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Riccardo Butta Of Stevanato Group On The Exciting Developments In US High Tech Manufacturing

An Interview With David Leichner





It's very important for everyone to have a mentor. Whether that's inside your company or outside of it, having someone in your corner that can provide guidance and advice on how you can continue to evolve, and grow is invaluable.

The global shortage of computer chip manufacturing has highlighted the urgency for the US to have a robust High Tech Manufacturing sector. As a result, the Biden administration has signed a bill to boost chip manufacturing in the US. In addition to computer chips, what other exciting advancements and innovations are US companies making in High Tech manufacturing? What is coming out in the near future? What would it take for the US to become a High Tech Manufacturing powerhouse? To address these questions we are talking to leaders of High Tech Manufacturing industries. As a part of this series, I had the pleasure of interviewing Riccardo Butta.

Riccardo Butta is the President of the Americas at Stevanato Group, a global provider of drug containment, drug delivery and diagnostic solutions to the pharmaceutical, biotechnology and life sciences industries. He holds a master's degree in mechanical engineering from Politecnico in Milan and a degree in Business Management and Innovation from MIP in Milan. Riccardo was formerly the Senior Vice President of Flex Health Solutions. At Flex, he was responsible for the global commercial organization of a business unit providing contract design, manufacturing and logistics services to the healthcare industry. His primary focus was on medical devices, drug delivery solutions, diagnostics, and life sciences equipment.

Thank you so much for joining us in this interview series! Before we dive in, our readers would love to “get to know you” a bit better. Can you tell us a bit about your ‘backstory’ and how you got started in manufacturing?

After college, I was hired by Hewlett Packard to help establish a new manufacturing site in Europe. Through their tech transfer program, I helped move the technology from the US to Italy to start manufacturing laser printers. Once I had returned from the US, I ran the manufacturing line as a process engineer. From there, I went into new product introduction (NPI) activities, ramping and launching new products, and later R&D. After several years with HP, I moved on to work for the manufacturing company, Flex, where I would spend the next 23 years learning and growing as a manufacturing professional and eventually becoming the VP of Health Solutions. As an SVP, I was responsible for the global commercial organization of a business unit which provided contract design, manufacturing, and logistics services to the healthcare industry. After four years in

that role, I then joined Stevanato Group as their President of the Americas in February of 2022.

Can you share the most interesting story that happened to you since you began your career?

There are many, but the most interesting one that made an impact on me was at the start of the COVID-19 outbreak. We found ourselves needing to increase our capacity five to ten times higher than we were used to for several products and customers. We worked very quickly and were always looking for ways to shorten schedules while maintaining high-quality standards. By challenging every assumption in our plans, we were able to deliver products quickly to patients. Looking back, it was truly impressive what we achieved back then to optimize the supply chain and stay engaged with customers in a completely new way.

Can you please give us your favorite “Life Lesson Quote”? Can you share how that was relevant to you in your life?

One that I will always remember came from my manager — I approached my manager with a problem, and his response to me was, “Your job is not to forecast the rain but to find solutions to protect people from the rain.” By saying this, he made me realize that we are in the business of working through problems and creating solutions for our customers, which helped me to refocus on my purpose.

Ok wonderful. Let’s now shift to the main focus of our interview about High Tech Manufacturing. Can you tell our readers about the most interesting projects you are working on now? How do you think this will help people?

The most interesting program we are currently working on is the development of our site in Fishers, Indianapolis. For the first time ever in the US, we will be manufacturing our high-volume solutions such as our SG EZ-fill® pre-sterilized solutions and our optimized glass primary packaging. This is a huge project and it’s on an aggressive timeline with an end goal of increasing our capacity and solutions available for domestic customers. This effort ties back to the US administration’s onshore manufacturing goals and is going to be a great solution for streamlining the value chain for our customers and patients.

In addition to what you are working on, what other exciting advancements and innovations are US companies making in High Tech manufacturing?

There are a lot of exciting new advancements, such as the development of new therapies and molecules. On the process side, artificial intelligence allows us to look at digital twins to ensure a solution is proven, even before we start prototyping. And finally, the fact that the US is creating new solutions is exciting because it means that we are driving a more robust supply chain and a higher level of sustainability, which is extremely important.

From your vantage point as an insider, what exciting developments will be coming out in the near future?

