The Power of Choice in a Complex World

Annual Report 2025

Edition The Netherlands, with an Introduction by
Zander Colaers, Managing Director

cegeka

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Realigning for Maximum Impact

A Conversation with Zander Colaers, Managing Director Cegeka Netherlands

Zander Colaers is a familiar face at Cegeka. Over his 14 years with the group, he served as COO and led the integration of KPN Consulting following its acquisition in 2020. After a short period away, he returned in 2025 as Managing Director for Cegeka Netherlands with a clear brief: realign with group strategy, accelerate growth, and raise client satisfaction.



Setting the Course

Cegeka Netherlands is a home market. Upon his return in the autumn of 2025, Colaers saw plenty of opportunity to deepen the connection with the broader group. “My immediate focus was reinforcing alignment with the strategy, culture, and ways of working that have driven Cegeka’s success in Belgium for over three decades,” he says.

His direction is unambiguous. “Our end-to-end portfolio, our boots-on-the-ground methodology, and our dual role as both enabler and trusted guide: that is the North Star. We are navigating toward it at full speed and without compromise. The goal is to continuously raise the bar.”

Our end-to-end portfolio, our boots-on-the-ground methodology, and our dual role as both enabler and trusted guide: that is the North Star.

Maniacally Outperform

For a Cegeka veteran like Colaers, performance discussions always lead to one place. "Client satisfaction is the Holy Grail. Our current standing is solid, but it must be higher." Measuring client satisfaction more rigorously and regularly is a cornerstone of his transformation program. "Not once a year, but at regular intervals, so the signal is never stale, and the response is timely."

Improving these numbers, he insists, is about execution: "Surprise clients. Delight them. Maniacally outperform. That can take many forms: in how we take complexity off their plate, but also in how we help them innovate in a way that is pragmatic rather than overwhelming."

Surprise clients. Delight them. Maniacally outperform.

He is also direct about what that means in practice. "Innovation doesn't always have to be a life-altering big bang event. Continuous improvement is also a form of innovation. Look at Generative AI and AI Agents: those daily, incremental gains compound into massive competitive advantages. Innovation is more elastic than many realize."

Capturing the Full Picture

Realignment also means making fuller use of the end-to-end Cegeka portfolio, moving beyond managed services and consultancy into other high-growth areas: AI, application development, and cyber resilience.

"In data and AI, we see intense demand for governance frameworks and AI Agent integration," Colaers explains. "In application development, the focus is on speed-to-market. Our AI Software Factory is specifically designed to accelerate both velocity and code quality. On security, our approach is end-to-end, from detection to recovery, backed by our SOCs in Europe and the US, covering both IT and OT environments."

The same drive for quality is reflected in a revamped recruitment strategy. Cegeka Netherlands is targeting high-impact profiles: professionals with the experience to raise the standard from day one.

Sovereignty: A Boardroom Imperative

One theme surfaces more than any other in conversations with clients: digital sovereignty. "This debate is the pendulum at work, swinging from central to decentral yet again. What is driving it this time is geopolitical reality: we have collectively realized that we placed a lot of eggs in a small number of baskets, and that yesterday's friends and allies are not necessarily today's, or tomorrow's."

The key question is: how much control has quietly been traded away in the rush to the cloud? "It is not a reason to second-guess the journey, but it is a reason to be clear-eyed about where you stand," Colaers says.

The cloud sovereignty debate is the pendulum at work, swinging from central to decentral yet again.

Cegeka's answer is structural. Private data centers on European soil, combined with access to major hyperscalers, mean clients can place workloads precisely where strategy, latency, or regulatory requirements demand. "We ensure that architecture, governance, and contracts are designed to keep options open," Colaers says. "Lock-in rarely happens through one major decision; it creeps in through a hundred small ones. Our job is to stay ahead of that curve."

Amid shifting technologies and swinging market pendulums, Colaers believes the core client needs stay constant. "CIOs still want to be relieved of complexity. They want a sparring partner, not just a supplier. And they want to shine within their own organization. We are here to make that possible."



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Zander Colaers, Managing Director Cegeka Netherlands



Introduction by Koen Deryckere, CEO

Technology companies sit closer to their clients' success than at any other time. Increasingly, it is the technology beneath an organization that decides how far and how fast it can grow.

Across our sector, 2025 brought real pressure. Private and public markets became more cautious. Technology continued to move faster than many organizations could keep pace with. AI moved from experimentation towards execution. Cybersecurity, resilience, data control, regulatory pressure, and digital sovereignty became board-level priorities. Across every industry, technology moved closer to the center of business strategy. These shifts are still accelerating.

Over more than three decades, Cegeka has grown into a strong European technology company with an expanding global footprint. That strength rests on trusted client relationships, deep technical expertise, and a broad portfolio of capabilities across cloud, cybersecurity, data and AI, business solutions, application services, digital workplace, and managed services.

Together, these strengths have given Cegeka a solid foundation for the moment we are in. In a landscape like this, clients need partners who understand their business and know their industry as well as they do. With our strong European core and the scale to deliver globally, we are able to meet clients across a broad spectrum of needs from public cloud to fully sovereign environments, and to move with them as their needs change. In a market that increasingly turns on trust and control, that combination matters more than ever.

Our clients show what this looks like in practice. At VTS, which oversees more than €18 billion in Flemish government subsidies, AI agents built with Cegeka cut invoice processing from 15 minutes to 6 seconds, replacing sampling with full coverage of every claim. At NIBC, years of close work led the bank to describe Cegeka simply as an extension of its own IT organization.

Across our clients, the same pattern holds: deep understanding of their industry, technology delivered reliably and at scale, and a true partnership behind the result. These are the strengths that set Cegeka apart.

As Group CEO, from 1 May 2026, my focus is to sharpen and build on these strengths in three areas. The first is industry depth, understanding our clients' businesses well enough to engage with their strategy, not only their requirements. The second is end-to-end service, ensuring clients experience the full strength of Cegeka as one company, brought together around their priorities. The third is continued international growth, extending the reach we have built in our home markets into new geographies across Europe and beyond, on the strength of the expertise and trust we have already earned. Together, these priorities will help us create more value for clients, strengthening Cegeka for the years ahead.

My thanks go to everyone across Cegeka for the work they delivered throughout 2025, and to our clients and partners for their continued trust. There is important work ahead, and I look forward to building the next phase of Cegeka together.

Koen Deryckere
Chief Executive Officer, Cegeka



Introduction by André Knaepen, Founder and Chairman of the Board

2025 was a year that tested us, and the numbers reflect that honestly. Revenue came in at €1.28 billion, broadly stable in a market shaped by geopolitical uncertainty and cautious client spending, with EBITDA of €118.4 million. We absorbed the cost of structural measures we knew were necessary, and profitability reflected those choices.

What I am proud of is how we responded. Across the group, our teams made difficult decisions with professionalism and commitment. We streamlined, sharpened our focus, and reinforced the foundations of the business. None of that is glamorous work, but it is the kind of work that determines whether a company is genuinely built to last, and Cegeka has been built to last for more than thirty years.

The strategic direction is clear. Artificial intelligence, cyber resilience and sovereign infrastructure are no longer peripheral concerns for our clients: They sit at the heart of board agendas across every sector we serve. Cegeka is well positioned in exactly these areas.

But what truly sets us apart is how we bring these capabilities to market: with deep industry focus, an end-to-end portfolio, and the kind of client centricity that has always been our hallmark. Knowing our clients' businesses from the inside, and being genuinely committed to their outcomes, is what allows us to turn technological change into lasting advantage.

I am pleased to welcome Koen Deryckere as our new CEO as of May 1, 2026. Koen brings the leadership and the energy this next chapter calls for, and I have full confidence in his ability to take Cegeka forward. The culture of entrepreneurship, craftsmanship and genuine client partnership that defines Cegeka is in good hands. I also want to extend a personal thank you to Bart Watteeuw, who led the group as CEO ad interim with great dedication and steadiness during a demanding period.

To our more than 9,000 colleagues, and to the clients and partners who stayed the course with us through a demanding year: Thank you. 2025 gave us a solid foundation. 2026 is where we build on it.

André Knaepen
Founder and Chairman of the Board, Cegeka



Introduction by Bart Watteeuw, COO

Trust is the new currency. It is a phrase that has come to define how Cegeka thinks about its role in the market, and it has never been more to-the-point. In a world reshaped by geopolitical volatility, regulatory pressure and the tsunami that is AI, our clients are not just looking for technology expertise. They are looking for a partner they can genuinely rely on; one that understands their industry, takes end-to-end responsibility, and earns confidence through consistent delivery over time.

AI is at the heart of what is changing. We are investing massively in AI, both in how we serve our clients and in how we work across every business line. AI is set to bring about a disruption of a scale and speed that most organizations are not yet fully prepared for, reshaping knowledge work, accelerating software delivery, transforming how business processes are designed and run. Our job is to make sure our clients are ahead of that curve, not behind it. That means deploying AI responsibly, with the right data foundations, the right governance, and a clear line of sight to business outcomes.

Cybersecurity has become inseparable from that conversation. As the threat landscape grows more sophisticated and AI arms both sides of the equation, resilience is no longer a technical matter: It is a board-level priority. Cegeka's integrated approach, combining state-of-the-art solutions, modern SOC operations and continuous compliance monitoring, reflects a conviction we have held for years: Cyber resilience is a daily discipline.

Sovereignty sits at the intersection of all of this. Who controls your data, your infrastructure and your critical systems has moved firmly onto the strategic agenda, accelerated by geopolitical shifts, hyperscaler dependencies, and a regulatory environment that keeps raising the bar. Cegeka covers the full spectrum, from the major hyperscalers to fully private environments in our own European data centers, with the expertise to help clients find the right fit and move as conditions change. For heavily regulated sectors where trust is not just expected but required — defense, government, healthcare, finance and insurance — this is a precondition, not a preference. These are also among our key vertical focuses, and for good reason.

Industry focus is the natural consequence of genuine client centricity. The deeper you understand a sector, the more useful you become. We build industry-specific, outcome-based solutions: preconfigured platforms, built-in accelerators, managed services and SaaS offerings designed for the specific realities of the sectors we know best. More end-to-end, across an increasingly integrated portfolio. That is how trust gets built: not through generic capability, but through deep knowledge, consistent delivery, and a long-term commitment to client outcomes.

Bart Watteeuw
Chief Operating Officer, Cegeka

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Cegeka at a Glance

2025 Financial Performance

2025: A Year of Transition

2025 was a transitional year for Cegeka, and management chose to focus on transition rather than chase short-term momentum. Revenue held broadly stable at €1.28 billion — a contraction of 2.3% versus 2024 — demonstrating the resilience of demand across the group's core activities in a cautious market. EBITDA amounted to €118.4 million, compared with €130.4 million a year earlier, with adjusted EBIT (IFRS) €59 million, versus €74 million.

The evolution in profitability reflects cautious client spending, the cost of structural measures implemented during the year, and temporary underperformance in several geographies that are now stabilizing. Importantly, the group's cash generation remained robust throughout the year, underpinning continued investment capacity and a healthy balance sheet.

Regional Picture: Stabilization Underway Across the Footprint

Performance varied across the group. Belgium and the Netherlands — Cegeka's largest markets — held up broadly in line with the wider European ICT services sector, with extended sales cycles weighing on growth rather than on competitive position. Italy improved progressively through the year and returned to positive operational performance in the fourth quarter. In the United States — an important pillar of the group alongside its European footprint — results shifted from profit to loss; new client wins and accelerated delivery in the fourth quarter point to a recovering trajectory.

None of these dynamics are considered structural. By year-end, early signs of stabilization were visible across the footprint, and the group entered 2026 with a healthier pipeline and a leaner delivery base.

A Sharper Organization

Throughout 2025 Cegeka completed a series of integration, simplification and performance initiatives across the group. Team structures were streamlined, delivery excellence reinforced, and the portfolio concentrated on activities with the strongest client value and long-term potential. The full benefit of these measures is expected to materialize progressively from 2026 onwards.

The group also reinforced its governance. The Board of Directors was strengthened during the year, and Koen Deryckere assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer on May 1, 2026, providing clear leadership for Cegeka's next phase of growth. The incoming CEO will build on the group's distinctive culture of entrepreneurship, craftsmanship and client intimacy.

Outlook 2026: building from a solid foundation

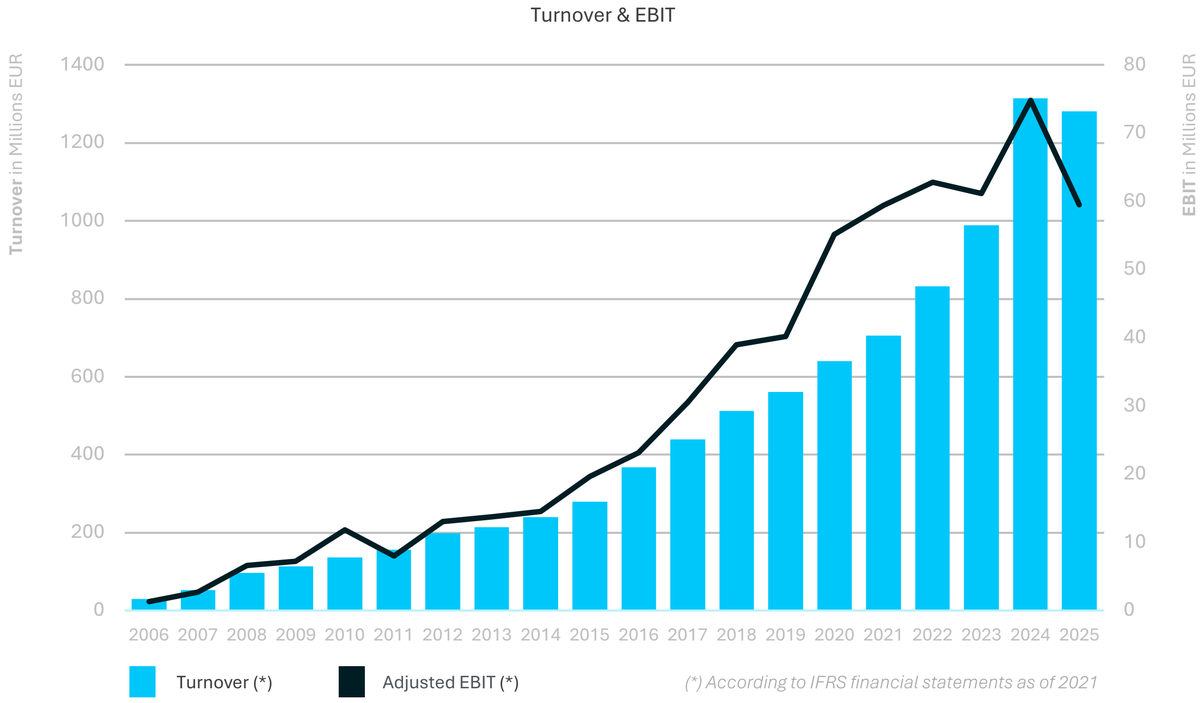
Cegeka enters 2026 with confidence. The operating model is adapted to current market conditions, the cost base is better aligned, financial solidity is preserved, and the group's strategic direction is clear. The measures taken in 2025 were designed to stay ahead of the curve rather than behind it — and management expects a progressive return to growth over the course of the year, with margin improvement building through 2026 and 2027 as the structural benefits flow through.

Under the leadership of incoming CEO Koen Deryckere, Cegeka will continue to invest in the areas where client demand is most resilient and where the group is most differentiated. Important strategic battlegrounds include, among others:

Applied artificial intelligence: embedding AI into mission-critical business processes and industry-specific solutions, from healthcare to financial services, defense, manufacturing, and the public sector.

