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GREEK SHIPPING TODAY

GREEK **business**file ASKS:

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The MV AFROS is the first ever bulk carrier, still on trials, to embrace spinning sail technology to harness the power of the wind – developed originally to reduce reliance on fuel

Greek Shipping: The Challenges Ahead for a New Era

The prevention of atmospheric pollution from ships and the relevant regulations, pose a great challenge to the shipping industry. As professor Dinos Arcoumanis explains in this interview, especially in regard to greenhouse gas emissions, the agenda was set at the recent historic IMO meeting. Of particular interests are the issues of slow steaming and the option of LNG propulsion for clean, environmentally sound fuels. Professor Arcoumanis points out that the next generation of Greek seafarers may be lacking the vital skills required to meet these challenges

Interview by Eugenia Anastassiou

Your work over the past three to four years has been focussed on the new environmental regulations for shipping. Could you tell us how both these measures are being implemented, and how have matters progressed?

Environmental regulations in shipping are now at an important juncture and indeed the recent Marine Environment Protection Committee session (MEPC 72), which took place at the International Maritime Organisation's (IMO) headquarters in London in mid-April, is a case in point; this historic meeting set the agenda for the prevention of atmospheric pollution by ships, especially with regard to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

In this landmark decision a plan was reached by 173 countries, for a 40% reduction of GHG emissions by 2030, and 50% by 2050, relative to levels in 2008, with recommended targets to be finalised by 2023 - in addition to improving energy efficiency measures by 40% by 2030 and up to 70% by 2050.

At this point it is worth analysing the progress, and measures of the key issues, and the challenges facing the shipping industry relating to environmental regulations.

Greenhouse Cases

The UN's aim is to reduce carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions to levels allowing temperatures not to exceed 2° C by 2050. So far, shipping had been excluded from the 2015 Paris Agreement. However, as a member of the UN 'fam-

ily' the IMO is encouraged, through the spirit of the Agreement, to respect and act on these measures, in order to align itself with the environmental efforts of other major industries and countries.

It is also interesting to note that according to IMO figures, shipping accounts for 2.2% of global CO_2 emissions, which is roughly the amount emitted by Germany (latest EU data).

However, the IMO is stuck in the middle of various national interests and agendas. On the one side the EU puts pressure on the IMO to act on CO_2 emissions, and countries like the Marshall Islands that will be 'flooded' out of existence, if sea levels rise, owing to increases in carbon emissions and subsequent global warming. The current US administration is not a supporter of the Paris Agreement, and oil-producer Saudi Arabia is also against stricter measures since they will impact on their fuel supplies. In addition, developing countries want to be given leeway to advance their industries, and economies, both of which rely on conventional fuels, thus finding the 30-year time-scale towards decarbonisation unfeasible and detrimental to their economic development.

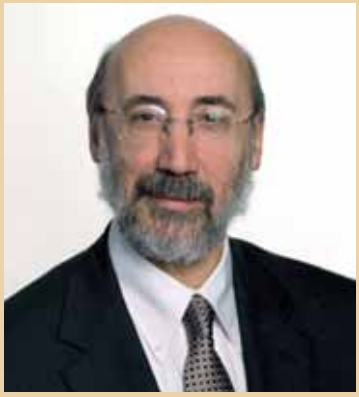
Sulphur Oxide Limits The aim is to achieve a 0.5% reduction in the amount of sulphur oxide (SOx) emanating from ships by early 2020—something that should have major health and environmental benefits, particularly for people living close to ports and coasts.

As far as the maritime industry is concerned, one way to attain this goal is by installing exhaust gas cleaning systems in ships, known as scrubbers, which 'clean' the emissions before they are released into the atmosphere. They are the equivalent of 'catalytic converters' in cars, but obviously they are much larger, heavier, more expensive, and complex to fit, especially when retrofitting scrubbers into existing vessels.

