

STRUCTURING THOUGHTS



Our activities
during 2007
in a nutshell



SINCE GENEVIÈVE JOINED PRINCIPLÆ just over a year ago, many of you have asked her what exactly she has been up to or asked Jean-luc how the business has evolved with Geneviève on board. Others of you have called upon us for a specific activity and are curious about how else we might help them. As a first step towards answering these questions, we are recapitulating in these few pages our activities in 2007 and providing a glimpse of the various projects in our pipeline.

As anticipated, Geneviève's wide-ranging financial background was instrumental in developing our business in the banking and insurance world, with exciting new projects and training for several Fortis companies and for PricewaterhouseCoopers, next to our now well-established sessions for Fortis and others.

The research and development world remains a strong focus, too, in line with Jean-luc's own background. This year again, we trained scientists and engineers at universities, companies, and governmental research centers—in Europe and overseas.

For 2008, we are eager to maintain the high level of quality and dependability you have grown to expect from the two of us in everything we do. We wish you every success in the new year!

Handwritten signatures in blue ink. The signature on the left reads 'Geneviève' and the signature on the right reads 'Jean-luc'.

Geneviève CASTERMAN
Founding partner

Jean-luc DOUMONT
Founding partner



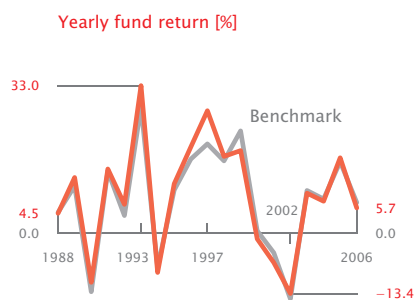
Effective communication

In line with Jean-luc's successful activities of the last 15 years, we ran many training sessions on effective oral presentations, written documents, and graphical displays. In these sessions, ranging from half-day workshops to multiple-day programs, participants liked the interactive approach, focus on structure, and customization, resulting in readily applicable guidelines.

Launched in 2006 under the name *Getting the message across*, our transversal approach to effective communication (cutting across oral, written, and visual channels) elicited much interest in 2007, especially for managers who may be unable to invest time in a full-fledged program on presentations or documents. By working closely with the client, analyzing sample material, or interviewing candidate participants, we could thus develop compact sessions—intensive and particularly rich in learning.

Example of our training audiences in 2007 included engineers from Ion Beam Applications (IBA), engineering students (both undergrad and graduate) at the universities of Louvain, Mons and Liège, postdocs at the Flanders Institute for Biotechnology, researchers at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (USA), and the management of Fortis Audit Services worldwide.

An example of graphical display created for a client in April 2007.



Return minus benchmark



Next to training people, we created communication materials (slides, documents, and graphs), coached individual speakers for specific events, accompanied projects, and advised clients. Our clients in 2007 appreciated our tightly integrated approach, allowing us to deliver high-quality near-final material early on, as well as our combination of deep communication expertise and broad subject-matter knowledge in science and in finance, allowing us to be on the same wavelength from the very start.

Among new projects in 2007, accompanying tender processes for PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) has enabled us to discover one of the “big four” audit firms from the inside, while helping Fortis Insurance Belgium with their yearly information event for brokers had us work with Belgian TV hosts and reporters. On an anecdotal note, Geneviève's “claim to fame” for 2007 is coaching singer Plastic Bertrand in saying a few words in Dutch.

Statistical thinking



Created in 2004 for Fortis Corporate Insurance, our program *Dice, cards, and insurances* turned out to be much demanded. Using group discussion, case studies, and actual dice throws (but hardly any mathematical formula), it helps underwriters and other insurance professionals develop correct reasoning and figure out a meaningful technical premium for a given risk, thus addressing an acute need for a more rigorous approach to corporate insurance, yet one that is usable in daily practice.

In 2007, we trained professionals from insurance companies in the Benelux, France, Germany, and Denmark. In early 2008, we will run a mixed session in the Netherlands for underwriters from Nassau Verzekeringen and insurance brokers from Marsh.

Invited presentations

An example of illogical sign use, found at Chicago O’Hare airport: this “wrong way” sign is actually meant for the opposite direction.



As many of you know well, Jean-luc built himself a reputation as an articulate, entertaining, and thought-provoking speaker, always popular at top universities and conferences worldwide. Given his sabbatical in 2007, he restricted his speaking tours of graduate engineering schools in the USA to the top three (at MIT, Stanford, and UC Berkeley) and to Harvard University, but will accommodate requests from more campuses in 2008.

Invitations to deliver keynote addresses or special sessions in 2007 had us travel “half-way around the globe,” from Spain to its antipode—New Zealand. Communication conferences often request graphical topics, with sessions on page layout or visual structure and a well-received new one on road signs. Scientific conferences increasingly ask us for sessions as well, such as the talks Jean-luc gave to “Women in Nanoscience”—a welcome change from his usual male-dominated audiences.

Perspectives for 2008

As usual, our pipeline starts to fill reasonably long in advance: our calendar is almost fully booked for the first half of 2008 and training dates beginning to crystallize for the second half.

Talks by Jean-luc Doumont		Principiaë	
Upcoming events		Structuring thoughts	
The following events have already been confirmed (and more are in the planning, please check back).		Activities	
		People	
		Clients	
		News	
		Talks	
		Papers	Upcoming
			Past
		FAQs	
		About	
		Contact	

Date	Event
29 Jan	Making the most of your presentation MIT, Boston, MA
29 Jan	Making the most of your presentation Harvard U, Boston, MA
30 Jan	Structuring your scientific paper MIT, Boston, MA

For a list of our upcoming talks or for more general information about us, we invite you to visit us on the Web at www.principiaë.be.

The first months of the new year will see us on the road again, with confirmed assignments across Europe (Rotterdam, Paris, Strasbourg, Barcelona), in South America (Santiago de Chile), and in the United States (Boston, Chicago, Atlanta, San Diego). These assignments range from 90-minute invited presentations to week-long training programs with homework. They cover scientific communication, statistical thinking, or page layout.

Closer to home, we will again run our now traditional sessions in scientific communication for various Belgian universities (Gent, Louvain, Mons) and are discussing possible new ones in Mons and Liège. We have also received renewed demands for similar sessions at the Flanders Institute for Biotechnology, at Virco and Tibotec (part of Johnson and Johnson), and at IBA.

As for the banking and insurance business, we have started a large-scale project to improve communications within Axa, are discussing training options with PricewaterhouseCoopers, and are exploring various possibilities with other companies.

The insistent requests from several clients for immediate help in the first half of 2007 afforded us interesting opportunities, but severely infringed on the sabbatical Jean-luc had planned. As a result, his long-awaited book on effective communication is not ready yet. It remains high in our priorities for next year.



It is never too early to contact us with a project or just an idea. Our planning indeed fills up fast, and experience demonstrates that early involvement on our part leads to better deliverables. We are always happy to listen, to help you clarify your needs, and to search with you for meaningful ways to address them. Get in touch with us at +32 2 757 26 36 or info@principiaë.be.

