

## Customer case

### Belfius

## Belfius invests in its own talent for its modern core bank

As an established player in the Belgian financial sector, Belfius Bank and Verzekeringen is constantly innovating. Among other things, they are creating a modern bank that works with future-proof technologies. For this, Belfius wanted to build up more internal knowledge of Java and open systems. In this context, the bank set up a reskilling program for developers and analysts with a background in COBOL or mainframe systems. The bank contacted Inetum-Realdolmen to support them in this. Now almost 30 employees have been successfully reskilled. This gives the bank extra leverage to position itself for the future.

### A conscious choice

Belfius is working on a modern 'core bank' based on various new technologies that require new specialists. Instead of setting up a recruitment campaign, the financial institution opted for internal reskilling. Marian Bevernage, IT Knowledge and Training Manager, says: "In a rapidly changing IT market, we want to offer our employees maximum career opportunities. What's more, the Core Bank project is something we want to build on with the whole bank. As we did not have sufficient knowledge of Java and open systems in-house, we decided to set up the Java Reskilling Program. In doing so, we wanted to transform our specialists in COBOL and mainframe technology into fully-fledged Java experts. In order to learn this expert skill and to support us in organizing this training program, we were looking for a partner with sufficient knowledge and proven experience. We found it in Inetum-Realdolmen."

### Both a rational and emotional process

The bank issued an RFP to five parties to determine whom they would be working with, says Marian Bevernage: "We worked with the obvious criteria. A supplier had to have experience with similar projects, expertise in the subject to be taught, a good proposal, acceptable deadlines, and a strong price. All of these were on the wish list."

"In addition, we felt it was important to pay extra attention to the emotional side of this reskilling program. Our students had to process a huge amount of information in a short time. They also needed to become used to a new way of working - from linear programming to object-oriented thinking. They are essentially changing jobs and, after having been experts for 30 years, are now starting from scratch. This requires a great deal of mental resilience. A partner with a feel for this psychological side was therefore essential."

### First impressions matter

With a good score on all the defined criteria and an excellent proposal for the training program with a trainer and a coach, Inetum-Realdolmen was able to win the order. The approach during the RFP phase also made a good impression on Bevernage: "Already in the exploratory talks, we were impressed by the response time, the flexibility and the down-to-earth, practical approach. We attached a great deal of importance to this, and that ultimately gave Inetum-Realdolmen the advantage."

### Four waves, 27 successful reskillings

"We have organized four training courses in total since 2018. After an internal invitation, motivation interview and a test, we organized a kick-off meeting where we presented the trainer and the coach to the students. Then the real training started, which we developed with Inetum-Realdolmen. Theory and exercise days alternated over a period of approximately four months. Self-study and evaluations were also part of the package. All this culminated in a demonstration in front of a jury in which the students performed a large, integrated exercise."

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VIA SIRCLE

Out of the 30 employees who registered over the four training waves, 27 completed the process. A success rate of 90 percent," says Marian Bevernage.

The combination of trainer and coach was certainly a contributing factor, says Jeroen Van Gompel, Application Engineer, one of the participants in the most recent course: "The trainer gave the explanation, the coach was there to answer our questions during the training. That tandem worked very well, and the coach provided plenty of help."

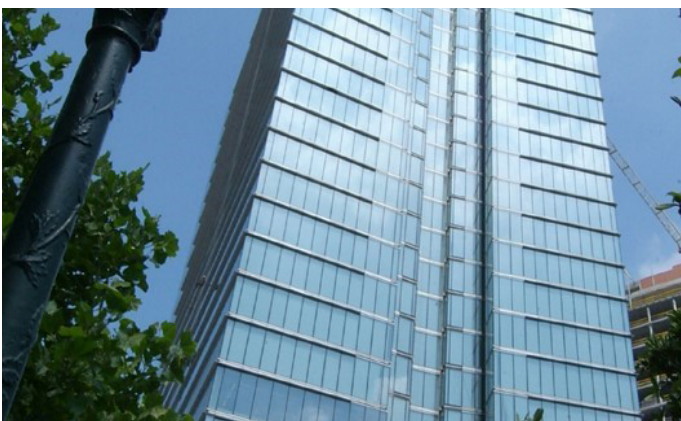
## Attention to the psychological aspect

For many of the students, the program entailed some stress and uncertainty. Attention to the emotional side of the training was indeed important. According to Alex Vos, Technical Designer, the attention was certainly there: "From the world with no secrets that I had been living in for 35 years, I went into completely uncharted territory. This is very overwhelming and requires some serious getting used to. Now that I'm in my new job, I've finally let go of the old one. If things became a bit difficult during the course, the trainer and the coach always made room for a conversation with each student who needed it. They also made sure that every participant felt comfortable. For example, they organized break-out times for people who didn't want to ask a question in front of the entire group during the online classes."

## Quick change to remote learning

"When COVID threw us a curve ball," Marian Bevernage continues, "the training was postponed for a while. When it became clear that the lockdown would not disappear quickly, Inetum-Readolmen continued the program online via live video. And with success, of course."

Alex Vos agrees that video works: "Before the lockdown, we still had a few days of classroom training. The switch to remote learning came with a number of advantages and disadvantages."



We had a bit less support from the coach because they were no longer able to walk around and answer questions. This meant that each question was handled with the entire group. All in all, it was a very educational four months with sufficient variety, that allowed me to retrain for a new challenge within the bank."

"Inetum-Readolmen actively worked on these curriculum improvements. In the fourth and most recent wave, everything went really well. COVID made things difficult for a while, but here too everyone got going and found a solution. Their success can be attributed to flexibility and the willingness to co-create."



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## Flexibility to adapt

Not everything worked perfectly the first time, so flexibility was necessary to make changes. The first waves of training were still a learning process for Belfius and Inetum-Readolmen, says Bevernage: "During the first phases, we found ways to improve the training. The content and the order of training were adapted, we moved from various specialized trainers to one fixed trainer, and the approach became more diverse with tools such as Kahoot, Floobits and more. We constantly worked on an integrated approach with the aim of creating a clear common thread throughout the training. Inetum-Readolmen actively worked on these curriculum improvements. In the fourth and most recent wave, everything went really well. COVID made things difficult for a while, but here too everyone got going and found a solution. Their success can be attributed to flexibility and the willingness to co-create"

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