

The
Intelligentsia.®

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Sincere dialogues
with enlightened leaders.

Richard Sorge

A Master of Spycraft
Codename 'Ramsay'

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS
with enlightened leaders
from the worlds of luxury,
literature and aviation





Dialogue

Steve Mark Varsano is an American business leader, jet broker, luxury entrepreneur, enlightened advisor, former Board Member at Virgin Galactic, founder and President of The Jet Business, which is the world's first and only aviation showroom for the marketing and acquisition of corporate jet aircrafts.

Steve Varsano began learning how to fly when he was 14 years old and so his career started up in the clouds. He has been selling jets for almost thirty years and the very first time he sold an airplane was when he was 23 years old. He has sold more jets and has known more ultra high net worth individuals personally than almost anyone else in the world today. In 2017 he was a contributing author in the fourth issue of *The Intelligentsia*.

Steve Varsano expanded and elevated the industry by contributing to it in a creative way with a unique offering – the first ever walk-in aviation showroom in a city-center location that caters for those interested in owning a corporate or private jet. For more detailed info visit: www.thejetbusiness.com

In 2017 when we first met in London we decided to conduct a sincere and celestial dialogue.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

My first question is: what lessons have you learnt from over three decades about intuition in entrepreneurial life?

Steve Varsano:

To read body language in clients is super important because you really want to adapt your presentation, to put yourself in your clients' shoes not just to make them feel good but actually to get in their head, to be able to really feel and think what they're thinking so that you can formulate the solution that best meets their needs. If you can't reach that kind of a solution then you're wasting your time. So it really is putting yourself in your clients' shoes.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

So, to you, intuition, really, is related not only to the internal but also to the external world?

Steve Varsano:

Yes, because body language is very important but unfortunately you don't get to see all your clients face to face. With our concept here, which is the street front showroom we do have the benefit of being able to meet clients face to face much more than any of our competitors in the world and you can really see as you take them through our process our expertise and experiential journey, the way they react to questions and answers on our video wall. It really gives you a much better feel and idea how to proceed forward. On the telephone, it's much more difficult but not impossible. And again it's how you ask a question and to listen what the response is.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

Who are your favorite giants from the history of art, business, science or of other areas and why?

Steve Varsano:

Well, anybody who has created a business from nothing is something that really attracts my attention. Somebody who really is a legend and has done something to change that sector or business. There are people that go from life coaches or motivational speakers like, one is called, Tony Robbins mostly based in America but he definitely has a global reach like Russia, Australia and Europe. That person is somebody who started from the streets with nothing and now he just takes twenty thousand people at one time, changing their lives. He donates a lot of money to a lot of really needy people, brings water to places in Africa... He is also a mascot for corporate aviation. Not embarrassed to be successful. He does not brag but he does not hide that he is a successful person because he really changes people's lives. There are people who are in the casino business that have built that business from nothing and have changed the face of that business. The people in technology... Obviously today with the search engines and social media, which created something out of nothing and have changed the face of the world. And then you go on the other side of it and you find a small nurse in the hospital who works almost eighteen hours a day and gets paid no money. That person to me is just as important and impressive as the person who is building a mega company.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

In what ways did all the high profile original personalities that you have met throughout your life inspire and influence you?

Steve Varsano:

I think the word is really 'passion'. Anybody who has been successful in their business has been passionate about what they are doing.

They really love it every day. They wake up and stay in love with what they are doing and with the people they deal with. And really complete what you start.

So many people have great ideas and they are creative but they can't execute. You can be passionate about something but you are not executive. You have to complete what you start and if you just come up with ideas, you are going to be just lost in space. You have to be passionate about what you want to do, execute and complete. Those are three major points in life when it comes to being successful in anything you can do.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

Could you speak of the particularities of being in such fields as aviation, galactic space and high luxury that are way ahead of the current times?

Steve Varsano:

You're dealing with the who's who around the world from different cultures, from different sectors and a lot of the times these people have just come into their newfound wealth through public offering of a company or selling a business or something like that and sometimes they are new into this world, after buying a corporate jet. It's something that's interesting because the psychology of changing your mentality of flying on an airline vs. spending the money to fly on a jet is a big leap. And I think that to learn how to educate people without condescending anybody is important. People do really want to learn and they really want to fly private, they really want to understand how it benefits them because the benefits that you have to get across these people are the time savings that you can really enjoy by flying on a private jet, the flexibility of

your schedule, the security of your life because today the world is a little crazy place and in a lot of traveling locations security is a major concern. But there is also the privacy of what you're dealing and who you're dealing with, who you are talking about business with. It's something that gets the attention of all the corporate executives around the world because they understand how this could benefit their business and their whole quality of life.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

Yes and, in a sense, they feel they are closer to the future when they are with you because of the experience, the vision and the mindset that is there and the field is ahead of the times.

