

Joint Press Release

GS-Automation S. A.
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Francis Eric Knight Britton named Interim CEO of GS-Automation, Geneva
New Geneva boss betting on people and technology

GS-Automation SA of Geneva is pleased to announce the appointment of Francis Eric Knight Britton as Acting Chief Executive Officer of the company and of RFID Holding SA. Mr. Britton took over interim leadership of the group on 16 September 2002, and has in that position initiated a significant overhaul and repositioning of the company. The first step in this process was to redefine the product and technology thrust, structure and management systems of the thirty year old Swiss engineering group. In parallel he has led the company to build up and extend international partnership networks and joint projects in an effort to extend the reach of the group from its traditional European markets to a world wide presence.

Latest developments can be followed via www.gs-automation.com. For further information, pictures and interviews, contact the media department at the address indicated below.

Bio Note:

Eric Britton is a proven hands-on manager as well as an experienced advisor to technology-based international businesses. He is on long-term leave from EcoPlan International where he has served as Managing Director since 1967 and from nGroups, a new work/technology consultancy of which he is Chairman. President of the international jury of the Stockholm Partnerships for Sustainable Cities and co-founder of the Sundance Festival of the Chamber Arts in Bucks County PA, he is a Member of the Board of Leber Planificación e Ingeniería S.A. in Bilbao Spain and New Mobility Partnerships, Inc. in New York, and a founding editor of the Journal of World Transport Policy and Practice. He has served as high level consultant in the area of new technology, work organization, and business development to the OECD, United Nations, European Commission, and a long list of national and regional government agencies.



Born in Mississippi and educated in New England and Europe, Eric Britton completed his undergraduate studies in physical sciences at Amherst and Columbia College, his Ph.D. work in the Graduate Faculty of Economics at Columbia University, worked on his dissertation on industrialization strategies for development as Fulbright Fellow in Italy, and awarded post-graduate fellowships from the Ford Foundation, MIT, the Salzburg Seminar, and the International Fellows Program. He lectures extensively on matters of technology development and business strategies at a number of US and European universities.

In 1967 he co-founded the international consultancy group EcoPlan International in Paris to provide an independent world wide forum of decision counsel, reporting to government, industry and the financial sector on issues involving technological and structural change as it effects people in their daily lives. Supported by an EcoPlan team and international associates network, Britton has provided organization counsel to several major international corporations in setting up and managing new technology-based international business units, including Volvo, Westinghouse Electric, Bandag Tires and Renault Véhicules Industriels.

More on Britton:

One of those outstanding innovators doing work likely to have the greatest future significance and impact over the long-term... and who will remain "key players" in the technological drama unfolding in coming years.

- World Technology Network 2002 Prize citation

Eric Britton is an experienced manager and advisor to technology-based international businesses. A common theme in all his work is the strategic adaptation of technologies, products, services, and business practices to changing technological, resource and environmental requirements and perceptions, including in times of economic crisis and industries facing fast technological change.

The new strategy of GS-A was initiated under his leadership in October 2002, and in the months since has led to a complete overhaul of the group's internal accounting structure, supplier relationships, production routines, and an aggressively restructured new management information system, all supported a reorganized marketing and sales system which is already showing results. .

In his job as acting CEO he has already repositioned the group significantly in the international market, reaching beyond its traditional industrial markets and product areas, moving strongly into such areas as advanced medical applications, sensors, environmental monitoring, audio and media, micromotors, mobile telephony, identifications systems and RFID, security and other end uses where high precision, miniaturization and high performance are going to have a determining role in the market place.

It is his firmly held view that the key to success in the tough conditions of the global economy in 2003 lies in finding the right combination of taut management, aggressive investment in technology and R&D, new degrees of product and production flexibility, a striking and instantly recognizable corporate image, and an ability to create and maintain working networks and alliances that reach effectively across national and other borders to open up new markets and opportunities.

A critical decision of the new management team under his direction was precisely not to give in to the morosity influencing many other Swiss and European companies during the present downturn, who are laying off personnel in the hope that good times and the market would eventually return to "normal". Instead GS-A has retained all of its employees, while at the same time investing heavily to provide them with the new skills, tools and backup resources that sharpen the edge of every member of the GS-A team. Our strategy in the face of this crisis is (a) take charge of our own future, (b) to invest aggressively on the downturn and (c) to be ready to invest in our people all the time. . This process is already well underway and is being supported by a significant grant from the Canton of Geneva, with a demonstration pilot program which is providing a variety of critical training programs for all levels of management and employees of the firm over the year ahead.

The immediate next step in the restructuring process is to prepare a reinforced management team to take over daily operations by mid-2003 with increased competence, confidence and the resources needed to ensure success in a highly competitive international economy

For further background, pictures and interviews contact:

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