GOING BEYOND
UNBURDENING...

What's next
for the CIO?

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EDITO

Technology is evolving lightning-fast, and staying technologically relevant has become almost a full-time challenge for many organizations. In the vast majority of cases, the CIO is the person within the organization who bears this responsibility, and who's expected to improve efficiency and cut costs, build a future-proof platform, and keep the legacy environment running faultlessly, among other things. In short, as CIO you are expected to be more agile than a ballet dancer and better at doing the splits than Jean-Claude Van Damme. So it's no surprise that the market has been bombarded with stories about unburdening recently.

Unburdening literally means relieving someone of a load. But it's easier said than done, and at Realdolmen we're realistic about it: because how often have you already been promised that someone will unburden you? It's an incremental process which you might have only just started, or perhaps you're well on the way already. But actually, the real question is: how do you as CIO, as a company and as an IT organization, want to be unburdened?

And what about after the unburdening? What impact will unburdening have on your role? Will the CIO become re-dundant? Are you going, and will you be able, to find another interpretation of your role within a reasonable time?

Will the unburdening give you the breathing space you need to concern yourself more with strategy, innovation and creating added value? How is your company, IT organization and own role future-proof?

After all, it's not about what we can do as a partner, but what your organization can do more and better when you don't have to concern yourself with some-thing else. Where are your challenges, obstacles and opportunities to remain relevant for all your stakeholders in this world where technology is evolving lightning-fast? How do you buy the time and focus you need to work on your organization's digital transformation?

Both aspects are looked at in this magazine – I hope you enjoy reading it!

Thomas Verschueren
Marketing Manager

forward together

Realdolmen
and the Gfi Group
offer the customer more together

The Gfi Group completed the friendly takeover of Realdolmen in August 2018. What does this means for us as an organization and you as a customer?

Gfi was looking for a strong brand to fulfil its ambitions for growth in the Benelux area, and eventually further north too. Realdolmen had similar strategic growth in mind, and so the two parties found each other.

TURNOVER OF
€1,6
billion

18.000
employees

20 COUNTRIES

18 INTERNATIONAL
SERVICE CENTERS IN

France, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Poland, India, Brazil, Colombia and Macau

Realdolmen has added an international dimension to its activities by joining the Gfi Group. We can now follow and support our customers in other parts of the world, from Europe to North Africa and South America.

Achieve international ambitions

The Gfi Group currently operates in over 20 countries. This means we can respond better to the growing trend of Belgian SMEs performing well and also having international ambitions. But crossing national borders brings lots of challenges and can often hamper good ambitions. Now that we have people to support our customers in more places worldwide, however, we can take lots of these IT challenges off their hands. The extensive series of Service Centres makes nearshoring a reality too, allowing us to collaborate on increasingly innovative cost models.

The collaboration with the Gfi Group means we can offer a more complete portfolio, and operate as our customers' sole partner. In contrast to before, now we can really put our weight behind technologies such as SAP under our own management. We can provide end-to-end support, making everything much simpler.

Use innovative technology

Gfi has a number of innovation and technology labs in Europe, researching how technology can create added value on a daily basis. We already had a lab in Ghent, and now we have them in Paris and Lisbon too. They are places for testing current technologies such as AI or IoT, and finding out which developments can be converted into concrete applications with added value. In these times, with hypes and trends emerging faster all the time, it's a challenge to remain technologically relevant and make the right choices at the right times. Many of our customers find themselves stuck with this problem, but the knowledge and experience being gained in these labs means we can offer them reliable advice and support.

'We can follow and support our customers in other parts of the world.'

Tim Claes, Sales & Marketing Director

HIGH TIME
for CIOs
TO EXPAND
their horizons

Surely a CIO's main responsibility is to keep their organization's IT systems running smoothly, preferably resulting in significant added value, isn't it? Joachim De Vos, CEO of Living Tomorrow and TomorrowLab, doesn't think so: 'The CIO needs to focus on the future more than anyone else. And I don't mean what's going to happen in the next year or two, but what the world will look like in 15 or 20 years. Only those who fully prepare for this will be able to capture a leading position in their sector.'

As the former Microsoft CEO Bill Gates said at the opening of Living Tomorrow in March '95: 'We always overestimate the change that will occur in the next two years and underestimate the change that will occur in the next ten. Don't let yourself be lulled into inaction.'

But companies rarely look so far ahead in practice, notes De Vos, who's been following the latest technological developments closely since Living Tomorrow was founded in 1995. As well as showcasing new technologies, Living Tomorrow researches developments that will determine the future world of business together with other companies and educational institutions.

Chief Information and Innovation Officer

'The CIO is in the best position to see the areas where their organization is ready for innovation,' says De Vos. 'They need to be able to assess the impact of new technologies better than their colleagues. CIO stands for Chief Information Officer, and information will be the key to success in the future, as well as the basis for innovation more than ever before. A CIO needs to plot out the vision and strategy that determines what we're going to do with all this information or data. The challenge is to extract valuable 'wisdom' to distinguish yourself from the competition. Which new data sources do you need to tap into, and how can you process them to reach better decisions faster? Innovation makes the difference here.'

Living Tomorrow

The fact that CIOs need to focus less on operational affairs and more on strategy and innovation is of course nothing new. But De Vos notes that hardly anything changes in terms of the CIO's range of duties. It's essential that the rest of the management team is prepared to change its view of the CIO's role. How do you need to approach this as CIO?

'I would recommend starting by setting up structural meetings with people from your own sector and elsewhere,' explains De Vos. 'This exchange of ideas with people from different backgrounds, with different disciplines and alternative visions of the future, can be very fruitful.'

Future scenarios

Meetings with other people don't give you a vision of the future alone, of course. De Vos therefore also advocates a pragmatic approach to ensure this apparent mission impossible succeeds: 'The best thing is to work with scenarios.

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An IT partner is a SOUNDING BOARD.

Joachim De Vos, CEO of Living Tomorrow and TomorrowLab

THE TIME OF THE CIO

6% Developing strategies

39% Reporting, mainly financial

42% Operational tasks

13% Regulations and intellectual property

Harvard University asked board members from around 10,000 organizations what they spend most time on.

The study also investigated what the causes of any major problems in the organizations were over a period of ten years.

2% Faults in reporting

3% Shortcomings in the area of compliance

9% Operational blunders

86% Strategic shortcomings

Staying blind to important trends or evolutions – or seeing them but not acting accordingly – is therefore the thing that will harm your organization the most.

Suppose you're CIO of a hospital and you want to build an IT infrastructure that's still relevant ten years from now. You could invite a trend watcher to a meeting, but they can only talk about trends that are already visible. So it's a much better idea to go deeper and question what the core tasks of your hospital are. Will we still get sick in the future? Are we all going to become bionic people? Is AI going to determine everything?'

De Vos believes you need to plot these possible scenarios on a double axis – one ranked on a scale of uncertain to definite, and one according to impact on your organization. 'The most interesting scenario is the one with the biggest impact that is also uncertain. Choose two or three developments from this, and determine what the most and least favourable outcomes would be. Then comes the hard work: preparing for each of these scenarios, checking what you need for them, and so on.'

A new role for the IT partner

While the CIO is looking at all these future scenarios, today's IT also needs to keep running smoothly, of course. And De Vos believes IT partners can play a major role here. 'The cloud has made it easier to outsource lots of the

IT department's traditional tasks,' he says. 'At the same time, you also see that it's faster to switch to new technologies, necessary to stay ahead of the competition, in a cloud model.'

But De Vos believes the IT partner can do more than just unburden the CIO. 'A real partner is also a supplier of ideas, a sounding board. As an IT partner, you can often offer insights into evolutions that the CIO has less view of because you work for multiple customers and in different sectors. You can learn lessons from a blockchain project with one customer that can also be useful for other customers, for example. A good IT partner can also play a role in developing a vision for the future and converting strategy into useful actions.'

YOU ASK,
bots do

Support bots can create and assign tickets, guide someone through a process, provide status updates and escalate critical problems – all without needing to take up the helpdesk's valuable focus. We're moving to a world where cognitive technologies are being implemented to elevate (internal) customer experiences to a higher level.

09

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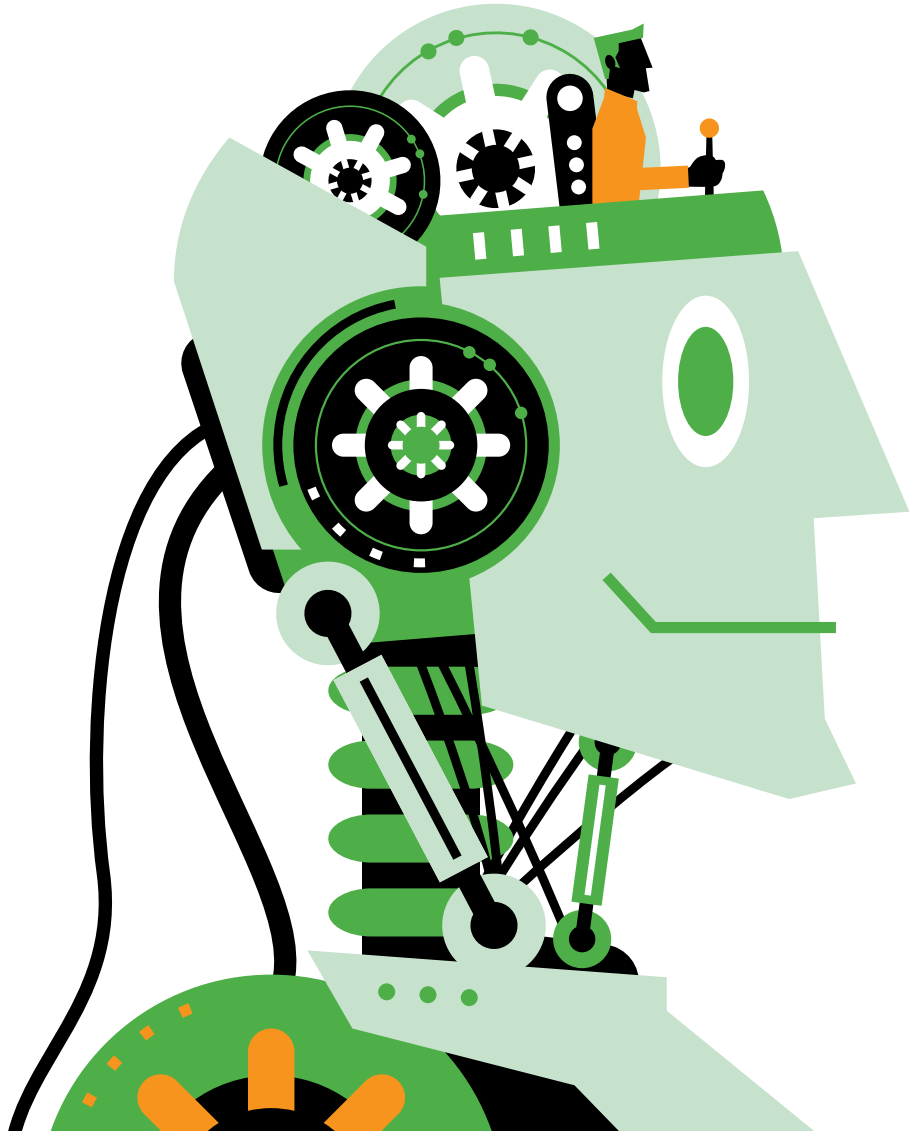
TYPES OF REQUEST
received by helpdesk:

