

## 485 AND COUNTING...

**Katrien Devos**  
Founder



**Greet Bunnens**  
Director

By the time you will be reading this newsletter, we'll have made the acquaintance of our 500<sup>th</sup> approved HR freelancer. Who is he? Where does he live? What actuates him? And more to the point... why? Before long, we'll have solved that mystery for you. There is one secret we can let you in on though. Looking at our current network, we are convinced

that he will have the following qualities:

- strong HR expertise,
- drive,
- great sense of responsibility,
- dynamism,
- client-oriented,
- passionate about HR,
- flexible,
- suitable availabilities,
- high integrity, ...

How can we be so sure of that? Because these are the HR professionals HR Builders teams up with.

This is our norm!

So, when you, as our client, call on the services of HR Builders, you can rest assured that we have thoroughly screened your

ad interim HR manager. What's more, we select suitable candidates from amongst a large and diverse pool of approved HR consultants, with the result that we can come up with a 98% match with your company in a very short space of time (48h).

This is also one of the reasons for our success: we are proud to inform you that, in 2011 on average, we joined forces with more than 30 HR Managers operating under the HR Builders' flag, every month. As to our team, that has meanwhile increased to five: Katrien, Greet and Robby, supported by our two highly efficient and charming assistants, Virginie and Mieke. And to ensure that we will be able to serve you even better in the near future, we are beavering away on our offices, but more on that later.

## A WELL TRAINED ARMY



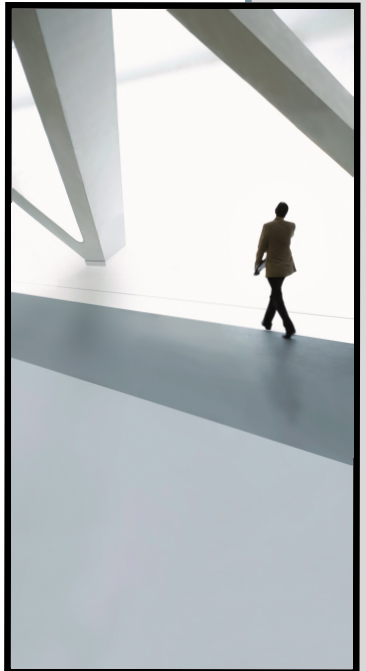
**Robby De Caluwé**  
Business Partner

The complex and rigorous process for the social elections has started and will last until May 2012 at least. There is no doubt that this period brings a lot of extra work and stress for your HR department. Over

the past few months, HR Builders, in collaboration with Claeys & Engels, has trained approx. 50 freelance HR consultants to assist and advise our customers during these elections. But don't be fooled: even without drastic changes in procedures and the same number of rules there are some snakes in the grass. So the key is to remain alert!

The unions have prepared themselves, have you? Within our large network of independent HR managers we

created a "pool" of HR specialists who have organised social elections in Belgium in the past. We mapped the experiences and availabilities of this "social elections pool", so we can assist you with the manpower you need. If you prefer to handle the social elections yourself, we can assist your company with other strategic or operational HR tasks that are pushed into the background.



### In this volume:

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- HR Complexities of a merger
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- Q & A
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- Workshops

Visit our website for up-to-date freelance HR challenges!

[www.HRBuilders.eu](http://www.HRBuilders.eu)

## DOS AND DON'TS IN CHANGE

In 2011, I decided to go down the road of HR interim management. My first assignment at AXA Belgium has proven to be every bit as challenging: priming and guiding a process of change at management level so as to better attune human potential to business objectives. Thanks to the involvement of HR Builders and the excellent communication, I embarked on this assignment with confidence. What position do I, as an external HR consultant, choose? What method would I use? My answers from the field: 1) Don't waste any time over-analysing problems and causes.

Clients who call on interim management will more than likely have set the wheels of change in motion already. I acknowledge negative feelings by summarizing existing problems so that I can focus on possible solutions as quickly as possible. Concentrating on problem situations and causes impacts on the energy you need to bring about change and can lead to resistance. 2) Use solutions employees already have in their minds but which never got implemented due to circumstances. Look for positive exceptions that did work in the past and analyse them. Co-create and reactivate

the circumstances and competences that worked then. Internal solutions work best. 3) I try to take small steps. Like a snowball that starts to roll. Which step you take first and which one next tends not to be that important. The discovery that something is moving in the right direction is more important to the success of the change process. The key? Partnership... which happens to be HR Builders' strength!

