



BEST INNOVATOR AWARD BELGIUM 2009

**AGC Glass Europe wins Best Innovator Award
Belgium 2009 in the Large Company category**

**Secretary Plus wins the Best Innovator Award
Belgium 2009 in the SME category**

**Winner of the Best Innovator Award Belgium – Large Company:
AGC Glass Europe**

Large Company Finalists: 3M, Belgacom, UCB

Winner of the Best Innovator Award Belgium – SME: Secretary Plus

Brussels, November 25, 2009 – For the third time this year, **A.T. Kearney** and its partners **Solvay Brussels School Alumni Association, Trends, Trends Tendances, Kanaal Z, Voka, BECI and UWE** have organized the **Best Innovator Award** competition. The **A.T. Kearney Best Innovator Award** offers companies the opportunity to identify and compare themselves with the capabilities and practices of innovation leaders. It also recognizes those companies that excel in innovation management. The competition is organized in 15 countries in Europe and NAFTA, and to date over 1,000 companies from various industries have participated in the Best Innovator Award across all geographies.

On the basis of a detailed on-line survey and site visits evaluating participants against **global best practices** in innovation management, an independent Jury has selected the Belgian Best Innovator 2009. As it was already the case last year, the Jury selected two Best Innovators: one for large companies ($\geq 1,000$ employees) and one for SME's ($< 1,000$ employees).

Out of the many companies that registered for the competition and filled out a questionnaire this year, the Jury selected:

- In the Large Company category: one Winner (AGC Glass Europe) and 3 Finalists (3M, Belgacom, UCB)
- In the SME category: one Winner (Secretary Plus)

The selection was based on these companies' commitment to innovation management, the level of innovation practices they have put in place and finally the success they have achieved.

Best Innovator Award Belgium 2009 Large Company Winner: AGC Glass Europe

"Strategic commitment to innovation in a heavy industrial sector"

AGC Glass Europe makes and processes flat glass for the construction industry (exterior glazing and interior decorative glass), for the automotive and solar sectors, and for specialised industries (transports, domestic appliances and high-tech applications). Based in Brussels, it is the European branch of AGC Glass, the world's leading producer of flat glass.

AGC Glass Europe currently employs around 14,500 people and its production facilities are made up of 18 float glass plants, 7 automotive glass plants and some 100 distribution/processing units located throughout greater Europe (from Spain to Russia).

Although innovation is not obvious in a heavy industrial sector such as glass making, AGC Glass Europe's management reinforced its innovative spirit to stay ahead of competition and grow profitability in a sustainable manner. About 3 years ago it refocused its innovation management and

embarked on an extensive innovation program – using both a top-down approach via R&D, and a bottom-up approach involving all of its employees throughout Europe as well as external partners (which explains why AGC Glass Europe was already a finalist of the Best Innovator Award in 2008).

This overall innovation program was successfully implemented and the company starts now to collect the results of its efforts, notably in glass destined for building and solar power industries. The following examples illustrate the innovation successes of AGC Glass Europe in 2009:

- New products: **Planibel Tri**, a triple glass maximizing the use of free natural energy (nominated for Batimat Innovation Award 2009), **Glassiled RGB Façade**, a façade animated by electroluminescent glass (a world premiere), **Extra-clear glass**, guaranteeing maximum transmission of light and energy for solar applications (2009 Prize for Technological Innovation in Wallonia).
- New manufacturing process: the world's **most ecological glass (float) furnace** thanks to a combination of oxygen combustion (a first in Europe) and preheating of gas (a world premiere) which leads to reducing energy consumption and CO₂ emission by around 25%.

Furthermore, AGC Glass Europe continues to heavily invest in research (its total budget doubled in 3 years) with a strong focus on sustainable development (70% of the total budget for top-down R&D is allocated to “green” projects). Around 50% of AGC Glass Europe products that will be introduced in the next 10 years do not yet exist. Its R&D centre, located in Belgium, is a world reference in the glass industry for construction, automotive and solar applications.

AGC Glass Europe was identified by the Jury as an excellent example of how companies active in heavy industries can become innovation leaders. While AGC Glass Europe scores high on various dimensions of innovation management, it has a particular strength in recent innovation successes, and in the way it has set up its innovation strategy and the supporting organization and processes.

Best Innovator Award Belgium 2009 SME Winner: Secretary Plus

"Virtual Outsourcing: Market-driven Innovation at Secretary Plus"

Secretary Plus, a subsidiary of USG People, is an international company specialized in recruitment, deployment, coaching and training of management support personnel. By continuously scrutinizing and re-evaluating the company's market view, its innovation team identified two key developments: 1) the need of clients for modular outsourcing services; and 2) the desire of potential recruits for flexible work opportunities.

Acting on these insights, Secretary Plus introduced virtual outsourcing as an innovative service offering that connects with both the customer and the recruits. Through a novel business and operating model, Secretary Plus designed virtual outsourcing to be an innovation that integrates sustainability into its core business practices:

- From a social perspective, virtual outsourcing creates job opportunities for specific categories of full/part-time workers that would otherwise be excluded from the labour market (e.g., disabled persons, mothers who care for young children at home).
- From an ecological perspective, virtual outsourcing helps reduce traffic congestion by fostering teleworking via advanced information and communication technologies.

