



“NO FEAR”

Vladimir Razumov, Member of SIBUR's Board of Directors, speaks about a continuous drive and angry dogs.

About game of chance

Though I have worked my entire life in the petrochemical industry, I cannot say I have chosen this path since I was at school. At that time, I played basketball a lot, and like my friends planned to get a degree in physical training. But our parents said a firm no, and we chose the Voronezh State University of Engineering Technologies (formerly the Voronezh Technology Institute) instead. I graduated from it as a specialist in chemical machinery and equipment. This is how petrochemistry became my lifelong ambition.



1963. A student at the Voronezh Technology Institute.

About romantic youth

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It was a wonderful and happy time. In 1961, shortly before I became a student, Yuri Gagarin journeyed into outer space. The entire nation was caught up in a wave of enthusiasm, it was in the air itself. As the country recovered from the war, its cultural life started to flourish. There emerged young poets – Bella Akhmadulina, Robert Rozhdestvensky, and Yevgeny Yevtushenko – who later became widely recognised. Another remarkable phenomenon was the so-called poets-lieutenants, for example Eduard Asadov and Yevgeny Vinokurov. Their wartime lyrics made us feel more mature and gave us the sense of what was going on at that time. While a student, I also developed a passion for classical music, especially piano. This was the Khrushchev Thaw period, and it was exciting because every day we could expand both our personal and professional horizons.

About the power of sports

I think sports is a perfect tool for self-assertion and self-discovery. There is a huge difference between individual and team sports though, the latter requiring, first and foremost, the ability to band together to achieve a common goal. Today, there are lots of team-building trainings, while in our time we had sports for that. You would ask, why basketball? Because I view it as an intellectual game, a game of successful people. For a long time, basketball was much more than a hobby for me, and giving it up was really painful. It took me an eternity to overcome my desire to play. At the same time, I was getting more and more involved in my professional life.



1967. The Voronezh Region basketball team training.

About choice

I graduated with honours, then started my career at the Voronezh Synthetic Rubber Plant (now Voronezhsintezkauchuk). My first job was at the design engineering department, and I found designing different machines and semi-automatic devices very exciting. But eventually I decided to pursue a different career path, moving into production. The best experience I ever had at work was when I headed the copolymer rubber shop, the famous Shop No. 28. I worked with a strong team of young, talented and ambitious peers, and it was at that stage of my career that I got fully absorbed in production.



1978. The Voronezh Synthetic Rubber Plant (now Voronezhskintezkauchuk), Shop No. 28. A photo with a repair service team.

About luck

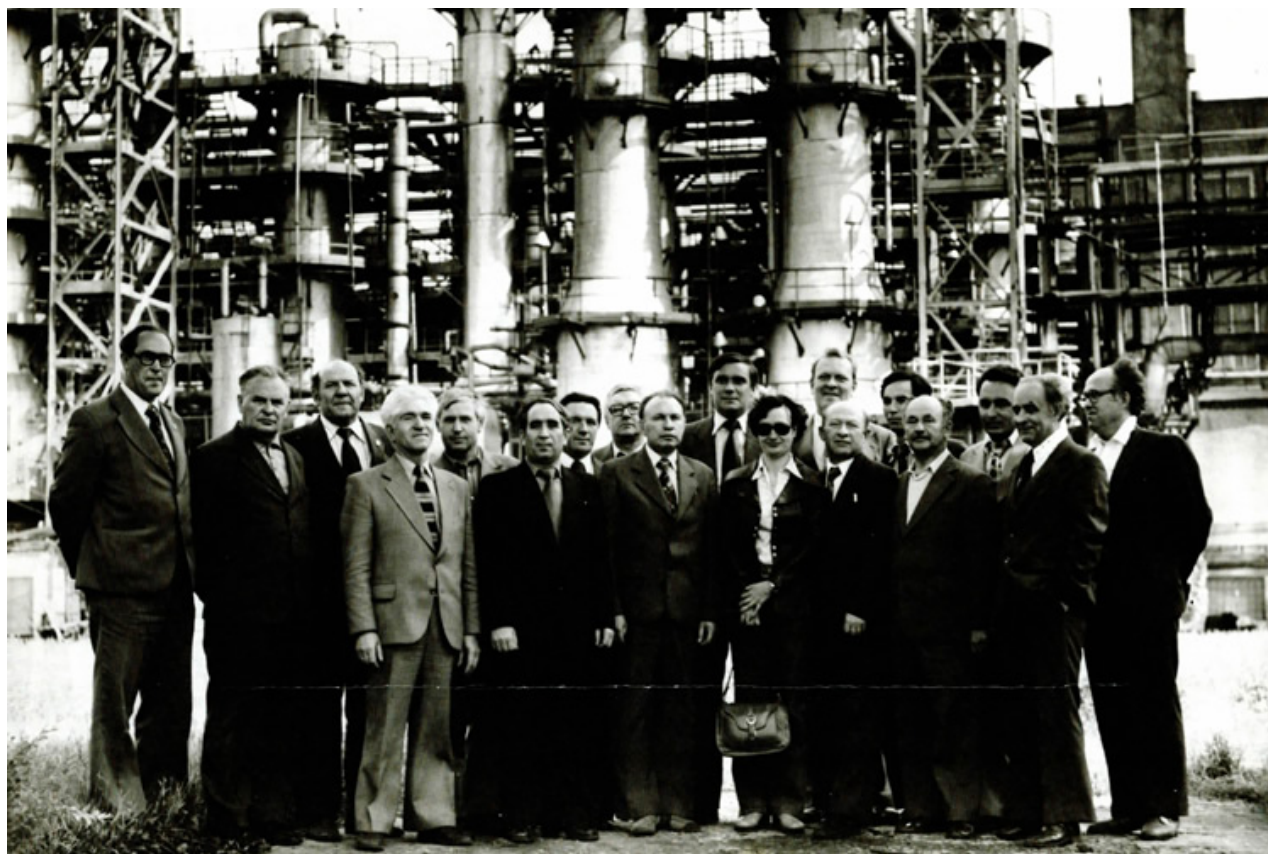
In 1983, I was appointed Director of the Volga Synthetic Rubber Plant. It was a real challenge for me. I fitted in with the team very well, though I was younger than many of my subordinates. Within the next four years, we succeeded in putting the plant back on track, and the best performers got rewards for their efforts. Then I decided to continue education and entered the Academy of National Economy under the USSR Council of Ministers (now the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration). The admittance procedure was as follows: each year the Academy picked 100 students from chief engineers and directors of plants who were then approved by the Secretariat of the Communist Party's Central Committee. I was interviewed and admitted. It took me two years to complete the education, during which I had to give up my managerial job at the plant and fully engage in training. It was a real piece of luck: I had the best teachers, excellent facilities, library and conditions at my disposal. The aim of the training was to transform engineering talent into senior leadership for large production facilities.



