

Biography - Richard Alain Granier

Personal Details:

Year of birth : 1953
Nationality : French
Residence : Spain
Status : Married, 6 Children
Languages : French, English, Spanish spoken and written, and basic understanding of Italian & Arabic.
Sports : Scuba diving (*fishing*), swimming, ski (*water & snow*), judo, hand-ball & golf.
Professional : Economy & finance, management, trading, banking, securities, mergers & acquisitions, USA & China markets.
Personal interests: Family, all type of sports, sailing boats, sport cars.

Education:

- 1969 BEPC (*Brevet élémentaire de Premier cycle*), Lycée Louis Pasteur à Lille (59) France.
- 1972 BACCALAURÉAT, Option Philosophie, Lycée Perrier à Marseille (13) France.
- 1973 Certificat de Stage, Dept. Marketing, Sté Phinelec (Phocénne Industrielle d'électricité) Head-Quarters, Marseille (13) France.
- 1974 DUT (*Diplôme Unniversitaire de Technologie*), Option Marketing, Université de Toulon-La Garde (83) France.
- 1973 Certificat de Stage, Dept. Juridique, Groupe OSE (*Organisation et Service d'Entreprises*) Head-Quarters, Marseille (13) France.
- 1976 Licence de Droit, option Finance & Business, Université d'Aix-en-Provence (13) France
- 1978, 1979 & 1981 Certificats de Stage, option Marketing des Services, INSEAD (*Institut Européen des Affaires*) (75) France.

Associations & Commissions :

- 1973 / 1974 Vice-President AJEERT (*Association des Juristes & Economistes de la Région Toulonnaise*) Université de Toulon-La Garde (83) France.
- 1977 / 1980 Board Member CSENSE (*Chambre Syndicale des Entreprises de Nettoyage du Sud-Est*) location Marseille (13) France. Creation of the BENP (*Brevet élémentaire de Nettoyeur Professionnel*) grades 1 2, 3 & 4.

- 1979 / 1984 Member of JCE (*Jeune Chambre Économique*) location Marseille (13) France.
- 1979 / 1984 Member of FNENF (*Fédération Nationale des Entreprises de Nettoyage de France*) location Paris (75) France.
- 1979 / 1984 Member of FMEN (*Fédération Mondiale des Entreprises de Nettoyage*) USA.

Professional Experience :

- **1973** Acquisition of KOM-NET Services S.A.R.L. a Company specialized in general cleaning services and an exclusive distributor of a specialized carpet cleaning range of products.
- 1974 Establishment of GRAMA FRANCE S.A.R.L. by merging all the assets of KOM-NET S.A.R.L. (*stocks, Trade Mark, staff, clients etc, etc.*). Commenced the Company with one Division bearing the trade name : "GRAMANET", which specialized strictly on Cleaning and Janitorial services to both private and corporate clients..
- 1976 Established a second Division under the trade name: "GRAMAGARDE", which specialized in Corporate Security Services, including personnel protection.
- 1976 Established a third Division under the trade name: "GRAMAFLUX", which specialized in the supply and installation of alarm systems and protection equipment for private and corporate clients. Opening of a showroom in Marseille (13) France.
- 1977 Established a fourth Division under the trade name: "RG Systems", which specialized in the marketing, sales and distribution of alarm system products and maintenance services thereof.
- 1978 Initial name and type of company changed from "GRAMA FRANCE S.A.R.L." changed to "GRAMA FRANCE GROUP S.A."
- 1979 Established a fourth Division under the trade name: "GRAMABAT", which specialized in construction and decoration services to both Private and Corporate Clients.
- From 1974, the Group managed its Divisional activities from its Head-Quarters, which was established in the city of Marseille (13), France and later opened further branches in the cities of Paris, Alfortville, Rungis, Montpellier, Nice, Cannes and Mougins.
- The Group's main activities centered on cleaning and security services. The Group grew in turnover, professionalism and knowledge and by 1982 had an employee base of more than 800 employees, with approximately 450 Cleaners, 300 Security Guards and 50 Management and Executive staff members. The Group's clients ranged from local government administrations to the Banking community (*with 26 Banks in permanent annual Cleaning or Security Contracts*).
- As Founder of the Group Mr Granier initially functioned as General Manager, i.e. whilst the Company operated as a S.A.R.L. ("*Société à Responsabilité Limitée*" - *Limited responsibility Company*), but later became Chairman and Chief Executive Officer when

the Company was restructured into a S.A., i.e. a Société Anonyme (*a Corporation*). Mr Granier always remained the majority Shareholder of the Group.

