



TEAM PERFORMANCE

Alexander Kharkovsky, Director for Sales and Technical Service at BIAXPEN, speaks about vocation, friendship and a rowdy childhood.

My childhood

My childhood was like that of many Soviet children. It was exciting and there were a lot of risks that I definitely won't allow my children to take. But it was not so much adventurism as it was the environment in which we had to live, grow and study. Although the environment was rather rowdy, I managed to receive a gold medal for my school achievements and graduate from the university with honours. Somehow I managed to balance childish "street" activities with my own interests. I've always been interested in learning.

"PEOPLE GET FREEDOM THROUGH RESPONSIBILITY, THAT'S GREAT – THAT'S HOW YOU BECOME INNOVATIVE."

I am a person who likes order and discipline, but also experiments. I remember accidentally setting fire to a fan at home and causing a power outage all over the neighbourhood. It was an experiment: it was summer, it was hot, and I decided to pour water on a fan. Many Chinese fans have actually now adopted this. Well, at that time this only caused a short-circuit failure and there was no electricity in the whole area for the rest of the evening – it went out at some substation. I don't remember the punishment, but I've learned that these things need to be approached from an engineering perspective.

About working in a team

It's a great success if you have people around you that share the same values. I'm a team player. Human interaction is important to me. I love leading a team that tackles complex challenges and achieves great results under my leadership.

People get freedom through responsibility, that's great and that's how you become innovative. When like-minded people have the freedom to do what they want to do, they do it at 150% efficiency. The main thing is to encourage progress.



A team is a cross-fertilization of energies.

I worked at Mars for 23 years, working my way up from sales manager to global distribution development head. I left for several reasons. At some point, despite my global role, I was left without a team, and my work progressed into more of an advisory and optimisation role. Before that, I had 400 people under my belt: my own department, people becoming more and more competent... And working without a team takes energy. Another reason is that my operational work became minimal. Achieving results every day, every week, every month gives you dopamine and endorphins. I need to reach goals, build teams, build something new. All of this allows you to feel a sense of importance and satisfaction.

“IT’S POSSIBLE TO BE IN HARMONY WITH YOURSELF IF YOU ARE SATISFIED AT WORK, WITH YOUR FAMILY, AND ARE DOING SOMETHING FOR SOCIETY.”

The new job

Joining SIBUR has meant a fundamental change in industry and team. I am glad that I have joined an industrial company. Of course, this entails some stress, I need to replenish my knowledge of petrochemistry, my knowledge of operating processes and trading. But this is business. It’s about people, about process efficiency, about relationships. I can’t say I’m out of my depth. I’m on my own path.

Visiting production sites and plants has given me a lot of expertise and awareness of SIBUR’s scale, has provided me with a better understanding of the specifics of the role, which have influenced my activities. Mentoring and advice from senior leaders have offered guidance, the ability to learn new things and are enriching. This is very valuable.

About me

At work I'm strict but fair. I demand a lot from myself and from others. I believe I can develop an effective team that is great to work with and that you can also have fun with. I'm not completely selfish, and sometimes that's a problem. In some aspects I should prioritise myself. It doesn't always work out. There are other corporate interests, and family interests, and liabilities.

It's possible to be in harmony with yourself if you are satisfied at work, with your family, and are doing something for society. If these four areas – including the one called “me” – are all in order, you can achieve a balance.

Friendship

As a rule, most of our friendships are made when we are students. But I'm lucky, I have a lot of friends from work. I've been able to create teams where we start to become friends. I think this is because it was possible to gather like-minded people with the same life values.

I'm also doubly lucky because even when working relationship ends, friendships still continue.



With family.

“I WANT US TO DEVELOP A PROPER HEALTHCARE SYSTEM SO THAT WE CAN TREAT CHILDREN WITH COMPLEX DISEASES.”

Family

Family is of huge importance, it's a support system. It is one of the reasons for living... It is a source of wisdom, kindness, love and it is a place where there is mutual understanding, patience, acceptance...

In the spring of this year, my mother passed away. She's in a better world now. This event made me rethink a lot of things, it made me realise that life is short and everything is in God's hands. It's about balancing time to do simple but important things today. Doing things for loved ones, helping those who need you is necessary...

Time is an irreplaceable resource. I try to spend my spare time with my family. I have three kids, two are grown up and the youngest is 7 years old. I want to focus my next 10 years on helping my child to understand the real value of things. This can be encouraged through family life. A man's role in the family is a big one, especially for boys. To establish boundaries, how to stick to those boundaries, what needs to be done rationally and where to rely on intuition, how to achieve something and deal with failures... With this in mind, the next 10 years will be about bringing up a happy and successful person.

Hobbies

I love sports – volleyball, swimming, billiards. In the winter, alpine skiing. But my true element is water. I've always enjoyed swimming. It makes sense, too. I grew up not far from the sea, by Moscow standards. In Krasnodar, which is 100 km from the coast. I like having sunshine when there's warm water nearby. I don't physically get enough sun in Moscow.



Active leisure as an important part of balance.

Dreams

I have big dreams. I want us to develop a proper healthcare system so that we can treat children with complex diseases, create centres for rehabilitation of children with autism, and make society more tolerant and supportive towards children and other people with special needs. And if we're talking about where I see myself personally in 10 years... I want to be at peace with myself, my family and the environment.

