



Interview with Maxime Chaya By The Midis Group

Rowing the Indian Ocean (RIO)

Second World Record for Maxime!

Start of Journey: Sunday June 9th - Near Perth, Western Australia

End of Journey: Monday August 5th - Mauritius, Off the East Coast of Africa



Midis Group had the pleasure of interviewing Maxime upon his return from a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, Rowing the Indian Ocean. The interview is structured in 3 parts:

- RIO
- Midis Group
- Miscellaneous



Rowing the Indian Ocean

Q1- About RIO, what were the most challenging moments that you faced and the best ones?

Challenging moments? A lot of challenging moments! Of course, throughout the first days, I was very sea sick... I knew that, like I said in my past conferences that we would suffer from sea sickness but the human body is such a wonderful machine that it can adapt to anything so we had to toughen it out and be patient. Of course also when the host of problems began to emerge like the water maker, power supply, ... those are tough moments. It's no joke, the ocean is no joke whatsoever, especially the Indian Ocean and the further we were getting away from the shore, the more difficult it was to come back and the further out we were getting, the likelihood of being rescued is hard. It was challenging from A to Z, and even before that, getting the whole expedition ready.

The good moments are when the weather is ok, when the waves are not very high and not crashing on the boat, and when they are in the directions you are going (west). It was very enjoyable at night, when the conditions were right, when there is no moonlight, you could see the sky with billions of stars and I have never seen so many shooting stars. But of course, the best moment is when you set foot on land, on August 5, 2013.

Q2- How would you define your relationship with the ocean? Imagining the ocean as being a woman, what was your impression before meeting "her" and after living with "her"? Was she as moody, angry, crazy? Or beautiful and sweet??

I don't know if I would compare the ocean to a woman. It was very interesting, humbling. With Nature, if you respect it, it will respect you. Unfortunately it is not the case with all of humans; we sometimes act without warning, we react rather than act. Exactly like women should be, some of them are not, unfortunately, but it's not just women, it's all of mankind.

Q3- How was it going on a journey with people you weren't familiar with? And was it enough to know a person within 57 days?

Oh My God! Do you need more than that?? (laughing!)

Of course, you really get to know someone's true color in very close proximity, very harsh environment, and nowhere to go. Unlike other expeditions, I have never been in such close proximity. This was a major challenge and of course we had disagreements but I am happy to say that as the captain of the boat, I was able to handle this by putting the overall objective above everyone else's objectives. If the three of us have the same aim, then there is a way for us to find a common ground for us to achieve that aim in the best and safest possible way.



Q4- What kind of arguments did you guys face? Was it because of performance, someone's character, compatibility...?

We faced some disagreements on how to do things, what to do, what not to do. One of them was complaining, he was able to see little negatives but was not seeing the huge positive. In fact I was the one who got the boat ready for the expedition, it took me a lot of time and effort, 2 years; they just wiped their feet and got on board at the very last minute.

Q5- Would you have changed anything in your preparation now that you crossed the ocean?

I had organized sea trials on the Mediterranean, to go to Cyprus and come back, but for several valid reasons, we would not been able to do sea trials. We just went on 12km and came back. We had several issues on the boat and this is because I have never done anything like this before. I am a perfectionist, the boat could have been a lot better, so I would probably have proper sea trials.

**Q6- July 25, you mentioned on twitter "I long for a shower. A Bed. Warm hug. Dry clothes. Shave. Full night's sleep. All previously taken for granted... .. I long for sitting on chairs too. Eating at tables. Real food. Walking. Running. Partying. Loving..."
What was your mind set at that time?**

Of course I was home sick, it's tough! Not only you are on the Indian Ocean which is unforgiving sometimes but also you are on a tiny little boat with no amenity whatsoever, no water, no toilets,...





Q7- What did you feel when you first saw land, Mauritius?

It's jubilation! It was the first time we'd seen land for 2 months. For 2 months, we had nothing but a horizon. It's not over till you really get there.





Midis

Q8- What does Midis mean to you? How were you first introduced to Midis?

I addressed Midis when I first came back from Everest, in 2006. It was at the Intercontinental Mzaar and we walked up in the mountains. Then, unfortunately, a few days later the war began. It's been a privilege to address you people ever since.

Q9- If Midis was a character, what would it be?

It would be somebody very, very ambitious and hard working. It reflects the leaders of the group and particularly one leader (smile).

Q10- Which was stronger? Technology or Mother Nature?

Mother Nature is always stronger than anything and anyone, way stronger. Of course with technology, you have more information. This is the difference between these days and 50 years ago; you have now more information because of technology. But no matter how advanced technology is, if it's supposed to rain, it will rain, if there is wind, there will be wind and you can't stop it.



Q11- You have been accompanying Midis during its events, since 2006, what do you like about the Group?

No matter what your position is, you always have your say. I love the way leaders listen to employees. Midis Group is one big family and everyone's word is heard.

Q12- How did Midis sponsorship support you during this trip?

To be able to do things, you need financial support. You need moral support as well. I thank each and everyone for their support. I am happy we succeeded and did well.



Q13- If you had to compare Midis to RIO, what would be the similarities? and the differences? Comparing Midis to Rio, what are the qualities needed from both of them to make the journey successful?

The difference is that with RIO there are lives at stake; with Midis it's not lives. But both of them are very ambitious and both need a lot of hard work to reach the goals that they set themselves. One of them is in a very competitive environment, and the other is in a harsh and unforgiving environment.

