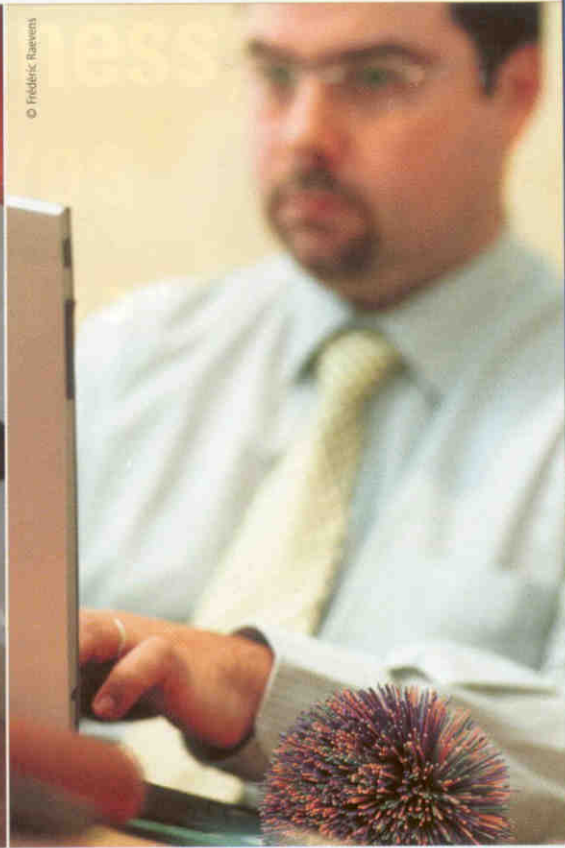




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the stuff of dreams

create a tailor-made programme which is extraordinary in the fact that participants could never do this type of thing on their own: stay in the private residence of an Indian Maharajah after playing polo on the back of an elephant, for example; or drink champagne in the middle of the Namibian desert... the bottles having been delivered straight to us by parachutists! The only limit is our own creativity.

What is the typical profile of your clients?

There is no stereotype picture. Our customers come from all sectors, pharmaceuticals, telecommunications, fast moving consumer goods... and they are not always trying to incentivise their own people: they sometimes want to motivate customers or energise sales forces. The budget needed depends on the type of event. I think people must avoid falling into the trap of making false economies; if the participants take a dim view, it may be counter-productive.

Managing cultural differences

What attracted you to this business? Did your previous experience as president of the Belgian branch of the AIESEC in

1991/1992 play a major role in your decision? Yes, I was immersed in this field early on, when I was doing my degree at the Warocqué Business School. I was very active in the International Association of Students of Economic and Commercial Sciences (AIESEC) at the end of the 80s and so I had the opportunity to attend various international conferences.

So it is true that this experience, in a certain way, set me off: I met an enormous amount of people from every kind of background and established a wide network of relationships. And above all I acquired a taste for the discovery of different cultures, which I now apply every day in managing relationships with my partners all around the world.

