

# LATHES. SOME VERY PERSONAL THINGS!

INTERVIEW TO

DINO DUSO Chairman of The Rössl E Duso Company (Full Transcription)

**M: To break the ice, would you be so kind to give us briskly some data about your company?**

**D:** Rössl e Duso is a metalworking company established by Giuseppe Rössl and me in 1969. Mainly, we deal with high precision mechanical machinings, such as: milling, turning, boring on medium-large-sized metal parts. Our company is situated in Vedelago (TV) – Italy, over an area of about 32,000 square meters (12,000 of which are covered). With a workforce of over 100 employees, our turnover was about 12 million euros last year. We mostly work in the following fields of application:

- Energy (hydroelectric, wind, nuclear, gas and steam turbines - we contributed to the "Iter" project, for example);
- General Engineering & Steel and Iron industry;
- Oil and Gas;
- Naval;
- Paper and Presses;
- Aerospace (e.g. we also contributed to the "Vega" project)

**M: We know that, there has been a sale of shares to the Cividale Group, recently. What's your general idea about shareholdings or mergers between companies?**

**D:** First of all, I've always thought that with a view to innovation and commercial strengthening, the union of two companies allows them to entry new markets and acquire new contracts and more complex orders which a medium-sized company would not be able to achieve by its own. Second, but not the least, in order to make such collaboration work, trust, honesty, reliability, and professionalism between the parties is fundamental.

***M: If I am not wrong, you are now focusing on mechanical machinings for renewable energies. In this regard, what can you tell us about topics like Innovation and Technology in the engineering field?***

***D:*** Exactly. We are aiming at providing our customers in the energy sector a complete and add-valued service: finished parts assembled with the utmost precision (e.g. turbine casings). We have the know-how and technology to offer our customers effective solutions to their issues. Our staff are capable of developing excellent ideas and they are also well-prepared for troubleshooting.

***M: Environment-safety-health at the workplace, an ever so sensitive topic. What about it?***

***D:*** For an entrepreneur, his/her employee's health is essential. Therefore, we must promote prevention and training, provide the adequate safety devices and respect current regulations on the subjects. In our job, you must be careful, try to foresee what could happen and be focus on what you are doing. In any case, a little bit of luck never hurts!

***M: What talents or skills do you consider necessary to be a good milling or turning machinist?***

***D:*** First of all, you must know and love your job. Then, being our operations very tricky and dangerous, you need a long practice and a certain experience that can only be accumulated in several years of work. I'm not exaggerating in saying that it takes between 3 and 10 years to get a certain skill and acquaintance with those type of machinings and to learn programming independently.

***M: What do you usually look for in an employee?***

***D:*** I think, it's really important for an employee to love learning new things and take risks. Being polite, respecting his/her colleague's work, being able to collaborate with them in order to come up with solutions to any kind of problem, and above all, a good will are fundamentals in any type of job.

***M: What suggestions would you give to technical and professional schools in order to train good milling or turning machinists?***

***D:*** Unfortunately, we are noticing that finding qualified personnel is getting more and more difficult. Personally, I believe that students should do more hours of training or internships in companies. We must teach young people how to approach our business, our world, involve them in what they are doing.

***M: What opportunities does the Rössl e Duso offer company to its co-workers? Why someone should wish to be part of your team?***

**D:** Let's say we are a very nice "business card" ...ha ha... You may learn a lot working with us. Any newcomer experiences so quickly, that, in 4 or 5 years, he/she results qualified to work for any other company. We are working on so many different, complex and important tasks for worldwide customers that you can't get bored.

**M: Do you think that an engineering degree is enough to climb the corporate ladder?**

**D:** No, I don't. Of course, I consider the collaboration between universities and companies very important, and it's something we are still working on even now. However, I think that the mere engineering degree is not enough to climb the ladder in a medium-large-sized metalworking company. It surely provides you some competences and theoretical knowledge... which are essential rungs for sure, but you will always need a lot of practice and a solid technical background. In order to improve a product or create innovation, any recently graduated employee, beyond owning the appropriate educational qualification, must increase his/her technical knowledge as much as possible.

