



May – June 2007

This newsletter is also available online at:

<http://www.essecusa.com/newsletter/newsletter.htm>

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ESSEC Centenary – New York October 6 – 8

Very Important Message from our President [Anne stone](#) and Vice-President of Events [Daniel Schimmel](#)

Dear ESSEC friends,

We are in the process of organizing ESSEC's 100th anniversary celebration in New York. This celebration will be held during the Columbus Day week-end, October 6-8, 2007. In order to make sure that there are enough hotel rooms available for everyone during this busy week-end, we need your urgent input on the form below. As soon as we have a clear idea of how many families plan to attend, we will be in a position to suggest hotels and a price range for the rooms. **We need your response by June 1st.**

The following program is still subject to change, but this should give you a good idea of the activities that we have planned:

Saturday October 6, 2007

[12:30-2:00 pm] Lunch at the offices of Calyon for all ESSEC alumni in the United States and their spouses/partners

[2:00-4:00 pm] Panel discussion

[4:00- approx. 5:00 pm] Recent developments at ESSEC by Pierre Tapie

[6:00 - approx. 8:00 pm] Reception at Van Cleef & Arpels

Sunday October 7, 2007

Day: Brunch at a clubhouse (1-hour drive outside New York)

Evening: Broadway show, concert TBD.

We will offer several baby sitting and child care options for the participants on Saturday (which will be available from 12:30 pm to 8:00 pm) and Sunday evening. We will send you further information about the program and the costs.

Monday October 8, 2007 TBD

We hope that you can join us

Please fill in the questionnaire below and RSVP [Jordan Parmast](#) by June 1st:

1. I will definitely attend. ____.
I will probably attend. _____. (specify expected confirmation date)
I will not attend. ____.
2. I will attend alone. ____.
I will attend with a companion/family. _____. (specify total number of adults, of children)
3. I will need baby sitting services. _____. (specify number and age of children)
I will need lodging. _____. (specify total number of rooms and beds)



100
1907-2007
ESSEC

*Fêtons nos 100 ans..
et notre avenir ensemble !*



Le week-end de célébration des 100 ans de notre école approche !

Voici un avant goût du programme de ces événements :

Vendredi 1er juin

A Cergy, de 15h30 à 18h30

Colloque international sur les enjeux croisés, européens et asiatiques, face à la mondialisation, suivi d'un cocktail avec les membres de l'International Advisory Board de L'ESSEC.

Samedi 2 juin

A Cergy, dès 10h

Visite des nouvelles installations de Cergy, suivie de rencontres en amphi avec vos "Augustes Professeurs" suivi de l'inauguration des nouveaux bâtiments en présence des autorités politiques.

Après une "pique-nique party", les étudiants ont préparé un après-midi ludique de rencontres et de compétitions jusqu'à 16h30.

A Paris, dès 20 h

Grande soirée de Gala du Centenaire, au Carrousel du Louvre, animée par de nombreux talents ESSEC.

Pour le Gala uniquement,

Inscription en ligne sur www.essecnet.com

ou www.essec100ans.fr ou par retour des invitations, cette semaine dans vos boîtes aux lettres !



Partenaires privilégiés du Centenaire

<http://www.essec100ans.fr/>

Venez nombreux : ESSEC USA Alumni vous a réservé des tables !

ESSEC USA FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

The first USA Fundraising Campaign closed May 15th with a total of \$ 243,000 pledged or collected through the generous contribution of 43 of our members.

The Board of Directors of ESSEC Business School Alumni Association was enthusiastic about these results and confirmed its decision to build the ESSEC USA Amphitheater on the Cergy Campus.

The gift made to ESSEC will be acknowledged by the School through:

- a brass plaque on the ESSEC USA Amphitheater bearing the name of all donors
- an invitation to the opening ceremony June 2 extended to all donors
- publications in ESSEC Reflets Magazine as well as www.essecnet.com

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO THE ESSEC USA FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN!



Upcoming events



www.aagef.org

Association des Amis des Grandes Écoles de France, AAGEF

Under the sponsorship of ESCP-EAP and INSEAD

An Update on the Pharmaceutical Industry: Boom or Bust?

