Hervé GARNIER
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
Colas, a Group where diversity and integration are cornerstones

These 250 or so portraits of men and women are Routes’ special tribute to the day-to-day work and dynamic spirit of the Group’s 65,000-strong workforce; men and women who are totally committed to their company and realize that success at the highest level represents a full-time undertaking. Men and women who have understood that desire is the springboard to such success – desire to learn, desire to progress, desire to share.

Viewed through their own eyes, each person gives an account of their individual career path, mission, approach and way of working in confidence with Colas. These natural portraits depict entrepreneurial, successful personalities who exchange ideas and experiences, make decisions, learn and forge forward; personalities living in worlds which, at first glance, seem to have little in common and can go from one extreme to the other, from bush-clearing to digital.

This special issue of Routes also sets out to be a showcase for a magnificent profession without frontiers, where all jobs are driven by passion, against the incredibly rich array of people’s initial training, the reality of social advancement, the enhanced role of women, the notion of enjoyment and freedom in one’s work and the strong feeling of being a key player in the company.

One cannot help being fascinated by the wealth of such diversity within the Group, a diversity which stems from a decentralisation policy that gives people responsibilities; a diversity which opens up a myriad of methods and makes it possible to build efficient networks and varied ways of working with each other. Diversity does not, however, mean disparity. It is the vital keystone to Group integration, for there is an assimilating tradition at Colas when welcoming new firms and new employees. By reconciling, like few others, unity with diversity, the Group adapts more than it standardizes. Cultures are enhanced by mixing and exchanging, which also foster new forms of organisation. Backed by the Group’s bonding values and its business and management principles, the resulting coherence ensures that dialogue, questioning and efficiency truly do go hand in hand.

There is nothing to be gained by working alone, on the contrary…

It is common knowledge that organisations will only flourish, grow and become more attractive where initiative, competition, incentive and sharing of best practices prevail. Corporate efficiency goes way beyond the sum of individual expertise. It is the power of interaction, a sense of responsibility, a future-focused outlook, impetus, respect and collective intelligence which not only constitute the cornerstones of any major Group’s performance and relevance, but its real range of influence and capacity to attract.
Dominique Duval
FLATBED DRIVER
COLAS ILE-DE-FRANCE NORMANDIE
FRANCE

“I’ve always loved to drive big trucks”

Dominique Duval obtained all his driving permits for tractor-trailers and transport while in the army. Once back in civilian life, he joined a specialized trucking and transport company. “I worked all over France.” In 1988, he was hired by Colas Ile-de-France – Normandie to transport heavy equipment to sites. He likes his job: “I’ve always loved to drive big trucks, the really heavy vehicles”, he confides. In 1997, he received the Losange d’Or award for his professionalism. Today, he is Vice-President of the Compagnons Skilled Workers Guild at Colas IDF/N: “Once a year we meet the Chairman of the Group, Alain Dupont. We serve as spokespeople for our co-workers in our region.” Dominique has two other passions in his life: his daughters and sports. A big fan of racing motorcycles and bicycles, he is a fervent supporter of his daughters, who play on the women’s basketball team of Ouistreham, where he is also a trainer. And this year has been a triumph: the team won the French Championship!
Tiphaine Michon
PROJECT ENGINEER
COLAS ILE-DE-FRANCE NORMANDIE
FRANCE

“It’s a job in which contacts with people are straightforward and direct”

In November 2006, Tiphaine Michon, a graduate of the Lille Ecole Centrale engineering school, joined the Seine-et-Marne profit center of Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie in Chaumes-en-Brie as an engineer. “During my second year of studies I had an internship on the Paris tramway project. I enjoyed being there, and quite naturally I re-contacted Colas when my studies were over,” she recounts. “The work is very demanding, but you are independent and your contacts with people are straightforward and direct. Whenever there’s a problem, you have to find a solution fast!” The sector may be predominantly masculine, but being a woman is not a drawback. “People actually treat me very well. Although most women who come into this business decide to work in an engineering office after a few years, I intend to do my best to stay on the operational side, because what I like best is site work,” she declares.
Ken Diver
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
COLASKA
UNITED STATES

“You can have an international career, it’s a recognized fact”

As chief financial officer, my work essentially consists in managing the finances of the six companies in the Colaska group. This apparently mundane task is actually pretty challenging. Ken Diver is based in Washington and the companies involved are in Alaska, three hours away by plane. “In order to coordinate everybody, I travel to Alaska about ten times a year,” he explains. Previously, Ken worked in Georgia, with Reeves, which was taken over by Colas in 1998. “I then left the southern United States to come to the Northwest. A big change! In Washington, you can drive an hour without leaving the city whereas in Georgia you’re out in the country in no time.” On the other hand, in professional terms, Ken Diver is happy at Colas. “It’s a Group that allows employees to evolve. When I hire a new employee, I am quick to point out that you can have an international career, it’s a recognized fact. For my part, I see myself staying with Colaska as it’s a company that is undergoing significant expansion and I want to be involved in it.”

Thomas Tock
FOREMAN
COLAS EST
FRANCE

“Being out in the field, that’s what I love”

In August 2006, Thomas Tock had the opportunity to join Colas, in Belfort, as foreman. At 28, he is happy to be part of a “big company”, with all the plusses that it represents: team professionalism, level of compensation, quality of the work atmosphere, etc. “It’s also very interesting for my career possibilities, on the national scale – I have a lot of family around Aix-en-Provence – and why not consider international”, Thomas affirms. After graduating with a technical degree and sending a few cover letters to the local construction companies, in July 2001, he landed his first job as a drainage project foreman in a family-owned business. Over the next five years he earned his stripes overseeing a 10-person team per project. Enthusiastic about the business, he is even becoming “Construction Ambassador”, evangelizing young people to enter the field, a torch-bearer with the colors of Colas.
“I’m constantly having to update my skills in this job”

“I try not to get stressed and I don’t let events get on top of me”, says Lorraine Harvey, Payroll Manager in the Finance department at Colas Ltd. Based in Rowfant, in Southern England, the young woman manages the weekly and monthly pay of 1,200 employees. She supervises a team of three people who work together meeting the tight deadlines that are the day-to-day reality in payroll. “I love my work”, she says. “I’m constantly having to update my skills. Colas Ltd is a company where life is good and my colleagues are friendly.” The young woman is glad to have been promoted from the post of pay supervisor to her current role, which gives her greater autonomy. She also enjoys working within a flexible structure: this allows her to free up time to look after her 9-year old son. On the agenda with him: cycling, ice-skating… and, when she has a little time for herself, Lorraine spends it in her vegetable garden.
“There is greater transparency since we joined the Group”

Didier hadn’t yet turned 18 when he joined CCM at Wallers-Trélom, in northern France. “I couldn’t find work with my lathe-operator’s qualification so I applied for a job at the CCM quarry.” Fortunately, the foreman was looking for an equipment operator and was willing to hire Didier, even though he didn’t even have a driver’s license. “I began as a driller,” he says. “My bosses were impressed with my work, so I went further and became a blaster.” A good, careful worker he was made blasting supervisor and then production supervisor. Didier talks enthusiastically about his job and says how delighted he is with the changes since CCM became part of the Group. “There is greater transparency and we are given information on how the company is doing. It’s motivating.” As part of his personal investment in his work it is not unusual to see Didier spending long days in the quarry. Except on a training evening! He is equally enthusiastic about table tennis, which he plays at championship level. “I can’t do anything halfway,” he says with a smile.
Jean-Michel Joubert
SITE MACHINE OPERATOR
SCREG OUEST
FRANCE

“There’s a great feeling in our team. Not surprising, some of us have known each other for over 20 years!” laughs Jean-Michel, a 57-year-old paver operator in the Poitiers sector of Screg Ouest. “My teammates are also my buddies,” he says. Hired in the 1980s, Jean-Michel enjoys site work as much as he ever did – for the practical aspect, for the open air, for the brotherhood, for the good times, and “because you always learn something new.” But once he’s back home, his main interest is completely different – the brilliant figure skating career of his son, 22-year-old Brian Joubert, who became world champion in 2007. Of course, Jean-Michel is extremely proud of him. “We have supported him since he took his first steps on the ice when he was only four. I have a collection of over 50 videos covering his entire career – competitions, TV reports, and so on. And I have several albums full of press clippings.”

Rodrigue Absalon
WORKER
COLAS GUADELOUPE/TTS
GUADELOUPE

“The job has given me stability in my professional life”

Providential! This is how Rodrigue Absalon speaks of being hired in 2000 by TTS (Tropique Travaux Signalisation), a Guadeloupe-based subsidiary, as a worker in charge of the depot. The island has a high unemployment rate, particularly among young people, and Rodrigue had piled up casual and part-time jobs over several years. So, when the company offered him the possibility of joining its small 15-strong team, he jumped at the opportunity: “I understood straightaway that it was my chance, so I really got into the job, 100%.” Tasked with preparing the trucks which leave the depot every morning for the worksites, he was quickly spotted by his superiors who gave him a chance to take an IT training course. This was a first for him: “I’d never had any computer experience beforehand, so I took it as a real mark of confidence,” he explains.
“The legal team dedicated to Major Projects works with all the senior management teams of all subsidiaries”

After business school in Lille, Benoît Dupuis continued his studies in Paris and obtained a degree in business law, capped by a thesis. He earned his first stripes in a law firm and then worked for corporations as international legal counsel before joining the head office of Colas SA, a year and a half ago. With a team of two associate legal counsels, Benoît follows all bids and invitations to tender concerning major infrastructure projects in France and abroad: from formalizing initial agreements to partner searches, by way of client negotiations, until a project’s financial closing. The Major Projects Team works with all the head offices and subsidiaries that are planning projects in their territories. Last year, Colas and its partners won the contract for the Rheims tramway concession. Between the bid and closing, two years went by. “We work on very long-term projects, Benoît specifies. The most interesting phase to my mind is negotiations, as much with partners as the client or the banks.”
Arben Ahmëti
FOREMAN
SPAC/SUBURBAINE
FRANCE

“I have been able to get training and learn a craft”

Arben joined La Suburbaine (Spac) at age 20, and he was promoted to foreman last year. He enjoys his work. “We do a bit of everything – plumbing, masonry, earthworks,” he says. Assigned to the hydraulics sector, he specializes in installing water mains for air-conditioning systems. He spends a lot of time working underground, in the sewers of Paris. Born in Macedonia, Arben arrived in France when he was 16, forced to emigrate by the war raging in his country. He hooked up with his father, who knew La Suburbaine very well because he had spent 15 years working there. He joined the company in turn, and has never regretted his choice: he has been able to get training and advance. He would like to go still further. Now age 31, Arben has a family of his own, and every year he takes them on vacation to his homeland.
Laurent Tejada
WORKSHOP SUPERVISOR
COLAS RHONE-ALPES
FRANCE

“In my profession, we have to do everything”

He was born in the Alps, studied in Provence and now lives in central France. Laurent has seen the country! Since 1991, he has worked successively in Colas Rhone-Alpes profit centers in Montceau-les-Mines, Chassieu and Valence. “I started out as a mechanic, with a qualification in agricultural machines,” he remarks. Fascinated by how things work, Laurent inspects, analyzes and repairs machinery. Pavers, graders and sprayers… he knows them all from A to Z. “I like the variety of the machines. Each one is different and no two breakdowns are alike. In my profession, we have to do everything.” Working with two colleagues, Laurent manages the fleet of site machines for four profit centers in the region. But don’t expect him to rush out at the first sign of a problem. “You have to study the problem before going out, because sometimes you can fix the problem over the phone.” In the mountainous area where he works, Laurent insists that the teams have the most suitable equipment available. He now feels perfectly at home in the area. “It’s great for mountain biking,” he grins, before returning to his machines.

Francis Dubard
ASSISTANT FOREMAN
SACER ATLANTIQUE
FRANCE

“In Sacer Atlantique gave me a chance three years before retirement”

58-year-old Francis plans to finish his working life in the Group. He joined Sacer Atlantique’s Limoges profit center in April 2006, but has not always worked in the construction industry. He used to be a farmer in central France. “For 23 years I raised cattle and grew crops. But I had to give up and change direction completely,” he recounts. He had a series of seasonal jobs for three years, growing melon in the summer and pruning the Chinon vineyards in the winter. He also worked as a janitor in a Chamber of Commerce. With no prospect of permanent employment, he turned to the public works sector, where he spent four years as a temporary laborer. “It was during this time that I was assigned to work for Sacer Atlantique, and they very soon offered me a regular job,” he continues. “What really surprised me was that they were giving me this opportunity only three years before retirement!” As a bonus, he enjoys the variety of his work and appreciates the team’s atmosphere of friendship and mutual support. “It is a warm and friendly company. I’m a happy man!”
Louis Gabanna  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
FOR COLAS NORTH AMERICA  
COLAS  
UNITED STATES/CANADA

“People show what they’re worth when things get tough”

From Canada to Africa, the Caribbean to the US west coast, Louis Gabanna has seen the world, often to restructure subsidiaries in difficulty, always to put them back on the growth path. For Louis is first and foremost a builder. Doubtless he gets it from his father who ran his own construction business. “I wanted to be a doctor, he confesses, but the studies put me off, too scientific and not close enough to people.” His first experience in Kenya taught him how to steel up against hostile environments: “People show what they’re worth when things get tough. Today I enjoy working with those who’ve gone through rough weather, they are reliable and won’t abandon ship at the first gust of wind.” Alongside them, he has, for 15 years, been building up the Colas network in the United States and Canada. “We’ve made superb acquisitions and developed fantastic operations,” notes a determined Louis, for whom field contact is vital. “Being in a managerial position in a construction firm is not just about occupying a chair, you have to get out there on site and show people you care about them.”
Ian Gibson
CONTRACTS MANAGER
COLAS LTD/ROWFANT
UNITED KINGDOM

“I am thrilled with the opportunities that the Group can offer me”

In his job as Contracts Manager Ian Gibson enjoys his contact with interesting clients, such as road constructors, and electronics, computing and civil engineers. An electronics specialist himself, he joined the Group in 1988, with a view to working with Colas Ltd in the specific area of road lighting & signaling. “Currently I’m working on a project on the M1 motorway in Northern England and on the presentation to my clients of three prototype electronic motorway message signals that have been subject to stringent testing,” he says. Having started out as an electrician, today Ian has developed a degree of autonomy. He’s hungry to learn and loves a challenge. That’s why he spent two years working with another company, to find out about alternative products and management styles. Back with the Group since 2000, he is keen to progress in the coming years and is thrilled with the opportunities given to him.
Mohamed Bousetta
PROJECT SUPERVISOR
GTR
MOROCCO

“Always make headway”

25 years of seniority. Today 50 years of age, Mohamed Bousetta has been a one-company man at Moroccan subsidiary GTR. After joining as a simple labourer in 1982, he went on to be site checker, then, for a time, storeman at spare parts and equipment ordering. Following on quickly, he underwent training and became a foreman, a position he filled for 10 years before being appointed head foreman in 1997. Two years later, he began training as a project supervisor and has been in this job since 2001. “I’ve always had a dream, that of making my life a success story, this workaholic confides. I’ve always been backed up by those above me; they believed in me and spurred me on.” When he’s off the site, Mohamed is on the roads. He has worked across Morocco, from north to south. Originally from Agadir, where his family lives, he is currently working over 1,500 km away, in the south of Morocco, up to the Mauritanian border. “Always make headway,” he likes to repeat. An unerringly approach which has earned him success.
Cathy Busin, a secretary at Screg IDF/N's Sucy-en-Brie profit center since 1996, never finds her job routine monotonous. "Life in a company is a bit like a family - unpredictable!" she laughs. Her days are full with managing the profit center supervisor's schedule and the meeting rooms, dealing with the mail and phone calls and keeping track of supplies. Such a workload requires "real versatility" and "close teamwork" from the profit center's seven secretaries. "We really do work as a team," explains Cathy, "which means relying on each others' strengths and coping with the demands made on each individual. As far as working hours are concerned, for instance, I start early in the morning which allows me to leave early to take care of my children, while some of my colleagues prefer to start later."
Bjorn Christiansen
SITE FOREMAN
COLAS DANMARK
DENMARK

“This job is first and foremost a human adventure”

Six months after joining Colas Danmark as site foreman, Bjorn Christiansen knows he’s made the right choice. “I oversee a team of 25 and, despite being new in the company and young, I was adopted straight away and felt like I was becoming part of a big family,” he enthuses. Thrilled with his new responsibilities and the fact that he belongs to a global group, he has at last been able to fulfill his dream of meeting challenges in the open air. “I was far from imagining the extent to which this job was first and foremost a human adventure that fostered team spirit,” he points out. In the field, there’s no difference in age, position or social origin since everyone pulls together towards a common goal: finishing the project on time and on schedule!” Proof that passion is a contagious virtue!

Jean Monnot
PROFIT CENTER MANAGER
SCREG SUD-EST
FRANCE

“Screg Sud-Est is my second family”

Jean Monnot recently celebrated his sixtieth birthday. But he has no thoughts of retiring yet. There is no shortage of work for the manager of Screg Sud-Est’s Côte d’Azur profit center, which takes in four business units (SNAF Routes in Nice, Cozzi in northern Provence, the Toulon work center and SIVIA’M in Monaco), a total of almost 250 employees. What does he like about the business? “Everything!” exclaims the youthful 60-year-old. “Screg Sud-Est is like a second family to me.” The contracting companies he runs offer a wide range of services and are well established in the local economy. People appreciate their skills and experience. As an example, SNAF Routes has held the town of Antibes’ technical services maintenance contract for over 40 years! Such a show of loyalty is also characteristic of Jean Monnot, who is originally from eastern France. He first arrived in Nice thirty years ago when he was a site manager. “I thought I would stay two years!” Will he return home when he retires? “We’ll see. I’m thinking of renovating the family farm,” he replies. One thing is sure: he will not be idle.
Bernard Roumagnac
and Pierre Prenot-Guinnard
ASPHALT MANAGER AND HEAD OF ROAD SURFACING/TECHNICAL MANAGER COLAS SWITZERLAND/PIASIO AND COLAS SWITZERLAND/TECVIA SWITZERLAND

“The Group lets those that want to scale the heights”

Pierre and Bernard, who joined the Group in 1986 and 1987 respectively, share a love of the Alps. “We go running every day, most of the time together, over the many trails in the Chamonix area,” explains Bernard. Running has become a drug for them! The two of them cover between 60 and 80 km a week, representing between five to ten hours of weekly running. They are currently in training for the Ultra Trail, the single-stage race around Mont Blanc. “We will run through France, Italy and Switzerland over a 163-km course, including an ascent of 8,900 m, all in 46 hours maximum!” exclaims Pierre. Running may be the favorite occupation of these two “men of the mountains”, but they also love their work. Bernard, who held jobs in several parts of France before joining Piasio in Switzerland, particularly values mobility. “I can’t stand routine, and here I have plenty to do. Our projects are short in duration and teams change every day,” Pierre, meanwhile, works for Colas Geneva and likes building roads and working with materials. “I like working in a team and I’m lucky enough to work with all levels of personnel, from the top to the bottom, including customers, doing a number of highly varied tasks.” The two mountaineers are full of praise for the care with which Colas trains its employees and advances their careers. Ideal for all those who want to scale the heights!
When Georges Ausseil, then Vice-President of Colas Inc., created the Colas USA Runners Club in 2006, Janine was quick to sign up. “I already did a bit of running but thanks to the club I got really motivated,” explains this 32-year old young woman. “With the team, I even managed to complete a half-marathon in Vancouver.” Since joining Branscome in April 1999, Janine has not only forged links with Colas’ runners. “This company is far more than just a place of work, it’s a bit like a support network outside the immediate family that shares your joys and acts as a shoulder to lean on if you need it.” A Business Management graduate, Janine is Group Credit Manager covering Branscome’s three subsidiaries. On a day-to-day basis, she processes credit requests, resolves price issues, institutes legal proceedings where necessary and supervises Branscome’s three billing department employees. “So far, my experience with Branscome has been very positive and I hope to advance my career within the Group.”
Laszlo Tiborcz
MANAGER
TML
MAURITIUS

“Over the past 20 years, I’ve seen the emergence of impressive road infrastructures in Mauritius”

1987 was a pivotal-point in the career of Laszlo Tiborcz. At the time a young engineer in a leading Hungarian building & public works company, he was to take part for two years in a vast motorway project on Mauritius. Never more was this native of Budapest to leave this paradise island set in the Indian Ocean! Successively site foreman, project engineer and project manager, since 2005 he has been manager of the Transinvest Mauritius Ltd (TML) company which became part of the Group in 1993. A professional challenge, but also a love affair with the island, says Laszlo Tiborcz: “Over the past 20 years, I’ve seen the emergence of modern infrastructures in Mauritius and road networks able to match its economic development. I’m particularly proud to see how all players in the road sector, private companies and public sector concerns alike, have been able to reconcile economic interests with preserving the island’s unique ecosystem.”

Philippe Eponon
MANAGER
COLAS BENIN
BENIN

“Our roads are an essential contribution to sustainable development”

After 15 years with Colas West Africa, Philippe Eponon was appointed branch manager of Colas Benin in 2004. Topographer-engineer in the Ivory Coast and Ghana, sector head in Benin, then branch supervisor in Mali, Philippe has moved forward at each transfer. Today holding a post in Benin, he is also responsible for monitoring countries in the West Africa zone. “My experience in these different countries is a great help for carrying out my current responsibilities,” confirms Philippe. Techniques, management, the daily challenge… he likes everything which goes to make up the job but what really gives him satisfaction is the direct benefit of his work for populations. “In Africa, when you build a road, you contribute to the economic growth of the regions you go through, not just because of the jobs created during the works but by the positive impact which road networks have on daily life and the commercial and cultural exchanges. It’s this strong contribution to sustainable development which also gives our job a meaning.”
Carolyn Vasquez
OFFICE MANAGER
SIMON CONTRACTORS
UNITED STATES

“I’m going to continue in this line of work: I love my job”

Carolyn Vasquez joined Colas in 1995. “I started working at the age of 15 in the family business. After five years, I wanted to progress and, above all get a bit of freedom,” she explains. She joined Simon Contractors as pay officer. “I immediately felt at home. That’s in spite of the fact that I arrived in May, a period when accounts are closed and accounting departments are run off their feet,” she recounts. Twelve years later, Carolyn manages a team of three people and occupies the post of office manager. “I’m going to continue in this line of work because this job suits me well. What’s more, I know that what I do makes a difference!” she exclaims. Though very busy, Carolyn always finds time to devote to her two teenage children, including her bowling champion son. “I spend my weekends on the road in Wyoming, where I live, taking him from competition to competition,” she ends proudly.
“There are more and more applications from women”

What are Isabelle De Vreese’s current priorities? Training programs, reviewing the Human Resources budget and recruiting: the HR supervisor of Screg Est’s Champagne-Ardenne profit center, who also deals with STAM and LTA, has very busy and varied working days, bringing her into contact with many people. She looks after the welfare of 450 employees. It is a heavy responsibility, but her door is always open. However, she would like to be able to find more time to familiarize students with the company. Isabelle also sits on the editorial committee of Pulse, the Screg Est house magazine. Is being a woman ever a problem for her in such a male-dominated working environment? “I have no problems with it,” she says. “In addition, things are changing. I receive more and more job applications from women.” Born and brought up locally, Isabelle enjoys walking in the surrounding vineyards and forests. She also likes to take part in the traditional “bitumen cookout” to celebrate the end of a project, a custom that attests to the friendly working relations at Screg Est.
Alain Bondoux
FOREMAN
COLAS EST
FRANCE

“I enjoy transmitting my experience to young newcomers”

When he wanders the pedestrian streets of Auxerre, Alain Bondoux can say, not without pride: “I was part of it!”… Drainage project foreman at the Colas Est Yonne profit center, in Appoigny, Alain is a “pro” in the field of sewer lines, whether in sandstone, concrete, PVC or cast iron. He manages each project from start to finish, from the delivery of the materials to managing the men (three skilled workers) and the equipment (a bulldozer and two trucks). Today, at 47, Alain boasts twenty years of seniority in the Group: before Colas Est, he worked many years at Novello, a company specialized in drainage systems, which joined Colas Sud-Ouest in 1990: “I almost left: in late 1984, after technical school and my military service, I joined Colas, in Varennes-sur-Allier, but there was not enough work, so I had to leave, he remembers, without bitterness. Before coming back to Colas, I learned everything about drainage. Today, I enjoy transmitting my experience to young newcomers.” Passionate about his job, Alain also loves golf: in 9 years, he reached 19 above par, a more than honorable ranking.
Allan Woods
SITE MANAGER
COLAS CIVIL SOUTH
UNITED KINGDOM

“I like the contact with the general public”

“I enjoy life,” says Allan Woods, roaring with laughter: a life in which he is always on the go and meeting people. This site manager for Colas Civil South, in Sussex, South-East England, manages up to 50 people working on road contracts, car park and building construction projects. “I enjoy the numerous contacts with general public and subcontractors,” he says. “It’s highly satisfying seeing a contract well done.” The man who “works to live rather than the opposite” has nevertheless acquired a broad range of experience since he joined the company in 1972. An excavator driver at the beginning, he then became a foreman, followed by general foreman, supervisor. “A typical path”, according to him for a man on the tools. What is difficult about his job is managing risks and the quantity of procedures to be issued. A man who enjoys his social life, he likes the contact with his colleagues, and loves engaging in humorous banter with them as often as possible.

Joannès Bouard
WORKSHOP MANAGER
SCREG SUD-EST
FRANCE

“I like passing on my knowledge”

A former French motorcycle rally champion, Joannès can boast of coming in 3rd in a world championship. “I competed for 14 years. I still collect motorcycles, and I still love motor sport,” he admits. Joannès joined the Lyon profit center of Screg Sud-Est in 1999, and he is in charge of four workshops. “I schedule repairs and deal with breakdowns, ordering parts and getting machines repaired.” He likes working in a large group, particularly because of its network: “Similar types of breakdowns are identified more easily, and certain requests can be centralized. All in all, it means greater efficiency and greater bargaining power in dealing with manufacturers,” he explains. But what he likes most of all is passing on his knowledge and his experience when he trains new recruits and young trainees. In his spare time, Joannès often leaves his motorbike behind and travels widely with his family: he has already clocked up 24 countries! And every year, he travels to Romania to take clothes collected in France to an orphanage, assisted in particular by the manager of the profit center.
Hongbo Zhang
PLANT GENERAL MANAGER
TIPCO
CHINA

“With Colas, I’m helping develop China”

“Ten years ago, joining Tipco was the obvious choice: Colas was already the leader in road building, and China represented a huge potential market…” Engineer by training, Hongbo Zhang previously worked for a Chinese building and electrical company. In 1998, round about his 40th birthday, he joined Tipco as assistant manager at the Guangzhou office, in charge of marketing and sales (“I’ve always liked sales and customer relations, and that suits me fine!”). Very quickly he became manager, then head of marketing and sales for the Xinhui site, of which he took over the reins in 2004. “My future’s with Colas: I see myself continuing my career path with them as the pace of development in China grows. Being part of the process which is introducing new products and technologies to my country is rewarding, all the more so since Colas is a responsible group which is mindful of health and environmental concerns.”
“Good communication is essential in our business”

“I always try to be a good listener, because good communication is essential in a company like ours.” His approach is one that bears fruit: across the 10 sites he supervises, employing 38 men, Al Jones has a very low turnover of staff. “My men are generally loyal. In fact, two of them have been in my team for 20 years!” Taken on as a truck driver by Henry Branscome 32 years ago, slowly but surely, Al has climbed up through the ranks of the company to become Plants Manager. “When Colas took over Branscome in 2001, I had some concerns but these were soon dispelled. Colas is a group of opportunities,” he asserts. If he is a good listener during the week, it is others who go and listen to him on Sundays. He is a member of the gospel choir at his church. Al has also been a volunteer fire fighter for many years. “It’s a way for me to give back to the community what it has given to me,” he explains. “But one day, it will be time to hand over to someone younger!”
With her persistence, patience and flair for negotiations and public relations, Nancy Vallette, who is a sales representative with Screg Est in eastern France, is well equipped to fulfill her task. After working in customer relations for an electronics company, Nancy, a business school graduate, took a new direction in 2002, changing industry sector and moving into sales development. “I was offered a 6-month training program tailored to my needs,” she recalls. “This gave me confidence right from the start.” Today she works with profit center supervisors and engineers on projects during the preparatory phase (sales), during execution (customer relations), and after completion (maintaining customer contact in view of future contracts). A member of a building contractors’ organization, she sets up business meetings throughout her territory. Her job responsibility is constantly expanding, along with the company’s sales team, which has grown from 25 to almost 40 people.

