

Adapt Connection Seminar,  
December, 1. and 2., in 1999, Kokkola Finland

## **Ladies and gentlemen**

Kokkola region was in the 80's a very important central in textile and clothing industry. After the collapse of Russian markets about ten years ago, the base of mass production was disappeared. These changes meant that about two thousand employees lost their work during a short period of time. There was only a group of small companies which were enough flexible to adjust to the new situation and competition. Many people who had education and experience of the clothing business were without work. This encouraged to entrepreneurship and made possible the born of small companies.

In the 90's information technology has become very important in industry and society. Following this development is though (=hard) for small enterprises, in which owners are active in all kind of operations. Information technology has made possible new extensions to the production and marketing chains. The first step for a small enterprise is to discover the possibilities which this new technology has to offer. Time is money for an entrepreneur and this is why he may not have enough interest to study the possibilities. That was our market gap to make an application for EU: "Small and midsize enterprise's (SME) Electronic Ability – Key Factor for Profitability". We are very proud of that all important companies in this area have joined the project. Through the project we have got an active network between companies and education.

This project has been a very important development challenge to polytechnic and vocational education in Kokkola area. We have suggested to create local and European network to help each other. The big challenge will be in future to keep that network alive.

I have pleasure to welcome our guests abroad, Finland, local companies and education units to Adapt Connection seminar in Kokkola. I hope that you will enjoy your staying here.

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