

Frixos Papadopoulos

“We worked really hard to make it through”

Thirty years ago Frixos Papadopoulos founded the company Fontana Food in Sweden, thus making his first steps as an entrepreneur in a country that was foreign to him. In April 2007 he was rewarded by the Royal Patriotic Union for his work in Swedish enterprising life and received a medal from the king of Sweden. His company, Fontana Food, imports products from Greece, Cyprus also including Mediterranean products such as Cypriot cheese halloumi, olives, olive oil, Greek cheese feta etc. The course of the company over the years is impressive. In 1978 the income of the company amounted to 100 thousand Swedish crowns. Today it exceeds 200 million Swedish crowns.

After the Turkish invasion of 1974, Frixos Papadopoulos and his family left Cyprus for Greece in order to work. They then decided to go to Sweden where his wife's brother was living with his Swedish wife. They went just for a few weeks and they were about to come back to Cyprus. However, they started working in different jobs and after two years he decided to open a shop with Greek and Cypriot souvenirs. Unfortunately no one was willing to buy. Later he identified that Swedish people buy such souvenirs during their vacations. He was determined to return to Cyprus as he was disappointed not only from his efforts as entrepreneur but also by the quality of life his family had in Sweden.

In 1978 they went to Cyprus to visit their relatives. During one of his visits to his brother, Frixos Papadopoulos opened the fridge to take out some fruit juice. The juices were packed in metal tins with the label —Fontanall. Frixos Papadopoulos decided to visit the director of the company and ask for the exclusive rights of importing the juices in Sweden. The director looked at him in a strange way and said —Take them, but I want you to sell in one year four containers of juices!! Within a year Frixos Papadopoulos had sold twenty containers instead of four! This was the beginning and from the name of these juices the company took its name. With a cheap car that he bought, he started selling juices and delivering them to supermarkets and even to kiosks. He thinks that the clue to his success was the fact that he was always happy and pleasant to his customers which is something that they also mention.

Maro Papadopoulou, Frixos' wife, had her role in the success of the company. Her responsibility was to introduce the products that the company imported in the best way and explain to Swedish people how they could cook them. For example, when someone bought Greek cheese feta he/she also received a recipe. In big supermarkets people also had the opportunity to taste their products.

Fontana Food currently imports 400 different products not only from Cyprus and Greece but also from Italy, Spain, France and even Iran. The company is considered to be an ambassador of Greek products in Sweden and has 40 people as employees. Frixos' Papadopoulos goal is to raise the income of the company from 200 million Swedish crowns to 300 million.

Frixos Papadopoulos had a very positive attitude towards people and that was his best characteristic. Furthermore he was hard working, assertive, had the capacity to persuade people and was a good story teller with excellent presentation skills. Thanks to his creativity and flexibility

he managed to extend the products that his company imports to Sweden and become a successful entrepreneur in a foreign country.