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Luc Dupont and Dr. Éric Dupont

21st century gold miners

Builders, visionaries and died-in-the-wool entrepreneurs: Éric and Luc Dupont have consistently pursued a single goal: to find gold and mine it! With a long list of successes to their credit, their strategy is to incubate new business ventures and to subsequently entrust them to high-calibre managers.

Luc Dupont and Dr. Éric Dupont

- » Co-founders of Æterna Zentaris (AEZ), Atrium Innovations (ATB) and Unipex

Luc Dupont

- » Bachelor's degree in business administration
- » Co-founder, president and CEO of Immanence Intégrale Dermo Correction

Dr. Éric Dupont

- » Post-doctoral studies in neuroendocrinology
- » Doctorate in physiology/endocrinology
- » Nine patents (oncology, dermatology, endocrinology, cosmetics, nutrition)
- » Founder and chairman of the CA\$15 million Cap Diamant Regional Economic Intervention Fund (FIER) since 2005
- » Co-founder and chairman of Immanence Intégrale Dermo Correction

Immanence Intégrale Dermo

- » Founded in 2007
- » Sector: cosmeceuticals
- » Line of five anti-aging products: IDC(tm) (Immanence Dermo Correction)
- » Number of employees: 10

Luc and Éric may be brothers, but they're not twins, even though the differences between them are so slight as to be imperceptible. They both have the same dynamic personality, the same drive for success, the same desire to deliver the best products and the same zest for life and work.

In 1991, Luc and Éric founded Æterna Zentaris from scratch, followed by Atrium Innovations. After turning these companies into global market leaders, they moved on to other endeavours – with nary a thought of retirement! More recently, the 40-something duo went back to the drawing board and created Immanence Intégrale Dermo Correction, also based in their adoptive home of Quebec City.

A family story

Originally from the Saguenay region (some 200 kilometres north of Quebec City), the brothers began their professional careers together at an early age and have travelled a shared road ever since. Drawing on their complementary qualities, their partnership is based on clear and open communication; it has also grown stronger over the years, beginning with their university studies and their initial forays into the business world. Working side by side, they launched their first company, followed by a second and a third.

Luc, a trained accountant, is more administrative-minded, while Éric is a renowned scientist. **"Our complementary styles are definitely one of the key factors in our success,"** says Éric. What's more, their pioneering vision gives them a multi-year advantage over their potential competitors.

An inspirational uncle

The brothers' decision to explore the life sciences field was no coincidence. The healthcare sector experience they acquired as teenagers was a decisive factor in their career choices. Their uncle, Dr. André Dupont, head clinician at Laval University Hospital Centre, was involved in a discovery involving a prostate cancer treatment. **"Clearly we were ambitious. Plus working with our uncle at 15 years old was a huge inspiration,"** says Luc.

Taking to Quebec City

The Duponts have launched companies that have flourished around the world - but their hearts remain in Quebec! **"We're definitely very attached to Quebec City, which has all of the advantages of a major urban centre and none of the downside. That means we can always find skilled and talented people for our various teams."**

Assisting the next generation

The Dupont brothers are not just business owners; they are also involved in mentoring and assisting the next generation of entrepreneurs. In the 17 years since they founded Æterna Zentaris, they have certainly learned a few things about starting a business from scratch! Back in 1991, Luc and Éric were 20-something university grads with no money, no experience and no credibility! "If you don't have those three crucial things when you're starting out, it's very hard. You need to be really daring and more than a little naïve. But we were lucky to have our supporters, including mentors who advised us on how to avoid major errors that could have wiped us out overnight. Today we're actively involved and we help out when we can. We know how important it is to have high-calibre people around the table!"

Builders

The Dupont brothers are not traditional businessmen. Their goal is not to control the destiny of their companies until their dying day; instead, they build new businesses, make sure they're on the right track and then hand over the reins. "We know what our strengths and weaknesses are. When a company reaches a certain critical mass, a different management style is called for. You need a surer hand. And that's where the professionals come in. Management is not really our area of expertise. Our talent lies in articulating a vision for a project and turning it into a concrete reality. Both of us like building world-class companies!"

Visionaries

The launch of the brothers' latest venture is further proof of their pioneering vision. Nowadays, people are living longer and are increasingly concerned about their appearance. With this market in mind, Luc and Éric developed an innovative line of products, known as IDC(tm), designed to counteract the main signs of skin aging.

As they did in 1991, the brothers started afresh in 2007. This time around, though, they didn't totally start from scratch: they're no longer in their 20s and now have extensive experience – not to mention financing, contacts and credibility! IDC(tm) is already gracing store shelves in France and Japan, and the Quebec launch is slated for January 2009. "We're starting over again. And we'll see what happens. This is our project for the next 10 years and we plan on making it into a huge success."

You may well be thinking: not another anti-wrinkle cream! In fact, IDC(tm) counteracts all causes and consequences of skin aging, not just wrinkles. It's not like a standard cosmetic that promises to conceal the ravages of time. It's a cosmeceutical, a new term derived from "cosmetic" and "pharmaceutical". So the miracle product that everyone's been waiting may well have been invented in Quebec City! The IDC(tm) line consists of five patented anti-aging products.

To be sure, the Dupont brothers have always been visionaries with impeccable timing and a long track record of success. In 1991, they were among the very few people working in the future-oriented medical biotechnology field. They then continued their pioneering efforts in the area of nutritional and nutraceutical supplements. "We believed that preventive medicine would eventually become the standard approach. And that was 15 years before anyone else! Time proved us right."

Cécile Gladel



Québec
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The economic development agency