- In 1979 the Group tendered for business offered by an International Catering Company named ALBERT ABELA Group, which had started its operations back in 1950 as a catering and services sub-contractor to the "Petroleum Industry".
- The ALBERT ABELA Group had expanded progressively to become one of the world's largest catering and security services Corporations. Operating in 35 countries the Group was responsible for serving more than one hundred million meals per year. By this stage the Group had developed a wide range of products and services. Among these services were: - Site catering & security support services, - Airline & Airport catering & security support services, - Hospital catering & security support services, - Institutional catering & security support services, - Hotels & restaurants management, - Food processing, - Purchasing & trading services, - Labor supply & recruitment services, - Maintenance, electro-mechanical, cleaning services and construction.
- Mr Albert Abela, Chairman of the ALBERT ABELA Group, was not in the cleaning business, but in all its Division's support services were obliged to provide cleaning services and with more than 20.000 employees the Group had already 700 personnel under the umbrella of the catering division, working only in cleaning activities.
- The purpose of the International tender was to find an existing medium size European cleaning company with a good track record and corporate image which could be merged with the ALBERT ABELA Group. One of the conditions of the tender was that the Tender Principal and part of his executive management Team relocate to the Middle-east in order to manage a new division named AA Industrial Cleaning Division, which incorporated the existing 700 Employees as above mentioned.
- 35 companies from across Europe competed in the tender. After many months of selection process Mr Granier's Group won though to final shortlist and eventually won the tender.
- In 1981 and 1982 Mr Granier personally accomplished several trips to the Middle-east to evaluate both the AA Group's existing and new potential Markets. Mr Granier spent more than 6 months visiting 15 Arab cities in more than 7 countries and filed a comprehensive 200 page report of his findings. Such was personally delivered to Mr Albert Abela and the ALBERT ABELA Group board.
- The outcome of which was that Mr Granier's Group was purchased by ALBERT ABELA Group and Mr Granier was offered a 5 years contract.
- As General Manager of the AA Industrial Cleaning Division and Vice-President of the AA Group in general and special Adviser of Mr Albert Abela for all matters of the Group in relation to industrial cleaning activities, Mr Granier and Family, in 1982, relocated to Dubai (UAE) where he opened the Head-Office of AA Industrial Cleaning Division.
- Mr Granier expanded then business and opened various branches of the Division in Abu Dhabi & Sharjah in the UAE, Bahrain, Oman & Kuwait in the Gulf, Al Khobar, Jeddah and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, Cairo in Egypt and Aman in Jordan.

- In 1984 Mr Granier moved back to the AA Group's main office in London and in order to centralize the Cleaning Division's International Client liaison and marketing activities.
- For the next two years Mr Granier remained based between London, which was the Management & Services HQ of the Group, and Monaco, the financial Head-Office, whilst his Family remained based in Mougins (06) France. During this period Mr Granier personally undertook and locally surveyed International tenders in the Sudan, Nigeria, Angola, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon and Zaire in Africa, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong in Asia, Brazil and Venezuela in South America, France, Greece, North Sea, Scotland, Spain, Cyprus, Malta and West Germany in Europe.
- In 1986 the AA Group secured a very large cleaning contract in Saudi Arabia. This was the brand new "King Khaled International Airport", which was located in Riyadh and commenced with 700 workers. Due to the size of this Contract Mr Granier and Family relocated to Riyadh and spent the next two years developing this business, whilst further expanding the cleaning Division in Saudi and in the middle-east in general.
- In 1988, the French Franc depreciated considerably against the US Dollar, which severely undermined Mr Granier's remuneration contract. This coupled with his Family's unhappiness with life in Saudi Arabia led to Mr Granier tendering his resignation. At that stage Mr Granier had over 5000 employees under his management control.
- Later In the same year of 1988, Mr Granier bought a majority stake in a US company called "ARTCARD International Inc." a Texas Corporation based in Dallas, which had developed a credit card concept and product named: "ARTEGE", *the connoisseur card*. Mr Granier became the majority shareholder and CEO.
- In America at that time there were over 95.000 high end Retailers that specialize in the selling of luxury or high end merchandise. The formation of ARTEGE Financial Services was accomplished to provide this broad network of unique, high end Retailers a range of financial services that, until ARTEGE's arrival on the market, was not available, or if available, only at great cost.
- The sale methodology of this broad group of Retailers was fairly consistent and yet the Market offered very little in the way of essential financial services to support the success of this select group of high end Retailers. ARTEGE Financial Services was able to step into the gap and provide innovative financial services to this Retail Sector and quickly become Market Leader.
- Initially ARTEGE focused on three Market Sectors, namely: - Art & Antiques Retailers, Better & best Jewelers and Furriers. This triad of Retailers was in desperate need of the kind of financial services that ARTEGE could offer. The Jewelers were well aware of the impact that credit selling had on their business. ARTEGE's low interest rate and sophisticated presentation made was very attractive and the Jewelers desired ARTEGE's credit programs. The Art, Antique and Fur retailers did not, as a rule, have access to alternative financing, and were most appreciative of the unique opportunity ARTEGE provided. ARTEGE by offering a national credit card at rates below prime lending rate soon managed to carved unique position for itself within the US Credit Card Industry.

