

Sodexo announces the loss of its Founder and Chairman Emeritus Pierre Bellon

4 years ago



It is with great sadness and emotion that Sodexo announces the passing of its founder and Chairman Emeritus, Pierre Bellon, on January 31, 2022 in Paris, at the age of 92.

Pierre Bellon was a visionary entrepreneur who was passionate about management, human development and the development of companies. He recognized very early on the potential of the service sector. Pierre Bellon founded Sodexo in 1966. Today, the company is a world leader in Quality of Life services. It has a presence in 56 countries, with 412,000 employees caring for 100 million people every day.

Pierre Bellon was a leader ahead of his time. He was a captain of industry with a long-term strategic vision, and at the same time very close to his teams on the ground. He was obsessed with job creation.

Sodexo shares the grief of his wife Nani, of their children Sophie, Nathalie, François-Xavier and Astrid, and of their grandchildren.

Sophie Bellon, Chairwoman of Sodexo's Board of Directors and interim CEO, says, "Our father was a builder, a pioneer, a free spirit who was never afraid of taking risks. He raised us, my sisters Nathalie and Astrid, my brother François-Xavier and myself, to believe that nothing is impossible. He taught us humility, curiosity, respect and courage. He was obsessed with the long term, but he was also very hands-on. Nothing made him happier than spending time with our teams on site. The mission and values of service spirit, team spirit and spirit of progress which he gave Sodexo are part of our fundamental principles and will continue to guide the Group."

Short biography of Pierre Bellon

Pierre Bellon was born in 1930. He graduated from French business school HEC and began his career in his father's maritime supply company in Marseilles, his hometown. He foresaw the sector's decline and decided to take charge of transforming the family business according to his vision: "to create a convivial experience around the lunch table that enhances quality of life." In 1962, he invented a new business model in France, corporate catering, and created 'Repas Service', a small meal delivery business for the Marseilles area. His perseverance, audacity and appetite for risk allowed him to overcome the many obstacles in his path and found Sodexo in 1966.

Pierre Bellon quickly embraced the challenge of international development to make his vision a reality. Early on, he also chose to diversify towards high-potential opportunities, for example by purchasing the French meal coupon companies Ticket Repas and Chèque Restaurant in the early 1980s. Sodexo's long-term vision and financial independence, controlled by a family holding company, are still among the company's guiding principles. Sodexo experienced rapid, solid growth: the company was listed on the Paris Stock Exchange in 1983 and joined the CAC40 in 1998. Pierre Bellon became a key figure in the service sector, foreseeing that the future of employment and economic development in France lay primarily in those professions.

Beyond his strategic vision, Pierre Bellon's humanist perspective also contributed to the company's success. The human dimension has been at the heart of Sodexo's performance from the very beginning. The desire to have a positive impact in the world and to be a responsible contributor, involved with local communities, has been part of the company's mission from day one. In 1966, it was truly an innovative business concept. Sodexo's profound, avant-garde goal of serving humankind came from Pierre Bellon, and he extended that goal well beyond the borders of his company. He was National President of the Centre des Jeunes Dirigeants [Center for Young Business Leaders] from 1968 to 1970, and Vice President of MEDEF (Movement of the Enterprises of France) from 1980 to 2005. In 1987, he founded the Association Progrès du Management (APM), which promotes progress in business by supporting the development of business leaders. As Pierre Bellon said, "the APM has become a movement, an "entrepreneurial state of mind" in its own right". In 2011, he created The Pierre Bellon Foundation for Human Development, recognized today for its public service.

In 2005, Pierre Bellon retired as CEO of Sodexo. He continued in his role as Chairman of the Board of Directors until January 2016, when he was succeeded by his daughter Sophie. He then became Chairman Emeritus of Sodexo.

Pierre Bellon was a Commander of the Legion of Honor, the National Order of Merit and the Order of Rio Branco, and a Knight of the Order of Agricultural Merit.

He is survived by his wife and four children, and thirteen grandchildren.

[You can sign an online condolence book created by Sodexo for Pierre Bellon here](#)

Image Credit: Sodexo