

Looking back

Konstantinos Macheras may have retired from an illustrious career with food retailer AB Vassilopoulos, but he's not finished putting his mark on the sector just yet.

IMAGES AB VASSILOPOULOS

When Konstantinos Macheras initially joined AB Vassilopoulos, part of the Delhaize Group, in 1997, the supermarket chain was sitting in the number five position within the Greek marketplace. It had just 15 stores and a turnover of around US\$117 million. Almost two decades later, thanks to the guidance of Konstantinos as CEO, the business has grown exponentially. Today it sits in the number one position, has well over 350 stores, and a turnover of US\$2 billion. "Even more importantly we are number one in the consumer's minds in Greece when they are thinking about food," Konstantinos adds.

Evidently, it's been a career filled with many highlights for Konstantinos who retired from the executive position in March, freeing up some of his time to focus on other pursuits. "There are so many opportunities for me looking forward," he says. "I am on some supervisory boards to advise companies on their operations in Europe, and I also have an interest in a company that produces new concepts in soft drinks. It's called Green Cola, and I will be helping them to develop their production facilities outside of Greece in various European countries. I hope this will occupy a third of my time, while another third will be spent on retailing advisory. The remaining time will be for some pleasure, and I'm not intending to stop working until I close my eyes."

Konstantinos started his professional career in the retail industry as a purchasing manager for a supermarket company in Chicago, the US. He then worked for confectionary manufacturer Mars Incorporated for 14 years, guiding >>



Name Konstantinos Macheras

Company AB Vassilopoulos

Position Former CEO

HQ Athens, Greece

Employees 12,700



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“When you define what the emotional drivers are for a consumer then you can make a lot of money.” – Konstantinos Macheras

been active in AMS, one of Europe’s largest buying alliances, and is the President of the Research Institute of Retail Consumers.

Konstantinos says his biggest learning throughout all of his years in the retail sector is that the customer is the most important thing. “That has always been my biggest concern,” he shares. “Wherever I am and whatever I am trying to do, I strive to understand what current consumer choices are, and what their shopping experiences are like. I then need to position my banners against those drivers. I need to communicate that accordingly and also to design and define store strategy which will meet the customers’ criteria. When you define what the emotional drivers are for a consumer then you can make a lot of money.”

After reflecting on the many highlights throughout his time with AB Vassilopoulos, Konstantinos says he hopes the business will continue to prosper and grow. “I hope my associates will continue to enjoy the freedom I have provided them because I hate micro management. I hope that it will continue to develop into a good business attitude and culture. I also hope that AB Vassilopoulos will leverage the opportunities which will arise from the merger which is expected to be completed in June.” ■

“Along with continuing to be a key and reliable supplier, we perceive that our role is to drive our client towards changes and to plan the future in our field together. We are thankful that this is recognised by AB Vassilopoulos.” – Mimis Koumantanos, Shareholder, Aktena Packaging



Leaders in packaging

The partnership between Euro Packaging Group and Aktena has resulted in the successful supply of high quality packaging products to top retail accounts in South–Eastern Europe.

Founded by the Majid family in 1974, Euro Packaging Group is a global leader in shopping bags, flexible film packaging, and paper products. It has a long list of blue-chip clients based on the most reputable retailers worldwide.

Its advanced technologies and vast experience in manufacturing high quality products, ensure Euro Packaging Group’s major position in the market. With its unrivalled in-house production facilities, Euro Packaging Group manufactures over 3,000 quality packaging items, including Carrier and Shopping Bags, Biodegradable and Compostable Carrier Bags and Packaging Products, Vest Style Carrier Bags (T-Shirt Bags), the entire range of Reusable Shopping Bags, Patch and Punch Out Handle Carrier Bags, Flexi-loop Handle Carrier Bags, Produce Bags, Fruit and Vegetable Bags, Paper Bags, Carton Liners, Refuse Sacks and Bin Liners, Gloves and Disposable Aprons, Courier Bags and Cash Bags, Grip Seal Bags, Flower Bags,

Flexible Bottle Bags, Shrink Films, Plantation and Seedling Bags, Piping Bags, Masking Films, and In-Store Bag Dispensing Solutions.

Meanwhile, Aktena Packaging is a leading supplier of the entire range of packaging products for supermarket chains, retailers, and industrial clients in South–Eastern Europe.

The joint forces of Euro Packaging Group with Aktena have resulted in the companies successfully supplying top retail accounts in South–Eastern Europe, such as AB Vassilopoulos (Supermarkets) S.A.

The state-of-the-art industrial infrastructure and the unique expertise of Euro Packaging Group’s R&D department, result in cost effective, yet environment friendly packaging solutions.

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reputable and leading supermarket and retail supplier—offering extensive regional corporate infrastructure of offices, warehousing, distribution and logistics, a highly specialised sales and marketing team, and a solid financial backing. All of these elements play a vital role in supporting the procurement departments of retailers.

The partnership between Euro Packaging Group and Aktena Packaging ensures significant financial and functional benefits for the supermarkets and retail chains that use their products and services. Their R&D departments collaborate with the clients on numerous development and manufacturing projects, which enable them to innovate, reduce costs, and improve product performance. ■

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sales, marketing, and exports in the Netherlands and later in Greece. From 1996, he was appointed general manager at Chipita International in Greece and stayed in that position until October 1997 when he joined AB Vassilopoulos.

“From there I went through all the steps,” Konstantinos recalls. “I was the General Manager of Greece, then the CEO of Greece, the CEO of Romania and Serbia and a member of the executive board, then the Executive Vice President of South-East Europe and Indonesia. I stayed with AB Vassilopoulos for almost 20 years. Then about two years ago I decided to

put an end to this career and start something new.”

Throughout his notable career Konstantinos has been the recipient of several honours. In 2005 he was named Officer in the Order of Leopold II by King Albert II of Belgium; he was selected as Manager of the Year in 2008 by the Hellenic Management Association, and as Manager of the Decade for 2002-2011 at the Retail Business Awards. He has served on the boards of various organisations, including the Hellenic Management Association, Association of Greek Executive Officers, and the Association of Greek Food Enterprises. He has also