

Gabriel Emanuelli

Life as an adventure

BY RONALD C. FLORES



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Gabriel Emanuelli's philosophy of life can be summed up in a few words: work hard and play hard.

Working hard has taken him from driving a UPS truck in 1985 to heading the \$30 billion corporation's operations in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.

Playing hard has included everything from skydiving, windsurfing, bungee jumping, hang gliding, car racing, and rock climbing, to sailing. "I made a list of all the things I want to do in my life, all the adventures I want to have. I'm about 75% through it," he says. "Some people might consider this a death wish, but I consider it a life wish. I want to experience all I can in life." Next on his list is learning to fly.

"There is a difference between boldness and recklessness," Gabriel explains. "I am carefully careless. I take courses, practice with experts and get the knowledge before I jump into a sport." Most recently, he went to a sailing academy and received charter certification that allows him to captain a 46-foot yacht in preparation for eventually sailing around the world. "That is definitely going to happen," he says.

Gabriel has always been on the move. The first of five children—beating out his twin brother by four minutes—he attended a variety of schools and colleges before graduating with a BBA in marketing from Inter American University.

He works mostly in Puerto Rico and commutes weekends to Florida where his family lives and where UPS regional headquarters are located. Gabriel is married to Mayelin Musa and the couple has a seven-year-old son, Giancarlo, who is a budding soccer player. "I met her at the Caparra Fitness Center where she was my aerobics instructor. As you can imagine, I was a very attentive student!" he says with smile. Both are exercise buffs and Mayelin runs eight miles every day.

He brings the same intensity to his work for UPS. Although he is responsible for some 530

employees with 26 operating centers in Puerto Rico and offices on 33 different islands, he doesn't like to refer to himself as a boss. "The only difference is that I have more responsibility," he says. "My people do the work. My job is to make sure the company's strategies and goals are communicated to them. I let them know where we are headed and remove the barriers so we can get there."

His mentor in business is Hugo Paredes, an

Ecuadorian who is currently UPS District Manager of the Latin America region and who was a UPS pioneer in Puerto Rico. "He has the perfect people skills. He does everything with all his heart. You know he is always doing the maximum. He sets the standard that I would like to achieve," Gabriel says.

This example helped Gabriel as he progressed from UPS courier to package operations supervisor, general auditor, and air cargo account manager. It helped him during his term as president of the Puerto Rico Air Cargo Association in 1991. It guided him in his journey from UPS business manager to sales and marketing manager for Puerto Rico and, in 1998, for the Latin America district. It guides him now as country manager.

His father, who was also named Gabriel, is his model for life. "As a young man, he taught me the importance of being responsible. It didn't matter if I was out until five in the morning, if I had to be at work at seven, I would always be there. Later in life, he taught me that respect doesn't come with a title but through the way you treat people."

His biggest challenge is to find the best way of motivating his team to continue to be winners. One way he has accomplished it is by taking key members on team-building adventures, rappelling through San Cristobal Canyon and other exciting destinations.

Gabriel believes that the secret of success is to experience everything you can in life, but to have balance and perspective. "I believe in working hard, but working smart, and caring about the people that you work with. It's as important as caring about your family and friends. A good education is useful, but not as much as having the right attitude and being willing to win," he says. "Being successful in business is like being successful in sports: you have to bring people together towards a common objective. It is and will always be a team effort." ■