There are certain drawbacks in some of the systems, for example 'open' scrubbers may prevent SOx from polluting the atmosphere, but the residual 'wash' water is dumped in the sea and it could contaminate marine life. Another type is 'closed' scrubbers, where the 'wash' water is typically held in a process tank, is treated, and then re-circulated but the process requires a number of storage and holding tanks, as well as additional water treatment equipment, which takes up a great deal of precious space onboard. The third type, the 'hybrid' scrubbers, seem to be more popular.

In other words, the solution to the problem could be counter-intuitive, as more electricity, power and fuel are required to run vessels with these additional systems, and in order to scrap them when they are not needed anymore.

Professor Dinos Arcoumanis



Professor Dinos Arcoumanis' notable career spans many years in the field of energy and related technologies as demonstrated by his Fellowship of both the Royal Academy of Engineering, and the International Society of Automotive Engineers.

His academic journey started in Thessaloniki at the Aristotelian University, and was followed by postgraduate degrees in engineering, and mechanical engineering at the University of California, and the Imperial College London, respectively. After 20 years at the Imperial College culminating in becoming Professor of Internal Combustion Engines, he joined City, University of London, and became Dean of the university's School of Engineering & Mathematical Sciences. This was followed by his appointment as City's Deputy Vice-Chancellor in 2008. In 2014, he stepped down from this position, and he currently remains Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering.

Professor Arcoumanis has received numerous international awards for his extensive research on fluid mechanics and internal combustion engines, and he holds several international professorships, namely at Tianjin University, Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics, Shanghai's Jiao Tong University and at the St. Petersburg State Polytechnic University of Russia, where he received an honorary doctorate.

In addition, in the period 1998 to 2000, Prof. Arcoumanis acted as advisor on alternative and renewable fuels for transportation to the European Union's Energy Directorate, during the "Auto-oil II" European Programme. In 2013, he was appointed Greece's Ambassador-at-Large with responsibility for Energy Policy and New Technologies on a pro-bono basis, and over the last three to four years he has been a Director and Board Member of a major Greek shipping company, and Chairman of the Academic Board of the Metropolitan College of Greece.

Nitrogen Oxide Emissions

Nitrogen oxide (NOx) is the by-product of burning marine fuel and is related to improved efficiency especially at lower combustion temperatures. Shipping produces 18-30% of NOx globally, and the regulations that have been in place since 2005 are gradually becoming more stringent.

Ballast Water Management

Ballast water is taken on by ships in one part of the world and discharged in another; a practice which may disrupt the local ecosystem of the discharge site. This is particularly evident in salty sea environments as well as in fresh water. The IMO directive took effect in September 2017, and the solution for the shipping industry to overcome this problem is the installation of ballast water mechanisms onboard in order to remove or kill organisms prior to discharge into the sea.

There was an issue over compliance between methods accepted by the IMO, and the stricter guidelines required by the US Coastguard. In fact, one Greek engineering company, Erma First has managed to gain the more demanding US Coastguard's approval for their ballast water systems, which have already been installed by several major Greek fleets.

However, installing another large appliance on ships—something that is both expensive and offers no guarantee of functioning successfully—brings back the problem of using more electricity, power and fuel in order to operate and maintain it, which rather defeats the purpose of creating an environmentally efficient vessel.

Saving fuel-decreasing emissions

Another environmentally effective system has been 'slow steaming', but how do you convince charterers and those wanting to transport goods quickly that slower voyages cut emissions and reduce fuel costs, which is better for the environment. After all, time is money in the shipping industry.

Unfortunately, the woeful underfunding of public maritime education in Greece and the lack of available resources strongly suggest that the next generation of Greek seafarers may be lacking the vital skills required in order to meet these challenges.

Slow-steaming (ships completing their voyages more slowly) has contributed greatly in decreasing global emissions, and this trend has been especially noted between 2007 and 2012. The economic crisis of 2008, and the reduction in freight rates, both illustrate the fact that saving fuel has become paramount for the industry.