Tuesday May 22, 2007 at 6:15 PM

Location: McKinsey & Co, 21st Floor, 55 East 52nd Street, New York, NY 10022

Time: Door opening at 6:15 p.m. - Panel discussion at 6:30 pm followed by a cocktail reception

Program:

Welcome: Anne Stone, President of AAGEF

Panelists: Jean-Paul Valles, former Vice-Chairman of Pfizer, Pierre Albouy, Managing Director of M&A, Rothschild Inc., Frank Verwiël, Axcan, Daniel Teper, Managing Director, Bionest Partners

Registration Fee: On line registration: \$15 for AAGEF, INSEAD and NYBSA members, \$25 non-members. No same day registration. Registration: <http://aagefpharma.eventbrite.com>

Please reserve in advance as seating is limited. Only registered participants will be allowed access to the building. Additional information: Celine.PerrotJohnson@viacom.com

Profils d'Entrepreneurs

Après le succès de l'événement de mai 2006 avec Michel Berty, nous avons le plaisir de vous proposer un second volet dédié au bio-médical, sous le titre :

"Something From Nothing"

- **Panélistes** : Jerry Sanders (auteur de "Something From Nothing", voir l'étude de cas de la Harvard Business School qui porte son nom www.sfsmed.com), Rémi Barbier (CEO de Pain Therapeutics Nasdaq: PTIE)

- La rencontre est ouverte à d'autres panélistes du domaine bio-médical

- **date proposée** : 14 novembre 2007

- **lieu** : à définir

Afin d'organiser cet événement dans les meilleures conditions, merci de bien vouloir confirmer votre intérêt directement à [Jabril Bensedrine](mailto:Jabril.Bensedrine) ou [Daniel Schimmel](mailto:Daniel.Schimmel) d'ici au 15 juin.



West Coast vs. East Coast battle: Competing ESSEC Alumni Events May 11th

Los Angeles – TGIF cocktail at the very hype Standard Hotel Downtown
Herve Blanquart, Gerald Maestu and Stanislas Debreu

New York Spice Lunch – at the very French La Mangeoire Restaurant

Jean-Xavier Barthelemy, Jabril Bensedrine, Lucie Campos, Guillaume Dovillers, Claude Draillard, Carole Gourmelon, Mai Khanh, Alexandra Lauvaux, David Rigaud, Anne Stone, Sylvia Naumann

Thanks to all who made it to the Standard Hotel or La Mangeoire (a couple of whom are captured on the picture below) last Friday.

To those who could not make it on either coast, this is what you missed: nice atmosphere, good cocktails and food... last but not least: good old ESSEC camaraderie. New York participants also reveled in American ESSEC Centenary events plotting!

**Be sure to join the next Cocktail Hours and Spice Lunches:
THE MORE ESSEC ALUMNI, THE MERRIER**



[Job Forum](#)

[Job Database:](#) See all job offers registered at AAGEF on <http://www.aagef.com/jobs/offerDetail.php?offId=59>

- Only those ESSEC alumni having paid their dues will be granted access to the web site. They must use the e-mail address provided by ESSEC: (in French) Sur le site <http://essecnet.alumni.essec.fr>, entrer son code d'accès, puis "mise a jour de la fiche annuelle" puis "update e-mails". Entrer l'adresse e-mail vers laquelle on souhaite faire suivre le courrier. Cela génère une adresse au format "prenom.nom@alumni.essec.fr" et fait suivre tout courrier. Contact: webmaster@essecmde.com ou 01 56 91 20 20.
To publish a job or internship offer, please e-mail [Anne stone](mailto:Anne.stone@essecmde.com).

[Job research:](#)

[Laure Cristofoli](#), young ESSEC MBA graduate willing to start her professional life in New York in the retail or marketing field.
: [resume](#)

[Marie Kennel](#), young professional, looking for a job in marketing or sales in New York City, holding a L2 work visa: [resume](#)

[Contact the ESSEC USA Chapters:](#)

- [Chicago](#) – Damien Zinck
- [Miami](#) – Ovidiu Sofronia
- [Los Angeles](#) – Stanislas Debreu
- [San Francisco](#) – Olivier Poissonier

[Contact the Newsletter Editors:](#) Gwarlann de Kerviler & Sylvia Naumann at newslettereditors@gmail.com



Interview of the Month: Eric Di Benedetto – ESSEC 89

Q1: Tell us about your background and current job?

