



## **FINAL** **President's Update** 1 September 2011

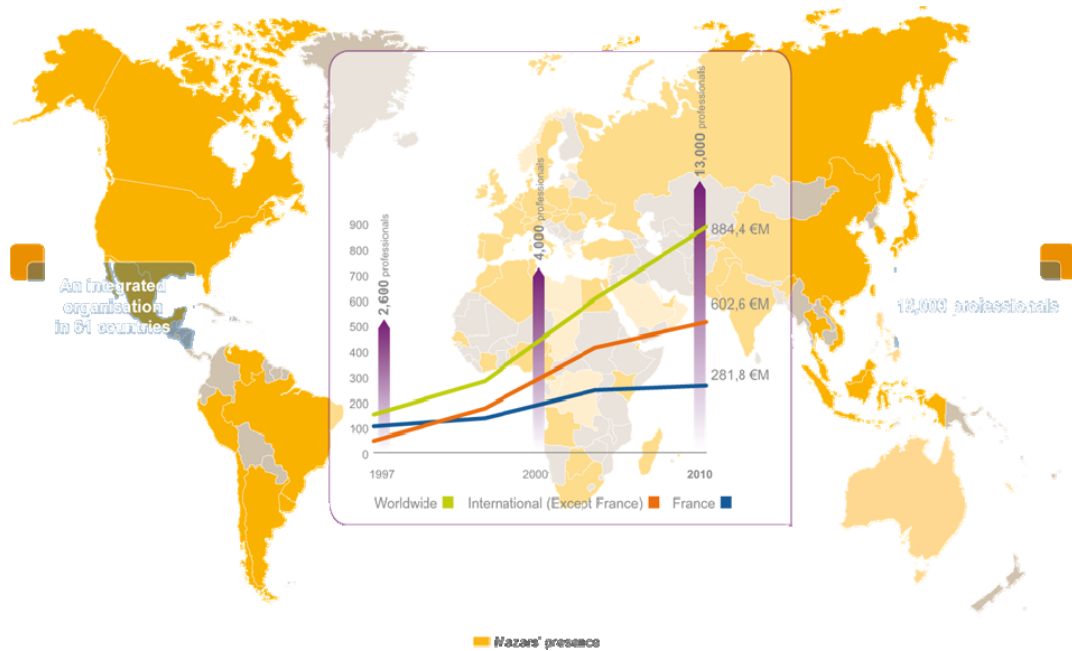
### **Metizo Merges with**



Dear Friends,

Since 2002 I have been writing regular Presidents Updates to you. So, I have a strange feeling as I write the last update as president of Metizo. Today, September 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, I have the pleasure to announce that Metizo has officially merged with Mazars. From now on, I'll be communicating with you in my new role as Partner and Practice Leader for Mazars People Development Consulting.

Mazars is an international, integrated and independent organisation present in 61 countries across five continents with about 13,000 professionals, specializing in audit, accounting, tax and law. Recently they began diversifying into consulting and now have a diverse range of services in their portfolio from strategy and operations to IT consulting, Human Rights and Sustainable Development. Their website will give you a full account of what services they provide: [www.mazars.com](http://www.mazars.com).



A graph representing the growth of Mazars since 1997.

It was a completely unforeseen opportunity for Metizo to begin merger discussions with Mazars in early 2011. We started out working with Mazars as a client but I soon saw that Mazars was different from the auditing firms I knew. Mazars has strong internal values based on respect for the individual in the organization, which they call The Mazars Way. I found a community of ideas with the partners I realized that there was and a strong match in our vision of human development and values placed upon the individual in the organization. As a business Mazars has a history of strong growth and has already gone through phases of development that Metizo would take many years to even encounter on its own.

- For information about the merger <http://www.mazars.sg/Home>
- For information about the Mazars People Development Consulting <http://www.mazars.sg/Home/Our-services/People-Development-Consulting-PDC>

## Metizo | How far we have come

Metizo was created as “the Personal Development Company” in 2002 and it has been both an adventure and a success.

An adventure because to many people, including potential clients, the vision seemed impossible: “Bob, who will take a personal development company seriously? The field is mostly psychobabble and snake oil.” But I was

convinced that companies and higher education were going to make human development more personal. Today I don't get the same glassy stare when I talk about the need for personal development.

