

Banco Santander Chief Rethinks Father's Legacy

The Spanish banking giant Banco Santander SA is going through a massive change in its top management and business strategy. These changes have been brought about by the executive chairman Ana Botin (54), the daughter of former chairman Emilio Botin who died in last September. She is modernizing the bank that had earlier faced investor criticism for alleged mal-governance. She has replaced the bank's chief executive and shuffled about half of the top management team. New teams have been put in charge of US operations that had twice failed to live up to the Federal Reserve's standards. Santander is Europe's second largest bank by market value and has customers across Europe and the Americas. It is a major car loan provider in the USA. *"We need to change how we run banks. We need to change the culture. If we get it right, we can have a huge impact,"* remarks Ana Botin, who has taken up the uncommon role of a female leader in the global financial sector - a traditional male bastion.

Ana has a challenging task of living up to her father's benchmark of success. In his 29 years as chairman, Emilio transformed Santander from the world's 152nd-largest bank by assets in 1986 to 19th-largest in 2014, acquiring stakes with an average of two banks or financial firms per year spanning a footprint from Portugal to Peru. Santander was founded in 1857 and has been led by the Botin family since 1895. Ana is the fourth generation member to lead the bank. Ana studied at Harvard University and worked at J.P. Morgan for eight years. She joined Santander in 1988 and had a mix of successes and failures. Since 2010 she had taken charge of the bank's UK operations and had consistently delivered growth. The changes made at the bank are a part of continued modernization which was much needed to gear up to the new realities of the global financial world. *"My ambition is to continue this success story,"* says Botin.

Source: Wall Street Journal, June 11, 2015.