



Vitalii Balykhin

Chief Executive Officer

Lauffer Group

Biography

For a year and a half I direct the work of Lauffer Group, one of the leading Ukraine's processing enterprises. Our company daily bakes over one million loaves of bread at 11 bread-baking plants all over the country. In its work Lauffer Group adheres to a policy of social responsibility and provides support to the least socially protected people, participants of anti-terrorist operation and forced migrants. The Loaf of Peace initiative has evoked warm response for the last six months not only in Ukraine but far beyond its borders. My education and work are indissolubly linked with Poltava region. I worked in many successful business projects. I was director for commercial activities at LLC Regional Prospects specializing in oil and gas business, headed the Poltava bread-baking joint stock company. I also was involved in business activities, I founded and directed the LLC PPSM, and created a successful transport company GMBH Leon Piker 44 in Berlin specializing in cargo transportation. My profound well-round education helped me to successfully participate in various business projects. In 1996 I graduated from Poltava Cooperative Institute with a certificate of technologist in public catering. In 2008 I graduated from Poltava University of Economy and Trade with a certificate in management of internationally administered organizations.

Why do you think Membership in the American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine is important for business operating in Ukraine?

While Ukraine is becoming integrated in the present day economic and political space it is of utmost importance to integrate Ukrainian business into international environment. The necessary precondition for sustainable economic growth and flourishing of Ukraine is the establishment of close and mutually beneficial ties among entrepreneurs on all continents. Ukrainian business can offer its partners and investors throughout the world a reliable cooperation, absolute fairness and big prospects. To coordinate this process and direct it towards mutually beneficial sphere the participation of Ukrainian business circles representatives in the activities of the Chamber is seen as a necessary precondition. It is also important to be represented by successful and stable enterprises, as well as the heads of big corporations enjoying positive reputation.

What motivates you to be a Chamber Board Member?

This position can help me establish and strengthen positive and mutually beneficial relations between Ukrainian business circles and foreign partners, because this cooperation greatly influences the growth of Ukrainian economy and its integration into global society. For several years I was witnessing the attempts of Ukrainian entrepreneurs to introduce high world standards of business and find the right approaches to cooperation with foreign colleagues, which lead me to be convicted in the fact that this cannot be achieved without the direct dialogue with the representatives of those countries' business elites who successfully introduced the free market principles. I wish to become the member of the Chamber Board to build such a dialogue and help Ukraine become the part of the world market. As the head of Lauffer Group I consider myself to be a proper candidate to participate in the activities of the Chamber Board to make its work in Ukraine even more effective.

Why do you feel you are qualified to serve on the Chamber Board? What skills would you bring to the Board?

Over 15 years of work in the leading positions at different Ukrainian enterprises and organizations as well as long experience of business consultancy provided me with an opportunity to look into business processes and examine in every detail all sore points that stand on the way of Ukrainian business environment integration into the international business community. My experience of life and work abroad helped me understand in what way business in developed market economies differs from that in the nations with transitional economies like in Ukraine. I also understood what Ukrainian business lacks for it to be in line with international standards. At the same time I can see all the benefits that Ukraine's foreign partners could gain from cooperation with enterprises in our country. Additional arguments in favor of my nomination to the Chamber Board are my understanding of processes mentioned above and my confidence in the fact that deep and mutually beneficial cooperation between the global and Ukrainian businesses is not a desire but a reality.

The first and one of the most important skills of the Board member is, to my mind, the swift response to unconventional situations. Life poses new tasks before us on a daily basis, and the one who will timely and effectively respond to such challenges should be successful. Analytical abilities are also not less important, as well as the skills to define major and minor tasks, to be good at planning and to act in line with the schedule. Great importance as also attached to leadership and talent for organizations. Only the one who is able to organize, to fascinate others with his example, and to convince the rest of the team by his authority can hold the leading position. The ability to work in a team is also one of such skills. But while realizing one's leadership role it is important not to forget that only the team with a sense of cohesion can achieve the good result, and the feeling of fellowship and the proper distribution of duties should prevail within this team. And last but not the least, to my mind, is the ability to acquire new knowledge and perfect oneself in a swiftly changing world.

How have you been active in the Chamber over the course of the last two years?

As the head of Lauffer Group I took part in a number of interesting events arranged by the Chamber. In particular, during the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Chamber, Lauffer Group presented its social initiative the "Loaf of Peace", having prepared the special festive bakery product for this purpose. According to the old Ukrainian tradition, together with the management team of the Chamber, the US ambassador to Ukraine, the governor of Odessa oblast, the Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine, we welcomed the first batch of coal from the United States purchased under the international US-Ukrainian contract. This event, designed to consolidate the Ukrainian-American partnership and the way to the energy independence of our country, was one of many events with the participation of the "Loaf of Peace". Among the latest events of the Chamber, in which Lauffer Group acted as a partner, was the party dedicated to Halloween.

What activity or Committee would you participate in and be responsible for?

First of all, my participation would be useful for the work related to the processing of agricultural products and the food industry activities. Historically, Ukraine has been one of the world's largest suppliers of agricultural and food products. It is this sphere of the Ukrainian economy, which is typically of interest to international partners. Constantly growing volume of exports of Ukrainian agricultural products and derived products testify to this assertion. Therefore, the establishment of connections between foreign partners and Ukrainian producers is of particular interest for strengthening the international cooperation. Besides, it should be remembered that for many years I have been managing the businesses, the main area of activity of which was food and processing industry. Therefore, this subject is familiar to me firsthand, and I have a qualified idea of what and how to do in order to make this branch of the Ukrainian economy of interest to the world business community, and for the international partnership to become of interest to Ukrainian businessmen.