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About angry dogs

I devote a lot of my time to work and professional development. My daughter is 45 now, and she occasionally gives me a mild reproach for not paying her enough attention. I recall one incident in this regard. My work at the plant used to start early, and before that I had to take my daughter to the kindergarten, which opened at 7 a.m. Once we arrived there in the morning – and there was no one to meet us. I was in a hurry to go to work. My daughter was four then. I told her to stay by the door and wait for the teachers, and left. In the evening, I asked her how it went, and she said: “You left and then came an angry dog. I stood still, without touching it. The dog waited for a while, sniffed at me and ran away.” And she kept that incident in mind. Now when we get together, she would recall it, by saying: “Do you remember leaving me all alone with an angry dog that could have bitten me?”



1980. A meeting of deputy CEOs at the Main Synthetic Rubber Industry Directorate of the USSR.

About drive

Balancing career and family is not always easy, but possible. If you started doing something, you need to fully focus on that – that is my opinion. Honestly speaking, I grew so deeply involved in petrochemical production because it was really fascinating. We put new capacities on stream and launched new products. Everyone strove to do something new and exciting. Though I have been working at SIBUR for a long time, it is still such a drive for me, especially because I am surrounded by lots of young and talented enthusiasts. To succeed, the manager, first of all, has to be strict, secondly, dutiful and responsible, and, finally, care for his people no matter what. You may not like them, but as soon as you stop caring for them, you are done and you'd better leave. Otherwise there will be scheming and intriguing. At SIBUR, we do not have it.



1978. Negotiations at the Buna Chemical Works, the German Democratic Republic.

About time

The ability to build relationships with people is among the most valuable qualities. Now money is used as a relationship-building tool, while previously it was not that important, and one had to possess different qualities. The young people of today differ from what we used to be at their age. Our generation had an overwhelming sense of responsibility. But even now one can find really responsible people, which, I am proud to say, are many in our team. My life has become even more interesting with time: I have gained a lot of knowledge and experience, which I can share with my younger colleagues. And I am learning from them, as well. This is what gives me an immense pleasure. I think I am really lucky to have been employed at SIBUR. We have a very tight-knit team. SIBUR has nurtured a generation of top managers that are recognised industry experts both domestically and globally. We have set ourselves a host of exciting and ambitious goals, the construction of ZapSibNeftekhim among the key ones. This is a huge project even on a global scale, and, despite the current economic downturn, we are proceeding at full speed.



About infinity

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There is no fear, rather a concern. Concern for my family, first of all. I wish our society could withstand various provocations and refrain from doing stupid things that could lead to its destruction. People have lived through different historical periods such as the war, revolution, or perestroika. It is only now, looking back, that we can fully appreciate how hard it was. But even then people retained their dignity. Now we have other challenges. One of them is that finance has long been divorced from real economy, turning into some kind of a virtual thing. In this virtual economic environment, someone is earning big money, inventing schemes, and speculating on the securities market. We cannot blame them – they have made their choice, and they are doing it for their own sake. Conversely, there are those who wish to create things, like building a plant, to benefit the society. We cannot measure everything in the world with money.

If I were a writer, I would title my book of life as follows: “If we don’t do it, who will?!” And I would write about people who made the difference in my life. For me, life is about continuously exploring and discovering things. What is the horizon? The line at which the earth and the sky appear to meet. You may be going towards it all your life, and on your way, you will discover new facets of being, even though you know that your journey goes out into infinity.