“I felt confident right from the start”

Didier Creach
OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR
SACER ATLANTIQUE
FRANCE

Didier’s entire career can be summed up in two words: Sacer Atlantique. He joined the Brest profit center after completing his military service, and has been there ever since, climbing the career ladder rung by rung. Through firm commitment backed up by an effective internal promotion system, he has not faltered. “The desire to see employees advance in their careers is a fundamental part of our corporate culture,” he remarks. “I joined the company as a worker with a technical school diploma. Thanks to something like fifteen in-house training programs, I was able to become a foreman, then a site foreman, a site manager and, eventually, an operations supervisor in 2004. It proves that upward mobility is alive and well in our Group!” He shares his knowledge of people, site work and the inner workings of the Group with his colleagues in the profit center. In particular, he has endeavored to help improve on-site safety since 2000. He has clearly been successful in this assignment, because the profit center has not suffered a single lost-time accident since then!

“Upward mobility is alive and well”
Daniel Aucant
PAVER OPERATOR
SACER PARIS-NORD-EST
FRANCE

“I feel useful when I train newcomers”

Daniel was born in a trailer in 1947. His father, an itinerant employee of Sacer, traveled around France from site to site. Daniel has fond memories of this nomadic existence. Developing an early taste for site machines, he used to drive his father’s compactor. After serving in the French armed forces, he joined the company, and for many years preferred the mobility of a trailer to the walls of a house. A settled home life seemed too restrictive. Based at Sacer Paris-Nord-Est’s Besançon profit center, Daniel progressed through driving three-wheeled and tandem rollers, compactors and pavers on sites for businesses and private individuals. “I learn something new every day,” he says. He feels useful when he trains newcomers. “I’m particularly proud of having supervised a number of employees who have now risen up through the ranks.” Daniel will soon be retiring from the company. He will spend his retirement driving along France’s coast roads at the wheel of a camper van.
Jérôme Lisima
DRIVER
COLAS MARTINIQUE/GTC
MARTINIQUE

“As long as we are working properly we get a lot of freedom”

Jérôme, age 53, has always been a truck enthusiast. He has been driving them now for 30 years. After serving in the French armed forces he was a driver in mainland France but got homesick for his native Martinique. Returning there in 1985, he joined Giacometti, in the town of Robert. The company was subsequently acquired by the Group. Jérôme has now been driving for 10 years for GTC, both as a truck driver and site machine operator. “I am a specialist in operating mobile cranes,” he explains, “but most of my work consists in transporting plant or site machines from one site to another.” Always ready to talk, he also enjoys his freedom. “As long as we’re working properly we really get a lot of freedom,” says Jérôme. He likes the atmosphere within the company. As far as the future is concerned, he still sees himself at the wheel of a vehicle. “The only thing that would make me change my job would be for health reasons. You need to be in pretty good shape to do this job.” Not a problem for avid soccer fan Jérôme.
Fortune Bellehsen
SALES REPRESENTATIVE
COLAS EMULSIONS
MOROCCO

“I’m often on the roads and I like contact with colleagues and customers”

You would never think that Fortune has retired! At age 69, she is still busy as a sales representative for Colas Emulsions in Morocco, albeit as a consultant. “As long as I can keep going, why shouldn’t I continue? I grew up with the company – I’m a pure Colas product! I don’t think I know how to do anything else,” she says with a smile. Fortune has had a wonderful career. She joined the company in 1961 as a shorthand typist when she was 23. Then she became a personal assistant. Later she was put in charge of supervising the accounts at the plant in Rabat. In 1980, she was given added responsibility for the plants at Meknes and Tangiers. Then in 1985, she was appointed business manager for all the Colas Emulsions plants. This meant that she supervised bids, the business management of the plants and customer development. “I’m often on the road and I like contact with colleagues and customers,” explains Fortune, smiling proudly: “We are number one in emulsions in Morocco.” Fortune has always enjoyed her work, and her spare time sees her busy with her children and grandchildren.
Pavel Sramek
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
COLAS
CZECH REPUBLIC

“What I like is building something new”

Pavel Sramek joined Colas as a site manager before being promoted to profit center manager and then technical director in 1999. “My job is to manage the plant and equipment, in liaison with the three profit center managers for the country,” Pavel explains. “I supervise the investment for all the Group’s companies in the Czech Republic, and I am responsible for the internal development of these companies, whether it’s a matter of building new factories or expanding existing factories.” What does he like about this job? “It’s forever building something new, something that’s always being improved, be it industrial processes, organisation models or the industrial design of a new factory.” If he were to express a preference, it would be for building new manufacturing sites: the results of the decisions taken become apparent very quickly, which is a real source of satisfaction for Pavel.
Bernard Marchand
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
SINTRA ENERGIES
CANADA

“The Group really gives the opportunity to forge forward”

When he joined Sintra in 1996 as a project supervisor, Bernard Marchand benefited from a brand new position: “The manager at the time already knew me and entrusted me with developing the company’s energy sector. He deeply believed in it and... he was right.” Boosted by his detailed sector knowledge acquired during his previous positions, Bernard has indeed succeeded in really developing the business. Today at the head of a 350-strong team, he is delighted about the choice he made. “I was interested in Sintra because of its scope. I knew I had the financial means to develop what I wanted, he explains. Subsequently, I also realised that the Group was really giving the opportunity to forge forward and that this was valid for everyone!” After work is over, Bernard enjoys a game of golf when the weather’s fine and above all hockey during the winter, a sport he’s played for forty years!
Walter Van Impe
MANAGING DIRECTOR
COLAS BELGIUM/WEGEBO
BELGIUM

“Whatever cause you choose, it’s important to make a difference”

Walter Van Impe spared no effort. At the age of 57, he made the Alpe d’Huez cycle climb seven times in a single day. Naturally, Walter, managing director of Wegebo, a subsidiary of Colas Belgium, is a cycling enthusiast, but that’s not the only reason that made him undertake such a feat. “This challenge was organized by a Dutch charity raising funds for cancer research,” he explains. “In 2006, 66 sponsored riders raised €370,000. This year I decided to join the team. There were 70 of us on the start line on June 7, and we raised €1 million from sponsors.” He did not decide to take part on a whim. “My wife died of cancer last summer. Taking part in the event was a way of paying tribute to her and helping finance research into this dreadful disease.” With his bicycle back in the garage, Walter has returned to the Wegebo office. “We handle everything to do with road works – concrete, asphalt, paving, earthworks and all types of foundations and sewage and drainage works.” He has spent nearly thirty years in a business about which he is still enthusiastic.

José Menezes de Assis
HEAD FOREMAN
COLAS NORD-PICARDIE
FRANCE

“I like showing what I can do”

“I am a head foreman and I should be promoted to site foreman later this year.” José Menezes de Assis has no doubt that if you are motivated, you can rise up through the ranks at Colas. All the ranks. He joined Sylvain Joyeux as a mason 39 years ago, and the company became part of Colas Nord-Picardie fourteen years ago. “Your promotion is helped by all the training courses that Human Resources provide throughout our careers. I have just completed a 150-hour part-time training package on products and materials suitable for building facades, such as resins. It’s important to keep up-to-date.” When he is not on a training course, José has barely enough time left over for his favorite hobby, gardening. He is currently working on two projects at the same time, and has just started work on a third. “It doesn’t bother me!” he laughs. “I like showing what I can do, and especially proving that I can work to schedule.”
Accountant by training, Rita Kassel very quickly moved to the payroll department of the company that hired her. In 1976, she joined Sacer, first as a payroll administrator, then as supervisor. Today, there are two people handling payroll at the head office of Colas SA, with a headcount of 350. “The job has changed a great deal. In the late ‘60s, we still did payroll by hand, Rita explains. We are regularly taking classes in IT to train on new software.” Rita enjoys what she does and appreciates the good atmosphere at the office. “It’s not like that everywhere. Here, we are lucky. We’re in a good group.” She spends her free time strolling in Paris. She has some favorite neighborhoods, like the Marais, the Luxembourg Garden...
“We have succeeded in rationalizing our purchasing”

After having first worked as a purchasing supervisor for Bouygues, Alberic Hérault joined Screg IDFN in 1994 to fulfill an assignment that was both simple and ambitious: rationalizing the subsidiary’s purchasing policy. “When I arrived, I noticed that the profit centers had no standard tariff, that the number of suppliers was exponential, and that there was no form of price reporting,” he explains. “We started out by making a complete inventory of expenditure and establishing a panel of suppliers so we could see where savings could be made.” Following this, on a national level, Alberic’s team went on to reduce the number of suppliers and develop framework agreements for key suppliers. The aim was to negotiate prices while securing regular supplies for projects. The strategy paid off. The current plan for “improved purchasing control” will be rolled out by the end of 2007!
“My bosses have always put their faith in me”

Roughly ten years ago, when he was appointed ready-mix concrete transport supervisor at the Colas Midi-Méditerranée profit center CBBP, Patrice was the only person in his department, but today there are five of them. “We have benefited from a boom in the ready-mix concrete market in the Marseille region due to the tram and metro projects as well as high demand in the residential and office building sector,” explains Patrice. “We make a very strong team, which accounts for our good performance.” In charge of logistics, Patrice handles transport, takes orders, which are either 24-hour or same day, and tracks the deliveries: “Concrete is a ‘perishable’ commodity with a maximum life of three hours! We have to avoid delays and deal with day-to-day problems, which are hardly ever the same. It can often be stressful.” All the same, Patrice enjoys his work, and is grateful for the faith his bosses have always placed in him. When he needs to unwind, he turns to his two hobbies: sports (running and mountain biking) and fine wines.
Roch Bernard
GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT
SINTRÁ
CANADA

“As a child, I was already giving my father a helping hand on sites”

Born in Granby, Quebec, Roch Bernard (pronounced «rock») has remained loyal to his native region of Montérégie. “At the age of eight, I was already giving a helping hand on sites where my father was a work superintendent,” he says. Today, it is his turn in the job, at Sintra. He appreciates the variety offered by his position which combines overseeing works (paving, crushing, quarries), budget and planning management, as well as meeting clients. He takes particular pride in having suggested that the Group acquire two companies, Construction Choinière in 2004 and Asphalte des Cantons in 2007: two significant operations in the region. This open-minded family man is also a golf adept with a handicap of 15, a sport which is a little calmer than curling (on winter ice) which he played for eleven years.

Mickaël Bourdin
STONE MASON
SCREG SUD-EST
FRANCE

“My craft requires patience and accuracy”

Mickaël Bourdin can name three reasons for choosing public works: the open air, being part of a team, and the lack of routine. With qualifications in road building, engineering structures and public works, he became a temporary worker at the Clermont-Ferrand profit center of Screg Sud-Est in June 2006, and was given a permanent contract one month later. He is pleased to have joined a major group, “where working conditions are pleasant, you can learn a lot and you are able to develop.” With a taste for a job well done, he applied for further training to improve in his craft, which, he says, “requires patience and accuracy.” His attitude impressed the company, which decided to enter him for the national heats of WorldSkills 2007. Mickaël came in fourth; he learned new techniques and says he is proud to have taken part in constructing a fountain. What is his ambition? “I want to become a good stonemason and be good at my profession before taking on responsibilities, perhaps becoming a foreman one day.”
Freddy Clément

SITE FOREMAN
COLAS NORD-PICARDIE
FRANCE

“I have always wanted to do construction work”

Hired as a skilled worker, promoted to foreman within ten months and now a site foreman, Freddy Clément has been quietly rising up through the company ranks for the last four years. He was 19 when he joined the Desvres profit center of Colas Nord-Picardie after gaining a qualification as a site machine operator, and he then decided to gain further qualification in public works. “I have always wanted to do construction work. My dad’s in construction, and I love working outdoors,” he remarks. Freddy likes regular changes of scenery in his work: yesterday he was working on a city project, today he’s out in the country building platforms and access roads for the installation of wind turbines. How does he see his future? “Rising even higher!” he answers in a flash.

Nicaise Orbel

SECRETARY
SOGETRA ABYMES
GUADELOUPE

“Sogetra is like a second family to me”

At the Abymes profit center of Sogetra in Guadeloupe, everyone knows Nicaise – she is nothing short of an institution! With 31 years in the job to look back on, the “Sogetra secretary” has seen a lot of people pass through the doors. “I’m now on my second generation,” she says. “I used to work with the fathers of most of the current employees.” Nicaise has fond memories of her early years in the company. “I was eager to get to know this universe. At the time, the managing director helped me fit in by explaining the business to me in a very down-to-earth way.” Her job is extremely varied and enables her to remain in constant contact with her co-workers. She always feels a surge of pride whenever her company’s bid is accepted – which happens quite often! Even after three decades in the job, Nicaise has no desire to leave. “People are truly respected here, it’s like a second family to me.” In her spare time, Nicaise devotes a lot of time to Gwo-ka, a traditional Guadeloupan dance that needs a lot of energy – which she is able to provide!
37-year-old David Lazaro has already lived several lives. He was trained as a boilermaker, became a factory foreman, and is now a road paint application team supervisor at Prosign, a subsidiary of Somaro. But he has also been a singer-songwriter. He tried to make a career in show business for two years, performing with French stars Patrick Fiori, Michele Torr, Nicolas Peyrac and C. Jérôme, “but I couldn’t make a living from it.” With no regrets, he continues to compose, but life goes on, and his priorities have changed. David now has a home and a family, and he enjoys his work at Prosign. “When you’re a musician, you are here, there and everywhere. In this job, it’s the same thing, always on the road again, going from town to town, from road to road. It’s the joy of the job.” Hired in April 2003, David was promoted to team supervisor within eight months. He appreciates being trusted. “I have my truck, I get to pick my team, and things are fine. I’d like to go further, become a site foreman and an application supervisor. I’ve always wanted to be in the spotlight.”
A temporary work agency offered me an assignment, and that was that!”

For just over a year now, Carole Delver has been working at Seco-Rail Freight branch. Her mission? Programming aggregate freight trains. She loves her job passionately and speaks about it with ardour: “Everything has to be built up since the business is new. This really is the beginning of an adventure, with a tightly-knit and motivated team. It’s super!” Difficult to believe that, just a short while ago, Carole was a professional make-up artist… making-up all kinds of stars before becoming chief editor of a woman’s magazine then marketing manager in cosmetics. “And then I wanted to find a steady job, in a more traditional sector. A temporary work agency offered me an assignment with Seco-Rail. And that was that!” Carole has quickly adapted to her new way of life. Juggling with timetables, organising departures, scheduling the necessary human resources, negotiating with the SNCF and Réseau Ferré de France (RFF)... All duties assumed by the ex-make-up artist. Simply, and without cosmetics.
“Colas is a company that’s open to new ideas”

With his entrepreneurial spirit, Iuliu Ivanciuc appreciates Colas’ know-how, as a “company that’s open to new ideas”. In June 2007, he opened a new center, in Brasov. “The company was operating at national level. Today, it’s setting up in towns and cities”, he notes. The Brasov center is the first stage in the deployment process. Already, Iuliu is thinking about developing it by adding pipework and ballast pit activities to road building. For the time being, he replies to numerous calls for tender and is setting up relationships of trust with local authorities. His secret: work and a logical mindset. This IT specialist has multi-tasked in the Group since 1995: successively quantity surveyor and topographer supervisor and site foreman. A career path marked by several training programs at the Boulogne headquarters: following on a topography module, he attended a course in team management and negotiating with public sector contacts. “Fascinating!”

“I always wanted to work in construction”

After qualifying as a draughtsman for the construction industry, Guy-Jean first worked on jobsites where he was a warehouse clerk in charge of ordering supplies. Then he moved to RPI, a plant that made prefabricated concrete slabs, which took the name of Prefaco. He worked there in the department that handled orders, production and delivery of the slabs. But that was 17 years ago. “I always wanted to work in the construction industry,” he explains. “Today I would like to work more with logistics and dispatch management.” Guy-Jean spent a year in mainland France on an IT course, which he enjoyed. He likes to play jazz guitar in his spare time and is a fervent admirer of Joe Pass, the legendary American jazz guitarist, but what he enjoys most is composing on his computer.
Agostinho Gonçalves Martins
WOODWORKER
COLAS IDF/N CONSTRUCTION AGENCY
FRANCE

“The Group offers good living and working conditions”

After spending 13 years as a woodworker in a building and construction company, Agostinho Gonçalves Martins decided to offer his services to the construction unit at Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie’s Chatou profit center in 2003. “I decided to join the Group because it offered better living and working conditions: a thirteenth month’s salary, an efficient works council, bonuses for the kids like the Christmas party. All the little extras mean a lot to me,” he affirms. “But I wanted to stay in public works, because I can’t imagine myself working in an office or wearing a tie every day!” Although Agostinho enjoys his current job, he is eager to benefit from training offered by Colas to update his knowledge or broaden his professional horizons. “I applied for training as a crane operator. Unfortunately I wasn’t accepted, but as I would like to operate machines, I have just put in an application to be trained on an excavator.”
“You learn constantly from working in a team”

So you think law is boring? When you listen to Denise talk about her job as a legal executive at Smac nothing could be further from the truth. For the last ten years, she has used her legal expertise to advise profit centers in the Ile-de-France/Nord/Normandie region. Her legal assistance is required both upstream and downstream of construction contracts. “The job of corporate legal advisor does not consist only in litigation, there is also a great deal of prevention work trying to anticipate problems that can arise on the jobsite.” Denise is fascinated by this aspect of her job. “It requires imagination – you have to think of all possible scenarios, search out every little wrinkle.” Denise sees her role as giving practical legal advice in the field. “You have to stay close to the field to take the right decisions while keeping enough distance.” Her skills and commitment to her job led to her promotion to department head in 2001, about which she remains levelheaded. “You learn constantly from working in a team,” she says.
Bernard Verdier  
**MECHANIC**  
**SACER ATLANTIQUE**  
**FRANCE**

“Finally I get to be a mechanic…”

Bernard climbs down from the cab of his patching machine to talk to us. A mechanic at the Toulouse profit center of Sacer Atlantique, he loves his profession – assembling, dismantling and cleaning... “You never know what you’re going to find,” he says in a deep, friendly voice. Eight years from retirement, he tells us he still enjoys his work. He sometimes travels to jobsites, but most of the time he stays in the Bruguières workshop. The days when he traveled the length and breadth of France are over. He began as a mechanic, but then operated a three-wheeled roller and a rubber-tired roller and a bitumen heater. “I have wanted to be a mechanic for as long as I can remember, but at school they pushed me into taking a qualification in masonry and electricity,” he recalls. Finally working again as a mechanic, Bernard, nicknamed “Teddy Bear” by his colleagues, is known for his kindness and good nature. He says he only wants one thing: for mechanics to be seen as a valuable resource for the company.
Nadine Trentini
CHIEF ACCOUNTANT
COLAS MIDI-MEDITERRANEE
FRANCE

“The atmosphere is friendly and people-centered”

From the moment she walked into the Société des Grands Travaux de l’Est in Marseille on a temporary assignment back in January 1974, she has never left the company, which was acquired by Colas in the 1980s. “Since 1997, I have been chief accountant. In particular I prepare the balance sheet for Colas Midi-Méditerranée and work on the consolidated accounts,” she says. “Working at head office, I’m at the heart of everything, and fully ‘live’ the life of the company.” The only pressures are meeting monthly accounting deadlines and closing out the books at year’s-end. But that’s all part of the job. “We also get so many benefits – career advancement, because of the trust our bosses place in us and through training programs, employee shareholding and healthcare schemes, and so on. In spite of its size, the Group has stayed friendly and people-centered.” In her free time, Nadine enjoys tending her garden and caring for her pets, and in the summer she loves to go sailing. But in recent months, most of her weekends have been devoted to her grandson, Gabin.

Guillaume Wautelet
SITE MACHINE OPERATOR
SCREG SUD-OUEST
FRANCE

“From healthcare to public works – I did a real 180°!”

Guillaume drives site machines dead straight, but his career path has been a winding one! Watching him work, who would have thought that three years ago he was heading for the healthcare sector? “I have a qualification in healthcare and social work but I was attracted to public works. Perhaps it’s because I have relations in the industry and also because I thought I’d make a better living.” Early in 2007, Guillaume became a site machine operator at the Toulouse profit center of Screg Sud-Ouest, after having started out as a road worker. Do the healthcare and public works sectors have anything in common? “The variety of tasks, the teamwork and the chance to meet new people,” replies Guillaume. And what is different about them? “I left a female-dominated world for a very male-dominated one. But it’s good to see that there are more and more women in public works!”
“I’m proud to represent my company all over the world”

When Fernando De Sa joined Prosign as a mechanic in 1974, could he ever have imagined he would have a globetrotting career a few years later? Thanks to the company’s training system, he advanced rapidly, and in 1983 he began traveling the world, training road marking teams to use “road paint Ferraris”… as he calls the rapid paint application machines manufactured by the company! He has been all over the world, including Russia, Chile, Lithuania, China and Gabon… in fact, he has lost count of how many countries he has worked in. “I don’t think I’ve been to Australia!” he reflects. A native of Portugal, Fernando never tires of visiting new places and encountering new customs and new people. “When you work in a new country, you always make friends,” he says. He was promoted to supervisor of the after-sales service at the Noyon plant in 1996, and was made production supervisor in 2007. He has only one wish: “Keep making even better and more powerful ‘Ferraris’ and tour the world presenting them.”

“Sustainable development techniques are being used more and more”

After graduating as an engineer from the school of chemical engineering in Lille, Caroline took a Master’s at Manchester University specializing in biomass. She wrote her dissertation on the use of sunflower seed oil in diesel engines. “That was twenty years ago,” she exclaims, “but I was sure it would be a major issue one day!” Passionate about environmental chemistry, Caroline is currently technical manager for the Caribbean/French Guiana region, with responsibility for all the Colas laboratories in this zone. The job requires her to travel a great deal, giving her the opportunity to observe that, to her great satisfaction, sustainable development techniques are being used more and more. “We’re innovating in all parts of the business, in binders, paints... everywhere, in fact.” A keen linguist, she would like to be involved on international contracts in the Caribbean zone. “It opens your mind. For example, English civil engineers have other standards and norms. You learn a lot.”
Petr Kostensky
MACHINE OPERATOR
INZIENERSKE STAVBY
SLOVAKIA

“Here, I’m working in a family business!”

Petr Kostensky has always been mad about machines: from bikes to cars, not to mention engines or trucks. He could never imagine spending his days behind a desk. He started working for Inžienerske Stavby, where his father worked in 1977; he is now a machine operator. “At the time, the company was hiring labour to build pipelines. I started off working on excavators,” he recalls. Then in 1982-83 he was sent to Iraq to help build an irrigation system: “a very interesting assignment, and a very demanding one – and not just because of the weather. Since the countryside was very flat, the greatest precision was required.” Thirty years after joining the company, Petr, now aged 51, still likes working there just as much: “Working here, it’s like working in a family business. And with the technology and equipment changing very rapidly, the work is now less onerous than it used to be,” he reckons. Petr is keen on cycling, skiing and rafting and has been a blood donor since he was 18, if possible four times a year, the maximum permitted!
Docteur Tombohasy

BUSH DOCTOR
COLAS MADAGASCAR
MADAGASCAR

“I try to bring about a change in people’s behavior”

Doctor Tombohasy is no run-of-the-mill physician. His visiting rounds are… in the bush! Extremely committed to preventive actions for staff and their families, he travels to all the Colas worksites. In Madagascar, health is a major concern, and so prevention a vital element. “I focus my attention on malaria, diarrhea and STDs. There are a lot of things that can’t go on as they are and I try to bring about a change in people’s behavior.” On average, he sees about forty people a day, in places which are often difficult to reach. But the results of his actions are ample reward for the work he puts in. “Our proactive policy reduced the number of STD cases by one-third just two months after I arrived, and today, there are only a few isolated cases.” Doctor Tombohasy’s action extends even beyond the Group’s perimeter: Colas’ social aid centers also provide emergency care for local populations.
Yannick Guillaume
SURVEYOR/TOPOGRAPHER
COLAS CENTRE-OUEST/LE CLERC TP
FRANCE

“A Group like Colas offers lots of job opportunities”

+++ Ask Yannick about his daily routine, and he replies passionately: “I’ve got the best job in the world! I’m independent with 50% desk work, 50% fieldwork, 100% in the countryside – everything I need to be happy!” Yannick uses robotized equipment and infrastructure, road and network design software to produce plans, working drawings and layouts for private and public contracts. He works closely with project engineers within a 50 km radius of the Le Clerc TP profit center of Colas Centre-Ouest in Brittany. Before joining Colas in 1999 with a qualification in surveying, he had worked as a surveyor for some twenty years. Now age 48, Yannick is thinking about the future. “A group like Colas offers lots of job opportunities,” he states, but he has yet to decide which one to choose. Perhaps he will find inspiration during one of his long motorcycle trips!
"My favorite time is chatting with the teams at the end of the day"
When he first arrived in France in 2005, Alexander didn’t speak a word of French. Age 29, Alexander comes from Berlin and holds a construction engineering degree from Leipzig University. His French has improved greatly in the space of two years! Hired in September 2006 by Surbeco (Spac) in Bonneuil-sur-Marne, he is now a costing engineer. “My job consists in looking for and selecting invitations to bid, choosing contractors and carrying out the costing,” he explains. “The job allows me to work both in an office and in the field. I get to meet people and find technical solutions.” Although he thinks the French are less well organized than the Germans, he thinks they are very good communicators. Alexander is very happy to be part of the Group, particularly because of its international dimension. He has already been on two training courses, and is aware that the Group offers real career opportunities. “I would like to take a post outside France in a few years. I love discovering new cultures.”
Alain Fournier
SITE MANAGER
SACER PARIS-NORD-EST
FRANCE

“For me, job satisfaction comes onsite!”

A highly motivated perfectionist with 20 years behind him at the Vesoul profit center of Sacer Paris-Nord-Est, Alain
Fournier has worked his way up through practically all the jobs in road surfacing – laborer, compactor then paver operator,
team leader, foreman and now site supervisor. “I’ve always welcomed change,” he says. He takes a training course every year,
exceeding the minimum required for promotion, and recommends his co-workers do the same. Following a course in time
management, he does his new job as if he was running a company, taking customer orders, supervising teams on a number of
jobsites and managing costs. The only drawback is the paperwork. For him, job satisfaction comes onsite. He sees the next step
as running a sector, once he has completely mastered his current job.
“Being a member of the Colas Board of Directors is a great joy”

Member of the Colas Board of Directors since the company became part of the Bouygues Group in 1986, Olivier Poupart-Lafarge has always been there at every history-making milestone for Colas. It is the Board which, at the request of General Management, authorises or not any important decision concerning the company. Implantation in the U.S., deployment of new activities such as the rail sector, and more recently freight, or bitumen, such have been some of the major choices determining Group policy. “As members of the Board, we have a very heavy responsibility towards thousands of people, shareholders, employees and corporate clients, since the way we vote engages the company’s future, points out Olivier Poupart-Lafarge. I must, however, say that being a member of the Colas Board of Directors is a great joy. Strategic choices have always succeeded. The company has been constantly growing over the past 20 years and has always turned in outstanding performances without showing any less favourable periods. That’s a rare feat!”
Bart Boulpaep
SLIP FORMWORK OPERATOR
COLAS BELGIUM/WE GEBO BELGIUM

“Achieving something together is a fine accomplishment”

At 33, Bart Boulpaep works as a slip formwork operator and has been with the Colas Belgium subsidiary Wegebo for thirteen years now. With his mechanic’s diploma, he had the opportunity to follow different training programs within the company. “I had an uncle who worked on a crane, and that was what spurred me to work on sites.” At Wegebo, he specialises in manufacturing concrete. “I like attention to detail.” If he enjoys being on the ground, it is because “each day brings its share of challenges.” Bart is delighted that his job is “interesting and always different.” Working hours, weather or geological conditions are sometimes a little hard, but “we’ve got to be flexible. Teamwork’s very important for me, because we all depend on each other. Achieving something together is a fine accomplishment.” Bart spends his spare time with his family, in Asse. When his 5-year old daughter says “my daddy’s job is making streets,” he feels extremely proud.