27-43%
How to

20-35%
Password security

12-25%
Fault

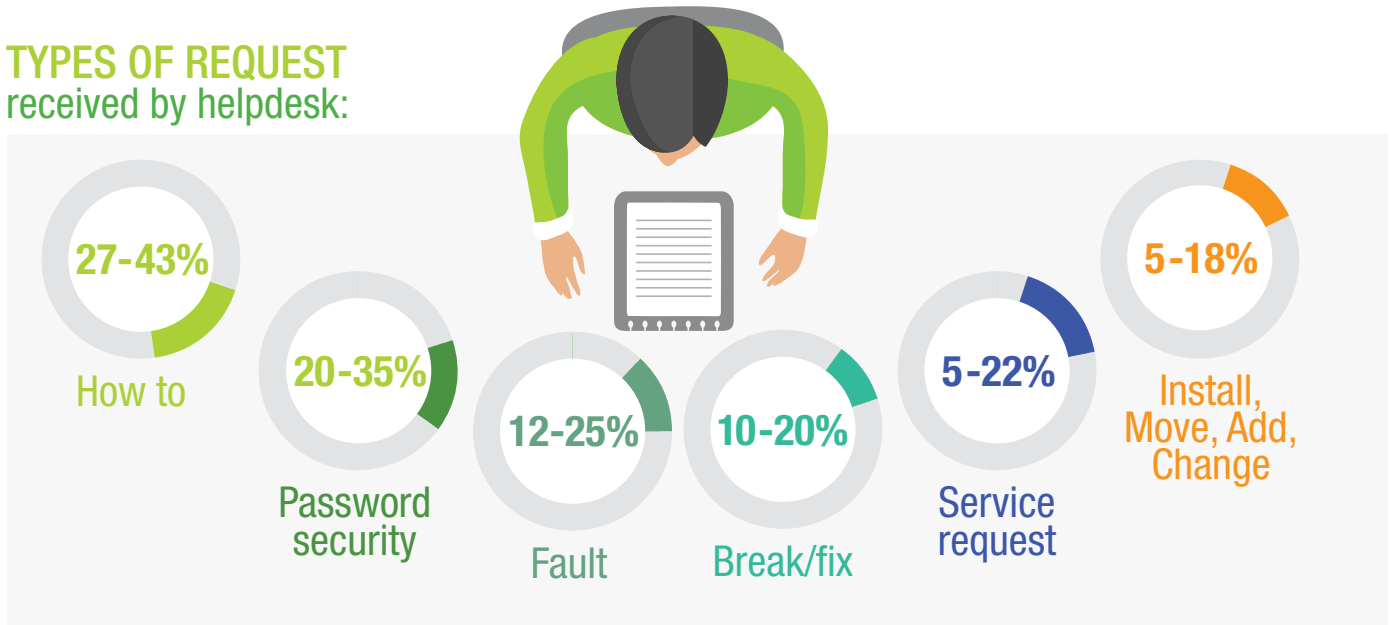**10-20%**
Break/fix

5-22%
Service request

5-18%
Install, Move, Add, Change

We expect (and often receive) immediate answers to all our questions and problems. Package from bol.com arrived damaged? They normally respond within one hour on Facebook. Consumers have come to expect this level of service now, and are adopting the same attitude on the work floor, so these immediacy challenges are reaching our internal IT support teams too. Lots of mature organizations are wrestling with this same problem when it comes to providing support. They're organised, with a helpdesk and ticketing system, so when a question or problem comes into first line support, they can deal with it straight away or pass it on to the specialised second line if necessary.

Just like in every business domain, helpdesks are being forced to work faster and improve productivity. On the other hand, budget limits and the technology landscape are changing lightning-fast. You need people with the right knowledge and skills, constantly training to keep up with new technologies, to be able to cope. This makes the internal helpdesk a challenging environment, forced to provide better service faster with – at best – the same resources as before.

A steep learning curve

35-50% of service requests are for repetitive tasks. Responses can be automated to resolve the problem of having a faster but affordable service. The actions that need taking are also routinely dealt with by first line employees straight away. But we make more mistakes when something becomes routine – we stop really thinking about it and maybe click without looking properly. Our learning curve goes up at first and then drops off again. A bot keeps learning regardless of how many times it has repeated an action, and therein lies its strength. A person can only specialise in a limited number of topics, but a bot can specialise in everything.

Reactive and proactive

Artificial intelligence can solve all kinds of different problems. Bots can intervene reactively and proactively. Examples of reactive applications are dealing with a service request, such as granting access or guiding someone through how to install a printer. A bot can assist with anything that's documented. It can also monitor systems in a preventive and intelligent way. So if someone can't log into an application, for example, it immediately checks if anyone else is having this same problem too. The system resolves the user's problem by itself, and the next login attempt

IT'S A MATTER OF FINDING **THE BEST BALANCE BETWEEN PERSON AND MACHINE,** WHERE BOTH ENHANCE EACH OTHER.

is successful. Trends can be found in the warning and error logs, so the bot recognizes when something is wrong. An application could start responding slowly, for example, without completely stopping. But the bot has learned in the past that there's probably something wrong with the memory, and schedules a reboot at a time when the application isn't being used. We're evolving from a ticketing system to an instant response system for these types of problems.
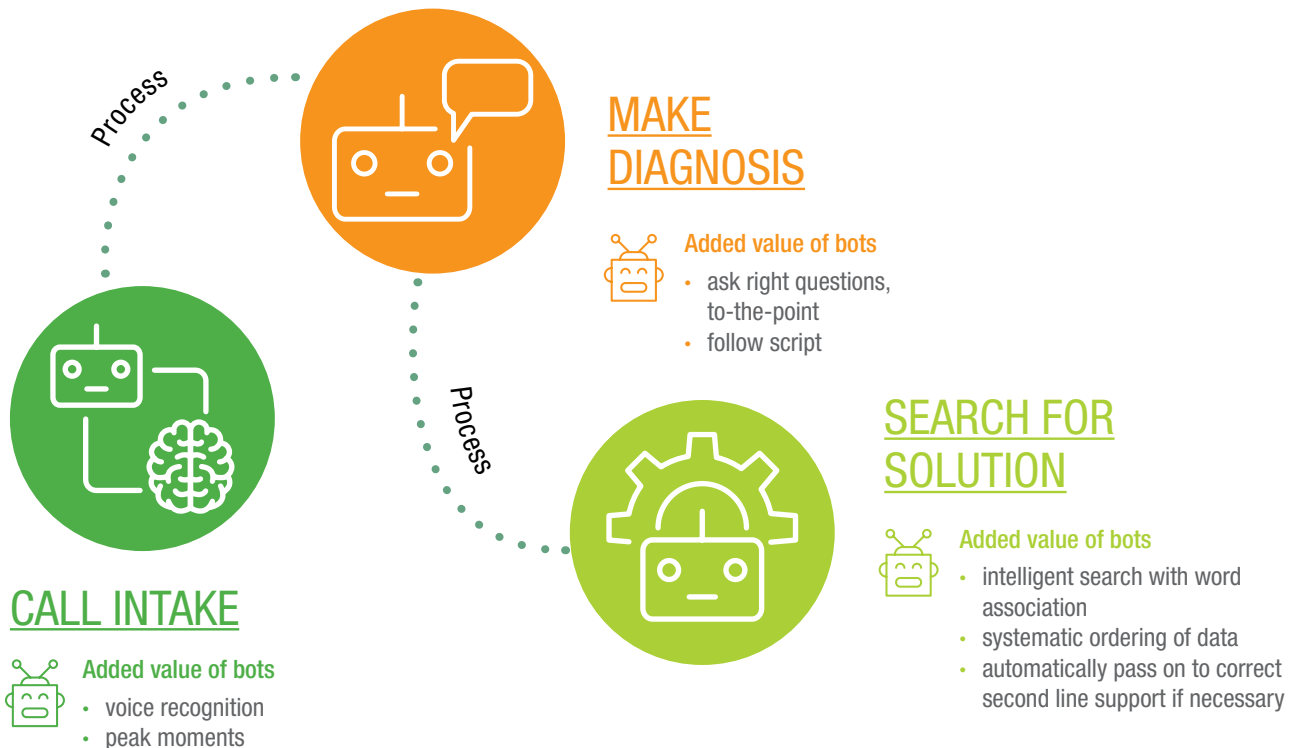
The added value of support staff

Will the support service become a fully robotised part of your company? No, both the first and second line employees hold their value. In fact, integrating bots will only increase it. Relieving employees of repetitive tasks by automating processes means they are free to focus on other work with much more energy to spare. They'll be able to concentrate more on the solution, and not get bogged down in the problem. It's a matter of finding the best balance between person and machine, where both enhance each other.

Integrating artificial intelligence makes people more productive and support jobs more valuable. To be able to integrate it successfully, we need to map out the organization and its IT department, and determine a clear vision and strategy: what can we solve, and what do we want to achieve? The two prerequisites for getting started with this technology are that it must be used for repetitive tasks, and the historical data needs to be available for analysis. A step-by-step implementation is recommended as the organization undergoes this structural change, so we start small and make sure everything's feasible. This also makes the added value clear straight away.

Ultimately, it's about using artificial intelligence in the IT support process to better meet customer expectations. It creates a good experience for both the (internal) customer and the support staff.

Process

MAKE DIAGNOSIS

Added value of bots
- ask right questions, to-the-point
- follow script

Process

SEARCH FOR SOLUTION

Added value of bots
- intelligent search with word association
- systematic ordering of data
- automatically pass on to correct second line support if necessary

CALL INTAKE

Added value of bots
- voice recognition
- peak moments

DATA
HELP
MACHINES
LAST
LONGER

The idea 'no change, no progress' is true now more than ever before, especially in terms of your machinery. Good maintenance is the only way to keep it up and running at all times, so it's high time to include it in your digital transformation. We can use AI and the IoT, among other things, to find the ideal times for maintenance, taking expected events into account. You can look towards the future and determine for yourself what it will look like.

From run-to-failure to predictive maintenance

The most primitive way of working is the run-to-failure principle: you only fix something when it's broken. One step further is preventive maintenance: servicing is scheduled after a set number of operations or a certain amount of time. But even so, maintenance might still not be essential, meaning unnecessary costs can be avoided. A more advanced form is Condition Based Maintenance (CBM), where a number of parameters such as oil levels, temperatures and vibrations are measured and recorded. These parameters provide a possible indication of when something could go wrong, so maintenance can be scheduled when the measurements differ from what's expected. This results in better alignment with what's really required, bringing us much closer to predictive maintenance.

Data capture and the Internet of Things (IoT) mean there are lots of data available. IoT enables machines to communicate with each other, but we can also collect huge amounts of data to run a whole battery of analyses on. Old machinery can be monitored by adding IoT devices to it, and we can make input from sensors available immediately via the internet. This enables us to discover and predict patterns in component life cycles, so we can plan servicing accordingly. One conclusion could be that there are other parameters (wh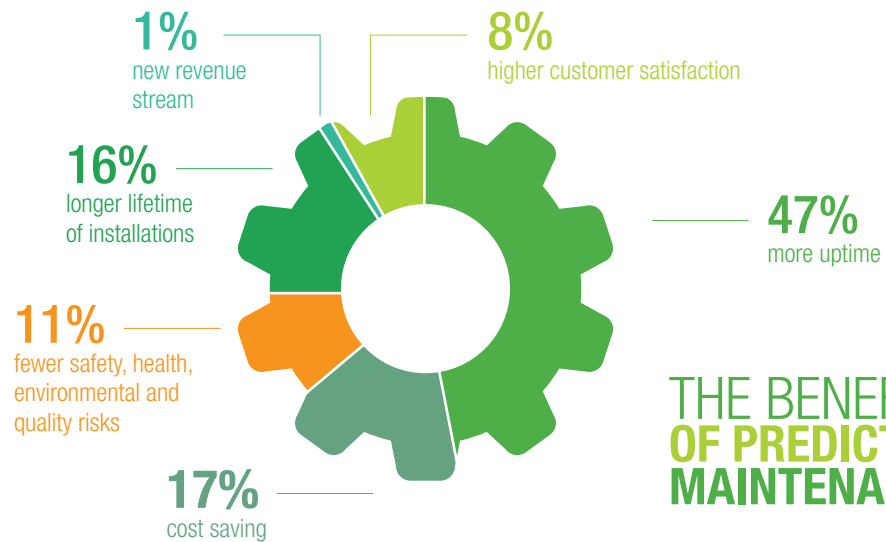ich we're not monitoring yet) that indicate even better when something's going to go wrong, giving us observable correlations with great predictive power.