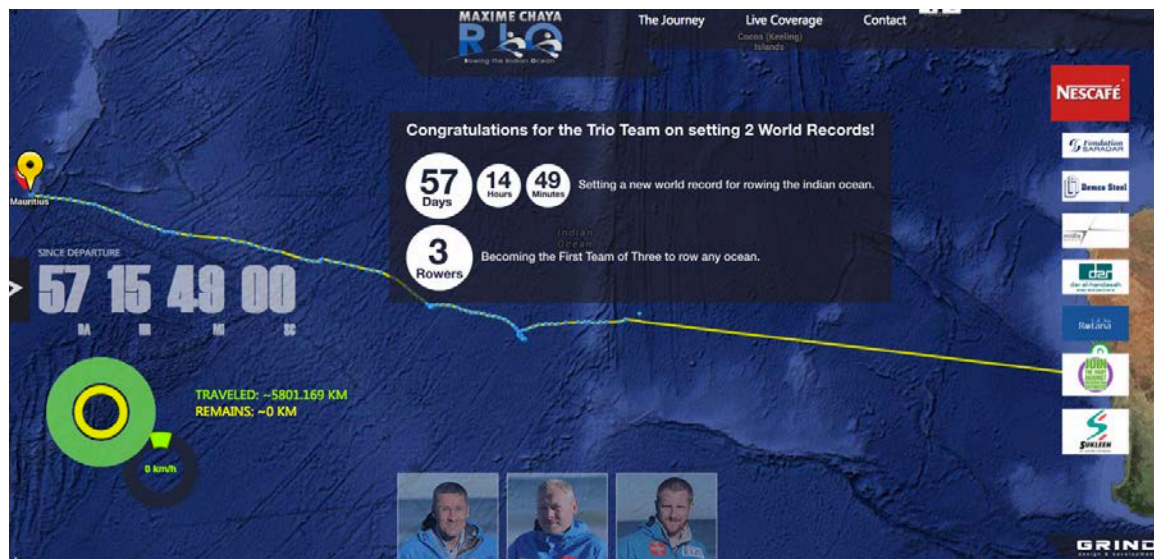
The main quality for Midis and RIO is the attitude that you take. If your attitude is correct, then you will succeed. The attitude will bring with it perseverance, hard work, dedication, learning from mistakes,.. This is why I said I love the way the members of Midis interact with one another, be it from the CEO to a regular employee, they are all in there for the same aim and they work together for accomplishment.

Q14- What advice do you have for Midis employees to have a successful career regardless of some ups and downs?

With hard work and dedication, you can achieve any objective you set to yourself. No matter how tough the goal seems to be, if you work at it, you will be able to solve all the problems and you will get to reach your objective, hence "There is an Everest for Everyone".

Q15- What is your slogan for RIO?

I am a perfectionist; I need everything to be perfect. But I have learnt that it doesn't have to be that way, that one shouldn't pay attention to the small stuff. So if someone has a certain way of doing something, sometimes you have to turn a blind eye. But in the end, if you want to reach the summit, it doesn't matter how you do it, so "let it be" would be the slogan.





Miscellaneous

Q16- You are a Sagittarius. Your planet is Jupiter. Would you consider visiting it one day??

I thought Men are from Mars and Women from Venus?? You know when I came back from Everest; I went to see the prime minister and he asked me what's next? The moon? I said why not, if you have a few million dollars. Not the moon but the international space station would have been nice. However for me it is not an achievement because you just sit in a rocket.

Q17- If you had to choose one of your adventures people remember you by, which one would you pick?

Everest! But the North Pole was much more challenging and the Indian Ocean was as well.

Q18- Who is Maxime? Define him in 3 qualities and 3 defaults?

The negative, is I try to do too much in too little time. Another negative is I expect too much from others, I expect them to be like me.

Qualities: I never lie. I never waste time and I cannot sit there and do nothing. Moreover, I try to always be positive.

Q19- If you had the option to be a personage from the history, who would you be?

It is very paradox because I admire someone like Ghandi who claimed peace but I also admire Alexander the Great who conquered! I don't want to name anybody but it is just somebody who sets an attainable goal and diligently works over months, years or even a lifetime to achieve it.

Q20- Who do you look up to?

God.

Q21- We know you are a role model for lot of people, how does this make you feel?

I never thought when I began doing different things, like climbing, cycling, to get to that point but I am happy that I did, it is very rewarding. Sometimes I think who am I to teach and give lessons to a CEO? I should be asking him questions. But definitely, with regarding to the young generation, it is a responsibility, because they look up at me and I find it a duty to inspire them and be the best they can be. Each one of them has big potential, many of them, if not all of them underestimate their potential and many of them are simply lazy and use this instability as an excuse not to achieve their potential.

Q22- Lebanon- If you had a magic stick, what are 3 actions you will do in order to have Lebanon on the peak of the world just like you did??

I would use it to apply every single law we have without any exception on everyone. We have excellent laws but we do not apply them all.

Q23- We have a challenge for you! Would you consider visiting all Midis affiliates (knowing that the Group has more than 150 companies across 3 different continents) in 56 days, 3h, 56 minutes and 44 sec. You have the option to do it either by running, biking, swimming or riding a Camel!

There is definitely a yellow light there, let's work on turning it green! It is an excellent idea but we have to find a reason, a motto, a core value in it. It's easy to find the what and how. The question is WHY? What benefits can we draw from doing so but if you find the right why, then WHY not??



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