Mariusz Ratajczak
ROLLER OPERATOR
STRADA POLAND

“I feel like I’m helping my country develop”

For the twenty-two years he has been with Strada, Colas’ Polish subsidiary, Mariusz Ratajczak has seen a spectacular change in the make-up of his country’s road network. This gives him a real sense of pride when he looks back on the successive roles he’s played – mechanic, highways workman and today roller operator: “Just a few years back, Polish roads were in a very basic state and this was a real check on economic development. Through the many sites on which I’ve worked, I really have the feeling that, in my own way, I’ve played a part in helping my country take off and grow.” The refurbishing of the Polish road network has indeed enabled the Polish government to promote the country’s position as a European crossroads and multiply exchanges with the seven bordering countries. A dynamic virtuous circle in which Mariusz intends to continue to take part.
He used to love being outdoors, working in the fields at his own pace. Now he is a team member in a workshop. Was it by choice? “Not at first,” replies David Mouchel. “After qualifying for working with agricultural equipment, I spent six years working on a farm. But my employer had to lay me off. My brother-in-law, who worked for Axter (Smac) in Sons-et-Ronchères in northern France, told me about a job that was available in installation, so I applied for it.” David stayed in that job for six months before becoming a polyester laminator, a job he has now held for eleven years. “We manufacture elements in glass fiber intended for dry roofing systems,” he explains. “It’s demanding work. We all wear protective equipment including coveralls, gloves and a mask. The worst is in the summer, it gets very hot under all that gear!” Still, David likes his work and the great team spirit. An excellent worker, he has been appointed a Compagnon de l’Arche. “I see it as a great honor, a reward for my services to the company,” he says. “Last year I got to go on the special Compagnon trip to Morocco that Colas organized. What great memories …” David is hoping for promotion in the company one of these days. In the meantime, he spends his free time fishing and biking. Apparently, David is someone who likes contrast…

“Being made a Compagnon de l’Arche was a great honor”

Koffi Konan
PROJECT SUPERVISOR
COLAS GABON
GABON

“In Africa, the usefulness of a road is clear from the word go”

Originally from the Ivory Coast, Koffi Konan always wanted to be in public works and made sure that he did everything to reach his goal. After his end-of-school baccalauréat, he was awarded a grant from the Ivory Coast government and left for Paris to study at the ESTP higher school for public works. After four years in France, he returned home and was hired by Colas. After spending thirteen years in the Ivory Coast, then five in Benin, he has now been working for two years in Gabon. As site experience piled up, he took on more and more responsibilities and became head project supervisor. Koffi certainly learned the trade in France, but it is in Africa that he has opened out. “In Europe, road sites are mainly renovation. In Africa, there are really magnificent building sites whose usefulness is clear from the word go.” Among the constructions that stand out for him, Koffi proudly remembers the Bondoukou-Bouna road, classed as Colas’ most impressive earthwork sites in the world in 1998.

David Mouchel
POLYESTER LAMINATOR
SPAC/COFOR
FRANCE

“Being made a Compagnon de l’Arche was a great honor”
“I came across people who were welcoming”

“Not a day goes by without my learning something.” Hamid has never lost his enthusiasm for his work. He joined Colas Mayotte ten years ago as an accounts officer and today he trains newly hired site foremen and site managers to use cost and management accounting software. “I’m also in charge of safety equipment, stock and distribution,” he adds. Back home in his native Morocco, after graduating from high school with a bookkeeping diploma, Hamid had a completely different career – as a violinist! He played professionally for 12 years. While staying with his sister in Mayotte he decided to answer a Colas ad. “At the time I needed work to be able to buy musical instruments,” he explains. But he soon found himself fascinated by this previously unknown world. He discovered another way of life, teamwork and people who were welcoming – “a wonderful environment” as he puts it. “Now my work takes up all my time, and music has become a hobby.”
Frédéric Kopka
SITE TECHNICIAN
SMAC/AXTER/ESSEMES SERVICES
FRANCE

“Something new every day…”

Frédéric Kopka knows everything there is to know about smoke clearance systems. He has been working for Axter subsidiary Essemes Services for the past fourteen years. He arrived with plenty of baggage, as a qualified mechanic in maintenance, micromechanics and automation with solid experience. Over time, he became more specialized. A Compagnon de l’Arche, he is now an itinerant site technician, traveling from site to site to supervise assembly and maintenance of equipment. “The different types of mechanisms, products and projects combined with tasks such as preparing quotations and keeping track of customers make this a really fascinating job,” he contends. “There’s something different to do every day!” Based at the Nord – Nord-Est profit center in Sons-et-Ronchères, northern France, Frédéric is happy where he is and has no intention of changing jobs. “Where will I be in ten years? Here, of course!” he laughs. Although he gives a lot of time to his work, Frédéric still finds time for relaxation. “Every Saturday, I do archery with my son. I started a year and a half ago and I’ve really got the bug.”
Olivier Thiriot
QUALIFIED DEMOLITION WORKER
COLAS IDFN/BRUNEL
FRANCE

“I want to rise through the ranks – this job makes it all possible”

“I’ve always known Brunel – it was the company my dad worked for, and I worked for them too during vacations from the time I was 16,” says Olivier. After qualifying as a skilled laborer in public works, Olivier joined the French national railroad utility SNCF at age 18 to work on line maintenance. But he was already a father, and having to work nights proved difficult. After three years he quit and applied to Brunel Démolition. They hired him and sent him on an 8-week training course to qualify in demolition. Everything else, “you learn on the job,” he adds. What he likes most about the job is the variety. Every day is a different jobsite, working with different people, “although we all know each other.” Now age 24, Olivier has lots of plans. “I want to rise through the ranks, and become a foreman... maybe even a site manager,” he says. “This job makes it all possible.”
Manoa Manarias

BOATSWAIN
COLAS MADAGASCAR
MADAGASCAR

“It was the excellent state of the ship that swayed me”

Manoa Manarias has been boatswain for ten years now. He embarked for the first time in 1997 and worked for two years for a fishing company, then on a tugboat before joining Colas Madagascar in 2002. “It was the safety conditions and the excellent state of the ship to which I was to be appointed that swayed me,” he underlined. Manoa did not begin straightaway on the Barge Express. “Before the Barge Express, it was another boat that ferried equipment and machinery from one site to the next. It sank during a cyclone, he testified, clearly moved. Then, Colas Madagascar invested in this new barge. Today it’s faster and safer by boat than by road!”
Nathalie Pierret
HR ASSISTANT
COLAS BELGIUM
BELGIUM

“Regular contact is indispensable”

Nathalie Pierret has worked in Human Resources at Colas Belgium in Brussels for two years. It is not the career she had expected when she completed her degree in communications. “I did an internship in public relations after graduating, but the ‘glitzy’ side of it didn’t really appeal to me. So I took a Masters in business management, and decided to go into Human Resources.” Nathalie has no regrets: she enjoys helping her colleagues fulfill themselves while helping the company develop. “At Colas Belgium, the Human Resources department isn’t compartmentalized, so we handle everything from A to Z: recruitment, training, pay, and so on. I really like this continuity in my work; it means I can keep track of people right through their careers.” One day a week, Nathalie travels all over French-speaking Belgium, meeting employees in different profit centers. “I think that regular contact with all the personnel is indispensable in this job – it allows us to understand what everyone experiences every day. Proximity to supervisors also helps us manage people’s needs better. We try to find solutions, to introduce improvements. It’s fascinating!”

Claude Laroche
WELDER
SINTRA
CANADA

“Fifty years of service!”

Hired in August 1957 by Sintra, heavy plant repair and design welder Claude Laroche can be rightly proud of his fifty years of service! “I followed in my father’s footsteps, one of the company’s first employees who joined in 1941, he recalls. Since I’ve been with the firm, I’ve seen a lot of people come... and go into retirement!” Although his is a risky job, Claude knows that the company is very strict about safety and has always done its utmost to avoid occupational accidents. And then, he’s lucky enough to be a stalwart force of nature...

“In fifty years of service, I’ve only been off work for three weeks all told! It has to be said I do get lots of exercise,” he explains. And that’s not just idle talk! Each day, after work, Claude begins his work-out with push-ups and sit-ups. Then he’s off on his bike or brisk walking. “I can do 20 km a day by bike or walk 15 km at 6 kph.” And when the weather’s bad, there’s always the exercise bike!
Ariel Ross
HUMAN RESOURCES GENERALIST
BARRETTE PAVING
UNITED STATES

“Barrett Paving has a genuinely proactive approach to HR”

Ariel Ross is one of the new recruits based at Barrett Paving’s corporate office in New Jersey. She has worked as a Human Resources Generalist for 2 years. “I chose Barrett Paving because it’s a company that is active in creating and implementing new Human Resource programs.” Today, Ariel regularly travels between the company’s 12 regions, where she meets Barrett’s 1,400 employees to pass on messages from the corporate office and offer them in-house training programs. “This job enables me to think about the models I came across during my studies. I also enjoy traveling to the different regions to get to know our workforce.” At the corporate office, Ariel is the driving force behind a number of new initiatives. “I’m in the middle of organizing a company picnic; I think it’s a good way to get to know each other outside of the office,” she explains.

Kadour Messalti
MAISON
SACER SUD-EST
FRANCE

“The seniors have transmitted their love for the job”

“Accounting wasn’t my thing, recounts Kadour Messalti. I didn’t get my degree and was left wondering what to do.” So he made an appointment with the Job Counseling Center in Lyon. “I applied for a work-study program in public works; three weeks later I was on a project with Sacer Sud-Est, which had agreed to take me on, after the first week of classes.” It was a demanding school. For thirteen months, he learned the job and did so well that the Lyon profit center offered him a permanent position as a road worker. “After the first year, the team’s mason took me under his wing and shared his know-how,” the young man recounts, who says he appreciated the help of the seniors. “They are passing on the tricks of the trade, transmitting their love for the job.” Although, in the dead of winter, the work is a bit harsh, Kadour likes the feeling of freedom that comes from working outdoors. “Maybe you don’t dream about this job when you’re a kid, but it’s a good trade,” he assures. Today, it is his turn to teach two trainees what he has learned. Another passing of the tricks of the trade, which gladdens his heart.
Prakash Yadav

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
HINDUSTAN COLAS LTD/HINCOL
INDIA

“I’m aiming to create a good atmosphere in the company”

Currently he is the Chief Operating Officer of Hindustan Colas Ltd (Hincol) and has been working with the company for the past 2 years. He has been with the parent company of the Joint Venture, Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) for 15 years handling various marketing assignments, before being deputed to Hindustan Colas Ltd. A specialist in the marketing of bitumen and value-added bituminous products, Prakash Yadav addresses each employee on an equal footing. “I’m aiming to create a good working atmosphere in the company,” he underlines. The results are there for all to see, thanks to a highly motivated team: “our growth has been fabulous over the past two years.” The launch of Road Bond, a new product dedicated to repairing potholes, will contribute to future successes. A marketing man, Prakash has a wide experience of marketing the entire range of petroleum products at HPCL. Today, this rich experience enables him to embrace a wider spectrum incorporating strategy, turnover growth and project management. He takes special delight, however, in his role as mentor and manager, celebrating “each little victory” with his team.
Hired by Baltifalt, Colas’ Estonian subsidiary, as project leader in 1997, Tarmo Lillsoo quickly moved up the ladder. Four years later, he was appointed Area Manager and has since run the Tallinn office. His rise through the ranks deeply convinced him that: “for projects to be successful, everyone must be involved and teamwork is essential.” “The average age of teams on the ground is often very young and, while this is a clear advantage because of their dynamic drive, it is also a handicap from an experience point of view,” he analyzes. “So our approach consists in building teams in which ‘old hands’ can oversee young blood and pass on their experience. In return, the younger members contribute motivation and the desire to surpass themselves.” This alchemy pays off since, for a few years now, Baltifalt has been following Estonia’s growth curve and has imposed itself as one of the country’s leading asphalt mix manufacturers.
“If you really have the will to succeed, you can”

“I joined Colas in 1968, which means that I’ve been in the company for 39 years! I was 17 at the time and had just arrived from Portugal. I had no real choice because I needed a job. But I liked the company, so I stayed.” Looking back, Manuel is very proud of his career at the Chaumes-en-Brie works center at Colas Ile-de-France Normandie. He began as a worker. “I held the shovel and pushed the wheelbarrow,” he recalls. Then he operated the compactor and the backhoe loader, before turning to the grader. “I’m now in great demand and I sometimes have to work on two or three earthworks projects on the same day. Even though I have to make sacrifices, such as getting up at 5 o’clock on a winter’s morning to get to a site, I have no doubts – if you really have the will to succeed, you can at Colas. I just can’t understand why young people who are out of work don’t choose this industry.”
Benoît Bolot
TECHNICAL SUPERVISOR
SCREG EST
FRANCE

“I don’t have time to get bored, thank goodness!”

A technical supervisor for the contracting companies and production facilities of the Screg Est Alsace and Lorraine profit centers, Benoît Bolot is in charge of five technicians. “With the training I give, the work I do on technical guarantees for sites and quality audits (ISO 9001:2000 certification and Laboroute approvals), I don’t have time to get bored, thank goodness! I am in permanent contact with customers, design offices, human resources departments and legal departments.” By October 2007, Benoît is due to have trained the design offices in his sector to use the Ecoware Group software, which provides a comparison of different roadway structures in terms of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Benoît is not short of ambition: in 2006, he earned an engineering qualification through a system of credits awarded for work experience. Well aware of the doors this qualification opens, he is mentoring a member of his team who is currently taking evening classes to study for an engineering degree.
Christophe Bataillon
RESEARCH CONSULTANCY TECHNICIAN
SACER SUD-EST
FRANCE

“I just love the atmosphere in the team”

It was at age 16 that Christophe found his way: “A career adviser told me about the profession of surveyor/topographer, and I was hooked on the idea.” After graduating from college he was hired by a surveyor’s office to work on the Lyon tram project. “It was an internal audit assignment for Colas, which made it my first contact with the Group,” he recalls. He then joined the office of a consulting engineer in the construction sector. It changed his life: “I immediately found public works really appealing.” On returning home to his girlfriend in Montpellier, he was contacted by Sacer Sud-Est, via the French national public works federation. He is now a project supervisor. He tends to prefer working on private-sector contracts: “They are often less complete and leave a certain amount of latitude in project design.” Christophe gets on well with his colleagues. “I just love the atmosphere in the team. It makes you want to become part of it and contribute to the team spirit.”
Alain Diaz
CONCRETE PLANT SUPERVISOR
COLAS MARTINIQUE
MARTINIQUE

“I totally changed sectors”

Formerly in the French armed forces, Alain joined Colas Martinique in 1988, age 37. He was already familiar with the world of public works and site equipment as he had been an equipment and driving instructor in the French army. He began at Colas as site foreman, then became a maintenance mechanic and progressed to assistant supervisor of the maintenance shop. He seemed set on a career path when in 2006 his boss offered him a job as supervisor of the future concrete plant in Martinique. “I accepted,” he says. “I totally changed sectors and went off to spend a month on a training course in a concrete plant in French Guiana to learn the job.” When this was over, he supervised construction of the plant, and he has been running it ever since. He tracks orders, supervises manufacturing operations, and dispatches the concrete trucks – all tasks he enjoys doing. Now age 56, Alain is keen to take on further responsibility by supervising several concrete plants or having regional responsibility for the concrete business. The market is well poised, there are major contracts under way and business is booming.

Jean-Jacques Gendillou
TRUCK DRIVER
COLAS SUD-OUEST
FRANCE

“How crazy can it get? Imagine qualifying as a truck driver before you have your driver’s license. This is just what happened to Jean-Jacques Gendillou. “I was 17 at the time and I had to work after school so that I could pay for driving lessons.” In 1975, Jean-Jacques joined the Limoges profit center of Colas Sud-Ouest, and delivered many consignments throughout the region in his 26-tonner. He clocks up around 35,000 km per year, totaling something like one million kilometers overall for the company. There’s no denying that Jean-Jacques is wild about driving… but he is not a wild driver! In over thirty years, he has had no accidents, not even an insurance claim. “I was well taught,” he says modestly. But driving is not the only great interest of Jean-Jacques, now in his mid-fifties. Indeed, he only works part-time. He has plenty of other things to keep him busy, though: he is deputy-mayor of his village, president of the industry court of the Limoges labor tribunal, union representative for Colas Sud-Ouest, general secretary of the company works council and vice-president of the local branch of ANACR, an association that supports survivors of the World War II underground resistance movement in France. Jean-Jacques Gendillou lives life in the fast lane!
Raymond Rodot
GRADER OPERATOR
AND SITE FOREMAN
COLAS EST/SOCIOE
JURASSIENNE D’ENTREPRISE
FRANCE

“I’ll have been at Colas for more than forty years”

When Raymond joined Colas at age 18, he could not imagine spending his entire working life in the company. Now at nearly 55, he reminisces, “At the time, SJE was called something different and barely had 30 employees. Today there are almost 125 workers in this Colas Est profit center. I went into public works because I loved the idea. My brother operated site machines and I wanted to do the same thing.” After first working in Paris, where he found there were “too many people”, Raymond returned home. This proved a good idea as he was hired at short notice to replace a grader operator who had suddenly quit the company. Raymond worked hard and in 1993 was even part of the first group of employees to receive the Losange d’Or award. After 20 years operating his grader in all weathers, including winter (“a tough season in this mountainous region, when we get called out to clear the roads of snow and repair them”), Raymond applied for promotion to site foreman, but continued to operate the grader. His request was granted. Today he still does both jobs. His team’s compactor operator is fully able to take over his site foreman duties when the grader needs to be operated full-time.
Christophe Husson
SKILLED ROAD PAINT APPLIER AND TEAM LEADER
SOMARO/PROSIGN
FRANCE

“I like the freedom my job gives me”

● ● ● Christophe loves the outdoors, and has found the ideal profession to work in. After graduating from agricultural college, he worked for four years for Prosign (a subsidiary of Somaro) in eastern France on temporary assignments, work experience that led him to be hired as a skilled road paint applier. He has since advanced, and is now in charge of a 3-man team. He particularly enjoys the freedom his job gives him. “My bosses put a lot of trust in us, we feel appreciated.” Don’t mention desk jobs to Christophe! “I hate being shut in; it’s a real pleasure to work outside.” He was appointed a Compagnon de la Route, but is shy when it comes to talking about it. He would rather talk about his favorite pastime – renovating a farmhouse in the hills of eastern France.
Olivier Deschamps
MACHINE DRIVER
SECO-RAIL
FRANCE

“I prepared the track for the world speed record”

Trains run in the family. His father was a manager at the French national railways company, SNCF. As for Olivier Deschamps, he drives a track tamper, a 50-meter long machine for stabilising and levelling tracks after renovation or maintenance work. “I joined the Group in October 1982,” says Olivier. “I had a fitter’s vocational training certificate and was lucky enough to be taken on by the Lyon Tamping Branch.” Trained on the job by the old hands, Olivier loves his trade which takes him across France. “The work’s never dull, crews change regularly and we go through superb countryside. And not everyone has the chance to drive along the tracks: you need a special licence.” He has recently worked on the TGV East project: “I prepared the tracks on which the world speed record was broken,” he says proudly. On the road all week, he enjoys being back home in the Paris region where he can strum his guitar, play chess or, when the weather is fine, go fishing.
Chitmanee Chiranantaratan
LOGISTIC AND PROCUREMENT MANAGER
TIPCO ASPHALT PUBLIC CO (TASCO)
THAILAND

“I like making decisions in a dynamic environment”

She has climbed the ladder through work commitment. Attached to Tipco Asphalt Public Co, Thailand’s largest asphalt supplier with a 50% market share, Chitmanee Chiranantaratan manages purchasing and supply chain for raw materials (bitumen) in liaison with local and foreign plants and refineries. The company has a dedicated fleet of 300 trucks and 5 tankers. “I like making decisions in a dynamic environment, in contact with international marketing, sea transport, logistics and procurement so as to optimise costs,” she says. For someone who began her career as a secretary before going on to purchasing, the dividing line between family and professional life is often a thin one. “In 2000, the 30% interest taken by Colas in Tipco Asphalt Public Co Ltd was a real asset,” says the young, internationally-oriented woman. In the pipeline: seeking out new sources of procurement in Singapore, Korea and Japan for 2008.

Tony Manzi
LABORATORY MANAGER
CANADIAN ROAD BUILDERS/GECAN
CANADA

“We’re the only private asphalt performance grading laboratory in Western Canada”

After 33 years spent working with Shell Canada, particularly at the Montreal refinery, Tony Manzi took on a new challenge. In 2003, he joined Gecan, a subsidiary of Canadian Road Builders Inc. in Alberta. “I was drawn by the opportunity to head up the only asphalt performance grading laboratory in Western Canada.” The AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials), ASTM and ISO-certified laboratory offers its services to companies operating in the oil and road construction sectors. With the exception of budget constraints, Tony likes everything about his job: the level of responsibility, sales and marketing, the autonomy and travelling. He also gives presentations on liquid asphalt at the NACTECH (North American Colas Technical Center) in Ohio and trains his teams in asphalt performance grading. His career with the Colas group had a pretty unusual start: his first interview took place while he was on a salmon-fishing trip in Alaska…
“I climbed the ladder rung by rung”

After gaining a university diploma in civil engineering in Toulouse and a Masters in civil engineering in Lille, Christian Héréson joined Colas Guadeloupe and rose up through the ranks. Foreman, then site foreman, and then assistant site manager, he is now a site manager himself. His projects are growing in size. He has just finished a contract for refurbishment of the Marie-Galante airport and is supervising a large-scale urban improvement contract that will last until the end of this year. He is the official representative of Colas Guadeloupe for the entire Marie-Galante sector. A native of the region, in his free time he pursues his two occupations of hunting and scuba diving. “I grew up in this environment – I love nature, hunting and walking in the woods,” he says. In the airs, he pursues doves and wood pigeons. Under water, he goes after rock lobsters and the fish that live on the coral reefs. His five-year-old daughter accompanies him already.
Four years ago, Sophie Gayvallet, a graduate of the ESCP engineering school, changed both regions and jobs. She moved from Picardy in northern France to Provence in southern France, and from the building sector to public works. “I had been a sales rep at Bouygues Construction for about four years when my husband was transferred to Marseille,” she explains. “At the time, Screg Sud-Est was looking for sales reps. I applied for a job.” Today, Sophie works in the Provence and Côte-d’Azur profit centers. She deals with projects up to the negotiation stage, “and I get more and more involved upstream in improving our margins, increasing our success rate in winning contracts and creating customer loyalty,” she adds. Sophie likes this contact job, which requires an ability to listen, good internal communications skills and a taste for teamwork. “I deal with the private sector and come into contact with very different types of companies, such as major retailers and haulage and logistics companies. I have a lot of independence in my work.” Sophie has found her niche in the sunny south of France.
Peato Valao
FORM SETTER
COLAS NEW CALEDONIA
NEW CALEDONIA

“In my job, you have to be a master of all trades”

Form setter with Colas New Caledonia, Peato Valao lives for fieldwork and appreciates a job well done. “You have to be a master of all trades: frame-working, concreting, reinforcement. I’ve learned how to become a multi-tasker. Despite it being a tough job, Peato enjoys going to work on the sites every day. “It’s a hard trade, you have to be brave and work in weather conditions that can be difficult to cope with, but I feel at home in the job.” He appreciates the fact that the Group is always at the cutting edge of progress when it comes to equipment and techniques. “I can see how my job’s changing.” Peato has had the opportunity to work on varied projects, from the building of simple accommodation to 10-storey towers. He also took part in the construction of an industrial building. Although Peato has both feet firm on the ground, it’s in the Pacific Ocean’s depths that he lets off steam on week-ends when he delves into his favorite sport, underwater fishing.
Jerry Farnham
EQUIPMENT MANAGER
BARRETT PAVING/
MIDLAND ASPHALT MATERIALS
UNITED STATES

“We were one of the first companies purchased by Colas in the United States that does emulsion!”

Jerry Farnham is always up for a challenge. With two marathons behind him, including two half-marathons he ran in tandem with his wife, he is a member of Colas USA’s long-distance running team. Equipment manager with Midland Asphalt Materials Inc., Jerry also enjoys the challenges of his work. “In addition to the day-to-day management of our machine fleets, I also oversee the arrival of new equipment,” he explains. Since Midland was bought by Barrett Paving in February 2000 to become part of Colas, Jerry has visited several European building sites in order to find out about and import new technologies to the United States. “Recently, I’ve been involved in introducing the FiberMat anti-cracking process developed by Colas UK to the US market, as well as the design by Secmair of a machine specifically aimed at the United States,” he enthuses.

Taken on by Midland at the end of his studies in 1988, Jerry has dedicated the last 19 years to a company he is proud of. “In the sector, Midland was one of the first North American emulsion companies, it’s very rewarding.”
Owen Lanier
VICE-PRESIDENT
BRANSCOME
UNITED STATES

“Colas’ decentralized organization gives everyone responsibility on the ground”

Less than two years ago, Owen Lanier was still President of Mega Contractors Inc., the road resurfacing company set up by his father in the 1970s. But at the beginning of 2006, the company was taken over by Branscome. Today, Owen is Vice-President of Branscome, in charge of Operations. He doesn’t regret his decision to sell the family business. “I like the fact that I no longer have to deal directly with the administrative aspects of the company concerning insurance, banking, or bonding capacity and the personal guaranty involved,” he explains. “It’s far less day-to-day stress!” Above all, Owen is able to spend more time passing on his experience. “Training the people working with me, teaching them to analyze a situation so that they can anticipate potential problems, that’s what I like doing today and it’s very rewarding.” Still able to look at the Group from the outside, Owen congratulates Colas on its approach: “Colas’ decentralized organization gives everyone responsibility on the ground. It guarantees accountability and performance which produces positive results.”

Jean-Claude Servan
REINFORCING STEEL ERECTOR
GTOI/BUILDING BRANCH
REUNION ISLAND

“I like to be on the go, change, move forward and vary my activities”

When he joined the Group, Jean-Claude Servan was 17. Now he’s 55. “GTOI is my second home!” he declares cheerfully. Reinforcing steel erector, Jean-Claude has taken the company to his heart: “A friend once suggested I should become a staff representative. I ran for the position and, over the years, I got hooked to the game. Today, I’m also a member of the works committee and the health & safety committee. It’s a passionate responsibility because we’re dealing with the well-being of employees.” Jean-Claude is happy with having so many duties: “I like to be on the go, change, move forward and vary my activities.” And what does he do when he has a little free time to himself? “Between two cockfights, which is my main hobby, I always find time to strike up a few dancesteps: life’s here to be enjoyed!”

Jean-Claude Servan
reinForcing Steel erector
GTOI/building branch
reunion island

“I like to be on the go, change, move forward and vary my activities”
István Mónus
SITE FOREMAN
ALTERRA
HUNGARY

“There’s always a change in the air!”

