



Q & A Against the flow...

"How do you keep going as entrepreneur in the Hi-Fi business during these turbulent times?" That was our question to Herman van den Dungen of Durob Audio. What is his secret for success?

How did you finish last year and how did you start this year?

In spite of the initial negative attitude that you feel around you and with everyone you meet, the last year was actually quite reasonable. The total turnover stayed approximately the same, but the variability between regions and brands was greater than in previous years. But, as I said, in general, it was the same overall.

What are the expectations for this year? Will this year be different from last one?

As we already saw in the final two months

of last year that sales were going up and should this trend continue, we anticipated that this year should be a better year than last year. This is the reason why I feel more optimistic and I now have confidence to invest in more new things, which in turn creates additional sales.

What are the greatest risks or threats you are now facing?

The most important challenges are, and continue to be, the capacity to keep what you already have going, keep up with the cutting edge of new developments and be able as a company to implement them at an

appropriate time. The worse that can happen is to jump into something new and forget about yesterday's and today's products and specialities. We have had great success with old-fashioned tube electronics that we have made very reliable with modern parts and circuits and because of that, we can sell them to customers who would otherwise never have bought those kinds of products if we had not updated them with modern technologies. One of biggest problems I see is that our tiny Dutch market is often used by larger markets, such as Germany, to dump both new and second-hand products at prices that do not allow for any after sales service. But a sale is a sale of course! However, I am afraid that dealers do not really realize how much turnover they are losing by selling in that way – turnover for which they have heavily invested in through their daily promotions and work.

How are you going to develop?

We are always busy with further developments of our "old-fashioned" products by adding new features and new circuits so that the "old-fashioned" becomes more and more the "new-fashioned".

What has made you so successful during this difficult time - what is your secret?

For 35 years, we have gained an enviable reputation for excellent service and support of all our products. People know it now and we therefore do not have to promote it anymore. They also know that we have a good nose for new opportunities. They are always curious about what we have now found and what we are working on. In addition, if they are even a little bit interested in one of our developments and they can and want to afford it financially, it is very rare that it does not end up in a sale. It also happens that customers ask us to develop special products because they are interested in them and want to get them from us. I think that we should not look at this period as a difficult period, but as a "different" period. Incidentally, this period has been preceded by a time when most people were financially over-stretched. Indeed, you now have to get back to "enjoyment" and work a bit harder to afford it. It's not so strange is it? Success, in general, is dressed in overalls and not in a smoking jacket!