Bot looks for solution

As well as IoT sensors that capture all sorts of parameters, you also need cases where something's gone wrong. This lets you make a link between cause, problem and solution. The data also need to be supplemented with the right expertise from engineers with knowledge of machine construction and maintenance managers with experience of servicing the machines. The main value of data analysis comes from the combination of all sorts of data; that's where we find the predictive power that until now has remained hidden in unnoticed signals.

The more data you have, the more difficult it is to see the wood for the trees. Realdolmen can filter out the important issues so you only need to pay attention where it's actually required. Rimses, our own maintenance software, allows deviations to be signalled so that action, such as

1%
new revenue
stream

8%
higher customer satisfaction

16%
longer lifetime
of installations

47%
more uptime

11%
fewer safety, health,
environmental and
quality risks

17%
cost saving

THE BENEFITS
OF PREDICTIVE
MAINTENANCE

scheduling servicing, can be taken straight away. The software provides an extra source of data as it registers faults. You can then look for a solution in the instructions or contact the supplier in the event of a problem, and this information can be updated in Rimses. When we link machine learning to this, a bot can propose a possible solution by looking through its knowledge of previous answers or efficiently searching in all existing documentation provided by suppliers, for example. It's a dynamic system which works using algorithms that are constantly fed with new data.

Cost of missed revenue

Maintenance is often viewed as a cost within the company, but it's actually a useful activity for preventing missed revenue when machinery is not up and running. Intervening at the right time helps us avoid irreparable damage, allowing you to maximise the lifetime of the machinery and make the most of your investments. You can plan the maintenance team's time so that it's spent more efficiently, because crisis maintenance becomes a thing of the past. Combating downtime also means you are indirectly investing in customer satisfaction. An uninterrupted production environment can keep delivering at all times. And we're improving safety, too: continuous monitoring reduces health risks and accidents.

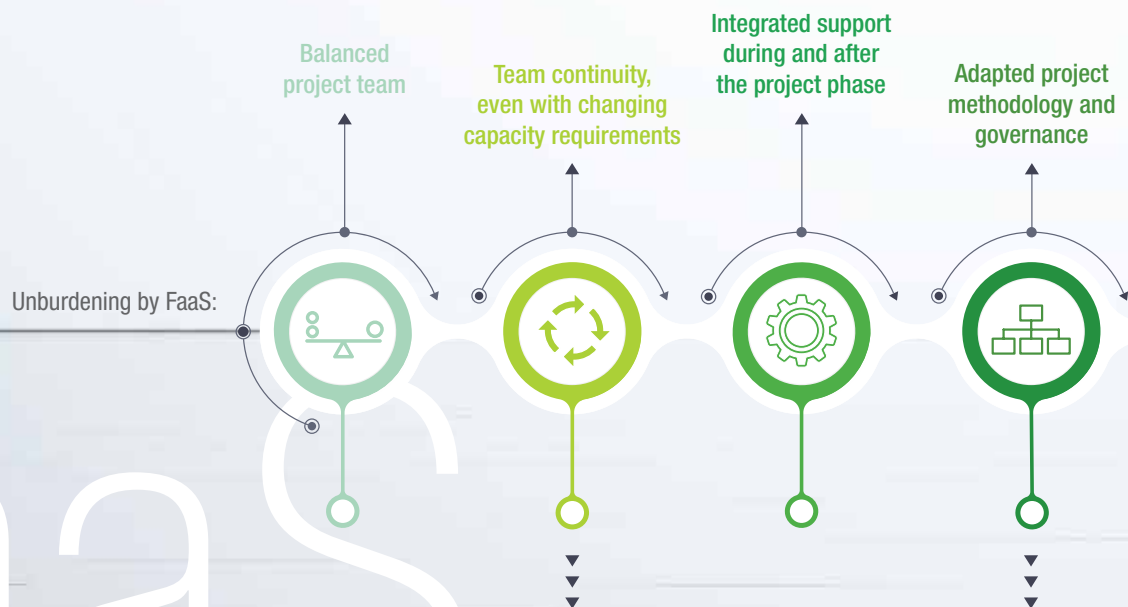### Getting relevant information out of data

New technologies give you access to huge amounts of data, and you can start by taking a first step with data that's already available in your production and maintenance process. The production process is monitored in real time to safeguard quality, and we can increase efficiency with the maintenance process. You can now bring this data to the user for analysis faster via a single internet platform. And analysis is the keyword for getting relevant information out of the data. The combination of data from different processes and sources gives you insights into historical events and allows you to evolve into predictive maintenance. Once you can predict the future, you can also change it, and the door is open for prescriptive maintenance. So predictive maintenance doesn't stop at predicting problems; it also provides solutions. Artificial intelligence can advise engineers, for example, so your hands are freed up if you let the data speak.

> **The main value of data analysis comes from the combination of all sorts of data:** that's where we find the predictive power that until now has remained hidden in unnoticed signals.

Own development or FUNCTIONALITY AS A SERVICE?

In a rapidly evolving world, an organization's ability to change is increasingly important for its chances of survival. As CIO, you know better than anyone that IT is a significant business enabler, and it's best for you to focus strategically on the innovative potential of digitisation. But now digitisation and constant technological advances are putting your IT development to the test. Expectations are evolving quickly, challenges are becoming more complex, and time to market needs to be shorter and shorter. Reaping the rewards of IT investments is less evident than it may seem. But the successful completion of IT projects is indispensable for the speed and strength of your organization's transformation.

Unburdening by FaaS:

Balanced project team

Team continuity, even with changing capacity requirements

Integrated support during and after the project phase

Adapted project methodology and governance

Philippe Minsart, Division Manager DevOps: 'We're seeing that all sort of companies are experiencing difficulties in completing their software projects successfully. They're often lacking the people they need and so also the strength. Classic models for developing new goods and services are failing.' Scalable and flexible help – in the form of Functionality as a Service (FaaS), paying for software features as you use them – can therefore offer some solace.

FaaS is about receiving only the business values you want from software features, rather than keeping IT development under your own management and paying for all the necessary expertise and associated costs. Minsart: 'FaaS isn't limited to technology or a platform. It's a way of providing our application services and ensuring the customer is getting exactly what they want and need. The unique approach used by our DevOps Factory, the platform where we provide these services, is indispensable.'

OUR AIM:
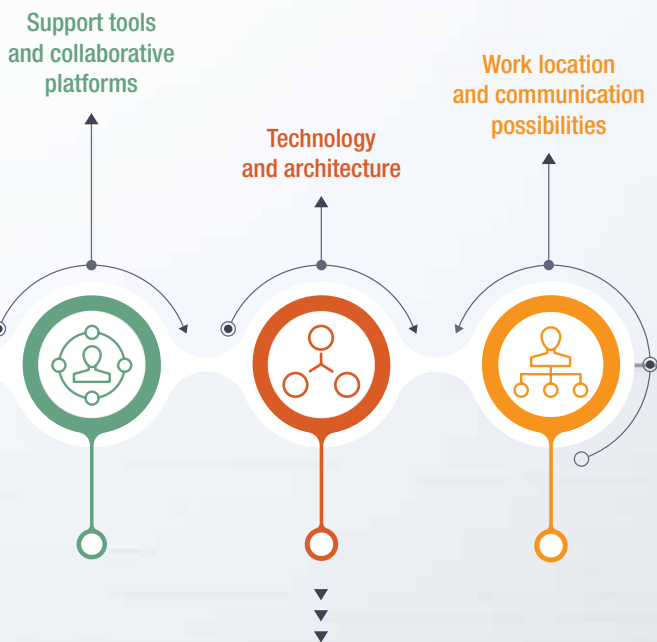IS TO ACCELERATE YOUR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT WITH MAXIMUM RETURNS FROM THE INVESTMENT.

Clients actively cooperate in DevOps Factory

DevOps is a literal combination of 'development' and 'operations', which covers the entire software development life cycle, including operational maintenance, service management and continuous improvement. Realdolmen's DevOps Factory brings the development and operational activities together with people working in a fixed and multi-functional team. They build and maintain applications with the highest level of commitment to unburden you and your team. Collaboration and knowledge sharing are important cornerstones in the DevOps Factory's operation. And as a customer, you're an active part of this too. This way of working (together) doesn't just safeguard quality and efficiency; it also ensures fast delivery.

'Giving the team collective responsibility helps us stimulate cross-functionality within the team,' explains Minsart. 'This benefits the quality and speed, because ultimately it's all about delivering a continuous IT service to the customer. The fact that we work in fixed teams that stay together for project after project is beneficial for customers in another way too. The traditional transfer from the development team to the maintenance team is often accompanied by extra costs and can result in discontinuity, also on a human level. But in the DevOps Factory, we break down the proverbial wall between project mode and maintenance mode.'

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Support tools and collaborative platforms

Technology and architecture

Work location and communication possibilities

From ideas to functionality with business value

As well as the fixed teams, the DevOps Factory also uses shared locations and tooling. Standardisation in terms of architecture and technology increases predictability, including when it comes to estimating the workload and insights into costs.

'Combine this with the Agile Scrum methodology that we use, and you have leverage for quickly converting ideas into functionality with intrinsic business value. Because that's what it's ultimately all about, of course,' says Minsart. Agile, as an extremely suitable methodology for responding to ever-changing circumstances, is an obvious choice. It's an approach that inherently assumes business needs can and will change during the development process, so it works iteratively in short sprints, with regular feedback loops leaving room for change and progressive understanding.

Minsart: 'We have coaches to supervise this process on the work floor. Agile working relies on having the right mindset and applying it correctly, but it's often implemented wrongly. A support team also provides assistance in specific domains such as architecture, quality control, UX and change management. And this latter aspect is not insignificant, because you need to do more than just deliver the desired functionality if you want to realise business value; you also need to ensure users can and want to cooperate. Only when you do that can functionality result in real business value.'

Financial benefits and flexibility

The financial benefits of DevOps and Agile working are well known: the short iterations ensure a lower rate of failure and a faster time to market, allowing the financial balance of software development to move in a positive direction. The permanent prioritisation and focus on business value are only invested in important and relevant functionality. 'At least as interesting are the flexible contracts we use,' says Minsart. 'When business requirement changes, or if it turns out that the goal has already been achieved after a completed iteration, the process can be adapted or you can choose to use the remaining budget differently.'

Minsart: 'Our added value comes from our flexibility, in the sense that the customer can upscale or downscale a team using a pay-per-use model. There's no full investment required in advance, but rather an opex approach where you pay for a specific functionality and only that functionality.' He concludes: 'Functionality as a Service and the DevOps Factory result in maximum unburdening of all facets of software development and maintenance, with the aim of accelerating digital development with maximum returns from the investment. It gives you the handles you need to benefit from the new developments, trends and innovations that make your company future proof.'

FaaS gives you the handles you need to benefit from the new developments, trends and innovations **that make your company future proof.**

Combine this with the Agile Scrum methodology and you have leverage for quickly converting ideas into functionality **with intrinsic business value.**

ALPRO
MAKES THE MOST OF
MICROSOFT OFFICE 365

Alpro, producer of plant-based foods, decided to implement Office 365 at the start of 2017. It soon noticed, however, that not all employees were making the most of the new collaborative platform, so decided to look for a partner to help. Realdolmen was very happy to oblige.

Luxury car with no gadgets?

'Not long after implementing Office 365, we quickly realised that lots of our employees weren't using the new features,' says Stijn Raemdonck, ICT Director at Alpro. 'Colleagues were still sending each other Excel spreadsheets as email attachments, for example, and then discussing them by email too. But that's not the best way to do it anymore. We'd chosen Office 365 largely to be able to collaborate more efficiently, but that just didn't happen. It would be a shame if you bought a luxury car with all sorts of gadgets, and then didn't make the best use of them, wouldn't it?'

