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Delivering new solutions

When it comes to the transport of goods, this innovative business has developed a door-to-door solution that will deliver enormous savings.

IMAGES INGER MACKENZIE

Taking its cue from tech giants like Apple and Amazon, both companies, Shamrock Shipping and Trading and BeFlexi Limited, have embraced innovation and new technologies in order to expand and grow their businesses. *The CEO Magazine* chats to CEO and Founder Sergey Galin.

***The CEO Magazine:* What is your professional background?**

Sergey: I started my professional life when I was twenty years old in the biggest global company in petroleum trading in the Soviet Union — basically it was the only company trading at that time. Since then I have been involved in many projects related to petroleum products — petrochemicals and crude oil — and later on in the trading and financing of those projects such as storage, maintenance, and pipeline delivery. By the time I decided to set up my own company, I had been in the industry for a long time and I had a very good understanding, and plenty of knowledge, to set in place what I wanted to achieve.

What are the biggest lessons you've learned?

Reputation is a key element. If you are honest, innovative, and you have strength, and a pure understanding of what you are trying to achieve, the rest will come. But if you don't have a reputation, it's much more difficult to reach >>



Name Sergey Galin
Company Shamrock Shipping and Trading; BeFlexi
Position CEO
HQ Limassol, Cyprus
Employees Shamrock: 7; BeFlexi: 11

your goals — even if your vision is progressive and knowledge is sufficient. Therefore, in whatever I do — the reputation, the name that I have earned for the ability to fulfil what I have promised, has always been the most important thing, and still is.

Are there any plans for further growth and expansion in the near future?

Until now, Shamrock has been positioning itself in the market as a one-stop shop for the lubricant industry — we supply our clients and our customers with whatever they need to produce finished lubricants. This includes plastics, base oils, components, and additives. In the past eighteen months we have looked to move into the market of fuel additives, which improve the characteristics and productivity of a range of fuels like gasoline and diesel. We have established fantastic sales and marketing channels, which will entrench our position in the global market considerably. That will contribute to our future expansion, and we're very excited about the market and the upcoming opportunities.

In 2008 you established BeFlexi.

It was set up to be involved with chartering, storage, shipping, and logistics for various petrochemicals and petroleum products. In 2008 we looked at the new technology that had been developed by the military for the storage and transportation of various liquid cargoes, and discovered a product called Flexitank.

This type of packaging, and the service we provide, helps our customers to avoid unnecessary steps in the supply chain. For example, there is a manufacturer of soybean oil in Taiwan. He has to source the raw material, and



then he needs to store the finished products on his site to accumulate large volumes, and then sell it to an intermediary trader. The trader then takes it to the port's shore-tanks, and from there the product is loaded onto the ship, which delivers it to the port of destination.

Then this soybean oil gets stored in another shore-tank, before being shuttled by rail or by road to the end user. What we offer to our client is door-to-door delivery. Product is shipped immediately, thus avoiding all the transshipments, storages, et cetera, to get to the final destination. It cuts down on costs, and it minimises exposure to price fluctuations, because you don't have to accumulate a large volume of product before the actual shipment. Such technology also optimises cash flow because instead of financing and storing huge volumes of the product, you can ship it and get paid straight away.

To put it simply, it gives enormous flexibility to the cargo owners

involved in the international trade; that is why the company is called BeFlexi. I really love this company. It's truly global — we've established ten loading points worldwide through our partnership with SGS. We are planning to increase that to 160 worldwide in the next five years.

There are two main applications for the product that we are offering to the market. One is Flexitank for transportation, and the other is Flexitank for storage — it basically eliminates the necessity to invest in the construction of big storage tanks or silos. It's very easy, because it's so straightforward, it's cheap, and it's safe. On top of this we are developing trade finance and operational solutions. The idea is that we take care of the entire supply chain, so our client just needs to tell us where to take the product and we take care of the logistics and the finance. Effectively we allow them to grow their business; they can use their increased cash flow to invest in other areas.

“Effectively we allow them to grow their business; they can use their increased cash flow to invest in other areas.” – Sergey Galin

How important is innovation and technology?

Today, business is all about innovations. There's a certain inequality that we see in business at the moment. High-tech companies like Apple and Amazon are growing by double digits. At the same time, old, well-established industrial businesses are struggling with their growth. There's a gap that needs to be filled somehow. If reputation is the first thing to worry about, innovation is definitely the second.

How do you work with your key suppliers and partners to achieve success?

We treat our suppliers and all of the people that we deal with in the same way that we want them to treat us. It's based on respect, fulfilling our obligations, and honestly explaining what we are trying to achieve — a clear strategy, and an understanding of both the benefits and the concerns for the suppliers who want to do business with us. Honesty is really crucial to maintaining reputation. Being trusted and respected is very important to us, so we never over-promise. We are very clear about what we are able to deliver, and we always do what we say we will. That's how we've managed to get such big names as our clients. ■

“We built a very interesting partnership during these challenging years, and TIBA is very pleased and honoured to be one of their key partners. Our mutual success has been possible because we share the same passion: customer service!” – Sébastien Deleu – Regional Director, TIBA Group



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