Today, the way we are approaching the development of new drugs in the market is completely different than it was a few years ago. The entire Pharma life cycle from drug discovery to commercialization is running much faster with companies looking to collaborate with others earlier in the development cycle. The question that immediately comes down is — how do you support those launches with the right level of capacity? And that is where Stevanato comes into play. By creating a reliable manufacturing ecosystem, we empower our partners and their ability to produce safe, easy-to-use, and cost-effective treatments through our customizable packaging products to our innovative EZ-fill® technology and more.

What are the three things that most excite you about the state of US High Tech Manufacturing? Why?

What's most exciting is the amount of innovation that is coming in from all sides of the industry: automation, digital solutions, miniaturization, and real time visibility. Second is the efforts being made around semiconductors creating opportunities in both the economy and the country. The more the US gets invested in complex solutions the more we benefit as a country through our improved manufacturing capabilities; this is clearly visible, as an example, with innovation around drug delivery devices. Lastly, the increased focus on sustainability within manufacturing is extremely exciting. The ongoing effort to develop sustainable technology will help support sustainability targets around the world.

What are the three things that concern you about US High Tech Manufacturing? What would you suggest needs to be done to address those concerns? Based on your opinion or experience, what would it take for the US to become a High Tech Manufacturing powerhouse?

The US government and private sector's efforts around identifying core technologies to invest in has already put us in a great position. However, there is still a concern about having access to necessary materials and components which is vital for long development cycles that can last years. Additionally, there's a concern about ensuring that we're investing wisely and taking a forward-looking approach that is sustainable. Lastly, there is a large talent shortage that is impacting the whole manufacturing industry. Moving forward it will be important to push the automation vector and to ensure that we are looking both inside and outside of the US to meet bandwidth and resource requirements if we hope to become a manufacturing powerhouse.

As you know, there are not that many women in High Tech Manufacturing. Can you advise what is needed to engage more women in these industries?

Part of the solution starts in our education systems, by ensuring that we're encouraging and providing resources for all students to get involved in manufacturing. Eventually, we will start to see an increase in the diversity of individuals who pursue careers in the field. Like most issues, this development will take time, but it's important to have these conversations now. At Stevanato we have created programs with schools and colleges to ignite conversations with students about the possible career paths and internships available for those interested in manufacturing.

Fantastic. Here is the main question of our interview. What are your "5 Things You Need To Create A Highly Successful Career In High Tech Manufacturing?"

When it comes to creating a highly successful career in manufacturing, it's important to start by investing in your education first.

Secondly, ensuring that you are exploring your interests when you are in the early days of higher education and your career will only help you as you develop further. In my case, I was studying mechanical engineering to work in the automotive industry, but I ended up pursuing an opportunity with HP which ultimately led to where I am today within the medical device industry. By being able to broaden your perspective on what options are available to you, you can find what interests you and start developing your career from there.

However, it's equally important to pick the right school or company that has a culture that enables growth and flexibility in one's ability to explore and develop

your career. Make sure you're weighing the pros and cons of any company or school you hope to become a part of to get the experience you're looking for. In my case, my decision to work for HP provided valuable experience and the opportunity to move from one position to the next.

Additionally, experiencing different cultures can be extremely helpful in developing yourself as a person which will ultimately help your career. Throughout my career I've spent a lot of time moving. I've worked in Asia, the US, and different parts of Europe which encouraged me to grow and learn. To enrich your career, you want to continue to stay current and avoid getting stuck in a situation where you aren't growing or learning. If you find yourself hitting a ceiling, take the initiative to move around in your role and responsibilities and experience different functions. This is something I've done throughout my career with all my companies and positions.

And finally, it's very important for everyone to have a mentor. Whether that's inside your company or outside of it, having someone in your corner that can provide guidance and advice on how you can continue to evolve, and grow is invaluable.

You are a person of great influence. If you could inspire a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the most amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger. :-)

If I could inspire a movement, it would be around ensuring that everyone has access to quality education.

Thank you so much for the time you spent doing this interview. This was very inspirational, and we wish you continued success.

A bout The Interviewer: David Leichner is a veteran of the Israeli high-tech industry with significant experience in the areas of cyber and security, enterprise software and communications. At Cybellum, a leading provider of Product Security Lifecycle Management, David is responsible for creating and executing the marketing strategy and managing the global marketing team that forms the foundation for Cybellum's product and market penetration. Prior to Cybellum, David was CMO at SQream and VP Sales and Marketing at endpoint protection vendor, Cynet. David is the Chairman of the Friends of Israel and Member of the Board of Trustees of the Jerusalem Technology College. He holds a

BA in Information Systems Management and an MBA in International Business from the City University of New York.

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