The logic, and the simplicity of slow-steaming is not just advantageous to the environment; it also means that there are fewer vessels available due to longer delivery times, therefore promoting a possible increase in freight rates.

Perhaps a system of better voyage and transport planning should be introduced to suppliers, or maybe shipping companies should give charterers incentives in order to encourage slow-steaming. For example, Maersk offers a better rate to charterers who opt for slow-steam voyages.

You have experienced the transition to environmentally better fuels in the car industry. How was that solved between both the oil companies and the car manufacturers, and is it relevant to the current changes in shipping?

Over the years environmental regulations and their compliance have been a major test for different sectors of global industry, and at the moment it is the turn of the shipping industry to be in the 'eye of the storm' in tackling the problem.

Indeed, it is right to point out that there are many parallels in what happened in the automotive industry 20-25 years ago and the way it had to deal with the challenges of polluting substances that were limited to nearly zero levels, like sulphur from diesel fuel, to what is happening in the shipping industry at present.

At that time the car manufacturers and the oil companies were at loggerheads over who should be responsible for the reduction of SOx from the atmosphere. Oil companies were expecting the engine manufacturers to achieve this technologically, by adding systems to cars. Conversely, the engine companies were arguing that it was the refineries who had the capability of reducing sulphur levels. In the end, this is exactly what happened: demand for the new—almost zero sulphur—diesel encouraged the oil companies to produce it globally; at first at a higher cost to consumers in order for the companies to cover their initial expenditure and investment into research and development.

It is interesting to note that according to IMO figures, shipping accounts for 2.2% of global CO_2 emissions, which is roughly the amount emitted by Germany.

Just as in the case of the automotive industry, the oil companies are the ones that have the capability of achieving the 0.5% sulphur level within the timeframe required by the IMO while holding the knowledge that low-sulphur fuel will be the preferred choice in global shipping. Inevitably, demand will drive production and, as in the case of automotive diesel fuel, the initial cost will be higher, but the price will fall exponentially as more vessels switch to low sulphur fuel.

Using clean, environmentally sound fuels, like low sulphur fuels or even LNG, means that there will be no need for scrubbers or added technology/systems, which require more energy and power to run onboard vessels, while being very expensive to retro-fit into older vessels.

At this point it is interesting to note that in a recent survey into the shipowners' preferred options carried out by the Drewry maritime research consultancy, the indications were that about 66% would consider low sulphur fuel, 13% prefer scrubbers, and 8% of owners may go for liquified natural gas (LNG).

LNG propulsion as an option

You mentioned that ship owners are now considering LNG propulsion as an option for their new ships. In your opinion is this the way forward, or

Ballast waters disrupt the local ecosystem of the discharge site

are there other viable environmental choices?

There are already dual fuel or tri-fuel marine engines in the market that burn LNG, which is currently cheaper than conventional fuels. Whilst it is not totally free of harmful emissions, LNG offers benefits in terms of producing lower CO_2, NOx and SOx, provided the problem of methane slip can be avoided—methaneslip is when unburned methane is emitted into the atmosphere—which can occur during refuelling and combustion.

The other disadvantage is that at present there is a general lack of adequate infrastructure for LNG refuelling, although moves are being developed towards establishing better facilities at major international ports, including construction of purpose-built LNG bunkering (refuelling) vessels that will fuel commercial ships.

Hybrid propulsion is another feasible option, in which one or more types of power can be used to optimise the operation of a ship. It is estimated that a hybrid-electrical propulsion system operating at an average speed with the vessel fully loaded, will use 20% less fuel than the equivalent diesel engine. Consequently, CO_2 emissions could be reduced, and greater fuel savings can be made during lower speeds, with lighter loads. In port, a ship is capable of operating on batteries only, producing zero emissions, especially if the supply of power from the shore is derived from renewable sources.

Slow-steaming (ships completing their voyages more slowly) has contributed greatly in decreasing global emissions, and this trend has been especially noted between 2007 and 2012.