Realdolmen and Alpro find each other

'So we wanted to find a partner who could help our employees make the most of Office 365's potential, and we soon came across Realdolmen. They don't shy away from any difficult issues, which occasionally led to some lively discussions, but we ultimately came through it all much stronger,' explains Raemdonck.

Training in four phases

'We rolled out our user adoption framework at Alpro,' explains Tom Knockaert, Unit Manager Education at Realdolmen. 'This means we train new employees to work with new technology in four different phases.'

'We made sure we had the employees' attention in an initial phase, and called on the marketing department to discuss how we could involve Ally – one of Alpro's mascots – in the campaign. We ultimately opted for a campaign which sees Ally journey into space. We used poster campaigns and marshmallows in the shape of clouds to symbolise the fact that Office 365 is a cloud solution.'

'Once we had the employees' attention, we trained them to make sure they were all roughly the same level in the second phase. In the third phase, we looked at certain employees' roles so that we could design our training very specifically to match their situation. Finally, we made sure that the old working method became a thing of the past for good. Showing users the added value of the new way of working together meant it didn't take long for us to succeed,' concludes Knockaert.

Stijn Raemdonck,
ICT Director, Alpro

Successful project

'We can definitely conclude that the project was a great success,' explains an enthusiastic Raemdonck. 'We're still seeing that our employees are continuing to make good progress, and we're already collaborating with Realdolmen again to set up more new features. I'm very curious to find out what the future will bring.'

www.alpro.be

Preparation and project management key to **smooth move** for AZ Alma

How do you go about relocating a hospital, knowing that it never closes? Managers, doctors and nurses expect the IT department to ensure all systems are operational straight away in the new location, without any interruptions. Realdolmen helped prepare the way forward using a technical roadmap, experienced system administrators, and guidance from a project manager.

Merge and move to a new site

The hospitals in Eeklo and Sijsele merged to form AZ Alma almost 15 years ago. A brand new hospital was built in Eeklo to accommodate all the patients and services from the two old sites. Moving all the IT was a very complex affair, not just because it was in a new location, but also because there was no fibre optic connection between the old and new sites, which made the data transfer much more difficult.

No interruptions

Unscheduled outages are unacceptable in a hospital. The migration therefore had to be done in a very controlled and secure way. 'Electronic patient records need to be accessible around the clock, just like medical imaging and other vital systems – which are all connected together,' explains Tom Decavele, Head of ICT at AZ Alma. 'What would happen to the storage systems, servers and network equipment when – after years of uninterrupted service – we unplugged the power supply, loaded it all on a lorry, and started everything up again in one of two new server rooms? Would it all work without any problems? We assessed the risks together with the project manager from Realdolmen, drew up a plan for the move down to the nearest fifteen minutes, and performed some tests beforehand so it was clear what we needed to do in the event of any mishaps.'

Intensive supervision and collaboration

Decavele: 'Realdolmen has experience of relocating ICT infrastructures and applications, and were able to tell us what was possible and what wasn't. Another advantage for us is that Realdolmen offers such a broad scope of services, so we only had to collaborate with a single partner.'

Infrastructure architect Lieven Willems from Realdolmen drew up a technical roadmap for the move. 'We made an inventory of our IT infrastructure and applications in a number of workshops,' explains Decavele.

AZ Alma opted against moving all its IT in one go. 'We migrated the most important applications first, before doing the rest,' says Decavele. 'We had help from two system administrators from Realdolmen. They were with us for two years and really became part of our team, which also included seven of our own system administrators. The collaboration ran perfectly; everyone thought it was a shame when it was over.'

Seamless migration

The good preparation led to a seamless execution. Everything was ready, with the two server rooms up and running in the new hospital building, within 24 hours. 'The approach Realdolmen adopts for its projects really works, and now we're using it to professionalise the hospital IT even further,' concludes Decavele.

www.azalma.be

Tom Decavele, Head of ICT at AZ Alma

> 'We assessed the risks together with the project manager from Realdolmen, drew up a plan for the move down to the nearest fifteen minutes, and performed some tests beforehand.'

DO MORE WITH LESS:
CLOUD STRATEGY IN 7 STEPS

All CIOs are faced with the challenge of always doing more with a limited budget and number of people. But no major investments are necessary to still have maximum impact on the business. You can do this by choosing a cloud strategy and giving each member of your team the right responsibilities. We use seven steps to help you discover a new IT approach in the cloud.

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CREATE A CLOUD TRANSFORMATION TEAM

Gather together your most talented and ambitious IT employees in a Cloud Transformation Team. This could consist of a Business Owner, IT Administrators, Developers, Business Analyst, IT Architects and Enterprise Architects. They become the nerve centre and carry full responsibility for the migration process to the cloud, taking all the decisions about applications, data and IT workloads. All questions about the cloud and upgrading applications pass through this nerve centre.

1

2

3

4

DETERMINE THE BUSINESS DRIVER

Start by drawing up a convincing business case and determining the driver for the cloud. Do you want to reduce your time to market, limit maintenance and licence costs for hardware and software, increase the IT department's productivity, or align IT and business together better? Each organization has its own specific activities and processes, which means each organization needs its own specific approach. As CIO, you therefore need to come up with a clear, sparkling case and business driver.

ANALYSE AND MAP OUT YOUR IT WORKLOADS

Analyse and evaluate the existing IT environment so that you can visualise the existing applications, data and relationships. Before migrating to the cloud and transforming the applications, you need to know exactly what you have in house and how the IT environment is set up. Every journey begins with good preparation and every cloud transformation project starts with extensive analysis of all your IT workloads.

FIND THE QUICK WIN

Once you've got a business driver and cloud transformation team, and have analysed your existing IT environment, you need to find a quick-win solution. Picking the low-hanging fruit is the most critical part of cloud projects. It enables you to satisfy the wishes of all stakeholders in the organization including at company level. It also means you're demonstrating the migration process is under way, and that the organization is benefiting from it and saving costs, with your employees achieving successes and creating momentum for the full digital transformation.

CELEBRATE EVERY MILESTONE

The first success has been achieved: you have shared the KPIs and practical results for the business. So now it's time to celebrate with the team. Every CIO can hide behind a busy diary, but making time for your employees, maybe even with a lunch or party together, is also an important decision. Initiatives like this reinforce the trust between you and your team, and lead to even better collaboration.

SHARE THE ADDED VALUE WITH THE WHOLE ORGANIZATION

It's important that you share the added value of the cloud migration roadmap with every employee in the organization. This added value needs to be more than just cost savings or the other well-known benefits of the cloud. Listen to what employees say about collaborating with colleagues, business processes and the technology they're using. Giving everyone the opportunity to be part of the transition to the cloud makes it easier to convince everyone of the added value. It makes it clear that people are the priority, rather than a technology or process.

EVALUATION AND VALIDATION

At the end of every cloud migration cycle, you need to evaluate and validate if everything is running smoothly. Check that your new way of collaborating after the migration achieves the KPIs set in advance. Ask your cloud transformation team what went wrong, what went well, which results have been achieved, and which haven't. Together you will find the right answers. This helps you come up with ideas for possible improvements in the next migration cycle.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO THE CLOUD

IT infrastructure and operational management have a heavy financial impact for many organizations. But all companies still want to use IT solutions more and more, and changes need to be implemented lightning-fast to stay ahead of the competition. So how do you make sure you have enough people and resources in IT infrastructure to meet business demands without incurring too many costs?

All organizations make different decisions based on their past, their current financial position and their strategy. But many organizations are asking themselves if their existing IT infrastructure model is the right one, or if the cloud is a good alternative. We do business in the cloud every day – just think of Gmail or Instagram – but it's not as obvious a choice as it may seem, and many organizations find it difficult to outline a clear cloud strategy. The range of possibilities, variants and alternatives is huge. Small and medium-sized organizations often don't have the required knowledge in house because they don't employ an IT architect, and we notice with larger organizations that the lead architect is often drowning in reactive work – always being called upon to answer urgent short-term requests and fix problems. This lands the organization in a vicious operational circle that's difficult to get out of. Many companies are therefore on the lookout for a partner who can provide a solution to all their needs. Outlining a cloud strategy in collaboration with a partner gives the organization a clear analysis of its existing IT environment, so it knows the potential impact of switching to the cloud.

An essential step forwards

Searching for 'cloud' in Google results in some 1.76 billion hits; cloud computing is very much on the rise. According to Gartner, 80% of companies will no longer feel it necessary to have their own data centre by 2025. There's also a trend for suppliers choosing to only release new software as a cloud version. Microsoft, for example, has decided to only provide its future ERP (AX) solution as a cloud service. It has indicated that a more limited version could follow for on-premise environments, but this makes it clear that suppliers increasingly need to choose a 'cloud first' strategy. This is of course a well-considered choice. Many more features can be made available via the cloud, which are faster to set up and can grow flexibly. All these qualities make the cloud an essential basis for an organization fully committed to digital transformation.

The key word is strategy

Is the business focused on growth or cost control? Are there regular mergers, acquisitions or divestments? What are the requirements in terms of flexibility, scalability and security? Where are you on the technology curve: are you a smart follower or an early adopter? All these aspects need to be taken into account when looking at suitable cloud models. Each model has its own pros and cons which contribute to a certain business strategy to a greater or lesser extent. Where do you place what workload in the (perhaps) hybrid model? We look at how to integrate the whole thing, with transparency for users as the ultimate benchmark.

A clear step-by-step plan

Starting anything recklessly rarely bears the desired fruits. If you want to partially or fully switch to the cloud, you need a good plan. A clear cloud roadmap helps you make the the right decisions from the very start. It helps you avoid unnecessary costs and unpleasant surprises. Every obstacle on the way is defined as an IT project. We select the right projects to fit with your strategy and determine the priorities. The projects plan also serves as a means of communication and makes it possible to see the route to the cloud. People like to know where they stand. A roadmap like this ensures that all stakeholders are aligned, so there's a better buy-in, even before the projects start. Then the plan serves as the basis for plotting the scenario: what actually needs to happen in the short and long term? The IT department can optimise the project planning in terms of the availability of people and resources.

This is how we outline the way forward, without pitfalls and insurmountable obstacles – mostly without a 'big bang', and often as a hybrid combination of on-premise solutions under your own control and cloud solutions. Together we design the contours of the cloud so that they become tangible and familiar. Because the cloud is the future, in whichever form or configuration.

> Collaborating on outlining a cloud strategy gives the organization a clear analysis of the existing IT environment, so it knows the potential impact of switching to the cloud.

WPAAS:
FROM WORKPLACE
to employee experience

A digital workplace that places collaboration centrally is a requirement for keeping up with technological trends. A workplace such as this also adds weight in terms of employee satisfaction. The end user's experience is extremely important these days. We're a long way past simply meeting basic requirements; it's time to go a step further.

Technological developments are coming thick and fast and changing the way we communicate and work. They even affect our actual work environment. By 2025, 75% of employees will be millennials – the generation that takes mobile working for granted. Social interaction, remote working and the blurring of lines between work and private life are normal and commonplace for them.

The employees of today are already waiting for the workplace of tomorrow, where structured and simple collaboration is a priority, all systems are connected together, and access to these systems is straightforward, whenever and wherever they are, on any device.

Change management is key

'Suitable digital workplaces are always designed with the company's strategic horizon in mind,' explains David Steppe, Division Manager Engaged Workplace. 'We rarely talk about products, and instead focus more on the long-term objective. A company that wants to make lots of international acquisitions has different workplace requirements from a company that needs to respond to developments in

the market very quickly. We always translate this for the end user too, so it's important to know what their needs and difficulties are. Only when stakeholders on the ground have been heard can projects be defined, always with full focus on user adoption to obtain maximum effect from the changes.'