Next January István, 62, will have been working at Alterra, one of Colas’ Hungarian subsidiaries, for 30 years. Today site foreman, not only has he witnessed the company’s changeover from public to private hands, but he has also seen its performances and technical level improve. “I came from a family who had been working in the building trade for generations, and I have really appreciated how things have developed, he confides. Having said that, I like everything about this job, particularly the human contact which has positive impact on the quality of the work. And I like its diversity. It’s a bit like the weather forecast, there’s always a change in the air!” Health permitting, Istvan would like to work one or two more years. When he finds the time, this “workaholic” indulges in photography. In 2006, Colas Hungary organized a local competition. “My photo of a dragonfly was placed third in the Nature category!” he says. Today, the dragonfly, along with all the other photos, features in a traveling show that is exhibited throughout the country’s subsidiaries.
Christine Pellerin
AGENCY SUPERVISOR
SPAC/SURBECO
FRANCE

“Women have a part to play”

Mother-of-two Christine Pellerin combines her family life with her career. At 42, she must feel pride in what she has achieved professionally. “But I’ve been lucky,” she objects. Back in 1989, she joined Surbeco, a public works company acquired by Spac in 2000. For four years, Christine, a geotechnical engineer, worked as site manager before being promoted to area supervisor in 1993. Ten years later, she was appointed deputy agency supervisor. Christine convinced her superiors, and in 2006 she was again promoted, becoming agency supervisor. She is in charge of around one hundred people, most of whom work in drainage, road and network projects, road works, etc. “In this predominantly male universe, a woman doesn’t have much time to prove she’s as capable as a man,” says Christine. “But once that’s out of the way, being a woman is an advantage. The presence of women moderates the competitive spirit and leaves more space for interpersonal relationships, listening and discussion. Our industry needs more women.”
Throughout his career with Colas, Philippe Decarnin has always encountered the same concern and attention for people. He joined the company in 1976. “My first contact with Colas goes back in fact to 1974, he points out. When I was an ESTP student, I did my internship at the Grenoble profit center. I liked the atmosphere and the work in the field with the teams right from the word go.” Taken on as an engineer after a second internship and his military service, he learned the different aspects of the job over the following 18 months. “A classic track.” Project engineer on the Riviera, this native of Boulogne-sur-Mer was then given the responsibility for the Ajaccio profit center in Corsica. A difficult and a formative position for a young man of 27. This was followed by ten years at Marseille as profit center supervisor, five as regional manager for the Côte d’Azur and five more years, this time in Morocco. President of Colas Rhône-Alpes since May 2000, Philippe confesses that he has lost nothing of his enthusiasm for the profession. “Having a project and ensuring it gets done by recruiting people capable of seeing it through and giving them the tools for the job still motivates me just as much as it ever did.”
“My job takes me all over the world”

Twenty years after joining Colas Danmark, Henrik Kusk’s professional life is like a world tour. United States, Africa, Iceland, Finland, Estonia… his job as industrial equipment manager has made it possible for him to work on very different sites and facilities. “I know of no other sector where you can be on a site in Tanzania for one month and a year later in Cuba,” he explains enthusiastically. Today in charge of the equipment for Colas subsidiaries in Denmark and Iceland, as well as Estonia and Finland, Henrik Kusk defines his role as liaising between general management and field teams. An assignment which suits him to a T, so long as he can “be involved in decision-making and strategic challenges, while remaining in tune with those in the field.”
Célia Carceller-Kemiche
PROJECT MANAGER
SPEIG
FRANCE

“Siroco has been a fascinating project!”

Célia Carceller-Kemiche made up her mind to leave the southern France of her birth to accompany her husband when he was transferred to the Paris region. “I used to run management, accounting and human resources IT applications for the Chamber of Commerce in Avignon,” explains Célia, who holds a university diploma in IT plus a diploma in business management. Hired by Speig, the Group’s IT subsidiary, she was asked to provide phone assistance for the payroll software, but this job didn’t quite correspond to her ambitions. “At my recruitment interview, though, we defined a career plan,” adds Célia. After a year, she was appointed project manager in charge of the design of Siroco, the new dedicated software package specifically intended for road-building subsidiaries. “I was really lucky!” Célia recognizes. “Our team had to practically start with a blank sheet of paper, we had to design everything. As an IT engineer, you don’t often have the chance to work on such a big or such a fascinating project!”
Christelle Sautreau
TRUCK DRIVER
SCREG EST/STAM-LTA
FRANCE

“I loved riding in my dad’s truck when I was a kid”

Truck driving is something that runs in Christelle’s family. “My dad was a truck driver. Because school was out on Wednesdays, he used to take me in his truck on his delivery round,” she recalls. She left school with a diploma in bookkeeping and then became a secretary. Ten years later, however, her enthusiasm got the better of her and she decided to get a truck driver’s license. She now drives a 40-ton rig – not bad for a young woman who is just 1.55 meters tall! It took her six months of training to qualify for her permit in 2003, after which she joined STAM-LTA, the transport subsidiary of Screg Est. Although she is the only woman truck driver in the company, she was quickly accepted. Every day she delivers sand and gravel from sand quarries in the east to the Paris area. Christelle is living her childhood dream and she will never be stuck behind a desk again!
Denis Chabin
PROJECT MANAGER
COLAS RAIL
FRANCE

“Managing requires listening and communication skills”

Réunion Island’s tram train, Mulhouse’s tramtrain extension, the Paris-CDG Express link and the South Europe Atlantic high speed train line feature among the projects on which Denis Chabin, Project Manager at Colas Rail in Cergy-Pontoise Saint-Christophe, is currently focusing. Colas Rail is the name of the new company that emerged from the acquisition of Spie Rail by Colas and Seco-Rail at the beginning of 2007. The subsidiary is involved in particular with private-public partnerships and concession projects (infrastructures, railroads, electrical power supply, equipment). “Managing means forecasting a good many situations,” notes Denis. “This in turn means developing listening and communication skills, and keeping cool when things start to heat up.” On projects involving several hundreds of millions of euros where provisions have been made for heavy late delivery penalties, Denis has to spread the risks. It’s not easy managing these long-term, often politically-weighted projects, but he gets immense satisfaction when recurrent projects return, such as the new subway lines in Cairo and Caracas.

Nicolas Chenavas
WORKSHOP MANAGER
COLAS CENTRE-OUEST
FRANCE

“My job is solving problems before they arise”

35-year-old Nicolas’ globetrotting days are now behind him. He spent a year and a half in Guiana, ten months in Chad and six months in Cameroon. He hadn’t joined the French Foreign Legion, but was working as a mechanic for a number of different companies worldwide. “But after that I wanted to put down roots,” says Nicolas, who was born and brought up in the French Alps. “I came back to France in 1998 to join the Colas Centre-Ouest profit center in Blois as a workshop manager.” Since 2001, Nicolas has been based in the city of Tours. “I am there to solve problems before they arise,” he says with a twinkle. Assisted by a five-strong team, he looks after site equipment. “Techniques are changing very fast and you have to keep updating all the time. But I’m a curious guy and I like to learn.” Nicolas admits that dealing with people can be hard. “Not everyone is a good communicator.” He pauses. “I guess it’s the same everywhere…” Nicolas enjoys living near Tours, where he goes running and flies ultralight planes.
July 4, 2006 is a date that will be engraved in Morgan’s memory. After working on a temporary basis as a road worker for a year in the Normandy profit center of SREG Ile-de-France/Normandie, he was offered a permanent contract. He wasn’t yet 18 years old. “It was quite a culmination!” he says, and proof if needed that effort pays: “After completing two internships while I was working for a qualification as a stonemason, my site foremen told me to keep going for a year as a temporary worker, saying that if I kept on doing a good job, I would get hired. They were right!” Morgan has now become a full-fledged member of the profit center, and everyone recognizes his qualities. “This job is a perfect springboard for me professionally. I know that my bosses trust me, which encourages me to go further. The company is also passing on a desire to progress: thanks to a 3-month training program, I have been able to improve my knowledge of drains,” he remarks.
Jon Miller  
ASSISTANT REGIONAL MANAGER  
IA CONSTRUCTION  
UNITED STATES

“My main aim: to complete sites in total safety and deliver on time”

The McKean County bypass, Route 66 sites in Forest County and Route 321 in Venango County… in all, this summer, Jon Miller’s teams at IA Construction will have completed no less than fifteen or so major projects and some fifty smaller paving works. “From April through November, we generally work 6 days a week, explains Jon Miller. It’s very important for me to complete sites in total safety and deliver on time.” When he joined IA Construction in June 1981, it was as a workman, but his career path has now taken him to Assistant Regional Manager level.

When the summer season is finished, Jon’s work goes from overseeing teams to invoicing and estimating future projects. It’s also an opportunity for him to go stag hunting. “Winter is a time when I can breathe a little at work, as I can in my private life. I take advantage to spend time in the woods and also to play with my grandchildren.”

Serge Becaud  
TECHNICAL ADVISOR  
COLAS CENTRE-OUEST  
FRANCE

“I love variety, contact with people and fieldwork”

Serge Becaud became a lab worker by chance. “It was back in 1973, when I was studying for a technical high school diploma. I was looking for a job and the brother of one of my teachers, who was in charge of a Colas lab, was hiring. Once my exams were over, I joined his team near Nantes.” As simple as that. Serge started out as a lab assistant, learning the profession on the job. “I gradually rose through the ranks, from assistant to technician to supervisor.” In 1979, Serge transferred to regional headquarters in Tours, returning to Nantes in 1990 as laboratory head at La Technologie Routière (LTR), a Group subsidiary. He is now deputy technical manager at Colas Centre-Ouest. His role consists in helping work centers with mix design calculations for technical alternatives, expert evaluations and work with special products. His territory covers much of Brittany and the Loire Country in western France. “I love variety, contact with people and fieldwork.” No doubt about it, Serge is a happy man.
Zulaika Zakaria
PLANNER
KEMAMAN BITUMEN COMPANY (KBC)
MALAYSIA

“Having the benefit of the experience of colleagues is a tremendous advantage”

“Being involved in the construction of the Kemaman refinery in Terengganu and having the benefit of the experience of colleagues are tremendous advantages,” says Zulaika Zakaria, Hydrocarbons planner, Processes and Environment technologist with Kemaman Bitumen Company in Malaysia (70% bitumen, 30% light products). Over the last two years, this young 25 year-old woman has lent her expertise to the senior technical and operations manager in terms of technical assessments and economic studies. Today, construction work is finished. A number of operations will enable the rapid launch of production at maximum output. Having joined KBC after studying at Petronas University of Technology, the young chemical engineer now has a broad range of expertise: supply and delivery of oil products, equipment performance verification, management of the safety, emergency and environment system. She also acts as KBC’s representative to the Malaysian environmental authorities.

István Sípos
MINING OPERATIONS MANAGER
COLAS ÉSZAKKO
HUNGARY

“Colas provides us with appreciable help”

Mining Operations Manager since 1992 at Colas Északkö, in the region of Tokaj, 52-year old István Sípos has no regrets about having followed in his father’s footsteps and chosen a quarrying career. “I didn’t see myself spending all my life behind a desk! I like to be in the field and in direct contact with my colleagues, feel the pulse of how operations are going,” he explains. A mechanical engineer by training, István has been working for Északkö since 1981. He was there when the company was taken over by Colas. It was in 1991. “We were the first company in the eastern block to be acquired by the Group, recalls István. Colas took the country’s specific characteristics into account before launching the development plan with the result that, in 15 years, productivity has increased 10-fold!” All the equipment fleet has been replaced and the eight quarries modernized, without mentioning the introduction of automated production processes. István praises the mutual trust that exists between Colas and its Hungarian subsidiary. “The Group provides us with appreciable help in terms of technical knowledge, exchanging experience and passing on expertise,” he recognizes. A gardening enthusiast, István has also recently taken up the guitar.
Grégory Lefebvre
ASSISTANT SITE MANAGER
COLAS NORD-PICARDIE
FRANCE

“When my colleagues run into a problem I tell them to keep going forward”

Public works run in the Lefebvre family. “My dad was a site foreman and so was my granddad, and I have worked on jobsites ever since I was 16!” relates Grégory. After combining a qualification in public works with work experience with a contractor, he joined Colas Nord-Picardie’s Artois profit center in Bethune. He has now risen to the level of assistant site manager, higher than his father and grandfather achieved. “It’s great. I follow every stage of a contract, I consider projects and estimates, and I meet customers.” Grégory has a love of freedom, the open air and speed (he is a keen biker and motor sport fan), and would not be able to stand the routine of an office job. His job needs him to respond fast, because every day brings new problems to solve. Grégory enjoys his contact with people at Colas. He is the first to establish a good atmosphere, helping his colleagues “keep going forward when they run into a problem.” The next step for Grégory is to be a full-fledged site manager.
Viviane Courcet
MAILROOM SUPERVISOR
COLAS ECHANGEUR BOULOGNE/
OFFICE SERVICES
FRANCE

“I answered right away and they hired me”

Originally from Martinique, Viviane Courcet was vacationing in mainland France when she answered a Colas job offer. “It was for a job in Office Services, at Group Headquarters: the company was looking for someone to take charge of the mail. I already knew about Colas by reputation, so I answered right away and they hired me,” she recounts. First mailroom assistant, then secretary, later assigned to the switchboard, followed by the telex, Viviane now runs the mailroom. With 30 years in the company, she knows all the different jobs in Office Services. She feels good about what she does. Her job requires a sense of organization, logic, memory and “and love for the task…” Viviane has plenty of that. Naturally enthusiastic, one of her passions is singing. Every Friday evening, she rehearses with her choir and also sings at mass on Sundays.
Ulysse Boyer
WORKSHOP SUPERVISOR
SCPR
REUNION ISLAND

"Technological developments fascinate me"

Apart from a brief spell of agricultural work on his father’s farm, Ulysse has always worked in the construction industry. For five years, he played a multifunctional role in a small prefabricated construction materials company. He then joined SCPR, where he first worked as a machine operator on a slab-making machine before being appointed production supervisor. He now runs a workshop that turns out concrete slabs and girders. “There are 9 people working for me, I’m very happy where I am,” says Ulysse. “What fascinates me is keeping up with technological developments in prefabricated materials. I have been asked to contribute to the design of new concrete slabs. I’m very pleased about that.” The company will soon begin work on obtaining French and European certification for its girders, which will provide an additional competitive edge. Deeply attached to Reunion Island – the only time he ever left was during his military service, he has been a member of a hiking club for ten years. Once a month he ventures out on hiking trails, “where cars can’t go”. A real treat!
Delphine Fourgeaud
SITE FOREMAN
COLAS SUD-OUEST
FRANCE

“I love teamwork and building things you can see”

When Delphine decided to get trained in the construction sector with the aim of one day becoming a site foreman, her family told her, “You’ll never make it, you’re a woman.” Today, she can be proud of herself: she HAS made it! On the way there, she did not hesitate to start out as a worker in a company specializing in electrical projects before becoming team leader. In 2005, wanting a change, she joined the Limoges profit center of Colas Sud-Ouest as site foreman. “I love working in the open air and teamwork, although the management side is not always easy when you’re a woman, particularly a young one!” she admits. “It’s always very satisfying to follow a project from A to Z and to build things that you can see.” Delphine is currently working on the redevelopment of a street in Limoges, which includes refurbishment of the roadway and sidewalks. Ideal for her! “I’m pleased to have achieved my professional goal and I don’t see myself changing jobs in the near future.” At age 27, Delphine has plenty of time to consider her future in the Group.

Patrice Bardy
FOREMAN
SPAC/COFOR
FRANCE

“I learned everything working on sites”

“I learned everything working on sites. I started as a worker and got regular promotions. Today I am a foreman,” says Patrice. Nine years ago he joined Cofor, a subsidiary of Spac. But he has worked in drilling for 23 years. It is complicated work that can get tough, but it is a profession he likes a lot. “We work 7-day-a-week cycles – when drilling operations start, we don’t stop for the weekend,” he explains. “Teams work round-the-clock shifts until they have reached the required depth.” With an average of four weeks’ continuous work followed by four weeks’ rest, Patrice finds the schedule suits him well. In any case, he has always worked this way. On jobsites, there is close cooperation between the teams – living together for days on end creates bonds. In 2004, Patrice became a Compagnon de l’Arc, a distinction recognizing the quality of his work. “It gave me a great deal of pleasure,” he smiles.
Joe Ruhlman
FOREMAN
SIMON CONTRACTORS
UNITED STATES

“I have to keep an eye on everything that’s going on”

It would be putting it mildly to say that Joe Ruhlman, foreman specializing in commercial buildings, has had an original career path. Wishing to become a catholic priest at the end of the 1960s, he began his professional life as a seminarian. “I studied for two years in Nebraska followed by another two years in Minnesota and earned a degree in Philosophy,” he explains. Those years left him with a great love of playing the guitar during the religious services that he continues to attend regularly. After deciding the seminary was not for him, he joined Simon Contractors in 1974 as a workman. He climbed the ladder to his current position as foreman and sees himself as a “superintendent”, knowing his job is to keep an eye on everything that’s going on at the various sites.

Paul Pita
MACHINE OPERATOR, TEAM FOREMAN
GROUPE RIBAL
FRENCH GUIANA

“I have a soft spot for the grader…”

Paul Pita, who will soon turn 61, began working at age 13. He started as a worker in the Cayenne highways department. “For five years, I did really tough work with a shovel and a pick-axe,” he recalls. In 1966, returning to French Guiana after his military service, he resumed his old job, but didn’t stay long. “The tools had become too small for me!” he says with a wink. In 1969, he joined Colas and went up a rung, to become a machine operator. When Colas Guyane closed down in 1980, he was hired by Ribal, an excavation works company… and then returned to Colas in the late 1990s when Ribal was acquired by the Group. A team foreman since the mid-1980s, Paul can operate every site machine, from digger to bulldozer, but he has a preference for the grader. In December, he is due to retire… part-time! The Group has already asked him to continue training newcomers. “The rest of my time will be devoted to my house and my livestock – I keep chickens, sheep and cattle!”

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“Safety has to become a reflex”

A draftsman/blueprinter by trade, Patrice Fery has recently extended his responsibilities at Smac Reims by taking on the functions of safety coordinator at the same time as his regular duties. Once a month he organizes a meeting for all the teams. “We talk about subjects that people often don’t think about, but which are nonetheless vital to start off contracts under the best possible safety conditions. We also talk about problems we have come across at a grassroots level.” Thanks to these meetings, safety has become more of a reflex within the company. “Teams are starting to find safety actions natural – they no longer see them as an obligation,” he says. Working on safety also involves raising awareness. “Employees are given responsibility for everyday things. For example, we ask them to monitor the state of the fire extinguishers.”

When it comes to free time, Patrice is passionate about soccer and has helped put together a team that is 100% from Smac Reims. He will soon take part in the first Smac Champagne tournament in which five local teams will fight it out.
“Everything depends on clear mutual understanding”

“I wanted to have a manual job.” This is the reason Etienne Fussel gives for his choosing a career in public works. This choice did not occur to him immediately on completing his studies. “I studied mechanical and production engineering in Toulouse before going to the ENSAM engineering school,” explains Etienne, now 24. In 2006, he joined the Saint-Etienne profit center of Colas Rhône-Alpes. “I was attracted by the chance to travel abroad through joining a major group such as Colas,” he explains. While waiting for an international opportunity, Etienne is gaining solid experience in France. He is currently a trainee project engineer and is hoping to make site manager. “Interpersonal contact is 80% of the job,” he says. “Everything depends on good communications and clear mutual understanding.” Etienne is currently working on upgrading a local road. “It’s very satisfying to see the work advance from day to day,” he says. It no doubt reminds him of how he is building his own “road” through life.
Anne Moustacakis
STONEMASON AND TRUCK DRIVER
COLAS RHONE-ALPES/CTPG
FRANCE

“I want to thank all my bosses for the trust they have placed in me”

“I want to thank all my bosses for the trust they have placed in me and for having hired me.” So says Anne, and what she says is sincere. She gets on well both with her colleagues and her bosses. What brought her to this job? “I started out in stonemasonry when I was just a kid.” She used help out her stonemason father on sites, and with her brother already working for the company, Anne applied to the CTPG work center of the Perrier TP profit center (part of Colas Rhône-Alpes). “And it worked, I was hired!” Having previously worked for 15 years in the meat industry, she wanted a change of scene. She has worked as a temporary worker for many years and intends to stay that way so she can pursue her pastime – amateur trotting races. From spring to fall, she travels the roads of France to compete, accompanied by a colleague who trains her trotting horse and takes care of it all year round. She has always loved contact with nature and walking in the woods. Single, with no children, she lives near her work in an old building that she is fixing up – with her own hands of course!

René Gstalter
DRIVER
SCREG EST
FRANCE

“I want to fight on behalf of other people”

A driver of all types of heavy vehicles at Screg Est’s Saint-Dié profit center, René has a mission to help other people. Outside the company, he serves as a volunteer firefighter. In a work context, as a Compagnon du Ruban Vert since 1999, he represents his colleagues at the annual general meeting of the guild, held in Paris, dealing with such issues as insurance for medical expenses. René is also an official trade union representative for the eastern region of France. After 27 years as an activist, he is as tireless as ever. “I reckon that it’s because I lost my own job one day that I decided to fight on behalf of others,” he reveals. He recently took on new responsibility in a local representative organization for developing on-the-job training in the construction industry, and sometimes wishes his colleagues would get more involved.
When physician Lorence Miha Felix joined Colas in 2005, it was a little out of impulse. “I was doing volunteer work in a hospital, but when I saw that I could get out onto worksites, I jumped at the opportunity. In my office, I get bored,” she confesses. After officiating in the north of Madagascar on the famous RN6 site, Lorence is today set up in the east of the island, near the town of Moramanga. “I have a well-equipped medical practice where I receive workers and their families. Every two weeks, I go out in the field to consult or prescribe medicine for the staff,” she explains. She can also be called out in an emergency to a site and have to decide whether to evacuate to the capital’s military hospital. In liaison with Colas’ Antananarivo Health Department, Doctor Lorence also carries out numerous preventive actions to combat HIV/AIDS and malaria with workers and the local population.
Jacky Balmine
LOGISTICS MANAGER
GTOI
REUNION ISLAND

“What’s important for me is to go on learning”

The Indian Ocean may conjure up pictures of exotic places for some, but for Jacky Balmine it’s his place of work. Jacky, who joined GTOI at the age of 16 as apprentice mechanic in Reunion Island, will never leave his island. “I’ve filled various positions, including assistant mechanic in mobile maintenance, messenger in the purchasing department and sprayer, grit spreader then flat-bed driver, before joining the ‘Paving’ teams as finisher driver, adjuster then head of application.” Since July 2005, this highly union-involved islander has been in charge of the new logistics department in the GTOI public works branch. With a headcount of over 20, this department was set up to optimize use of automotive equipment and make centers more competitive. At 44, Jacky has acquired a solid experience which he likes to pass on to others. And when you mention future career path, he answers: “Nothing precise…. What’s important for me is to go on learning every day and advance, like I was lucky enough to do at Colas from day 1!”
Patrick Brochier makes no secret of it: “It was pure chance that brought me into the construction industry. After graduating from high school, I went into civil engineering simply because the school was near where I lived.” Luck was on his side, it was the right choice for Patrick. After 18 months in a family-owned construction company, he was hired by the Valence profit center of Colas Rhône-Alpes in 1987, as a site foreman. He gradually rose through the ranks: site manager in 1992, sector supervisor in 2000, and deputy profit center supervisor in 2005. Then he worked as a deputy operations manager in the French Alps. As head of the roadway team on the A 41 highway contract, he was away from his family for six months. But since January 1, 2007, he has had a desk job, as purchasing supervisor. “It’s very different from working in the field,” he points out. “I am tasked with setting up framework agreements with suppliers and circulating them to the profit centers. It’s a brand new job, so I have to do everything from scratch. Patrick gives his work everything he’s got, although he leaves time for his favorite pastimes, mountain biking and windsurfing – “I need both of them to keep a positive mindframe.”
Amulso Aguirre
CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN
SULLY-MILLER
UNITED STATES

“I love being on the road”

In his own words, Amulso Aguirre loves “being on the road”. It’s even what drove him to start working in construction some twenty years ago. He has been with Sully-Miller Contracting Company for over ten years. “I travel from town to town, wherever the job takes me: ten months building one road, then seven months somewhere else.” That suits him fine. “When Colas took over Sully-Miller in 1999, our working conditions improved, we acquired new equipment and enhanced worksite safety was introduced. So I have no regrets and no intentions of changing companies.” When he is not working, Amulso devotes himself to his passion - baseball. He is very modest, but he is an excellent player. For over 25 years, he has played competitively in California and Mexico.

Palmerina Di Marco
SALES REPRESENTATIVE
COLAS EST
FRANCE

“I have the feeling of belonging to a national network”

In September 2004, when she joined the headquarters of Colas Est, in Colmar, as a sales representative, Palmerina Di Marco was delighted: she was finally going to be able to put her theoretical work into practice. After earning a Masters in business and sales, she spent 4 months on an internship with Colas Est working to establish a diagnosis of the sales function in the subsidiary. Palmerina is quite motivated: “At Colas Est, the sales function was created in 2000, to meet client expectations: in fact, we work less and less with local government agencies, and more and more with private engineering firms coming from all over France, she explains. Today, Palmerina enjoys participating in teamwork, with a feeling she is collaborating in the creation of a vast, high-performance network “which will help us better position ourselves upstream from operations.”
Bruno Bourdon
APPLICATION SUPERVISOR
GTOI/AGENCE TP
REUNION ISLAND

“I have a taste for adventure”

 Bruno Bourdon is a man of action. He had carried out fifteen or so different trades before joining the Group in 2000. Today, his work is far removed from his initial training as a diesel mechanic, but, for him, such a widespread apprenticeship is a source of wealth: “I left France 18 years ago; it’s the taste for adventure which drives me…” Bruno builds roads, a difficult task, particularly in the burning sun at 45°C. And yet, for him, these conditions are a source of motivation: “It’s a real challenge. It’s like a boxer climbing into the ring: you get up at 4 am and you have to spread the asphalt in such a way that the road’s perfect… If it’s not perfect, it’s not worth getting up…” Pierre-fonds airport runways were his latest project, a long-haul job carried out at night, and of which this demanding supervisor who likes to oversee his teams is proud.

Médéric Cadiou
ROAD WORKER
SCREG SUD-EST
FRANCE

“The industry provides a wide variety of jobs”

 Médéric Cadiou was not Médéric’s vocation: he began as bodywork apprentice, but he then gained a basic qualification in road construction and maintenance. 10 years later, he is pleased with his choice. “The industry provides a wide variety of jobs and opportunities to move around. I also enjoy working outdoors and being able to follow a contract from start to finish.” When he left school in July 1999, Screg Sud-Est gave him an employment opportunity contract in urban road and network construction, which was followed by a six-month temporary work contract, culminating in January 2001 in a permanent employment contract from the Lyon Saint-Priest profit center. He is highly appreciative of the profit center’s benefits: “In this company my work is recognized. Every year I climb another rung and am given a little more responsibility. I now get to manage small contracts. In addition, I can do a different training course every year.” Currently, Médéric, who is a keen motorbike rider, is interested in operating site equipment or truck driving.
Charlotte Daudeteau

LAWYER
COLAS ECHANGEUR BOULOGNE/
LEGAL DEPARTMENT
FRANCE

“Law is constantly changing, it’s very exciting”

Profession: Lawyer. Passions: law, Normandy and horses, the last two since childhood. Charlotte Daudeteau, 26, really fell in love with law during her studies. She earned a Masters in business law and a graduate degree in general private law at the School of the Paris Bar, where for 18 months she alternated classes, business internships and clerking in law firms. It was during this period she did an internship in the Legal Department of Colas SA, in early 2006. She was hired in July of the same year. “General business law encompasses many subjects: fair trade law, company law, civil law, commercial law, tax law, labor law… It’s really vast, very open, which I like,” she explains, enthusiastically, and adds: “Law is a reasoned, structured and precise discipline, which requires keeping up-to-date due to the constant changes in legislations and evolving jurisprudence. It’s thrilling…”
Artie Cousins
PLANT MANAGER
DELTA
UNITED STATES

“Asphalt is my daily business, and that’s what I like”

...You can be a nomad in your soul, while at the same time being someone who’s really settled and enjoys raising tens of thousands of chickens on his family farm... Like 46-year old Artie Cousins, asphalt plant manager for Delta Companies, in Arkansas. “I don’t have any specific diploma, unless you count 100% training dedicated to road building, including apprenticeship on burners, roadrollers and asphalt plants, explains Artie, without this bothering him. I came to work for Colas 5 years ago, following the takeover of Rock Products, Inc., the company I’d worked for for 20 years. Today, I do the same job for Delta as I did before, a trade I chose for its opportunities and because it enables me to work outdoors...” In love with his job, Artie appreciates working for a large group such as Colas since this “gives me more resources to do my job well.” What about his future? “Continue to do this job, in one form or another, until I retire,” concludes Artie in a philosophical vein.
**Pascal Sauvage**

**FiniSher-grader oPerator**  
**Screg SUd-eSt**  
**FRANCE**

“I’ve always liked public works machines”

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**Pieter Veulemans**

**CHIEF LAB TECHNICIAN**  
**COLAS BELGIUM/VBG**  
**BELGIUM**

“In my job, there’s no such thing as routine”

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Pascal Sauvage carries out two parallel careers: from May to November, he is a finisher-grader operator at the Screg Sud-Est profit center in Thonon-les-Bains and, from December to April, technical manager for the Morzine ski school. To begin with, there was nothing to suggest that he was cut out for such a dual vocation. Native of Val-de-Marne, near Paris, where he got a training certificate in automotive electrics, he moved with his parents to Haute-Savoie in the French Alps in 1979. A skiing enthusiast since his childhood, he joined the Morzine ski school in 1980 and became a ski instructor in 1987, while working primarily as a mechanic in the family garage, then as a truck driver in a public works firm. “I’ve always liked public works machines. What’s good about this sector is that you work outdoors and in a team. My experience as a ski instructor has helped me to have easy contact with people and I know how to pass on my skills like a good teacher.” Hired in 1995 at the Thonon-les-Bains profit center as a truck driver, Pascal quickly made progress, becoming a finisher operator, then moving on to the grader and finisher. “When I’ve mastered a job, I like to set myself challenges and go forward,” explains this accomplished sportsman.