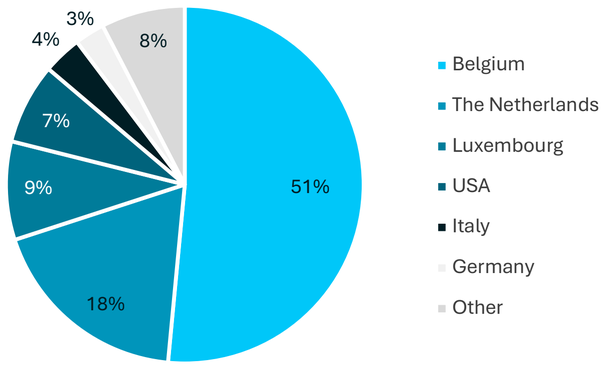
Cyber resilience: helping organizations raise their resilience in a threat landscape that only grows more demanding.

Sovereign and hybrid cloud: delivering scalable, compliant infrastructure and managed services for clients that need their data and critical systems operated to European standards of trust.

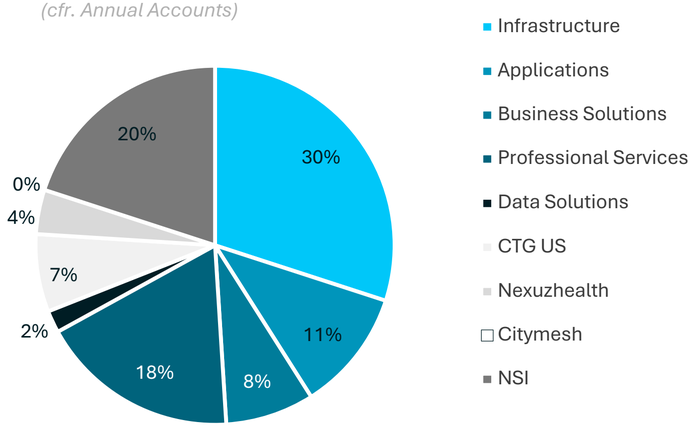


2025 Financial Performance

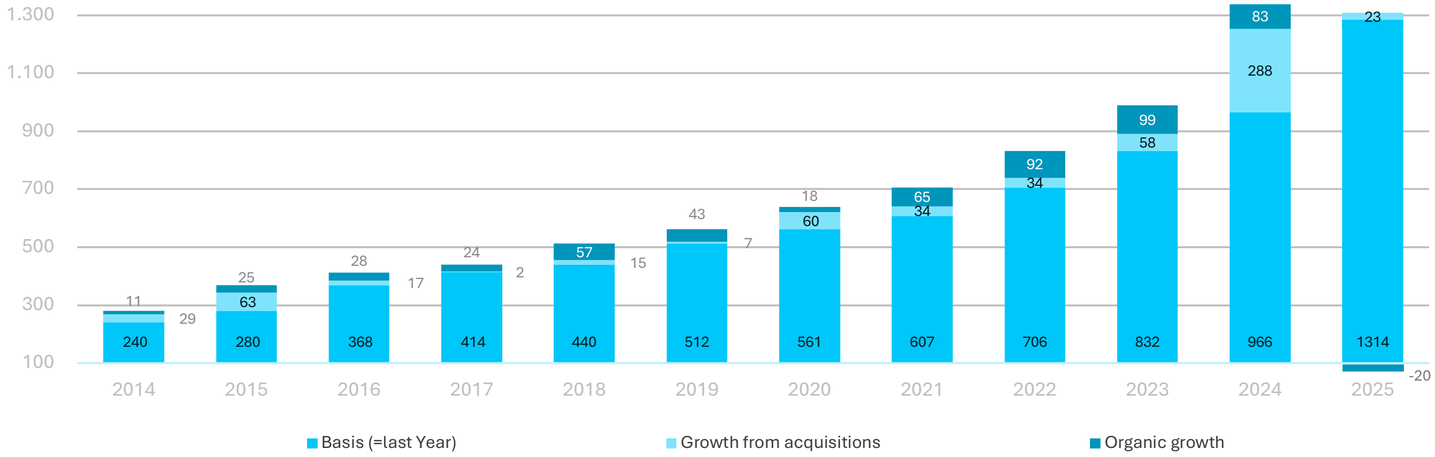
Turnover per country
(cfr. Annual Accounts)



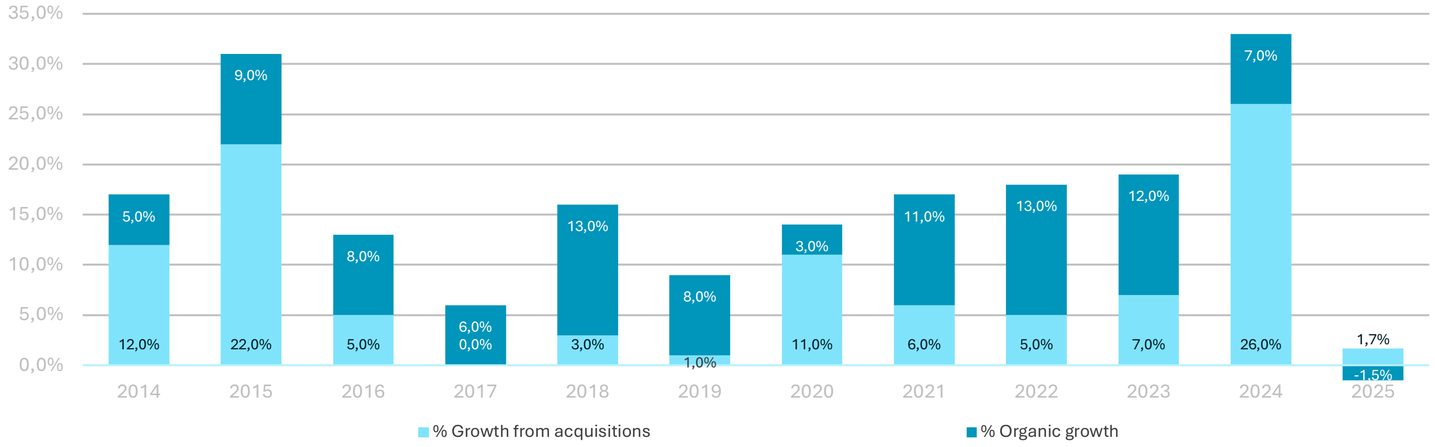
Turnover per Business Line
(cfr. Annual Accounts)



Growth from acquisitions vs organic growth excluding the impact of disposals and divestments



Growth from acquisitions vs organic growth excluding the impact of disposals and divestments



Corporate
Milestones

January 23, 2025

Cegeka Expands its Microsoft Dynamics Activities to Germany

Building upon its established presence in the country, this new endeavor will introduce industry-specific solutions based on Microsoft Dynamics 365 and the Microsoft Power Platform to the German market.

Read more

February 18, 2025

Cegeka Expands US Presence with Microsoft Dynamics Practice Focused on Pharma

This move builds on the acquisition of CTG in late 2023, which provided a foothold in the US market. Thomas Nielsen is appointed to lead Cegeka's Microsoft Dynamics practice in the United States.

Read more

March 25, 2025

Cegeka Announces Appointment of Gregory Verlinden as New Vice President of Data & AI

Gregory brings over 31 years of international experience in the ICT sector and has a proven track record in leading transformative growth and managing complex technology ecosystems.

Read more

April 30, 2025

Cegeka opens new Modern Security Operations Center (SOC) in the US

Cegeka is expanding its global network of Security Operations Centers (SOCs) to the United States. The new Modern SOC will operate out of the headquarters of its subsidiary CTG in Buffalo, New York. The new SOC is part of Cegeka's growing Modern SOC network, which integrates advanced technology with human expertise to deliver next-level cybersecurity.

Read more









June 3, 2025

Cegeka appoints Lorenzo Greco as new Managing Director for Italy

Cegeka announces the appointment of Lorenzo Greco as the new Managing Director of Cegeka Italy. Together with the appointment of Lorenzo Greco Cegeka is entering a new phase of accelerated growth in Italy.

Read more

July 3, 2025

Cegeka achieves Prioritized Tier status in Microsoft Copilot Jumpstart Program

Cegeka proudly announces that it has graduated to the Prioritized Tier of the Microsoft Copilot Jumpstart Program, making Cegeka one of the first in Europe to reach this milestone. This recognition shows that Cegeka knows how to turn Copilot's promise into real results for businesses.

Read more

September 25, 2025

Cegeka Named to the 2025–2026 Inner Circle for Microsoft AI Business Solutions

For the eighth year in a row, Cegeka has been named to the Microsoft Business Applications Inner Circle 2025–2026. This continued recognition places Cegeka among one of the most consistent and impactful Microsoft partners worldwide. The Inner Circle distinction is reserved for partners who achieve outstanding results with Microsoft Dynamics 365 and Power Platform, helping organizations accelerate digital transformation.

Read more

November 12, 2025

Cegeka recognized as the winner of 2025 Microsoft Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Partner of the Year

Cegeka has won the Global Dynamics 365 Supply Chain 2025 Microsoft Partner of the Year Award. Microsoft honored Cegeka for its outstanding innovation and execution of industry solutions that drive business success, powered by Microsoft Dynamics 365 Supply Chain, the end-to-end platform that optimizes planning, production, inventory, and logistics.

Read more









December 5, 2025

Cegeka Strengthens Board of Directors to Accelerate Growth and International Expansion

Cegeka announces the expansion of its Board of Directors with three new members: Bart Van Den Meersche, Kurt Decat and Bart Troubleyn. Their combined expertise in digital transformation, financial management and international business operations will support Cegeka in the next phase of growth and globalization, while contributing to the continued professionalization of the organization.

Read more

December 11, 2025

André Knaepen Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

The Belgian newspaper Het Belang van Limburg, covering the region around Cegeka's headquarters in Hasselt, has honored André Knaepen, founder and president of the Board of Directors, with a Lifetime Achievement Award. This recognition celebrates not only André's entrepreneurial spirit but also the impact Cegeka has made over the past three decades for our customers, our colleagues and the region.

Read more

December 12, 2025

Cegeka Builds Toward a Climate-Neutral Future with Its Own Wind Turbine and Solar Park Energy

Cegeka is taking a major step in its green economy ambitions with the construction of its own wind turbine and the procurement of energy from a newly built solar park in Belgium. Together, these projects will generate enough green electricity starting in 2026 to match the equivalent power consumption of Cegeka's data centers, offices, and electric vehicles in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Read more

January 20, 2026

Cegeka Selected by IBM as European Launch Partner for IBM Sovereign Core

IBM has selected Cegeka as one of the first European IT service providers to offer IBM Sovereign Core in Belgium and the Netherlands. The collaboration builds on Cegeka's long-standing investments in sovereign cloud and data center services, designed to manage sensitive data within controlled, compliant and locally governed environments.

Read more









February 23, 2026

Cegeka Appoints Koen Deryckere as New Chief Executive Officer

Cegeka Group today announced the appointment of Koen Deryckere as its new Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Koen Deryckere joins Cegeka from Accenture, where he built a long and distinguished international career. He brings deep experience in driving growth, leading large organizations, and working closely with clients across industries and regions.

Read more



April 27, 2026

Cegeka strengthens focus on Defense, Intelligence & Space – Brandon De Waele appointed Managing Director

Cegeka is strengthening its focus on the Defense, Intelligence & Space market by organizing its expertise, capabilities and go-to-market approach around this specific sector. This move enables the company to address the specific needs, regulatory context and long-term dynamics of this sector in a more focused and effective way. To lead this sector, Cegeka appoints Brandon De Waele as Managing Director Defense, Intelligence & Space.

Read more



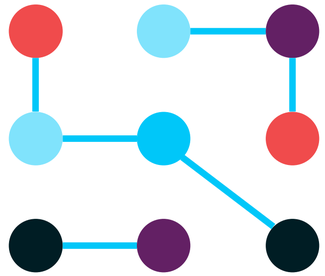
Vision

Navigating Complexity, Timing, and Visibility

We believe IT is more than just code and data. It’s a catalyst for change — driving progress for people, businesses, communities, and the planet. Unlocking that potential requires three essentials:

Complexity

Complexity is built into today’s IT environments

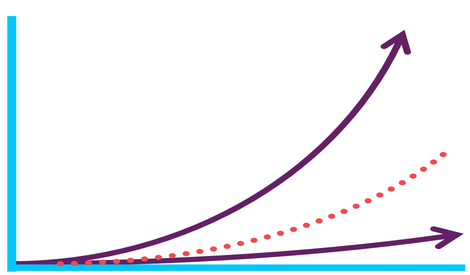


Cloud and legacy systems have to coexist, massive volumes of data flow in from billions of devices, and the regulatory landscape never stops shifting. These dynamics don’t operate in isolation — they amplify each other.

Our job is to cut through that complexity so technology works for our clients, not against them. The goal is simple: keep complexity under the hood, and deliver smooth, seamless experiences above it.

Timing

Shaping the optimal path

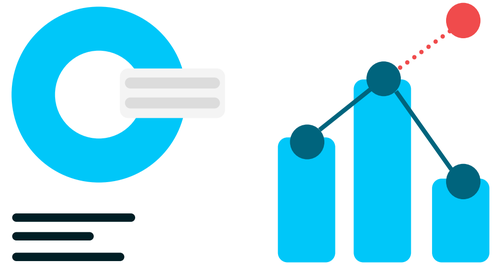


Then there’s timing — the art of knowing exactly when to act. IT craftsmanship isn’t about implementing every new technology the moment it drops. It’s about identifying the right solution at the right moment, with a team capable of delivering it.

It’s about sequencing decisions to drive adoption and impact — not disruption. Every move should serve a purpose: to solve real problems without undoing what already works.

Visibility

Observability isn’t a nice-to-have, it’s essential



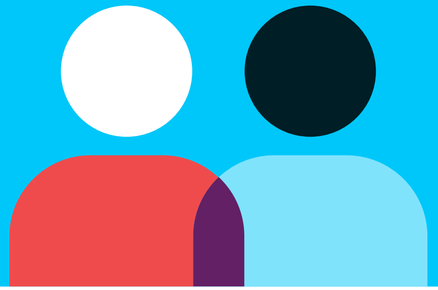
Finally, visibility. In a world that shifts by the second, clarity isn’t a nice-to-have — it’s essential. Without continuous, transparent insight into IT operations, security posture, and ESG performance — both high-level and granular — businesses are left making assumptions. And in IT, assumptions are risky.

Mission

To design, build and run resilient digital solutions, shoulder to shoulder with our clients

Values

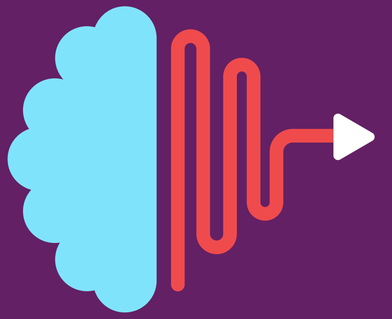
Shoulder to Shoulder, We Combine Our Strengths



We Enjoy What We Do

We Walk the Talk

With Curious Minds, We Always Act a Step Ahead



Client Engagement Portal

Shoulder to Shoulder, Digitized

To chart the optimal path, you need both a clear vision and deep insights. Horizon illuminates that path.

As a single pane of glass, Horizon provides deep insights and full observability across IT operations, security posture, and ESG footprint — delivering advanced control and visibility.



Global Capabilities, Local Ownership



- Commercially active
- Commercially active & Global Delivery Centers
- Data Centers
- Security Operations Centers

The Rise of the Global Captive Center

A Conversation with Tom De Vos, Executive VP Global Delivery

Tom De Vos heads up Cegeka's Global Delivery Center, leading a team of over 1,000 professionals across Romania, Greece, Moldova, India and Colombia. With 250 new colleagues scheduled to come on board in 2026, the GDC will be growing by 25% to stay ahead of changing client needs.



