

Mico Alvo And The Staff Of His Store



This is the staff of our shop. There were about 30 persons.

Fourth from the left is my cousin Niko Alvo. Second from left is Danny.

Fourth from left, standing is Stergios, the son of my grandmother Alvo's maid. We are celebrating New Year's Eve and do the cutting of the cake.

We always used to set a table on New Year's Eve. All the staff of the shop gathered and we used to give a turkey to everybody.

It was a time, that business was going well, and we used to give our employees a 14th salary as a bonus. While they were already getting the 13th salary for Christmas, in New Year's Eve we would give them a 14th as well.

They were delighted. Apart from that, we had an extra insurance from the National Bank of Greece. On top of the NHS - IKA, we had private insurance fund. When we were to give more money, we wouldn't find much resistance from Solomon.

He usually agreed because he didn't have many expenses. He didn't care so much. Only sometimes did we have difficulties with salary raises.

Not only would we not agree between ourselves, but we would have difficulties with the employees too because they were envious of each other.

Once, one guy, who wasn't happy with his raise, got to the point of saying, "why did you give him such a raise and gave me this raise? Did I ask you for a raise? You shouldn't have given us a

raise." He got to this point!

We had employees from the prewar period. At the beginning we didn't have any employees. We were doing the packing by ourselves and we would receive the goods when they would arrive on our own. We would arrange them.

Then when a customer would come, we would sell, pack it, deliver etc. We hired the employees one at a time according to our needs. We had only one who was Jewish and he too left us later.

He went to Athens and he opened an agency office. His name was Hugo Frances.

We also had as employees the children of our customers, who used to come to us for apprentices and for training. They used to say, "we don't want you to pay them, only to teach them the business".

We had one from Kozani who later became well known. We had girls too, not only guys. We had one to go to the bank. The cashier always used to be a woman. They would issue the invoices, keep the accounts. We got to the point that we had thirty employees.

When we would hire a new employee, it would be the impression he/she made to us that we would take more into consideration.

Firstly, it was their appearance. And we always hired through acquaintances. Someone would come and say "I have my cousin, why don't you take her?" Then our employees would bring us their friends and relatives.

We never had to put an advertisement to hire personnel. We were lucky. We always had really good staff. That was because we treated them very well, me especially, I was very liberal. Apart from the fact that we treated them very well, I wanted since we were pleased with them, to pay them accordingly.

My father wouldn't be interested only in the part of the business. He would talk to his employee as a man too. I developed this attitude even further. In the forty, forty-five years that I was in the shop, how can I say this, we were all like a big happy family and they recognize it now.

Some didn't understand it at the time. Yet, some that went to work for others, they would later come and tell us "bosses like you, we cannot find anywhere".

I had really good relations with the staff. They used to say, "no employee leaves from Alvo". We had some good employees, whom our competitors were trying to lure from us, but they never managed to do so.

An example: Our grandmother Alvo had a maid, Sofia, who was from Aivati. She took her from a very young age and she had her there all the time. During the war, Sofia got married.

After the liberation as she was going with a cart, there was an accident and her husband got killed. So she became a widow. We helped her then, because she couldn't work with three young children. She had two boys and a girl.

As soon as the boy was fifteen years old, he came to the shop wearing short trousers and we took him in the business. Well, he came fifteen years old at the shop and he left when he got his pension.

His name was Christos Matis. We later took his brother Stergios too. And all that because of our mother's maid, Sophia.