

# GEWC

## Farewell Getronics

Dear management and workers' representatives. At the end of my employment by this company, I want to say some words to you and to the people in the company. Some of you, including Erik, know that Stephen Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" for me are an important source of inspiration to do the things that I do and that I want to do. The step from independence to interdependence and the habits that can facilitate such a development are also very important for our organisation.

In a company like Getronics, with almost 10,000 employees in the Netherlands and more than 14,000 worldwide, it's important to maintain a dialogue between the different groups of people in the organisation. From the beginning with our negotiations in 2001 we had the objective to establish a dialogue at the EU or international level. Maybe, it's even better to say: "at company level". Speaking with Stephen Covey, a dialogue means: "First seek to understand, then to be understood". Really listening to what the other has to tell you. Mutual understanding between management and employees at different levels in our company is very important. Our works councils can contribute to achieve that. Also the principle of mutual benefit (think win-win) seems to me very important and needs to be practised as much as possible, especially in this company where employees are the most important resource. Finally the principle of creative cooperation (synergize) might also be a challenge for our works councils and management to "delight" the phenomenon of workers' participation for all the persons concerned.

When Erik took over the role of CEO Getronics in 2007, he looked a little confused about having a works council at the EU level and he seemed not to be very interested in what we, as GEWC, wanted to deal with him. However, in that first meeting in December 2007, Steven and he had just begun to explore our company and probably had other concerns than talking with a European Works Council. Therefore, in 2008 we decided to give our "relation" a new chance and in my opinion we succeeded and had two fruitful meetings with Erik and other board members. I think that this success has created a good foundation for further information exchange, consultation and dialogue in order to make also this level of workers' participation highly effective for everyone.

After having been employed for more than 24 years in this company and despite all the difficult situations I have gone through, I still care very much for this company. I concern about what is happening at this moment with measures that mainly promote the *efficiency* of the company. If we are not able to become simultaneous a more *effective* company, it might be difficult for us to survive the overall crises we are going through by now, even as a part of the KPN company. Again the interdependence principles should be practised to achieve that. That means win-win for KPN and Getronics, a serious dialogue between KPN and Getronics about the strategy of our ICT-company and creating real synergies from the integration of communication and information technology.

Although I will not be present in the company as an employee to deal with the further developments, I want to give you some special advises for this future:

- Take care for the dialogue and for listening to what other people (managers, employees) have to tell each other.
- Take care for the power of our sales organisation, so that they can really sell services and can focus on the best customer and prospects base.
- Finally, take care for a balanced employee base with a combination of people that want to explore our business and the future of our business and people that do the work for our customers that needs to be done. Use the HR discipline and the works councils to achieve such a situation.

Because of my feelings for this company, with all my heart I want to say "fare well" to the company and to all the employees in the company. I seriously hope that KPN/Getronics will be able to survive all the crises and to contribute to the challenges of our society, especially at the communication level. I also want to thank you for the good cooperation we had and the chances you have given me to explore organisational issues at an international level. *Farewell Getronics.*