**M: I see you are recruiting personnel. What kind of difficulty do you face in hiring?**

**D:** Exactly, we are mainly recruiting personnel to be assigned to our tool machines: such as milling or turning machinists (preferably with a little bit of experience). It's not easy to find a good and expert operator, especially someone who works metal parts as big as ours without being scared by their dimensions (remember that some of our pieces weigh tons). Initially, we wanted to get rid of our smaller machine tools, but later, we understood that those were necessary to grow our young operators up, allowing them to step into more complex and, let me say "dangerous" mechanical machinings. Anyway, in general, we certainly are looking for people with goodwill, I will never get tired of saying it! We are looking for young people willing to learn and here there are a lot of good teachers!

**M: In such an increasingly dynamic economy, how do you see the future of your company? Do you think your company will last over the years?**

**D:** Insomuch as our company has been set up, and well, you know... we have got excellent machinists and machineries... I'm convinced that we will have no problems in providing machinings and employments for the next 20/30 years. Furthermore, it will take many years before robots or independent technological automations would be able to carry out mechanical machinings with the same abilities of our machinists, even because these metal parts are not mass-produced.

**M: Do you hope your company will remain an Italian company?**

**D:** We are an Italian metalworking company known and renowned all over the world. I believe we could still stay this way in the future. In any case, we are open to possible joint ventures with foreign corporations.

**M: What are your targets for the next years? And what do you think your company should improve in the coming years?**

**D:** To make our company even more competitive, and therefore we can say "improve it", I set myself two targets for the next future: buy another *Gantry* lathe and hire other qualified staff.

**M: Let's get into something "personal". Why are you so keen on engineering?**

**D:** I started to take an interest in engineering, when I was a child. An uncle of mine worked in one of the few turning workshops in the area of Treviso (the company named *Gandelli*). So, during my summer holidays I used to go with him to the factory and watching the turning machinists working on manual lathes (there were no cnc lathes at that time), I mean, I was looking around...Then, I started doing some little chores like cleaning the equipment, sweeping the floor, welding etc. Well, at the age of 8, I already knew I would have become a turning machinist. So, I enrolled in the "industrial schools" and when I was 14, I started working for my uncle who, in the meantime, had opened his own business.

**M: If you hadn't become an entrepreneur, what would you have done or become?**

**D:** Probably, I would have become a professional soccer player... ha ha... I remember that the very same day when I decided not to sign a contract as semi-professional player with a Sicilian club, I went to look at a lathe to start my own metalworking workshop up.

**M: Retracing some of the most important steps in the history of your company, could you give us some significant dates for you?**

**D:** **1969:** beginning of our business. **1983:** we started acquiring skills from some highly qualified staff from Milan, Turin and Genoa who taught us how to assembly and fix a machine tool (you should take into account that, in Veneto, we were mostly farmers and there weren't as many professionals of this particular sector as in those big cities) **1993:** I realized that working for Italian companies wasn't enough for us, and therefore we should have worked for foreign companies as well; this would have made Rössl e Duso improving in quality. So, we hired an expert engineer who knew four foreign languages and had excellent technical knowledge, and with him I went travelling through the world in search of new companies to work for and contracts to sign. **2012:** Dear me! This was the year of the composition with creditors, resulting from the global crisis of 2008 which we suffered a few years later. **2013:** *Beppi's* death: my partner and friend...hmm... Those have been hard times and they made us grow up a lot, understand some

mistakes and allowed us to change some of our strategies. Fortunately, but above all thanks to the efforts of each one of our staff members, this stage ended in **2017** and it was followed by the sale of a part of our shares to the Cividale Group in **2018**.

**M: Could you tell us one or more significant episodes which have affected your working life?**

**D:** Rather than episodes, I would say that some special people have affected my private and working life. I would call them: my MASTERS! First of all, my uncle *Giuliano*, then Mr. *Valentino Scarpa* and finally, Mr. *Toncelli* from the *Breton* company.

**M: What difficulties did you find in your job and how did you face them?**

**D:** As it happens in anyone's private life, there are often difficulties you never stop learning. You need be determined, be focused. So, albeit complicated an issue can be, once you have analysed it, you will come up with the solution.... You know, "*there's a solution to any problem*".

**M: Can you describe us, in few words, how was like working in the 70s and what are the main differences compared to nowadays?**

**D:** Of course. We used to work 8 hours more a week, and no one would complain about it. For example: when I used to work in my uncle's workshop, there was a sort of ritual: every Saturday, before lunch, we would go and have an aperitif altogether (obviously offered by my uncle). Nowadays, you would say we were doing "team building"!...ha ha... Furthermore, since in the 70s there were not all those modern equipment and technologies, we machinists had to be smart, shrewd.

