

## Mutualism and Cooperation

### **A socially responsible enterprise is an enterprise that believes in lasting development.**

More and more, we hear talk of corporate social responsibility. But what exactly do we mean by this? Can SSQ claim to be a socially responsible enterprise? SSQ often states that it is committed to lasting growth, but does this necessarily mean that it is socially responsible?

A company's social responsibility is reflected in the relationships it maintains with all of its stakeholders: clients, employees, community, shareholders, government, suppliers, and competitors. In other words, when a company decides to contribute to improving society or protecting the environment, it can claim to have a sense of responsible citizenship.

From an economical point of view, a company subscribes to lasting development when it is:

- aware of the importance of environmental protection and makes use of natural resources in a conscientious manner;
- socially responsible and meets its obligations toward clients, employees, suppliers and shareholders;
- financially sound by ensuring its balance sheet remains healthy.

Does SSQ meet these criteria? I am firmly convinced that it does. Furthermore, our 2002 Annual Report (available in all good stores... and at the Annual Meeting held April 12, 2002) includes the SSQ Financial Group's first Social Responsibility Report. In the report, SSQ accounts for its actions as a corporate citizen. I invite you to read the report, as it helps one to understand the importance of the policies our employer endorses. Evidently, the positive actions SSQ has taken are listed, but so are areas where we still need to improve. For example, we already recycle paper and computer-related material. Are there other measures that SSQ could easily undertake to help protect the environment? This question will be studied in-depth in 2003.

I believe there are many at SSQ who would agree that the values of solidarity, equity, responsibility and integrity are very much alive within our organization. The Social Responsibility Report is therefore based on a solid foundation. More and more companies are adopting socially responsible corporate policies. The transparency of commercial enterprise and the non-verifiable character of certain affirmations have been cause for concern. Our Social Responsibility Report provides tangible proof that SSQ truly believes in corporate transparency. Now,