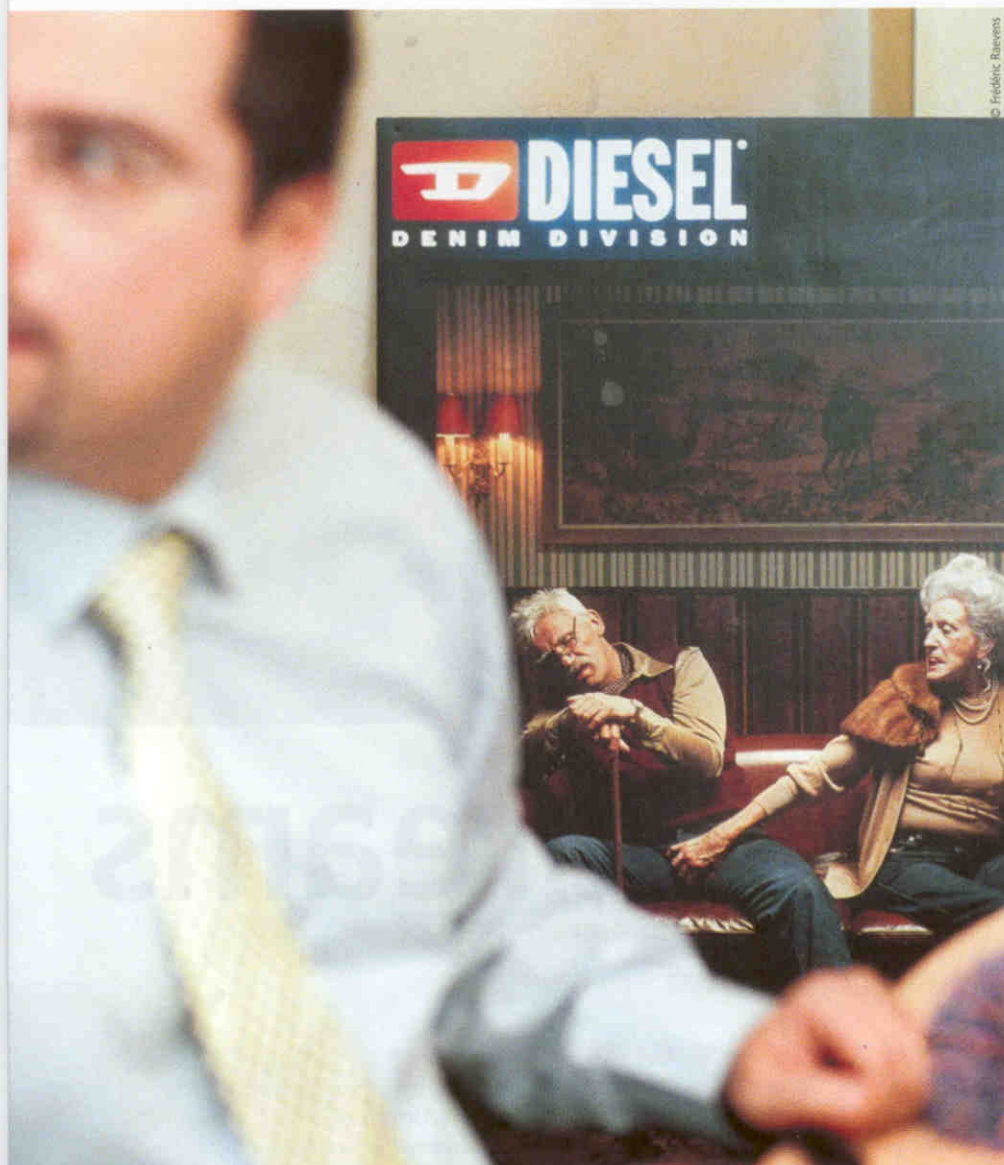
You've written several articles on the subject.

My final thesis was on cultural differences in management and I was able to return to the subject last June in «The meeting professional», magazine which is read by 20,000 professionals worldwide. My point of view is that cultural differences are indeed very enriching, but can also be the source of misunderstandings:

you therefore have to identify and respect them. This applies not only to relationships with African or Asian colleagues, but also to improving understanding with our French and Dutch neighbours for example! Generally, I'm a great believer in the importance of personal relationships in business. It is true that in my sector, we are constantly exchanging information via our professional associations, but it's important in my own company too. Alone, you can do nothing...

Why did you decide to complete your economic & commercial studies with a post-graduate diploma at the Solvay Business School?

For the same reason I decided to study sales and marketing: sound training which opens up the widest range of opportunities. My diploma in Marketing and Advertising which I took in 1994 at the SBS also allowed me to further my training in a very practical way. Not only by case studies but also by exposure to the accumulated experience of the other participants who were already in responsible jobs. In my particular case, what I learned allowed me to find the right market positioning for our concept and services.



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« My postgraduate diploma in marketing from the SBS allowed me to further my training in a very practical way. »

What are your short and medium-term perspectives? Ince & Tive was created in 1996. So it is a relatively young company, but it already has a sound, loyal customer base and a well-established network of international relations. In the immediate future, I am tackling the challenge of managing our expansion. We are going to exceed €1.5 million turnover this year and I'm now concentrating on consolidating the structure of the company in order to maintain both its creative capacities and its quality standards. One notable result is that we have hired two extra people. As well as internal growth management I'm also looking at the possibilities of an external development programme. I think that there are numerous opportunities to be exploited in operating within a network.

Benoît JULY



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THREE KEYWORDS FOR THE BUDDING ENTREPRENEUR

- > **Desire.** "When you set up your own company, it has to be for rational reasons, but you have to have the right feeling about the project in your guts too, then pick it up and run with it."
- > **Daring.** "When I signed my first client contract, the company had not even been formally established! This does not mean that you have to be prepared to do everything and anything - my client was aware of the situation and had confidence in me - but you must not hesitate to take risks and analyse every opportunity that comes along. You have to believe in luck... but make your own luck too."
- > **The team.** "Even if you're the one responsible at the end of the day, you have to know how to make the most of the support of efficient, loyal collaborators without whom you simply cannot progress. Personally, I have had the great fortune to have the benefit of the advice of an exceptional man, Philippe Buck, General Manager of Editions Dupuis, who is my associate, but first and foremost, my mentor and my friend."