



BIOGRAPHY

BERTRAND PICCARD

Pioneer, explorer and global influencer

Bertrand Piccard is the initiator and visionary behind Solar Impulse, the very first airplane capable of flying perpetually without fuel. It is in his DNA to go beyond the obvious and achieve the impossible, he also did when circumnavigating the globe nonstop in a balloon. The ocean depths and the stratosphere attracted his father and grandfather; the challenges of our time fascinate him. Since he launched the first flight around the world in a solar airplane, his ambition has been to leverage a pioneering spirit for a useful contribution to the cause of renewable energies and clean technologies. With his dual identities as medical doctor and explorer, Bertrand has become an influential voice heard among the most distinguished institutions across the globe as a forward-thinking leader for progress and sustainability.

Bertrand was one of the first to envision ecology through the lens of profitability, to show the economic opportunities in fixing climate change. "Clean technologies should serve the environmental challenges of our time." Solar Impulse was built to carry this message. Taking turns at the controls of the airplane with his partner André Borschberg to attempt the first ever round-the-world solar flight, Bertrand wants to demonstrate that energy efficiency and renewable energy can achieve incredible goals – reinforcing the idea that it will be easier to protect the environment with a broader use of modern clean technologies, than by fighting against societal trends in mobility, comfort and growth.

Together with his wife Michèle, he conceived the Solar Impulse project as a now widely recognized platform to raise public awareness and encourage political actions in favor of clean technologies. Thanks to this zero-emission airplane of unlimited endurance, he became a convincing ambassador, and is regularly invited to express his vision at major international conferences on innovation, energy, environment and technology.

Bertrand's conviction and breadth of experiences enabled him to mobilize a large scope of partners to support Solar Impulse, despite the skepticism of the aviation industry. While André Borschberg took over the mission to design and build this revolutionary prototype, Bertrand brought on board more than 60 corporations, institutions and individuals that provided technologies and funding for the project. These industry leaders recognized in Bertrand's vanguard philosophy a concrete opportunity to stimulate their own innovation processes and promote the modern solutions society needs for a sustainable future.



“Exploration is a state of mind: go beyond the obvious, enter the unknown and call certitudes into question. An adventure is not necessarily a spectacular feat but rather something «extra-ordinary» that forces us out of our ordinary ways of thinking and behaving. Most of the time, it’s not the limits that prevent us from accomplishing our dreams, but the limitations that we invent and inflict on ourselves.”

Bertrand’s thirst for exploration is the continuation of a family legacy, passed down through three generations of inventors who dedicated their lives to scientific adventure and protection of the environment. First, there was Auguste Piccard who opened the way for modern aviation with the first-ever stratospheric flight in the pressurized capsule that he invented. Later, it was Jacques Piccard who pioneered scientific ecology when he discovered traces of life during the historic dive with his bathyscaphe to the deepest point of the ocean, the Mariana Trench.

Inspired by his childhood, where he also rubbed shoulders with most of the astronauts of the American moon program, Bertrand developed an insatiable curiosity for pushing limits and became a serial explorer. As a young man, he pioneered the early development of hang-gliding and ultra-light flying in Europe, won the Transatlantic Balloon Race, and achieved the first-ever nonstop round-the-world balloon flight, completing the longest unrefueled flight in the history of aviation for both distance and duration. During the 20 days of this circumnavigation, together with English aeronaut Brian Jones, Bertrand feared he would fall short of propane and promised himself to make another round-the-world flight, this time without any fuel. Solar Impulse was born from this commitment.

This passion for exploration was brought to new levels as a medical doctor and psychiatrist, when he searched for alternative therapeutic solutions in hypnosis, Oriental approaches and Taoism. This practice came full circle, as Bertrand used hypnosis to increase his level of vigilance and manage fatigue when he was for days at the controls of the Solar Impulse airplane and the Breitling Orbiter balloon.

