

## Contrast program: Daniel Goeudevert as guest at the DESMA Open House 2008

### Ideas for a new mindset

How much progress can the world stand? This question is being posed by Daniel Goeudevert as keynote speaker at the Open House 2008 and he is going to elaborate on his view of the outlooks of industrial society under the dictates of tremendous prices for raw materials and increasing environmental issues. However, the automotive manager and business consultant is looking at this subject from a different angle – a specialty with which he has already rudely aroused so many boardrooms.

He begins with the conclusion that the technical feasibility may eventually put an end to the survival of humanity. Against this background, he contemplates the imminent change in technology and paradigms in a steadily changing world and the challenges and markets of the future involved. „Until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, progress has exclusively changed respectively improved the human’s surroundings. These days, progress is changing the human species itself“, notes Goeudevert. As per him, the social being mankind has meanwhile become the consumer mankind. The human ability to adapt oneself in the long run to even shorter innovation cycles is highly doubtful to Goeudevert.

Among the demands resulting from this for elastomer industry, Goeudevert counts the environmental protection, the social factor and modern moral understandings. He cautions against short-winded location hopping à la Nokia – not only because higher salaries are sooner or later being fought for in low-wage countries as well - but also due to the great willingness to change employer within the well-trained staff in the Third World. Here he identifies new tasks for the management. “Innovations are still crucial” says Goeudevert, “but the people are the most important factor. They are much more important than the product”.

Remarkable lateral thinker, colourful personality, business visionary – the French automotive manager and business consultant does not fit into any pattern. The career of the sixty-six-year old started off with literature studies at the Sorbonne in Paris followed by a job as university lecturer for literature. In the mid-sixties he switched over to the automotive industry, within a few years he marched through and was appointed Chairman of the Board of Citroën Germany. In 1975 he became Chairman of the Board at the German Renault AG, later Export Director Europe of the company. From 1981 until 1989 he acted as Chairman of the Board at the German Ford Werke, then he resigned and founded a German counterpart of the Harvard Business School. In 1991 Goeudevert returned again to the executive floor of the automobile industry as Chairman of the Board for the model division at Volkswagen AG. There his dedication to the human side of the business, to the development of eco-friendly cars and the expansion of public transport encountered so

much resistance that he left the group in 1993. Since then, he has been committed to creative corporate management as lecturer, advisor and author. Goeudevert's autobiography and other of his books hit the bestseller lists, he was decorated with the French Legion of Honour and the German Federal Cross of Merit and holds an office at European environmental protection and economy foundations and at the UNECSO.