Wrapped in cotton wool

Today's employees want responsibility, freedom (of choice) and engagement. 'To help companies meet these high demands, we're working to develop a new Workplace-as-a-Service solution,' says Steppe. 'The aim is to set up a service that runs using a fixed template. When an employee signs a new contract, we take care of the IT-related side of things. We automatically create a work email address with the company name and give them access straight away. We also send them an email with a link to a personal portal for ordering materials. They are notified that they have an IT budget of €1200, for example, to put their own package together. Someone who works from home a lot might want a light laptop with an extra monitor, for instance. Then there's a procedure to follow for selecting all the applications they want and need, so that they can be installed on their chosen devices. This order is sent to the distributors, who deliver everything to the new employee's home a few days before they start work. Your new employee feels like they've been wrapped in cotton wool before they've even started work. An employee experience like this hasn't really been seen on the market until now.'

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All companies ultimately just want the job to be done at the end of the day, and it doesn't matter what device it's done on.

WPaaS

This model approaches IT in the same way as a car policy: a choice is presented depending on the employee's level, and we work out together what's required per level. Someone in the financial department will need more processor power, for example. 'But it doesn't stop there,' says Steppe. 'We can also do end-to-end monitoring of the operations if desired. When we notice that someone's email inbox is 80% full, for instance, we automatically ask if the data capacity needs increasing or together look to see where we can optimise the existing capacity.'

A team of individuals

Because each employee has a budget according to their level within the company, there's clarity about what costs a digital workplace can incur. WPaaS is provided for a fixed amount per month. This means you don't need the whole IT department to work on individual orders and getting all the various devices ready. Each employee also has devices with the right specifications for their role. But Steppe doesn't think these are the most important aspects. 'We all want to be part of a team where we collaborate and perform well. We also want to be able to identify with a company while retaining our own individuality, and this is a way of achieving that. All companies ultimately just want the job to be done at the end of the day, and it doesn't matter what

The employees of today are already waiting for THE WORKPLACE OF TOMORROW.

device it's done on. If an employee feels better working on a particular device, that always has a positive impact on their productivity. The employee is given the empowerment they're feverishly looking for on the labour market.'

'The time of Henry Ford is long since over,' says Steppe. 'He famously said that everyone can choose they car they want, as long as it's black. That enabled him to set up his production process efficiently. But times have clearly changed; it doesn't work like that anymore. IT equipment is consumer equipment now. It's about experience, and this positive experience helps motivation. That should be a fundamental cornerstone of every good workplace.'

WPaaS

Wanted:
VIRTUAL
CIO

Managing an SME is hard enough without having to worry about IT too much. And only very few SMEs have someone with an IT background to run things for them, let alone a CIO. This is why Political Intelligence wanted to outsource all its IT activities to an IT partner it could trust. 'You need to leave IT to the experts,' says CEO Isabelle De Vinck.

Isabelle De Vinck, CEO Political Intelligence

The Brussels Public Affairs office, Political Intelligence, was anything but happy with its IT infrastructure. 'We received lots of complaints from customers about IT related things not working properly when they came to meet with us,' explains Isabelle De Vinck. 'That's unacceptable in an office like ours. It's essential that our customers see us as a professional and reliable organization, and that means our IT needs to run perfectly.'

When the office decided to move into new premises at the start of the year, De Vinck decided to take the bull by the horns and look for a new IT partner. Things clicked straight away with Esther Van Ham-Grave from Realdolmen in their first meeting.

Videoconferencing and Skype

We already worked with Microsoft Office 365 at Political Intelligence, so the experts from Realdolmen assumed control straight away. The biggest change was switching to Skype for Business with custom videoconferencing equipment and new computers, which immediately gave the organization a much more professional image. Employees in the Brussels office – there are branches in London and Madrid too – received training to work with the new equipment. The network is fully integrated, too, so you can even answer the doorbell with Skype for Business.

Absolute unburdening

Political Intelligence is already preparing for the next step: Workplace as a Service (WPaaS). 'SMEs generally can't afford to employ fulltime IT professionals,' says De Vinck. 'But I want to be completely unburdened, and need my IT partner to have every aspect under control. So when a new employee starts, I want there to be a laptop ready for them, with the right email account configured, access to the wireless network all set up, everything. Even the smaller things like headsets, printers and anything that our partner can give us that helps, so we don't need to keep buying and replacing things. I also want support requests not to be centralised before they go to the partner anymore, which we currently need to do to keep the IT budget under control. I'd like to give each employee a number of credits, for example, so they can open support tickets independently at their own discretion. Then I only need to intervene when they've used up their credits, which would save me lots of time.'

Every SME's dream

Realdolmen is fully committed to this approach. 'But there's a lot involved,' says Van Ham-Grave. 'You need to have the equipment in stock, for example, so that you can supply and configure everything straight away. New contracts need to be drawn up, agreements need to be made about how customer data can and must be stored, and so on.'

De Vinck certainly hopes the new service will come soon. 'I think this is a formula that every SME dreams of,' she says.

www.political-intelligence.com

SECURE DIGITAL IDENTITIES
IN A HYBRID CONTEXT

As the demand for an agile approach and flexibility increases, organizations are resorting more and more to standardised solutions often provided in a cloud model. A hybrid infrastructure helps them optimise costs and increase efficiency. But there's no such thing as a free lunch. A hybrid IT infrastructure sets new challenges, not least in terms of Security and Identity.

It's a challenge to link together all the various components in a hybrid infrastructure. In an ideal world, the user only needs to log in once to then be able to use all services seamlessly, regardless of where they are, and everything takes place with respect for the permissions and roles they have been assigned. The technology to realise this is already available today, but the legacy systems still in use at most organizations usually make a clean green-field setup impossible. By legacy we mean everything that's left over in terms of IT that's difficult to get rid of. And mergers and acquisitions only make this problem more complex.

A good Identity & Access Management (IAM) solution is required, not just to streamline the process but also to guarantee the security of digital identities. A good IAM solution is a business enabler, because you can use it to gain user-friendly and secure access to new digital services – it's possible to switch quickly and easily integrate new employees and applications if necessary, all in a secure way. A new cloud application can be integrated easily because secure access is guaranteed, and the employees' user experience improves too – they only need to log in once, which saves lots of time and hassle.

Key under the mat

Digital identity security is an essential step in the protection of crucial company information. Digital identities can be viewed as keys that provide access to your infrastructure. Unfortunately, identities are often poorly protected, leading you to wonder what the benefit of building a fortified castle is if the key is simply left under the mat. An IT organization, for example, often no longer has an overview of privileged accounts such as Domain Admins, or they have to struggle with an inadequate password policy. The user lifecycle management is also often insufficient. Who is 100%

certain that a user who leaves the company doesn't still have access somewhere? When hackers succeed in gaining access to an environment, furthermore, it takes 206 days on average before they're discovered. The reality, unfortunately, is that the break-in is usually the result of a malicious action or poor judgement of someone within the company. IBM noted in its X-Force Threat Intelligence Index 2018 that 60% of all threats come from within the organization. The main danger of these types of threats is that they come from trusted users and systems, so they stay under the radar of detection systems.

Build an observation post

Even when well-thought-out architecture means that everything's in order in terms of security, there are still always challenges. An important step, where Realdolmen can help you, is the detection of all vulnerabilities within your current identity solution so that the necessary actions can be taken to close these gaps. Multi-factor authentication can be built in for important accounts, for example. But even with a well-sealed IAM solution, it's still crucial to audit all activity relating to digital identities. An auditing tool will identify suspicious actions, based on aggregation of logs and machine learning, and help detect threats from inside or outside your organization much faster. So you can keep an eye on all login behaviour, for example. It would be very suspicious, for instance, if an account logs in from Brussels and then logs in again an hour later from Munich. An intelligent auditing tool will also detect a threat if someone who works part time and never normally logs in on Wednesdays tries to log in on that day. Notification is then sent so that action can be taken straight away. A tool like this is only useful if you can correctly respond to problems or notifications fast enough, of course. But we can take care of all this for you, and so keep everything safe. Hacking, phishing and malware will take up a lot less of your time and effort, and your crucial company data and reputation will stay safe.

'Having your digital identities properly protected is a business enabler; **otherwise the show could be over.'**

Rik Delva, Unit Manager Microsoft Hybrid Cloud team
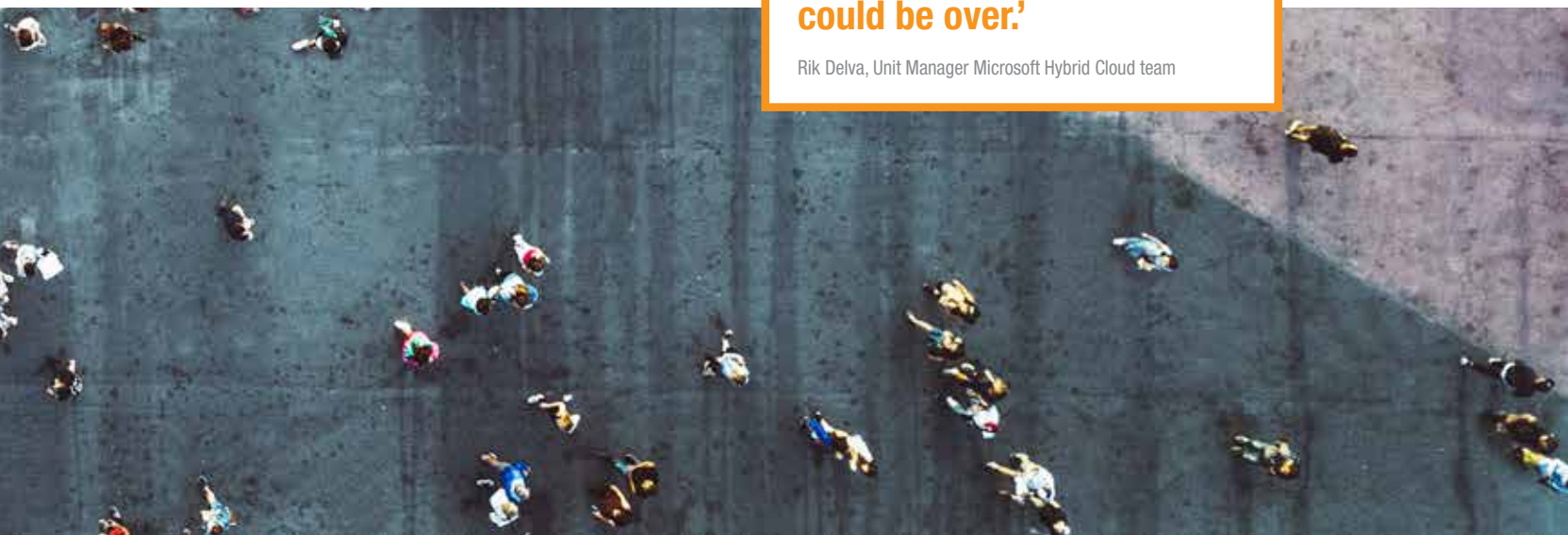
DCaaS as a utility model,
& computing power as a service

The dynamics of the digital world often means a CIO's time has to be split between 'running the business' and 'changing the business'. As well as safeguarding operational stability and maintaining service to the business, you are also expected to be proactive in terms of implementing new technologies to accelerate the business. But when you – rightly – focus on the latter, it's possible a bottleneck will form for the former. This is a good reason, therefore, to consider outsourcing your IT or at least part of it, starting with an IT commodity such as your data centre.
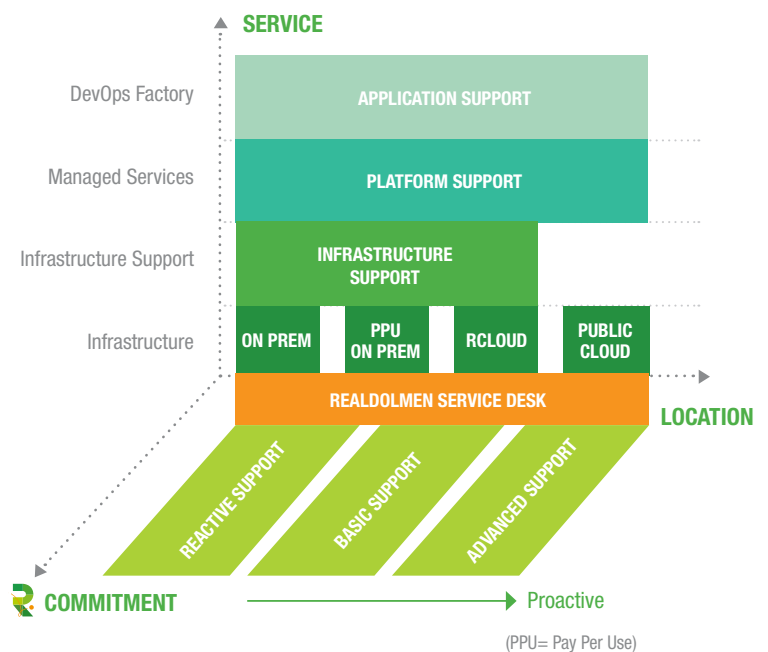
When everything's running as it should, the data centre is invisible, so it's increasingly taken for granted. It's something that just needs to be there, like electricity and water. But at the same time the infrastructure landscape is also becoming more and more complex, partly because of drivers such as the cloud and the Internet of Things.

