

BERNARD CHARLÈS RECEIVES THE INSIGNIA OF OFFICER OF THE LEGION OF HONOR

THE SPEECH by BERNARD CHARLÈS

September 13, 2012



“Serge, Charles, Ladies and gentlemen, Friends,”

Thank you for honoring me with this award on behalf of the French Republic.

This award is all the more special to me as it is presented by Serge Dassault. For me, it is further illustration of the trust you have shown, as well as the freedom and resources you have granted to Dassault Systèmes. As majority shareholder, you enable our enterprise to flourish, while admiring how passionate we are about our business, clients and partners. In other words, we benefit from a real relationship of trust.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to, and profound friendship for, Charles Edelstenne. Charles, you understood that developing a technology company requires tremendous scope for freedom. After initiating the founding of Dassault Systèmes, you gave us the freedom to pursue our dreams – and take risks – while ensuring that rigorous management became part of our DNA.

We have always enjoyed the most rewarding and enriching relationship. In fact, what you have given me Charles is the freedom to break the mold. Allow me to share a few anecdotes from an insider’s point of view and also to outline the convictions that underpin Dassault Systèmes’ remarkable success.

It all began with a personal dream

As a child helping out on the family farm in Brittany, I soon acquired my parents’ determination and taste for hard work – regardless of what the weather or market had in store for us. The abstract scientific theories and notions I was to discover as a student were still many moons away. And yet, deep down, they were already taking root. Using science and technology to make that work easier made sense.

How to better plan and imagine the future? This is something that has always fascinated me: ‘Why don’t I know today what I’ll know in the future and why do I have to wait for tomorrow to learn what I could know today?’ Even now, after all this time, this question still drives me to constantly seek imaginative new ways of doing things and pursue a certain ideal. I believe that holding on to an ideal is vital. Everyone is capable of achieving their own personal ideal. Fortune can smile on us – but it’s up to us to get things started!

Dassault Systèmes’ vision, our purpose, is strongly linked to a firm conviction – that I know many of you here today also share – that providing virtual universes is the way to harmonize products, nature and life.

Our innovation platforms and software applications make it

possible to better imagine and design products – and get them right from the start. In other words, we help customers drive progress by unlocking innovation through platforms that connect people, ideas, knowledge and expertise, enabling them to develop solutions that improve life in general.

I am confident that we have the world-class skills and resources needed to meet this challenge. I’m fascinated by the marvelous scope and infinite variety of people’s talents. I see this day in, day out through the remarkably diverse skills of our workforce as well as through the different approaches and cultures at play in the many and varied countries where we operate, not to mention of course our customers and partners – who include manufacturers, designers, distributors, physicians, university professors or researchers. When it comes down to it, this ecosystem is one of Dassault Systèmes’ best-kept secrets and one of our greatest strengths!

To help people live a better life, we need to bring together and leverage all our skills and resources. What was a dream has become a passion: the passion to constantly push back the limits of our imagination and the potential within us, and tap the benefits of science and technology to invent tomorrow’s world.

I have made this dream my job

Our 3DEXPERIENCE universes allow us to harmonize products, nature and life. It gives me immense pride to be part of a company that contributes to the greater good and to progress – in the noblest sense of the word, meaning the common development of society and scientific knowledge.

We build bridges between dream and reality. And this works both ways of course: not only do we offer tools that let customers bring to life and give shape to their dreams, but our virtual universes also allow us in return to imagine exciting sustainable solutions for the future.

What was one man’s dream has since become the dream behind Dassault Systèmes

So how do you define a company? When is it that groups of individuals actually form a “company”? It’s not the place we work – although I must admit, our facilities with their distinctive design visually express our core values to a certain extent. And neither is it our bottom line, which is equally “in good shape”!

I believe that an enterprise is above all about working together to realize a shared dream. One man’s dream is not enough to build a company; it has to be shared, passed on

and translated into meaningful objectives. An organization's accomplishments must reflect this dream and everyone must feel engaged and involved.

This ability to imagine, to dream, is at the root of all innovation. Napoleon, a great man whom I admire immensely, is quoted as saying as he walked among his men while they rested overnight at their camp in Poland: "I draw up my battle plans from the dreams of my sleeping soldiers".

This is also why I have always emphasized collective intelligence when it comes to putting together teams, and managing teams and change. And we are in a permanent state of transition; nothing is stable.

Furthermore, I believe that companies today have a specific role to play and responsibility within society especially in our modern societies. By helping people come together, organizations forge social and societal bonds.

The strong sense of harmony that runs throughout our organization – across the numerous different skills, profiles, and nationalities (which currently stand at over 100!) – lies at the heart of our remarkable success. I would like to extend my sincerest gratitude to the people I work with every day: Dominique, Thibault, Pascal, Bruno and Monica, Philippe, Laurence and Sylvain.

When it all comes down to it, we are what we do and we do what we are: we imagine platforms which bring people together, presenting and simulating everything that can possibly be imagined. We call these "3DEXPERIENCE platforms". Here at Dassault Systèmes we say that our solutions cover all applications from mining to space!

Holding a dream is part of my philosophy on life

However, this doesn't mean I just watch from the sidelines; on the contrary, I'm a very hands-on person. But dreams are multi-faceted, multi-dimensional. As a scientist, holding a dream for me comes down to constantly challenging the way we do things. As a supplier and partner, for me this means being creative, staying ahead of the game. As an entrepreneur, it means never being afraid of taking on new challenges. You can see what I'm getting at: holding onto a dream means that one day you'll probably achieve it!

I believe that we need to have "our feet firmly on the ground and our head in the clouds". We must look at the world upside down, back to front and always opt for the most unlikely solution. If we dream the impossible, we can make it come true.

I believe that an ideal is for sharing. To achieve this dream, I becomes WE.

I believe that each organization must also pursue an ideal, especially as companies increasingly provide vital social bonds.

In addition, as this is a national recognition, I would like to express a heartfelt wish for my country: that, at last, entrepreneurial success be encouraged and considered as an irreplaceable force for progress and that our exciting work continue to be pursued here – and not elsewhere.

To finish, allow me to reiterate our company's new slogan – which is now also my own motto: "IF WE ask the right questions, we can change the world".