

**Takis Loukeris, ADUS: "Many clients guarantee success"**

"Overnight" sales department available to every customer at 1/10 the cost, compared to building it yourself from scratch



ADUS serves supermarket suppliers who, even if they have been in the stores for years, do not have their own sales department. "We have organized the company in a way that we are the ideal sales department that the supplier would want. The market's perception of the outsourcing services we offer has now matured", the CEO of ADUS, Panagiotis Loukeris, states to FOODReporter. The cost of working with the company is estimated at about 1/10 of the money the customer would spend to "build" his own sales department from scratch.

**Experienced "overnight" sales department for any interested supplier**

"ADUS has a ready hierarchy and organization, and the interested supplier immediately enjoys the benefits of its services. The alternative is for the supplier to hire 40 of its own people, so that it can have the same coverage, which it can possibly achieve," says Mr. Loukeris. ADUS visits 2,000 points, from all major organized retail chains, nationwide. The sales department "goes into the stores, organizes the shelves and replenishes them where necessary, does merchandising and

agrees with the stores on direct or warehouse orders."

The company also sees local chains and local wholesalers or chain franchisees, if the customer requests it. Since 2012, all the company's sellers, in Attica and the rest of Greece, receive orders in real time, via tablets. One of ADUS's "weapons" is the normalization of supermarket visits, which "creates a situation on the shelf, ideal for the customer." Its executives visit the stores every day with the main aim of the flawless image of its customers' products. "We educate the staff on communication matters. Then, the trainer, in real time, shows the seller what he has learned in the field", points out Mr. Loukeris.

**The strength of ADUS is its people** ADUS, with 40 staff nationwide, has merchandisers, sales merchandisers, sales inspectors, sales managers and experienced back-office sales staff. The company provides its employees with a highly attractive work environment taking care of the staff's well-being, with additional private insurance coverage, a target reward system with monetary bonuses and a strong training program through which the abilities of the executives are

significantly improved.

The stable staff of ADUS is a strength for the company because they have very good knowledge and contact with the local stores. "We are an economical solution, since we visit the points for more than one company. In this way, we take advantage of economies of scale and provide high-level services in a very economical approach", underlines Mr. Loukeris. The customer ensures the availability and visibility of his products at the points and in the range defined by the original agreement he has signed as a supplier. "We are the "army" that implements it", states the managing director of ADUS. ADUS salesmen and merchandisers visit the stores with the necessary frequency, which is proportional to the size of the store, in order to fully cover the needs of the customers. "The customers who cooperate with us, it is certain that they will have the place on the shelf that they have agreed on," points out Mr. Loukeris.

The need that the company has been serving since 2009 is old because there are too many companies that don't have their own sales department. The basic needs of supermarket



suppliers are always the same: a full shelf, correct product expiration dates and final purchase by the consumer, with the prerequisite that suppliers can supply their products seamlessly and without shortages. Those that change over time are the market conditions, the crises presented and the intensity of the competition.

**The success story from the daily research in supermarkets**

"Our customers can learn, see and hear what is happening in the stores. For example, we have a customer who was constantly out-of-stock in a certain chain. After field investigation, we found that the customer's short-term products, with 45 days of expiration from the date of manufacture, arrived in stores 15 or ten days before their expiration. Small stores did not have time to sell the product and faced the issue of spoilage because the products were left in the refrigerator, resulting in smaller orders or none at all. As soon as we discovered the problem, we asked the customer for detailed information with the delivery dates of the new batches and communicated the information to the stores, which started receiving new batches, with the result that within three months there was a 40% increase in the sales of the supplier's codes", says Mr.

Loukeris. This particular success made the client trust ADUS and gradually entrust it with the supervision of the rest of the supermarket chains, in which it is placed. "Our help is most valuable in the case of centralized delivery chains. If you don't have a partner like ADUS, you don't really know which stores your merchandise is going to and when, if each store is putting your products on the shelf on time, which codes do best, and what turnover per store. For "centralized" customers, our work is more important, because the company records inventory on the shelf and sends a complete report to the customer with the movement of the product by store, by chain, by geographical area and by time period, as well as a proposed order per store to transfer it to the central warehouse. An important part of ADUS's work is communication and information", underlines Mr. Loukeris.

"It is essential for the suppliers of the chains to understand that the moment they manage to enter the supermarket, they do not "finish" the work, but then begin it. If there is no sales team to monitor the product, slowly its sales will decrease and fatally in the distant future the codes will be abolished", he adds. The goodwill of ADUS is also

the "shield" it raises against the competition, which is becoming more intense every day.

**The noticeable difference in the Greek region and the investments in the cooperation model**

A great strength for ADUS is the Greek region. It's hard for companies to visit stores outside Attica. ADUS has a sales department that visits the stores in the region, which are a competent percentage: About 40% of the total stores, but also of the total turnover. "We have seen that when we take on new companies, the increase in sales in the region is much higher than in Attica. In Attica, the companies can somehow inspect the shops, due to the close distances. There is an empty space in the region", says Mr. Loukeris.

With the outsourcing of the sales department, each customer of ADUS receives measurable statistics, learns the competition, the current conditions in the market and collects information, which allows him to have more demands from the chain. ADUS competitors typically work with different models: Lease per executive, percentage payment on sales or per point visit. "No one else offers a fully organized sales department," clarifies Mr. Loukeris. To the complaint that companies like ADUS, with many different clients, cannot in fact respond equally effectively to everyone, Mr. Loukeris replies: "Its strong advantage is the many clients who trust us over time. The partner who manages you properly is the one who knows how to grow with you. After all, in 2009 when the company started we only had two staff members, today we have 40 and we continue to grow".