**Walter Peeters**  
HR Business Partner a.i.  
AXA BELGIUM



## HR COMPLEXITIES OF A MERGER

About a year ago, I was contacted by HR Builders to support Stanley Black & Decker's HR team in their merger activities and this has been an interesting experience with lots of lessons learned. Working in a company where mergers and acquisitions are yearly recurrent initiatives allowed me to broaden my knowledge of other countries' social legislation and market practices on a compensation & benefits level. What are the lessons learned? 1) The implementation of the European Directive 2011/23/EC into local social legislation is different in the various European Member

States. 2) Tax and legal requirements in the different Member States also differ. 3) When merging legal entities you should not only focus on the harmonisation of proper C&B elements, such as group insurance and bonus schemes, but also on the "softer" side such as one HR management, one company culture, and even on the holiday request system and the discounts on company products. 4) A detailed project plan for the preparation phase, the implementation and some aftercare is crucial. 5) Apart from the possible changes/harmonisation of the C&B package, implications of local legal

mergers from an HR point of view can be organisational redesign, office moves, possibilities for lateral moves or for promotion. 6) From a financial point of view, consolidating legal entities often implies a reduction in regulatory compliance costs. But be careful, in most cases, the total cost of integrating two companies is higher than the savings.

**Gretel Goessens**  
HR Manager Comp & Ben a.i.  
STANLEY BLACK & DECKER



## HIGH IN THE SKY & ON THE WATER

September was a busy month with two client events. We were very pleased to welcome our clients and their partner, friend or child for a sightseeing tour with a Robinson R4 helicopter. It is safe to say that it was a "thrilling" experience high in the sky.



We experienced it all: sun, rain, clouds, wind, waves... sandbanks... but no seasickness! Definitely an experience worth repeating, and maybe an occasion to aim for a higher ranking in the Vlerick Sailing Cup.

Some of our sportive clients chose an active sailing day in the Netherlands.

This is our way to sincerely thank our clients and supporters without whom we would never be where we are today.



## HOT QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### Who are you?

My name is Sofie Claes, I am 39 years of age and live in Antwerp with my husband, Roberto, and our two daughters, Anna and Giulia. Currently I'm working as an interim HR manager via HR Builders in the Maintenance Services and Panels division within Fabricom, in Zwijndrecht.



### Why did you opt for a career as an interim HR manager?

This was something that I had been playing around with in my own head for a number of years. As an interim manager, you have a challenging and varied job. And you get to know interesting people. As an employee you can only dream of the independence you enjoy as a freelancer. Although I had been playing with the idea for a long time, it was the nice assignment HR Builders offered me that won me over.

### Why did you choose for a temporary role within Fabricom?

I didn't know Fabricom and was pleasantly surprised. A nice company to work for, with a wide range of activities and a very pleasant atmosphere. I am working in a young and rapidly growing business: the ideal area for an interim HR manager! And what's more, my assignment is a three-days-a-week one, so I can always combine it with other projects.

*Sofie Claes HR Manager a.i.  
FABRICOM*

## NEGOTIATING WITH THE UNIONS: a few tips!

Once my job came on the line in 2011, I, for one, gave HR Builders a call and, a few interviews with potential clients later, I found out quite quickly that I would get a freelance assignment with Lipton Tea. It was a conscious decision as I was keen to work on a part-time basis and permanent part-time positions are rarely advertised. My present job fits in perfectly with the work experience I gained at another factory. My job content (following up HR procedures and plenty of industrial relations) is almost identical save for the fact that the workforce is smaller which makes the job a very personal one. You

get to know people quicker. Some HR professionals utterly dread a job where social relations in a working-class environment take centre stage on account of the powerful unions which can put a fair bit of pressure on management. Experience has taught me though that union representatives are ordinary people who more often than not have the company's best interests at heart and are open to reason. Of course, life is a whole lot easier if you keep on the right side of them. Here, just a few tips to avoid difficult situations. Regularly communicate with them in a formal and informal

manner. Keep them properly informed about any changes in the organisation so that they are never taken by surprise when faced with questions from staff. Make sure that you never end up in a deadlock with them: a head-on approach seldom works and you risk losing face because, in the end, you will have to come



to a compromise anyway. Humour is your best asset if you want negotiations to run smoothly. I wish you every success!