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Pieter Veulemans is chief lab technician at the VBG asphalt plant, in Belgium. His work consists in testing new materials, permanently trying to improve the quality of the asphalt concrete, ordering raw materials and directing the drive to obtain ISO 14001 certification. He likes the fact that his work is so varied: “There’s no such thing as routine in my job. No two days are the same.” Pieter is convinced that chemistry still has surprises in store for us, and that advances will always come, particularly on an environmental level. With five years’ experience, Pieter already has a number of impressive projects behind him. In particular, he worked on the extension and refurbishment of the Antwerp ring road, a two-year operation which required a large amount of production work upstream and numerous tests onsite. “We had to work really hard and it could be stressful, but when I see the result, I can’t help feeling proud.” Pieter is not the stereotype chemist who never ventures outside his laboratory; as soon as summer arrives, he travels the roads of Belgium attending the many rock festivals held in the country.
John Thompson
BUSINESS MANAGER
COLAS LTD
GREAT BRITAIN

“I was looking for a better career so I joined Colas”

John Thompson likes to welcome newcomers to the company and help them fit in. Business Manager of Colas North in Newcastle, he oversees all Colas Ltd’s business in the north of the United Kingdom. He has managed to create a company atmosphere that is both pleasant and reassuring. John enjoys a good relationship of trust with the employees. “I rose up through the ranks because I was not afraid of taking on responsibility,” he says. He began his career in 1977 as a qualified operator in the north of England and then expanded his experience in the field by taking on a number of different jobs. “Then in 1999 I joined Colas. I was looking for new challenges and a better career,” he recalls. He was impressed by the contact he had with people at Colas – they were “sincere and honest people,” he says. He now appreciates the relationship of trust that he has been able to set up within the company and also with his customers. He likes to spend his free time with his family, whenever possible near Sainte-Maxime, in the south of France.
Daniel Marcotte
REGIONAL CONTROLLER
SINTRA
CANADA

“I like a bit of action!”

“...When I was hired as an accountant by Sintra in 1988, I was determined to work in construction because it’s a vibrant sector that is good for teamwork. The company was already well established in Quebec and offered good career prospects,” recalls Daniel Marcotte. He was promoted to controller in 2000. Time has proved him right. “Sintra is very sound financially and has acquired new companies – the family is expanding!” He is perfectly satisfied with his current job, but would like to be doing something different in a few years’ time. He thinks he has a lot to contribute to the Group. Energetic and motivated, as much at home with people as behind a desk, he puts everything into his work. But whenever possible, he goes off with his family to the forest cabin he built for himself. “My son and I fish for trout and hunt deer and moose. Then my wife and I go to work in the kitchen!”
Challenges and responsibilities are the two things that motivate Ishtiaq Hussain the most. As Management accounts administrator with Colas Midlands in Birmingham, this 31-year-old works with other business units within the Group and the company’s suppliers. With the help of two other people, he draws up the monthly accounts, analyses financial results, resolves queries, keeps the books and is responsible for annual budgets & forecasts. In 2001, after gaining valuable experience in purchase ledger, credit control, accounts & general administration he joined Colas Ltd. “I chose Colas because I wanted to contribute to the success of this multinational group... as well as to my own!,” points out this hard-working young man. “Working at Colas Ltd has enabled me to broaden my skills, particularly in terms of communication, team work, management and information technology.” His next major task will be to produce budgets. Once he has left the office, Ishtiaq enjoys spending time with his wife and children, with whom he wants to travel more in the coming months...

Claudine Ménager
SECTOR SUPERVISOR
SACER PARIS-NORD-EST
FRANCE

“Managing is listening to people and analyzing mistakes…”

Claudine Ménager speaks firmly, her tone emphatic. The phone hasn’t stopped ringing, and Claudine, sector supervisor in the Etampes profit center of Sacer Paris-Nord-Est, is explaining why she is reluctant to be interviewed. She would much rather be getting on with her job! She has eleven site foremen working for her. What made her leave her job at Total Oil for Sacer Paris-Nord-Est back in 1988, when she was only 23? Because the company gave her the chance she was looking for to work in the field. “In those days, it was unusual to see women in those kind of jobs,” she says. “It was hard to get accepted, dealing with men who often had 20 years’ experience and who were married to housewives.” She fulfilled expectations through her knowledge of the business and her leadership skills. “On paper, management seems easy. But when you’re dealing with people on the job, it’s something else. Managing is a whole host of things: knowing how to say hello, showing respect for people, knowing how to raise your voice when you have to, analyzing mistakes, and so on.” Her co-workers say she is forceful, but she just says she is decisive, whether at work or at home with her two children.
Maxime Montreuil
PROJECT MANAGER
SPEIG
FRANCE

“I’ve always been interested in IT”

At an age when most boys want to become firefighters or aircraft pilots, Maxime wanted to work in IT. “I was six years old when my parents gave me my first computer and I immediately got the bug,” he says. After graduating as an engineer, he went on to get a Master’s degree in management at the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey. Although he thought seriously about getting his first job in the United States, December 2001 was not the best time. Consequently he was hired as a systems engineer in Vélizy, outside Paris, at Speig, the Group’s IT subsidiary. At first he dealt with business machines, moved rapidly to development and project and resources management. Now interested in data management, Maxime was recently delighted to be offered the chance to go to Colas Inc. in Morristown, New Jersey, on a five-year assignment as IT coordinator. “It will be my job to orchestrate the tasks of the IT engineers so that they work in concert on cross-functional projects,” he says. But before he gets there, Maxime will be celebrating the arrival of his first child.
“I want to rise through the ranks”

“I have set myself the challenge of rising through the ranks so that one day, who knows, I may become a maintenance supervisor.” Since joining Colas Mayotte in 2005, Mohamed Ahmed Djambae has set his heart on advancing. “I put everything into my work,” he says. After qualifying as an electrical mechanic in mainland France, he worked in the automobile industry for three years, in component production. Since working for Colas Mayotte, he has been responsible for repairing concrete plant and concrete block press motors in quarries. A keen sports fan, Mohamed used to play basketball, but finds he no longer has the time to train seriously. Instead of playing sports, he now manages the Passaminti soccer team, which finished near the top of its pool last season. “We’re hoping for promotion next year,” says Mohamed. He is full of ambition for his team, too.
Philippe Walraff
SURFACER
COLAS BELGIUM
BELGIUM

“I never spend more than four days in the same place”

Philippe is a surfacer for Colas Belgium, a sort of “road doctor”. His job is to cure their ills with miracle remedies. What does he have in his black bag? Emulsion, schlam and asphalt. And because, of course, prevention is better than cure, he frequently carries out upstream maintenance work. Just like any doctor he can be called out on emergencies at all hours. Responsiveness and flexibility are essential but Philippe is the man for the job and he likes the variety. “I never spend more than four days in the same place,” he explains. “I have traveled the roads throughout Belgium and France!” Philippe enjoys a change of scenery so naturally he was pleased to journey to Morocco in June 2006 to take part in the Compagnons de la Route convention. “I thoroughly enjoyed this big get-together, which included all the professions. There were almost 800 of us and I was pleased to see we have a real team spirit.”

Nuntasak Prasertchai
FREIGHT AND OPERATIONS MANAGER
TIPCO ASPHALT PUBLIC COMPANY (TASCO)
THAILAND

“It’s important to stay close to the ocean”

As second officer, then chief officer and finally captain, he spent ten years sailing across seas and oceans, stopping off in Asia, Europe and numerous Arab countries. Today, with all this experience behind him, Nuntasak Prasertchai is happy to be leading a more sedentary life, conducive to meeting people, spending time with his family and enjoying the firm friendships he has forged with colleagues. He chose a career at sea partly on the advice of his father and partly because of the good prospects such a career offered. He left his former job after being contacted by Tipco Asphalt Public Company Ltd, a bitumen distribution company that he knew by reputation. He is currently Freight and Operations manager with Tipco in Bangkok, Thailand. “I enjoy being in regular contact with international sales and supply departments in China and Malaysia, with captains – monitoring boats boarding and departing – and with the authorities.” For him, what is really important is staying close to the ocean.
“We’re constantly confronted with logistic challenges”

General Manager of QAP, a subsidiary of Colaska, Inc. based in Anchorage, Alaska, Jon Fuglestad currently oversees several divisions of the company – construction, prestress and concrete. The construction division is currently working on over ten projects throughout the State of Alaska, including the renovation of an airport. “All the sites where we work in remote areas can only be reached by plane or boat, so we’re constantly confronted with logistic challenges. But, the challenges are motivating and enable me to get the most out of my job,” underlines this engineering graduate who began in the construction industry as a superintendent. Working in Alaska also requires a wealth of organizational skills: “because of the short construction season, from May to October at the latest, our working days are long since there is plenty of daylight. We get our year’s work done in six months.” Like many of his Alaskan colleagues, the rest of Jon’s time is taken up with numerous winter sports, including skiing, snowshoeing and hockey.
“A very fascinating job”

With a PhD in organic chemistry and a Master’s degree in environment, Vincent Grosshenny joined Colas Environnement et Recyclage in April 1998. Specialized in soil pollution remediation, the subsidiary hired him as a scientific advisor on exceptional projects for Novartis. Notably, he developed a system for analyzing air content and quality to protect personnel on toxic clean-up sites. He also oversaw, in 2001, the subsidiaries triple QSE certification – a first in France, for all sectors. In 2004, Vincent joined the newly created Environment Division of Colas SA. He works on Environment issues for the Group, participating notably on projects requiring skills in both environment and analytical chemistry (chemical risk, emissions from asphalt plants, measuring fumes during the application of asphalt mix, etc.). Vincent also lends a hand to the subsidiaries with their environmental issues by answering specific requests or developing technical guides for their basic questions. “I have a very fascinating job”, he confides.
Farouk Singh

SPRAYER DRIVER
COLAS SOUTH AFRICA
SOUTH AFRICA

“This job’s my life!”

At 61, Farouk has no desire to retire. “I’d like to continue doing this job until I reach the end of my own road”, he confesses. A freedom lover, travel enthusiast and eager to make new encounters, Farouk finds everything to satisfy his all-embracing curiosity in his daily work: “I’ve always kept to the truck sector so as to be able to travel. Since being hired at Colas in 1995, I’ve taken part in projects in Namibia, Mozambique and Swaziland. Without forgetting my own country!” This “free spirit” as he calls himself has found his place in the Group, which he appreciates for the way it recognizes the value of work: “Colas treats its employees well, maintains respect and a sense of companionship, and encourages those who wish to forge forward.” His wide experience has led him today to a position that requires a considerable amount of knowledge, where he particularly values customer contact, inherent responsibilities and the satisfaction of successfully completing an assignment.
“Some wonderful people have helped me discover a fantastic industry”

For more than 35 years, Raymond Olejnik has been working for Smac at the Châteauroux-Rousseau agency, specializing in timber frame construction and traditional roofing. A native of the Normandy region, he joined the company, which became part of Colas in 1999, as a quantity surveyor. He enjoys his profession very much. “Although I originally came here by chance, throughout my career I have been supported by some wonderful people who have helped me discover a fantastic industry,” he says. His work may have given him great satisfaction and stability, but until the age of 33, he led a double life, also playing professional soccer for Châteauroux in a major French league. “While I was still playing, my work schedule was arranged to allow me to train every evening,” he recalls. “I’m still involved today as a member of the club’s board of directors.” Raymond has played on a 36-day world tour and has even played a few games in a French amateur team alongside French soccer legend Michel Platini! These days, he has traded his soccer ball for a golf ball. “I now really enjoy the great game of golf, which I used to find boring when I was younger. It requires a lot of accuracy and concentration. And once you’re on the green, you really do forget about all your worries!”
Roman Banic

SITE MANAGER
INZIENERSKE STAVBY KOSICE
SLOVAKIA

“I’m lucky enough to be able to combine my work with a personal passion”

Roman Banic is site manager at Inženierske Stavby where he oversees bridge building in particular. “I like the job because it gives me an opportunity to work outdoors and have lots of contact with people.” In his thirties, Roman is also a video enthusiast, a virus passed onto him by his father who is a professional cameraman. “I always have a video camera on hand and do a lot of shooting. I also take advantage of my spare time to study composition. What’s great for me is to be able to combine this passion with my professional activity, for I regularly take pictures of sites I’m in charge of.” In particular, he filmed the different stages of the construction of Pružinka - the longest bridge ever built by Inženierske Stavby Kosice – over 900 metres long built as a single expansion unit! His images were used to present the project.
François Cormier
ESTIMATOR
SINTRA
CANADA

“We’re lucky enough to be able to switch sectors!”

At 57, this year François is celebrating his 36 years at Sintra. He began as a store clerk. “I made the choice because I loved building. Already at the time, the Group offered excellent career prospects and you could specialize or switch sectors, he recalls. It wasn’t long before I had the chance too and became estimator.” The job suits him to a T: “I like office work, statistics and being able to constantly improve myself. I have to take up a good many challenges and deal with fine-tailored tasks.” François also underlines the strong feeling of belonging to the company and the importance of the local aspect of his activity. Delighted to have carried out his whole career in the Group, he does nonetheless appreciate vacations! “We go camping with friends in Quebec or the States. And when I get back home, I have fun with Photoshop making photo albums!” he confides.

Valérie Vinois
ACCOUNTANT AND EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
COLAS ECHANGEUR BOULOGNE/
ACCOUNTING DIVISION
FRANCE

“I don’t regret my choice”

In 1987, Valérie Vinois had a summer job with Corporate Accounting, at the Group’s head office. The next year, Colas called her back to offer her a job… “I already had a job, but I resigned.” For Valérie, the choice was a quick one – it was obvious. “I didn’t regret it, I’m quite happy at Colas,” she says. Starting as an accounting assistant with a diploma in accounting, she fills two positions today: accountant and assistant to the Corporate Accounting Manager. Responsible for all administrative questions concerning employees in this department, Valérie also handles accounting for the company’s vehicle fleet, from treasury data to the transfer of funds, the company savings plan, etc. Over the last 19 years, she has benefited from many training programs in IT and accounting. “I’ve always made progress,” she affirms.
Sophie Sadeler
DEPUTY CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
COLAS ECHANGEUR BOULOGNE/COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION FRANCE

“It’s my aim to showcase the Group’s image”

After first working for a local government agency, Sophie Sadeler joined the Corporate Communications department at the Colas head office 11 years ago. She was seeking to work in a company with wide international scope. “I’ve always been attracted by foreign languages and cultures,” she explains. Sophie speaks French (her native language), English, Spanish and Italian. She deals in particular with communications relating to the Colas and Sacer companies, and is responsible for all aspects of logistics regarding trade fairs and conventions in France and other countries. This aspect of her work means she has to travel a lot and meet many employees from the subsidiaries. Sophie plays a major role in designing booths and panels and ensuring they are sited optimally, and producing brochures and other literature. She enjoys her job, and loves showcasing the Group’s know-how, innovations, techniques and, beyond its products, its people. She attacks her work with great energy and creativity. But as soon as she can leave on vacation, she flies off on a quest to discover new cultures and see new sights.
Daniel Pelneault, who became Vice President of Construction at Sintra in Montreal in January 2007, began his career thirteen years ago as an estimator. Since then, he has progressed rapidly up the career ladder. Working untiringly and taking up challenges have been leitmotifs throughout his career. “My new post needs a global vision of the business, increasing market share and cutting costs. We have acquired five road marking companies since 2005. We also have a subsidiary, Sintra Energie, specialized in erecting poles and electrical works.” His new responsibilities have matured him. “Nothing happens by chance,” says Daniel. In other words, “you have to be able to make the most of situations that arise, even when they’re not what you would’ve wanted.” Daniel thinks highly of the company’s decentralized organization, which encourages communication and decision-making. Outside work, he is a member of Richelieu International, an organization that promotes the use of the French language.
“My promotion is in recognition of my experience”

“I have risen in the ranks thanks to my bosses. By offering me regular training programs, they have helped me get promoted,” says a grateful Ahmed Bellaoui. He was 20 when he joined Colas as a clerk with no more than a high school diploma. 38 years later, he is personnel supervisor for Colas Morocco, a company which now employs more than 2,000 people. “My promotion is in recognition of my many years of experience,” claims Ahmed. “I have always worked in Human Resources, it’s my field.” When he was in charge of personnel at GTR, Ahmed regularly visited plants and sites. Then he became head of recruitment, before moving to the Morocco regional headquarters in Casablanca, where he took up his present job. He is proud of his career path and “his” company. “May the road go forward!” proclaims Ahmed.
Wilfried Lanfrois-Nazac
FREMAN
SCREG SUD-OUEST
FRANCE

“What's next? I'll be a head foreman, with a bit of luck!”

As Wilfried loves driving (particularly motorbikes) and has a liking for adrenalin and big thrills, no one was surprised when he decided to become a grader operator. “I first worked at Screg Sud-Ouest’s Blaye profit center as a temporary worker when I was 17. Within a year I was hired.” Still only 27, Wilfried already has 10 years' seniority! During this time, he has won everyone's trust, as testified by his advancement through the company. “After seven years, I became a foreman. What will come next? I should become a head foreman with a bit of luck!” Are there any pressures in his job? “Yes – deadlines…and the weather!” These also apply to Wilfried's other hobby of fishing, in which patience and waterproof clothes are also required!
Carmen Grondin
SALES SUPERVISOR
SCPR
REUNION ISLAND

“I love contact with customers”

After a high school diploma in commerce and twenty years in an import-export business, Carmen Grondin joined SCPR (Société de Concassage et de Préfabrication) in January 1998, in the customer relations department. Last year, she requested a move closer to her home, applying for a job in Sainte-Marie, where she became sales supervisor. “I really like it. I love contact with the customers. Previously, I never saw them, I did everything on the phone. At Sainte-Marie, apart from dealing with people, I am also in charge of administration, scheduling and checking the cash registers. Welcoming and friendly, Carmen makes sure “that all the customers who come on site leave with a smile. It’s important for me.” What’s the secret of her happy disposition? The answer can perhaps be found along the wonderful coastal paths where she goes jogging three times a week… “otherwise I don’t feel right,” she laughs. “And when it rains, I work out at home.”

Osman Assoweh
CHIEF ACCOUNTANT
COLAS DJIBOUTI
DJIBOUTI

“I was right to choose the private sector!”

Osman joined Colas Djibouti at age 19 with a qualification in accounting. He is quick to admit that at the time he was unsure about choosing the private sector. “Most of the people I knew were public servants,” he explains. “But I chose to take the hard way. In the private sector you have to want to succeed. Today I know that I made the right choice.” When he arrived in the company in 1986, Osman was the only accountant and assisted the financial manager. He worked hard and took evening courses to gain higher qualifications. Since that time, Colas Djibouti has greatly expanded, and today he has two accounting assistants working under him. The team is responsible for the payroll, monthly accounts, receivables and files required by the government authorities. “We are always running and rushing, and every month-end is a juggling act,” he laughs. Osman is married and has four children. He enjoys soccer and plays a game with friends every Friday night – “just for fun!” he adds.
“In the beginning, there was only one project”

“I joined Colas in March 1977, when the Fez profit center opened”, declares Maria El Bouhaddioui, brimming with pride. Since then, she has continued working here. Hired as a secretary, with her degree in short-hand and typing, by GTR, a subsidiary of Colas Morocco, she followed classes in office automation to keep abreast of evolving office needs. Data entry, filing, bidding… everything passes through her hands. In 30 years, she has had 13 profit center managers and seen the company grow. “In the beginning, there was only one project under way. Today, 178 people are working in the Fez profit center”, Maria El Bouhaddioui explains. Hailing from the town of Sefrou, 30 km from here, she knows the region well and wouldn’t want to change!
In 1999, Alan Kavanagh joined Colas after completing a Master’s degree that was sponsored by the Group. At the age of 31, he is Technical Manager for Atlantic Bitumen (suppliers of bitumen throughout Ireland). Aggregates, bitumen, mixes and above all new products, nothing escapes testing in their lab. As a member of the Irish Committee for the implementation of CEN standards, he keeps up to date with changes and keeps his colleagues informed. “In the future, I want to continue with this mission. Atlantic Bitumen is a young company.” Over the next 10 years, it will face significant challenges: the Irish government intends to continue the development of Ireland’s road network. Delighted to belong to a company at the leading edge of asphalt technology, Alan has forged his experience in other Colas subsidiaries: Colfix (where he helped to launch Colrug and Colsoft), Road Maintenance Service, Cold Chon in Ireland and IA Construction in the United States.
Nancy Bastien
ACCOUNTING DIRECTOR
COLASCANADA
CANADA

“I was given a warm welcome and I fit in easily”

After putting her career on hold while she took care of her two sons, Nancy joined ColasCanada in Montreal in 2004 as accounting director. “I was given a warm welcome and I fit in easily thanks to my predecessor, who spent six months with me,” she says with admiration. “I’ve never seen anything like that before.” The 41-year-old certified public accountant is responsible for consolidating the accounts of the four Canadian subsidiaries. A perfectionist who enjoys numbers, Nancy is proud to work for Colas: “It’s a company that works throughout the world and is always moving forward. That impresses me a lot.” Behind Nancy’s logical mind beats the heart of an artist! For the last five years, she has been taking classes at the Laval Fine Arts Academy in the suburbs of Montreal. After two years of drawing classes she took up painting, and now enjoys reproducing old master paintings using period techniques. “It makes me more creative... and indirectly, it helps my work, too.”
Benjamin Gédéon Rakotoarinelina
BASE CAMP COOK
COLAS MADAGASCAR
MADAGASCAR

“My adoptive mother taught me to cook”

Nothing destined Benjamin Gédéon Rakotoarinelina to work as a cook at the Antsohihy base camp as part of the Route 6 project in Madagascar. Far from it! Before joining Colas in 2004, he had alternated between two occupations – those of tour guide and driver. “My adoptive mother taught me to cook,” says Benjamin Gédéon. “I wanted to join Colas as a driver, but the only job on offer was in the kitchen, so I thought why not?” A specialist in French gastronomic dishes, he now prepares meals for the permanent work team with another cook and two waitresses. “But we sometimes have to feed other people at short notice, so we have to react fast!” he laughs. To satisfy his guests, Benjamin Gédéon delves into the numerous recipe books he has brought along with him, and which he reads cover to cover during his free time.

Jacques Rosenthal
TRAINER
COLAS MIDI-MEDITERRANEE
FRANCE

“I’m still learning”

Jacques was hired by Colas 36 years ago. With a basic qualification in mechanics, he was thinking of buying a service station when friends working for the Group persuaded him to come and join them. For the last three years he has been a trainer with Colas Midi-Méditerranée. “I trained local labor for contracts in Reunion Island, Martinique, Mauritius and Indonesia. It was very successful. So I now do the same job full-time in the south of France,” he explains. He has a full schedule, spending between one and four weeks on a project before going to another one, and returning home at weekends as often as he can. “This job means that I can pass on my expertise while still learning myself,” he remarks. “There is now an incredible range of new Group products and site machines. Key contracts such as the Paul Ricard race track and the Monaco project are unforgettable!” Still fond of mechanics, Jacques likes to build machines. His latest creation is a scooter powered by an angle grinder motor.
Farid Sadek
SITE MANAGER
SPAC/SUBURBANNE
FRANCE

“In our work, you have to be meticulous and painstaking.”

A former engineering officer in the Belgian merchant marine who has worked as a high-level technician all over the world, he has become a specialist in pressure drilling at the Port-de-Bouc profit center of La Suburbaine (Spac)… Now age 43, Farid Sadek has already lived several lives. He talks about them in fragments. Why is he with La Suburbaine today? “I’d had enough of traveling, and wanted to settle down. And then I was kidnapped twice in Nigeria and got lost in Bangladesh…” La Suburbaine is specialized in laying pipelines, but also carries out drilling and sealing operations on pipes carrying gas or oil under pressure. This is the work performed by Farid Sadek and his team of three. It’s a very specialized, high-risk job demanding a cool head and precision. “We work in environments where safety is vital. You have to be meticulous and painstaking… which suits me fine.”
Dian Lusiana
HUMAN RESOURCES AND SAFETY MANAGER
WASCO
INDONESIA

“I enjoy helping our employees grow in line with the company’s needs”

“I’m a hard worker and love to learn, but without losing my sense of humor,” says Dian Lusiana, Human Resources and Safety manager with PT Widya Sapta Colas (Wasco) in Djakarta. At 35 years of age, this young woman left the banking sector for Colas’ Indonesian subsidiary in 2000. “I enjoy helping our employees grow in line with the company’s needs,” she says. “And although some days are difficult, it doesn’t mean that I don’t love my job.” The young woman who started out as a personal assistant now appreciates how far she has come. She chose Colas for the personal development opportunities it gave her. She is delighted to be doing a job she loves in which she is gaining a wealth of experience, meeting a lot of people and forging some good friendships. One day, she would like to work abroad. Why not Singapore?
Philippe Soisson
DEPUTY OPERATIONS MANAGER
SCREG ILE-DE-FRANCE NORMANDIE
FRANCE

“On a site, it’s the people that make the difference”

42-year-old Philippe Soisson is a true “son of Screg Ile-de-France Normandie”. After studying civil engineering, he joined the company as a site foreman in 1988. Thanks to the subsidiary’s training schemes, he progressed rapidly. “For a year, I did a journeyman’s tour in the Paris region, changing sites every three months. It was a very formative experience.” He was promoted from site foreman to site manager, and is now deputy operations manager. Philippe values the human aspect of his job. “Carrying out a project means taking the best skills from each person and putting them together harmoniously. Nowadays, the difference between companies is not in techniques, it’s in their people.” In his 19-year career, he has taken part in all types of projects. His finest memory is the construction of runway 2 at Roissy - Charles-de-Gaulle airport. “The Group’s three Paris region subsidiaries – Screg IDFN, Colas IDFN and Sacer PNE – joined forces on this project. There was a real team spirit, and it made me really proud.”
John Bennett is regional manager in a small town in Arkansas. It's a job he loves since “no two days are ever the same.” He defines his role very simply: “to solve problems as quickly as possible and to ensure the success of the people in my team.” However day-to-day life is far from a breeze. “I work in a rural area and I have to travel long distances to reach widely scattered work sites,” he underlines. John joined Colas in 1993 and he doesn’t for a moment regret his choice since, according to him, the Group is generous with its employees compared with its competitors. “This takes notably the form of potential for career development internally thanks to Colas training programs. I personally have taken Colas University 1 and 2 in addition to sales and marketing courses,” he explains. A by no means insignificant advantage of his job is that it leaves him time to indulge his passion: astronomy. John spends the majority of his free time with astrophotography.
Roger Diehl
AREA PLANT MANAGER
HRI
UNITED STATES

“Colas benefits from real legitimacy in the construction industry”

In the Diehl family, a love of mechanics has been passed down from generation to generation. Having worked in the coal industry, Roger’s father joined HRI, a company now owned by Colas. His son naturally followed in his footsteps and is currently area plant manager with HRI. “I oversee four plants in Pennsylvania. My job is varied and that’s why I love it. I get up every morning not knowing what the day will bring and I find that extremely motivating,” he explains. Roger joined HRI 18 years ago — “my first job involved crushing stone” — and he patiently climbed the ladder to his current position. “I was delighted when Colas bought us because the Group benefits from genuine legitimacy in the construction industry. Our suppliers recognize and respect the Colas name!”
Pierre-Yves Esparcieux
APPRENTICE ENGINEER
COLAS RHONE-ALPES/PERRIER TP
FRANCE

“I’m learning a lot because they trust me”

Pierre-Yves “fell” into earthmoving when he was a boy. He discovered his calling by watching his father at work. He first gained a qualification as a site equipment operator, and then took professional high school courses. He is currently completing training to be an engineer, alternating two months of classes and two-month terms of apprenticeship as a site manager’s assistant in the earthworks department at Perrier TP (Colas Rhône-Alpes), in Saint-Priest. “It is great experience,” says the 25-year-old. “They trust me here, and give me the tools I need to succeed. I’m working on a big highway contract in Béziers. It’s very exciting. I am learning to be well organized, communicate properly and listen carefully to what the men I am supervising have to say.” Which neatly sums up what being a good manager is all about. Pierre-Yves is a long way off base in Béziers, where he stays through the week, returning home only on weekends. But he is willing to make such a sacrifice to achieve his goal of gaining his engineering diploma and becoming a full-fledged site manager next year.