Moving in Both Directions

"Companies are rethinking their shoring strategies," De Vos notes. "With budgets tightening and the global landscape shifting, both nearshoring and offshoring are at the top of the agenda." European clients are leaning into nearshore to maintain control and sovereignty. At the same time, demand for AI R&D is pulling work offshore, where anonymized data can be processed at scale, safely and compliantly.

Scaling for the Future

That demand is set to drive a 25% surge in the GDC, adding 250 specialists across data, AI, applications, and infrastructure. A big part of this is opening the doors wider for US clients, who are serviced through CTG US. “US clients now have full access to the entire Global Delivery network,” says De Vos. “We’ve opened our global footprint to our colleagues in the US, so they can match any client to the location and setup that fits their strategy.”

Clients are increasingly asking us to build their own dedicated delivery hubs.

Hub-as-a-Service

Demand for Global Captive Centers (GCC) is rising fast. “Clients are increasingly asking us to build dedicated delivery hubs on their behalf, whether nearshore, offshore, or hybrid. A GCC is essentially a client’s own permanent operation, with Cegeka handling the setup, governance, and infrastructure to get them there. We call it hub-as-a-service.” These engagements typically span five to ten years. “In the current geopolitical climate, this model really resonates.”

Not a Resource Pool

“Delivery only works when it’s genuinely integrated,” De Vos insists. At the GDC, teams work shoulder to shoulder with Cegeka’s internal business lines, never at arm’s length. “We aren’t just a resource pool,” he says. “We know the business, the goals, and the sector-specific context. That’s the difference.” The integration goes further: GDC teams are co-building AI agents directly with Cegeka’s internal business lines, keeping pace with a landscape that looks completely different from two years ago.

We aren’t just a resource pool. We know the business, the goals, and the sector-specific context.

Operational Discipline

“Success in nearshore and offshore delivery isn’t just about adding headcount,” De Vos concludes. “It’s about operational discipline. Time zones, cultural nuances, and governance don’t manage themselves. There are technical and organizational measures you simply cannot shortcut. We’ve spent years refining this across all our locations. That expertise is exactly what our clients are buying.”



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Clients are increasingly asking us to build their own dedicated delivery hubs.

Tom De Vos, Executive VP Global Delivery

Strength Under Pressure

A Conversation with Anik Stalmans, CHRO



“The strength of an organization like ours is that we never become complacent,” says Anik Stalmans. In 2025, those words were put to the test: sustained economic and geopolitical pressure, and an AI shift that continued to reshape the nature of work.

A Company Tested and Transformed

Cegeka’s growth over the past three decades has been remarkable by any measure. What began as a Belgian player has grown into a global organization of 9,000 people, with a presence stretching from Europe to the US, Colombia, Canada, and India, all while remaining a true family business. That combination of scale and ownership culture has been a source of genuine pride, but also a test of identity.

2025 made that test harder. The departure of CEO Stijn Bijnens, sustained economic and geopolitical headwinds, and the accelerating impact of AI across every corner of the workplace demanded a response

that was clear-eyed and unsentimental.

“We were deliberate and prepared for the difficulties of our response,” says Stalmans. “We focused on reducing complexity, sharpening execution readiness, and eliminating overhead, all while continuing to bridge cultures and making tough calls on leadership positions. The result was a leaner organization entering 2026 in a position of increased strength, ready to welcome incoming CEO Koen Deryckere, in May.”

Connection as Strategy

One conviction that only deepened through the headwinds: human-to-human connection is not a soft benefit; it is a business imperative. “The more external pressure builds, the more critical it becomes that people feel genuinely connected to each other and to the organization,” says Stalmans. “We are, and will always be, a people business.”

Human-to-human connection is not a soft benefit: it is a business imperative.

That belief translated into a clear decision in autumn 2025: managers leading teams are now expected to be present in the office or at the client location at least three days a week. The reasoning is straightforward: “Managers set the tone. When they are present, they make it easier for their people to be present too, and they create the conditions for the kind of connection that builds a team.”

“No one wants to commute to an empty office,” Stalmans continues. “Much of what makes being together valuable — the exchange of ideas, the trust built in passing conversations, the spontaneous moments that no scheduled call can replicate — cannot be reproduced on a screen.”

AI as Copilot

The impact of AI on Cegeka’s workforce is growing. Job content is shifting at an accelerating pace: some tasks are changing; new ones are emerging. “We are actively aligning our business plans with this evolution to keep our people ready to deliver the high-speed, changing services our clients demand,” Stalmans says.

Part of that response is to invest in tooling, training, and advanced AI literacy across the organization. An AI Academy and a dedicated Generative AI Program are in the process of launching, with a clear emphasis not merely on using AI, but also on thinking critically about it. Validation, judgment, ethical use, and a clear-eyed understanding of the limits of AI output are treated as core competencies, not optional extras.

AI is a copilot, an augmentation of human capability, not a substitute for it. The human in the loop remains non-negotiable.

“Crucially, these are not top-down HR initiatives. The business lines, where people work alongside AI every day, including in Cegeka’s Software Factory, are driving the thinking. They define what quality and craftsmanship look like in this new reality, how they want to work, and what the genuine impact on their roles is. That ground-up ownership makes all the difference,” Stalmans explains.

The philosophy is unambiguous: AI is a copilot, an augmentation of human capability, not a substitute for it. The human in the loop remains non-negotiable. The goal is a genuine synergy between humans and machines, one that amplifies what people do best rather than bypassing them.

The Skills That Will Matter

What does this mean for the workforce tomorrow? Two capabilities stand out above the rest. “The first is systems thinking,” says Stalmans. “AI does not eliminate the need to understand how complex systems work and interact. If anything, it raises the bar. Thinking across functions and disciplines, rather than in silos, becomes a defining skill as AI absorbs more of the transactional work.”

The second is resilience, or more precisely, what Stalmans calls ‘job crafting’. “The ability to resist the pull of the status quo. To have an appetite for change, and the mindset to turn that change to your advantage. To reinvent yourself. To ask hard questions about your own role.” At Cegeka, this translates into a clear expectation: every employee should assume their job could look fundamentally different within a few years, and approach that prospect as an opportunity, not a threat.

“And yes, some routine, entry-level tasks will inevitably be automated. But new entry points will emerge alongside them: roles centered on AI ethics, output validation, and human oversight, demanding precisely the kind of critical judgment that AI cannot replicate.”

Every employee should assume their job could look fundamentally different within a few years.

Reading the Signals

Cegeka consistently performs well in employer reputation surveys and on platforms such as Glassdoor. That remained true in 2025, but with a nuance worth acknowledging. The autumn employee survey showed a modest increase in the share of employees adopting a neutral, wait-and-see stance toward the organization.

Stalmans is candid about this: “It was entirely predictable, given the external pressures and internal changes we were navigating at the time the survey was sent out. And it was in line with what we anticipated. More than that, it served as confirmation. The tough decisions we took were the right ones, not painless, but necessary. Cegeka enters what comes next leaner, more resilient, and ready.”

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Every employee should assume their job could look fundamentally different within a few years, and approach that prospect as an opportunity, not a threat.

Anik Stalmans, CHRO

From Commitment to Execution

A Conversation with Tom Knaepen, Chief Sustainability Officer at Cegeka

At Cegeka, sustainability is entering a different phase. What was once a set of commitments is increasingly becoming part of how the company operates — across infrastructure, services, and day-to-day decision-making. For Tom Knaepen, that shift is the real story.



Embedding ESG in the Core

For Knaepen, ESG is no longer a parallel initiative. “It is embedded in how we run the business and how we deliver value to clients,” he says. Strengthening that foundation has been a key focus over the past year, with clearer governance, defined ownership, and a growing policy framework covering environmental impact, cultural diversity, and fair treatment. The objective is not to build another layer of reporting. “It only starts to matter when it influences everyday decisions,” Knaepen notes.

Building the Energy Backbone

The shift becomes most visible in infrastructure. Cegeka has moved beyond sourcing renewable energy to producing it. A solar park came online at the end of 2025, and a wind turbine was brought into operation in spring 2026. Together, they are designed to generate enough green electricity to match the entire annual consumption of Cegeka's data centers, offices, and electric fleet in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Carbon-neutral Cloud Services by 2030

The broader ambition is to deliver carbon-neutral cloud services by 2030, with the renewable energy capacity in place forming the first major milestone toward that target. More precisely, the goal covers Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions — direct emissions and those from purchased energy — starting with cloud services from data centers in Belgium and the Netherlands. "Energy is the starting point, but it is not the whole story," Knaepen explains.

Data centers are continuously optimized for efficiency, while virtualization ensures that capacity is used as effectively as possible. Hardware is increasingly refurbished and reused through a standardized IT Asset Disposition process: in 2025, 72% of the 812 assets processed were successfully refurbished and returned to use, with financial returns looped back into the sustainability roadmap.

"Our goal is to create a closed system," Knaepen says. "The value we recover can be reinvested in initiatives that address long-term carbon minimization." These elements come together in what Cegeka describes as its zero-emissions virtual server: a service that integrates renewable energy, efficient infrastructure, and circular hardware into a single model for lower-impact computing.

Inclusion as a Constant

Beyond environmental impact, ESG at Cegeka remains closely tied to how people work together. Inclusion is approached as a practical requirement for performance, particularly in a company that operates across countries and cultures. "Our teams bring different perspectives by default," Knaepen says. "Making sure those perspectives are heard and used is both a daily practice and a constant discipline."

That is reflected in ongoing investments in intercultural awareness, leadership capabilities, and special attention to fair treatment, gender equality and neurodiversity, not as isolated initiatives, but as a steady effort to strengthen how teams collaborate day to day.

Staying Ahead of the Curve

For Knaepen, the common thread is consistency. ESG is not a program with a defined end state, but a discipline that evolves alongside the business. "The context keeps changing, be it technology, regulation or client expectations," he says. "Our role is to stay ahead of that curve and keep improving."

As those expectations become more explicit in client conversations, the emphasis on execution only increases. "Clients want clarity. They want to understand what is behind the claims and how it translates into the services they use. That is where Cegeka is positioning itself, not at the level of ambition, but at the level of delivery."

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Tom Knaepen, Chief Sustainability Officer

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Cegeka Brands

Ready to Scale

A Conversation with Tom Niehaus, CEO CTG US



Two years into the Cegeka family, CTG US is hitting its stride. With a growing portfolio of wins in healthcare, a maturing SOC, and a set of AI partnerships that signal where the business is heading, CTG is moving with purpose. Tom Niehaus, now carrying the title of CEO, sat down to reflect on a year of momentum.

Lifting the Team

Tom Niehaus's title changed this year. His responsibilities did not. "What changed is the signal it sends to the market," he says. "It lifts CTG's credibility, with clients, with partners, with the talent we want to attract. And that lifts everyone on the team." His job, as he puts it, is to be an enabler: give the team clarity so they can move fast and make decisions. "The reputation is there. The qualifications are there. So is the access."

Winning Where It Counts

The numbers back the confidence. Energy delivered 12% growth, driven by demand for grid modernization and digital transformation. In logistics and manufacturing, CTG now runs software supporting over 200,000 warehouses for a major food and beverage player. In healthcare, the work on EHR interoperability and Epic support continues to deepen.

The SOC's strength comes from several directions, but one capability stands out: OT/IT alignment.

A Maturing Cybersecurity Practice

The Security Operations Center (SOC) that opened last year in the US is now fully operational, and attracting strategic clients. Baptist Health signed on as CTG's top new managed security services client. A second landmark healthcare organization followed, with two competitive wins including a contract for Identity and Access Management. "These are strategic accounts," Niehaus says. "They validate our positioning in a market that is under real pressure on cyber."

The SOC's strength comes from several directions, but one capability stands out: OT/IT alignment. CTG brought in a seasoned healthcare CISO with deep operational technology experience — a deliberate hire. "The dedicated OT competence center within the SOC brings together specialists who understand the unique risks of these environments. It's a high-risk, high-impact area," Niehaus says.

The Hippocratic Partnership

"The most forward-looking move we made this year was choosing the right partner to help address one of healthcare's most persistent realities: demand keeps outpacing workforce supply," he continues. "That decision led us to Hippocratic AI, a company with technology purpose-built for healthcare, operating at real scale, in real clinical environments, and with safety and specialization based on 41 contributing large language models and over 180 million patient interactions."

The most forward-looking move we made this year was choosing to partner with Hippocratic AI.

The first joint use case is taking shape around the service desk: automating workflows, enabling patient interaction at scale, handling appointment reminders, transport coordination, follow-up outreach. "It's early days," Niehaus says, "but the business opportunity is significant." Hippocratic AI's recent launch of their omnichannel AI front door takes this a step further, fundamentally changing how access, navigation, and support are delivered across providers, payers, and life sciences.

CTG US also collaborates with AWS, focused on the same domain. Niehaus: "These technology partnerships are demonstrating what's possible when AI is purpose-built for the industries and clients we serve. They reflect our approach to innovation: outcome-focused, scalable, and centered on solving the problems that matter most to our clients."

"We have strong positions across our key verticals. We have a SOC that's proving itself. We have AI partnerships that open genuinely new territory. And we have a team that knows how to move fast. The pieces are in place. Now we scale," Niehaus concludes.



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We have strong positions across our key verticals. We have a SOC that’s proving itself. We have AI partnerships that open genuinely new territory. And we have a team that knows how to move fast. The pieces are in place. Now we scale.

Tom Niehaus, CEO CTG US

New Horizons, New Logos

A Conversation with Manuel Pallage, CEO NSI

Manuel Pallage looks back on a strong year: a deeper global footprint, a standout ERP business, and an AI order book that's filling fast. What sets NSI apart? "We are large enough to handle things, small enough to care, and we shape ourselves entirely around our clients' reality."



More Than a Foothold

NSI started as Cegeka's foothold in Francophone Belgium. Today, with more than 1,800 people across Belux, France, and Canada, it is rather more than a foothold, and 2025 made that abundantly clear.

Much of the year's energy went into the CTG integration. "Not only did we successfully bring all French-speaking CTG entities into the Cegeka fold, we also used the momentum to expand their portfolios," says Pallage. Microsoft Dynamics 365 is now serving pharma and life sciences in France. In Canada, a dedicated team has been built around Odoo, the successful open-source ERP that has taken root in the SMB-heavy market there. Atlassian and IBM Solutions & Services are moving internationally as well.

We successfully brought all French-speaking CTG entities into the Cegeka fold and used the momentum to expand their portfolios.

ERP and AI: The Twin Engines

ERP was a standout performer. “Many new logos, significant new hires,” Pallage says. “And it is our vertical knowledge that makes the difference, in pharma, food and beverages, logistics, to name just three in the Dynamics business. In-depth sector expertise is not something you build quickly. The value it brings, shows in our client relationships.” In Odoo, NSI holds a strong position in the public sector, which lost some momentum in the final quarter of 2025 but found its feet again heading into 2026.

Our focus is on AI that demonstrably drives productivity and efficiency — nothing less.

AI is fast becoming the second engine. Pallage is not interested in AI for its own sake: “Our focus is on AI that demonstrably drives productivity and efficiency; nothing less.” An example: NSI has built an AI Agent that runs the after-sales operation for car dealerships. Clients report operational costs falling by 30 to 40 percent, with revenue opportunities that would previously have slipped through the cracks now surfacing automatically. “That is the kind of AI I believe in: it puts clear value on the table.”

The Sovereignty Debate

Luxembourg is one of Europe’s leading financial centers, and that makes digital sovereignty a live issue. NSI has over 600 people there and more than 300 clients in the sector, where the question of where data lives and who controls it is anything but theoretical. “That’s why we invested one million euros in a sovereign cloud platform, built on IBM software and designed from the ground up to host AI solutions,” Pallage says. “The topic is at its peak in Luxembourg right now. We made sure we were ready.”

