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Leading in positive

Interview with Francisco José Riberas

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"In the company, principles and values must always be present naturally"



Francisco José Riberas | Executive Chairman of Gestamp

Leadership models, professional development, training and team management in the family business are some of the points addressed by Francisco José Riberas, Executive Chairman of Gestamp, a Spanish multinational specialising in the design, development and manufacture of engineering metal components. The executive stresses values as a key to business success and promotes a management model based on teams and a long-term business vision.

From your beginnings, how have you furthered your professional development to become the leader of a multinational company?

In general terms, we can talk about very rapid growth. My professional progress has always been based on the development of a project framed within the great changes arising over all these years.

What are the keys to leadership in a family business?

The key to leadership in this type of business is trying to convince people that you have moral authority, i.e. be consistent, the ability to assemble a team and have a sense of vision. Resembling much like what there is in non-family businesses.

What qualities as a leader do you feel have helped you most to progress in your professional development?

A team-based management model is essential. The only way to progress is to ensure that the teams are strong and are continuously motivated to achieve a project. Also, trying to avoid talking about yourself as

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an idea, and talking about what we're going to do as a team, has a huge motivating effect.

How would you define the leadership model of your company?

We are well aware that we are in a type of business in which we coexist with large, extremely competitive customers. Therefore, our leadership is based on work and a readiness and reliability that we have to fulfil

with our customers every day. The sense of leadership, responsibility, work and ambition, in a positive sense, is what makes companies really believe in a project and grow in the long term.

What are the main training needs of leaders?

The key for executives is not to think about what they have to do to be leaders, but what are the alternative paths they must be capable of following in order to remain current. For Gestamp, training is fundamental and the employees are the key to everything that the Company does. Management training is not the same as training of manual workers or of middle management.

How should a manager accompany their teams?

The only way teams can be accompanied is by talking about the project idea and not individualising. The leader is responsible for decision-making, but it is important that the whole information process, opinion and strategy management comes completely from the team. Because if the decisions made by the leader are not supported by their teams, throughout the shaping process, it will result in that leader being isolated and unable to succeed.

What advice would you give a young person that has just finished their training?

One piece of advice for young people would be that they have to be patient and have a bit of a long-term perspective. It's important to be able to find a project that excites you, from which you can gain some long-term satisfaction, but with the mentality that you have

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to work for it. Nowadays, we find highly-trained and capable young people who, however, have quality of life as one of their first criteria when looking for a job, . Given this, I believe that if you have a plan, and knowing that work is quite important in everybody's lives, you have to think somewhat beyond this and sometimes leave it as something to concern you at another stage of your life.

What ethics-related values do you consider essential in today's business world?

The concept of principles and values should always be present naturally. In the end, the values of companies are very different from each other. The focus on the customer is fundamental, attention to people who are the real masterminds of the work, honesty and the elimination of selfishness, which, among other things, destroys teamwork. Commitment is the task of leading yourself back a project and, even if there are difficulties, betting on survival and long-term development.

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