



AQUATECH

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Industrial Leaders Forum yesterday

Industrial leaders focus on water

The well-attended Industrial Leaders Forum heard moderator Menno Holterman, the CEO of Nijhuis Industries, explain that 'for industry, water is becoming their licence to produce'.

He added that during the preparations for the event, the captains of industry involved had unanimously proposed to send their sustainability directors. 'Not because they were no longer interested, but because all of the major water users are implementing ways to reduce their water footprint,' he explained.

Rabobank's Managing Director of Sustainable Business Development, Daan Dijk, noted that there is a significant latent demand for more money to implement water efficient technologies. He also outlined the need for a 'hard-nosed' approach to sustainability based on quantitative figures.

He explained that 'big brands' have three reasons for undertaking sustainability – costs, changing legislation and

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Menno Holterman,
moderating the Industrial
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consumers. Companies are generally ahead of legislation today, he noted, adding: 'Consumers are getting more critical. It is getting more and more easy to get information on products.'

Akzo Nobel Head of Eco-Efficiency and Sustainable Growth, Martijn Kruisweg, echoed an observation of Mr Dijk's, saying: 'Investments in growth often win over investments in resource efficiency.'

He observed that more and more companies are seeing the benefits in investing in eco-efficiency, and added: 'It does definitely pay off, but making the decisions is not easy.' ●

PIPEFITTING COMPETITION TROPHY AWARD TODAY

The Watnetwork Pipefitting Competition will be taking place today between 10.00 and 16.00 hrs at the pipefitting competition floor, Booth 07.540.

Men's teams from six companies will compete for the honour of achieving the World Water Cup of Drilling and Tapping, with the trophy being presented at 15.35 hrs. Teams have been competing for the national and world title during Aquatech Amsterdam. The competition, sponsored by the Royal Association for Drinking Water Supply in the Netherlands, has also included company management teams.



IWW young professionals event yesterday

Bridging the generation gap

The Young Water Professionals' session on 'Bridging the generation gap' got off to a lively start yesterday with a determination to fulfil the aim of the title.

Questions from the audience were put to a panel of three – Sarah Dickin of the University of Canada and retiring Young Water Professional Ambassador, Agnes Maenhout, the managing director of the Wateropleidingen academy, and Henk Nieboer, director of consultant Willevoen + Bos.

Ms Dickin began by confirming the existence of a generation gap, noting one issue being that 'at events people tend to stay in their groups'. Mr Nieboer added that 'one of the things you don't realise when you become a director is that there is an imaginary door that is always closed, even when your door is open'. He encouraged young professionals to approach the older generation, reassuring them that 'we are just ordinary people'.

Questions from the audience touched on reliance on old knowledge,



soon as possible, and Ms Maenhout encouraged young professionals to go to management. 'Nobody will throw you out of the window,' she joked.

The event moved forward with breakout sessions focusing on different areas of the world discussing the particular issues that they face. These included the observation that there are more gaps than generational ones – there are gaps between the sexes – in salaries, the latter forcing young people out of the sector and into others, such as oil.

Another issue reported is a lack of opportunity for work experience in some areas, which is creating a 'brain drain', and the breakout session moderators also highlighted the need for young water professionals to make their own opportunities and develop 'soft' skills such as communication as well as technical expertise.

The meeting closed with participants being asked to create and score suggestions, the best of which are to be put forward to the organising committee, and the creation by all of those present of a symbolic Lego bridge.

Moderator and Saxion University course director Hans Haaselt said: 'What is really nice about an event like this with so many young people is that they bring so much energy.' ●



the reason why the generation gap exists, how to implement the ideas from the session, whether the issue was a challenge or a problem, and barriers to progress.

Observations from the panel included the need for the generations to find somewhere in the middle to compromise. Mr Nieboer spoke about the need to empower young people as



**Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz
International Prize for Water**