

# SECRETARY VISION

Magazine for Managers and Management Assistants  
Ninth volume issue 1 / 2006

## Direct Team:

ideal for Management Assistant  
and employer

---

## Explore

the Champagne region by bicycle

---

## A good archive

saves time and frustration

---

## Recruitment

terms explained

---

You will find opportunities  
at every level.



[info@secretary-plus.be](mailto:info@secretary-plus.be)  
[www.secretary-plus.be](http://www.secretary-plus.be)

# We are stronger than ever

Dear Reader,



Secretary Plus is part of the USG People group, which is listed on the Euronext Amsterdam Stock Exchange. Thanks to this well-defined structure, we have developed into a strong organisation, securing a solid position in the Belgian market in recent years.

We are now stronger than ever. Our name is continuously gaining recognition. We are number 1 in the placement and recruitment of management support personnel. Preparations for our launch in the French market are well under way. In short, the future is very promising.

A strong organisation also offers advantages to our clients and candidates. The number of Secretary Plus agencies is increasing and our prospects are excellent. With Open Academy Plus, we are investing in continuous training. Furthermore, we are promoting the image of the Management Assistant through high-profile activities, surveys and participation in workshops.

Every day we meet hundreds of Management Assistants; determined men and women who are building their careers. They are all different but they all have one thing in common - a passion for their work and that inspires us when we are putting together your magazine.

We hope that you enjoy reading it!

Christine Van den Eynde,  
General Manager

## Contents

- 3 Editorial
- 4 Dossier  
Direct Team: ideal for Management Assistant and employer  
Something for you too?
- 7 Focus on  
Office Manager
- 8 Travel  
Quebec: a mixture of exuberance and cultural individuality
- 12 Business knowledge  
Recruitment terms explained
- 15 Tips & Tricks  
- A good archive saves time and frustration  
- Archive your e-mails
- 16 Working in ...  
the transport sector
- 18 Focus on agency  
Secretary Plus Roeselare
- 19 Take a break  
Explore the Champagne region by bicycle
- 20 Secretary Plus Matters  
- Survey results  
- From school leaver to Sales Secretary at VCM Belgium  
- Bachelor Office Management of the Year Award

## Colophon

Secretary Vision is a publication from Secretary Plus Management Support NV.  
Editor: Mieke Van Damme (Schrijf.be).  
Photography: Event Attitude, Frank Toussaint  
Pre-Press & Impression: Fotogravure Godefroit  
Responsible publisher: Christine Van den Eynde, Secretary Plus Management Support NV, Luchthavenlaan 10, 1800 Vilvoorde

- Reproduction of the articles is only allowed with the written authorisation of the publisher.
- The Internet address of Secretary Plus is: [www.secretary-plus.be](http://www.secretary-plus.be)
- E-mail: [info@secretary-plus.be](mailto:info@secretary-plus.be)
- The wrapping film of Secretary Vision is made from environment-friendly polyethylene. This synthetic material degrades and breaks down into a harmless substance.
- Print-run: 42,000 copies.

Secretary Plus Management Support is a member of Federgon (Federation of employment partners) and is recognised as a recruitment bureau in Flanders (VG.494/BUO), Brussels (B-AA04.056) and Wallonia (W.INT.048 & W.RS.48). Secretary Plus is a part of USG People N.V., a European services organisation in the field of flexible labour, training and customer-care services.

The shares of USG People are listed on the Euronext Amsterdam stock exchange.

# Direct Team Ideal for Management Assistant and employer

The freedom and variety of interim work, combined with the stability and security of a permanent contract? A person who has the qualities, skills and motivation of the Management Assistant they replace? This may seem like a dream, but in fact - it's the Direct Team.

Not everyone is cut out to become a member of the Direct Team. "The bar is set high," says Christine Van den Eynde, General Manager of Secretary Plus. "The Direct Team is composed of 50 enthusiastic Management Assistants. They are flexible, mobile, experienced, speak three languages and can work with all standard MS Office computer programs."