Renewable energy sources using wind power, as in the case of Flettner rotors, have also been trialled and are already on-board ships, including the newly-built Greek bulk carrier, the MV Afros, now undergoing sea trials.

Rotor sails have also been retro-fitted aboard a Maersk tanker during the first half of 2018, which is now undergoing testing and data analysis at sea until the end of 2019—it is expected to reduce average fuel consumption on typical global shipping routes by 7 - 10%.

Next generation of Greek seafarers must meet the challenges

Is the new generation of young Greek seafarers able to cope with the requirements of modern shipping, able to deal with the ever-changing demands of shipping stemming from the enforcement of the new regulations on-board, and the complexities of new forms of shipping??

We are now entering a new era in shipping, not just in terms of propulsion, fuels and the relevant complexities of new regulations and systems, but also technologically and digitally with smart and autonomous shipping on the horizon. Unfortunately, the woeful underfunding of public maritime education in Greece and the lack of available resources strongly suggest that the next generation of Greek seafarers may be lacking the vital skills required in order to meet these challenges.

The technological revolution in shipping will result in less crew at sea, and probably more expert personnel on land; however, they will have to have higher skill-sets, especially in areas such as electrical systems and computer engineering.

To this end, a partnership has recently been set up with the renowned UK maritime academy Warsash/Solent University of Southampton, and the Metropolitan College of Greece, which is currently running their BSc and MSc degrees in Maritime Business and Shipping, and Port Management, whilst also training both Deck and Engineering Cadets and offering shorter shipping courses, for the first time in Greece, as part of the joint Maritime Academy. This collaboration demonstrates that private and public education can and should be complementary in the Greek maritime training sector for the benefit of both the graduates themselves, and the global maritime industry. bf

Cyprus President Anastasiades, Greek PM Tsipras and Israeli PM Netanyahu at the recent meeting in Cyprus

The untapped Greek natural resources

Through three projects, EastMed pipeline, TAP, and IGB, Greece's ambition of becoming an energy hub can be fulfilled—something that is vital for the country's economic development as professor Dinos Arcoumanis explains in this interview

Interview by Eugenia Anastassiou

In your former role as Ambassador-at-Large for Greece's Energy Policy you closely followed decisions made on energy exploration in the East Mediterranean, the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and the Greece-Bulgaria Gas Interconnector (IGB pipeline), how are these projects progressing and how do they benefit Greece?

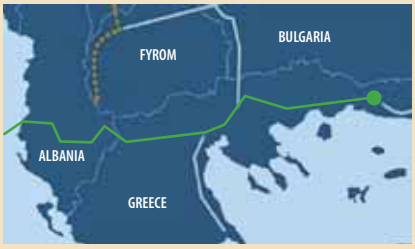
Greece has plenty of untapped natural resources which can be exploited efficiently for the benefit of its citizens, as well as the national and European economy, and it is very encouraging to see that steady progress has been made in the oil and gas exploration fields.

The EastMed pipeline

The question often asked regarding drilling for oil and gas in this region, as far as Greece and Cyprus are concerned, is how much of both is there in the main areas being explored, which are located in the Ionian Sea, in the South of Crete, and around Cyprus; unfortunately it's an unknown quantity and it will take many years for it to be verified. So far, large quantities of oil and gas have been discovered in Egypt's territorial waters, and it is estimated that Greek and Cypriot resources will be significant but probably less extensive compared to those discovered in Egypt. It is very encouraging that major oil companies are involved in these exploration efforts, a fact that guarantees the best possible production outcome and a very efficient exploitation of the discovered resources.

In early 2018 Greece, Cyprus, Italy, and Israel signed a memorandum of understanding to construct an underwater pipeline, extending from Israeli and Cypriot offshore gas fields, via Crete to the Peloponnese, through western Greece and up to Italy.