We invested one million euros in a sovereign cloud platform, built on IBM software and designed from the ground up to host AI solutions.

NIS2 Without the Panic

NSI’s cybersecurity practice is built around NIS2 audits for SMBs, a market with strong and growing demand. But not every engagement starts like this. “When a business gets hit, we also get the call. In those moments, you have the full attention of the boardroom, and you get to show what you are made of.”

Pallage knows the value of that moment, but he knows where he would rather be. “We would much rather help organizations build resilience before a crisis hits. That is what our end-to-end offering, from prevention to recovery, is designed for.”



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We invested one million euros in a sovereign cloud platform, built on IBM software and designed from the ground up to host AI solutions.

Manuel Pallage, CEO NSI

nexuzhealth

Care Beyond Boundaries

A Conversation with Gertie Delande, CEO Nexuzhealth

Gertie Delande has led Nexuzhealth through years of steady, principled growth. But ask her what keeps her thinking, and she doesn't reach for the numbers. The real question, she says, is how care flows, across institutions, across care lines, across walls, but always with the patient at the heart of things. For Nexuzhealth, that question shapes everything.



A Platform in Motion

Nexuzhealth has expanded far beyond its hospital roots, evolving into a comprehensive healthcare ecosystem. While it continues to serve over 40 hospitals across Flanders, its reach now extends into the broader healthcare landscape. The scale of this transformation is evident in the numbers: the Mynexuzhealth patient app has crossed the 1.6 million user mark, while Nexuzhealth Consult is now the tool of choice for over 2,450 General Practitioners, fueling a growth rate of nearly 10% in 2025.

This momentum is sustained by targeted expansion into specialized segments. This includes Nexuzhealth Doctor, a fully-fledged Electronic Health Record (EHR) tailored specifically for GPs, and Nexuzhealth Nurse, a dedicated EHR for home care that is being developed in co-creation with Wit-Gele Kruis — Flanders' leading home care organization — as its first client, rolling out across several provinces.

"We are no longer just a hospital system," Delande notes. "We are a full-spectrum care ecosystem." For Nexuzhealth Hospital (a rebrand of what was formerly known as the Clinical Workstation), expanding into Wallonia and Brussels is the next logical step. Nexuzhealth Lab already has a wider footprint: the platform serves 20 laboratories across Belgium and beyond, including Viollier in Switzerland.

For hospitals, the primary driver is business continuity; they require systems that remain operational under any circumstances.

Business Continuity First

Nexuzhealth Hospital is moving towards a hybrid model: on-premises infrastructure anchors stability and reliability, while public cloud services are being brought in selectively to enable pragmatic innovation. AI is among the most promising opportunities that opens up.

For clients, the primary driver is business continuity; they require systems that remain operational under any circumstances. However, to stay competitive, they must also embrace modern advancements. "These two priorities aren't in conflict," Delande notes, "provided you are thoughtful about the architecture."

Pragmatic AI

Nexuzhealth now supports the integration of ambient speech technology from a growing list of vendors, giving hospitals the flexibility to choose their preferred hardware and software while Nexuzhealth manages the heavy lifting on the backend. The core objective is to ensure that clinical dialogue is captured and saved directly into the system as structured data rather than remaining as unstructured, free-floating text.

Ambient speech technology is one of several AI-driven projects Nexuzhealth is currently rolling out, and a good illustration of how the company approaches AI adoption more broadly: it is only deployed where it demonstrably adds value, whether in clinical efficiency or quality of patient care.

"By ensuring nothing lands in a separate, siloed system, we guarantee that data ends up exactly where it belongs, in the correct format, and fully ready for reuse," Delande explains. This commitment to standardization doesn't just streamline domestic workflows; it actively facilitates cross-border collaboration by ensuring medical information is prepared for seamless, standardized exchange.

Care Beyond Boundaries

As hospitals move toward shorter stays and earlier discharges, a patient's medical information must follow them seamlessly across every handover. "The common misunderstanding is that connected care is a technology story," Delande says. "It isn't. It's a story about agreements and collaboration, deciding who needs to know what, who owns the data, and who is ultimately responsible at each stage."

The common misunderstanding is that connected care is a technology story. It isn't. It's a story about agreements and collaboration.

The Nexuzhealth ecosystem is engineered specifically to accelerate the transition to 'care beyond boundaries' by unifying hospitals, GPs, labs and home care providers onto a single integrated platform, keeping the patient at the center of the journey. Delande's vision for success is clear: "When terms like 'connected care' no longer need to exist because they have simply become the standard way of working, we will have achieved our true goal."



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When terms like ‘connected care’ no longer need to exist because they have simply become the standard way of working, we will have achieved our true goal.

Gertie Delande, CEO Nexuzhealth

SMARTSCHOOL

Proudly Sovereign

A Conversation with Jan Schuer, CEO Smartschool

Jan Schuer, founder and CEO of Smartschool, Belgium's leading digital education platform, puts it plainly: "Digital sovereignty is the phrase on everyone's lips right now. But let me tell you: Smartschool has been digitally autonomous since day one. That consistency makes our position more relevant than ever."



Three Million Users

Smartschool now serves three million unique users across Belgium, with over one million logging in every single day. Over the past year, the platform has extended its footprint into primary education and deepened its presence in Wallonia, two milestones that reflect deliberate, principled expansion rather than growth for its own sake.

Schuer reflects on the journey with quiet pride: "When we started building Smartschool over two decades

ago, we worked from a set of guiding principles that still hold today: a platform built locally, shaped to local needs, with data stored in local data centers and maximum autonomy for schools in how they implement it. Those principles have guided every decision since. They also are the keys to our success."

Digital sovereignty has been in our DNA since the very beginning.

Sovereignty in the DNA

Digital sovereignty dominates today's headlines. At Smartschool, it has been in the DNA right from the beginning.

"Smartschool doesn't follow trends," Schuer says. "When cloud was the buzzword and everyone was shipping data and workload off to remote servers, Smartschool held its ground: Belgian servers, Belgian soil. People raised eyebrows at the time, questioning whether we were 'with the times', but I persisted." Smartschool's data is hosted in data centers in Brussels and Hasselt. "I would happily put up a billboard to say so."

That choice comes with some trade-offs, but he is clear about where the balance falls. "With public cloud, you are entirely dependent on your provider's resources and pricing models. COVID made that painfully obvious: when demand suddenly spiked, scaling up wasn't simply a matter of turning on a tap. Capacity had to be negotiated, not assumed." His position is equally unambiguous on the broader principle: "I refuse to let Smartschool become a digital colony of another nation. Not with our users' data."

This commitment to sovereignty also defines Smartschool's approach to innovation: "What we need are safe, sandboxed environments that allow responsible innovation with greater regulatory flexibility, without ever compromising security or privacy."

If It Works, Don't Fix It

Meanwhile, Smartschool continues building toward a robust digital transformation, a four-year roadmap that introduces new functionality step by step, without disrupting what already works. It is a philosophy grounded in respect for the platform's users.

If it works, we don't fix it. That's not complacency. It's the feedback I hear most often from the field.

"If it works, we don't fix it," Schuer says. "That's not complacency. It's the feedback I hear most often from the field: this works well, don't change it." That discipline applies even to small things: for instance, the platform's color palette has remained unchanged for years, a quiet signal that stability is a choice, not an oversight.

The same thinking underpins the platform's relationship with schools. Smartschool enforces as little as possible and pre-configures as little as possible. "Schools know their own needs best. Our platform's job is to empower them, not to prescribe," says Schuer. Twenty-five years later, that instinct to step back and trust the people closest to the classroom remains as deliberate as ever.



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Jan Schuer, CEO Smartschool

03

Making Business Impact, Everywhere



Steering Through the Shift: How VDAB Is Navigating Complexity and Change

VDAB is the public employment service of the Flanders region in Belgium, connecting hundreds of thousands of people with the labor market every year. Steering the technology behind this mission is Jan Dobbenie, who joined as CIO in 2018. His mandate is a balancing act: modernizing a public institution under scrutiny while ensuring the digital foundations remain rock-solid.

Bringing a wealth of experience from senior leadership roles at global giants like AB InBev, Dobbenie is no stranger to large-scale complexity. However, his current mandate involves a unique set of pressures: a shifting political reality, an €80 million cost-cutting program, and a technology landscape he describes as "possibly among the most intricate he has encountered."

Meeting a New Reality

To understand VDAB's technology roadmap, you need to understand the political reality it operates in. As of 2026, unemployment benefits in Belgium are capped at two years, a shift that hit with immediate force. In January, 20,000 people lost their benefits, with the total expected to reach 60,000 by year-end. This influx, including those transitioning from long-term illness or living-wage systems, adds to the 200,000 people already on the books. "In total, we're likely talking about 600,000 people in Belgium, two-thirds of whom are in Flanders," Dobbenie notes. This surge arrives just as VDAB is absorbing structural savings of €20 million per year, for four years running. "Our room to maneuver is much smaller than people think," he admits.

The response to this pressure has been a deliberate narrowing of focus. "We are transitioning from a traditional long-term roadmap to a strategy that is more directly responsive to this new reality," Dobbenie explains. That shift demands hard choices, and some initiatives have been sidelined to ensure every resource is directed toward the primary mission of activation.

“Rather than building a broad data platform for the entire labor market, we are now laser focused on leveraging the specific data that actually drives people back to work.”

Quietly Pioneering

Managing this level of complexity against a surge in users demands more than traditional IT. While much of the world is only now waking up to the potential of AI in government, VDAB has been a quiet pioneer for years. The journey began with machine learning models designed to improve job matching and job reach, which have since evolved into a live evaluation tool used within the VDAB call center to score the placement difficulty of individuals.

AI is a high-speed train. The longer you wait to get on, the harder it becomes to catch. Best to make sure you are on board from the start.

The next phase is operational: linking these scores to partner financing to ensure those tackling the most challenging profiles are compensated for the extra effort. Beyond these core models, VDAB is also experimenting with GenAI tools like Claude to transcribe and process the nuance of complex intake conversations.

This level of innovation often stands in sharp contrast to the organization’s public image. “We are often in the news when the going gets tough,” Dobbenie admits. “I understand that, but I regret it. Peers worldwide see us as a pioneer and an example. Some travel from the other side of the globe to come and see what we do. That is a story that doesn’t get told enough.”

For Dobbenie, staying ahead is not about prestige. “Frankly? AI is a high-speed train. The longer you wait to get on, the harder it becomes to catch. Best to make sure you are on board from the very start.”

Complexity under Control

With over 1,200 servers and some 360 applications, the VDAB IT landscape is a massive mix of custom builds, SaaS, and a long tail of legacy systems. To manage this, Dobbenie enforces a strict hygiene rule: every time a business process is renewed, the underlying technology must be modernized as part of the project. “It makes every project a little bigger,” he says, “but the alternative is piling up technical debt, and that’s worse.”

With over 1,200 servers and some 360 applications, the IT landscape is a massive mix of custom builds, SaaS, and a long tail of legacy systems.

To maintain this engine, Cegeka won the public tender to become VDAB’s strategic IT partner in 2024. The mission is broad: providing the technical, process, and architectural support to ensure an up-to-date, performant, and reliable application infrastructure for all VDAB employees and external clients.

In practice, this means managing and supporting hybrid and multi-site environments, from storage and backup to datacenter networks, to achieve seamless end-to-end ICT service delivery. Having already built a strong collaboration in software development in previous years, this tender cemented Cegeka’s position as a strategic partner for VDAB.

One Team

Currently, over 45 Cegeka consultants are embedded within VDAB’s software factory and AI teams, working as equals alongside internal staff. Ensuring total equality across the workforce is a point of principle for Dobbenie. “You have to stop looking at the cost of a person and start looking at the value they create,” he says, acknowledging that he is often a “lone voice in the desert” on this topic. “Externals bring expertise and an outsider perspective that is simply essential to our momentum.”

Many of my peers who went all-in on the cloud are now envying my on-premise strategy.

Looking back, he is satisfied Cegeka won the tender. “Cegeka is a solid, Belgian party. In these times, sovereignty matters.” While VDAB leverages SaaS for CRM, AWS for specific (anonymized) AI workloads, and Google Cloud for G Suite, most applications remain anchored in private datacenters. “Many of my peers who went all-in on the cloud are now envying my on-premise strategy,” Dobbenie notes. “Cloud is not wrong, but sovereignty and pricing are very real concerns that you cannot ignore.”

As a leader shaped by the corporate world, he views every tech decision through a business lens, looking for partners that can handle both the vision and the grind. “What I value in Cegeka is that they do the complex things well, but they also master the daily operations. They bring us knowledge of how others are becoming more efficient. That is not just a contract; that is a real partnership.”



Trust Is the New Currency

A Conversation with Gregory Verlinden, Global VP Data & AI

When Gregory Verlinden joined Cegeka in April 2025, the question on every client's mind was how to get value from AI, responsibly. A year on, that question has grown to include a second one: how to retain control. Budgets are under pressure, geopolitics are rewriting the rules of digitization, and the all-in public cloud logic of the past decade is visibly fraying. For Verlinden, this is a fundamental tectonic shift in how European enterprises must build for the future.



Catching Up to Reality

"The last century was about growth, powered by technology. Today, that's under pressure. Geopolitics is unpredictable, AI is set to take over half of knowledge work, and hardware and energy are scarce. Our data and AI tools are still mostly built outside Europe. These are not abstract risks, clients talk about them with us every day."

We always said the future would be hybrid. The market is now catching up to that reality.

The result is a profound recalibration. The assumption that public cloud was the default destination — dominant thinking for the better part of a decade — and that data and AI could simply follow, is no longer holding up. “We always said the future would be hybrid,” Verlinden says. “The market is now catching up to that reality.”

Fifty Shades of Sovereignty

Sovereignty has rapidly migrated from policy whitepapers onto boardroom agendas. The European Commission’s Cloud Sovereignty Framework, published in October 2025, brought some much-needed clarity: eight measurable dimensions of sovereignty, each scored from zero to four. “For the first time, we have a clear, quantifiable definition,” Verlinden says. “Not politics, but a tool we can use. At Cegeka, that’s our starting point.”

From that assessment, a picture emerges of what each organization needs: where data must sit, what compliance requirements apply, what level of operational autonomy is genuinely non-negotiable. Cegeka describes the resulting landscape as ‘fifty shades of sovereignty’, a spectrum stretching from the major hyperscalers at one end, to fully private environments at the other.

“Every week, there is a new option between the extremes, “ Verlinden says. “Our job is not to push clients to a specific solution, but to help them set knockout criteria and make the right call. We cover the full spectrum, are not tied to one technology, and have the expertise to find the right fit and move as that fit changes.”

The depth of that commitment shows in the partnerships behind it. Cegeka is among the first European providers of IBM Sovereign Core and combines HPE infrastructure with the Morpheus platform for hybrid cloud governance. Verlinden: “We work with the major hyperscalers, run our own data centers in Europe, and can go full open source when needed.”

We work with the major hyperscalers, run our own data centers in Europe, and can go full open source when needed.

The Agentic Enterprise

Looking toward the horizon, Verlinden identifies three lenses that will shape the next five years. The first is the evolution of knowledge workers. “It is sobering, but I am convinced that soon, roughly half of today’s white-collar tasks will be handled by AI agents.” The second is cost and control. “As legacy systems continue to consume budget and data infrastructure grows more expensive, the pressure to demonstrate value will only intensify.” The third is the shift from reactive to proactive AI. “We already see this in healthcare. Prevention is replacing cure.”