Thierry Madelon
PRESIDENT
BRANSCOME RICHMOND
UNITED STATES

“For me, straightforwardness and respect are cornerstones”

The Thierry Madelon story can be summed up as a trip around the world… or almost. A Frenchman and engineer by training, Thierry wanted to leave. Hired by Colas in 1988 following an internship in the Ivory Coast, he stacked up experiences abroad: Réunion Island, Guadeloupe, Madagascar, the Caribbean, India… In 1993, he was called on to oversee the Borneo airport site in Indonesia. Then he headed for Vietnam. “There, I was lucky enough to be in on the Group’s first installation in the country, he recounts. Then I became Assistant Manager for Asia Operations.” He settled in Bangkok. Three years later, Thierry left for the States, where today he is President of Branscome Richmond. “All these trips taught me that basic management rules differ little from country to country. For me, straightforwardness and respect are cornerstones.” Another common denominator to countries: soccer! “I played everywhere I went.” What is his best memory? The Sunday tournament organized in Madagascar with 700 workers. “The atmosphere was fantastic,” he recalls.
Isabelle Thiery
STONE Mason
Spac/Segec
France

“I don’t regret my choice for a single moment”

Who would have guessed that one day Isabelle Thiery, sitting demurely at a reference librarian’s computer terminal, would become a stonemason? But to her great delight, this is exactly what happened. “After graduating from high school in humanities I took a course to become a reference librarian,” she recounts. “Then for 14 years I worked for a company responsible for computerizing the French National Library catalog.” But Isabelle had itchy feet and decided she wanted an active outdoor job. For several months, she hunted around for a solution. But then suddenly inspiration struck – why not become a stonemason? “It was working in the open air and the fact that it was something completely different that attracted me to the profession. I enrolled in a stonemasons’ training center, just to see. For my internship, I went to Segec, a subsidiary of Spac. After qualifying, I re-contacted the company, and they offered me a temporary contract.” In October 2006, Isabelle was given a permanent job. She is now perfectly at home with prefabricated reinforced concrete elements, reinforcing bars and concrete mixing plants. The former librarian is now a full-fledged member of the 12-strong team at the La Châtre heavy pre-fab plant. “I don’t regret my choice for a single moment,” she declares. “I am learning a lot, and working in a big group like Colas gives me confidence.”

Pascal Guidi
Site Manager
Colas Benin
Benin

“I love meeting new challenges”

Pascal Guidi joined Colas West & Central Africa over 11 years ago. He began with unsurfaced roads before gradually branching out. The building of Tchibanga airport in Gabon and the paving of the road through Tanguia, in Benin, gave him the opportunity to take on important responsibilities and prove his skills. Today, Pascal is site manager in Djougou, Benin. Depending on the projects, he oversees 250 to 350 people. He likes the job and its daily challenges. “There’s nothing dull about this job. You have to meet new challenges all the time, whatever the size of the site. No two situations are alike.” Pascal has had the opportunity to get to know West Africa well – Benin, Mali, Gabon – and is always curious to learn about new cultures. “Even if building techniques are the same everywhere, you have to be able to adapt to people and mentalities. I’ve learned a lot from all my experiences.”
Johnny Neel joined Smac at age 18 with no training at all, and for two years he worked nights, producing mastic asphalt. He then left to complete his military service, during which time he qualified for a truck driver’s license. When he returned to the company, he first worked in a mastic asphalt application team, then switched to truck driving, before becoming a foreman six years ago. He is now supervisor of after-sales in the Strasbourg center. “They are small projects that I handle from A to Z,” he explains. “I also deal with property maintenance contracts.” Before work begins, he prepares estimates with the sales representative. He then organizes the work, orders the materials, manages the teams and site machines, and prepares the invoices. “The work is very varied,” he says. “There’s no routine. There are an increasing number of small contracts.” He enjoys the responsibility that comes with the job. He puts a lot into his work, and he gets satisfaction from the trust the company places in him.

“The work is very varied”
“In my profession, you are constantly advancing”

A lab technician attached to Colas Sud-Ouest’s Saint-Avit center, Jimmy Phirmis travels widely around his territory in southwestern France. He was born in Guadeloupe in the Caribbean, but does not miss his native island. Naturally a quiet man, he says, “Meeting people through my work has opened my eyes.” He is tasked with carrying out quality controls in the region’s production facilities, concrete plants and works centers and ensuring that products are used correctly on sites. In his multifaceted job, he covers some 50,000 kilometers per year. He joined the Group in 1998, after gaining a university diploma in civil engineering and receiving technical training, and enjoys a profession “in which you are constantly advancing.” Colas runs in Jimmy’s family: his brother, Lenny Phirmis, is a technician in the Floirac engineering office and his mother, Liliane Marot, works in Human Resources at the Colas Sud-Ouest head office in Merignac.
“Our people are our greatest wealth”

For 80 years now, the heart of Liam Henry’s family has beaten to the activities of Cold Chon, national leader on the Irish market for the production of bitumen emulsion. Liam’s father was manager of Cold Chon Sligo and it was with him that he took his first steps in the company, when he was very young, during the summer holidays. With his chemical analyst’s diploma under his belt, Liam joined the company’s second site in 1985 in Galway. Then, after climbing all the rungs of the ladder, he was appointed general manager in 2003. “I learnt a lot from my father and I’m really proud to be able to continue his approach to the job based on an on-going dialogue with our customers to work out optimum solutions with them, he explains. At the same time, I’m devoted to carrying on our training tradition because our people are our greatest wealth.” Thus the company proposes in-house training for all its employees and really invests in their professional development with the result that many of them trace their lifetime career path at Cold Chon…

“Being a woman has helped”

“At first sight, I thought the job wasn’t for me. GTOI was looking for somebody to take care of on-site quality and safety. I did have a diploma in quality strategy and engineering but no experience in terms of site safety, and the public works sector didn’t seem right for me,” explains Célyne, a quality and safety technician. Those around her managed to convince her to at least send in a résumé. To her great surprise, she was hired! Now she loves the job that enables her to travel all over the island. Her task is to ensure that quality standards and safety rules are properly applied on jobsites. “I deal mainly with site foremen and site managers. I have been very well accepted by them, they answer all my questions and give me all the information I need. As it turns out, being a woman has helped.” Célyne is proud of the quality of the contacts that have developed. “I am really part of the team,” she declares. Originally from a small town in the east of France, Célyne has found her place in the sun of the Indian Ocean.
Sébastien Robert

SITE MANAGER
COLAS NEW CALEDONIA
NEW CALEDONIA

“Later I would like to supervise site managers”

After a Masters in civil engineering, Sébastien began his career with Bouygues in Paris. But in 2004, after two years, he decided to return home, to New Caledonia, where he was hired by Colas. A site manager in the building sector, Sébastien recently completed his first major project as general contractor. “It was the construction of a school complex on a very tight deadline,” he explains. “Managing all aspects of the project, scheduling, budget, relations with subcontractors and so on all proved to be a lot of work, but it was fascinating, and everything went very well.” Sébastien enjoys the human relations that are forged in meeting this kind of challenge. It was the quality of contacts with people that immediately attracted him to Colas. Later on, he would like to supervise site managers on a number of different projects. Sébastien has a great career ahead of him!
Rebecca Dixon

SENIOR ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE CLERK
BARRETT PAVING
UNITED STATES

“Barrett Paving is a good company to work for”

Allied Chemical, Barrett-Gooding, Whittaker-Gooding, Barrett Paving Materials. With her thirty years of seniority, Rebecca Dixon has seen a good many brand changes and, you might say, is a sort of memory for Barrett Paving Materials. “In thirty years, the company has developed enormously and so has my job. I still remember the time when we drew up invoices by hand using carbon paper,” she says. Rebecca joined Allied Chemical as a secretary at the age of 19 and is now Senior Accounts Receivable Clerk at Barrett Paving’s Ypsilanti site. “I like contact with the customer and I’ve always enjoyed dealing with figures,” she explains. In 2007, the company organised its first Health Fair featuring advice on better food diets and encouraging people to take up a physical activity... A success according to Rebecca. “Barrett Paving is a good company to work for. The management cares about the well-being of its staff. And business is good.” A true mother at heart, Rebecca also makes sure that all is well for her 8 year-old daughter, Mariah Rose.
Joanna Shewen
PROJECT ENGINEER
CANADIAN ROAD BUILDERS/ACP
CANADA

“I’ve been lucky enough to learn from experienced people”

Jean-Paul Morineau?
QUARRY SUPERVISOR
COLAS CENTRE-OUEST/CARRIERES BONIN
FRANCE

“I like the variety of my job”
“I had several jobs before I joined the Group”

Before joining Colas, Sébastien had a number of jobs to his credit. After studying electrical engineering in Reunion Island he took further courses in electronics and mechanics at a maritime academy. He next worked on a major project in a plant that manufactured pushbuttons and on a tunnel boring machine. He then came to mainland France and for a year-and-a-half worked at Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport, where he took part in installing 80 km of luggage conveyor belts in Terminal 2. Returning to Reunion Island after two years, he found he was constantly on the road going from job to job. He then decided to stop and settle down in Mayotte. Today he is production supervisor for ETPC, which is specialized in the pre-fabrication of reinforced concrete pipes, inspection wells, electricity poles, etc. Sebastian monitors all stages of manufacture: checking quality, managing orders, controlling stock, purchasing raw materials, etc. He enjoys his job. “When we were building the plant, my training in mechanics and electronics came in very handy,” he explains.
José Lino Gomes da Veiga
FOREMAN
COLAS IDF/N/SNPR
FRANCE

“My boss trusts me and appreciates my work”

A stone worker and home improvement specialist in his native country of Cap Verde, José Lino Gomes da Veiga arrived in France back in 1987, “looking for a better life.” For seven years, he took temporary jobs as a stone worker before joining SNPR’s Ile-Saint-Denis profit center (Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie) in 1994. At which point his career took off. “I rose through the ranks as a stone worker, and ended up becoming a foreman less than a year ago,” explains José. “What helped me get a promotion was all the training programs I have taken part in over the last few years, such as in business, topography, advanced paving, and so on. At Colas, you really can succeed if you want to and if you’re prepared to work hard. In my case, I also benefited from a helping hand from my boss, who showed trust in me and appreciated my work.” José, a father of six, is now determined to take the next step, and become a site foreman.
Karen Schmid
ROAD SAFETY ENGINEER
COLAS SWITZERLAND/ERTEC
SWITZERLAND

“The future of our profession depends on promoting sustainable road safety”

In 1981, right after high school, Luc realized that an office job was not for him! “I took my dad’s advice – he was a grader operator – and joined Colas Midi-Méditerranée as a worker. I knew nothing at all about road building, but I learned bit by bit,” he recalls. Twenty-six years on, Luc is thoroughly familiar with all types of equipment. He has been operating a sprayer since 1986. He very much enjoys his work, and likes the variety of tasks, assignments and projects: “It’s never tedious, and there’s never a routine.” He is delighted with new developments in machines and their levels of performance. And of course there is constant improvement in working conditions, which are not as tough as they once were. Luc is a member of the Health, Safety and Working Conditions committee, and enjoys explaining safety regulations to new recruits. His work center (Narbonne) can be proud of not having recorded a single lost-time accident in more than ten years. He has also served as treasurer of the works council for the past 12 years, and he works hard to negotiate cheap rates for employee activities (swimming pools, movie theaters, holiday entertainment, etc.).

Luc Chulio
SPRAYER OPERATOR
COLAS MIDI-MEDITERRANEE
FRANCE

“Working conditions have really improved”

Each morning, Karen Schmid gets up with a driving objective: help reduce the number of road accidents. “The new Swiss road safety policy aims to halve the number of deaths and serious injuries by 2010, she explains. Against this backdrop, Ertec, a subsidiary of Colas Switzerland, created a road safety department of which I’m in charge.” The young woman undertook her assignment with good references behind her, including five years spent in the Swiss accident prevention bureau. Today, her role consists in studying the dangerous areas in the road network and proposing developments to municipalities to enhance safety. “Many elected officials blame human behavior for accidents and play down the role of infrastructures. In fact, both aspects need to be addressed.” With the contribution of a designer and a technician specialized in counting traffic, Karen is studying the weak points in the road network and proposing measures to put them right. And she’s looking forward to seeing her department grow in the future. “Mobility must become safer,” she asserts.
**Dominique A. Schmitt**  
**HEAD OF PROPERTY AND LAND DIVISION**  
**COLAS RHÔNE-ALPES**  
**FRANCE**

“**You have to stay optimistic and persistent**”

“...” My family will tell you I never give up,” laughs Dominique A. Schmitt, head of the property and land development division at Colas Rhône-Alpes, which was created in 2004 and also operates on behalf of Colas Est. Dominique is responsible for opening and extending quarries. His motto? “Every ton we sell has to be replaced. That’s a minimum.” In these protracted operations, optimism, persistence and negotiating skills are essential requirements. Three years can often elapse between the initial launch of a project, land acquisitions, official permits and negotiations with neighboring residents and government authorities. Dominique gained his expertise in this field between 1989 and 2004, when, as a regional general secretary of Unicem (the French national federation of the quarrying and construction materials industries) first in Alsace, eastern France, and then in the Lyon region, he negotiated ten quarry zones, took part in drafting legislation and set up a consultancy and assistance service for companies. At Colas, Dominique has set up an engineering unit in his department, which is soon to expand.

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**Manuel Lopes da Costa**  
**FOREMAN AND BACKHOE OPERATOR**  
**COLAS IDF/N/GÉNIER DEFORGE**  
**FRANCE**

“The Group trusts me, so I trust them!”

...Whether it is motorbikes or go-karts, Manuel likes vehicles with engines. Little wonder, then, that he also makes his living out of them. “I operate a large backhoe,” he explains. However, there was nothing in his past to suggest that Manuel would do this type of work. After graduating from high school in Porto, in northern Portugal, he came to France in May 1994 on a short vacation. “Within a week I had been hired by Genier Deforge, part of Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie!” he laughs. There then came a year as an apprentice mechanic, followed by 6 months at the depot checking trucks and handling paperwork, then six more months learning to operate a backhoe. Manuel wants to continue his career within Colas. Very independent minded, Manuel, who has a young family, values his freedom above everything. “The Group trusts me, so I trust them!” he says.
A few months after becoming general manager of Colasphalt, the division of Canadian Road Builders responsible for buying and selling asphalt concrete (logistics, transport and storage), Chuck Van Dyk smiles: “Colas and I are still in our honeymoon phase!” His job consists in developing Colasphalt’s business and ensuring it remains profitable on a market characterized by high price instability. He got where he is now through his experience in the oil sector. His career began at Shell, where he advanced as a result of internal training. He then became a senior marketer at Husky Energy, which gave him the opportunity to be in contact with Colas. “I liked the work culture and the human relations that exist in the Group,” he explains, “and I wanted to play a part in its development.” Chuck wishes that days were longer so he could give even more. Involved in charity work, he sees a link with his role as a manager: he provides support for others.
Philippe Quillien
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR,
ADMINISTRATION FINANCE EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL
COLAS ÉCHANGEUR BOULOGNE
FRANCE

“I like working with people from other cultures”

Indian, Africa, Morocco, the Caribbean, French Guiana, northern and central Europe… Philippe Quillien regularly visits all the Colas operations there, which means about one business trip per week. As Deputy Managing Director, Administration Finance Europe and International, he must often review business with local staff. “Nothing replaces onsite contact, he explains, even if, between trips, I follow up on things via e-mail and video-conferences.” It is thanks to the Group’s growth that Philippe, now 54, was able to have this international career. A graduate of business school, he joined Colas 30 years ago and worked with several senior management teams before being sent to the French Caribbean, as Administrative Manager. “I loved it. That’s when I realized how much I like working with different kinds of people, from other cultures, and in other contexts than the ones I’m used to,” he explains enthusiastically.
Arthur Alain Rasolofojaona  
CAPTAIN OF THE BARGE EXPRESS  
COLAS MADAGASCAR  
MADAGASCAR  

“Crossings can take anything between 17 hours and 4 days”

In Madagascar, Colas’ Barge Express ferries men and machines to the most remote sites. Under the responsibility of Captain Arthur Alain Rasolofojaona, it operates with a crew of ten and can take up to twelve passengers. “Depending on the destinations, crossings can take anything between 17 hours and 4 days. For each trip, I supervise the embarkation, on-board safety and am responsible for navigation,” he underlines. Arthur Alain has been a captain since 1995: “I did lots of long-hauls for small Madagascan firms.” He is delighted to have joined Colas Madagascar in 2000. “It’s a serious, respectably-sized company, which is a guarantee from the point of view of safety. In addition, the Barge Express’ home port is Majunga, where I’m from originally. So, I can see my family as soon as I’m on dry land.”
“The Group is one big family”

Less than one year from his retirement, 60-year-old Christian Colange certainly knows the Group very well! He joined Colas in 1975, while working on the construction of a stretch of the A 9 highway in southwestern France. A native of the region, he had already worked for thirteen years in mechanics, mainly as a wire winder. “The Group is one big family,” he says. “I have seen a lot of people get promoted. I’ve worked with them, and today some of them are heading subsidiaries. It’s a very good thing that at Colas, everyone starts out in the field.” A longstanding Compagnon de la Route, Christian is ending his career as quarry supervisor with Colas Midi-Méditerranée in Thuir. He is also tasked with maintaining the crushing equipment. “We have to bring the machinery into line with new standards, which are constantly being made more stringent. So you have to get organized several years ahead to find solutions that will ensure continuity of production, which cannot be slowed down.” This is just one of the challenges that this technical expert deals with every day.
“Working in different countries, you never stop developing”

It was a love of the construction industry that brought Arnaud Boumaour to Colas, with a professional qualification in reinforced concrete construction. He had been attracted to the sector very young. “I started out working for small contractors, but I quickly decided to join a big group: I wanted to take part in major concrete building projects.” Determined to advance in the industry, he took evening classes and rapidly rose through the ranks until he became a site foreman. Colas then made his dream come true: he was given the opportunity of working overseas. For the past fifteen years, Arnaud has traveled from island to island – Reunion Island, Mayotte, and now New Caledonia. He believes that mobility is a factor of enrichment: “Working in different countries means you never stop developing,” he says. Through all these moves, he has had the opportunity to see many kinds of operations, but for him there is something specific about each project. “They are all beautiful in their own way. Some of them make more of an impact than others because of the technical challenges they constitute. But I have thoroughly enjoyed working on every single one of the projects I’ve directed.”
Fred Belfan
MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN
ECHANGEUR NORD-PICARDIE
FRANCE

“A hell of a challenge that I was pleased to accept”

The Echangeur Nord-Picardie head office in Villeneuve-d’Ascq is a brand new building. Since April 2007, the 62 employees of the regional head offices of Colas Nord-Picardie and Screg Nord-Picardie have been housed in its almost 2,500 m² of floor space. Hired in July 2006, Fred Belfan tracked the construction process (excluding the civil engineering), in liaison with Colas SA – “a hell of a challenge that I was pleased to accept.” After supervising both head offices’ moving operations, he is now based in the Echangeur, where he is responsible for purchasing office supplies, managing outside contractors and suppliers, organizing rooms and meals, and managing the reception team, mail and the fleet of cell phones. Fred Belfan’s duties are completely practical, which comes as a relief to him: “After spending 21 years in the military, I felt cut off from reality to a certain extent. I’m pleased I have crossed to the other side of the mirror.” Versatile and independent, he makes sure that things keep running smoothly at the Echangeur Nord-Picardie and thus contributes to the quality of services provided to the teams. “Just call me ‘Mr. Echangeur Nord-Picardie’!” he laughs. “I am there for both Colas NP and Screg NP.”
Michel Sardain
SALES REPRESENTATIVE
SMAC/GIRAUD CONSTRUCTION
FRANCE

“When they offered me the possibility of advancement, I decided I better take my chance”

“I joined Giraud Construction in October 1964 as an apprentice. I was 14.” Today, at 57, Michel Sardain is still there. 43 years of seniority represent a whole life in the company, with the inside-out knowledge of the business that implies. Specialized in metallic frameworks, Giraud Construction first assigned the young apprentice to the framework manufacturing workshop. A few years later, Michel became a delivery driver and participated in setting up frameworks on project sites. Then, in 1991, he was offered a job as a technical sales representative. “I said to myself that I ought to give it a try. I challenged myself, he says. So I started from scratch in this new job and I followed internal training.” Customer Relations, designing buildings according to specifications, budgeting, quotes, project monitoring… Michel is like a fish in water. He knows perfectly what he sells. His common sense, know-how and experience make him an excellent salesman.

Silvana Sorbo
REGIONAL MANAGER
SINTRA
CANADA

“You really have to like what you do, because it’s very demanding”

Thirteen years after being hired by Sintra as quality manager, Silvana, a 40-year-old civil engineer, is now regional manager. “I am responsible for a profit center with three asphalt plants, a quarry and between 100 and 150 employees, depending on weather conditions,” she explains. “That’s a lot of work and a lot of responsibility! But I love my job and I know that by giving 100%, you get back what you put in.” She enjoys the diversity of her work. Silvana pays a lot of attention to customer contacts and insists that her teams do the same. “You have to focus on customers, anticipate their needs and always listen to them. This is what differentiates the Group from the competition. Of course, this is in addition to the excellent reputation it has earned for the quality of its work, which we have to keep up.” She gained an MBA in 2004 as part of an in-job training package and likes to relax by taking dance classes and traveling. “I love Europe. I have Italian roots so I am drawn to Italy, but I also like France a great deal!”
Jean-Jacques Simon
FOREMAN
SCREG NORD-PICARDIE/VALLET SAUNAL
FRANCE

“I got my second chance”

Jean-Jacques did all kinds of jobs before he found the one that was right for him: plumber, welder, salesman. It was 1989 when he first tried public works as a temporary worker. Screg Nord-Picardie’s Vallet Saunal profit center in Condren had just opened and was looking for workers. “Four years later, I was still a laborer. So I quit and took a job as a salesman in a supermarket. Some mistake! The store was 50 km away from where I lived. I spent almost all my salary on gas!” In 1998, Jean-Jacques returned to the profit center, where they were only too pleased to welcome him back. “This time things were different. After four months I was given a small team to supervise. In 2002, I was trained as foreman to make the grade officially.” His in-job training course lasted nine months and resulted in a fully accredited qualification. But Jean-Jacques intends to go yet further. He is aiming to make site manager. His profit center supervisor has supported him for many years, and is now enabling him to start up training again. He says, “I don’t know many groups that let a worker become a site manager!”

Charles Ruffin
SALES SUPERVISOR
COLAS SWITZERLAND
SWITZERLAND

“To do this job, you have to enjoy challenges”

After a career path through engineering sectors in various Group subsidiaries, five years ago Charles Ruffin opted for sales. A 90° turn? “Not at all, replies Charles, an engineer by training. It’s a logical step, a natural way forward for me. During all those years, I always had good relations with my customers and, in a sense, was already doing a bit of sales, like all engineers. Colas Geneva wanted to dedicate a fully-fledged position to acquisitions and the search for new markets. I applied.” Quite simply. Charles is 100% committed to his assignment and wants to create and develop a genuine commercial sector. In a word, he “has got the bug”. “To do this job, you have to enjoy challenges and difficulties, show patience and perseverance, not lose heart…,” he advises. These qualities are also ones that fifty-year young Charles also shows in his leisure activities. A mountain lover, he has no fear of obstacles. And far from enjoying this pleasure as a lone-wolfer, he helps the visually-impaired to ski. If you have a passion, share it!
For the past 10 years now, Kadija Benddif arrives every morning at 6 o’clock to clean the offices at the Boulogne-Billancourt headquarters. At 8 o’clock, she leaves, crosses the Porte de Saint-Cloud square and begins her second job, babysitter. She knows the family well and has looked after their little boy since he was born, 7 years ago. For a while, Kadija also did office cleaning in another company, up to 9 o’clock in the evening. Then she decided to stop, because it was too much. Colas? She knew someone who worked there. “I like it. The hours suit me since I live nearby, at the Jean Bouin stadium where my husband works.” Kadija Benddif is Moroccan, from Marrakech exactly, where she returns “at least twice a year”. Married at the age of 16, she followed her husband to France in 1978. Mother of three, she began working at elderly people’s homes, then in companies. When she retires, she may go back to Morocco, but it’s not easy. “We’re foreigners everywhere, she says. Both here and there.”
Valérie Masure
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
SMAC/RESIPOLY CHRYSOR
FRANCE

“The production department is just like a family”

“I wanted an active life and not to be stuck behind a desk. I had a cousin who enlisted in the armed forces and traveled abroad, so I went and enlisted, too.” In 1995, after graduating in accounting, Valérie Masure joined the French army. But she was disappointed. As far as seeing the world was concerned, she was posted to the city of Lille, not far at all from her home town, Maubeuge, and was assigned to... a desk job! Two years later she quit the army to look for work. She found it in Paris at the age of 22. Life was not easy for her at first: she was very lonely, working in a small factory where she hardly met anyone. She resigned after five years, and took a temporary assignment with Rézipoly Chrysor. A few months later, she was offered a permanent job. “I accepted. The people were so nice to me! I’m involved in the administrative side of the business. I work with the trucking companies and the customers, of course, but I’m mainly in contact with the production teams and all the support staff. The production department is just like a family to me.” Something that means a lot to Valérie, now age 32, who was the eighth child in a family of eleven and for whom contact with people counts more than anything.
Yves Pauleau
TECHNICAL SUPERVISOR FOR QUARRIES
COLAS MIDI-MEDITERRANEE
FRANCE

“I love the diversity”

Now age 58, Yves joined the Group in October 1970, and has stayed throughout his entire career. “I served an apprenticeship in wrought ironwork but I didn’t stick with it. I found out by chance that Colas Midi-Méditerranée in Montpellier was looking for a welder. They gave me some tests and hired me,” he recalls. Since then, he has again changed direction several times. After being a site mechanic, he worked on asphalt plants and then moved to the quarry sector. He became a quarry manager in 1983, and has been technical manager for quarries since 2000. In his day-to-day work, he likes the fact that he never knows what’s coming next: “I switch from equipment mechanics to boiler maintenance, electricity or automation. Even if I try to schedule my work, something unexpected always crops up.” Full of energy at work, Yves keeps something in reserve for his five grandchildren. “And you need energy when you have to replay France’s international soccer matches in the backyard!”
“The main thing is not getting beaten but fighting back”

Eric and Olivier, both in their forties, have worked at Sacer Atlantique in Rennes for over 15 years. Eric became a compactor driver after starting out life as a pastry cook. Olivier spent many years working on jobsites before becoming a lab technician. Their jobs may be very different, but both men have something in common: in 2003, both of them were victims of serious workplace accidents. A roller fell on Olivier’s leg, and after major surgery he had to give up work for three years. Eric’s left foot was so badly crushed by a planing machine it had to be amputated, with a year and a half off work. Did these accidents spell the end of their working lives? Not at all. With determination and courage, neither man would give up, and both have made spectacular recoveries. “Thanks to my artificial limb, I am now able to work almost like before,” Eric says proudly. “I now operate a hydraulic machine, so there is no clutch pedal requiring a left foot. My colleagues have been terrific with me. Anyone who doesn’t know that I have lost my foot would never guess.” Olivier’s journey to recovery has been different, but is no less extraordinary. “I was in charge of asphalt mix at the time of my accident. There’s no longer any question of me going onsite, but I was offered a job in the lab to work on soil stabilization. I was given training in this technique. Now I almost regret I didn’t ask to change jobs a lot sooner!” No question, Olivier and Eric have managed to turn their misfortune to their best advantage.
Georges Gesbert
TRUCK/CRAINE DRIVER
COLAS CENTRE-OUEST
FRANCE

“I go from site to site – I like keeping on the move”

However imposing the machine – a roller, a mobile crane, a flat-bed truck or a patching machine – Georges Gesbert handles it skillfully. Originally trained as a stone-worker, Georges loves the great outdoors, particularly cycling, hiking and fishing. It’s hardly surprising he only lasted four months in the factory producing motorcycle handlebars where he was first hired. “I couldn’t stand being indoors any longer,” he admits. He left Paris and moved to Bourges, where he joined Colas Centre-Ouest. “I was a stoneworker for three years, and then I was offered a job driving a compactor.” Georges learned to drive it on the job. Later, so that he could drive a flat-bed truck, he went on a two-week training course, and a patching machine also required special training. Now he has no difficulty switching from one machine to another. “I go from site to site. I like variety and keeping on the move.” On condition, that is, that he does not have to travel too far from his family. When he was a compactor driver, he found long assignments hard to handle. The way his work is now scheduled suits him fine.
As a child, in Benin, the sight of Colas machinery on the worksite made him dream. There were no two ways about it: he was going to be an excavator driver. Fiacre Koï, who joined the Group in 2000 with a vocational training certificate and diploma, appreciates the human relationships at Colas Sud-Ouest’s Floirac branch, as well as his job: “Each site is a new story, with different companies and people, he notes. There is a great feeling of mutual support in the teams, even if, sometimes, things need to be clarified.” Fiacre’s job has also helped him make another dream come true: creating his own audiovisual production firm, M Allians Prod. Rap, soul, jazz, R’nB, reggae and French and American pop are part of its repertoire. With six colleagues, Fiacre also deals with subtitling films, organising concerts and shooting clips. For three years, he attended composing and songwriting classes at the Bordeaux National Conservatory and has earned a name in musical comedies.