**M: How much has politics mattered in the growth of your company?**

**D:** Let's say we have always managed to get by on ourselves. I'm an entrepreneur and I'm trying to run my business as well as I can.... I let politicians do politics.

**M: What do you think about the big industrial groups you work for or you worked for? Is there any co-operation or project coming?**

**D:** We have been co-operating with big worldwide corporations for years and I must say that working with perceptive and competent professionals is always very nice. Projects coming?! Everywhere and at anytime... Well, you know what I mean... we are dealing with GE, Ansaldo, Siemens...

**M: I've noticed you have been working with a huge number of relatives. How has your extended family affected your business?**

**D:** For me, my family has always been very important. Uh...I have to admit that there are a lot of family relationships. Well, my wife, my daughters and their husbands, my brothers, some nieces and nephews... are working with me: However, I want to clarify that WHOEVER WORKS IN THE RÖSSL E DUSO COMPANY MUST RESPECT THE RULES. I believe in meritocracy, in trust, and above all, in honesty. In this belief, we have always lived and worked side by side. I remember, when I started, I also happened to work the night-shift, so in those occasions my wife took some fresh fruits and a good strong black coffee to my colleague and me. It's safe to say that my family has always supported and helped me a lot.

**M: I won't ask you about the strengths of your company, however if you were to mention some of the qualities that make you most proud of your job, what would they be?**

**D:** We are called "*The company of miracles*" ...ha ha... I would say that one of the greatest qualities we have is flexibility. The type of cohesion that exists among us is not easy to find in a company.

**M: What advice would you like to give to your "elder" and/or "young" peers entrepreneurs?**

**D:** So, as for "the elder" entrepreneurs are concerned", well, I would say that if they are turned elder, it means that they had done something good in their companies.... ha ha.... While, to the "younger", let me see...hmm...I would advise them to love their job and respect peers' work. Ah...and also to be determined, in order to overcome the issues they will find managing a company

**M: Do you want to take the opportunity of this interview to "take some pebbles out of your shoe" or to thank someone special?**

**D:** "*I have no pebbles to take off*". I learnt that honesty always pays back in life. Moreover, I'm a frank and sincere person. Instead, I would take advantage from this interview to thank my mother who has always given me her spiritual and moral help. She is a woman who prays a lot: both for her family and for all the people of the company, above all she prays they don't get hurt. When I have a problem, I go to visit my mother and still today she reminds me that <<*Those who do well and behave, will reap well too*>> And, it is a fact that... things have always gone well.

**M: If you could travel through time, what would you say to the "Dino of 1969" and what would you wish to the one of 2030 instead?**

**D:** So, a tip I would give to the "*Dino of 1969*" is: <<*Learn English!!*>>. Hmm, you know, ... I learnt Spanish through some course I attended and travelling around South America... and I can get by with that, but English... ENGLISH is everything nowadays! (Probably, I would have been much more independent if I had

learnt it). At any rate, I must admit that I have usually had fun working. To the "Dino of 2030" ...hmm...I wish him health and I'd say <<Take your fishing rod and go fishing!!">>

**M: What does Dino Duso believe in?**

**D:** As I reiterated in a previous answer, I firmly believe in honesty. When you act honestly, you can go to sleep like a child. I never wanted to make money from others' sacrifices or without having given my best.

**M: Last year, you celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of your company. Firstly, I want to congratulate you for this important goal, and secondly, I would like to ask you as polite as I can: do you think to keep working still for long? Don't you want to retire?**

**D:** Thanks. Well, before retiring I would like to create a school to train mechanical experts together with some collaborators (those who have been working with us for 40-50 years). It would be useful and a source of pride for me, to give continuity to our work, work I have always believed a lot in.

**M: So, to ending this interview with a dash of hilarity, "Are lathes some very personal things?"**

**D:** I always put passion and heart into what I do. Hmm... I guess that If they hadn't been "lathes", they would have been something else. I strongly believe in my company and our customers recognize our excellent job (I wouldn't say this, but maybe, we are known better abroad than in Italy). For these reasons, I can affirm that lathes are some very personal things to me... and I also think to all those families who have been working in Rössl e Duso for all these years.

**MD**