



# PROVENCE PROMOTION

## Hervé Chérubini, President of Provence Promotion, being interviewed

### The enterprise Attitude

Now that Hervé Chérubini is approaching the end of his 3-year mandate as chairman of Provence Promotion, he takes a look back ..... And apart from the figures that are good and the real difficulties of the international context, he has a genuine passion for the enterprising spirit as a General Councilor and a former company manager. A passion and spirit shared everyday with everyone working in the agency!

**> You became chairman of Provence Promotion in October 2001. What would you say are the highpoints of the past three years as the head of the Bouches-Du-Rhône economic development agency ?**

Hervé Chérubini : I would say that the overall balance is very good, considering the very difficult international context - I arrived one month after the September 11 attacks in New York. In summary: the September 11 2001 attacks marked the beginning of a period of international tension which led to the Iraq war and increased terrorism in Central and Eastern Europe.

Economically, the European economy is slowing down as a result of a very much weaker American dollar - which is good for development in the United States - and the power of China is increasing, nourished by foreign investments, delocalization and the end of quotas.

Under these conditions it is not easy to get a fair share of the market! But we succeeded. Provence Promotion improved the numbers of new jobs and company installations, as a result of the "Home Sweet Home" and "Start in Provence" operations set up to counterbalance this disturbed economic environment.

**> Are there any figures to confirm this good result ?**

Hervé Chérubini : Provence Promotion's actions resulted in:

- 1 849 new jobs in 2002,
- 2 581 in 2003 ,
- 2 769 in 2004.

The number of company setups were:

- 63 in 2002,
- 77 in 2003,
- 83 in 2004.

There is a very wide variety of profiles, varying from logistics companies employing several tens of persons to the startup in the Internet Telecom universe, which started with a staff of 3 based on an idea by one of the founders.

But caution! It took hard work! a wave of a magic wand wouldn't have done the trick! Although our region has many advantages, the competition is becoming increasingly fierce. It is no longer possible to simply wait patiently until a company says "Yes, it might be a good idea to setup in Provence"! It is essential to go out and find companies, meet them, present arguments, convince managers, help them prepare their files. And as I have already mentioned, we did this successfully in a very difficult context.

**> And more personally, how have you benefited from these 3 years of your chairmanship ?**

Hervé Chérubini : By chance, in my youth I became manager of a small clothes manufacturing company created in 1985.

I continued this activity for 7 years, and then I sold the company in 1992. This was the most "entrepreneur" period of my life, in economic terms! You live for the present when managing a company, even if it is small, decisions have to be made quickly and applied immediately.... I have very good memories of this period!

Whereas when working for a community as I am doing now as General Councilor, the time lapse between when an idea is put forward and when it materializes can sometimes be very long because procedures are complicated, you have to convince an assembly, financiers, voters etc.

So when I became chairman of Provence Promotion to support economic development in our department, I returned to the decision times, working methods and even the excitement that I had known as an entrepreneur! I genuinely appreciated the skills and efficiency of the people working in the agency, they are all highly professional and motivated!

**> What is your best memory to illustrate this "entrepreneur" spirit ?**

Hervé Chérubini : The Telecom Italia episode. One agency member received a call from Telecom Italia one week-end completely by chance, to obtain information about the Alpes Maritimes Department. The person who answered the phone attracted the interest of the caller, and convinced him that it would be worthwhile accepting a proposal. Provence Promotion produced the proposal in 24 hours and the proposal was accepted! Exactly like a company that captures an unexpected contract!

So, if I should lead a municipal council again in the future, I know that I will be able to put my experience to good use to promote economic development!

### Hervé Chérubini in a few lines



1985-1992: Company manager

1989-1995: Saint-Rémy-de-Provence Municipal Councilor

1995: Elected Mayor of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence

1998: Bouches-du-Rhône General Councilor

2001: Candidate for mayor of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence but not reelected, and Chairman of Provence Promotion for 3 years

2004: Reelected as Bouches-du-Rhône General Councilor