It is sobering, but I am convinced that soon, roughly half of today’s white-collar tasks will be handled by AI agents.

All three lenses converge on what Verlinden calls the agentic enterprise: an organization where every knowledge worker operates alongside a growing layer of specialized agents — tools that carry role-specific context, operate within the company’s ethical guardrails, and interact fluidly with both people and each other. “An HR team managing five thousand people today will soon manage many more, humans and agents alike. The enterprise architecture of the future must treat agents as full participants, not add-ons. This is not science fiction. It is the operational reality we are preparing clients for.”

Building to Last

Cegeka’s data and AI practice is built around centers of excellence and deliberate bets on Microsoft Fabric, Databricks and Snowflake, alongside a strong commitment to open source. None of it works, however, without the right foundations. Master data management, end-to-end governance, full observability over where every data element sits and why: These are the non-negotiables. “Clients increasingly ask us to take end-to-end ownership of that layer,” Verlinden says. “And we do.”

“We are not always the biggest. We choose where to be the best and deliver. That gives clients confidence, not just in what we do today, but in where we are headed. In the end, trust is the new currency. You earn it when the foundations are solid and the business value is real.”





Building the Data Foundation for TU/e, a University in Motion

"We partnered with Cegeka to make a fundamental shift," says Jeroen Bovend'eerdt, Product Owner BI, Analytics & Data Coordination at Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e). "We moved from a traditional BI approach where every data request filtered through my team, to one that treats data as a strategic asset, with Databricks as the foundation and self-service at its core."

Few universities in Europe are as deeply woven into the fabric of industry as TU/e. Founded in 1957 in what was then Philips' backyard, the university has spent nearly seven decades producing the researchers who power some of the continent's most advanced companies. ASML, DAF, Vanderlande, Philips and thousands of suppliers, combined in the Brainport ecosystem, are still on its doorstep today. With 13,500 students, 5,000 employees and nine departments, TU/e holds itself to high standards.

That standard now carries higher stakes than ever. TU/e plays a pivotal role in the Beethoven program — a €2.5 billion Dutch national investment to secure Europe's position in the global semiconductor industry. To feed the talent pipeline that companies like ASML urgently need, the university must expand its programs and research facilities at pace, and to steer that growth with confidence, it needed to trade legacy reporting for a modern data strategy.

Moving Beyond the Queue

Since 2018, TU/e had relied on a centralized BI program built on a fairly traditional Microsoft SQL data warehouse, supporting departments such as HR, finance, research and facilities. But the central BI team found itself perpetually overwhelmed.

"Demand always exceeded capacity," Bovend'eerdt recalls. "We were constantly prioritizing and playing catch-up. Every report, every dashboard, every data request joined the same long queue. It was a problem of

architecture as much as capacity — adding headcount alone was never going to solve it." Strict privacy compliance requirements added further pressure to find a structural solution.

The BI team found itself perpetually overwhelmed. Demand always exceeded capacity.

The Self-Service Shift

The answer wasn't incremental; it required a fundamental rethink. Working with Cegeka, TU/e built a new platform with Databricks on Azure, and pivoted toward a data mesh model in which departments build their own data products.

"In practical terms, this means true self-service," Bovend'eerdt explains. "Any department with Power BI knowledge no longer needs to submit a request and wait in line. They build and publish their own reports. They are now in the driver's seat, determining their own development speed. Our role has shifted from bottleneck to backbone: we unlock the data, set the standards, and maintain the infrastructure rather than serving reports one by one."

The platform was built for the long horizon, with sandbox environments for researchers and genuine AI integration from the start. "These are not nice-to-haves for an institution that takes data science seriously," Bovend'eerdt says.

Our role has shifted from bottleneck to backbone: we unlock the data, set the standards, and maintain the infrastructure.

Combing Through CVs

The choice of Cegeka as a partner reflected the university's own technical culture. "We really combed through those CVs and spoke at length with the technical specialists," Bovend'eerdt explains. "Cegeka's profiles were impressive and helped seal the deal."

What also sealed the partnership was Cegeka's willingness to work within the TU/e vision. Where a standard approach would have included Azure Data Factory for data ingestion, TU/e insisted on a single, coherent platform built directly in Databricks. "We wanted everything in one place with minimal tooling diversity. Cegeka agreed and delivered," says Bovend'eerdt.

Cegeka's profiles were impressive and helped seal the deal.

The resulting migration was a complete re-architecture: dismantling a legacy environment built on SQL Server, Visual Studio, and Azure Data Factory, and rebuilding it as a full Databricks data platform. Throughout the process, everyone worked shoulder to shoulder. "Extremely knowledgeable, flexible, and frankly reachable at all hours," Bovend'eerdt says of the Cegeka team.

Faster, Cleaner, Compliant

The outcomes are already visible. Departments now set their own pace, and data quality has improved because ownership creates accountability. Teams can also share datasets directly with one another without being heavily dependant on the central team.

The system is now fully privacy-compliant. "That compliance is enabled by an AI-powered classification tool embedded in the Databricks platform," Bovend'eerdt says. "It automatically scans datasets for privacy-sensitive information, not just in structured fields, but in unstructured ones too, including free-text comment fields. Where sensitive data is found, it is pseudonymized, with access configurable by role."

With the platform in place, TU/e is already building a dedicated Beethoven dashboard to track its role in the semiconductor talent pipeline. "It gives our Board a clear view of where we stand against specific Beethoven goals — budgeting, student retention, and so on. This is significantly easier and faster than in the old setup."

"We are now ready to put AI agents at work to build self-service data models at lightning speed and help end-users easily find the reports that they didn't know existed!"



Prepared by Design

A Conversation with Fabrice Wynants, Global VP Security, Networking & Compliance

Led by Fabrice Wynants, Cegeka's Security, Networking & Compliance division had a standout 2025. Driven by NIS2 adoption, demand for managed services outpaced the market, while US operations expanded. To cap it off, Cegeka's Security Services topped the Whitelane BELUX ranking for the fourth consecutive year.

"Cybersecurity has always been built on trust, perhaps more so than any other IT domain," Wynants says. "Ranking number one in Whitelane tells me we are earning that trust, every single day. This recognition is a clear endorsement of our approach: laser focus on service excellence and client outcomes, not just technology."

Pulled in All Directions

Today's CISOs are being pulled in more directions than ever. With AI adoption expanding the threat surface, regulatory frameworks like NIS2 demanding constant compliance, and geopolitical tensions forcing a total rethink of digital dependency, cybersecurity is in the boardroom to stay.

"The operational workload remains relentless," Wynants observes. "Detection and response need to run 24/7. Specialized talent is scarce, and staying ahead of the curve is a massive undertaking. For most organizations, carrying the full weight of that reality in-house is becoming unsustainable."



The sovereignty debate raised awareness on privacy and security in one fell swoop.

This pressure has also fundamentally rewritten the sovereignty conversation. Where IT leaders once had to campaign to explain the risks of data location and vendor dependencies, the current climate has changed that. “The sovereignty debate raised awareness on privacy and security in one fell swoop,” Wynants says. “It accomplished more in months than years of evangelizing ever did.”

Foundational Measures First

Headlines focus on the spectacular, but behind those narratives lie the same persistent ‘basic’ flaws: unpatched systems, excessive or outdated access, and unmonitored OT environments. “Working on foundational measures isn’t glamorous,” Wynants admits, “but it’s often what decides whether an organization weathers an attack, or not. Organizations often spend significant budgets on a state-of-the-art point solution when there are foundational issues that need attention more urgently.”

Cegeka translates that work into a cohesive operation. “Through our Modern Security Operations Centers (SOCs) and our Cegeka Security Advisory Framework (CSAF), we integrate Vulnerability Management, Identity & Access Management (IAM) and threat detection, response, and recovery into one continuous program rather than a series of disconnected activities. It’s simple really: Cyber resilience is never finished. It is an ongoing journey and a moving target.”

In particular, demand for managed IAM services has accelerated sharply since mid-2024, driven by stricter requirements for privileged access, greater scrutiny on identity governance, and a threat landscape where stolen credentials have become attackers’ preferred entry point. “Identity as the new perimeter is no longer just a catchy slogan,” Wynants says. “It is the reality of the landscape today.”

Working on foundational measures isn’t glamorous, but it’s often what decides whether an organization weathers an attack, or not.

Innovation in Motion

Coming into 2026, the team’s momentum showed no signs of slowing. At the RSA Conference in April, Cegeka launched the Cyber Resilience Dashboard as part of the CSAF advisory service. “This new dashboard provides organizations with continuous, board-level visibility into their security maturity, turning complex assessments and roadmap progress into a clear score that supports executive decision-making and tracks NIS2 readiness over time.”

At Cybersec Europe in May, advanced Cyber Recovery capabilities were launched. “The focus here is on genuine resilience,” Wynants says. “By integrating verified clean restore points with deep expertise across both legacy and modern environments, the service ensures that recovery is not an experiment, but a structured, tested, and reliable process, prepared well before an incident ever occurs.”

‘Identity as the new perimeter’ is no longer just a catchy slogan. It is the reality of the landscape today.

Beyond these launches, the division remains deeply active in the wider security community, and Wynants is particularly proud of that. “Our SOC sees 24/7 what is moving through the threat landscape, and we share what we find,” he explains. Recent findings include the identification of a trojanized PDF editor and a previously undocumented malware variant named ‘StealeriumPy.’

Last but not least, the CTG US security business is also ramping up. Since launching at RSA last year, the US team is securing successes across the Modern SOC, Identity and Access Management, and CSAF.

The Elephant in the Room

Then there is the elephant in the room: AI. “Adversaries have not just added AI to their toolkit, they have mastered it,” Wynants notes. “Attacks are faster, more targeted, and more convincing than ever before. The sheer volume of what security operations face is unprecedented. As defenders, we do not just need to keep pace. We need to stay one step ahead, always.”

Cegeka responds through its SOC operations. Here, AI ‘instruments’ SOC workflows to handle triage, enrich incident context, and process telemetry at a scale no human team could sustain alone. “Agentic AI in our SOC drives real efficiency,” Wynants says. “It allows analysts to focus on genuine judgment, while the routine heavy lifting is handled with greater speed and accuracy.”

Effective cyber resilience today demands an integrated command of both the security domain and the IT environment beneath it. This kind of understanding only comes from operating complete, end-to-end stacks over time. “That is precisely where Cegeka sits,” Wynants concludes. “And it is not something that can be built or replicated overnight.”



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Adversaries have not just added AI to their toolkit, they have mastered it. As defenders, we do not just need to keep pace. We need to stay one step ahead, always.

Fabrice Wynants, Global VP Security, Networking & Compliance



Always On: How BioFirst Group Secures a Living Inventory Globally

"When I presented IT strategy to shareholders eight years ago, cybersecurity was just something I'd routinely tuck away on the very last slide," says Guido Peeters, ICT Group Director at BioFirst Group. "Today, I open with it, and it takes up half my presentation."

That shift in focus reflects the explosive growth of BioFirst Group. What began in 1987 as Biobest, a pioneer in bumblebee pollination, is now a global powerhouse spanning four key brands: Biobest, BioWorks, Plant Products, and Biotrop. With 3,000 employees and 35 subsidiaries worldwide, the stakes are high. In this business, a security breach doesn't just crash a server; it threatens a living inventory.

High Stakes

BioFirst works with living organisms like bees, fungi, and biological agents destined for horticulture, specialty crops and open-field agriculture. Because these products are alive, they exist on a terminal clock.

"Our supply chain is short and incredibly time-sensitive," Peeters explains. "Disruption doesn't just mean a delay, it means the waste of living inventory. If a customer's window closes because of a delivery failure, the damage is double. The product is lost and the harvest is at risk."

Disruption doesn't just mean a delay, it means the waste of living inventory.

This reliability is the foundation of their business model. At BioFirst, customer intimacy is defined by a simple standard: delivery as promised. "Customers need to be able to count on the fact that when they order, it will actually be there," Peeters says.

The Complexity of a Global Footprint

Managing a group of 35 companies, some inherited through rapid acquisition, is a major structural hurdle. Peeters has spent years standardizing the backbone, including firewalls, ERP systems, and a common Microsoft 365 and Azure environment.

“Without that foundation, achieving uniform security maturity across newly acquired companies is very difficult,” he explains. “Acquisitions are high-exposure moments where new users and connections create openings for an attack, often while attention is pulled in every direction.”

The environment is also technically sophisticated. Beyond biological operations, BioFirst develops digital tools, including automated monitoring and decision-support solutions, that use imaging and AI-driven data analysis to interpret crop data. This provides growers with continuous insights, enabling more informed and timely decisions.

Enter the Cegeka SOC

BioFirst did not have the personnel to manage all security operations internally, nor did it want to grow the IT team in that direction. “We were looking for a partner who could watch over our environment 24/7, but with the triage expertise to filter out the noise so we only got alerted when it really matters,” Peeters says.

“We also needed them to be able to actually step in and block a compromised user or service on the spot. Attacks usually happen right as everyone is heading home for the day, and while we already had alerts in place, trying to manage that kind of around-the-clock response ourselves just wasn’t viable.”

After evaluating several international providers, Cegeka’s Modern SOC solutions stood out. “Cegeka brought a full team of experts covering a broad spectrum of cybersecurity. Each was clearly an expert in their field, and they worked well together.” Through Cegeka’s CISO Office-as-a-Service (part of Cegeka Security Advisory Framework), BioFirst gains on-demand access to specialized expertise and security assessments.

> Through Cegeka’s CISO Office-as-a-Service, BioFirst gains on-demand access to specialized expertise and security assessments.

Peace of Mind

The implementation moved quickly. Discussions began in the second quarter of 2024, and by September, the SOC, leveraging Microsoft Defender XDR, was live. “It exceeded our expectations,” Peeters says. “Even during the two-week test period, it had already started to pay off. We feared we would still need to examine numerous alerts ourselves, but that wasn’t the case. We receive only a few requests daily.”

The value goes beyond incident response. Cegeka’s SOC team proactively recommends more secure configurations by identifying an event, handling it, and drawing insights to prevent similar issues. “They handle it without us having to look, and then tell us how to avoid it happening again,” Peeters says.

> In grey zone situations where a task might not be explicitly in the contract, Cegeka has never let us down.

He also values the way Cegeka works with the organization. “Some suppliers see us as a large company with 3,000 employees. But we are essentially a conglomerate of SMEs. Cegeka has the flexibility to communicate not just with our central IT department but with our local teams as well.” That flexibility extends to the commercial relationship. “In grey zone situations where a task might not be explicitly in the contract, Cegeka has never let us down.”

For Peeters, the ultimate metric is peace of mind. “When we acquire a new company, I know that with Cegeka’s support, we can bring it up to our expected security maturity level fast.” For a business where a delayed shipment means a broken promise, that peace of mind is crucial.



Taking Control of Your Own Destiny

A Conversation with Gaetan Willems, Global VP Cloud & Digital Platforms

Gaetan Willems, Global VP Cloud & Digital Platforms, has a clear view of where the cloud debate stands, and where it is heading. As digital sovereignty moves from policy circles into the boardroom, he explains why the old answers no longer suffice and how Cegeka is helping clients navigate an increasingly volatile landscape.



Shifting Focus

2025 was not an easy year for IT organizations. Budget pressure was widespread, and the market continued its gradual but unmistakable shift toward adaptable cloud and digital platforms in direct service of business outcomes.

“The questions clients are asking have changed,” Willems says. “It’s no longer just about running IT efficiently. It’s about building the right platform for what comes next in a world that is politically and technologically unpredictable. That volatility has given renewed urgency to a subject Cegeka has been tracking for years: digital sovereignty.”

