

From Textbooks to International Success



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Drawing on over 17 years' experience in the weddings industry, WeddingItaly® is the ideal partner for anyone seeking a dream wedding in this stunning country. We invited Founder and CEO Alberto Ciani to tell us more.

For the last twenty years' couples from all over the world dreamed of getting married in Italy: an industry with an overall turnover of millions of dollars. Within this dynamic and vibrant industry WeddingItaly is a trend setter: established in 1999, the company has grown as the largest and unique Italian operator specialized in high-end weddings and events.

In a market mainly composed by small professionals, the competitive advantage of WeddingItaly is a strong cohesive team, a one-to-one approach with customers, a dynamic and reliable planning process, and a long-time experience in handling the most sophisticated demands. Alberto, who Founded the firm in 1999 and has worked hard to support it and grow it into the success it is today, discusses the early days and how he helped to cultivate this pioneering company and client focused culture.

"When the company began as travel agency, the intent was to market honeymoons in Italy, but it immediately was changed to weddings in Italy, as soon as we found a free niche in this market. I was not planning to be a CEO in the wedding industry, but this has been very challenging and formative: I always say that if you can satisfy a demanding bride in her one-and-only best day of her life, you can face any other job or challenge with an easier pace.

"When I first started the business I was only a young college student, and I remember buying "HTML for dummies" and working night and day on the website. It was 1999, when internet was still at the embryonal phases. It took me almost a year to complete the website, and at the end it was a great for that time: very informative, with pictures taken from friends and relatives albums. I remember scanning the photos and framing the image with very basic software,

"Meanwhile I was training as a travel agent in a very large travel agency in north-Italy. The first clients were my real school, providing hours of research and extensive travelling to visit each remote place. I had any role you can expect from a self-made start-upper: website designer, SEO specialist, travel agent, wedding planner, then I hired the first employees and I began my career as an entrepreneur, then a team leader, director of operations, and finally CEO. In order to drive WeddingItaly to success I have extensively studied SEO, marketing online, communication and NPL. My highest achievement in education is a post-graduate diploma in Luxury Brand Management, but I am currently half-way to be a Master of Business Administration from the school of management of the University of Liverpool, as I believe in arming myself with knowledge which will support both myself and my business."

As his workforce grew, Alberto had to develop a leadership style with which to manage and support them. He describes how he has cultivated this in order to get the best out of every one of his staff and ensure that clients receive the service they expect.

"Personally, I believe in individual responsibility, in team-work, in clear purposes, and in personal development. By this foundation, I manage staff valuing each unicity as a strength to grow a united team in which each member can develop his/her own leadership to reach their personal and company's goal. There are more talents than you expect out there, but a good manager should be able to find the right persons to fit the organizational environment. Sometimes a curriculum says nothing, sometimes too much: I have hired one only person from a CV. I believe successful managers should create opportunities for their talents within the staff, investing in resources and developing businesses within the business."

This dedicated workforce is constantly exploring new trends in the market and working alongside clients to ensure that they enjoy the wedding of their dreams, as Alberto is eager to emphasise.

"As a service company, here at WeddingItaly we are consumer-centric, totally devoted to customer satisfaction, and we have one attempt to make things perfect, which adds to the pressure. It also means that every little detail, proposal, provider, venue, etc., should be attentively selected and chosen for our client's satisfaction. To be innovative in our industry means to keep up with trends, import trends from abroad, research in other markets and industries what it could be appealing for ours. Keeping up to date with technology is essential and it is also a useful tool to research the market and find new interesting trends."

Although WeddingItaly has achieved phenomenal success since inception, the journey is far from over. Alberto is excited for the future as he outlines, in his concluding comments, the upcoming developments and projects which will drive the company to even greater achievements over the months and years to come.

"Looking ahead, our firm will keep enhancing our outstanding service in wedding planning and concierge service. We are also working on new interesting projects, always within this industry, so I am looking forward to the next future. WeddingItaly is already becoming an international company with its roots deep in the Italian territory, but with an international flavour that you can already perceive with the multicultural staff. We had many offers to partnership with strong international brands in the tourism industry, and my personal mission is to lead WeddingItaly to reach its objectives in the next 5 years.

"With regards to my own career, I am enjoying my actual positions as CEO at WeddingItaly and as a business consultant for other firms: I will keep enjoying my work, developing my skills as a business leader in order to take WeddingItaly even further."