*Marijke Decraene HR Business Partner a.i.  
Lipton Tea UNILEVER Corp.*

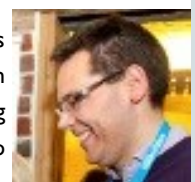
## A TESSENDERLO EXPERIENCE

The Tessenderlo Group is represented in more than 20 countries across the globe. To implement the group's business strategy, important strategic projects are taking place all around the world. A great many employees are involved in these projects with the result that we need qualified HR professionals both in the short and in the long term. When one of our HR colleagues went on maternity leave, we urgently needed outside support in the field of (legal) HR. We got in touch

with HR Builders last year and were pleasantly surprised to find that they could quickly provide a number of suitable interim HR managers. HR Builders understood our need immediately and came up with profiles which might fit the bill. We selected the interim HRM, who started immediately. During 2011, some other ad hoc projects cropped up, which meant that we needed different profiles of interim HR managers. Based on our initial experience, we continued to work with

HR Builders. Once again, they were able to provide us with the most suitable candidates for these jobs and they have really proven to be successful in their assignments.

HR Builders clearly aims for a win-win situation and targets a strong long-term relationship with its clients.



*Steven Claes  
Group Reward Manager  
TESSENDERLO GROUP*

## KEEP UP-TO-DATE & SHARE EXPERIENCES

As a self-employed Interim Manager you take your career in your own hands. You can offer companies value-adding opportunities and moreover, you can learn during your temporary assignments. You deliberately choose how to handle your downtime. You often invest in further training or instruction. Sometimes assignments can be effectively juggled with the continuation of a long-term training. And sometimes it is impossible as you are fully booked. Or you are spoiled for choice with so many interesting subjects and topics, and cannot make up your mind.

For several years now HR Builders has been offering, free of charge, noteworthy evening workshops on a monthly basis. Within the space of a few hours, participants are introduced to a current HR issue or allowed to delve deeper into the subject. You become involved in an active listening and interactive questioning process, while swapping thoughts with a small group of other Interim Managers. Sharing knowledge is apparently a genuinely effective process, because the workshops are always fully booked and the feedback is enthusiastic. The exchanges with other self-employed

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BUILD YOUR  
FREELANCE  
CAREER!**

people are very stimulating and instructive. We offer a wide variety of topics and frequently change regions so everyone ends up being served for. Be sure to get involved and register in good time! Our website is regularly updated with the topics on offer. If you have any suggestions for a relevant content, please let us know!

Hope to see you soon at one of our workshops!

## HR BUILDERS WORKSHOPS

Every first or second Monday of the month we organise a workshop to collaborate and discuss interesting matters. We work together on current issues, trends and management tools. The exchanges of experience and no-nonsense approach of our moderators constantly lead to fascinating interactions and enhanced knowledge. Our speakers are specialists in their branch and bring interactive workshops. The topics are mostly related to Human Resources or to self employment. The workshops take place in the evening in different provinces. Don't wait too long to enrol if interested, since the number of participants is limited (max. 25 persons). [Subscribe through info@hrbuilders.be](mailto:info@hrbuilders.be)

### Next topics, dates and locations 2012:

<b>Creative Thinking</b>	Jan 9	Antwerp
<b>Lean &amp; Six Sigma</b>	Feb 13	Brussels
<b>Reward &amp; Excel</b>	March 12	Leuven
<b>Liability</b>	April 16	Brussels
<b>Creative HR Communication</b>	May 14	Ghent
<b>Social Relations Unfolded</b>	June 11	Mechelen

*Our workshops are free of charge*

Some reactions: "Great moderator"

"Nice environment and very good practical organisation"

"Always nice to get an update from knowledgeable professionals"

"Good idea to organise this in the evening as we are all busy people during the day"

"Very accessible and yet profound"

"I loved the atmosphere"

"Thanks a lot for another successful workshop"



Loyal HR Builders clients in 2011 are a.o.

Conrad, Tessenderlo Group, Sibelga, Ernst & Young, Thomas Cook, CSC, Schneider Electric, SGS, Ecover, Telenet, Adecco, Deme, Abbott, AGC Flat Glass Europe, Grontmij, Stanley Black&Decker, Niko, Verhaeren & co, Eneco, Ansell, UZ Brussel, Johnson & Johnson, Strukton Railinfra, Bellerose, Bombardier, Dupont de Nemours, SD Worx, Armonea, AB Inbev, Onafhankelijk Ziekenfonds, Sabena Technics, Delhaize, AXA Belgium, Bia Services, Bia Overseas, Essent, Fabricom, Federaal Agentschap Veiligheid Voedselketen, BNP Paribas Fortis, Huntsman, MECS Global, Partena, Trifinance, Unilever, WWF, ...

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