

Graduation Speech – Barcelona Graduate School of Economics By Josep Mateu, president of FemCAT and general manager of RACC

It is a pleasure for me to join you in such a special day, the graduation day of the class of 2009 of the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics.

It is a pleasure to be able to speak in this special setting. The building that hosts us today, Casa Milà, was designed by one of the geniuses that Catalonia has given the world, Antoni Gaudí. Gaudí, who died in 1926, was an architect and an artist who designed many of the buildings that are now visited by people from all over the world and that give Barcelona one of its most unique features. When it was built, between 1906 and 1910, this building was highly controversial. It was given a nickname by which it is still known, "La Pedrera", The Quarry, because people compared its façade with unpolished rocks. Gaudí was a genius and an entrepreneur; and like many geniuses he was in advance of his time and misunderstood by many. Thankfully, many people like Pere Milà, who commissioned this building, or Eusebi Güell, who was Gaudí's friend and benefactor, understood his art and gave him the possibility to work and leave the future generations, us, with buildings as beautiful as this.

This is a celebration of the merits achieved and the work done along this year, and of the first step towards your personal future and your contribution to the community you are part of.

When I was asked to make the closure speech at the graduation of this class, it gave me a special feeling inside.

First I remembered my own graduation, back in 1978. Then I thought about my professional career, my good decisions and my mistakes, and I said to myself: "I'm not sure if I'll know how to do it", because I'm a person of actions rather than words. But if my experience can be useful to only one of you, who are graduating today, I'm sure it will be worth it.

Currently, in addition to my professional career, I have the honour of being Chairman at FEMCAT, a Private Foundation of 100 businessmen and Senior Managers which was created some five years ago, with the aim of promoting, carrying out and supporting initiatives that will be useful for the progress of Catalonia in the medium term.

At FEMCAT, we work with our children in mind, thinking about the generations to come, and following the words of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who said *"Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country"*.

So, therefore, we are people who devote time to our jobs but also want to devote time to our country, to our community. Speaking with true humbleness, we define ourselves as "patriots".

We are united by the passion for language, our way to do things, our values.

I'm making this introduction, because the histories of the Barcelona School of Economics and the FEMCAT have been closely linked. In fact, we were directly involved in the creation of this school.

Andreu Mas-Colell, an entrepreneur, had the idea, the opportunity and part of the funding to carry it out. The only thing he needed was the realization, a business plan. He came to FEMCAT, and this is how a team was created, made-up of the entrepreneur and the specialists, the executives, who helped him to put the project on paper, drawing up the Business Plan.

Thanks to this team work and to the shared view, it became possible to get the rest of the funding and thus a project took shape, with a great professional team and talented students that make our school better day after day.

I consider it a beautiful metaphor, entrepreneurship understood as team work. If an entrepreneur had not had the idea, nothing would have happened. But if a team of managers and businessmen, with their compromise as citizens, had not given shape to the idea, probably nothing would have happened either.

Going back now to Antoni Gaudí, his name is known by many, as well as the name of his benefactor Eusebi Güell. Together they built Park Güell, which I am sure you have visited. What is not so widely known is that Güell was also a technological innovator. He founded Companyia General d'Asfalts i Portland Asland, a company that is still making and selling cement and concrete today. He brought Portland cement, more solid than what was being used here at the time, and pre-fabricated cement vaults to Catalonia: the first prefabricated cement vaults ever used in Catalonia are still holding in Park Güell. So, once again we see that genius and teamwork need each other to succeed. Probably, if Güell had not made them possible through technology, some of the curved lines that we see today would not have been possible outside Gaudí's head.

Based on the education you have just received and your own personal profile, some of you, who are graduating today, will be entrepreneurs and others will be executives. To make projects like this real you will have to combine both. You will have to be able to share the vision of the entrepreneurs, to get thrilled with the ideas and to use your capabilities, efforts and knowledge to work in a team and make them come true.

The time has come to show and to start making use of all you have learned during these nine months, either in the professional market or extending your studies with a PhD programme.

Remember that from now on, Entrepreneurship and Training must be the two concepts that must always go with you, in your academic, professional and also personal career.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP, anticipation, tension, attitude, are concepts that I have tried to internalize myself and which I consider essential for your career, in order be able to look at your own professional and personal evolution as your own project, your own personal enterprise, your own personal business.

