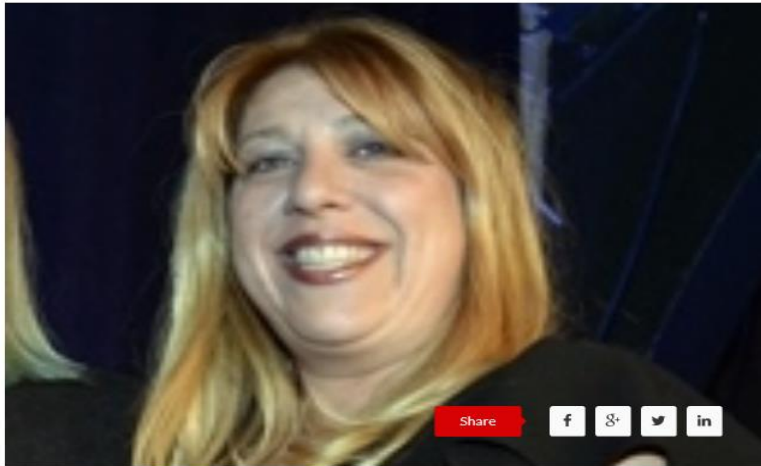


Annalisa Liuzzo (Lawyer - Italian Chamber of Commerce in New York)



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We often analyze the dynamics that bring increasing numbers of Italian citizens to migrate to the United States. We talk to lawyer Annalisa Liuzzo, who can give us the point of view of someone who helps many Italians understand what they need to do, and when and how to do it, to try and achieve their American dream. Annalisa is the perfect example of the successful mix of Italian and American traits: she is kind and competent, enthusiastic and attentive, passionate and dedicated.

Annalisa – every year you meet several Italian citizens who dream of moving to work and live in the United States. Who are these people, and why do they want to go to the USA

I have been a lawyer for 18 years, and over this period of time I have had the privilege of witnessing an evolution of Italian migration to the United States. In the beginning of my career, I mostly met the classic importer of Italian products – mainly wine and food products – as well as young graduates from wealthy families. But today, the number of talented young people with the motivation to succeed keeps growing. They are aware that if they work hard, they can have a chance in the United States.

Many such people continue to arrive today. Aside from them, there are very many people who choose to invest here, and others who simply understand the importance of adding professional experience in the United States to their résumés – in American companies or Italian subsidiary companies in the U.S. Lastly, there are those who try and start their businesses for the first time in the United States. It may be that the years of the economic crisis in Europe have pushed increasing numbers of Italian citizens to look for opportunities elsewhere. Plenty of people today are willing to try and bet on a decisive change of life, induced by the state which they deem Italy to be in.

What are the questions you are most frequently asked and the most common situations you deal with?

In general, the question I am most frequently asked is: can I work for myself, as an autonomous professional? And unfortunately I have to reply that generally the answer is no, this is not possible. Naturally, the issue of the visa is the most important. The visa we mostly apply for on behalf of our clients is the E visa, because there exists an treaty between Italy and the United States which provides that Italian-owned companies that import or export with Italy can employ Italian managers and executives in the U.S. We often apply for the E visa also for investors in order that they may oversee and manage the companies in which they have invested.

Another important sector that attracts a lot of Italians – all extremely talented and in need of a visa – is that of the arts. The visa for artists, actors, scientists and business professionals is the O visa.

Then there is the H1B visa. Unfortunately, only 65.000 of these are released each year, on condition that a non-American individual with a specific specialized degree is offered a job by an American company. There are many highly qualified and skilled Italian citizens who come to the USA with this type of visa.

There is hope that the new migration of Italian young professionals will help renew the Italian community and break the stereotypes that are still associated with Italian-Americans today...

This is true. The Italians arriving in the United States are highly skilled and often have advanced professional training. Naturally, they bring their youth and innovation to the Italian community here, which as a result is changing and being modernized. All over New York you now hear more people speaking Italian than I did when I was a child. And I am often told I am lucky, when I say to an American that I am Italian.

The level of excellence and quality of all things Italian has really increased here: think of Italian restaurants – today we have some among the best in the world here. This contributes significantly to breaking the stereotypes about us. Luckily I think this trend is set to continue, increasingly helping every Italian in America feel appreciated for his or her real value, just like it should be.

What advice would you give to the people who dream to live and work in the United States?

If they have this dream they need to have a plan and the right amount of determination. I have seen many Italians be successful here, and what all of them understood was that simply having a high quality product or great personal skills – or the right idea – is not enough. They need to get to know the United States and adapt to this market, integrating its cultural and economic rules. They need to believe in themselves and their abilities and understand how best to make the most of them and become successful in a country that has many differences compared to Italy. The word to describe this attitude is “commitment”. Commitment leads to success. This is what makes the United States an exceptional country, still today.