



FRANK MATHIS

The CEO of a family business in Muttersholtz, with strong historic roots, Frank Mathis is bringing youth and revitalisation to the region of Alsace Lorraine.

Wood is the only building material that is naturally renewable. All that wood needs is sun and water, it's magic! It's a gift from God, a material that has already saved humanity with Noah's ark, Frank Mathis says of the material around which his business is based.

He took over the family business from his father in 1999. At the time, Frank Mathis saw the disastrous financial consequences of the Kanak construction site of Jean-Marie Tijibaou in New Caledonia, one of president Francois Mitterand's *big projects*. He concentrated on the reconstruction of the business. With some success afterwards, the 190 strong company practically doubled its numbers, and ten years later, in 2009, had a turnover of 40 million euros. Frank Mathis has seen several years of growth in double-figures, except of course in 2009.



I wanted to take a more collegial direction, I am very open with the employees, including at the work's council. In 1999, we didn't have a research department or work agencies. I created all that, and people looked at me strangely sometimes.

What's not to say that everything is sub-contracted, and that the business, known for its participation in the reconstruction of Haut-Koenigsbourg is content to be the middleman? Frank Mathis doesn't want this. *By dint of sub-contracting, one becomes nothing! We need to be close to our clients, on the construction site, and at the same time invest in ways of production that have become very capital.*

In Frank Mathis' eyes, after a decade of being in control, the biggest issue he has experienced has been the transmission of the business from his father: *I hesitated, I wanted to travel, I felt like working somewhere else, I would rather have been in logging,* says the graduate of Mouchard Wood School, and Saint-Dié business school. *I don't think I was a great pupil,* he smiles. Nonetheless, he responded to his father's wish to pass on the family business. *The succession went very well, while my father had been in a more difficult situation.*

Being the head of a business is a job that Frank Mathis describes as *thrilling but hard*. He openly defends his secrets for a balanced lifestyle: family, reading, evenings at the theatre, and sport. *I would like to have a normal family life... I need balance, to find resources. We are in a field that requires you to use your imagination. And it's up to me to find new ideas.*