The EastMed pipeline would run for about 2,200km and the proposed pro-



The EASTMED PIPELINE

The EastMed project current design envisages a 1,300 km offshore pipeline and a 600 km onshore pipeline. The pipeline, starts from the new natural gas discoveries in the East Mediterranean region and comprises the following sections:

- **200 km offshore pipeline stretching from Eastern Mediterranean sources to Cyprus;**
- **700 km offshore pipeline connecting Cyprus to Crete Island;**
- **400 km offshore pipeline from Crete to mainland Greece (Peloponnese);**
- **600 km onshore pipeline crossing Peloponnese and West Greece.**

The EastMed pipeline is preliminarily designed to have exit points in Cyprus, Crete, mainland Greece as well as the connection point with the Poseidon pipeline.

TAP

Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) is a natural gas pipeline project developed to transport Caspian gas via Greece and Albania to southern Italy and further into Europe.

IGB

Bulgaria (IGB) is a trans-boundary pipeline project involving the construction of a 182km-long natural gas pipeline between Greece and Bulgaria.

ject will be the world's longest and deepest sub-sea pipeline, with the capacity to transport 10 billion cubic metres of gas per year, a total cost of around €5 billion, with an initial €70 million coming from the EU as part of its pre-FEED studies. Although technically the project is very challenging due to the deep sea, the financial support is already in place, so the pipeline could theoretically be completed by 2025, with the eventual aim of helping secure Europe's energy future.

The Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP)

Construction of TAP started in 2016, with €1.5 billion directly invested in Greece. The pipeline aims to transport natural gas from the Caspian to Europe, and it connects to the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) at the Greek-Turkish border, crossing Northern Greece, Albania and the Adriatic Sea before coming ashore in Southern Italy to connect with the Italian natural gas network.

The Greek stretch of TAP is approximately 550km long, and according to a report by the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research, it is estimated that during its 50-year lifetime the operation of TAP will generate €33-36 billion for the Greek economy. In addition, almost 10,000 jobs are being created during the project's construction period.

So far TAP's contractors have cleared about 92% of the project's route in Greece and Albania, and trials using water are planned for 2019, with the first gas deliveries to Europe via TAP following approximately a year later, towards the end of 2020.

The Greece-Bulgaria Gas Interconnector (IGB)

This 182km pipeline, the construction of which is commencing this year, will start in Komotini, in Northern Greece, and end at Stara Zagora, in Bulgaria; approximately 31km will run through Greece.

The pipeline will cost an estimated €160m, of which up to €45m is provided by the EU, it is constructed with the aim of securing gas provision to Greece, Bulgaria, and south-east Europe, and it is scheduled for completion in 2020.

The projected capacity of IGB will be three to five billion cubic metres of gas per year from Greece to Bulgaria but it will also allow for reverse flow from Bulgaria to Greece, with the additional installation of a compressor station. In addition, there is also the possibility of a prospective LNG terminal through the station of a Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) in Alexandroupoli; an idea proposed by the Copelouzos energy group. An FSRU is a custom-built vessel, similar to an LNG carrier, but with the added ability to store and turn LNG into its gaseous form, which can then be transported through gas pipelines; this is a far more economic option than building an onshore facility. Through these projects, Greece's ambition of becoming an energy hub can be fulfilled—something that is vital for the country's economic development, since it is envisioned that the Greece-Bulgaria Interconnector will eventually be linked to the TAP pipeline. bf

Greek Women Abroad with the spirit to succeed

London-based Afroditi Krassa, product and industrial designer

Born in London but raised near Mount Olympus, Afroditi Krassa studied product design and has a stunning career with many international awards and accolades

Interview by Eugenia Anastassiou

You are primarily well known for designing hospitality spaces, how did you get into that particular field of interior design?

It was quite coincidental, as I was trained as a product designer and worked at *Seymour Powell*, which is a large product design consultancy, before I set up my studio with the intention of designing furniture and lighting for high-end brands. Along the way, I met Julian Metcalfe, the founder of the UK's well-known sandwich chain, *Prêt A Manger*, who invited me to design his new sushi restaurants *Itsu*, from beginning to end. So, I fell in love with the industry and never looked back.