Light with no lamps

'Light with no lamps,' to paraphrase Thomas Rau, architect and innovator. Several years ago, Rau posed Philips a challenge: 'Give me light and I'll pay for it. Whether it's natural light or a lamp, I don't mind how you do it.' The end result was a 'pay per lux' lighting plan that assumes users aren't actually interested in lamps; they're only interested in the light that's produced. And that's what DCaaS – Data Centre as a Service – does. It's a utility model that supplies computing power and data centre technology as a service, just like electricity and water. As CIO, you no longer need to worry about the technical details, operation or maintenance – how or where the data centre is running – but just that it's running, with all the desired functionality and flexibility that your company needs in these rapidly evolving times. From this perspective, DCaaS is a valid choice that ensures you can focus on what really counts: using technological innovation to help meet your organization's business challenges.

Multicloud as standard

Jo Leemans, Group Manager IT Outsourcing: 'Realdolmen's DCaaS model is a multicloud platform where on-premise solutions can be combined with hosted environments such as Rcloud, our own cloud environment, and the public cloud.' The trade-off between an on-premise infrastructure and the cloud partly involves a different distribution of costs, with a shift from capex to opex and paying per use. It means you can invest more in IT projects that stimulate turnover and grow the business. But the main idea behind multicloud as standard is the consideration that different workloads require different environments. Workloads that need a high level of scalability are best included in a public cloud, for example, whereas business-critical or privacy-sensitive workloads are perhaps better on-premise or in the Rcloud.

(PPU= Pay Per Use)

we safeguard through monitoring and a support organization that operates round the clock, among other things. We offer complete transparency using dashboarding and invest in automation to reduce our customers' TCO. We also provide services such as infrastructure services, platform services and application services. We support everything with a service desk that can provide reactive or proactive assistance depending on requirements. Furthermore, our services and solutions are based on SLAs and KPIs to offer clear guarantees for availability, reliability and security.'

On-premise in an opex model, it's possible

In a traditional on-premise set-up, everything runs on your own infrastructure, which often requires big investments. These capital investments

End-to-End responsibility

It's never 'one size fits all' with DCaaS, so it's essential that a clear strategy is formulated in advance to weigh up the requirements against the possible platforms. The ultimate choice is often made after considering a combination of various factors such as flexibility, speed, legislation and costs. 'Our experts make sure the right workload lands on the right platform,' explains Leemans. 'We manage the different building blocks of the infrastructure as a whole, and take end-to-end responsibility which

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DCaaS is a utility model that provides computing power and data centre technology as a service, just like electricity and water.

(capex) are generally written off over a period of four to six years before a new round of investment follows, making it difficult to scale the infrastructure because you need to estimate in advance what you're going to need over the next four to six years. This is also often scaled to peak loads which can create differences between the investment and actual usage. Costs can be incurred that do not yield results, or do so too late. The consequences don't just have a financial impact; they can also manifest in terms of infrastructure capacity.

Leemans: 'To cope with this, we offer a flexible on-premise opex model where you pay per use and can easily upscale and downscale to satisfy changing loads with minimal commitment. It's new and makes our DCaaS model quite unique. It means you can profit on-premise from the scalable benefits of a hosted environment, but still keep the data centre in house.

CIOs who still have cold feet can use this formula as a stepping stone to a cloud alternative.'
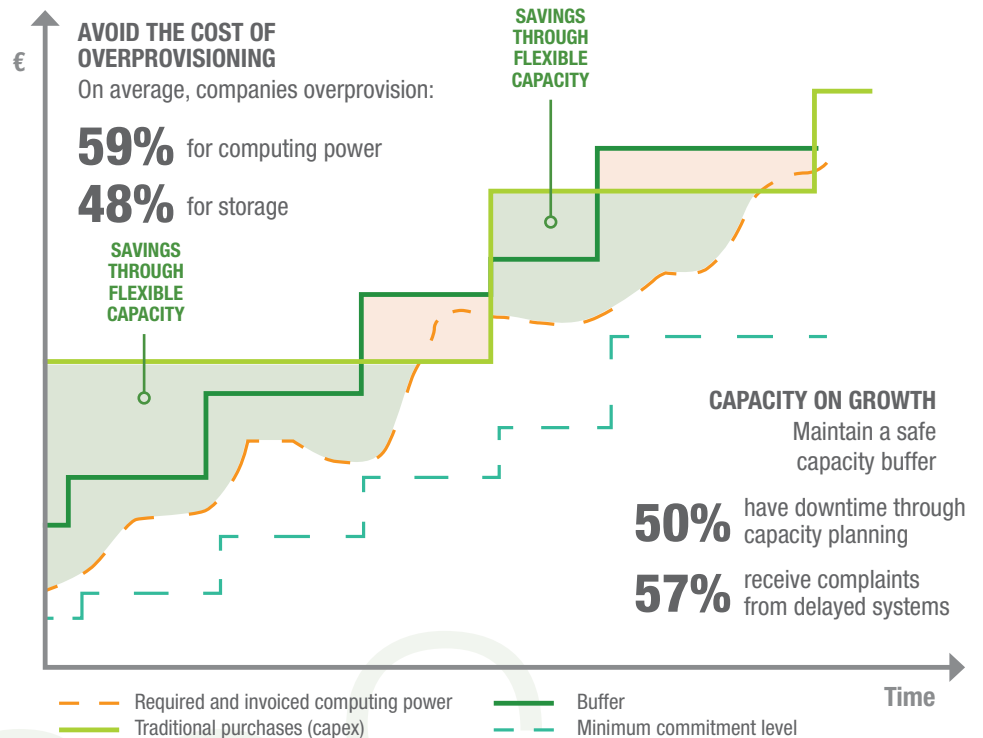
Sparring partner

DCaaS ensures that you as CIO can focus on strategy and innovation without needing to worry about the underlying IT infrastructure. It's just there like electricity from the wall socket or water from the tap. 'In our role as sparring partner, we can optimise our input even further by anticipating certain evolutions in the business, together with the CIO, and proactively convert them into the infrastructure they require,' concludes Leemans.

THE BENEFITS OF DCAAS:

- Outsourcing management
- Flexible expansion possibilities
- Pay per use

The benefits of **pay per use** for IT

€

AVOID THE COST OF OVERPROVISIONING
On average, companies overprovision:

59% for computing power

48% for storage

SAVINGS THROUGH FLEXIBLE CAPACITY

SAVINGS THROUGH FLEXIBLE CAPACITY

CAPACITY ON GROWTH
Maintain a safe capacity buffer

50% have downtime through capacity planning

57% receive complaints from delayed systems

Time

- - - Required and invoiced computing power — Buffer
—— Traditional purchases (capex) - - - Minimum commitment level

CYBERSECURITY:
A RESPONSIBILITY
TO SHARE

Following current trends in IT innovation, organizations are becoming more connected, visible and accessible on the internet. Unfortunately, this increased connectedness comes with a higher vulnerability to cyberattacks. Business leaders and boards of directors acknowledge that this is a business risk, based in IT. Responsibility for cybersecurity is usually assigned to the CIO, which is no easy task on top of other responsibilities.

A study by BDO found that over one third of board members surveyed are briefed on cybersecurity only once a year, with 9 percent not being briefed at all. CIOs in turn face the difficult task of illustrating the business risks in a way the board understands. Moreover, CIOs are burdened with multiple organizational responsibilities including those related to acquisition, policy and strategic planning. Security should not be of lesser importance though. Damage caused by inadequate security includes revenue and reputation loss, business disruption, and even destruction of physical property.

More than technology

The cybersecurity landscape's increasing complexity adds to the prominence it should have on any organization's agenda. Threat actors are adapting by using different tactics and constantly evolving these techniques. Organizations find it difficult to stay ahead of this evolving cyber threat landscape, making prevention alone no longer enough to reduce the risk of a security breach. Technology alone cannot solve this problem.

Take the pressure off the CIO

For IT security solutions to be effective, you need good people to apply skills and knowledge to the operation. Many organizations do not have these resources internally. Managed security services (MSS) can help alleviate the pressure that CIOs face related to cybersecurity. Working with a trusted partner allows organizations to focus on core activities while remaining protected against vulnerabilities.

Early warning system

Benefits of MSS include but are not limited to 24/7 protection by skilled cybersecurity resources, reduced log review time and increased cost effectiveness. Secureworks, in close partnership with Realdolmen, offers a wide range of managed security solutions to organizations of all sizes. Our Security Operations Centers are staffed by experienced security professionals. In addition, Secureworks provides an early warning system for evolving cyber threats, enabling organizations to prevent, detect, predict and respond to cyberattacks.

www.secureworks.com

4 concerns
resolved
## with a
ONE
STOP
SHOP
IT-SUPPLIER

Managing an IT infrastructure is no easy task. You don't just need to make sure everything is working properly; you also need to maintain relationships with an increasing number of suppliers. You can buy software and hardware from them, or outsource some of the management, which unfortunately involves even more work. Choosing a single supplier for the vast majority of your infrastructure makes everything much easier for you, but companies are sometimes reluctant to do this because they still have a number of concerns. How do you dispel these worries? Look for a company that offers a partnership and not just a contract: a one-stop-shop IT supplier.

Can I leave whenever I want?

Yes. Just like working with a number of different suppliers, agreements such as this can be set down in your contract. You agree a number of exit conditions in consultation with your supplier. A good partner adopts a flexible attitude in this discussion and will help ensure your transition to another partner runs smoothly. They're working in your best interests, after all, so you can switch with no worries.

Won't my innovation be curtailed?

A one-stop-shop doesn't need to hinder your innovation – on the contrary. But your choice of partner is crucial here, too. A large company has more resources than a small one to be innovative together with you. Furthermore, outsourcing your IT to a single supplier saves your own IT department time because it needs to invest less in contact management between suppliers and day-to-day IT maintenance, so it can focus more on innovation in the department and expanding your business.