His insights as an explorer and a medical doctor give him a unique perspective on man’s psychological capabilities and the way to manage change and crisis. His track record brings credibility to his guidance, as he challenges others to embrace new ways of thinking. He is a born communicator, respected for not only achieving lofty goals but also demonstrating the steps needed to achieve them. For more than two decades, he has shared his experience in inspirational speeches for corporate and public audiences on topics such as achieving the impossible, developing creativity and innovation, managing crisis, teamwork and communication. Bertrand encourages others to reject common assumptions, to focus on solutions by refusing convictions and to take on challenges with the spirit of a pioneer.

Referred to as the “Inspioneer,” he has become an influential voice that is heard within the most distinguished institutions across the globe, like the United Nations, the World Economic Forum, COP21, TED, the European Institutions and many national governmental bodies. A trusted adviser and influencer for the development of new societal solutions, he has been appointed Champion of the Earth and United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for the Environmental Program (UNEP). The inspiration he received from other explorers and pioneers during his life gives him the desire to also inspire younger generations in return.

Furthering Bertrand’s success is his ability to build bridges between extremes to develop synergies where others see oppositions. First with Solar Impulse, Bertrand promotes the reconciliation of ecology and economy. He also acknowledges that sustainability is not limited to the environment and therefore he is actively committed to humanitarian causes. Bertrand chairs the Winds of Hope



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“Our world needs to find new ways of improving the quality of human life. Let’s replace old polluting devices with modern clean technologies. Sustainable growth will only come from products that can save energy and protect the environment. It is possible today to bridge ecology and economy.”

Foundation that he co-founded with Brian Jones and Breitling after the round-the-world balloon flight. Through this organization, he created the “No-Noma International Federation” to coordinate the eradication of Noma, a disease symbolic of deep poverty, caused by malnutrition and lack of hygiene.

Also an author, Bertrand is able to bring to life his experiences through writing. Even in the midst of a new challenge, he is documenting his experience of moments to share later. He wrote several best sellers and aims to use his pen as a tool to inspire readers to greatness in their own lives. For this pioneer free from dogmas, exploration is a state of mind. Bertrand believes that one must change the altitude in the winds of life by dropping the weight of certitudes in order to find better directions. As he says, “Performance and success come from using doubts and question marks to stimulate our creativity.”

His next venture will be to develop his Future is Clean Initiative, which already federates more than 420 organizations around the world toward a common goal of environmental progress through clean technology solutions.

Together with his wife Michèle, Bertrand resides in Lausanne, Switzerland,

- > Born 1 March 1958 in Lausanne (Switzerland), married and father of three children
- > Medical doctor, specialist in psychiatry and psychotherapy for adults and children (1996)
- > Lecturer and supervisor for the Swiss Medical Hypnosis Society
- > Professor at the Nice Faculty of Medicine and Honorary Doctor of Science, Technology and Letters
- > Pioneer of hang-gliding and microlight flying in Europe; European hang-glider aerobatics champion (1985)
- > Winner of the first transatlantic balloon race (Chrysler Challenge, 1992)
- > Initiator of the Breitling Orbiter project and captain of the first non-stop round-the-world balloon flight: 45 633 km in 19 days, 21 hours and 47 minutes (capturing a total of 7 world records)
- > President of the Winds of Hope Foundation which is fighting against noma
- > United Nations Goodwill Ambassador for the Environmental Program (UNEP), Champion of the Earth (2012) and Energizer of the Year (2014)
- > Official decorations: Légion d’Honneur; The Olympic Order; Order of the Alawi (Morocco); Order of Saint-Charles; Order of Leopold; Médaille de l’Aéronautique; Gold Medal of Youth and Sport
- > Lecturer (several hundred public and private lectures since 1992)
- > Initiator and chairman of the “Solar Impulse” project to fly round the world in a solar aircraft in order to promote the use of renewable energies; pilot of the 1st solar-powered intercontinental flight, first coast-to-coast USA crossing by a solar aircraft, alternating with André Borschberg
- > Author of: “A Trace in the Sky” (Editions Favre, 2005)
“Around the World in 20 Days” (Wiley, New York, 1999, a best seller),
“Changer d’altitude” (Editions Stock, 2014, a best-seller)
- > Records: 8 FAI world records for distance and duration in a balloon;
2 FAI world records for distance with a solar airplane

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