Metizo was a success because we created a business model and defined the field of **institutional** personal development. We created a set of competencies where development could be measured and certified. Our certification process, the first in the world, in 2002 was later extended to leadership competencies in developing individuals and to talent professionals leading organizations where personal development was part of the management system.

Concerning the business model, it took two years after creating the company to come up with programs and arguments that would convince a client. I remember two discoveries that made me feel that I was onto an idea whose time had come. The first was when the European Foundation of Management Development defined personal development as a requirement for business schools to receive the quality label Equis. The second was when McKinsey consultants published "The War for Talent" and made it part of their consulting practice in strategy.

By 2007, Metizo had built a million-Euro business with operations in Europe and Asia, extending to Brazil. But then we started to reach a limit. With less than twenty employees, I could see that it would take many years to get us to a size where we would have offices in the human capital hubs of the world. We couldn't get there through organic growth: we would need to change our development model. Either we would have to become an online company, as many training companies did when switching to e-learning, or else we would have to sell or merge the company with a large company, which most of the big HR consulting firms have done in the past three years.

I consulted with my Board of Advisors and they were unanimous in their opinion that a merger with Mazars would take Metizo to a new level and break the size barrier we were struggling with – while keeping our soul. It also helped that a longtime and admired friend, Laurent Choain, had joined Mazars as a partner heading HR worldwide. He was several steps ahead of me in seeing the interest of joining forces.

### **“What about the Dream?”**

When I announced to my employees that I was discussing a merger, their first reaction came as a surprise: “What about the Metizo dream? Are you going to give up who we are?” That reaction made me proud of the company's culture and the people who worked for it.

So let me explain how this merger represents a realization of the Metizo dream. Of course dreams are the engines of enterprise. But it is often necessary to go beyond the dream if you are interested in making it real.

The Metizo dream was to bring personal development to organizations from the inside, to make into a normal process with measureable result.

The true test of an entrepreneurial dream is whether you are willing to go beyond the original projection and make it work in the real world. This idea is nicely expressed by novelist William Faulkner who calls it a kind of wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

*The end of wisdom is to dream high enough to lose the dream in the seeking of it.*

Faulkner wrote this sentence in one of his early novels and it requires some thinking before you understand what he means. But I don't think the idea could be formulated more clearly and succinctly.

Faulkner's expression of going beyond the dream expresses perfectly how I think of merging Metizo with Mazars. The Metizo dream is high enough to go beyond the company that created it. I'm not sure that I can claim it is wisdom but by seeking to realize my dream I found that I needed to lose the dreamlike quality of the original vision.

### **Mazars People Development Consulting – a broader scope and a higher message**

In the early years of Metizo I spent a lot of my time working directly on the technical elements of personal development. To take an example, the Personal Enterprise Plan took five years before becoming a standard tool that could be used in higher education and company training programs and eight years before being publishable as a management book<sup>2</sup>. But as the years went by I found that clients wanted me to speak about the necessity and meaning of developing people to their leaders before selling them tools. The aspirations of people development went from a soft issue to a hard one, especially when corporate leaders considered the implications of political movements such as the Arab Spring on their organizations. Listening to people went from luxury to necessity.

Within Mazars I feel that I am better able to meet the broader aspirations of clients. This map of services shows many of the needs we are able to meet.



The horizontal part of the map shows that some people development lies within the scope of HR but at least half of the needs must be met by working directly with leaders. The vertical part of the map shows the difference between consulting, which is providing creative solutions to problems, as compared to tools and programs which are needed to implement solutions and create standards.

At the end of the day, anyone can put a nice label on a consulting offering. The moment of truth comes when the consultant works with clients to provide innovative solutions that work. Mazars aspirational approach to people development is not different for the sake of being different. It is rather a better way of developing people. That is what I have with the honor of doing for clients as head of the Mazars People Development Consulting Practice.



<sup>1</sup> William Faulkner, *Flags in the Dust*, Vintage Books, 1974, SBN 0394712390, 9780394712390 page 74

<sup>2</sup> The book, *Managing Your Aspirations*, was published by McGraw Hill in 2010.