

## Lessons from the top: Shared goals, bonds and strategies are vital

**This Eric Salmon & Partners, ‘Lessons from the top’ is a thought leadership article based on an interview with Paolo Recrosio, CEO Berlin Packaging EMEA.**

Acknowledged as the world’s largest Hybrid Packaging Supplier specializing in the supply of glass, plastic and metal packaging and closures, the company, with its origins in the U.S., has grown significantly in EMEA over the last few years. It is now operational in 14 countries in the region and has completed more than 25 acquisitions since 2016, keeping this one-billion-euro plus business together is no small feat.

Paolo Recrosio, who has headed up these businesses in Europe since 2018, believes success is about creating shared goals, bonds and strategies. Consensus building from the top definitely has a role to play in the 21<sup>st</sup> century business, with Monika Stoiber from Eric Salmon & Partners he sets out his aims:

**MS: What was your mandate when you were appointed CEO, and how is your role evolving?**

**PR:** Our business model is unusual and so is my role. Firstly, our philosophy is to never ‘take-over’ the companies we acquire. Instead, our aim is to provide support so they can excel in their local activities.

Another priority is to align the objectives between our management and the acquired companies. The aim is to foster a strong bond and a shared strategy, which is in the interest of Berlin Packaging as a whole.

Increasingly my role has become that of a coordinator focused on gaining the trust and buy-in from the companies we have acquired. The people that head up these local businesses are very smart. If they see value in becoming part of our organisation they will then do their best to accelerate performance and growth.

At our EMEA headquarters we aim to serve our local markets and supervise performance, which we take a long-term view on. This allows management to focus on key goals such as sustainability, diversity and inclusion, as well as employees satisfaction.

**MS: With such a unique business model, how do you develop a common corporate culture?**

**PR:** Our motto is ‘anything is possible.’ We encourage inclusive behaviour, entrepreneurial spirit, dynamism and a culture of experimentation. The management team delegate a lot and promote local empowerment, this leads to strong buy-in at all levels and avoids bureaucracy and politics. The focus of our headquarters is to align the interests of our main organisation with local subsidiaries.

For that reason, we look for the right people and companies to join us. We therefore partner with well managed local businesses, whose management team can align to our strategy, plans, and cultural mindset in order to accelerate growth.

Our current challenge is to bring all of this together under one brand. We have chosen a softly, softly approach, without forcing systems and processes on the companies we have acquired. The aim is to bring all stakeholders on board.

**MS: With such an ethos, where do you focus your time and energy?**

**“I see myself as a conductor who needs to make sure that everybody is ready to perform at his or her highest level.”**

**PR:** I spend half of my time interacting and engaging with people across the organisation. Our business model is also very agile and requires a lot of adjustments, continuous change and realignment. I see myself as a conductor who needs to make sure that everybody is ready to perform at his or her highest

level. This involved a lot of coordination and really understanding other people.

**MS: Talking about people, who are your stakeholders, and do they have an influence on you?**

**PR:** Our stakeholders are the typical ones of any company, such as employees and customers, as well as our local businesses, who are the key enablers of our success. They are also the foundation of our business model, since they are an important source of growth and have a key role to play in our future strategy.

I am certainly inspired when I talk to them and see them operate in their local markets. For me respecting our local businesses and the role that they play is key to our mutual success.

**MS: How would you describe your dream company of the future?**

**PR:** I would imagine this company to be an evolution of what we have today, rather than be disrupted entirely. In the future, the work environment will allow everybody to feel that they are a key player in driving success. The company will be focused on empowering individuals, but also exposing them to the company's ethos from the very first day they join.

I would imagine the company to be more like WhatsApp, where there is quick decision making, yet an informal culture when it comes to communication. The aim would be to give lots of space to individuals so they can be pro-active, but also foster a culture where individuals can work hard and play hard. With respect to talent, we already have a 'recruit for attitude' philosophy and we will continue to enforce this.

**MS: What challenges are you focusing on in the next three to five years?**

**PR:** Firstly, internally, it is all about maintaining communication with our local companies as they continue to grow strongly and enhancing the decentralised leadership model we believe in.

Secondly, externally, the challenge will be delivering on digitalisation and ESG compliance. I firmly believe that as the CEO of our growing EMEA region I have an obligation to drive these changes and



to create long-term value, which is in the interest of all our stakeholders, the local community, and society in general.

**MS: When recruiting young talent what advice would you give?**

**PR:** When it comes to attracting and retaining young talent, as well as motivating them, our key focus is to empower them from the very first moment they join. They can literally make a difference every day and feel part of our community with common goals in a very agile environment. Our informal style – think WhatsApp -- fits in well with the younger generation. It is why they feel engaged at Berlin Packaging.

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