A Debate That Grew Up

Sovereignty started as a policy topic around 2018, centered on keeping European data within European borders. Since then, the conversation has broadened. The invasion of Ukraine, shifting geopolitics, and (more recently) large-scale hyperscaler outages have forced organizations to confront their own digital fragility. “The alliances of today are not necessarily those of tomorrow,” Willems says. “Clients ask us: Who can we trust?”

The alliances of today are not necessarily those of tomorrow. Clients ask us: Who can we trust?

“Data privacy remains a central concern. But there are other questions too. When those alliances shift, what happens to digital foundations built on non-European platforms? Organizations that concentrated everything with a single hyperscaler are discovering today how fragile that position can be. And underneath all of it runs a deeper unease about how dependent we have become on technology we do not control, at a moment when AI compute costs are rising and critical infrastructure is under strain.”

The result is a fundamental shift in how clients approach cloud decisions. The public-cloud-first orthodoxy that dominated the past decade is in clear decline. “Most clients now want to assess every case on its own terms. And that is exactly where we add value,” Willems says.

The European Commission uses its framework to audit its providers, and we are using it as an objective, measurable tool as well.

What brings some clarity is that sovereignty is no longer a fluid concept. The European Commission’s Cloud Sovereignty Framework, published in October 2025, changed that. It defines eight specific objectives, scored from zero to four. “The Commission uses this framework to audit its own providers, and Cegeka is now using it as an objective, measurable tool to help clients make data-driven decisions,” Willems says.

Fifty Shades of Sovereignty

The cloud landscape is not a binary choice between a hyperscaler and a private data center. It is a spectrum — what Cegeka calls ‘fifty shades of sovereignty’. “In between the public-private extremes, is a continuously expanding range of solutions, as major players release new sovereign-adjacent offerings: Azure Sovereign Cloud, Azure Local, Azure Local Disconnected, among others.”

“Every day another shade appears,” he says. At the same time, Cegeka is working to make its own private infrastructure more scalable, through open-source adoption, multi-vendor architecture, and as-a-service hardware consumption models.

The destination, whatever path leads there, is hybrid. The practical question is how to choose well. “The use case, the data requirements, and the regulatory context together define the minimal sovereignty requirements,” Willems says. “From there, we can guide the client to the right cloud environment and the right digital platform. We tell them: Take control of your own destiny — and let us help you make the right choice.”

Staying Relevant

Credibility requires investment. Starting last year, Cegeka has deepened partnerships with HPE, Dynatrace, IBM, Oracle, Red Hat, and Commvault, holds European Launch Partner status for IBM Sovereign Core and is renewing its Microsoft Azure Expert MSP designation.

Clients want a partner who can meet them anywhere on the cloud spectrum and move with them as their needs evolve.

This work is paying off in recognition: Whitelane, an independent research firm, ranked Cegeka second in both Cloud and Infrastructure Services and Network and Connectivity Services in the Belux market, while S-Square placed it in the top three for Cloud and Data Center and Cyber Security.

“The market is recalibrating,” Willems concludes. “Clients want a partner who can meet them anywhere on the spectrum and move with them as their needs evolve. That is what we are built to do.”



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Clients want a partner who can meet them anywhere on the cloud spectrum and move with them as their needs evolve.

Gaetan Willems, Global VP Cloud & Digital Platforms



Riding Ahead: How Bianchi Built an IT Foundation Fit for Its Next Chapter

“We needed to make a real shift,” says Gianfranco Maniglia, COO of Bianchi. “Not just upgrade, but fundamentally rethink how IT supports a company at our scale, moving at our pace.” Together with Cegeka, Bianchi carved out its IT infrastructure from a shared group environment and rebuilt it for the future.

Few brands in any sport carry the weight that Bianchi does in cycling. Founded in Milan by Edoardo Bianchi, it is the oldest bicycle manufacturer in the world still in continuous operation and one of the most recognized. Fausto Coppi. Marco Pantani. The unmistakable Celeste color.

Today, Bianchi is part of Grimaldi Industri Group, operating under its Cycleurope division, and sells tens of thousands of bicycles across more than 60 markets. With around 300 employees — 200 based at the Italian headquarters — and 500+ managed devices in the field, the operational reality behind the heritage is substantial.

COO Gianfranco Maniglia knows something about operational transformation. Before Bianchi, he spent years at Accenture and in the automotive world, at Maserati and Fiat, where rigorous process discipline is the norm. The industry Bianchi operates in, he explains, is a different story. “World-class in product. More traditional in everything else, including IT. There is also a mindset in many conventional businesses, that foundational IT is better handled internally,” he says.

Carve-Out for Agency

The trigger for change was structural. Bianchi had been running on a shared IT tenant with Cycleurope, its sister company within the Grimaldi Group. As Bianchi accelerated its international expansion, including a planned relaunch in the US, that shared infrastructure became a constraint. “Everything was optimized for a different scale and different priorities,” Maniglia explains. “We needed more agency than a shared European setup could offer.”

The IT carve-out was an opportunity to address years of accumulated technical debt.

The decision was made to carve out entirely and build a dedicated, autonomous IT environment, one where security decisions are made against Bianchi’s own risk profile and rolling out a new tool takes hours rather than weeks. “Autonomy isn’t just a governance word,” Maniglia says. “It’s something everyone feels.”

Clearing the Technical Debt

The IT carve-out proved to be an opportunity to address years of accumulated technical debt. Three areas stand out. First, connectivity between sites had been slow and fragmented, with cloud traffic routed through a central hub; a move to SD-WAN gave teams direct, secure access to cloud services. Second, device management had been inconsistent, with machines configured differently depending on their origin; a standardized build through Intune made updates, policies, and onboarding uniform. And finally, the collaboration stack had been aging, with limited storage, outdated permissions, and files exchanged mostly by email attachment. Teams, SharePoint, and OneDrive replaced that entirely.

“These were not just IT improvements,” Maniglia says. “They made daily work more efficient. The Wi-Fi works everywhere. Laptops just work! You smile, but you know how infuriating it is when the basics don’t work. Also: we now collaborate like a single team rather than 20 scattered ones.”

Stepping Up Security

Bianchi’s security posture needed work, but there was no single incident that forced the issue. Rather, a pattern. An uptick in phishing attempts. Inherited controls past their useful life. An expanded international footprint that increased exposure. NIS2 gave the journey a clear, structured rationale.

“The fundamentals are now in place: identity protection, MFA across the board, endpoint security, logging, and monitoring. The gap analysis wasn’t a shock, but it was instructive. Incident response maturity and supply-chain security both needed work. Both now have roadmaps and owners,” Maniglia says.

Shoulder to Shoulder

The partnership with Cegeka was itself a shift. Maniglia is direct about what made it work. “I no longer have the feeling that every burden rests on my shoulders only,” he says. “Having Cegeka by my side changes that. What also stands out is their ability to translate complex technical decisions into business terms, which makes internal alignment easier.” The pace was fast, sometimes faster than the original plan, but the communication held. “Cegeka does not behave like an external vendor. More like an extension of our own team.”

He is equally candid about what he would do differently: stricter prioritization from the start, and earlier investment in change management. “The temptation during a carve-out is to fix everything at once,” he says. “Technology moves fast. People absorb change at different speeds. Bringing everyone along from day one would have made the journey smoother.”

I no longer have the feeling that every burden rests on my shoulders only. Having Cegeka by my side changes that.

What Comes Next

The project didn’t just solve problems, it opened doors. With an autonomous, modernized infrastructure in place, Bianchi can now build the digital ecosystem Maniglia envisions: a fully integrated supply chain, a CPQ/PLM/ERP backbone for global product lifecycle management, advanced analytics for forecasting and demand planning, and a richer dealer portal covering CRM through to aftersales.

The first step is a new e-commerce platform that will allow clients to “click and collect” through a dealer, feeding purchase and client data directly into Bianchi’s CRM. For a 140-year-old brand that has always sold through dealers, direct insight into its own clientele is a significant new asset. The next chapter, as Maniglia puts it, is about innovation, not remediation.

With an autonomous, modernized infrastructure in place, Bianchi can now build the digital ecosystem we envision.



The Future is Agentic

A Conversation with Stijn Geeroms, Global VP Business Solutions

Stijn Geeroms looks back on a year of significant momentum: 13.6% revenue growth, a team of 750 professionals active across eight regions, and recognition as Microsoft Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Partner of the Year — globally.



The Formula Behind the Success

The division's success is rooted in a clear conviction: implementation starts with deep industry knowledge translated into preconfigured processes. "You capture the 80% or so that is sector-standard, then focus expert craftsmanship on what is truly client-unique," Geeroms explains. "Microsoft named us as the Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Partner of the Year, which means recognition that this approach delivers results. It is exactly what clients need to move fast, in the right direction."

The division's industry-first approach spans food, discrete manufacturing, pharma & life sciences, and medical devices across all eight regions. While certain regions maintain their own specializations — such as project-based business — expansion remains a shared priority. "Print and packaging will become the next cross-regional focus, building on the strong footprint we have in Austria," Geeroms notes. Close collaboration with NSI ensures coverage of French-speaking markets worldwide.

Our success is rooted in a clear conviction: implementation starts with deep industry knowledge translated into preconfigured processes.

Spiking Demand for Agentic AI

The context is shifting. Microsoft no longer positions ERP and CRM as standalone products. They now form the core of a Business Applications Platform where business data and processes converge, and where Agentic AI is deployed to analyze, automate, and improve those processes in a governed way.

“The AI opportunity plays out on two levels,” says Geeroms. “The first is client-facing. Since our teams work directly within business operations and maintain a deep industry focus, they are perfectly positioned to identify where AI agents provide value. We do this on top of Dynamics or standalone.”

AI agents can handle baseline ERP configuration and documentation from the start. That allows clients to hit the ground running.

Those agents come in three forms: first-party agents shipped natively with Dynamics 365, third-party agents including own IP such as the Cegeka Recall Agent (available on the Marketplace), and custom agents built with Copilot Studio and AI Foundry. “The first-party agents are low-hanging fruit, already inside the application. We do a lot of evangelization to highlight those. But demand for third party and custom agents is also spiking. The reality is that clients often don’t know where to start, and that is precisely where deep process knowledge makes the difference,” Geeroms says.

The second level is internal. “The preconfigured industry processes that accelerate implementations can now be combined with actual client data, allowing AI agents to handle baseline configuration and documentation from the start. That allows clients to hit the ground running,” says Geeroms. His team relies on Cegeka’s Global Delivery Center to provide the human-led AI teams that make this model operational at scale, freeing specialists to focus on the more complex layers.

IFS can be deployed on public and private infrastructure. That makes it an ideal solution for the defense sector.

A Separate Play: IFS

Alongside the Microsoft practice, Cegeka runs a dedicated IFS operation. Currently anchored in Sweden with plans for international expansion, the focus lies on maintenance, heavy equipment, and field service. Crucially, the team is planning a deliberate move into the defense sector. “IFS can be deployed on public as well as private infrastructure,” Geeroms explains. “This makes it an ideal solution for organizations with the strictest data sovereignty requirements.”

Recognition That Resonates

2025 highlights included a series of high-profile accolades. Microsoft named ‘Cegeka Dynamics 365 Supply Chain Partner of the Year,’ and the Business Solutions division retained its place in the Microsoft Business Applications Inner Circle; a group reserved for the top 1% of partners worldwide.

Cegeka and VTS, responsible for second-line control of Flemish government subsidies, deployed AI agents as digital colleagues for government inspectors. The project was named Best AI Project at the 2026 Channel Awards and won the Agoria Digital Society Award 2025 in the category of Profitability/Efficiency. “None of this happens without an exceptional team,” Geeroms concludes. “Every one of these recognitions belongs to them.”



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Our success is rooted in a clear conviction: implementation starts with deep industry knowledge translated into preconfigured processes.

Stijn Geeroms, Global VP Business Solutions

Keeping Grip on 18 Billion: AI Agents Transform Subsidy Auditing at VTS

"We had to make a choice," says Tom Blockmans at Verstrengd Toezicht Subsidies (VTS). "Either we kept adding people to an overloaded system, or we rethought the process from the ground up. We chose disruption." VTS is responsible for the second-line control of Flemish government subsidies, a portfolio worth more than €18 billion.

A System Under Scrutiny

"With thousands of files to process, auditors were spending up to 15 minutes per invoice on manual checks," Blockmans recalls. "And that is before you account for the time spent gathering data from different sources, cross-referencing registers, pulling together the information needed just to begin the actual audit. The administrative load is significant."

Cegeka built ten AI agents designed to take over the repetitive, time-consuming work.

"Like any audit organization operating at this scale, we worked with sampling. That is standard practice, but it does mean that some invoices, some duplicate claims, some irregularities, can slip through," Blockmans continues. "Not through any failure of the team, but because the volume outgrew the method."

The ambition to do better was there from the start. "Subsidy management is under public scrutiny, and that scrutiny is legitimate," Blockmans says. "Public criticism of misspent subsidies and questionable allocations is damaging, not just for VTS but for trust in how public funds are managed more broadly. We wanted to get ahead of it."

Bringing in Digital Colleagues

The answer came in the form of a collaboration with Cegeka, who built 10 AI agents designed to take over the repetitive, time-consuming work. These agents were developed using a low-code approach in Microsoft Power Platform, leveraging Copilot Studio in combination with Power Automate. VTS also deployed a Model-Driven App where data and processes converge, serving as the central workspace for the auditors.

VTS chose to deploy these agents alongside its existing auditors, not to replace them, but to absorb the administrative burden that was consuming their time and capacity. "We think of them as digital colleagues," Blockmans explains. "Each agent has a specific role. The Info Agent pulls data at speed from sources like the subsidy register, the Central Database of Enterprises (KBO - Kruispuntbank der Ondernemingen), and the National Bank. The Analysis Agent runs trend analyses and flags risks. The Invoice Agent checks invoices in seconds. And the Report Agent brings everything together into a single, clear overview."

Human auditors focus on high-value judgment and decision-making, while AI handles the volume.

The principle is straightforward but the impact is significant: human auditors focus on high-value judgment and decision-making, while AI handles the volume. "That division of labor is what makes this work," Blockmans says. "Technology supports. People steer."

From 15 Minutes to 6 Seconds

The results have been impressive. Invoice processing time fell from 15 minutes to 6 seconds. More importantly, sampling is no longer necessary. "We now have 100% coverage," Blockmans says. "Every invoice is checked. That changes everything in terms of transparency and compliance. Incorrect claims and undue subsidies are caught early, which means public funds are spent more efficiently and more effectively."

Invoice processing time fell from 15 minutes to 6 seconds. Sampling is no longer necessary: We now have 100% coverage.

The gains extend beyond speed. With less time lost to repetitive tasks, auditors are more focused, errors and misuse have decreased, and confidence among subsidy beneficiaries and the public has grown.

Lessons for Any Organization

Blockmans is candid about what made the project succeed. "AI is not a magic switch. Success requires more than the right technology." The principles VTS applied transfer well beyond the public sector, to any organization wrestling with complex invoice flows, compliance obligations, or the pressure to do more with less.

"Start small, think big. Work iteratively, side by side with the people who know the process. Make the return on investment visible early. And be willing to genuinely disrupt. Deploy AI where it makes a real difference, not just where it is safe and comfortable."

The project's results did not go unnoticed. VTS took home an award at the Channel Awards 2026, recognition of an approach that is already drawing interest from sectors far beyond government.

Pivoting to Value-First Delivery

A Conversation with Herbert Vanhove, Global VP Application Services

The application services market of 2025 was defined by hesitation. As economic headwinds tightened budgets, the traditional model of software delivery faced scrutiny. Clients are starting to shift their expectations, demanding that vendors focus not just on execution but on quantifiable business outcomes. For Herbert Vanhove it was not a year to retreat, but a year of strategic acceleration.



