

Although I should start by commenting on the explosion in the lead price early this year, I will both as a customer and a consumer, only give this strong warning to those of the lead industry and trade who took part in what many of us thought was pure manipulation: Don't do this again!

So I come right to my main point. In my opinion, two key words should determine our entrepreneurial action: responsibility and change.

You — scientists, engineers, managers — constantly develop and change by your work products, technologies and the environment. You are dealing with materials and products that can, on the one hand, be beneficial — even crucial and vital — to our society and our civilization; on the other hand, if not dealt with properly, these materials and products are considered by the public to be potentially hazardous to the health of people and to the environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us prove offensively in our research and daily work, that *we* accept the responsibility for the consequences of our decisions and actions; and that we do not, for instance, develop products and processes without assuring the recycleability and a safe treatment of any by-product. We all must be aware that we as managers, scientists and companies can only exist by *public consent!*

This means that before we concentrate on maximizing profit, we have to do our homework in fields like product safety, product liability and environmental protection — both inside and outside our plants.

Some weeks ago, a top manager of a European automobile manufacturer told me that the car battery would be a trivial product. It could not contribute to improve car sales, could be made by cheap and uncomplicated low-tech processes, and at low cost.

The programme of this meeting and the great number of experts who take part in it, however, tell another story. Without your research and achievements, further progress in improving the safety, performance and comfort of cars appears to be limited.

I would like to thank the Lead Development Association and the Centre d'Information du Plomb for organizing this Conference.

So, we not only have a chance to exchange information and ideas, but also to demonstrate the importance of our industry which is aware of the priorities and accepts the challenges thrown down by the public and our customers.

Claus Zoellner
Hoppecke
Brilon 2
F.R.G.