## Various projects and permanent contract

Direct Team members are above all committed to long-term assignments, e.g. covering for the long-term absence of a Management Assistant, setting up a new project, or putting everything in order in preparation of a major reorganisation. Regional Manager Barbara Stadsbader, responsible for the Direct Team, says: "With the Direct Team, the employer gets a qualified, motivated and experienced Assistant at his disposal. Unlike some temporary staff, a Direct Team member will not abandon a project halfway through because a better offer comes along. Our Direct Team members ensure continuity in an organisation."

Christine Van den Eynde says: "Members of the Direct Team get a permanent employment contract with Secretary Plus, a good salary and a company car. Moreover, they can continuously develop their talents and skills. Thanks to our Open Academy Plus programme, they can follow all sorts of interesting courses free of charge."

## Still more support

The Direct Team is a great success - in 2005, the growth in turnover was 50 percent higher than in the previous year. "For this year, we anticipate an increase of 40 percent," predicts Barbara Stadsbader. "Most of the assignments are based in Brussels, but the number of assignments in Flanders is increasing steadily."

An organisation that experiences such growth also suffers growing pains. "2005 was not altogether an easy year," admits Barbara Stadsbader. "For that reason we decided to restructure our



organisation. We have created some new roles. For instance, Florence Ledecq is the new contact person for our clients - she talks with (prospective) employers about their needs and discusses the details of the position that has to be filled."

## Extra cossetting

Not only has the organisation been expanded, but the benefits for a Direct Team Assistant have been enhanced as well. Barbara Stadsbader says: "The success of the Direct Team is entirely due to the efforts and the talents of our people. For that reason, we have added a couple of extras. After two years in the Direct Team, they will get a free company car upgrade from a Peugeot 206 to a Peugeot 307."

However, that is not all. As from January 2006, all members of the Direct Team are entitled to hospitalisation and group insurance. The group insurance is a very interesting form of pension benefit.

## Exchange of experience

Members of the Direct Team do not work in isolation. Secretary Plus Direct Team supports, motivates and advises them, while all Direct Team Assistants exchange experiences with each other. Barbara Stadsbader says: "We all got together for a kick-off meeting in December, and on 5 May we assembled at a nice venue for a 'personal development' training



## >> Testimonials

Cindy Borie,  
Direct Team Assistant  
since 1 December 2005

Sandra Janssens,  
Direct Team Assistant  
since 13 April 2005

session, team building activities and a delicious dinner!”

Day-to-day communications are also being improved - as in the course of 2006 the Direct Team will have its own extranet. Joelle Tay, Marketing Manager at Secretary Plus says, “A great deal of information will be available on the extranet, including such things as timesheets, annual leave request forms, invitations to events, information about new clients, success stories, a diary, and more besides. It will also include a mailbox and everyone will be given their own Direct Team e-mail address.”

### Open Academy Plus

A final change is the expansion of Open Academy Plus, in style and content. Véronique Plumet, Sales and Event Officer, Secretary Plus says, “Direct Team Assistants are given the opportunity to attend all training courses free of charge. Previously, all courses were held in Vilvoorde, but we have now introduced various other venues. The topics covered include Mind Mapping, Think like Leonardo da Vinci, a course about new spelling rules, etc. Open Academy Plus does not believe in long theoretical presentations, but offers absorbing courses with many examples, useful tips and tricks that can be immediately applied in practice.”

### “Good for self-confidence”

“After seven years of doing the same work in the same company, I was worn out. Stagnation means decline, as you know. So I went for a new challenge with the Direct Team. I learn about different aspects of administrative support and get to know various companies. That is good for my professional skills, insight into human nature, and corporate experience.

I find it all very exciting. I learn something every day. I try to maintain a balance in my present assignment - I have to use my initiative, but I also have to know my limitations and recognise when I need advice from someone else.