CONCERN 1

CONCERN 2

CONCERN 3

CONCERN 4
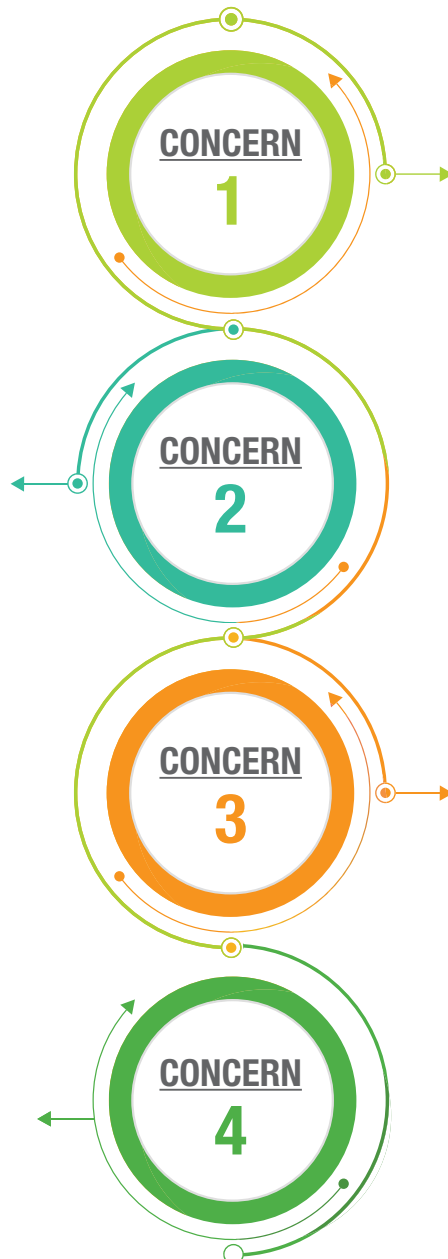
What if you want a tool that your one-stop-shop doesn't have?

A good partner will be open to suggestions. They'll be prepared to discuss this with you. If it's useful for them to add this tool to their portfolio, they'll recruit the right competences for it. This isn't always feasible, of course, which is why the best one-stop-shops also have a network of partners. If a particular software package isn't included in their extensive range, they'll refer you to a supplier they collaborate with, so you can full rely on them with peace of mind.

Doesn't this give my supplier a monopoly on my IT, meaning the costs can spiral out of control?

This is an understandable fear if you have the wrong partner. But if you choose your one-stop-shop carefully, it shouldn't be a problem. One way of keeping track of this is by benchmarking their offer. With this information in hand, you can easily discuss things with them. So check that your partner is open to this when you select them. If not, you'd be better off looking elsewhere.

Now that the Internet of Things is booming, the cloud is finding its way in business, and artificial intelligence is making its entrance, companies have more and more data. But they're still not profiting from it, or not enough. The main reason for this is that many companies don't have the right knowledge in house to make the most of their data. Fortunately, they don't necessarily need it – because there are plenty of external parties who can help them. The most important thing is to not let the data get cold. Using it intelligently doesn't just facilitate your business automation and optimisation, it also helps you create new business models.

DON'T LET YOUR DATA go cold

But how do you get started? 'The first step is to separate the wheat from the chaff,' says Roel De Cuyper, Connected Company Innovation Manager at Realdolmen. 'All the data that a company has needs to be mapped out so it can be analysed to determine what's valuable and what isn't. Once you have good-quality data, it's just a matter of interpreting it all correctly. The main thing to consider in this phase is what you're actually trying to achieve.'

Earn with data

'When you've got the right insights into your data, you can work out how to earn money with it,' says Peter Cuypers, Program Manager Innovation. 'There are various ways to do this, depending on which sector you're operating in and what objectives you have in mind.'

A first way to earn money with data is by optimising your business processes. Predictive maintenance is a good example here. Companies that use data analysis to correctly predict when a machine will need servicing can save themselves a lot in maintenance costs and improve availability of the machines at the same time.

Cuypers: 'You can extract value from data for a wide range of issues and use it to optimise your processes, such as waste collection for example, where sensors in the glass container can let you know when it needs picking up. Or sensors in meeting rooms or by sanitary facilities can monitor how much they are used so you can schedule and maintain them more efficiently.'

There are of course other ways to give your data value. Sometimes it won't even have anything to do with your organization's normal core activity, but could instead be interesting for another business. De Cuyper: 'Logistics companies could for example equip their lorries – which are driving round anyway – with sensors to monitor air quality, CO_2 emissions and temperature. This data could be useful for applications in industry, to know when to start up or indeed shut down certain industrial installations.' Using this data as a product and making it available as such creates new ways of generating income.

Better customer experience

It often pays to focus on the customer experience. 'Why do people become your customers?' asks Cuypers. 'Because you can offer them added value. The more you can meet your customers' wishes, the stronger these customers become attached to you. And data can be very useful here. Information about customer preferences or their buying history is extremely valuable, for example, in terms of offering them a better service. The more you know about your customers, the more personally you can approach them, which in turn helps you sell more. So you see that data can directly lead to more income.'

'The more you can meet your customers' wishes, **the stronger these customers become attached to you.'**

Peter Cuypers, Program Manager Innovation

TEAM
FOR HIRE

Supplying reliable IT professionals who have the right skills quickly and flexibly is undoubtedly one of the most effective ways in which an IT partner can unburden the CIO. But this individual reinforcement isn't always sufficient in complex environments; sometimes you need to hire a whole team. That's called Team Sourcing, and Jan Graulus, Manager Professional Services at Realdolmen, knows all about it.

'Making people with a certain skill set available, or competence sourcing, as it's called, is something that Realdolmen has been doing for a long time already,' begins Graulus. 'Companies call on us for this service because they can't find the right profiles on the labour market or because employees with these competences need to be replaced temporarily. Because of our critical mass – around 1400 consultants, of which around 1000 are permanently employed by us – we're usually able to help our customers in need very quickly.'

Useful extra services

Competence sourcing enables CIOs to access employees with the right skills relatively easily so that certain tasks can be completed successfully. This is especially useful for safeguarding the continuity of day-to-day operational activities, or for very specific projects. But it's often not enough in a complex environment.

'Some organizations ask us to supply whole teams,' says Graulus. 'There are various formulas for this, possibly with SLAs, such as managed seats contracts for example, where we ensure that a team of around five people with specific competences is always available. We provide competent replacements in the event that employees are absent through illness or on holiday.'

These types of contracts often include extra services, explains Graulus: 'We provide flexibility in upstaffing and downstaffing, for example. If the client needs more or fewer people at certain times, we can also take care of that. Another such service is knowledge management, where a

so-called technical account manager (often the unit manager of a team) ensures that everyone in his or her team stays up to date with new developments and knows how they can be useful for the organization or project they're working in.'

Hard-to-replace profiles

As well as the managed seats formula, companies can also make use of team sourcing in other ways. 'There's quite a lot of demand for managed staffing,' explains Graulus. 'Whereas competence sourcing is generally for more common profiles – customer support staff or developers, for example – managed staffing is more useful for filling roles that are harder to find replacements for, such as business analysts. Potential candidates are screened and accredited in advance – in close consultation with the client, of course – to prevent the need to search for these people when someone leaves.'

Relationship with the customer is changing

There is generally less consultation between the client and the 'supplier' for competence sourcing, which often

involves collaborating with various parties simultaneously with recruitment via a portal. The availability of the employees and the price are often the most decisive factors when selecting a supplier.

This is somewhat different for team sourcing, where lots of different formulas and numerous associated services are possible. 'We work much more in terms of the customer's specific needs here,' explains Graulus, 'which means that

the collaboration with the customer is more intensive and proactive. Our customers are invited to submit projects as an exercise for our AcADDemICTs, for example, and they can attend the project presentations. These customers often gain access to our employees' future availability, so they can deploy scarcer profiles faster. We also make agreements with some customers for collective training, knowledge management and recruitment.'

DREAM TEAM

Team sourcing can be a great help for an organization, but it requires more consultation than competence sourcing. So what do you need to consider to ensure everything keeps running smoothly?

- **Make very clear agreements with the customer** about what the teams are required to do and not do.
- **Communicate very clearly** about the responsibility for results, and the expectations that the customer has about this.
- **Conflicts don't need to be a problem.** Sometimes they are even necessary to make progress. Realdolmen employees are therefore trained and coached in terms of team dynamics and competences. The main thing is that you provide an environment where trust and a focus on the collective goal prevail.

Realdolmen delivers
THE RIGHT EXPERTISE
FOR AUTOMATION
at ArcelorMittal

ArcelorMittal will be developing completely new software for planning and monitoring its production over the next few years. But the steel manufacturer needs many more IT experts than it has in house for this. Realdolmen is therefore providing the right knowledge at the right time.

'We're developing a completely new supply chain application, which is a huge challenge for us,' explains Didier Marichal, Team Leader at ArcelorMittal. Extra help from outside is more than welcome for such a large project, and Realdolmen is currently one of its main consultant suppliers.

'We've been collaborating with Realdolmen for a long time already, so we were quick to go knocking on their door,' says Team Leader Geert Van Canneyt. 'We've created teams around specific expertise, such as integration or .NET' adds his colleague, Ken Wauters. 'The number of employees we have from Realdolmen is slowly growing.'

Proactive screening of candidates

Team Leader Didier Marichal: 'It's often difficult to find people with the right knowledge. That's why it's a such a big help that Realdolmen is supporting us. They suggest candidates for us proactively, taking our needs into account. The very precise screening by Realdolmen means that we hire a much higher

number of candidates proposed to us than normal, so we don't lose so much time selecting the right people, and we have valuable external employees on board to push the project forward straight away.'

The biggest talents, fresh from training ground

The IT managers at ArcelorMittal are very appreciative of Realdolmen's acADDemICT programme. 'It's become a recognized concept amongst IT organizations and young academics,' says Marichal. Realdolmen selects the biggest talents from graduates in every discipline, and gives them intensive training for three months. They don't just look at their technical knowledge, but also at their soft skills, so they can be employed and useful straight away.

> 'Realdolmen doesn't wait for us to make a request – they're always consulting with us and constantly screening potential new employees.'

Van Canneyt: 'Realdolmen involves us in the project exercises performed by the acADDemICTs, which ensures an even stronger start. They don't wait for us to make a request – they're always consulting with us and constantly screening potential new employees, holding evaluation interviews to ensure their employees stay on board with us for as long as possible, for example by only selecting people who don't live too far away. This continuity is important; it helps us build knowledge within the teams and collaborate better and more efficiently.'

belgium.arcelormittal.com

Didier Marichal and Geert Van Canneyt,
Team Leaders, ArcelorMittal

INAMI-RIZIV
brings in external IT consultants for **pioneering government work**

Milena Mitrovic, Sourcing and Program Manager, RIZIV and Nick Marly, CIO RIZIV

INAMI-RIZIV – the Belgian National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance – manages government resources for insuring medical care and disability benefits, using extensive IT infrastructure to lead everything along the right lines. The government agency has a framework contract with Realdolmen to supply in-house consultants to support existing systems and future innovation.

INAMI-RIZIV's IT department is a real IT innovator for the various government agencies. It does more than just support the business, explains Milena Mitrovic, Sourcing and Program Manager at INAMI-RIZIV: 'We're the driving force behind several innovative IT projects. In two years, for example, we'll be relocating to new premises where we want to work fully digitally, a step that many government agencies want to take alongside INAMI-RIZIV. This digital transformation, as well as other innovations, results in increased IT demands which we simply can't satisfy with our own personnel and expertise alone. But recruiting new employees is no easy task, so we opted to bring in an external partner.'

'Our infrastructure is already supported by external employees,' says Nick Marly, CIO of INAMI-RIZIV. 'The help we're receiving from Realdolmen ensures we have the right manpower and expertise to maintain our leading role and make our comprehensive digital transformation possible.

Looking for the best Microsoft partner

Recruiting a partner in a federal setting is a bit different from normal. It's not INAMI-RIZIV itself, but Smals, a non-profit organization, that brings public services into contact with IT partners and selects suppliers via a framework contract. 'We need to draw up a profile when we want a new partner. Smals then looks for the right consultant who best matches our requirements,' explains Mitrovic. 'Realdolmen is one of the most suitable external Microsoft consultants, and we're very happy with them. We've already worked together in the past, and that was a very positive experience. It also means the organization is already familiar with INAMI-RIZIV, our needs and profiles. So they're definitely one of our preferred partners.'

