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Positive Leadership Interview with Amancio López Seijas

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“If you work with tenacity you are capable of achieving things that can seem impossible; moreover, you are also able to involve more people”

Amancio López Seijas. Chairman of the Hotusa Group.

Chairman of the Hotusa Group, an organisation made up of various companies related to the widest range of fields within the tourism industry. It includes the world’s leading hotel consortium, Hotusa Hotels, with more than 2,500 partner hotels; the hotel representation company Keytel, the booking service Restel; the management and online booking portal Hotelius.com; and a hotel area which encompasses the Eurostars Hotels and Exe Hotels chains with 146 hotels in 18 countries.



Amancio López Seijas. Chairman of the Group Hotusa

The core of the Hotusa Group is Hotusa Hotels, the world’s number one independent hotel chain. What are the keys to exercising leadership in a sector as competitive as the hotel industry?

The key is to have lots of enthusiasm, work hard and have a little bit of luck, but above all you have to be persistent. Many organisations have disappeared as a result of not having expanded internationally or of not using the right technology.

How do you lead a company that is present in more than 100 countries?

With a positive outlook on life, which is rather more than simply being an optimist. A phrase I always use is: “you are either part of the solution or part of the problem.” You have to know how to instil in your team a culture with values, ensuring they share a common enthusiasm and commitment to a medium- to long-term project

How is the Spanish leader perceived abroad?

The perception abroad is frankly excellent, better than what we find at home. In Europe it is good but it is even better in Latin America. Drive, creativity and fighting spirit are highly valued. Also, they admire our internationalisation process and the improvement in our

competitiveness.

The achievement of new records in the number of tourists visiting Spain and with the arrival of 37.9 million tourists up to July 2015. How do you think the hotel market in Spain is going to perform in 2016?

We ended 2015 really well. We have seen that in the recent years the holiday period, especially in sun and beach holidays, has gone well, and city vacations, which have had some difficult years, have also begun to recover. We expect this pattern of increasing growth to persist in 2016.

Innovation and new technologies have a fundamental part to play in the development of businesses and companies engaging in the tourism business are no exception. How can you innovate in terms of leadership? How is management influenced by new technologies?

The Internet has greatly influenced the tourism industry, above all in the booking process and in bringing the hotel closer to the end user. The liberalisation of the skies has been another key aspect which has resulted in major changes.

The press speak of you as someone who is self-made. What lessons have you learnt about leadership through your professional career? Is there any situation that has left a particular impression on you as an executive?

What I've learnt is that if you have enthusiasm, you can sift and refine it through reason, turning this enthusiasm into something feasible, and if you work with tenacity you are capable of achieving things that can seem impossible; moreover, you are also able to involve more people. If you achieve all of this, you surprise yourself and you get to a level that you never thought that you could have achieved.

“You should not fall into the trap of pessimism or fatalism, as this is toxic and corrosive, it spreads and destroys you”

How does someone prepare themselves to be leader of a company? Amancio, what do you consider to be the keys to success?

For me the key has been to find myself with people who have helped me greatly, who have believed in me and who have put their faith in me. Everything that you don't know can be learnt; because of this knowledge is less relevant because you learn, you forget and sometimes you have to unlearn, which is more difficult. As Einstein said: Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, but imagination embraces the entire world. "There are no exact formulae, you have to try to be able to take on the projects that cross your path.

And, lastly, in conclusion, if you could profile the most well rounded leader or executive, what three qualities would they have to have? And what would a good leader never have to have?

On the positive side, you have to maintain a good attitude in order to build. On the negative side, you should not fall into the trap of pessimism or fatalism, as this is toxic and corrosive, it spreads and destroys you. A leader must, above all, be an optimist.

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