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All aboard

Despite having offices all over the world, international shipping company d'Amico simply treat everyone like they are part of one very big family.

IMAGES D'AMICO

D'Amico had humble beginnings back in the 1930s when the family decided to transport timber by sea from Salerno, Italy. Today it is a world-leader in the shipping industry, with businesses on four continents. CEO Cesare d'Amico has been with the company since he left school. It's still very much a family business, but the d'Amicos have embraced their international connections.

Cesare explains: "Our difference is that although we are a family company we don't conform to the ways of traditional family-owned shipping companies, which tended to be centralised in the hands of just a few members of the family, or even just one of the family. What we have done is try to delegate to our managers the authority and the autonomy to run the company. It may appear unusual for a family-run business, but we have always thought of the company as global. Even back in the 1970s when I started, people were already using the word 'global' when they spoke about d'Amico.

"Also, even though we are a very large company, we try to run things as if it's a big family. It's important to treat people in the right manner, as you would your family. In a big company this is not a common approach, but we like to do it this way." >>



Name Cesare d'Amico
Company d'Amico Società di Navigazione
Position CEO
HQ Rome, Italy
Employees 569 onshore, 3,000 rotating ship personnel



This philosophy also extends to the way d'Amico deals with its suppliers and key stakeholders as it helps them to establish strong ties built on transparency and mutual respect. "When I joined the company, one of the first things that my uncle taught me was the importance of a good reputation and the need to protect it: never promise something that you could not deliver, never borrow money if you think you might not be able to repay it," says Cesare. "Once you have lost your reputation and your credibility it could take forever to get it back again. As the shipping business brings you into contact with so many other counterparts, it is essential that you take care in how you deal with these people. Not just financially, but also in your attitude.

"The other day I was being interviewed at the local newspaper in Genoa and I was talking about one key point that has always been a part of my



family; when we do a deal it has to be done with the will of both parties. For this reason, respect is one of the essential points. You might have something that gives you an advantage, but you need to be able to give concessions to the other side as well. That is the key which allowed d'Amico to achieve extraordinary results in terms of relationships, especially in Japan. It's very important to be transparent, loyal, and honest. That way, when you encounter problems, it's much faster and easier to deal with them."

Another important aspect of the family philosophy concerns three main tenets: "It has always been something that we are concerned about and it's been a work in progress over many decades, but we are very serious about safety, security and respect for the environment," explains Cesare.

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- Cesare d'Amico

"These ideas are part of a company policy, and there is no compromise.

"These three words are part of our culture and we work every day to spread it among the people we work with. In a growing and expanding company, it can become difficult to ensure that the policy of the company in the head office and the philosophy of the family effectively reaches everyone in the business.

"Also, among our staff there are many cultural backgrounds. When we

started, the majority were Italians, but as we have expanded, we have become more global. There are now many cultures, many experiences and different levels of competence that we can draw from to really take advantage of our global position. We see this as an asset."

"Environmental issues are very important for us. As we all know, unfortunately these days environmental concerns are growing and therefore we are very strict in respecting safety procedures and standards." Here Cesare is referring mainly to the product tankers business area. The world has seen the massive environmental destruction that can be caused by an oil spill in the ocean. But for d'Amico, the ocean is its home and the protection of marine life gets as much care and attention as its relationships with people. ■



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