Collaborating on Government Cloud

The consultants' expertise can also be noticed outside INAMI-RIZIV. 'Our IT department actively puts its weight behind innovation within government, meaning we take lots of responsibility for the Government Cloud. We're working with the Microsoft Azure stack there, among other things, so we're only too happy to be able to make use of our Realdolmen consultants' expertise,' says Marly. 'It's just one of the ways they profile themselves as a genuine partner. From our perspective, we consider them to be an integral part of our team: we train together, eat together in our canteen, and they have coordination meetings too, just like our own employees.'

www.riziv.fgov.be

NO MORE PERFORMANCE PRESSURE ON INFRASTRUCTURE
with SaaS

Rapid technological evolution and digital transformation can no longer be stopped. All companies are undoubtedly undergoing a change process. And one of the main changes in the IT landscape is applications increasingly being offered 'as a service' and run in the cloud instead of on own servers.

Business applications such as CRM, ERP and accounting software are increasingly used via the cloud. We know this trend as Software as a Service (SaaS): software provided as an online service. It makes software management a partner's responsibility, and offers a solution to anything that has something to do with software – such as server capacity, updates and monitoring performance. So it's a huge relief for the internal IT department, which no longer needs to worry about it, and no surprise that locally-run software is giving way to the cloud's ease of use.

Weight off the shoulders

Giving the responsibility of business software to an external partner takes a huge weight off the CIO's shoulders. SaaS providers also have a much bigger IT footprint, which results in greater economies of scale when it comes to speed, security and reliability. You have more peace of mind as CIO and you need to invest less time in software and server management and

maintenance. Continuity is safeguarded too, because suppliers guarantee permanent monitoring – an essential requirement for the 24/7 availability organizations and end users expect. Your cloud partner's underlying infrastructure is deduplicated, perfectly secure and ready to deal with possible problems or disasters. Your valuable data can never be lost.

Software upgrades are automatically implemented company-wide via the cloud, so employees always work with the latest features and applications can communicate with each other very reliably. Microsoft is also adopting a cloud-first strategy, for example, with all new developments first introduced in the cloud.

Predictable costs

Whereas you've often had to pay a very large amount for licences all at once in the past, with a SaaS model you only pay for what you actually use (the operational costs), based on a monthly payment, making it easier to estimate the TCO. You no longer need to cope with the cost of sometimes unexpected but essential investments, such as when memory capacity is reached. This means budgets are systematically kept under control and cash flow improves.

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SAAS FROM REALDOLMEN

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365

Dynamics 365 helps companies combine data and manage its connections, building intelligence into decision-making processes and achieving better results. It also combines various applications such as CRM and ERP in a single platform: so not just Sales, Service and Marketing, but also Finance and Operations, Talent Management, Project Service Automation, Customer Insights, Field Services … lots of apps all working together in the cloud. Microsoft's open ecosystem means all the different business needs are integrated in the same platform.

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 FOR SALES, SERVICE & MARKETING

Microsoft Dynamics 365 for sales, service and marketing is a robust CRM solution that streamlines your processes and increases the profitability of your sales, marketing and service divisions. It's a very versatile platform that combines everything that's crucial for developing, improving and maintaining your customer relationships.

MICROSOFT DYNAMICS 365 FOR TALENT

Microsoft Dynamics 365 for talent is a central platform in the cloud where you can optimise and automate the HR processes and registration tasks within your organization. It creates a 360-degree view of the employee, from hiring to retiring, with simple and visual data analyses. Everything you need to implement a modern HR policy.

SALESFORCE

Salesforce is a fully integrated system for managing all interactions with existing and prospective customers throughout their customer journey. It's an ideal solution for facilitating your company's digital transformation, helping you grow and be successful. And because you review and streamline your processes, you no longer need to deal with fragmented thinking. This includes sales, marketing, a 360-view, financial processes, case management, and customer and field services, among other things.

SaaS solutions enable the supplier to package the cost and complexity of the licence model in an end-to-end product.

Custom modifications?

Generalist software is often seen as disadvantageous. Can a company differentiate itself sufficiently if it's working with the same tools as its competitors? But this might not be a problem in itself; it's mainly what you do with the tools that's important. A piano, for example, is only brought to life by a pianist who determines the level at which it's played. Though it is of course possible that extra features are required. Microsoft has therefore developed PowerApps, a platform where you can easily create your own applications and make modifications to existing apps. It's been set up according to the low-code principle, so even business people can develop what they need themselves. The benefits of SaaS still apply: self-developed apps fit in seamlessly with what's already there, and you're automatically assured that security, for example, cannot be circumvented.

War for Talent

A CIO's focus therefore shifts to adding valuable support services to supplement the use of SaaS. Are users getting the most out of the software? Is it set up in such a way that it also supports business objectives? You can only really answer these questions once the software is up and running.

It's also important to remain flexible when it comes to software. All companies need to keep evolving, and solutions need to be ready today for tomorrow's questions. A shift in your business domain can mean you need more licences or more capacity almost straight away, for example. Another consequence of the digital transformation is that almost all

55%
OF LARGE COMPANIES will have successfully implemented an **all-in cloud SaaS-strategie BY 2025,** ACCORDING TO GARTNER.

companies are looking for the best IT profiles available on the labour market. The creation of an enjoyable employee experience therefore benefits you in the 'war for talent', and having a flexible working environment definitely works in your favour. Employees can work together from any location with SaaS via the cloud, and contact the SaaS vendor's helpdesk with questions if necessary, to receive quick and efficient support.

In summary, a SaaS strategy enables a company to easily migrate unnecessarily complex and outdated legacy systems, increase mobility and flexibility, improve operational efficiency and – in particular – focus on business results rather than concerning itself with IT.

DP World Antwerp working on
A DIGITAL TERMINAL

DP World Antwerp, one of the largest container transhipment companies in the Port of Antwerp, wants to digitise the logistics behind its container loading and unloading as much as possible. This is quite a big job for CIIO Patrick Putman and his team, so he's happy he can leave the project preparation and execution to his IT partners.

Thousands of containers are loaded and unloaded every day, with hundreds of lorries driving on and off site, manoeuvring between the many container cranes and giant ships that cannot be late – it's a logistical challenge that matters. So it goes without saying that it's a process that benefits greatly from a careful, sophisticated IT approach. To fully focus on it, CIIO (Chief Information & Innovation Officer) Patrick Putman can't also be worrying about the day-to-day IT activities that all companies needs to deal with: email, data management, updates to office applications, etc.

Better, more secure collaboration

Microsoft Office 365 plays a major role in this, explains Putman: 'This technology enables our employees to collaborate without taking up too many resources. We often collaborate ad hoc. Colleagues can consult with each other, share files and work on presentations via Microsoft Teams.'

Using the new tools – correctly – means they need fewer physical meetings, which saves lots of time and improves productivity. The analytical tools that are part of Office 365, such MyAnalytics, help with this and improve IT security too. 'Our physical protection is regulated very strictly in accordance with international legislation, and our IT systems were a bit behind on that front,' explains Putman. 'But we've more than made up for lost ground now.'

Think in the present

Ensuring this his colleagues can work together optimally is important, but the CIIO mainly wants to focus on preparing for the challenges that DP World Antwerp is going face over the next ten to twenty years. 'IT needs to be like electricity or water,' he says. 'It needs to go almost unnoticed and not take too much effort. So it's very important to choose a good IT partner, and you need to work together well. Companies need to stop telling their partner what has to be done, and instead ask for solutions.'

Choosing a partner he can trust with his organization's ongoing IT concerns leaves Putman's hands free to look ahead to the future. 'There's no concrete plan for a long-term approach like this', he says. 'You need to have a good look at what's going on around you and be inspired by what you find. And definitely not think inside the boxes.'

> Companies need to stop telling their partner what has to be done, and instead ask for solutions.

www.dpworldantwerp.com

Photography: Arthur Los

OPTIMISATION AND MAXIMUM UNBURDENING
from hardware and software licenses

Forward-thinking business leaders understand that digital transformation, 'digital first', is necessary to remain relevant in the future. They're increasingly looking to the CIO and IT department not just to facilitate this transformation, but also to be proactive in making intelligent use of technological innovation.

Jelle Vervaeke, Group Manager of Products & Licenses, the Realdolmen department that's the central point of contact for all hardware and software issues: 'We're seeing that CIOs are placing innovation on the work floor high on the agenda, but they don't always have the bandwidth they need because of operational IT. The IT park, which is responsible for buying and managing hardware and software, is the foundation for this. If organised efficiently and flexibly, it can allow business to grow successfully.' Companies currently often use modernisation cycles of four years or even longer as standard, because that's been the normal period for technological evolution until recently. But this rate of evolution has become much faster now. 'If you don't keep up, you're risking a technological backlog that will slow down growth and could even become an obstacle,' says Vervaeke.

Predictability and flexibility

The fast technological evolution also means that IT parks are becoming increasingly complex. It demands considerable time and resources, and so extra costs, to keep this under control. So it makes sense for CIOs to choose an outsourcing option. Vervaeke: 'A partner like Realdolmen can maximally unburden the CIO in terms of their workplace management and IT infrastructure. We have a range of no less than 150 brands and technologies for this, and we hold the highest possible level of partner certifications on the market. We also operate using a flexible as-a-service model and pay-per-use total solutions because we know that every organization has peaks and troughs in their business. This leads to predictability and gives our customers

the flexibility to grow, as well as to downsize. It's this combination that makes us unique in Belgium.'

Bid and buy services for a faster time to market

Unburdening isn't just about managing IT products; it's also about buying them. Bid and buy services optimise and standardise this procurement process, which is often cumbersome and prevents a fast time to market, even for organizations with their own IT buying department, such as big companies and government organizations. Vervaeke: 'Our extensive expertise and clout means Realdolmen can significantly shorten buying processes. We're not just a regular coordinator or traditional 'box mover'; we provide strategic advice backed up with SLAs. We receive very competitive buying options and conditions because we turn over such a large volume, which isn't just good news for us but also especially for our customers.'

New business models: evolution, not revolution

'As well as this operational unburdening of IT products, we can also guide customers to new business models and technologies to support this transition. Think of the IoT, the workplace of the future and artificial intelligence, for example,' says Vervaeke. 'Our decades of experience in traditional infrastructure-related IT also helps us consider a much healthier way of thinking about digital disruptions together, and the new technologies we can use to overcome them. We differ from other companies here, because they tend to work with customers on technological solutions from a single niche perspective, and therefore lose sight of the bigger picture.'

Realdolmen therefore tackles the paradox that many companies face head on, because certain investments have already been made and can't always just be thrown overboard. Vervaeke: 'And that's not necessary, either. You can use the existing situation as a lever. Compare it with an aeroplane: you need to make sure you can add new components and change or remove others without the aircraft shutting down, stopping and crashing. It's also not the case that a traditional taxi company can decide on a digital transformation today and become Uber tomorrow. It doesn't work like that in practice. A gradual transition if often the most recommended route.'

We operate using a flexible as-a-service model and pay-per-use total solutions because we know that every organization has peaks and troughs in their business.

Realdolmen can significantly shorten buying processes and offer very competitive buying options and conditions.

Collaborative partnerships that inspire

Realdolmen is proactive when it comes to making collaborative partnerships with suppliers and service partners. 'We don't just asses competitiveness and performance, but also look at how we can place maximum focus on our own and customer projects,' explains Vervaeke. 'Look at cities and local councils, for example. They're facing big challenges to improve living conditions in the city and the services they provide to residents. Part of the solution here can lie in evolving to become Smart Cities. We can bring the right suppliers, who have already proven their worth on an international scale, around the table to meet their specific needs. Partners such as Cisco have for example already implemented Smart Cities successfully in Copenhagen and Amsterdam, and can offer useful inspiration for Belgian cities. We can facilitate this.'

Rstore as online unburdener

The Products & Licenses group makes its range of IT products available online with Rstore. Vervaeke: 'Rstore is more than just an online store; it's a portal through which customers can place orders fully according to their purchasing policy while also monitoring their administration. We're no Bol or Coolblue, of course, and that's not our aim either. We don't supply consumer goods that the customer has to install and maintain themselves after delivery. Rstore covers the professional ranges including staging, tagging, testing and imaging. That's our added value and maximum unburdening plays a central role here.'

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