Head of the Costs Department of Ancorad Oltenia, a former public-sector enterprise acquired by the Group in 1996, Mihaela Cristina Patru enjoys her work with Colas and appreciates the cross-disciplinary projects. Thus she coordinated the Jaguar programme which involved implementing several IT applications in the field of inventories and wages in particular. “I’m proud to have accomplished this project with the help of my colleagues,” she says. She also appreciates the encounters and friendships she’s been able to develop with the Group in Romania. Her numerous contacts with operational departments have enhanced her awareness and understanding of the company’s activities. Currently involved in updating the Asis software (assistance, training and inventory), she is already engaged in future projects. Roadbuilding holds no secrets for her as her parents already worked in this sector. Return to roots!
“I’m a Colas career man, on more than one count”

Zach Green can thank his wife. It’s because he wanted to be nearer the university where she was finishing her studies that the young mining engineer graduate joined Southeast Missouri Stone Company (a subsidiary of Delta), in Missouri, as mine engineer and quality control manager. “I worked there three years and learned a lot about quarries and the Group’s management principles, he recalls. As a quarry manager, I oversaw a team of 30, then I took the job of Aggregates engineering projects manager at Delta, where I am today Equipment Manager. I have no regrets about joining and staying with the Colas Group, or about being in this line of business. When I was at school, I wanted to specialize in electrical engineering, but the mining sector guaranteed a job after graduation… so I went for that, and enjoyed it.” At 30, after 8 years of 100% Colas experience, Zach is set on pursuing his career track… in the same vein.

John Logsdon
OPERATIONS MANAGER
COLASKA
UNITED STATES

“My new role gives me the challenge I’m looking for”

An airport extension, the construction of a highway… John Logsdon, based in Juneau, Alaska, has a pretty busy schedule: coordinating the activities of various site workers, taking stock with public agencies, tracking down unnecessary costs … “I also give interviews to the local press to inform people about how projects are advancing,” he adds. “Having worked as a surveyor and as project manager for several years, I’ve been in my current role for eight months. It’s very stimulating and gives me the challenge I’m looking for.” And as can be imagined, working in Alaska is no easy ride, especially in terms of logistics: “we are very remote, we often have to use airplanes.” John also appreciates belonging to an international group giving him the opportunity to meet colleagues from around the globe. “I was born in Alaska and have always lived there. This year, I took some courses at the Colas University, which gave me a chance to meet colleagues from the rest of the United States and Canada,” he explains.
“In this job, you’re nothing without others…”

“I have a passion for public works,” confesses 50-year-old Alain Binda, Manager of the Languedoc-Roussillon branch of Colas Midi-Méditerranée, without a moment’s hesitation. As a young, freshly-graduated INSA engineer, he joined the Group in 1981 as foreman and then went on to climb the ladder in Martinique, continuing his career path in France as site manager, operating manager, center supervisor, agency supervisor and, since 2002, profit center manager. “When assuming the responsibilities of each position I held, the Group always expressed its confidence in me and gave me a wide rein, which enabled me to learn and progress,” explains Alain. “At Colas, employees make career headway and many of them have over thirty years of seniority.” According to him, such loyalty can be explained by the size of the Group, its diversity, the training given and general corporate culture. And he adds: “It’s a stimulating and time-consuming profession which requires boundless commitment and, first and foremost, team spirit. In the public works sector, you’re nothing without others, there’s no place for individualism. Each of us makes his contribution to Group growth.”
Vincent Menier
Paver Operator
Ribal/Sbeg
French Guiana

“Even on sites, I’m still insect-hunting”

Originally from Rennes, France, it was a passion for insects which led Vincent Menier to Guiana. “A few months after my military service in Djibouti, I set out in search of adventure and ended up in Cayenne. And since it’s hard making a living out of insect-hunting, I began working in the building trade. In 1990, I took a temporary job with Trauchessec, as a paver operator driver. I learned the trade on the job.” After one year, Vincent was hired on a permanent basis. Since then, the company was taken over by Ribal, which in turn was absorbed by the Group in 1998. Vincent Menier is attached to the SBEG. “I like the job which lets me work out of doors and stay in touch with nature. I’ve always got my insect box on me and sometimes I even find a few specimens on forest sites!” A keen sportsman and a swimming and running enthusiast in particular, he also hunts during his daily run. It’s a real passion which he has passed on to his children and which he also teaches in schools. His insect and butterfly collection is very near the 4,500 mark.

Paulo De Carvalho Pena
Operator
Colas Switzerland/CRGC
Switzerland

“I began as a worker and today I’m an operator”

Originally from Portugal, Paulo was 22 when he first set foot in Switzerland. “Quite a few of my friends had left to settle there, so I said ‘why not me?’” Young and full of enthusiasm, he set off on the adventure trail, which happened to begin in a farmyard. “For three years, I worked as a farm laborer, but I didn’t like it at all…” Then Paulo joined a factory making cast iron parts where he was a driver. Two years later, in 1997, he finally found his way at CRGC, a subsidiary of Colas Switzerland. “I began as a worker and today I’m an operator. I’m in charge of loading seven trucks.” Behind the controls of his backhoe loader, Paulo is in his element. And although the Swiss thermometer falls well below Lisbon temperatures, he really feels at home in Bassecourt, in the canton of the Jura. With his Swiss wife, he is the happy father of two young daughters.
“Our jobs are anything but routine, and that’s what’s exciting”

“After my studies at the Bucharest Polytechnic Institute where I graduated in 1967, I began my career as a building engineer for road and bridges,” explains Ioan Stan. As Managing Director for ADP Constanta, he has a wide spectrum of assignments: planning, leading, organising, coordinating and overseeing the subsidiary’s business. He carries out the operational management of current activities and represents the company in third party discussions and the finalising of legal documents – within the boundaries defined by the Board of Directors. “What’s marvellous about our jobs is that they’re anything but routine. The problems we come up against are extremely varied and always call for new solutions.” There’s no doubt about it, Ioan really has found the way that best suits his longtime ambitions.
Sébastien Sacksteder
ACCOUNTANT
SCREG EST/STD
FRANCE

“I like contact with teams in the field”

His promotion to head of the accounts team at STD (Société de Travaux du Doubs), a Screg Est profit center, is an outstanding moment in Sébastien Sacksteder’s career. He is now directing two new projects: setting up accounts for the Besançon asphalt plant and rolling out Siroco software for STD teams. He particularly enjoys coming into contact with construction teams: “I am someone who has a desk job, so it’s very interesting for me to go out into the field to meet teams on the job. I have a lot of admiration for what they do!” Sébastien works in collaboration with colleagues in other Screg Est profit centers. Through the experience he has acquired in four different business units, he understands the process of networking perfectly. Sébastien has ambitions: one day he wants to become F&A manager for a number of profit centers.
“Colas knows how to motivate their employees”

After 32 years in the hotmix construction industry, including 20 as paving foreman, Freddie Flagg knows what he’s talking about. “I began as a worker fresh out of high school. I enjoyed it and continued my career without asking myself too many questions. I enjoyed working outdoors even if, at times, it was physically demanding, with the Georgia heat and afternoon thunderstorms. But with the great working environment and valued co-workers it has been worth it,” he explains. Freddie began his career in a small Georgia firm that was sold to Reeves Construction Company in 1989, which was acquired in turn by Colas in 1998. “I’m pleased to say that Colas is by far the best company I’ve worked for: they offer many benefits and know how to motivate their employees to make them more efficient,” he underlines. All excellent reasons which have convinced him to remain loyal to Colas until he retires!
Brian Farrell
REGIONAL ENGINEER
BARRETT PAVING
UNITED STATES

“Colas is a group where you can move up the ladder”

Since the beginning of 2007, Brian Farrell has been working as Regional Engineer with Barrett Paving. One of his roles is to estimate projects. “What I really enjoy about my job is seeing how a project takes shape. Often, I have my own vision of what it will be like and then the men make it happen quicker and with fewer resources. That means bigger profits for Barrett!” In the company, Brian is also known for his lucky T-shirt that has helped Barrett win several bids. “One day, I was the one who went down to lodge our bid and I was wearing this red and green flannel T-shirt. We won and since then I’ve continued to wear the same T-shirt for every bid. It’s always in the back of my car and has never been washed!” As a young engineer, Brian appreciates the Group’s family atmosphere. “The company is always organizing events for the whole family. I’ve taken part in the Colas North America University and the Corbach Conference in Canada,” he recalls. “It’s a group where you can move up the ladder.”

Aurélie Chomont
PROJECT MANAGER
SMAC
FRANCE

“Maybe I could run a sector one day”

Holding a materials engineering degree, Aurélie joined Smac last September. Since then, the 24-year-old from St Etienne, in eastern France, has been on a journeyman’s tour of France. “It allows us to get to know the company better, to receive training and to find out about different aspects of the business,” she says. After a spell in Brest she moved on to Besançon, where she was site manager on a hospital building project. The final stage of her tour now sees her back in St Etienne. A strong believer in interpersonal relations, Aurélie is an active woman who enjoys fieldwork: “In part, this was what attracted me to the construction sector. We work in a group, we share the good and the bad, and we help each other out. And the fact that Smac is part of the Colas Group has given me confidence because it makes career moves possible. One day I would like to run a team, and then maybe progress to running a sector.” Fitting into a predominantly masculine world was not too tough: Aurélie soon won her colleagues’ trust. She has used her free time during her journeyman’s tour to discover new regions: “I was pleasantly surprised by Brittany, and the waterfalls in the Besançon region are truly magnificent.”
“What I like is site work”

“I joined Screg Ouest by chance,” reminisces Hervé, roads and networks team supervisor at the Morlaix profit center. The son of a farmer and a native of the region, he heard one day from the mayor of his village that Screg Ouest was looking for road workers. “I had had enough of the pressures of farming life, so I immediately applied,” he recalls. It was a good decision. Hervé has now been working 17 years in the same profit center. Having spent 10 years in asphalt as a worker, compactor operator and then screedman, he accepted promotion to roads and networks team supervisor. But talk to him about further career moves and he stops you short: “I think I’ve already made quite a few career moves! What I want to do is stay in site work – now that’s what I really like! No desk job for me, thank you!” Hervé is well liked by his team. Last year he was awarded the Ruban Vert, an accolade given for team spirit and the ability to welcome and train newcomers to the company – his own son among them.
Thanks to a “2nd chance” scheme that targets young people in difficulty, Stan Christopher joined the Amiens profit center of Colas Nord-Picardie in October 2006. He had dropped out of high school at the age of 16 with no qualifications and it was during a one-day information session run by the French armed forces that he found out about the scheme. He spent six months in a residential school working on improving literacy and numeracy skills and generally dealing with problems of social behavior. There followed a 2-week evaluation period in a work environment at Colas Nord-Picardie, the leading sponsor of the scheme. He liked the work, got motivated and was signed up at the profit center, alternating periods of work and study. He is learning to lay curbs and paving stones. As a roads and networks laborer now, he has a site foreman as his mentor. “He often comes to see me to give me instructions. He says he’s pleased with my work. As for me, I’m happy I found a job. Now it’s up to me to carve out a place for myself and to work hard so I get promotion and do better,” says Stan Christopher.
Thierry Delcroix
HEAD OF EMULSIONS AND SPECIAL BINDERS
COLAS/CAMPUS FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNIQUES
FRANCE

“We are working on a cold version of Vegecol”

At age 22, with a professional qualification in chemistry, Thierry Delcroix was hired by the Colas Central Laboratory, which became the Campus for Science and Techniques in 2000. Since he has been there, he has never lost the research bug! The first major project on which he worked was Novacol, a technique for in-place recycling of road materials, developed from Stabicol, a hybrid binder. But another product for which he and his team can take credit is Vegecol, the Group’s famous plant-based binder. “We started out from scratch,” recalls Thierry. “At the time, we were using a synthetic binder, Bituclair, to make colored road surfaces. One day the technical manager of Colas France came up with the idea that we could replace oil-based raw materials in this product by equivalent plant-derived materials. That’s how it all began!” Appointed project manager for this research in 2003, Thierry is now working on a cold emulsion version of Vegecol. “It’s a translucent binder which retains the natural color of materials,” he notes. “It will be sold as much for its visual appeal as for its environmental qualities!”
Florence Macaigne
PROJECT TECHNICIAN
COLAS NORD-PICARDIE/
SYLVAIN JOYEUX
FRANCE

“I fell in love with public works!”

Florence is completely at home working in Colas Nord-Picardie’s Sylvain Joyeux profit center. Her job consists in following projects through from beginning to end. “I go on site, estimate quantities, tabulate data and calculate costs. I handle all the follow-up,” she explains. “And every project is different because we do roads and networks as well as drainage and drinking water networks.” The 34-year-old is passionate when she talks about her work. The days when she was studying for a science degree are a long way off. She gave up the course after taking a vacation job with a public works contractor. “I fell in love with the sector and changed direction. I decided to take a technical qualification in public works.” Thirteen years later, Florence has no regrets: “In the past ten years my job has changed, and so have customers’ expectations. You have to be able to adapt and challenge yourself all the time. That’s the attraction of this job.”
Linda Newton
SENIOR ESTIMATOR/PROJECT MANAGER
SULLY-MILLER
UNITED STATES

“In this job, thrills are guaranteed!”

Linda Newton is a fighter with a simple motive: to be right where the action is! Having joined Sully-Miller’s purchasing department in 1989, six months later she became the first female estimator with Colas’ Californian subsidiary. Today she manages some major roadwork projects, which recently included the maintenance on a 5-lane freeway north of Los Angeles used by millions of motorists each day! “In this job, thrills are guaranteed, a bit like in sports: first of all there’s a warm-up phase, during which we are putting together the most competitive bid,” says Linda. “Then, if our preparation pays off and we win the contract, the moment of truth arrives: in the field!” Her spirit has enabled her to rise to numerous challenges: for example, with the Los Angeles freeway project her teams had a “window” of just 5 hours each night to carry out the work.

Yves Morlot
TECHNICAL & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
COLAS CENTRE-OUEST
FRANCE

“I’ve always enjoyed my work”

After a long career, Technical Manager of Colas Centre-Ouest in Le Mans, Yves Morlot, has just retired. He assesses his career path positively. “I’ve always enjoyed my work, he confesses. And with Colas all the time! I joined the Group when I was 21, some 40 years ago, and I’m a ‘pure Colas product.’ At the time, he was hired as a laboratory technician at headquarters’ study & research department. The renovation of the Trappes laboratory in the Paris region propelled him to assistant manager position six years later. He then became in 1978 an “in-house” engineer, head of the Nantes laboratory and technical advisor for the west quarter of France, then technical & development manager for Colas Centre-Ouest in 1984. Over the last 15 years, Yves Morlot filed more than a dozen patents including Reccol and Valorcol, a product which won 2nd prize in the Fédération des Travaux Publics’ 2006 competition. Another of Yves’ outstanding successes was the creation of La Technologie Routière, an engineering company set up in 1990 and which today features a headcount of 40 engineers. But there’s no question of Yves, in his sixties, turning the final page straightaway. “I intend to remain active through auditing and teaching assignments.”
Silvia Oswald

PROJECT MANAGER

SCREG SUD-EST

FRANCE

“No two days are alike”

Born in Austria, her heart lies in France. After studying civil engineering at Vienna’s technical university, Silvia Oswald went to engineering school in Strasbourg in 2001 as an Erasmus scholar. She fell in love with France and returned every year on internships. She first went to the Colas Midi Méditerranée Côte-d’Azur profit center in Fréjus, then to Screg Ile-de-France/Normandie and finally Screg Sud-Est’s technical services in Lyon. In 2005, before even having graduated, she was hired by the Grenoble profit center of Screg Sud-Est as a project engineer. She then began a journeyman’s tour which took her to Dunkirk in the north and Nancy in the east. By January 2006, she was back again at the Grenoble center, where she was promoted to project manager. “In all the profit centers I have worked in, I have found a warm welcome and a friendly atmosphere. In Austrian engineering offices, people are very formal and don’t talk much,” she says. “I like having full responsibility for a project. I chose this profession for the variety of assignments and work environments it offers. Here, no two days are alike.” At age 27, she has decided to make a career in “a well-known and well-respected international group that offers many career possibilities.”

Jean-Paul Philippe

STONEMASON

COLAS CENTRE-OUEST/HELARY

FRANCE

“I’m now in demand for many different types of work”

Jean-Paul, age 51, has worked at Colas Centre-Ouest’s Helary profit center for twelve years. A qualified stonemason, over the years he has honed his skills and now has total mastery of his craft. “Masonry work in stone or reinforced concrete cannot be learned overnight,” he explains. “You need experience. Since I have been with the company, I have improved my technique on curbs. As a result, I’m now in demand for many different types of work.” Although highly skilled in masonry, Jean-Paul also excels at oil painting. He is a well-known artist, and articles about him have appeared in the local press. He spends a lot of his free time painting landscapes and, his preference, seascapes. His paintings sell well and he is also generous with his art. Last year he donated one of his canvases as a prize for the company Christmas raffle. “I have already turned down a number of offers for a show,” he confesses, “but no doubt, in a few years’ time I will be ready to do one.”
“Teamwork: a prerequisite for success”

“Born and bred in Alaska.” That’s how Aaron Burmeister, Project Superintendent at Colaska, describes himself. His job requires him to be physically fit, as he explains: “I’m currently supervising the rebuilding and expansion of an airport 1,200 miles from the capital, Anchorage. For the time being, the site can only be reached by plane or barge.” Because of the climate—the thermometer can drop to -30°C—the teams only work from June to October. For the rest of the time, Aaron indulges in his favorite pastime: running a husky team. He takes part in numerous dog sledding competitions organized throughout Alaska. “At the beginning of each May, I’m back at Colaska to take up my position again. I love meeting back up with colleagues and the teamwork, a prerequisite for success in the extreme climate we’re operating in.”
Philippe Leyendecker
DEPUTY TO EQUIPMENT MANAGERS
INTERNATIONAL AND EUROPE
COLAS ECHANGEUR BOULOGNE
FRANCE

“I’ve always wanted to work abroad”

“...As a child, I lived abroad. I wanted to continue this life, to go and work abroad”, explains Philippe Leyendecker. With his technical degree in construction mechanics, he applied to Colas in 1979 for an assignment abroad. “Not right away”, was the answer. He was offered a job in the Dijon profit center as a mechanic. Two years later, he began his international missions, which have followed one after the other for 20 years: Rwanda, Nigeria, Madagascar, the Caribbean, Gabon... His most memorable experience? The year on the Agalega atolls, in the southern Seychelles, for the construction of an airport and a bridge. A whole year, cut off from the world with a team of 40, on little islands spread over 9 km² with 250 inhabitants, and one radio call per week, “...when that was broadcast!”. Today, Philippe works at the head office. As Deputy to the Equipment Managers, International and Europe, he travels half the year in the regions included in his zone and carries out two or three missions per year in Asia. And when you ask him what he does with his free time, Philippe confesses: “I travel!”
“Our work focuses on seeing that our sites respect the natural environment”

In June 2007, Jérôme Barreau joined the QSE Department of Echangeur Nantes. He coordinates quality, safety and environment actions for the region’s subsidiaries. “The team I’m part of covers three subsidiaries: Colas Centre-Ouest, Screg Ouest and Sacer Atlantique. We provide back-up for establishments engaged in ISO 14001, ISO 9001 and ILO OH&S 2001 certification approaches.” Jérôme’s job provides him with a concrete opportunity to apply his love for nature. “Our work focuses on seeing that our sites show more respect for the natural environment. Our safety-oriented actions also help bring about better working conditions.” Jérôme is delighted to see that environmental awareness is becoming a real concern in public works. “In the bids, environmental-friendliness is becoming a deciding factor and this encourages companies to be more vigilant.” True to his passion, Jérôme likes to spend his free time in natural surroundings, hunting down exceptional landscapes with his camera poised.

Tal Poss

FOREMAN
REEVES
UNITED STATES

“When a road’s finished, I feel proud”

Tal Poss entered the construction industry at the age of 18. “I like working outdoors and building roads because it’s a job where you can visually appreciate how far you go every day. When a road’s finished, I feel proud and tell myself that it’s also because of me that it exists. To date, I’ve taken part in one hundred or so projects,” he explains. It was his uncle who gave him his first chance. “I was just out of high school and he took me on as a workman in a small family business where he worked.” Then Tal joined the Reeves company in 1987, acquired by the Group some eleven years later. But he has no regrets about that. Far from it! “Maybe Colas is a big organization, but there’s a family atmosphere to it and employees back each other up with good team spirit. Our performances are also recognized for their rightful value,” he underlines. A host of reasons why Tal is set on staying with the Group for a long time yet...
“I’ve built roads all around the island”

“Building a road is a long and difficult job.” Balsama Andrianarisoa speaks from experience – 18 years of it with Colas Madagascar. Surveyor by training, he has climbed the rungs of the ladder to his current position as project manager. “Up to just a few years ago on a road building contract, we did everything: studies, preparing the land, crushing, right up to project hand-over,” he explains. “Today, Colas Madagascar has grown in size and we do 5 to 6 times as many projects, so there are more supervisors.” Balsama is one of the company’s old hands. He has crisscrossed the island and proudly “notched up” hundreds of kilometers of renovation and construction of roads and tracks, an airport runway and several bridges. “It’s increasingly complicated from a technical point of view, especially since it is sometimes hard to find good quality materials on site. When you find them, you then have to work out solutions and bring everything to the site. That’s when things get complicated… no roads to get them there!”
Jean-Rito Desruisseaux  
BUILDING SITE FOREMAN  
GTOI AGENCE BATIMENT  
REUNION ISLAND

“I like to pass on the knowledge that’s been handed down to me”

Jean-Rito had already caught the building bug when he was little. Son of a building site foreman, the question of what trade he would learn was already more or less solved. He joined GTOI at the age of 18 and is now (in his own words!) one of the “old-timers”. “I have my roots here, the company’s seen me grow up. Today, it’s me that’s seeing my kids grow up.” When asked whether his children also worked at GTOI, Jean-Rito jokingly corrected: “When I say ‘kids’, I mean my projects. All my projects are like babies: I saw them being built little by little before my eyes!” Jean-Rito insists on sharing his knowledge of the trade with everybody: “I like training team leaders: I was given a chance when I learned the job and I want to pass this on to others.” He admits that it’s a “pressure-intense profession”, but the tone of his voice leaves no one in doubt: it’s a challenge he likes to take up.

Olivier Harnais  
LABORATORY SUPERVISOR  
COLAS MARTINIQUE  
MARTINIQUE

“My job is highly varied. I monitor sites from A to Z”

Seven years ago, after graduating in civil engineering, Olivier Harnais had to choose between the building and public works sectors. He decided that the second option was closer to his training. “Colas built many roads in Martinique. As a kid, I used to see Colas signs everywhere. I wanted to work for the Group because it is so well known.” In 2000, he joined Colas Martinique in Fort-de-France as a technician, working in the lab alongside the regional technical manager. A laboratory whose development mirrors his own. “In 2003, I received six weeks’ training at the Group’s Campus for Science and Techniques near Paris. I also have regular discussions with technical managers who come out to Martinique to give presentations of new processes.” In 2007, Olivier became laboratory supervisor. “My job is highly varied. I monitor sites from A to Z, so it’s not at all monotonous!” Freshly promoted, he is keen to prove himself in his new job, but he can well imagine extending his skills to international projects at a later date.
A fresh recruit to the Tubobel plant, 18-year old Glenn Van Genechten works as a reinforcement concreter. It was his father who brought him here: “He himself has worked at Tubobel for some 15 years. He hasn’t given me any particular advice but he has put my foot in the stirrup,” admits Glenn who is carrying out his training with his father. “It’s a present for me to be able to work with him and it’s made it all the easier to be accepted by others.” With the Van Genechtens, it runs in the blood since the grandfather and uncles on Glenn’s father’s side were in the same profession. “It wasn’t necessarily my dream but I was in a hurry to start work.” He has learnt how to braid iron for reinforced concrete. “I like being at work, making shafts and special constructions. There’s a nice atmosphere.” What does Glenn do during his spare time? He likes to meet up with his friends, “to enjoy being together” and is a sporting adept: fitness work-outs, football and cycling.
“Building is my oxygen”

“My love for building goes back to my childhood. It really is a pleasure to see things you’ve imagined become a reality. Being part of this concrete aspect of work is vital for me, it’s like oxygen,” confesses 38-year old Attila Pappert, Technical Manager at Alterra. With three years experience in Germany under his belt, followed by two years in Hungary, he was working at one of Alterra’s service providers when the company offered him a position. “I knew Alterra well and liked many aspects about it. I said to myself that I wouldn’t mind working there one day. Fortunately, the attraction was mutual!” he recalls. Today, after almost ten years with the firm, he would like to continue to meet the technical challenges so as to move forward and use his experience to win new markets. Very involved in his work – which he never forgets even after his day is over – this father spends all his free time with his two boys of 3 and 12. Without forgetting reading and learning languages: after German, Attila is taking on English!
Worker, stonemason and now foreman at Somaro subsidiary BRS near Lyon, Philippe Grange, 40, specializes in repairing engineering structures. “I learned all the techniques in the field, working with old-timers,” he explains. He will probably be a site foreman one day, but he’s in no hurry. “You need time to digest what you learn, there’s no point in being hasty.” Six months a year, through the summer, Philippe works for BRS, in the valley. But in the winter months, he stays in his home town, the Alpine resort of Valloire-Galibier, where he runs a ski lift. During this period he “recruits” team members for the next summer. They are people he knows well and has seen at work. “There are four of us in the resort who do the same thing.” Made a member of the Losange d’Or guild in 2004, he was surprised yet thrilled to be honored. “It’s a symbolic promotion, but it means you get recognition in this job. I was delighted.”
Patrice Ling
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISOR
SOMARO/EL-SI
FRANCE

“The more our company grows, the more interesting my work becomes”

When he joined Somaro in 1979 as a Civil Engineering graduate, Patrice Ling began his career as an assistant project engineer before becoming a project engineer himself. He worked in operations in Angers before going over to the administrative side. In 1992, he joined Pessac, near Bordeaux, at the headquarters of El-Si, a Somaro subsidiary specializing in road and urban traffic management systems. As an Administrative supervisor, in particular he oversees corporate accounting throughout France, including profit centers. “It’s very interesting, he explains enthusiastically, since the company’s in full growth. There’s never a dull moment. In 1992, there were 43 of us, and today the figure’s risen to over 200. And we’re still expanding.” During his time off, Patrice devotes himself to Chinese cooking, a reminder of his origins. His specialty: sea bream with coriander.
Dante Massari
CONSTRUCTION MANAGER
TERUS
CANADA

“I’m driven by the challenges in my job”

Born in Canada of an Italian family, Dante Massari lived from the age of 3 to 15 in Italy, before coming back to North America. “I played in the junior team and dreamed of becoming a professional soccer player, but things didn’t work out. So, it’s almost by chance that I entered the building trade,” he recalls. Lukewarm to begin with, he changed his mind when Terus hired him in 1988. With its excellent organisation, the company offered him real career opportunities. Today Construction Manager at 48, Dante loves his job: “I work a lot on remote sites which can only be reached by plane or boat, in areas where Indians still live. It’s always a challenge to see a project through, but once the mission is accomplished, there’s huge satisfaction.” And then the Group helps him achieve a good life and work mix by sometimes renting an apartment near to sites so that his 8- and 10-year old daughters can follow dad. He considers himself Italian above all and would like to round off his career in his country, where he spends each Christmas with his family.

