
SYNERGY CLUSTER



ISSUE: Building on local entrepreneurship

ITINERARY 6B

Date: Wednesday, September 11, 2013

Location: L'Oiseau Bleu cheese factory

PROMOTER

François Gouin, ABS Trailers | E-mail: infoabs@abs-remorques.qc.ca

Presentation of the issue:

Initially, ABS Trailers manufactured several types of trailers and took over all stages of production. A shift toward specialization in the manufacture of a product led the owner to question the ownership for all stages of production.

Project description:

In 2001, Mr. Gouin reviews the company's mission, and initiates a shift toward specialization and the manufacturing of a sole type of trailer. Over the years, other entrepreneurs had established their businesses in the industrial park. Mr. Gouin then saw an opportunity to phase out some of his operations, so that other companies, that could develop the expertise, could take over and do things better in their chosen sector. Thus, the finished product is of greater quality, satisfies the customer, and allows several companies to grow rather than just one.

The key elements according to the promoter:

- it is important for a company to have a mission and to adhere to it;
- for a city such as Asbestos, which has long been a single-industry community, it is important to develop entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs are an important asset to any community;
- to "Pay it forward" is a philosophy that must be developed and maintained. In the case of cluster synergy, inter-company teamwork is the key-element that allows each of the partners to grow and prosper, rather than to consider themselves as competitors.

PANELISTS

Hugo Michel, Usinage Pro-24

Éric Brown, Concept Promet

Philippe Turcotte, Peinture véhicules lourds (PVL)

Mario St-Cyr, Peinture véhicules lourds (PVL)

Each participant recounted his experience of business development in partnership with other companies. The synergy created between the companies established in the Asbestos industrial park has allowed them to grow, and to develop new markets and new expertise. This new business relationship makes everyone a winner.

QUESTION PERIOD

Q.: Is the diversification fund that was announced not a great opportunity for the economic development of the community? And which areas will be prioritized?

A. (Mr. Gouin and Mr. Gagné): It must be understood that the proposed revival project of the Jeffrey mine would have created 450 jobs. When the Government of Quebec abandoned this project, it was a huge blow to the community. It should also be noted that the diversification of the economy had begun well before the announcement of the fund diversification. The latter will help accelerate the process. In terms of the preferred orientations, the metal processing and agrobusiness sectors are specifically targeted.

Q.: What is the labor situation, and will the former mine workers be able to work in the new businesses?

A. (Mr. Gouin and other panelists): The shortage of labor is an issue, as is the case everywhere in Quebec. Since the vocational training center offers training in connection with metallurgical processing, there is an opportunity to recruit labor. We must also develop business succession, which is minimal at this time. As for the former mine workers, many were close to retirement, and others have left to work elsewhere. Therefore, this does not constitute a very large pool of labor.