TRAINING, constant training is essential in order to have chances to access and to stay on the front line of any profession.

In fact, I understand talent - meaning the talent that you have been showing during these months - as the sum of Capacity and Compromise.

Now you will start in a world marked by globalisation and new technologies. This implies that the world's economies are largely interconnected. There is a huge mobility of people, goods, services and knowledge.

You yourselves are a proof of talent mobility.

Words, such as *customer service, loyalty, time to market, flexibility, outsourcing, etc.* have changed the way we work and deal with relations.

Nowadays, market conditions can change quickly. Whatever happens in one end of the world can quickly have a global impact, like it happened with the economic crisis that started in the USA.

The effects of this crisis have been unpredictable and have highlighted the huge importance of VALUES, of the ways of social behaviour.

In this final part of my speech, I would like to share some thoughts with you,

1.- In this world you have to live in, you will need to learn how to manage uncertainty and take up changes.

Lawrence J. Peter, economist and author of "The Peter Principle", said, "*Some problems are so complex that you have to be highly intelligent and well informed just to be undecided about them*".

Today, the difference does not lie in the change, but in the pace of the change. It is faster than ever and it is becoming faster every day.

You will have to make or help to make decisions with uncertainty and limited information. But there is no other choice.

2.- The world is your field of action. Think globally as people. Go and work abroad, anywhere in the world, and if you can go to different places, so much the better. Developing an international career is a highly valuable asset.

3.- Ideas are just ideas.

The only way to make the difference is making projects become real.

4.- People make the difference. You need to attract and keep the talented.

I know from experience that behind every successful project there is a team of exceptional professionals.

5.- Always look for balance. Combine short-term results with a long-term perspective.

6.- Don't be afraid of making mistakes. If you don't make mistakes, someone will come and check whether you are really working.

To fall is human. To get up again is what makes you "great".

7.- Be careful with success. Success comes before arrogance and arrogance is followed by failure. You have to be humble. Arrogance takes us to complaisance and this will sooner or later lead us to downfall.

8.- Research cannot only be curiosity. You must know how to answer the questions and the questions are known by companies. Always try to be close to companies.

9.- Use your smile. It is an act of emotional intelligence, of relating with people. Humour, good humour, improves team spirit and binds people.

10.- Define your values, your ethic and moral values, and stay true to them. Dedication, honesty, sense of responsibility, integrity, coherence, humbleness, courage, respect and determination.

With these values, people will trust in each one of you and will understand the reasons for your actions.

The job of a graduate like you is not limited to your place of work; it has to go beyond in order to try to make the society you are living in better.

You must assess the meaning of this graduation correctly, not as a base to achieve success, but as a tool to take on bigger responsibilities and to help towards the improvement of society.

This graduation means to change and to go deeper into the way you face the problems in your professional, but also in your personal and family life.

You become reflective and analytical persons, able to understand reality in all of its dimensions.

You become professionals with the ability to define problems and to be able to come up with solutions and choose the adequate one.

It means to know how to co-operate and to compete.

To compete to be the best, but at the same time co-operating for the benefit of others.

Not to compete “against” but “for” the others.

To be the best for the benefit of others.

What you have learned and the way you have learned it is useful both for your personal and your professional life.

On the one side rigorous, constant and well-organised work.

On the other, serenity for the moments of highest pressure, and balance to find the solutions in every moment. You will have to face many moments of pressure and uncertainty.

This graduation is only the start of the next chapter of your life.

Let's trust – and this would be the wish of the Barcelona Graduate School of Economics – that the boost you have received will go with you in your professional and personal career.

You will have to know how to manage the present, and that means nothing else but winning the future, learning from the past.

Now is the moment to put all of this knowledge into practice. I would like to encourage you to never underestimate the importance of lifelong learning. What you have achieved so far is only the first step in order to be able to face the future challenges with success.

Your learning process has just started. You always have to be up-to-date with studies and research.

When it is time to take stock of our lives, we will have to assess what we did as persons, as a family, as professionals and also as citizens.

Thank you, congratulations and good luck.