How does designing for a restaurant interiors differ from doing so for other commercial spaces or domestic interior design?

It is completely different because residential properties are very much about intimacy and personal taste. Restaurants are public spaces which need to be emotional, theatrical and also practical, at the same time, since chefs need to be able to produce massive amounts of food at speed, with restaurant staff having to deliver meals to customers in an easy, fluid manner. So, everything needs to work together beautifully and harmoniously. A restaurant can be a very complex operational space.

Where and how do you find inspiration in your designs?

In the actual food itself and the story it needs to tell—although all the food, drink, and interior design elements need to come together to tell the same story. So, we always start by trying out the food and understanding the emotions and feelings that the client needs to have.

What would be your dream commission, and which has been your favourite project, so far?

My dream commission would be to design a food environment in a very unexpected setting, which would completely change the way we experience food and drink. I am very interested in how multi-sensorial research explains the way we understand food; flavour is a combination of all our senses and not just taste. For instance, eating food at high altitude completely changes how we perceive taste. The same applies to

experiencing food in an 'out of the usual' or a conventional setting.

In terms of my favourite project, I have really enjoyed working on *Suvlaki*, it relates back to my Greek origins. I also think we have fantastic food in Greece, and it is great to promote it though a really good restaurant/ambassador.

As a young Greek woman, what were the 'ups and downs' of setting up a now-thriving new business in London?

Setting up your own business is not for the faint hearted, you need to be able to put up with a lot of different stress factors and difficulties, while keeping a cool head. The challenges change at every stage of the way; they range from the difficulty of an early start-up in a competitive field to creating a reputation and a name, maintaining staff, as well as sustaining quality and integrity as you grow.

Every day is different, which is very rewarding, and that does keep you on your toes. However, for me, the greatest reward has always been the fact that I have worked with really great people, whether clients or colleagues, and this is a real privilege. Also, making your own decisions, and playing by your own rules, are very satisfying.

What advice would you give a young person setting up on their own? Are there any pitfalls they should avoid?

Do not rush, and have true passion for what you do. If you don't have the passion, then don't start at all.

Aside from the difficulties of the current crisis in Greece, in your experience would you say it is true that, in general, Greeks do better and thrive outside Greece?

This has always been the stereotype and I guess also the reality. Historically we have been a country of emigration, at least during our most recent history. So, we have dealt with a brain drain, as many young talented people leave Greece for good. It is expected that a certain number of these people will forge ahead and do really well 'flying the flag' for our country, abroad. The question is, how do we create an environment that allows for young talent to be nurtured and promoted in Greece, in a business-friendly surrounding which promotes entrepreneurialism? This is key to the growth of any country's economy.

Afroditi Krassa

Afroditi was in fact born in London but spent her childhood near Mount Olympus, returning to the UK to study product design at the prestigious Central Saint Martins art school. After graduating, she became the first ever female designer at the influential product-design firm Seymour Powell. Two years later, at the age of twenty-eight, Afroditi set up her own design company, Afroditi Krassa, where her work soon earned her collaborations with Italian luxury furniture/interior designer Cassina, contemporary high-end furniture company Ligne Roset, American fashion designer DKNY, and high-profile restaurant personality, Mourad Mazouz, the man behind London's fashionable Momo and Sketch.

This encounter with Mazouz, drew her into the then 'niche' world of designing restaurants and hospitality spaces. However, it was her designs and branding for pioneering sushi restaurant Itsu, which has quickly grown into a chain of seventy shops in London and New York, that really put Afroditi Krassa on the map.

As a specialist in category-defining hospitality design, Afroditi's portfolio spans from popular UK sandwich takeaways *Prêt A Manger* and *EAT*, as well as high street restaurant chains like *Café Rouge* and *Byron* hamburger joints, healthy eating takeaways *Detox Kitchen*, through to the more up-market contemporary Indian chain *Dishoom*, Israeli trendy eatery *Bala Baya*, and maverick celebrity chef Heston Blumenthal's *Perfectionist Café* at London Heathrow Airport's Terminal 2.