Leading a division of over 1,000 specialists — firmly anchored in Cegeka's Belgian home base and scaling into the Netherlands, Italy, and Romania — Vanhove spent the year readying his teams for a fundamental shift. As 2026 unfolded, the narrative moved past mere software delivery to value-first delivery, marking a turning point in how his team operates.

Innovating in a Cold Climate

The forecasted growth for 2025 was tempered by market reality. "We felt the budget pressure, just as the wider market did. The addressable market for custom application services, as forecast by Gartner for 2025, came in significantly below expectations, down around 15% in Belgium and 10% in the Netherlands," says Vanhove. Between budget pressures in the private sector and some pullback in the public sector, the headwinds were real.

"It's not because the going gets tough that you can afford to stop investing and innovating. Quite the opposite," Vanhove continues. "We spent much of 2025 doubling down on our Software Factory, equipping

1,000+ experts with advanced AI tooling and agents needed to stand out. That investment is now yielding clear results in 2026 as the market begins to accelerate once more."

Building the Software Factory 2.0

In 2025, the focus was on building an AI-augmented army. In 2026, the Factory itself is being upgraded. "We are making an accelerated move toward business-value-first delivery and AI-native software development," says Vanhove. "That changes how we run our Software Factory — this is version 2.0."

We equipped our Software Factory's 1,000+ experts with the advanced AI tooling and agents needed to stand out.

At its core, AI-native delivery means a fundamental shift in what Cegeka sells. AI accelerates every step of the software development cycle. Accountability takes center stage and becomes the product. "We are moving from 'we build software' to 'we co-own outcomes and production risk,'" Vanhove says. "The Software Factory — the AI Delivery Platform itself — is as important as the people who work within it." Those people are reorganizing around AI Delivery Squads, combining best-in-class human expertise with best-in-class AI tooling and software agents.

The shift in how Cegeka engages with clients is equally significant. Vanhove: "Every project starts from a set of quantifiable client KPIs, whether it is cost reduction, higher NPS, faster time to market, new revenue streams, or other strategic and measurable business objectives."

We are making an accelerated move toward business-value-first delivery and AI-native software development.

This drives a shift in engagement mode. Where the team traditionally leaned heavily on IT staffing and Team-as-a-Service arrangements, the direction is now toward Product-Centric Delivery and Managed Services, where Cegeka commits through SLAs and leverages the cost efficiency of offshore and nearshore capacity. Both models share the same foundation: outcomes come first.

Compliance Complexity

On top, the IT landscape is defined by layers of friction: a massive surge in compliance, security, and sovereignty requirements. From the European AI Act to NIS2, DORA, and ISO standards, the regulatory environment is becoming increasingly dense.

"These are all hurdles placed on the client's path," Vanhove notes. "Our core domains — Energy & Utilities, Government, and Finance & Insurance — are feeling this acutely. These extra layers offer no inherent functional value to the business, but they are mandatory. We absorb that complexity, allowing our clients to stay focused on their core mission without getting paralyzed by the regulatory framework."

Domain Depth is Key

Key to making this work is domain depth. "We aim to compete on domain knowledge and repeatable assets built for specific sectors, not on generic engineering capacity," Vanhove says. In practice, that means that his team builds and maintains predefined assets — proven frameworks, sector-specific accelerators, reusable components — tailored to the industries it knows best: Energy and Utilities, Government, and Finance and Insurance. "These assets allow the Factory to move fast without starting from scratch, and to make commitments that go beyond effort and into impact."

We aim to compete on domain knowledge and repeatable assets built for specific sectors, not on generic engineering capacity.



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We are making an accelerated move toward business-value-first delivery and AI-native software development.

Herbert Vanhove, Global VP Application Services



Setting the Scene: Acerta Pioneers Real-Time Payroll

"The payroll engine is the beating heart of any payroll service provider," says Johan Guelluy, CIO at Acerta. We saw an opportunity to do more than just modernize ours: To build something in co-creation that could become the standard for the entire sector."

Acerta is one of Belgium's leading HR service providers, supporting employers, HR teams, and the self-employed across every stage of their professional journey. With an immense volume of payroll calculations processed every month, the margin for error is zero.

That reality is precisely what set an ambitious transformation in motion. In January 2020, Acerta's leadership decided to build an entirely new payroll engine. Guelluy, who had joined as CIO just weeks earlier, found himself in the driver's seat of a technically and operationally challenging project.

A Moving Target

Payroll is a moving target and legislation changes every month. "You have to build a system that is always right, and that can absorb change constantly", says Guelluy. Belgian payroll law is notoriously complex. Sector-specific rules, tax obligations, and collective labor agreements are each capable of triggering a cascade of recalculations. Every legislative update must be absorbed immediately, without disruption.

Payroll is a moving target. Legislation changes every month.

On top of that, payroll processing has traditionally been a month-end sprint, a massive compression of workload into a narrow window. “In our solution, with a real-time engine, based on event-driven architecture, processing is spread across the entire month,” Guelluy says. “The workload becomes more distributed, which means less operational stress on the entire organization”

End-to-end Process Analysis

The first two years of the project were devoted almost entirely to the process analysis, architecture and the technical foundations. The goal was to ensure the end-to-end chain worked reliably at scale before a single client went live. “Previous attempts to build a new payroll engine in Belgium had limited success,” Guelluy notes. “We were determined to do this properly, and that meant not rushing the fundamentals.”

Errors are simply not an option. We’re talking about people’s salaries here.

The engine was designed from the ground up as a cost-sharing platform that is real-time, API-driven, and modular. Scalability was non-negotiable, as the system needed to handle very high volumes of calculations in short time frames. Precision was equally vital. “Errors are simply not an option,” Guelluy says. “We’re talking about people’s salaries here. Everything has to be 100% correct, every single time.”

By 2022, the first organizations went live. Today, more than 40,000 Acerta clients run on the new engine and have done so stably for four years.

Shared Ownership

As the scope of the ambition grew, so did the thinking around how to sustain it. In 2021, Group S — another major Belgian payroll service providor — joined the initiative as a cost-sharing partner. In 2023, the collaboration was formalized into a joint venture: EverESSt, owned by Acerta, Group S and Cegeka. The initiative transitioned from a private modernization effort into a collective mission to establish the industry standard for payroll calculations.

“Cegeka has been involved from the very beginning of the trajectory, present during the architectural choices, the technical foundations, the first client rollouts.” That continuity, Guelluy argues, is one of the project’s most significant assets. “The same people at Cegeka who were there at the start are still following the trajectory today. That creates consistency: in vision, in execution, in the decisions we make along the way.”

Beyond development, Cegeka’s role spans the full end-to-end scope: hosting, optimization, integration, maintenance and support. And within the joint venture structure, Cegeka plays a neutral and connecting role between the payroll service providors, a position that matters when competitors are building shared infrastructure together.

40,000 Clients, and Counting

The results are there. Over 40,000 Acerta clients are currently processing payroll in real time on a platform that is stable, scalable, and capable of absorbing legislative complexity on the fly.

Over 40,000 Acerta clients are processing payroll in real time on a platform that is stable and capable of absorbing legislative complexity on the fly.



The road ahead is focused on expansion. In the coming months, Acerta will extend their services with additional joint labor committees, progressively opening up the platform to all clients.

“The ultimate goal is to make payroll processing cost-efficient for the entire sector,” Guelluy says. “We want to become the Belgian standard. We have the foundation, now we keep building on it.”

Engineering What Comes Next

A Conversation with Benny Schaeken, Director EngineeringSTUDIO

EngineeringSTUDIO is Cegeka's specialist unit for hyper-complex digital product engineering, when a challenge sits at the high-stakes intersection of IT, hardware, and radical innovation. Benny Schaeken leads a multidisciplinary group of architects, data scientists, and digital twin specialists who build custom enterprise solutions which cannot be bought off the shelf.



Platforms With Traction

At the core of EngineeringSTUDIO's portfolio are two proprietary platforms: Cegeka Mobilize, and Cegeka Capacity.

Cegeka Mobilize, the AI-powered digital twin for urban mobility strategy, crossed a significant threshold in 2025 — moving from experimental projects to

essential infrastructure. The platform now supports more than 30 cities and organizations across Flanders. “Anchor clients like Bruges, Leuven, Aalst, Halle, and the Brussels Airport Company are all on multi-year contracts,” Schaeken says. “Mobilize is embedded in their policy and planning processes.”

Cegeka Mobilize now supports more than 30 cities and organizations across Flanders.

Three major initiatives expanded the platform this year. The European x-CITE collaboration added air quality and sound models alongside traffic data. The MIA project introduced advanced visualization for mobility hub analysis. The Flemish Digital Twin initiative added large-scale geospatial time-series processing.

While the roadmap takes Mobilize into logistics, construction, and retail, its sibling platform, Cegeka Capacity — a cloud-based smart parking platform that transforms traditional multi-tenant parking infrastructure into a dynamic and operational excellence platform — continues its steady climb. “The target for 2026 is to break through the one million euro mark in SaaS license revenue,” Schaeken notes.

Q-Park: The Sweet Spot in Action

The Parking-as-a-Smart-Service platform developed for Q-Park reached a milestone in 2025 with the launch of the first fully digital car park in Antwerp. “By eliminating paper tickets for short-stay parkers, the project successfully transitioned a traditionally physical process into a fully digital flow,” Schaeken says.

The rollout continued in Q-Park France, with session-based and permit parking, and in the Netherlands, where a new B2B feature in the mobile app automatically splits private and business parking into separate invoices, addressing local subscription needs.

A Sovereign AI Platform

The most significant development of the last few years is the launch of a proprietary Enterprise Agentic Platform. Built on a combination of best-in-class components, it enables what Schaeken describes as “sovereign AI”: data remains in the EU, models are vendor-agnostic, and knowledge stays with the client.

Built on a combination of best-in-class components, the Enterprise Agentic Platform enables sovereign AI.

With internal use cases already active, EngineeringSTUDIO combines engineering depth with practical integration experience to help clients deploy and govern all AI agents across the organization, preventing shadow AI from taking hold.

A Room Where Ideas Take Shape

In 2025, EngineeringSTUDIO introduced the Immersive Room, a purpose-built environment featuring large touchscreen walls, a local compute cluster, and Milo, Cegeka’s AI assistant, controlled by voice.

“It’s both an engagement tool and a shaping accelerator,” Schaeken explains. “Teams use it to explore ideas, make connections faster, and move more quickly through early-stage design.”

The space is already used for high-intensity workshops and demos, including visits from external researchers. For EngineeringSTUDIO, it reflects a clear ambition: creating an environment where complex ideas can be visualized, tested, and translated into working solutions.



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Our Immersive Room is both an engagement tool and a shaping accelerator. Teams use it to explore ideas, make connections faster, and move more quickly through early-stage design.

Benny Schaeken, Director EngineeringSTUDIO



How IT and AI Enable NIBC's 'Think Yes' Mentality

"Think Yes stands for flexibility and our entrepreneurial mindset," says Elly Bruining, IT Director at NIBC Bank. "If we think we have something good on our hands, we just go ahead and do it." To make that philosophy a reality, technology is non-negotiable. Together with Cegeka, Bruining and CTO Anke Schlichting built a solid IT landscape and laid the foundation for AI adoption at NIBC.

NIBC is an entrepreneurial asset financier for businesses and individuals. The bank finances assets ranging from owner-occupied homes to rental properties, commercial real estate and infrastructure. It has offices in The Hague, Frankfurt, London and Brussels, with a combined workforce of around 600 people. At the end of 2025, it became known that NIBC may be acquired by ABN AMRO. That acquisition is expected to be completed in the second half of 2026, once all regulators have granted their approval.

Think Yes is how NIBC sets itself apart as a mid-sized bank in a sector that has traditionally been risk-averse, cautious and, it must be said, somewhat slow. For NIBC, Think Yes means entrepreneurship within boundaries. Bruining: "It is a way of thinking and working: getting things done, rolling up your sleeves, moving forward with innovation, trying new things. And then of course taking a very careful look at how it fits within the rules." But Think Yes also demands a solid technological foundation. That is precisely what Cegeka provided, in very close collaboration with the bank.

Getting the Basics Right

Since 2018, Cegeka has handled infrastructure, data storage and technical management for NIBC. The strategic rationale was clear: NIBC did not want to build a large IT organization for infrastructure services but instead wanted calm and stability in its IT foundation. "We wanted to direct our time and energy primarily towards things that add direct value for the business: innovation, speed and agility", says Chief Technology Officer Anke Schlichting. "What we were looking for was not a complex or flashy solution, but simply a reliable partner that knows his trade. A party

that does what needs to be done, without any fuss. Cegeka was a good fit. They knew the financial sector, were pragmatic in their approach and radiated calm and stability."

The people from Cegeka feel like colleagues. Cegeka has become an extension of our IT organization.

When IT Director Elly Bruining joined in 2024, she found there was no clear picture of the full infrastructure landscape. "That was one of the first things I focused on", she says. "The systems were running, but the overview was missing. Responsibilities were unclear. My first step was to bring clarity and structure." The relationship with Cegeka also needed attention. "I discovered that Cegeka and NIBC did not yet fully understand each other. So I introduced informal coffee catch-ups to get to know each other better and hear what people were running into. That was followed by weekly check-ins and a monthly operational-strategic meeting in Veenendaal. We also started collaborating in an agile way, as we prefer to do at NIBC." The approach paid off. "The people from Cegeka feel like colleagues. Cegeka has become an extension of our IT organization."

The trust that was built became the foundation for everything that followed. Together, NIBC and Cegeka mapped the entire infrastructure landscape. Services that were no longer needed were switched off. "Those savings were immediately reinvested in innovation", says Bruining.

From Reactive to Proactive

The results of that careful clean-up were significant. "Now that the landscape is in good shape", says Bruining, "we can look ahead together, plan and work proactively instead of reactively." One example is the approach to infrastructure vulnerabilities. "We have dramatically reduced the number of vulnerabilities. Now we are genuinely in control, together."

Once the foundation was in place, NIBC could do what the bank does best: think ahead and accelerate. A great example of Think Yes in action? Embracing Artificial Intelligence. "We saw that AI could really help us by automating repetitive tasks and speeding up processes. We then took it to production in a very structured way, together with Cegeka. Everyone can use it now. That is Think Yes."

The rollout was cautious but purposeful. NIBC made clear choices about what is and is not permitted within its network. ChatGPT, for example, is kept outside the door. The bank organized a prompting course for the entire organization and introduced its own chatbot: ELLMA.

At the same time, the rollout of Microsoft Power Platform began. The platform lends itself excellently to building automations and intelligent AI agents. The governance for this — who can build what, who is responsible for it, who has access to which data — was built by Cegeka directly into the platform itself. This ensures that every automation or agent immediately meets NIBC's standards and regulatory requirements. The added benefit is that employees can easily build their own intelligent automations, agents and multi-agents. "You can do absolutely anything you want with no-code on the Power Platform. Whatever you build, you can also share with your colleagues. Only when more than five people are using your agent or automation does it become a 'real' application and go through our review process."

In total, 57% of participants are actively working with the solutions developed during the hackathon

Hackatons Make AI Tangible

To make the possibilities of AI tangible for the whole organization, NIBC organized a series of hackathons with Cegeka and Microsoft. The first was aimed at the Operations department. "They had a heavy workload and a lean team, so they wanted to explore whether certain tasks could be handled more efficiently", says Bruining. CTO Anke Schlichting opened the hackathon and took part herself. "I developed a multi-agent that connected different information sources to gain insights more quickly and identify connections", she says. "It was an instructive experience that helped people see technology not as magic but as something that requires conscious choices."

"When a hackathon has buy-in from management, everyone joins in", Bruining adds. "When you have a CTO who genuinely wants to push forward, that enthusiasm is contagious." The second hackathon was open to the whole of NIBC. An estimated 130 people took part.

