

Andrew Benedek

is the Executive Chairman of



after having founded and led Zenon for 26 years. He's a former member of the IWA board and the inaugural recipient of the Lee Kwan Yew Prize.



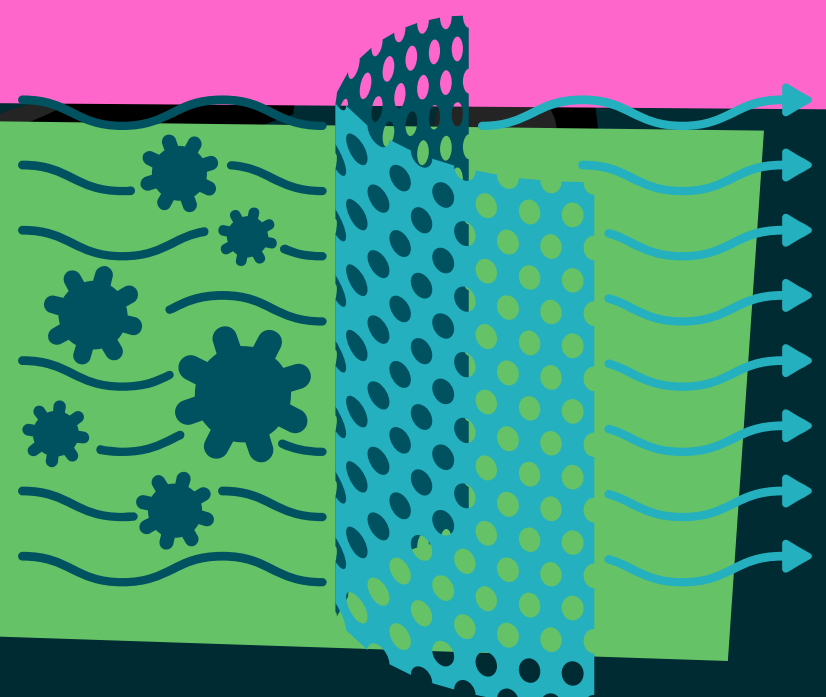
Membrane Bioreactors systems weigh \$4Bn a year today (and growing).

Yet, in the early eighties, no one really believed membranes would ever make a dent in clean water applications. So before envisioning a wastewater application, there was a long way to go...

No venture capital investor, no investor, in fact, would have been crazy enough to fund a professor wanting to find a solution to water reuse!

But Andrew Benedek had a vision: wastewater reuse would become mandatory with decreasing water resources and increasing population.

It took him one decade to find out which technology was the best suited to solve this challenge: membranes.



(DON'T!)

WASTE WATER



In 1980 he made his leap of faith and founded Zenon:

(DON'T!)
**WASTE
WATER**

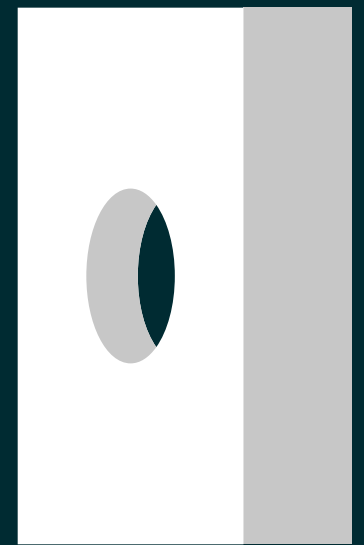
You don't change the world through academic research!

Here's a riddle for you:
how long would YOU keep pushing along your vision without reaching any traction?



We're almost talking of a lifelong dedication to a (brilliant) intuition in this story!

For 16 years, we had no competition because everybody thought this was crazy



It took some mishaps, like when years and millions of R&D investments almost ended up at a dead end.



Or when other market players refused to join forces.

(DON'T!)
WASTE WATER

But if you are a believer and persistent and willing to work at it, miracles happen!



A miracle? I'd say the well-deserved reward for that dedication instead.



Indeed, around the late 90s - early 2000s, Membrane Bioreactors finally were in the middle of the market. And Zenon had "made it"!

It had become too good to be ignored, so GE Water took out its checkbook and acquired the company for slightly under \$700 million.

Time to enjoy retirement for the then 63-year-old Andrew? Not at all.



Talking to scientists And looking at the ocean. I really got scared about climate change. I just couldn't sit there and enjoy my money and watch a problem without wanting to do something...



This is how he ended up diving back into the shark tank, acquiring a bankrupt German company, turning it on its head, and leading it up to IPO in 2021.

(DON'T!)
**WASTE
WATER**

All of that for a simple reason:

I'm working for your future! If we don't solve this, we won't have one. The older I get, the more ambitious I get!

BONUS:

Do you also want to change the World? Here's Andrew's 4-step recipe.

Step one: pick a problem that's big and is going to grow with time.

The second thing you need is a sustainable advantage.

The third? Minimize the risk!

And lastly, you need really great people.

Don't miss a single bite: head over to dww.show