Afroditi also re-vamped clothes shop *Top Shop*, designed the luxury perfumery *Acqua di Parma*, and renovated London department store *John Lewis*. Also included in her diverse portfolio are projects such as her re-designing of the iconic *Curzon Cinema* chain, and aspects of hotel design for *Hilton Worldwide*, *Four Seasons*, and *Hyatt*, all the way to the classic *Athenaeum Hotel* in London, *My Hotel* boutique hotel chain, and ultra-luxe resorts *One & Only*.

You have been named as 'one of the 1000 most influential people in London and have won many international awards and accolades. Where do you see yourself and your work in the future?

As long as I enjoy what I do, I will continue in the same route. I never planned for any of the results which came my way. I just do what I really love and have been blessed to work with truly inspirational people.

Sydney-based Suzi Dafnis, events promotion, internet marketing

Born in Sydney Australia Suzi Dafnis worked in marketing and promotions for the fashion and music industries and now she is the CEO of the Australian Businesswomen's Network

How did you go from starting your events/speakers' company from a spare room, to a successful company spanning both Australia and the USA.

Success didn't happen overnight. In fact the first couple of years were really difficult, as we tried to find our place in the market. We had to determine whether we had a viable business model, choosing which products and services we could deliver and the people we really wanted to work with.

It was a learning curve, since we lost $50,000 on our very first big project, because we entered a brand new market with a new product, and consequently made a lot of mistakes. It took us about two years to get back to a healthy financial position. During this time, we realised there were things we needed to learn about running a business. We sought out experts and mentors who could help us, and we committed to absorbing what we were taught in a big way.

Looking back at your entrepreneurial journey, what advice would you give yourself back in 1994, when you started your business?

Firstly, I would have found mentors sooner. Secondly, I would have spent more time planning and less doing - it's so easy to be distracted when you don't have a clear plan. Also, I would have hired staff much faster. If you really want to grow a business you need to do the work that you are best suited for; to be the CEO of the business, and learn to delegate.

So, it's important to know what you love to do, what you are good at, and what you should pay other people to do. For example, most entrepreneurs shouldn't be tinkering with websites or general administration work; that is not the best use of their time as business owners.

You are considered a pioneer in internet marketing in Australia. How did you get involved in that then-very-new medium, as well as in podcasting and webinars, before they became mainstream?

We were very early adopters of new media and technology, blogs, podcasting etc., before people really knew what these types of mediums were. Part of it comes from my own passion for innovation. I remember, in early 1998, going to a marketing event in Vancouver, Canada, which one of my mentors suggested I attend. One of the speakers there talked about email marketing and the internet, which blew my mind. We immediately started to use internet marketing and this put us way ahead of the competition for many years.

It's so important to keep an eye on changes and new innovations in your industry, not just in marketing but generally in all aspects of business. As business owners we can pivot pretty quickly if we stay educated and up-to-date. This takes an ongoing commitment to keep upgrading your skill levels—reading, attending events, listening to podcasts, doing courses etc.—you yourself are the best investment in your business.

What prompted you to exit the successful company you founded, and was letting it go a difficult process?

After thirteen years we were quite burnt out and we needed to do something different, so it was a good time to exit. We had been living in the US for seven years and we'd been running businesses in two countries simultaneously. We just needed to take a break, to clear our heads and set out our next goals, but we didn't sit still for too long.

While it was hard to part with something that we'd created from scratch, it was the best decision at the time.

What inspired you to take on the role of CEO of the then-called *Australian Businesswoman's Network*, (now *HerBusiness*)?

I'd been involved since 1995, running the Sydney office on the side, together with my own company. We actually bought the business back in 1998, and ran it quietly for many years. When I sold my other company, I decided to

dedicate myself full-time to *HerBusiness*, since there is so much work to be done in supporting women entrepreneurs in growing their businesses.