"The Think Yes mentality was sky-high on those days", says Bruining. Employees built agents for sorting email, generating business replies or translating client communication into professional English. "Those might seem like small things, but they make a big difference because they allow you to make your own work easier." In total, the hackathons produced around 160 agents. "57% of participants are actively working with the solutions developed during the hackathon", says Schlichting. "That shows how much potential there is in an organization when you give people the space to explore."

Trust and Honesty

What advice can Elly Bruining give to other organizations that want to get started with AI? "Work shoulder to shoulder with your colleagues in security and a good vendor", she says. "You have to do this together. Without clear frameworks and agreements, the security department will, out of a sense of responsibility, continue to focus primarily on risks, particularly around data security. But it starts with the step before that: making sure the foundation is in place. Having visibility into your IT landscape and your data. Making sure all authorizations are correct. Putting in place good monitoring that surfaces what is not yet right."

Bruining is very pleased with Cegeka. The secret? "Trust and honesty", she says. "That is the foundation for bringing out the best in each other and succeeding together." Schlichting can only agree: "Cegeka moves well alongside NIBC and aligns with the direction the organization is heading to. The relationship is at least as important as the contract."

The Client Zero Philosophy

A Conversation with Luc Dedroog, Global VP Digital Employee Experience and CIO

Luc Dedroog holds two roles at Cegeka: Global VP of Digital Employee Experience (DEX) and CIO. The pairing makes perfect sense to him. "We embrace the client zero concept," he says. "The digital experience solutions we sell are the same ones we run internally first."



A Portfolio Built Around the Modern Worker

DEX spans four domains: the modern AI-infused digital workplace; the ITSM platform ServiceNow; staffed service desks at client sites such as Brussels Airport; and Empowerment, Cegeka's consultancy practice covering digital literacy and AI adoption. The division manages around 70,000 workplaces globally, with its center of gravity in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Two engagements illustrate that ambition. The Flemish Government rollout equipped 5,000 workplaces with Microsoft Copilot in 2025, with another 5,000 following this year. At DEME, world leader in maritime construction, Cegeka is driving a company-wide transformation including a Copilot deployment to some 1,000 employees.

Too many organizations treat Copilot as a project: arrive, deploy, drive adoption, leave. It moves far too fast for that approach.

Dedroog is direct about a pattern he sees across the market. “Too many organizations treat Copilot as a project: arrive, deploy, drive adoption, leave. It moves far too fast for that approach. Like cybersecurity, it demands continuous attention, non-stop learning.”

Client Zero in Practice

“The client zero principle means that before you sell a solution to anyone else, you deploy it on yourself first. You become your own first client. It’s ‘drink your own champagne’ in practice,” Dedroog continues.

His team runs Cegeka’s own service desk as a living laboratory. A prime example is AI-powered ticket similarity matching, built by Cegeka’s EngineeringSTUDIO. “There is rarely such a thing as a new ticket,” he says. An AI agent matches every incoming case to similar past ones, freeing staff from routine triage and enabling automatic or preventive resolutions. “We use this in our Service Desk, but the same logic applies to any internal process: HR, fleet, procurement, just to name a few.”

Being your own guinea pig carries real advantages. “You hit every roadblock your clients might hit, and you solve it first.” It also surfaces problems that might otherwise stay hidden, particularly around data quality and governance. “Without those foundations, AI delivers poor results. Client zero forces you to confront that early,” Dedroog says.

The CIO as First Port of Call

Beyond DEX, Dedroog carries full CIO responsibility for Cegeka’s internal IT. He cites a pointed Gartner finding that frames his mandate: employees today expect more from their CIO than from HR. “They expect you to lighten their workload, give them the best tools, design the right processes. The bar is high.”

He knows that bar cannot be cleared with a blanket approach. AI agents are widely heralded as ‘the next big thing’ and the temptation is to roll them out uniformly, but Dedroog is quick to push back on that. “Different roles have different needs, and the tooling should reflect that: an admin user gets what they need from M365 Copilot, a developer unlocks more with Copilot Studio, a sales professional needs Copilot for Sales. Handing everyone the same tool and calling it empowerment misses the point.”

Being your own guinea pig carries real advantages. You hit every roadblock your clients might hit, and you solve it first.

Also central to his mandate is Horizon, Cegeka’s Engagement Portal, available to all clients. It’s an interactive tool that offers a unified view across services, from IT operations to security and ESG. When Cegeka first launched Horizon in 2020, just 17 client users were on the platform. Five years later, that number stands at nearly 25,000 — with more than 10,000 Cegeka users on top of that.

When a metric spikes or drops in Horizon, the user needs to know why. We will deploy AI agents that do exactly that.

Dedroog is now taking Horizon further. The next step is conversational intelligence layered on top of that unified view, so that a dashboard does not just surface information but helps explain it.

“When a metric spikes or drops, the user needs to know why,” he says. “We will deploy AI agents that do exactly that.” It is, he acknowledges, a significant undertaking. Clean data, tightly integrated systems, and rigorous governance are not optional. They are the foundation on which everything else rests, and Horizon is being built accordingly.



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Being your own guinea pig carries real advantages. You hit every roadblock your clients might hit, and you solve it first.

Luc Dedroog, Global VP Digital Employee Experience and CIO



Driving Change From the Bottom Up: How DEME Is Embracing Copilot

"Simply providing Microsoft Copilot licenses is just the beginning," says Charlotte Garcia, Digital Business Partner and lead for the Copilot project at DEME. "The real work starts after that, when people begin to discover, adopt, and embrace new ways of working. Change management is what makes the difference between a simple rollout and a success story."

Early Mover in the Industry

DEME is a leading global contractor in offshore energy, dredging, marine infrastructure, and environmental remediation. With 6,000+ employees active in over 90 countries, much of the work happens offshore, on vessels, and on construction sites around the world.

That makes its early embrace of Microsoft 365 Copilot all the more striking. While AI adoption in office environments is increasingly common, DEME is among the first movers in its industry, proving that Copilot is not the exclusive domain of organizations that are 100% white collar.

DEME is among the first movers in its industry, proving that Copilot is not the exclusive domain of organizations that are 100% white collar.

The timing adds another layer. In 2026, DEME is celebrating its 150th anniversary, marking the occasion with a new office in Beveren-Kruibeke-Zwijndrecht and two new jack-up offshore transport & installation vessels

that have entered service this year. A company looking firmly forward, even as it marks a century and a half.

The Power of Community

The program began with a pilot group of 300 motivated volunteers. DEME and Cegeka launched an Early Adopter Program built around kick-off sessions and open Q&A moments, alongside a Copilot Center of Excellence to ensure governance and ongoing learning. “Change is shaped as much by mindset as by tools,” Garcia says. “That shared belief defined how we approached this from day one.”

While measuring exact productivity gains is complex, the most convincing evidence is simple: people do not want to give Copilot up.

What gave the program its momentum was the community that grew around it. Regular internal communication, webinars, Copilot Cafés, one-on-one coaching, and a dedicated Copilot Community Week created spaces where colleagues could share experiences. DEME also introduced a digital ambassador network to provide hands-on peer guidance, backed by a dedicated community manager. The shift was from a top-down rollout to a bottom-up movement.

Around 1,000 DEME employees now work with a paid Copilot license, with many more using the chat function. While measuring exact productivity gains is complex, the most convincing evidence is simple: people do not want to give it up. “When a license occasionally moves to someone else due to low usage, the previous holder almost always asks for it back,” Garcia notes.

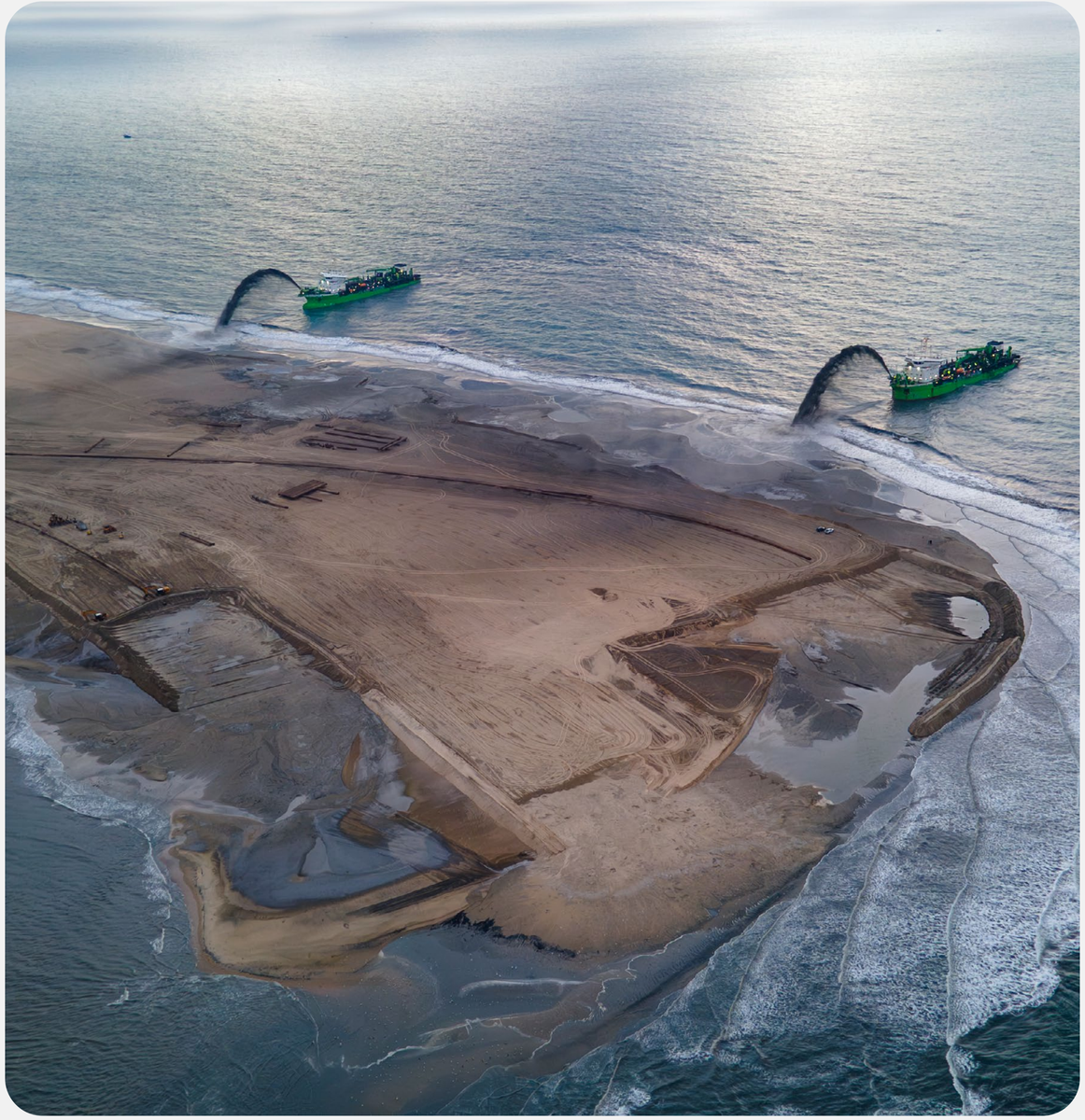
From Basics to Custom Agents

Change management has been a core investment throughout, and Garcia remains the central point of contact for the program. As the community has matured, the nature of the support has changed as well.

“The questions have evolved,” Garcia says. “Where early conversations covered the basics of getting started, the focus has now shifted to what comes next: building agents inside Copilot and figuring out how to share them across teams. Most experimentation today revolves around knowledge-driven agents that search defined sources and surface results in a structured way.”

Most experimentation today revolves around knowledge-driven agents that search defined sources and surface results in a structured way.

The success of the initiative rests on three pillars: clear communication, strong sponsorship, and ongoing support. “With dedicated coaching and a real community behind it, Copilot became more than just a new feature,” Garcia concludes. “It is now part of how we work.”



Turning Headwind into Momentum

A Conversation with Jos Sourbron, Director Professional Services

Jos Sourbron does not sugarcoat it: 2025 was a difficult year economically, marked by cost-cutting and downsizing across both the private and public sectors. The Professional Services division feels that kind of headwind first, yet it grew and continued to win new business. The reason, Sourbron argues, comes down to quality of service and the ability to turn adversity into opportunity.



The Ice-Breaker Effect

In a tight economy, the pressure on Professional Services is real and immediate. “We feel the impact of cost-cutting first,” Sourbron explains. “But we also feel the recovery first.” When companies hesitate to commit to permanent headcount, they turn to flexible expertise to maintain momentum. “That is where we come in. We offer exactly what clients need, for exactly as long as they need it.”

A single well-placed consultant often opens the door to broader engagements across the Cegeka portfolio.

In 2025, that flexibility resonated strongly. The division welcomed 14 new logos, and while the private sector grew modestly, the public sector outpaced it significantly. Professional Services also continues its role as a strategic icebreaker for the group; a single, well-placed consultant often opens the door to broader engagements across the Cegeka portfolio. “Clients see the immediate impact we can make, and the conversation grows from there,” Sourbron says.

When Headwind Becomes Tailwind

Sourbron’s division is not one to wait for the market to shift on its own. “We constantly ask ourselves how to create extra value for clients under pressure. That means thinking alongside them on how to reduce costs, not just filling vacancies.”

A key driver of growth is the rise of ‘combo profiles’: consultants who bring the requested skills plus an extra layer of technical depth.

At several large accounts, this consultative approach paid off as demand picked up in the second half of the year. A key driver was the rise of ‘combo profiles’: consultants who bring the requested skills plus an extra layer of technical depth. “They overdeliver from day one,” Sourbron says. “In a market where every budget decision is scrutinized, that makes a real difference.” Combined with a flexible rightshore offering, blending nearshore and offshore talent, it proved to be a major differentiator.

Quality Engineering Joins the Family

The division’s capabilities have expanded with Quality Engineering now officially part of Professional Services. With over 20 years of experience, this practice covers functional, performance, and usability testing, often delivered as a service. “Demand remains high, particularly for the as-a-service model which allows clients to scale quality control without the overhead.”

Polishing the Diamond with Switchfully

Growth is also fueled by Switchfully, an initiative that has evolved from an experiment into one of the division’s most distinctive assets. The program reskills individuals from non-technical backgrounds into developers, functional analysts, or test engineers in just four months. It also helps mid-level professionals transition into senior roles, as requested by an increasing number of clients.

The philosophy behind Switchfully addresses a common market frustration. Clients often tell Sourbron that finding a perfect diamond in the current talent pool is nearly impossible. “Our response is that it is better to find a solid stone and polish it yourself”. The results back this up: higher retention, faster growth trajectories, and people who hit the ground running. “They are motivated in a way that is hard to manufacture. They want to prove themselves, and that energy is contagious.”

Switchfully also helps mid-level professionals transition into senior roles, as requested by an increasing number of clients.

AI-augmented Workforce

With nearly 500 professionals — the largest Professional Services operation in the Cegeka group — the ambition for 2026 is built on stability as a foundation for renewed growth. “We have high ambitions, as always” Sourbron says. “To reach them, we are investing heavily in our technical communities and business development skills.”

Underpinning all of it is a commitment to an AI-augmented workforce. “By scaling AI across the division, we ensure that our consultants are supported by tools that streamline delivery and enhance performance,’ Sourbron concludes. “Equipping colleagues with AI means we can strip away the repetitive tasks, allowing our team to dedicate their energy to the strategic work that truly moves the needle for our clients.”



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A key driver of growth is the rise of ‘combo profiles’: consultants who bring the requested skills plus an extra layer of technical depth.

Jos Sourbron, Director Professional Services



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