My agency in Aalst supports me very well, particularly during the first meeting with a client. They raise my spirits. ‘It is not a job application. You already have the job, because you are a representative of the Direct Team.’ That is very good for your self-confidence.

It is also my greatest benefit. Now I am often assigned tasks that are very new. The longer I work and the more places I work at, the more I come across the same tasks and everything goes much quicker. Your self-confidence increases and you feel much more certain of yourself.”

### “You belong there and you know it from the small things”

“I had already been in a couple of jobs when I started with the Direct Team. Due to company closures and reorganisations, I had to look for a new job once or twice. Well, these fluctuations in the market can be absorbed when you work with Direct Team. As one job comes to an end, there is always another one to go to.

You quickly learn to adapt to a corporate culture. I am now on my third Direct Team assignment and I quickly detect whether I’m dealing with a ‘formal’ or a ‘relaxed’ environment.

I have never had any real problems during an assignment, either with the job content or with my boss. However, if a problem were to arise, I have the feeling that it could be discussed with the people from my Secretary Plus agency.

Secretary Plus listens to you. They keep you informed about developments in the company and there are other small things that keep you happy. For example, my contract for the Direct Team had already been signed, but I was still working for my previous employer. Even so, I got a special text message from Secretary Plus on my birthday. I knew immediately that I had found a good employer!”



Maria La Mela  
Direct Team Assistant  
since 1 April 2004

Heike Dirikx  
Direct Team Assistant  
since 4 January 2005

## “Not for creatures of habit”

“My eye fell on a leaflet about the Direct Team and guess what - I happened to have just the right profile for it! We are really cosseted in the Direct Team - a good salary, a company car, extra benefits, etc. I have now been with the same client for a long time. If they were to offer me a permanent position, well ... it would have to be a very good offer and, even then, I'm not sure that I would accept. I love variety. At each place of work you add to your network. I am sure that I will keep in touch with colleagues from my present assignment. Direct Team Assistants must stand on their own feet. You must not be timid and you have to adapt quickly. You see and hear a lot - especially if you work in one place for a long time - so you have to be both discreet and flexible. You may have to travel a long way for your job. What's more, every person and every company is different and everyone expects something different of you. You cannot be a creature of habit. It is very enriching and not only from the professional angle. You learn how to interact with people. I have, for example, learned to employ tact. Normally I say exactly what I think, but now I know that you have to handle some people with kid gloves.”

## “I am proud of working with the elite”

“I worked as an interim worker for fifteen years. That is a completely different way of working. As a Direct Team Assistant, you are a member of a team, you have a set value and you are appreciated. Direct Team is a quality label. You enter an office as a stranger and yet you are already trusted. A client also has more confidence, because he can be sure that you will turn up every day. You could say that we are the elite and naturally is nice to be a part of it. I am now on my third assignment as a Direct Team Assistant. You frequently discover new aspects of business. Thirty percent of the knowledge you pick up on the job is unique to the company, but seventy percent of the knowledge can be used in another job. The Office Managers and Consultants

provide support. I just have to send an e-mail or make a phone call and they will deal with my problem. It is also interesting to talk with the Office Manager after an assignment has finished. That's when you can let them know what you thought of the job - 'Nice but this or that aspect ... never again!' They get to know your abilities and they can find the perfect match for you. What is the ideal Direct Team Assistant? They need extensive knowledge of languages, they must be very communicative and assertive, and they must be readily adaptable. They are joining a solid group and they must feel comfortable there. They must learn quickly, pick things up and apply them. The boss expects active input from you, so you have to accept your responsibilities. Last year, the Mind Mapping course was a real hit! 'This course expands your memory by a thousand percent,' says the leaflet, and it was very interesting. The teacher was fantastic and everyone hung on her words. I use this information every day.”

## Direct Team Assistant: something for you too?

Are you looking for a permanent job with a personal coach, a company car and a company mobile phone? Then you have come to the right place. Secretary Plus Direct Team offers interesting long-term assignments. You will get to know different corporate cultures and gain extra experience.

