



INVENTING THE FUTURE

DATASHEET 2 - 2002/2003

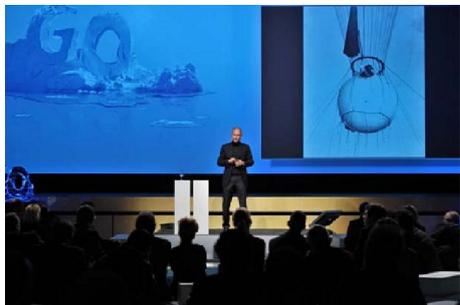
THE CHALLENGES



Conference at EPFL

Feasibility study at EPFL

In 2002, after discussing his project with energy and aerospace specialists, Bertrand Piccard presented it to the *Ecole Polytechnique Federale de Lausanne* (EPFL). Together they launched a feasibility study in 2003, managed by André Borschberg, engineer and former Swiss air force pilot. A first multidisciplinary team was formed from members of various EPFL laboratories. Four years after landing with Breitling Orbiter 3 in the Egyptian desert, Bertrand Piccard could finally see the vision of a solar aircraft take shape.



Bertrand Piccard in a conference

Bertrand Piccard as the President of Solar Impulse

Thanks to the partnership with EPFL, the Solar Impulse project was officially launched on November 28, 2003. Bertrand Piccard and André Borschberg, whose personalities and skills complement each other perfectly, decided to create a partnership. Bertrand Piccard is the President and initiator of Solar Impulse. He is the one who embodies the philosophy of the project. He travels around the globe, meeting industrialists and well-known personalities from the world of economics, finance and politics. Whenever he can, he outlines the challenges that Solar Impulse addresses: reducing our dependence on fossil fuels and investing in new technologies to better exploit renewable energy. In this way the Solar Impulse President raises the necessary funding to complete the project.



André Borschberg

André Borschberg as the CEO

For his part, André Borschberg is CEO of Solar Impulse. His job has been to put together the technical team and oversee the construction of the aircraft. Initially, the team looked at several possibilities. Why not an airship? Why not an airship-airplane hybrid? Very soon it became clear that a solar aircraft was by far the best solution. The engineers engaged on the Solar Impulse project already know that, to fly only on solar energy, night and day, this plane would need to be both very large and very light. Something unprecedented in the history of aviation.