

# Leadership insights

**After more than 100 years, Reiwag Facility Services is still reaching new heights, successfully operating in nine industry sectors across the European marketplace.**

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**T**o be successful in business, there are three key attributes one must possess: character, knowledge, and diligence. That's according to Viktor Wagner, the CEO of Reiwag Facility Services, who believes any leader lacking one or more of these qualities will struggle to reach their full potential, and fail to get the most out of their team. Viktor chats to *The CEO Magazine* about what else he believes makes a good leader in today's fast-paced environment. He also shares some of Reiwag's recent successes, and his thoughts on entrepreneurial collaboration.

***The CEO Magazine:* How can you tell a good leader apart from a bad one?**

**Viktor:** Leading executives have an influence on the lives of their employees and their families. They are the foundation and as such, a key to the success of a business. The leading executive has to be permanently aware of his or her great responsibility. Thereby, under no circumstances can there be a lack of entrepreneurial thinking.

Entrepreneurial thinking is characterised by having a medium- to long-term effect. The opposite of that is a quarterly pursuit of a personal result which operates only short term and is bonus-oriented.

One of the most important tasks of a leading executive is the continuous support and encouragement of his or her employees. The continuity in corporate management usually creates the most positive impact and, at the same time, enhances a greater trust in the enterprise from clients. In addition, one should also ensure they have an adequate mix of ages at various levels of senior >>



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management. Experienced, leading executives who have gained valuable experience through mistakes made in the past (as one knows, experience equals the sum of mistakes made) may exchange their opinions and experiences with younger managers to achieve creative results.

The three essential attributes are character, knowledge, and diligence. Undoubtedly, success will be jeopardised if one of these three attributes is not sufficiently represented. How can someone with great character and diligence be successful if they do not possess sufficient knowledge and skills? How can the cleverest employee be successful, when he or she does not have an excellent character, or is not diligent? And finally, what helps the most diligent person if he or she has a poor character, and does not know or do anything?

Leading executives have another important task—they have to be role models. They have to live up to that responsibility in every respect, in terms of reliability, diligence, dedication, and, of course, skills and know-how. Only when the 'boss' sets the example, can he or she demand and expect full commitment from an employee.

#### **What role should education play in an executive's life?**

There is no doubt that higher education at a university or other academic institute is an advantage, with prior degrees and other job-related training being an additional asset.

Unfortunately, universities and other academic institutions, do not place sufficient importance on providing training for rhetorical and negotiation skills, and it is these factors

that are a necessity for sales and leadership. After all, sales is a very crucial factor for the success of an enterprise since even the best product does not sell if the sales team cannot make the product attractive to the client.

Also of great importance is a network which can be extended through memberships in various clubs and associations. Networking, after all, is one of the crucial criteria for positive economic results.

#### **You believe international connections are also a key part of success. Can you explain?**

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also worth mentioning the benefit of the ability to speak foreign languages, preferably acquired at an early age. Having already spent extended periods of time in a foreign country not only considerably widens the horizon but also helps form a better view of the world. It additionally enhances the capacity for understanding and diversity within an enterprise.

#### **Can you tell us about the growth and expansion Reiwag has experienced in the past 12 to 18 months?**

Reiwag is continuing to increase its turnover and business presence not only in Austria, but also in other countries. For example, we are operating in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Croatia, and Serbia.

We have important contracts with some big clients in Austria that engage our cleaning business in addition to technical services and some other services. In the Czech Republic, the business is also going very well because the turnover for most of the companies is increasing and the unemployment rate is very low. In Romania especially, the GDP is increasing and the real estate business has boomed. That means that a lot of Reiwag's clients in other countries are buying real estate again and that provides a very big opportunity for our Building Support Services business in Romania—where Reiwag is the main shareholder—to increase its turnover and profit.



#### **You were recently invited to the University of Stanford in California after being presented the Ernst & Young [EY] award for Entrepreneur of the Year in 2013. How was that experience?**

It was organised by EY and we did a workshop at the university and had a visit to Silicon Valley. This was very, very impressive because we learned that there is one professor for nine students and the relationships with the students are therefore fantastic. It brings a really great result so that they can challenge and question whatever they like. It was very interesting and this workshop had a benefit for Reiwag: an innovative team meeting in which I brought people from the outside in. They had another way of thinking compared to our IT experts which was great because in our business we are always striving to try and create a product which is better. That diversity in thinking gives us new ideas and discussions. We have already organised this innovation meeting to happen twice in Austria for Reiwag and will continue to do so in the future.

Every year, EY hosts a conference, and it brings the entrepreneurs of the year

together to discuss various topics. It is always very interesting. It is about the collaboration of entrepreneurial minds. In 2014, we went to South Korea and Taiwan, and then last year it was Silicon Valley. We also visited Google and learned a lot about what they are doing, as well as Airbnb and Tesla.

#### **Where do you see the facility services industry moving in the future?**

I think the computer will take over a part of the work. That means that people will lose their jobs all around the world. The challenge of the future will be finding other jobs for them.

Generally, I believe that the technology sector is growing very fast and changing the way we work. We can see this already happening in other industries, where technology is replacing the workforce. Soon our branch (facility service industry) will be confronted with this.

Finally, there will be a dramatic change maybe within the next 10 or 20 years and we have to take care so that we can still be a leader in our business environment. ■



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