Woolly thinker teaches giants of Silicon Valley

Italy
Tom Kingston Rome

The sundrenched town and a group of his fellow Silicon Valley technology billionaires have made an unlikely pilgrimage to a remote Italian village to glean some tips on management.

Jeff Bezos, the founder and chief executive of Amazon, has spent three days on a holiday in the centre of Italy, as his search for inspiration from a culture entrepreneur who gives his staff long lunches, tells them to stop working at 5.30pm and provides theatrical performances for them.

Mr Bezos, whose company has been criticized for the long hours staff endure at its Seattle headquarters, became “emotional”, while visiting Brunico.

Cuccinelli, known as a “humanist capitalist,” Mr Cuccinelli, 65, wanted to learn about the relationship with his staff. After hearing his factory, he said, “This is food for thought.”

Mr Bezos was accompanied by Reid Hoffman, the co-founder of the LinkedIn website, Drew Houston, the chief executive of Dropbox and Dick Costolo, the former chief executive of Twitter.

The visitors abandoned their phones for three days while touring the village of Selva in Pieve dei Fantoni.

They learned how Mr Cuccinelli, whose factory has achieved sales of $100 million a year while rebuilding the ancient village and offering its staff above-average wages, subsidised three-course lunches, a theatre and a library packed with philosophical works.

Mr Bezos, who has threatened to walk away from talks over an EU antitrust probe, is said to have been impressed by the villagers’ spirit of cooperation and their drive for creativity.

Mr Bezos said: “I was deeply moved by the passion and the community in this little village.”

Mr Cuccinelli said he would love to have Bezos over to his village to see how they do business.

Jeff Bezos said: “I want to work on returning to the roots. I want to learn about the values and values of the community.”

Brunico Cuccinelli says that if you can see the sky in an office, things are better.

Workers at Amazon’s warehouse, run by Jeff Bezos, will, would like the chance to look at the sky.