Fabienne Bertrand
OPERATIONS MANAGER
SCREG GRANDS TRAVAUX
FRANCE

“From my early days, I wanted to be part of major projects”

Nineteen years on from when she joined Sreg Grands Travaux after qualifying as an engineering technologist, Fabienne Bertrand has lost none of her passion for large-scale projects and working in the field. “As soon as I came into the Group, I wanted to be part of major projects that combine technical challenges with social diversity, such as the construction of the Channel Tunnel terminal or more recently the construction of 100 km of new roadway for the A28 highway extension,” she explains. Fabienne, a forceful personality, is used to living out of a suitcase: she has worked the length and breadth of France several times over on major highway contracts. Over the years, she has regularly climbed through the ranks, starting as a site foreman in 1988 and promoted to site manager two years later, she is now one of the subsidiary’s two operations managers. Which goes to show that passion for a job leads to professional success!
Maxime Oxeant
SITE FOREMAN
SCREG OUEST/ARNAUD TP
FRANCE

“My tour enabled me to learn more quickly…”

Maxime Oxeant is full of praise for the “tour of the west” organized by Screg Ouest. After graduating from junior college in public works he replied to a job ad: “Screg Ouest is looking for a beginner site foreman.” Hired in October 2004, he immediately set off on his “tour of the west”, a one-year period of internal training that enabled him to learn the ropes while working. He spent four 3-month spells in different profit centers, including a period in the company’s laboratory. “Working with enthusiastic site foremen who were eager to pass on their knowledge, I was able to advance, and learned much more quickly than if I had jumped straight in at the deep end as a site foreman. When everything changes every three months – work techniques, colleagues, workplaces – you soon realize you have to adapt!” It was this dynamic training program, which is extended by training courses, that encouraged Maxime to apply to Screg Ouest when he was looking for a job. As soon as he had joined the company, he chose as his home base the Arnaud TP profit center in La Châtaigneraie, western France. That was where he returned once his “tour” was finished, and the profit center showed every sign of not wanting to let him leave again.

Josée Brouillard
SECRETARY AND SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR
SINTRA
CANADA

“I’ve been the voice of Sintra for 25 years!”

Josée Brouillard is the warm, smiling voice of Sintra at the company’s Montreal headquarters. She is happy in her work as a switchboard operator and you can hear it. “At the 2006 Christmas party, they celebrated my 25 years with the Group,” she says. She began her career in the accounts department of Transelect Inc. which became part of Sintra afterwards. She alternately filled positions in accounting, invoicing and as secretary, but what she really enjoys most is being behind the switchboard. “At Sintra, most staff have 20 years of service, so relationships are strong, she continues. There’s a real family atmosphere.” She remembers with emotion the support of her colleagues when she lost someone who was dear to her. She sees her future in the same position, devoting herself to phone reception while going about the various tasks for her colleagues. Happy in her work we said. And how!
Jean-Etienne Gay
MOBILE PLANT SUPERVISOR
COLAS EST
FRANCE

“I tell my guys to be proud of their work”

Often presented as the “lords of the road”, the mobile asphalt plant teams are highly independent units that crisscross the country, bringing their know-how and their excellence to projects. “To be part of it is something to be proud of”, insists Jean-Etienne Gay, head of a mobile plant, based in Dijon. “This plant is the flagship of Colas Est, a reference for the whole country. The unit takes part in all the big projects, airports especially, but also highways, he explains. Compared with my studies (I have a degree in electrical engineering and industrial IT), I have a lot of responsibilities. I manage the whole business, and my guys know we are the Group’s showcase.” At 34, Jean-Etienne trusts the Group to ensure his career advancement. “Working at a stationary plant doesn’t interest me. I prefer to pursue other opportunities, even though it could be difficult to square with family life”, he admits, with serenity and foresight.
Kristof Hermans
HEAD TOPOGRAPHER
COLAS BELGIUM/VBG
BELGIUM

“We can count on each other”

Kristof Hermans is head topographer at VBG, subsidiary of Colas Belgium. With his team, he adapts plans drawn up by the research consultancy according to the company’s equipment capacities, the techniques required and the measures taken on site. Once the plans have been adapted, he takes charge of any eventual orders for manholes, necessary for drainage, with Tubobel, another subsidiary of Colas Belgium, and marks out the construction site. Kristof is also responsible for his teams, from placing the guide wires for the machines used on the concrete projects as well as the 3D guidance of the graders and bulldozers. He appreciates the technical level and the diversity of his activity. “Working for a global corporation is very enriching, he adds. It’s a challenge to try and apply the new techniques from other subsidiaries in our own work”. But what he prefers, in his department, are the teams and especially the reigning community spirit: “We can count on each other”.

“Where there’s a will there’s a way… forward”

“I have a family, a home and a car. Public works can’t be so bad!” Since leaving professional high school, where he specialized in public works, Sébastien Bhiki, a native of Guadeloupe in the Caribbean, reckons he has come a long way. “I began at Colas as a temporary worker, first of all packing bags of cold mix, and then as a microsurfacing equipment operator. At one point the company needed people on sites and in the plants, and so I was hired as an operator at the Maromme plant near Rouen (Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie) in 2002 then I was appointed foreman early in 2005,” he recounts. “Proof that where there’s a will there’s a way forward!” Sébastien aims to become plant manager and he takes his work very seriously. “No two days are the same, and I never get bored with working in a team.”
Guillaume Piot
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISOR
SACER SUD-EST
FRANCE

“People in public works love what they do”

Although trained in finance and accounting, Guillaume still prefers working with people! “When I worked for three years in an accounting firm after graduation, then afterwards in a manufacturing company, all I did was juggle figures. It hardly mattered what lay behind them. But after a while it gets very tedious.” Guillaume, from Lyon, is delighted with his current job as administrative and accounting supervisor for Sacer Sud-Est’s Lyon profit center. “This job is far more varied. I deal with the legal, social, accounting and managerial aspects of things.” Guillaume admits there is less call on his specialist knowledge of accounting and taxation, but he now deals with people. “Public works brings an enormous benefit. The people who work in it are passionate about what they do, pleased to be there and want to do well and go higher,” he says. Guillaume also likes working as a two-man team with the head of the profit center, who involves him in decision-making. He also enjoys visiting sites and meeting the teams. “It’s the only way to get to know their work,” he says.

Jean-Michel Simonin
CHIEF SITE FOREMAN
SCREG OUEST
FRANCE

“You need to be on your toes all the time”

Hired by Screg Ouest in 1971 with a building industry diploma, Jean-Michel Simonin is one of the firm’s “seniors”. He began as a stonemason, but his desire to learn helped him quickly through the grades. Promoted team foreman in Tours in 1974, then site foreman in Poitiers in 1986, he reached executive status six months ago. A success story for this road and network specialist who likes to pass on his know-how to new recruits. “A few years ago, I trained a boy with a cooking degree to be a foreman. It’s satisfying to see young people without any experience climb the social ladder,” he says. What else interests him in the job? Managing the unpredictable on a site: “There’s never a dull moment. You need to be on your toes all the time, be reactive and proactive.” As proof, his 36 years of seniority haven’t dulled his curiosity for new techniques and his faith in his job. “Now I’d like to specialize in Compostyrene, a light fill, and do a training course in environmental quality.” At 54, this wine and hiking enthusiast is far from having quenched his thirst for knowledge.
Mbonani Timothy Nxumalo

OPERATIONS MANAGER
COLAS SOUTH AFRICA
SOUTH AFRICA

“I like people with a hunger to learn”

Originally from Swaziland, Mbonani Timothy Nxumalo arrived in Johannesburg in 1980. “At the time”, he says “it was difficult to find work in South Africa.” After a spell working as a taxi driver, he joined Protea Asphalt, which was taken over by Colas South Africa Pty in 2000. Now in the post of Colrub Manager, his job is to ensure customer satisfaction, the good working conditions of his teams and the smooth running of projects. Having worked, in turn, as a sprayer driver, road foreman, supervisor, laboratory assistant and logistician, he now shares his experience with his colleagues. “I like people with a hunger to learn,” he remarks. For his part, he wants to climb as high up in the company as possible, in other words to become Branch Manager. From a family of eight himself, he is now a father of four girls and a boy. This is undoubtedly where he gets his team spirit.
Pavel Aksamit
HEAD PROJECT MANAGER
SANGREEN
CZECH REPUBLIC

“Going back to school again was very important for me to build my future”

Pavel Aksamit joined Sangreen, in Prague, fresh out of high school. Frustrated at having had to stop school so early, three years after entering the company he took up civil engineering studies which he carried out at the same time as his job. “It wasn’t easy. I was packing two days into one, but the effort was worth it because it was important for me, for my future, he explains. I really love my job – being on the building sites, overseeing my teams, the contact and relations with subcontractors, investors…” Pavel also invests – enormously – in himself and wants to forge further ahead. “Thanks to my training, I’ve been able to go from site engineer to head project manager. Before, I only oversaw one project, now I supervise the smooth running of two or three at the same time!”
“At Colas, it’s possible to move quickly up the ladder”

Mehdi Taoutaou was just 18 when he decided to put an end to his IT training. He accepted a temporary assignment for the Montaron branch of Screg Nord-Picardie, in Maubeuge. In July 2006, he was hired on a permanent basis as a skilled worker. “Now, I can manage the job on my own. I can do everything, from the paving to driving the machinery. The thing I enjoy about the job is being able to change what I do every day.” And Mehdi is a quick learner. This year, he won a silver medal at the WorldSkills Competition, in the “Road builder” category. “My ambition is to become site foreman. The sooner I get my chance, the quicker I’ll succeed. And I know that, at Colas, it’s possible to move quickly up the ladder. You just have to want to. At 27, my boss is already site foreman. Like me, he began as a worker!” Mehdi has in fact just signed up for a site foreman training course.
Gilles Simon joined the Quimper profit center of Colas Centre-Ouest 33 years ago and has been there his entire working life. “I began as a truck driver, but it didn’t last long. Within a few months I had become a paver operator.” It is a job he still holds today. “It’s very intricate work,” he explains. “We operate during the last phase of a contract to put the finishing touches to the asphalt surface. We have to be very careful, particularly for road works in town centers or in residential suburbs, especially when there are speed bumps.” Gilles always works alongside a screed-man, and has had the same partner since 1974, when he first started working. The dynamic duo is perfectly synchronized. No doubt the partnership is one of the reasons that Gilles is not keen to discuss retirement. “There is a really good atmosphere in the company. Most of the employees had been around a long time. As long as I’ve got my health, I’ll keep going – I really don’t want to stop.”

Elimathias Saint-Germain joined the Ribal group in Cayenne in 1981 as a machine operator. Five years later, he became supervisor of SGDD, Société Guyanaise de Déforestage. “I took part in the clearing of 150 km of forest for the installation of power lines from Cayenne to Saint-Laurent,” he recalls. In 1989, he joined SCG, then SCC, a quarry where he managed a gravel production unit. “This period was interspersed with a few years back in the earthmoving business on the Saint-Georges project, where he participated in the construction of 80 km of highway. During this period, I also spent two months in Gabon to train Colas personnel in crushing techniques”. Elimathias appreciates the diversity of his professional path: “I like to move around, a regular change in the workplace. Currently, with my team, we are working in the town of Mana, in western Guiana. It takes us two and a half hours to reach the site on Monday and as much on Friday to come back. So, we stay there for the whole week.”
After completing graduate scientific studies in Environment and Quality, Claire Guignon answered a job ad placed by La Suburbaine (Spac). “I was looking for a company that wanted to set up Quality and Environmental standards. I wouldn’t say I was necessarily thinking of the construction sector!” she admits. “It conjures up an image of a totally masculine universe. But there are more and more women. On sites, teams seem to like the presence of women.” As soon as she joined the company, Claire went out in the field so that she could understand the business and the pressures it faces, and evaluate its environmental impact. After gaining Quality and Environmental certifications, La Suburbaine then obtained MASE safety certification. “We now have a complete QSE system,” she points out with a touch of pride – the company has come a long way in seven years!
“Safety first and foremost!”

“Seeing trains into the station, managing manoeuvres, reforming train sets, checking the brakes on the 22 wagons, coordinating these tasks with local rail traffic controllers, then, finally, preparing to send off a new convoy... Wide-ranging tasks which all require scrupulous respect of procedures. Safety first, and everywhere!” For Ludovic Sachot, 23, native of Thouars, with an advanced vocational training certificate in tourism, it was an opportunity which, a year ago, gave him the chance to become a ground staff agent for Seco-Rail on the platforms of Saint-Pierre-des-Corps. Convinced of the activity’s huge potential, he has acquired a taste for this outdoor job, even if, sometimes, the weather conditions are not always ideal. 2 hours to load a train set from the quarry, 2½ hours to unload into trucks, with the Recognition of Aptitude for Transport (which identifies all the points to be checked before authorising a train to leave) in his head... Around 61 tons of aggregate per wagon to be loaded and unloaded... Ludovic strides beside the convoy. As for his own track, he’s found it now.
Michael Thompson
REGIONAL MANAGER
BARRETT PAVING/MIDWEST SOUTH
UNITED STATES

“We’ve just signed one of the Group’s biggest contracts in the United States!”

This summer, Michael Thompson’s men haven’t been hanging around. Their Midwest-South division has won a 3-year outsourcing contract for paving the I 275. “It’s probably one of the biggest contracts ever signed by Colas in the United States, points out Michael. It will require no less than 600,000 tons of hot mix asphalt.” This contract, and others, today enables Michael to manage Barrett Paving’s leading region from a sales revenue point of view. A challenge and a reward for this 61-year old who joined the Group in 1977. “In a few years, it will be time for me to hand over the reins to younger hands,” he admits. A car buff since his youth, Michael spends his week-ends doing up old cars. “I built five cars over the last 15 years and have won many awards at various car shows.” A ready-made hobby for the long days of retirement ahead.
“Joining a major group like Colas is really very enriching”

“I always wanted to work in company management. Joining a major group like Colas is really very enriching, because there are so many projects to undertake”, explains Anne-Laure Le Floch Le Corre, 26, Business, Finance and Treasury Supervisor for mainland France in the Corporate Financial Department at Colas SA. Hired three years ago, after her business internship in the Treasury department, Anne-Laure quickly moved from Treasury to supervisor of investments, financing and bank guarantee issues in France. “This promotion was a new professional challenge to meet. Today, I handle and negotiate business directly with many financial contacts in the subsidiaries or with service providers, she explains. The members of the Financial Department share their knowledge and experience with me: I’ve learned an enormous amount since joining the Group.” Later, she wishes to broaden her skills: study accounting “in order to have a better overall view of the business”, and why not work in a French subsidiary, or abroad…
Jean-Pierre Cros
PLANT DEPARTMENT MANAGER
COLAS ECHANGEUR BOULOGNE/EQUIPMENT DIVISION
FRANCE

“The Group builds emulsion plants wherever it operates”

An engineer by training, Jean-Pierre Cros has for 13 years run the Plant Department at the Group’s Equipment Division. With his team, he studies, builds and installs emulsion plants, modified bitumen facilities and bitumen storage depots for subsidiaries, both in France and abroad. The department works like a small business: four engineers and three designers conceive projects from A to Z. Since its creation, over 50 major projects have been carried out, particularly in the Caribbean, Thailand, Romania, India, Morocco, Ireland and France, in fact anywhere that Colas operates. To date, the Group owns 159 plants throughout the world. Whenever their services are required, Jean-Pierre or his staff go on site, set up initial commissioning, fine-tune production settings in partnership with technical teams and train the local workforce on the production units. “This makes it possible to create a strong human network around the plant,” explains Jean-Pierre who was far from being predestined for such an international career when he began as an engineer at Sacer in his native Toulouse. At the age of 57, with 32 years of seniority under his belt, nothing has diminished his passion for machines.
Haroun Sirieys
SECTOR SUPERVISOR
SACER SUD-EST
FRANCE

“Everyone was passionate about what they were doing”

Haroun Sirieys starts by naming a date: June 17, 1991. “That was the day I first set foot in the Valence profit center of Sacer Sud-Est. I came as an intern, mid-way through my university course in civil engineering.” With the opportunity to see for himself every aspect of the business, the internship triggered something in him: “Everyone I met was passionate about what they were doing. They transferred a taste for their work to me.” Sure that this was the career for him, Haroun returned to Sacer Sud-Est as soon as he had graduated. “I came along at just the right moment, because the company was recruiting.” Since then, he has been promoted regularly – and rapidly. In January 2005, he was appointed sector supervisor for Carcassonne. From all his own experience, he knows just how important the preparatory phase is. The renovation of the wearing course on the A7 highway is a project of which he retains many fond memories: “With six months of preparation and forty nights of work, it was a tough but truly rewarding experience. I always put everything into my work,” he concludes, “and I never forget that the company has put its confidence in me.”

Troy Scarcelli
CONCRETE SUPERVISOR
TERUS
CANADA

“I’ve always liked building”

At 43, Troy has already notched up thirty years of experience… “I’ve always liked building. I began by mixing concrete when I was 12, in my father’s firm. At 15, I was running a crushing and washing plant,” he confides. So Troy learned the trade every day after school, on weekends, and during summer vacations. His uncle is a civil engineer and his mentor; so after working in his uncle’s road building firm, he decided to continue with his studies to acquire theoretical knowledge as well. From the start, the family business grew and, in the spring of 2007, was acquired by Terus. Troy is proud to see all the construction throughout the region (bridges, tunnels etc.). “The takeover will bring a new dimension to the company, he feels. Already, the plant has been updated, the IT structure extended and new trucks bought.” And a big project has started: the company is supplying the concrete for a ski resort site which has been waiting for the go-ahead for decades…
Eugène N’Gouan
LABORATORY SUPERVISOR
COLAS GABON
GABON

“I’ve found the same Colas spirit in every country I worked in”

Eugène N’Gouan is the supervisor of the Colas Central Laboratory in Libreville, Gabon. His expertise is required at every stage of a project. Upstream, during bidding, he conducts the geotechnical feasibility studies to propose alternative structures. “For one project, our geotechnical studies showed that the solutions recommended by the client were not viable given the volume of traffic. So we proposed new solutions, which were eventually accepted.” For projects under way, new studies are carried out to control the materials in situ: this task is indispensable for completing a project in optimal quality conditions. Eugène enjoys following the progress of the project and the results of his work. His greatest source of pride: the ISO 9001 certification version 2000, obtained by his laboratory in 2005. Originally from the Ivory Coast, Eugène has had the opportunity to work in other African countries such as Benin and Gabon. “Despite differences, in each of these countries, I found the same Colas spirit, which consists of always moving forward.”

Hervé Tessonneau
TECHNICAL AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
SCREG SUD-EST
FRANCE

“A fascinating adventure”

Hervé Tessonneau began working at the age of 22. Without even finishing his training at the Arts & Crafts Conservatory, he left for the Ivory Coast on a technical cooperation assignment, of which he still has good memories. “I was a teacher in a technical high school and LCPC* correspondent there,” he recalls. On his return to France, after a short time in the Paris region with the Esponde Highways Department where he set up a technical laboratory, he joined Screg. “I worked for 6 years on the construction of Area. I was in charge of the road design department, Hervé continues. A fascinating adventure…” In 1983, he was called out to Lyon to run the technical team, after which he was to become technical manager of Screg Sud-Est where he remained for 23 years in the position. What were his main assignments? Steering a 26-strong team and fostering development of new road techniques. Today, the time for retirement has come. “But I don’t intend to stop all at once,” asserts Hervé.

*LCPC: Laboratoire central des Ponts et Chaussées (Central Laboratory of French Road Authorities)
Neil Butterworth is a busy man, signing off accounting and financial information, advising the profit center manager on labor relations, dealing with litigation and developing management tools. What’s more, he works in two separate Colas Ile-de-France/Normandie profit centers, Sylvain Joyeux and SNPR Ile-Saint-Denis. A keen golfer and poker player, Neil joined Colas in 2003, after a degree in management at a business school in Rouen and studying for an MBA in the United Kingdom. “The manager in charge of contacts with schools helped me make up my mind to join the Group by showing me the young managers induction program. My first few months at Colas went exactly as expected. A number of internships and particularly the Colas University, organized in conjunction with the Ponts et Chaussées engineering school meant that I received high-quality training,” he recalls, adding that he practically “grew up on building sites” because many members of his family work in civil engineering. After four years in the company, Neil now feels ready to take on new challenges and explore the job opportunities the Group can offer him.
Bjørn Thordarson
PROJECT MANAGER
COLAS ICELAND
ICELAND

“I’m proud to see our firm grow”

Bjørn Thordarson is a one-company man... Colas Iceland! It was here that he did all his internships, and so there was nothing surprising in his being taken on when he graduated in 2002. Today Project Manager, he confesses that he’s proud to see “his” firm grow day after day. “I get a real emotional charge when I see how much the guys have achieved over the past few years and how the company’s developing,” he says. Thanks to everyone’s involvement, we’ve managed to triple sales revenue since 2003 and each year we must heighten our production capacities.” A human and economic adventure whose end is not yet in sight: Colas Iceland plans to build a new hot mix production site by the end of 2007 with an output of 240 tons per hour, to help keep pace with the country’s growth rate.
After graduating from technical high school with a qualification in public works, Pierre barely had time to breathe a sigh of relief. “I left school on a Friday at the end of June. On the following Monday I started as a site machine operator at Fabrimaco in Scrig Sud-Ouest’s materials division, near Bordeaux,” he recalls. By September 2004, Pierre had been promoted to quarry team supervisor. “I never expected to be doing this job,” he explains, “but as soon as I started, I loved it.” Enthusiastic about his pastimes, which include hunting and soccer, he never had any intention of taking a desk job. When he talks about aggregates, concrete plants or job sites, his passion is obvious from the sound of his voice. “You get really excited about your work in this business. In public works, you are all in it as one big team, and all try to emulate one another.” He modestly omits to mention that he was made a Compagnon two years ago, a testimony from the Group to his tireless motivation.
Henryk Sulek
QUARRY MANAGER
PDB
POLAND

“Everything I have is through hard work”

At 21, Henryk Sulek got his first job in the Wilcza Gora (PDB) basalt quarry in Zlotoryja. Like all those who were unable to study during the communist period, he opted for a manual trade and became an electrician. For him, there was no mission impossible: “He can repair anything,” they said. Aptitudes which paved the way for promotion: at 24, he became foreman before also assuming charge of energy questions for the 9 quarries and gravel pits in Lower Silesia. When these became part of the Group in 2005, he was given responsibility for the Winna Gora and Rogoznica II sites. “Everything I have is through hard work, ambition and the Group’s open-mindedness,” he says. From his visits to quarries in Germany, Hungary and Poland, he brings back technical solutions which he adapts to sites for which he is responsible. “2006 was a good year: installing modern equipment and improving technical processes have cut costs. None of which changes the fact that people are the company’s most important asset and the driving force behind our success,” modestly concludes Henryk, who, outside his work, is also a Zlotoryja town councillor.

Antoine Perriot
R&D ENGINEER
CAMPUS FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNIQUES
FRANCE

“Each question is like a puzzle”

A graduate of the Ecole Centrale with a passion for physics, Antoine Perriot wanted to put his knowledge “to some use”. After a Ph.D. in the physics of materials and a post-doc in Cambridge, he decided to turn to applied research and join Colas at the Campus for Science and Techniques in Magny-les-Hameaux. “The advertisement was a perfect match, as Colas was looking for an engineer in applied physics,” he points out. For over a year now, he has been pooling his knowledge in physics and the mechanics of materials and phenomena with R&D teams. “Each question is like a puzzle. It’s fun! I take all the data and tick those whose effects play a role in the problem to be solved. I don’t give a turnkey solution, but I open the way, like a scout. That saves time in reaching the goal.” For Antoine, “playing” is part of life. During his time off, he is a magician! During the Group’s Technical Convention gala dinner in Marrakech last March, his tricks impressed more than one…
Max Pichot
CARPENTRY SUPERVISOR
COLAS MADAGASCAR
MADAGASCAR

“My career has taken me all over the world”

He started out with a basic qualification in carpentry and roofing, and will be retiring as carpentry supervisor in charge of a 200-strong team in Madagascar. A fine career for Max Pichot, although at the outset he would not have imagined ending his career in this way. As a teenager he seemed to be set on a quite different course. “I started at 14 as an apprentice in my father's carpentry business,” relates Max. “I became a partner and then took over the company in 1981.” But he then gave it all up on an impulse. “I was refused a building permit for an extension, so I just quit!” Now an expert in carpentry, Max began working all over the world, including Egypt, Guinea, the Caribbean, Indonesia and Nigeria. From country to country, he remained loyal to carpentry, his first love, and over the years he rose through the ranks. Now nearly 61, as he prepares to return to France for a well-earned retirement, he can look back over his career with no regrets. His father would have been proud.
Jutta Halonen
HSE MANAGER
VALTATIE OY
FINLAND

“You’re efficient when you believe that what you’re doing is justified”

Equally at home in her office or in the field, Jutta Halonen has been HSE Manager since 1997 with Valtatie Oy, Colas’ Finnish subsidiary. A “passionate assignment” since she’s convinced that “economic performance goes hand in hand with respecting the environment and the health of our staff.” This is the message she delivers every day, either during production site visits or training sessions with workmen. “Of course, we work on the technical aspects, drawing up standards and so forth but the relational side is vital if we are to bring about progress from environmental and health points of view,” Jutta adds. “So, a large part of our work consists in creating a dynamic commitment from top managerial level to the workers because you’re never more efficient than when you really believe that what you’re doing is justified!”
Trần Dai Minh
PLANNING MANAGER
COLAS VIETNAM
VIETNAM

“I grow more aware of the size of the Group as time goes by”

“I sort of represent the living history of Colas Vietnam,” is how 63-year-old Trần Dai Minh introduces himself. A translator, computer enthusiast and chargé d’affaires, he considers that “Colas chose me for my knowledge of French and of the building and public works sector.” After completing his studies in Melbourne, Australia, and working in the Vietnamese ministry of public works followed by a spell in a construction company in Ho Chi Minh City, he was involved in the creation of the Colas Cong Chanh (Colas Public Works) joint venture in 1996. The company became Colas Vietnam in 2002 and Trần Dai Minh became the planning manager. His target is to match the profitability of the Group’s best-performing subsidiaries. “I grow more aware of the size of the Group as time goes by,” he says, following a trip to Mauritius, Thailand and France where he visited subsidiaries. A highlight for him was the Group convention organized in Paris in February 2007, when all the profit center supervisors and subsidiary managers from every country in which the Group operates came together in one place. A man of a quiet disposition, Trần Dai Minh appreciates the quality of interpersonal contact within the company. “Alain Dupont and I have always been close,” he adds.
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AHMETI ARBEN P.014
AKSAMIT PAVEL P.226
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