



A CIMBA Spotlight with Lorenzo Salieri, MBA Class of 1995

➤ ***Lorenzo, tell us more about you, about your current and past jobs.***

Lorenzo Salieri, born in Lombardy, I graduated in 1992 in Business Economics from Università Cattolica in Milan. After the draft (it might sound as Jurassic but it was still mandatory in Italy in 1992!) I started as auditor at PWC, then moved to Corporate Finance at UniCredit. In 1994 I decided to take a leave of absence and took a new challenge attending the 1995 CIMBA Class.

In 1997 I joined 3i Group Plc, a British listed private equity funds, where I spent 15 years becoming Head of Italy and managing the €5 bln Eurofund V, completing majority and minority investments in Italy and Europe in 12 private companies (and yes!, “Mionetto wines” was one of our portfolio companies!).

Currently I work for Cobepa, covering the Italian market. Cobepa is a Belgian private equity investor, funded by 2 large corner investors, de Spoelberch family, main shareholder of listed AB Inbev, €120 bln of market cap and Von Baumbach family, owner of Boehringer, the world’s largest non-listed pharma business. Our most recent investment is still wine related, since in 2019 we invested in Enoplastic-Sparflex, the world leader in wine closures.

➤ ***How did you choose CIMBA? What led you to choose the Master of Business Administration?***

Back to early 90s, I realized that while Italian universities were exceptionally good at teaching theoretical and technical aspects, they were missing some operational aspects of business activities. While I had already a good job at that time, I decided to boost my career, choosing a US MBA style, quite different from European MBAs available at that time.

➤ ***Reminiscences of your experience in the CIMBA program. What are some of the things that changed your way of thinking?***

As for any goal in your life, to succeed you need really to study and work hard (I counted up to 100 hours a week while at CIMBA), but also to balance your life and have some fun. You can stretch your life for in the short run, but to be a long-term winner you need to build your own life balance.

➤ ***What was your favorite moment in the CIMBA MBA Program? Favorite class? Difficult moment?***

The greatest contribution to me was really the international spin of all students: North and South America, Central and Eastern Europe, Middle East, China, India, Russia, all of them with their own stories and background... a truly eye-opening experience, and as matter of fact, after the MBA I have been always working for international companies.

But also, weekend parties and BBQ in Clemson were not so bad!

I can't recall a favorite class, I learnt a lot in all of them, and had some good fun in all of them, Don White can you recall it?

➤ ***What was the impact of the program on your life and career?***

In mid 90s, an international MBA was truly an element of differentiation, actually I received different job proposals, and then I chose to move to 3i Group.

➤ ***Looking back at your professional career, is there something you regret?***

When you are assessing an investment opportunity (where you have to invest maybe €200 mln) and also the management team leading such business, you can rely on whatever top consultant due diligence suite; however, even though this seems not completely rational or cannot be fully rationalized, my experience has taught me that the ultimate decision should be your own gut feeling.

➤ ***What advice would you give a current or perspective students?***

Continuous learning is key to me. Never think that after your college, MBA, PhD, you are done. Taking additional professional courses, reading a lot, especially in this pandemic world, will keep you up to date with the huge impact change that are taking place.

And...study history and geopolitical changes, I call it "seeing around the bend".

These two disciplines might not depict what is going to happen over next 6 months but what is going to happen in 10 years. IE: Think about 5G as an infrastructure (like a motorway or telecom backbone), and then you immediately realize that implications for companies and nations are much broader than you originally thought.

➤ ***Can you share a dream/future goal?***

I am planning to climb the central peak of the "Three peaks of Lavaredo" in the Dolomites.

But using a Alex Honnold (first free solo on El Capitan, Yosemite Park) quote, "a climber can be bold or can be old, but cannot be bold and old", so for the time being, I am still practicing.

➤ ***What is your favorite movie? Favorite book?***

Movie: Once upon a time in America.

Book: Life and fate, by Vasily Grossman

➤ ***What inspires you?***

I am inspired by people with a neat vision, but strongly rooted in their present.

Such leaders talk to crowds, but they are able to reach you straight, I call it the ability to talk to "the audience of one".

Leaving aside any personal judgement, I could have mentioned Warren Buffett, Barrack Obama, and now I could mention Pope Bergoglio.

➤ *Is there something else you would like to add?*

Everyone you meet is fighting a battle you know nothing about.

Be kind. Always. I am still working on it...

And, if I may add, one of my favorites: Life is too short to drink bad wine.

Don't miss the **Virtual MBA Reunion of the 1995 Class** – 25 years:
December 11th at 9 PM CET.

Join us: info@cimba.it



Alessandro Diana and Lorenzo Salieri, MBA Class of 1995.