

The unstoppable curiosity of Bruno Porchietto



Pictured: Bruno Porchietto, Chief Executive Officer of VICT. Photo supplied by VICT.

Imagine this scenario: you get a phone call from a head-hunter. He asks you how you feel about logistics. At this point in your work history, you don't have substantial logistics experience. You are then asked how you feel about running in a port in Argentina. And the port's not functional.

Do you want to know more?

If you're Bruno Porchietto, then of course you do!

"Out of pure curiosity, I went to the interview," he explains to Shipping Australia. It was an interview with International Container Terminal Services Inc (ICTSI), the well-known Philippines-headquartered and globally-operating box stevedore.

Bruno's CV was already packed with senior roles and achievements. But it was time for a new experience.

Bruno is proud of himself and the team for having re-started a terminal within six months that had been idled for years, especially as he had to create the team at same time and during an economic depression.

"We had to think outside of the box to create new opportunities. We created a barge operation to bring cargo to the terminal – most of the cargo in Argentina travels by truck but they have a deep river, and no-one was thinking that way. There was a lot of bureaucracy, but, Once it got started it was great". Buenos Aires also lies on the "Rio del Plata", which, despite its name, can be considered to be a river, an estuary, a gulf, or even a marginal sea. Or, to put it another way, it's a big body of brackish water with massive populations living along the coast. About 126km east-by-south from Buenos Aires on the Rio Del Plata is the Uruguayan city of Montevideo which attracts many services.

"I couldn't get services into my terminal, so I created a feeder service to there, and this gave us connections to the rest of the world" Bruno recalls.

While he was living in Argentina, Bruno and his family made many connections with the local community, especially through sport.

One of Bruno's hobbies is the Korean martial art of Taekwondo, which is

famous for its kicking techniques, and Bruno is a 3rd Dan (a third-level black-belt). Bruno saw an opportunity to use his hobby to give back to the community.

"We, as a company, created a Taekwondo school for children. The company helped with payments, and I helped bring teachers. We helped the local children who spent a lot of time on the street and we helped them to learn good values. I've reflected a lot on this. The children were very serious about their training. They were very disciplined; they never missed a class. They had a clean place to go, they felt respected, and they had someone teaching them important values. They and their parents were very thankful. It was very rewarding," he says.

After five years or so, Bruno felt it was time for a change. He could have stayed but there were no more revolutionary changes; the job would have been more of the same. Then a new opportunity beckoned.

"I was very honoured that ICTSI chose me for the job", he says.

Hailing from Torino, Italy, which is well-known to petrol-heads as the birthplace of Fabbrica Italiana Automobili di Torino ("FIAT"), Bruno originally had the idea that he would work as an interpreter. After finishing his studies he encountered a small problem: he hated the idea of translating for a living. Nonetheless, he is an accomplished linguist, having mastered English, French, Spanish, German, Romanian, and Polish in addition to his native Italian.

So, he followed-up with master's degree in political science. There was a problem with that too. "I had no idea what I wanted to do," Bruno laughs, adding, "it's a mixture of everything. You get to know enough law and economics to be

dangerous," he chuckles. In the long run, its generalist nature has proven useful to Bruno as a CEO. But, as a young man fresh out of university? Well, it wasn't quite so useful back then.

"It's why I did an MBA in Business Comms and Marketing. I felt that I needed to specialise. Marketing is a good mix of a science and an art. I like science, but, in my personal life, I also like art. I need the creative part in my life. But at the same time, I like the order that science gives. I am not an irrational scientist; I am a rational artist!" he laughs.

So, armed with a newly coined MBA in 1994, Bruno moved into marketing which, he discovered, is about people.

It's about working out what people need and then providing it to them in a better way than competitors. Marketing is exciting for Bruno because its about helping to make something that never existed before.

"This helps explain my all my jobs. It's been curiosity and new challenges. It never stops. I've always been going to new jobs and new countries and taking on new challenges and it never stops. I'm 58 now and you would have thought that it would have stopped. But it hasn't, and I'm here now. I thought that, at one point, I would go home to Italy, but no. that's why I'm here. It's this sense of curiosity. It just doesn't stop," he laughs. ▲



Pictured: Bruno is a 3rd Dan (a 3rd-level blackbelt) in the Korean martial art of Taekwondo. Photo supplied by Bruno Porcietto.

Personal life

Family: married for over 30 years to Paola. Kids are Elenora (20) studying management and Alessandro (22) studying architecture.

Favourite food: "I love tortellini! The really good ones are homemade, and they remind me of my mother and grandmother making them on a special occasion".

Sports: Taekwondo. He's a 3rd Dan. Anyone getting a black belt is a significant achievement. It was especially meaningful for Bruno as he trained with his son, they arrived at the same time for the exam and were awarded their black belts at the same time. "It gives you a sensation of having achieved something that is very hard to get to".

Professional history

2023-to date – CEO, ICTSI, Melbourne

2018-2022 – CEO, ICTSI, Buenos Aires, Argentina

2016-2018 – Group Managing Director, Coca Cola, Italy

2012-2016 – President & CEO, Hibu (formerly Yell), Spain

2012-2012 – General Manager Europe, Candy Category, Kraft Foods

2008-2011 – Chief Marketing Officer, Hibu (formerly Yell), Spain & Latin America,

2003-2008 – Business Unit Director & Division Marketing Director – Coca Cola

2001-2003 – Country Manager, Indesit Company, Poland

1996-2001 – Marketing Manager Turkey; Marketing Manager Romania, Bestfoods Unilever

Education

1994 – Master of Business Administration – Master in Business Communication & Marketing

1992 – Master of Science: Political Sciences - Università degli Studi, Turin