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Leading in positive

Marc Puig

“All companies become imbued with the way their leaders act”



Marc Puig | Chairman and CEO of Puig.

Marc Puig has managed and led the Puig Group since 2004. In the midst of an ambitious transformation process, in this interview he shares his vision of leadership and talent management in a family company. Leadership based on values, with commitment, consistency and effort, is the key of the culture fostered by the Puig Group of which its Chairman and CEO is the best ambassador.

How would you define your leadership model? In your experience, what qualities should a good leader have?

I have always tried to be transparent about how and why I make the decisions I do. I try to establish a guide and objective: Why do we want to do things? I also believe it is more important to listen than to talk. I like listening to people and I always try to achieve a consensus but I am also aware that if this doesn't happen, it's the leader's responsibility to make the decision.

“We look for people who are curious, who pursue excellence and always want to find a better way of doing things. People who know how to solve problems, seek solutions and stand out”

Who have been your mentors? Which leaders or important people have inspired you throughout your career?

I have been inspired by many people throughout my career; one of them was my father. I have learnt that you have to be true to yourself. I was sent to the US to replace an executive who was retiring. He had been very successful, but his manner and personal profile were very different to mine: he was a real extrovert, a great motivator and had very good people skills... I was very aware of our differences but I knew that I had to be myself. You have to be authentic, have integrity and be consistent with who you are. You shouldn't have to force the way you are.

What are the particular characteristics of leadership in a family company?

Puig is a company with over 100 years of history where the leaders, except on very few occasions, have always been members of the same family. There are ways of doing things and behaving that are typical of this organisation and are a result of a set of values that the family believes in. These are values that are transmitted and are visible: respecting people, listening, helping people to grow and believing in them. They are how our family behaves and this translates into how we do things in the company.

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All companies become imbued with the way their leaders act. In our case we have a script and a path because we belong to a family that has its way of doing things. The perennial question is “What will happen to the organisation when there is no leader from the family?” We will have to ensure that the person who leads the company has the same values in their DNA. If not, it will be impossible for there to be any continuity.

A family company, by definition, tries to build on the achievements of the previous generation, grow the business and then pass it on to the next generation. This time horizon consisting of generations is very different to the time horizon of a quarter, a year or a two-year plan. In a family company many decisions are made with this time horizon in mind. Generally speaking, family companies are more prudent in terms of leverage and take good care of their people to ensure that they feel good and can develop their skills. They also care for their surroundings because they are strongly linked to a certain area, and we take care of our environment.

The pandemic has redefined how we work with and relate to our stakeholders. The return to normality has meant we are faced with new needs and many companies have adopted new ways of working, increasing the amount of remote working. How can leaders continue to motivate and inspire their teams?

Before the pandemic, at our company we had already started a pilot project to facilitate remote working. The need arose because it was difficult for us to retain talent at the Moscow subsidiary: our teams there had to spend a lot of time travelling in a very large city with a great deal of traffic. We implemented a platform before the pandemic so that people could work from home. When the pandemic occurred, this platform was a great help when it came to implementing it throughout the organisation. After the pandemic, what we have done in all the countries and workplaces where this is possible, is to offer two days working from home and three days from the office. Flexibility is very important and you have to take care of people so that they become involved in the project.

Now it's time for the economy to recover: digitalisation and innovation will be key to stepping up economic recovery and promoting sustainable growth. How can this culture of innovation be fostered within companies?

We sell dreams in a bottle. We are recognised as being a creative, disruptive and innovative company. Our secret is imagination. We have managed to grow and increase our market share in a very competitive industry because we have been able to offer innovative products and inspire people with stories, imagination and a great team of people.

From your experience, what are the key factors for attracting and retaining talent today?

We are a small company that is growing more than others in a world of giants. We have always thought of ourselves as David fighting many Goliaths. We attract talent by offering an ambitious, exciting project that aims to achieve important goals in an environment that takes care of people, where there is no culture of fear and mistakes are allowed. We want people to try things out, innovate, create and develop and we encourage them to do so. We think that these factors, together with a competitive remuneration system, are what attract and retain talent.

When people join our company, we always look for and value curiosity, the pursuit of excellence, wanting to do things better... We look for people who know how to resolve situations, seek out solutions and stand out.

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