### Our requirements

- You are willing to travel.
- You have an A1 Diploma and a good command of languages (Dutch/French/English or German).
- You are familiar with MS Office (Word/Excel/PowerPoint).
- You are reliable and stress-resistant.
- You are flexible and you can work independently.
- You learn quickly and adapt easily to different working environments.

### Our offer

Secretary Plus Direct Team offers you a position as a Management Assistant at top level. You can attend our Open Academy Plus training courses free of charge. You receive a permanent contract of employment for an indefinite period of time. You earn an attractive salary with an excellent package of benefits (company car, group insurance, mobile phone, etc.).

Interested? Do you like new challenges and changes in your job? If so, send your CV to [info@secretary-plus.be](mailto:info@secretary-plus.be), stating 'Application Direct Team/Vision' in the subject line.



Kristien De Brouwer, Office Manager with Commsquare:

## “Communication is very important in my job”

Once upon a time there was ... an Office Manager without a job called Kristien who went to visit the Secretary Plus offices in Mechelen. At the same time, a businessman called Stefan, manager of Commsquare, also went there to look for an Office Manager. They hit it off immediately. Kristien was able to start the job in his company the very next day and they have now been working happily together for a long while.



Kristien De Brouwer says: “What’s most important in my job? To be involved and to be able to work independently in a good atmosphere.”

### Did it really begin this way?

Kristien: “Yes, the story is true. What a coincidence! My dealings with Secretary Plus went very smoothly. Overall, I am extremely satisfied with them. They specialise in Management Assistants, which enables them to match ‘supply and demand’ perfectly. Furthermore, their staff members are very friendly and dynamic. I found it an extremely rewarding experience.”

### Management Assistant vs Office Manager: what’s the difference?

Kristien: “A Management Assistant assists the Manager nearly exclusively and helps him in the performance of his tasks. An Office Manager assists the whole company. I take care of personnel administration, accounting, payments, supplies, administrative organisation of training, time sheets, and so on. In fact, Commsquare has two central staff: my Manager and myself. Most information is channelled through us.”

### What is required of an Office Manager?

Kristien: “Keep things well-organised and don’t forget anything. Be very meticulous and logical in your follow-up. Communication is very important in all this. I used to think, ‘Oh, that’s not for me, I’m no good at that’, but I’ve developed a system that works for me - without it I would be lost. Another part of my job is to look for solutions that optimise internal processes. Of course this is teamwork. The company is growing very rapidly, so we have to ensure that the administration side develops at the same pace. Otherwise, everything would become chaotic. All this needs considerable commitment to the company.”

### Are there less pleasant aspects to your job?

Kristien: “The work of an Assistant is largely invisible. You only get attention if something goes wrong. This kind of work often goes unnoticed. People have no idea of the workload that an Assistant has, which can be a little frustrating at times.”

### Is this the job of your dreams?

Kristien (laughing): “I still don’t know what I want to be when I grow up. I’m just a curious person, always open to new things and not just on the professional front. I think that’s a good motto to live by.”



## Portrait of the company

Commsquare, established in 2001, is a telecoms company. It employs ten full-time workers and a handful of freelancers of different nationalities. Commsquare provides consultancy, training and audit services to mobile operators. They have customers throughout Europe, North Africa and Southeast Asia. The manager is Stefan Engels.

Kristien: “Commsquare is a small company, but we have a lot of work and we are growing rapidly. The number of workers has doubled in less than a year. I was hired in March 2005 as the only administrative employee. Now I need assistance quite regularly when things become too busy. It’s really fun to work for a small company with growth potential. The atmosphere is dynamic and people are motivated. My Manager is passionate about his work and he is able to get that message across to his co-workers very well.

[www.commsquare.com](http://www.commsquare.com)

# Quebec

A mixture of exuberance  
and cultural individuality





© Yves Tessier, Tessierma.