The Jury recognized these important contributions and praised the ability of Secretary Plus to assess and integrate its clients' and collaborators' emerging needs, and quickly mobilize a product development team in a hitherto traditional industry. Furthermore, the Jury appreciated Secretary Plus' capacity to innovate its business model and implement new internal processes and enabling tools for making virtual outsourcing a sustainable innovation.

Best Innovator Award Belgium 2009 - Large Company Finalists:

- **3M** is a technology driven company well known for its breakthrough innovations since decades and regularly ranks among global leaders in innovation. Each of its six businesses (from health care and highway safety to office products, abrasives and adhesives) has earned leading global market positions. The size of this multinational company is very large, providing scale advantage in areas such as R&D, cross-fertilization, open innovation and strategic partnerships... At the same time, innovation management is extremely decentralized at division level, allowing flexibility and creativity in line with local market needs. 3M, whose largest European chemical research laboratory is based in Antwerp, was identified by the Jury as an excellent example of how appropriate innovation management processes can be used to leverage a very strong innovation culture.
- **Belgacom** and its subsidiaries are able to provide all their customers (whether private or professional, company, institution, or other telecom operators) with a comprehensive range of offers and solutions in fixed and mobile networks (e.g. fixed and mobile telephony, Internet and television). In the high tech industry, innovation is a must to survive. As a telecom operator, Belgacom's service offering and competitiveness depend primarily on its capabilities to quickly leverage technology evolutions in constant acceleration. Over the last 10 years the company has been continuously adapting its business model and organization to stay ahead of the pack, and is now structuring its innovation management (especially around open innovation). Belgacom had also invested EUR 3 billion the last 5 years to constantly upgrade their networks, develop new applications and provide best of class content. The Jury recognized the efforts put in place by Belgacom to organize its innovation management and foster a culture of innovation.
- **UCB** is a global biopharmaceutical company dedicated to the research, development and commercialization of innovative medicines with a focus on the diseases of the central nervous system (CNS) and immunology disorders. In an industry where R&D is core and a

long term vision is required, UCB has succeeded to completely transform its business and organization towards an innovation focused pharma biotech company. Its major challenge resides in the long product development cycles that requires to think in the medium and long term (5 - 20 years) and be able to:

- Simultaneously/sequentially manage different phases of product development and new product launch, combining short and long terms goals
- Mobilize the workforce and maintain innovation efforts during slowdown phases

The jury especially commended UCB for its efforts in the area of innovation organization and culture management.

About the A.T. Kearney Best Innovator Award Belgium 2009

The Best Innovator Award is initiated by the global strategy consultancy firm A.T. Kearney. It currently covers 15 countries in Europe and North America. The Best Innovator Award Belgium was organized with the support of a Strategic Committee composed of **Gilles Samyn**, Chairman of Solvay Brussels School Alumni, **Nathalie van Ypersele**, Chief Editor of Trends Tendances, **Luc De Bruyckere**, Chairman of VOKA, **Emmanuel van Innis**, Chairman of BECI, **Eric Domb**, Former Chairman of UWE, and **Jean-Pierre Delwart**, Chairman of UWE.

The contest aims to identify and promote innovation leaders capabilities and practices which together provide sustainable competitive advantage. Innovation in overall management performance is measured against five dimensions: innovation strategy, innovation organization and culture, innovation process, enabling factors and innovation success. The composition of the Jury, consisting of eminent leaders from business, sciences and society, is intended to guarantee the independence, quality and impact of the Best Innovator Award Belgium. This year's Jury was composed of **Bruno Colmant**, Chairman of the Jury and Deputy CEO of Fortis Holding, **Maximilien de Limburg Stirum**, SBS Alumni Association and CNP, **Koenraad Debackere**, Chairman Leuven Inc., **Laurent Dumarest**, Partner A.T. Kearney, **Elvira Haezendonck**, VUB Professor, **Freddy Neyts**, Director of External Relations Roularta Media Group, **Guy Legrand**, Trends Tendances Deputy Director, **Didier Paquot**, UWE Department Manager for R&D, **Pierre Thonon**, BECI Managing Director, **Peter Van den Brande**, Principal A.T. Kearney, **Bruno Van Pottelsberghe**, SBS Professor in Innovation, and **Peter Verboven**, VOKA Knowledge Center.

The Best Innovator Award recipients were selected in three phases:

- **Phase 1:** Selected companies were invited to fill out a web-based questionnaire. All Belgium companies were invited to participate, in two categories: large companies (above 1000 employees) and SMEs.
- **Phase 2:** On-site visits were conducted for participating companies achieving the highest scores on the questionnaire, and finalists were selected.
- **Phase 3:** The Jury met on November 5 and selected the winners on the basis of the combined results from the questionnaire and the visit. Individual feedback will be provided to all participants.

About A.T. Kearney

A.T. Kearney is a global strategic management consulting firm known for helping clients gain lasting results through a unique combination of strategic insight and a collaborative working style. The firm was established in 1926 to provide management advice concerning issues on the CEO's agenda. Today, we serve the largest global clients in all major industries. A.T. Kearney's offices are located in major business centers in 33 countries.

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