

CONFRONTATION

He seems like a very friendly man. Someone who remains himself at every moment and in every situation. Never panic. When he talks, he constantly plays with his glasses that are on the table. And when he stands or walks, it is almost always with his hands in his pockets. During a conversation there is constant contact with the eyes. A conversation does not last longer than necessary. It is valued based on the position. The so-called "small talk" does not suit him. But when he talks about the people of Tektronix, you feel the value he gives to these people. Then he smiles broadly, then he is like the eldest of the family. Earl Wantland; a portrait of the president' about his person, his position and about the future of Tektronix Heerenveen.

When Earl Wantland came 20 years ago as the first director of the new branch to be built in Heerenveen, people from the press who could not get enough of the staggering numbers asked Earl; how many people come to work here? Earl raised a finger and replied; 1. "And then we will expand." After he returned to the United States, he visited Heerenveen almost every year.

"Still, during the party I thought about the past more than ever," says Earl Wantland. "Especially because I met people again with whom I worked initially. I have powerful memories of that time. We couldn't get enough of it. And when I see this now, it is almost unbelievable that there used to be a piece of pasture here."

Everyone had high expectations of Tektronix Heerenveen. Expectations too high sometimes. Earl Wantland "Numbers were thrown around that it was no longer beautiful. We ourselves had no figures at all, except that Heerenveen seemed a favorable place. Tektronix grew incredibly fast during those years, so we had to constantly adapt our organization. For example, transferring all financial development to Guernsey was one of those measures."

After Earl returned to the United States, he was deployed again shortly thereafter. This time to Japan where he was heavily involved in setting up a new company. "Completely different from Heerenveen. We have started a new factory in collaboration with Sony."

FUTURE

According to Earl Wantland, Tektronix Heerenveen has fully met expectations. "We also believe in America that this subsidiary has been a successful operation. The quality of the products made here is excellent. Productivity is also reasonable and improving. Heerenveen has every opportunity for the future. The knowledge and experience that people have built up here is of enormous value. Especially with a view to the future. The Western world can only maintain its current level of prosperity if it continues to produce.

More production with fewer people. The technology, automation and new products. People will have to constantly engage in intensive training programs to keep up. If we are not aware of this, we will eventually notice it in our prosperity. That awareness does not have to come with the whip of a slave driver. No, we'll have to see that for ourselves.

Does that mean that fewer people will work at Tektronix ? “No, we will have to produce more with the people we have.” Heerenveen used to have its own development department. Why was it canceled?

Sometimes Earl Wantland waits a while before answering. But then the sentences also come out neatly formulated. “A development department requires major investments. The equipment you need is very expensive. Tektronix already has a Technology Group for that reason. That group works with very expensive lines of communication to the coordinator.

We can then immediately assess the value of a study and continue or stop it. The people who work in this group function as optimally as possible. This is only possible if you coordinate things well. In Heerenveen the distance to the USA was a handicap. There was plenty to be invented here, but it was of little use to us. That is also the reason why we closed the development department.

Another important point is that we have to put a lot of effort into getting people who can do this work. We tow them all over the world. We have people from all kinds of functionalities. For example: the group's coordinator, vice president and director of technology , is the Dutchman Wim Velsink.

BUILDING BLOCKS

You have now been president of Tektronix for 10 years , how does it feel to occupy such a high position? “Yes...how does that feel?” He looks at me and that friendly smile again. “In the end you don't think about it anymore. Let's see, how did I experience that then... I believe that I am happy with all the work I do and for which I have been given the opportunity. Look, you don't do it alone. I didn't make this building. I didn't lay the bricks...I just contributed a little to getting it there now. And now as president of Tektronix, I sometimes feel the weight on your shoulders... Not always...but sometimes.”

He is silent for a moment and then; “It's a big family for me.”

“A lot of people have the wrong idea of what I do. They think I'm just sitting behind the desk making decisions. You should see my function as coordinating. The broad outlines arrive on my desk. I talk about that with people. People I depend on. So it is an essential part of my job that there are good people in key positions. In addition, you sometimes have to delve into details. A day largely consists of consultations, meetings, making plans, checking and assigning responsibility to people. The human factor is particularly important. They can make mistakes. You have to know that and take it into account. But people...they are indispensable.

Tektronix 's growth came to a standstill after years of upward trend. “In terms of technology, Tektronix is still one of the leading companies. The Japanese haven't caught up with us yet. But, we have to be careful. We will have to look for methods to achieve greater production.” Earl Wantland dismisses the comment that people in Europe often speak negatively about the economic situation. “Yes, the more negative people are, the worse things go. After all, people get what they deserve. Throughout history you see that people with courage and inventiveness always succeed.

Sometimes I feel like people don't realize their own importance. And I can't get enough of saying; do your job, because you are important too. And that goes for the man at the top. But also for people

who work in the production workshop. Because all parts have to work. Tektronix owes its good name to this. Namely that all parts interact flawlessly.