HerBusiness allows me to explore my passions: to serve a community that I love, to be creative and share my many years of experience. We're always growing, innovating and changing, even though we are a relatively small business.

What is the most important advice you'd give to women starting their own companies?

1. You don't have to do it on your own. Find people to support you and surround yourself with like-minded people. Your family and friends may love you, but they don't know what it's like to be in business for yourself.

2. Seek mentors. Find people you respect to advise you, people who have experience and can give you an objective and thoughtful point of view.

3. Keep learning. As your business grows you need to keep growing as well. The only thing standing between where you are now and where you want to be, is what you are yet to learn.

What are your opinions on the dilemma which many women entrepreneurs are in between family and starting a business?

This is a very real dilemma, but it is similar for all working women. However, being in business for yourself means that the need to create your own income intensifies. My advice is the same as above: mentors, learning, community. And in addition, having just a few goals, and long lead times. It takes time, and it cannot happen immediately. You also have to really think about what your priorities are, and what you can afford to get a little help with.

When growing a business, is there some way to get some help around the house, with shopping or with childcare, etc.? You can't do it all. An hour spent on your marketing may be better for your business (and your well-being), than an hour doing housework.

Which have been the greatest businesses successes you've mentored through the network?

I have been doing this for twenty-one years and we have had many success stories. I am very proud of the work we do and our achievements, since we have mentored over eight hundred women and supported thousands more through our mentoring, courses, and programs.

Have there been any successful ventures started by fellow Greek Australians?

Of course, there have been many. Two recent ones are Dominique Antarakis of *The Copy Collective* and Eleni Mitakos, who started *Galmatic*; both smart businesswomen. *The Copy Collective* is an online hub of Australian, New Zealand and international copywriters offering their services to help out not-for-profit organisations with their marketing and copy for corporate and government writing, fundraising, feature and speech writing etc.

Galmatic is an awesome business which teaches women about cars, both keeping them safe on the road and saving them lots of money in repairs and maintenance, through on-line courses, e-books, workshops and schools.

Has having a Greek background in Australia helped or hindered you in reaching your business goals?

Being an entrepreneur was not an issue, since many of my relatives both in Australia and Greece own their own businesses. Greeks are great small-business owners, they are hard-working and they love to create their own game in their work, which is something I really like about our culture. While it was fine to do well, it was another issue when it came to real success, and that jump took a lot of courage. Basically, because there is a certain mentality in Australia about not being a 'tall poppy', which means not getting your head too far above the crowd, like a tall poppy flower sticking out in a field, because you might get cut down.

So we got to a point where we could achieve great things without feeling like we would be too conspicuous, and yet at the same time we were wondering whether we were good enough.

As we started to grow internationally, to win awards, and then attract lots of publicity, I felt like we were 'sticking out' above the crowd and I noticed that I wasn't so free in sharing how well we were doing; there was a level of guilt. However, I also realised how crazy that was, since our success meant that we were able to reach and help more people, and to change more lives. There's no fun in playing it small. bf

Suzi Dafnis

Suzi Dafnis was born in Sydney, Australia to Greek immigrant parents, and after completing High School she worked for many years in marketing and promotions for the fashion and music industries. Her entrepreneurial journey began in 1994, when she started a boutique events company, *Pow Wow Events*, representing American speakers and authors in Australia.

Through *Pow Wow Events*, Suzi organised educational programmes and seminars presented by top international experts in sales, internet marketing, entrepreneurship, real estate, and investing, through live and online events reaching more than 250,000 people at a time, throughout Australia, New Zealand and the USA.

Out of *Pow Wow* came a number of successful businesses in both Australia and the USA, which went on to become multi-million-dollar enterprises, including a small publishing company Suzi co-founded in 1998, which eventually published and sold more than 1.2 million books, including the best-selling 'Rich Dad, Poor Dad' series by Robert Kiyosaki. She went on to become the CEO of the *Australian Businesswomen's Network*, (now known as *HerBusiness*)—a Sydney-based mentoring company focused on helping women (and some men) succeed in business.