end of September, Ford Trucks is no 4 in top brand with 12.2%) and to continuously extend our national service network, and also achieve the multi brand dimension of it.

2. The auto and transport industries faced numerous challenges as a result of the pandemic crisis, especially during the lockdown. How did that reflect in your activity?

Trucks for international transport have been suffering the most this year with a market drop of more than 50% when compared to last year. This

has naturally affected our FMAX sales. We are now working on growing our market share in this segment, where we see many opportunities, and a lot of room for a mature product as F-MAX is in this moment.

3. Which was the biggest challenge that you had to face during this sanitary crisis? And what great opportunity arose for your line of business?

Every change is an opportunity. Even the disruptive changes of the 19 Covid pandemic creates opportunities and thus the need to be always ready (and able) to take advantage of them. This lesson was learned by our group during the 2008- 2010 crisis when our being overstretch in the constant search of ever-growing volume and market share left us unable to take advantage of the than massive market changes. It very much applies today and yes, this time, we are ready for the incoming changes and able to take advantage of them. I see also great opportunities in this context for Romania, particularly when thinking at all the money now available for infrastructure development. I strongly believe that the development of a modern infrastructure will be the key for further economic development in Romania. This is a proven concept both worldwide and in Romania.

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I also see great opportunities in consolidating the commercial vehicles distribution industry in Romania. Thanks to our leadership in the construction vehicles segment of the market we will take full advantage of any volume growth in this segment. We are also ready and willing to take any opportunity to consolidate our distribution operations with opportunistic acquisitions.

4 ■ How do you foresee the new economic reality? Which are the top 5 priorities on your CEO agenda today?

It is a very disruptive environment in the sense that major deviation from traditional business model are recurrent. I do not refer only at the adverse effect of the Covid pandemic, but specially to the rate of change that technological development is bringing in our industry, that will only be accelerated by the progressive deployment of artificial intelligence. In the future, success will be mostly driven by the ability to adapt to change.

In this context the top 5 priorities are: being flexible; developing a corporate culture that consider change as a part of everyday life; investing in people rather than assets; always ready to enter new business or exit ongoing business; being financially solid to withstand short-medium term crisis.

5 ■ What are your short-term, and also your long-term plans regarding your company strategy? Has the crisis shift your priorities in any way?

The crisis did not shift our current priorities. We maintain the short term objective of making Ford Trucks one of the top 3 brands in Ro commercial

vehicles market (>16 T. GVW), and a medium term objective of building the leading multi brand after sales network for commercial vehicles. In our RE operation we will continue to develop state of the art logistic parks and/or logistic-industrial buildings.

6 ■ The pandemic also constrained us to adapt to a different way of relating to each other - keeping social distance, paying special attention to safety measures etc. Have the working relationships changed in your company?

This was the critical issue with Covid 19 Pandemic, as social distance and safety measures make more difficult interpersonal relationships. I am Italian and I like a friendly work environment with plenty of social events (with employees and clients), and everything that means being part not only of a team, but almost of a family. Implementing all restrictions and rules in our work environment was a challenge, but as our slogan says: Together we move forward! ; and we looked for alternative ways to continue to be close to our customers and partners even in this conditions.

7 ■ You are a skilled businessman and a visionary entrepreneur. From your experience, what would be your „Focus on...” advice for the managers of the large local companies during this times full of unexpected challenges?

Invest in yourself and in your company to strengthen your ability to change! The ability to adapt and take advantages of changes is the most important factor to achieve success.