



Article by David Feffer for Estadão

On September 2, the newspaper O Estado de S. Paulo published an article by the President of the Suzano Group, David Feffer, where he tells a little about the group's history and the Suzano way of being: strong and considerate.

David also addressed family governance, the challenges of growing and the importance of active and transparent communication to build trust and respect among people.

**Read the full article in Portuguese ([in PDF](#)) or the translation below.**

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### **Strong and Considerate**

*Clear and responsible family control ensures that business is managed with a long-term vision*

David Feffer\*

How to keep a company of over 90 years growing? That's a recurring question in talks and interviews. But, before I heard it for the first time, I asked myself this question 15 years ago. And I never stopped repeating it. I say there is no right or wrong answer, but simply choices based on our values.

In 2001, amidst the shock and sorrow caused by the premature loss of my father, who had also been President of the Suzano Group, I took over as President with the mission of redesigning its trajectory. The natural course until then was my continuing as CEO for a long time, just as my father and my grandfather had done earlier. But it's not always that the natural course of things is the best when we think of the long run for a company and all that goes around it.

We wanted the group to emerge from the 21<sup>st</sup> century stronger than it started and decided that the best way would be to implement a model that considered professionalizing the management, clearly defining the role of the controlling family in the business and preserving the autonomy necessary to nurture high performance professional management. In this process, I committed what I call "professional harakiri" when, in 2003, I stepped down as CEO in favor of this new management model, giving the example of what needed to be done to make our decision succeed. We designed and implemented our own management model in the Suzano Group, which has become our strength. It is based on 3 fundamental pillars: family control, professional management and commitment to our stakeholders.

Clear and responsible family control ensures that business is managed with a long-term vision, such that decisions are not made simply by the pressure to deliver results every quarter, but with the focus on business perpetuity. To guide these decisions, we rely on the values of the entrepreneurial family and strive to create business value, which is expressed not just through financial assets but also through human, social, political and environmental assets.

Companies are live, dynamic and constantly changing systems that react to the impacts of competition, disruptive movements, guidance from business values and the need to constantly create value, so that the results are reinvested to increase productivity, as well as in research and innovation, thus generating a virtuous growth cycle. Professional management, leveraged by meritocracy and which is constantly evaluated, enables us to have the right people in the right place at the right time.

This harmony requires an equal amount of active and transparent communication, which is required for building trust and respect among people, the alignment of professional and shareholder interests, empowerment of managers, accountability, encouragement and the



motivation to put individual creativity and energy at the service of the team, thereby maximizing and sharing benefits.

And commitment to stakeholders is based on our belief to reconcile Strength and Consideration. We aim to be, at the same time, strong in our business dealings and values, and considerate in our relationship with our stakeholders, based on a comprehensive and empathic process of listening and on open, transparent and objective communication, building quality relations that can overcome the obstacles along the way. Hence, opinions and observations of stakeholders influence our investments, cause realignment of our targets and objectives and make up our mission and the way we operate.

The combination of these three pillars, which are the foundations of our management model, has been put to practice across the group every day for more than 12 years and we continue to learn. Transformations around the world call for constant revisions and improvements so that we can anticipate trends and respond to the challenges we face. I believe that this is the answer that will guide us during the next 90 years, in a strong and considerate manner.

*\*President of Suzano Holding and chairman of the Board of Directors of Suzano Pulp and Paper.*