- At that time the bulk of high end specialty purchases in the USA were either conducted with cash or Bank card. There were a limited number of two to three months payouts to known, regular customers; but as a rule these industries were operated in a tight cash driven industry.
- ARTEGE's developed a far reaching understanding of the many types of Art Galleries and the unique requirements of these high end Retailers.
- Whilst the Art Industry accounted for a total of \$6.1 Billion in annual sales, this volume was consummated primarily through a network of individually owned and operated galleries. Hence ARTEGE developed a comprehensive financial program to service this Market Sector.
- ARTEGE offered a range of financial services tailored to this Industry, the most popular being "The CONNOISSEUR CARD". This card was positioned to the high end, affluent consumer. ARTEGE's strategy focused on establishing the Card as a prestige card that signified affluence. The look and feel of the card and all additional support material and services help insure the acceptance of the card by the more affluent Clients.
- High end furniture retailers historically were selling 60 to 70% of their total sales using long term credit financing. Predicated on this rate, ARTEGE delivered a minimum of 15% of this sales volume. This amount was broken into, sales redirected from Bank Cards, and most importantly, incremental sales, that the retailer would not have made without the ARTEGE Card, constituted the balance.
- ARTEGE Card International, Inc. and Norwest Financial Business Credit, Inc. (NORWEST), one of the largest consumer finance processing companies in America, in conjunction with Dial National Bank, Des Moines, a subsidiary of Norwest Financial Iowa, was administrating the ARTEGE Card. The Dial National Bank Charter was the first to be approved by the United States Congress, and allowed ARTEGE to operate in all fifty states. Norwest contracted with ARTEGE and provided a full non-recourse, private label program. Thus ARTEGE was able to market the fact it had the backing support of a \$22 Billion dollar Financial Institution, Norwest. In addition to Norwest's financial support, ARTEGE also had their total commitment to support the personal and logistics requirements of the ARTEGE's Program.
- With everything in place ARTEGE, initially based in Dallas, Texas, quickly expanded its reach over the following tree years to cover the States of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Hawaii, New York & Washington. Never before had a company been able to so successfully offer a national credit card program at interest rates below prime, with limits that could exceed \$5 million dollars.
- ARTEGE further expanded its product range to one that offered a substantial discount on Master card and Visa processing. The retail bank card processing services, which ARTEGE has contracted for was handled by LMS, which was at that time the fourth largest processor of Bank Cards in America. This additional business created bulk processing savings, which was passed on and immediately increased the value of ARTEGE membership.
- Having more than 5000 cardholders ARTEGE was able to launch its own "in house" magazine to the individual cardholders, which was named "Art & Travel International".

- ARTEGE was then able to further expand its business model to include offering its Retailers and full time Sales Associates a full range of insurance services providing health, dental, long term disability, casualty and workman's compensation, etc, etc,
- One of the challenges faced by ARTEGE in marketing its products and services was the fact that the offer seemed too good to be true in the existing credit climate. Hence the Company had to embark on an extensive Market campaign to promote its product and services. This was achieved via:
 - o Magazines advertising in trade publications of the discipline
 - o Telemarketing efforts in conjunction with direct mail
 - o Key market representatives to validate the program
 - o Campaign of spots advertisements through televisions network.
- However, whilst the first three media were fairly simple to establish and launch, television advertising proved to be real burden due to the funds required in this kind of advertisement. Thus ARTEGE avoided television advertising as much as possible and strived for two years to survive without such mainstream advertising. Unfortunately without such advertising, competitive activity eventually started eating into ARTEGE's bottom line and two years later ARTEGE found itself in dire need of a serious cash injection.
- Mr Granier then took the decision to place ARTEGE on the Market and eventually sold ARTEGE to "Techniques & Development SA." a French company specialized in tele-marketing. Thus it was that in 1990 ARTEGE was sold for 12 (twelve) times the money invested in less than 3 years.
- In 1990 Mr Granier came back to France and invested into Real Estate.
- In 1991 Mr Granier secured a professional license in order to act as an Industrial & Financial Advisor and has remained such working all over the World for different Groups and Companies as a Consultant, including some specific missions for the ALBERT ABELA Group.
- Mr Granier has traveled extensively on business and has spent time in Japan, again in the USA (spending almost 2 years in NY), United Kingdom (spending 4 years in London), Hong Kong, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland.
- Over the course of the years Mr Granier invested heavily into various companies. These investments were mainly in the computer science (*Temps X*, *MMS*), telecom (*Phonebrazil*), education (*Educatie+*), Health (*Biointegral*) financial business, consulting, trading and real estate Sectors.
- In 1998, due to Mr Granier's real estate activities he relocated with Family to the Monaco area.
- In 2002, for Family and lifestyle reasons, Mr Granier relocated to Marbella, Spain, where he resides to this day and from where he conducts his various business activities.