I have been an investor in software start-ups for the last 16 years. After graduating from ESSEC in June, 1989, I left for the United States two days later. A first professional experience with an American investment bank in Paris had helped me conclude that if I wanted to learn as much as I could about the industry I was in and reach positions of responsibility early in my career, I would have to spend some time in the US. I went from M&A with Bankers Trust – now Deutsche Bank- in Europe to funding buy-outs with a subsidiary of the Pargesa Group in the US. Once I learned the ropes of financial engineering and how to structure a transaction, I decided to get out of the financial routine and into the stimulating environment of technology innovation. I had always found that field extremely motivating and challenging, both intellectually and from a leadership and management point of view. The merchant banking arm of BNP Paribas gave me a chance to get into venture capital in 1991. I started managing their joint partnership with Robertson Stephens & Co. in San Francisco in 1991. We made some great investments in technology companies either started in the US, or which moved to the US after a successful start in Europe. Five years into it and a few successful public offerings and M&A transactions later, I founded my own venture capital firm with two other partners in 1997. Some early successes in the first wave of the internet catapulted us into the big league. I was profiled in both Business Week and the European in 1998. We continued on with more achievements for a few years. Then we got hit with the crash of 2000, the “nuclear winter” in technology that followed September 11 and various corporate scandals. In 2003, I started funding some remarkable entrepreneurs I had worked with before with my own resources. Almost four years later, my new firm, Active Starts www.activestarts.com, has become one of the strongest professional angel investment firms for California-based software start-ups.

Q2: Why did you decide to come and stay here?

Interestingly, I had never been to the US before my first job here. Although I was used to the Anglo-Saxon working environment of Bankers Trust in Paris, I was full of the typical prejudices against the US that most young Europeans exhibited in the 1980s. I came to the US for professional reasons. I stayed because I found overall fulfillment in a culture of empowerment and initiatives that empowers the best from all over the world. People still come to this part of the world, specifically the San Francisco Bay Area, from all over in order to pursue opportunities. This rich mosaic of cultures has led to the most open-minded society on the planet. You never think that anything is not doable. My career took off, my prejudices proved narrow-minded and false, and I definitely found happiness and fulfillment in many ways here.

Q3: What advice would you give to ESSEC graduates who would like to come to work here?

Most importantly, a leg-up in working in an Anglo-Saxon environment in Europe with a “brand name” company will help climb the leaning curve. Most employers are reluctant to hire people and transfer them to a different environment. Also, this international experience has to be acquired before the age of 30. Our ability to adjust to a different culture definitely goes down after the age of 30. Two successful years in Europe within a US company is a good first step after ESSEC. Then, a young graduate should exhibit some early success and a considerable drive to either find a job in the US, or apply to one of many quality business schools in the US. Although a US job is not easy to get because of all the restrictions and stringent selection between candidates, it is possible as ten of thousands of graduates demonstrate every year.

Q4: How do you think your ESSEC background helped you?

The ESSEC environment and curriculum after the classic French education based on competition, merit and critical thinking perfectly prepared me to learn a lot of new things early as a self-starter, always strive to excel and challenge the conventional wisdom. What the French education system lacks in training in verbal expression and hyper-specialization – two traits traditionally valued very highly in the US corporate environment -, can be addressed through the sense of initiative and intellectual power that it promotes and that are so indispensable in the knowledge economy of the 21st century. At some point in my education at ESSEC I realized that I was the one who had to build something with all the tools I had been provided with, that there was no guarantee, do your best, hope for the best and be grateful.

Q5: What do you consider as your role in the ESSEC family?

The adoption of social networking technology should help ESSEC and other French Grandes Ecoles graduates harness the power of their collective knowledge, skills, talents and relationships to play a bigger role in the global knowledge economy. There are still very few ESSEC graduates in many decision making centers around the world. While it is very challenging to play any role physically on the ground without much of a critical mass of graduates there, the collective wisdom and energy of our network can be used as an amazing resource digitally thanks to the use of social networking platforms such as LinkedIn www.linkedin.com or VisiblePath www.visiblepath.com. We have a latent ESSEC ecosystem that could be leveraged and opened to other schools to emphasize the critical thinking aptitude so key in successful approaching and addressing the key challenges of the future...

Thank you Eric!