

Andrei Marcu (MBA '89)

Senior Managing Director, Energy and Climate, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

Interview by Stephen Watt

What kind of new thinking and creative measures are going to help us avoid a climate change crisis?



We have many of the tools and technologies that we need to address climate change. What we do not know, and what is critical to know, is this: what is the price of a ton of carbon? Finding the answer to this question is the best outcome you can hope for from a greenhouse gas market approach. Once you've determined the price of carbon, you need to apply additional policies and measures to avert climate change. Time is running out. If you believe what the scientists are telling us, we're working on a tight schedule. We're going to need additional funding and policies that will encourage the development of new technologies, from the research and development to the deployment stage, before the damage becomes irreparable.

What has been your biggest accomplishment so far in your career?

I take great pride in having been given the opportunity to work on the climate change file. The satisfaction comes from working on a challenge of such profound historical significance. Additionally, the people who work with me on this issue happen to be an enormously interesting and diverse collection of individuals, and I learn from them daily.

What has been your greatest challenge?

The greatest challenge has been to integrate a very diverse array of approaches to climate change being developed around the world, and to try to understand them, and bring them together in a coherent way. There's a great deal of competitiveness between the various approaches, and the discord can occasionally be challenging and even discouraging. Sometimes the different initiatives even look contradictory, whereas in reality they shouldn't be.

What's the biggest personal or professional risk you've taken?

My decision to start the International Emissions Tradition Association seven years ago was, in retrospect, an enormous risk. If you recall at that time, that was the era in which the only well-known piece of environmental legislation was the Kyoto Protocol – there was no Marrakesh Accord on climate change; there was no emission trading system in Europe; there

was no Clean Development Mechanism [which allows industrialized countries to invest in projects that reduce emissions in developing countries] – there was nothing. Taking a leap of faith and attempting to establish this association – which now plays a very critical role as the voice of business in the global debate on climate change – was a significant risk, more so than I appreciated at the time.

What is your fondest memory of your Rotman MBA experience?

I had some very interesting professors at Rotman, whom I remember fondly. I completed my MBA on a part-time basis, so my memories are of being at class in the evenings, studying alongside a crowd of accomplished professionals. I remember showing up at class at the end of a work day, feeling tired and lethargic, and then finding myself rejuvenated by the rigour of my studies, and by professors who challenged us to really strive for our academic achievements. If you wanted to achieve something great, you had to work hard for it.

Who do you consider to be a great thinker, and why?

I've had the good fortune of working with a number of really strong thinkers. One of these was Maurice Strong, the former chairman and CEO of Ontario Hydro. I worked at Ontario Hydro for 17 years and with Maurice for three or four years. While he's had his share of successes and challenges in the course of his career, he's certainly brought new thinking to many of the issues facing the world today, both during his tenure at Ontario Hydro – where I knew him – and later with the World Bank and the United Nations.

What do you do for fun?

As you asked me this question, my whole staff – who are here with me on a visit to Washington DC – looked at me and wondered, "How is this guy going to answer?" But yes, despite what they might think, I do have fun occasionally. Besides doing what most people do to enjoy themselves, such as watching sports, the thing that I most enjoy is deep-sea diving. I try to go diving when I can, and where I can, in places such as Italy, France, Brazil, Mozambique and Indonesia, to name a few. Diving attracts me in particular because telephones don't work under the ocean! At least, they haven't invented an underwater cell phone yet, so it's quiet down there, and very peaceful.