Steve Varsano:

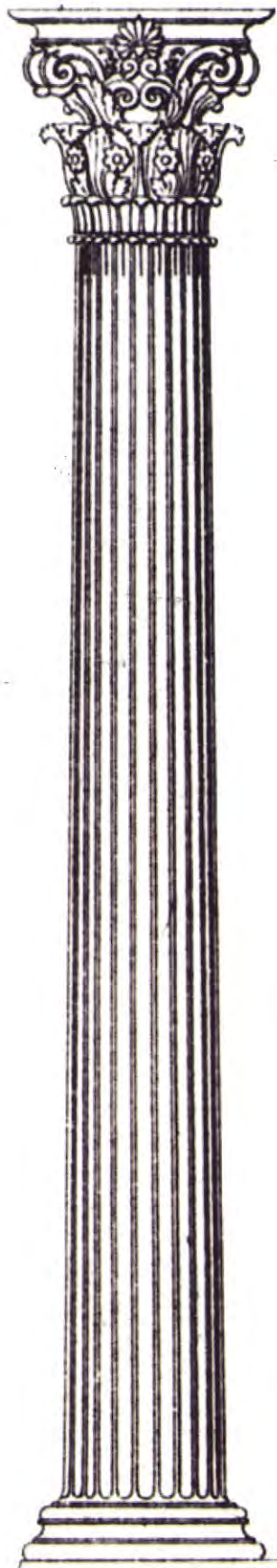
Yes, and they are always looking ahead to see what new technologies are coming out, whether it's traveling in space in Virgin Galactic or actually what's coming out now – these autonomous pilotless passenger carrying drones. There was a cartoon years and years ago in America called the Jetsons and where these people were flying from house to house in a tiny little spaceship and that actually is where the world is going today with short distance travel. You will be able to just travel around a city or within a place of 200 miles away by these little spaceships that can't go into space but they look like spaceships. And people are so learning about this stuff because once they get into the corporate aviation world they want to be ahead of the curve, they want to know what's coming down the pike in six months, a year or five years from now. I think they are very in touch with being ahead of everybody else in business because that gives you the upper edge.



Tofiq Husein-zadeh:
Which kinds of books do you find most stimulating to read and why?

Steve Varsano:
I definitely love the biographies of successful entrepreneurs. And, looking at my bookshelf behind my desk now and to give you some of the names, there is Making Ideas Happen, there is How to Influence People, there is Little Bets, there is Give and Take, there is Rational

Optimist... These are the kinds of books that I like to read. If I think of probably the most influential book I've ever read and that I give to a lot of people is one called Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand who was a Russian immigrant in 1957 wrote a fictional story about Altruism vs. Capitalism and how the world is going to fall apart by people thinking everything should be done for the people and for the state and this is exactly what's going on in the world today. It's a must read for any entrepreneur or any CEO.



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Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

Which common characteristics have you noticed among the world-views of the ultra high net worth clientele of yours?

Steve Varsano:

I think most business people don't think locally. Everything is global. They look at it so opposite to the governments. Governments are getting more insular and they are becoming very close-minded to be in a country, in a country, in a country... And all the business people are looking at how to expand and how to be a global business. With the internet today, there is nothing that is not global and to hide from that just means you are wasting your time. That is the truth.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

And to see humanity as a whole is part of it.

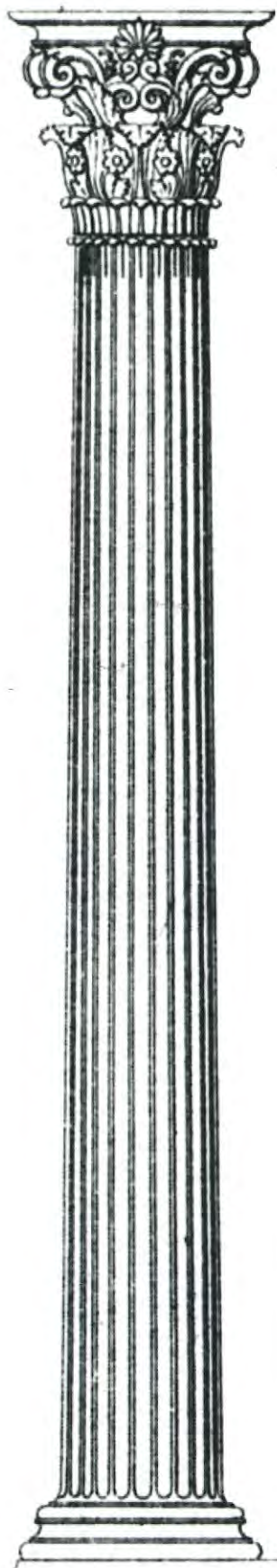
Steve Varsano:

Yes and unfortunately anything that has to do with religion or politics is very controversial and people in business are not interested in political fights or the religious fights. This is something that should be on a personal level and shouldn't be a small group of people as the heads of governments dictating what all other people are thinking. Unfortunately, that's what the world sees in a newspaper or in media. It's not what the general public of a country really feels.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

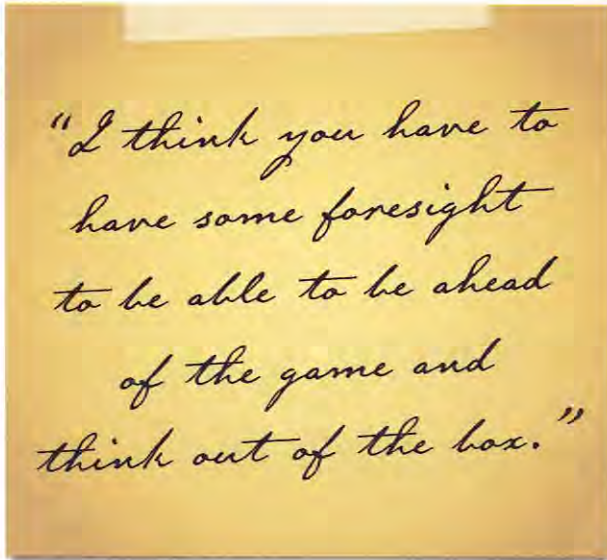
On the level of strategic communication, what do you think other industries can learn from the real luxury industry that you are in?

Every human being wants to feel better about his or her lives and anything they can do to buy something that makes them that they are in a



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Steve Varsano



different class than other people is a benefit. So even if you look at the lowest level, say, a Tiffany jewelry store, which is in the luxury world but it is not as luxurious as it used to be many many years ago. So think of a waiter who works in a restaurant. He will go to Tiffany to buy a keychain for, say, 50 Euros in that blue box because it makes them feel like they are better than what they are or what they think they are and it just makes them feel good. It elevates your status. And anybody in the world, from any culture wants to make themselves feel better and elevate their status mentally in their head. That's what luxury is about, that's what marketing is about. That's what advertising is about. They want to get into your head and they want you to be that person in that photograph, in that video, in that movie... It's social media... That's why everybody wants to take a picture of themselves and then they make it better. Why? Because they want to make themselves to feel better than the reality even though the reality is fine but everybody wants to feel better.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

Could you describe your favorite kind of escape? What do you do or where do you go to feel disinterested pleasure?

Steve Varsano:

I like to go on a private boat in a very desolate area because in our normal day-to-day life we are out all the time socializing with big groups of people. We've been to the most incredible events in every place in the world and they are fantastic. But to really turn off, which you never really turn off. You are always connected to your e-mails and telephones or things like that but to go on a boat in a serene environment - it does make your body come down a little bit and it allows your brain to think differently.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

It feeds the soul as well.

Steve Varsano:

It takes away some of the external stress.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

What do you think the personal qualities are of a leader from the future?

Steve Varsano:

I don't think it's changing that much. I really think you have to be a people person, to be able to then hear people's input and consolidate that information and make a decision based on that. Not be a dictator in your head to do it the way only you believe is correct because the world doesn't operate that way. You have to take input from outside but I am not saying from the masses. Then formulate it into an opinion that a lot of people would be able to agree to. I think you have to have some foresight to be able to be ahead of the game and think out of the box.

To tell you the truth, again we go back to marketing luxury brands, the fact of the matter is that people, as much as they will never admit it, they like to be told what they should do, what they should like and what they should want. And I just think that you have to have the ability to influence people's mind to give them the direction where they are going to go. If you think of i.e. fashion and when you start hearing about fashion and there they say 'this is going to be the fashion for next winter'. Well, how do they even know that this is going to be the fashion in the future?! They don't know. They are telling you that this what you are going to be buying so if you want to be in fashion you better buy this. They are directing the path of the people. It sounds as a really funny process but that's done in marketing.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

It is when you are qualified, you can be a tastemaker and it's not just ability but also a responsibility to give that direction.

I agree with you.

Steve Varsano:

It is a responsibility. You are right. It is a big responsibility and if you take it seriously you can be influential.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

What is the most important message that you would like to pass on to the young (or the future) intelligentsia? What advice would you give them?



Steve Varsano:

Stop looking at your telephones every ten minutes and interact with people because social media is really anti-social media. And I think people need to interact with people, to read more about what you are interested in and not be involved in what other people are interested in or what other people think of you because nobody really does think of you in that sense. People do things to impress other people's image of you and it's really a terrible thing to do because all those people, you think, care about what your image is, they don't. So do everything to make yourself happy and be passionate about what you do. Don't concern yourself of what anybody else thinks of you. Main point.

Tofiq Husein-zadeh:

That's very timely advice. I would like to thank you very much for participating in this interview. Your answers were full of meaningful insights.