

## Ulrich Schmid-Maybach on putting Mercedes money to use mentoring doctors in developing countries

Sam Whiting

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Ulrich Schmid-Maybach's father was a UCSF physician, but the long money comes by way of his great grandfather, who designed the first Mercedes. A native San Franciscan, Schmid-Maybach, 46, serves as brand ambassador for Maybach, a sedan that retails for around \$400,000, and as president of the Maybach Family Foundation.

**"I commute** back and forth to Europe almost every month. Out of pure serendipity I met a gentleman, Dr. David Bangsberg, on a flight from Frankfurt to San Francisco. We sat next to each other and spoke for 9 out of the 11 hours of the flight. He is an AIDS and infectious disease specialist, and he consults for a variety of African countries.

**Because my** great-grandfather had been mentored by Gottlieb Daimler, the whole idea that was growing was this mentoring concept. Dr. Bangsberg trains upward of 200 or 300 doctors every year in Africa. I said, 'Why don't we pick one of these gifted young doctors and really give them a chance to become more than they would otherwise become?' So many doctors in Africa become stuck in the AIDS factory rut or they flee to technology or to some other higher-paying job.

**We launched** the Maybach Family Foundation one year ago at the United Nations Global Youth Leadership Summit, under the auspices of Kofi Annan, in New York. Kirk Douglas was our keynote speaker.

**The concept** is that we focus on one very gifted young person who has shown talent in a particular area. We choose maybe five or six every year, but we go very deep with each one. We are across the board - community, ethics, science, technology, art. Then we either connect them with a mentor or they already have one. We put a curriculum together. 'What are they going to need for the next five years or 10 years? It is a cradle-to-grave approach that we'd like to take so that they may come back and help the organization once they are successful.

**The financial** support depends. A young doctor may require \$100,000 a year for five years in terms of financial support. Somebody else may require less. It's a customized approach. Once someone is selected,



we try to stay with them until they achieve their goals. When they achieve their goals, there is an understanding that they come back and mentor somebody else.

**I went** to Uganda with Dr. Bangsberg and looked at what was going on there, met a lot of the doctors. We've now chosen a young candidate doctor who is really the first of our projects. We've raised some money for him and we're putting together a curriculum that includes both funding his research and treating patients in Africa as well as developing his natural leadership skills.

**We're looking** at a young woman in India who is an exceptional golfer that we're looking to get involved with. There is a project that we're looking at in the Middle East that would bring the Palestinians together with the Israelis.

**Since we're** in our first year, I can't tell you what exactly our budget will shake out to be but the DaimlerChrysler company and the Maybach brand are significant financial supporters of what we are doing. We have just opened an office in Los Angeles. I'm finding we have a lot of supporters in the entertainment business.

**I was in** Cannes again this year with the foundation. I was not staying at the Carlton, but it was very nice. You don't get a hangover from helping other people."

**The Lightbulb:** I'm at the Carlton Hotel at the Cannes Film Festival in 2003. I'm waking up. It's 2 in the afternoon. I'm in a beautiful suite. The world is great but I'm not happy. I realize that the reason I'm not happy is that the life I'm leading is very superficial. That was when I got the spark to do more than just represent a luxury brand.

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