Do you feel like a little adventure, enjoying beautiful scenery and watching wildlife? Do you fancy sailing down a river in a canoe, watching whales from a fishing boat or spotting black bears and wolves in remote forests? How about trekking through a nature reserve for five days without seeing another human being, staying overnight in basic huts? Or would you prefer the comfort of a luxurious hotel such as the Fairmont Le Chateau Montebello in Quebec City, with the city's buzzing night-life scene virtually on the doorstep? In Canada, everything is possible.

Canada is a land of exceptional colour, extremely diverse culture and breathtaking scenery. The original inhabitants were Indians and Eskimo tribes, the Inuit. Over the centuries, the country was occupied successively by the English and the French. Their influence is still unmistakably present. Today, Canada is an extensive melting pot of more than 80 different nationalities who live together in harmony and provide a unique multicultural character.

### St. Lawrence: the heart and soul of Quebec

Canada is comprised of 10 provinces and 3 territories. The territories are mainly populated by Eskimos. Quebec is one of the most well-known provinces, mainly due to its tourist attractions. With a surface area of 1,667,926 km<sup>2</sup>, it is seven times the size of the United Kingdom and three times the size of France. Quebec has around 8 million inhabitants. Eighty percent of them live in the south of the province where the mighty St. Lawrence River flows. This river, along whose banks all of the most important cities of the province are situated, is the heart and soul of Quebec.

### Whale Watching

The St. Lawrence River is one of the longest rivers in the world. Thanks to its central location and the breathtaking scenery through which it flows, it has grown into a hit with tourists. You can discover the river in several different ways: with a ferry boat, with a cruise



© Claudel Huot

ship that visits the old ports of Montreal, Quebec City and Trois-Rivières, with a whale fishing boat or by means of an ecologically inspired journey by canoe or sailing boat. Between June and September, whales are the biggest attraction. Every year, at least 12 species of whale come to feed on the rich fish populations of the St. Lawrence River. You can admire these spectacular animals from the river banks or from one of the numerous ships that take you close up to them. The whales are not at all bothered by such activity and are happy to be observed and filmed.

### Unique fauna and flora

Quebec has some stunning fauna and flora. Many wild animals still populate its vast forests - black bears, wolves, reindeers and big cats like the lynx. The rivers and lakes are a recreation ground for otters and beavers. The snow goose also appears frequently in Quebec.

Such rich wildlife has helped the tourist industry of Quebec to grow. You can tour around these areas without disturbing the animals. La Mauricie is a large national park of over 500 km<sup>2</sup> that stretches as far as the Laurentides, a mountain chain which flanks the north side of the St. Lawrence River. Are you the adventurous type? Then a five-day walking tour through this national park is strongly recommended. You will walk 75 kilometres through some simply magnificent scenery. On the way you will spend the night in basic huts. Alternatively, you can take your own tent.

Traditional winter sports tourism is also well developed in the Laurentides region. You can go Alpine skiing at the Mont Tremblant ski resort. This resort's infrastructure can rival most European ski resorts and the après-ski scene is very attractive and lively.

## Carnival in Quebec

The inhabitants of Quebec City truly enjoy life. A French flair can be felt throughout the town, and the multi-cultural spirit of the region brings excitement to the city life. Gastronomy and festivals are high on the agenda of the Quebec people. The best-known celebration is the Carnival of Quebec City. This has become the largest winter carnival in the world and the third largest carnival event after Rio and New Orleans. Every year, thousands of tourists from across the world gaze in wonder at this spectacle. The city has built a gigantic village for these winter celebrations. Dozens of activities are held in this magical arena: ice sculpture exhibitions, costume parades and open-air balls as well as typical dog sledding competitions. The programme also includes ice fishing, skating and cross-country skiing competitions as well as a host of traditional games.

Quebec City does not just stand for Carnival. The old part of town is a Unesco World Heritage Site. Quebec City is the only city in North America which still has fortified walls. Its architectural heritage is impressive and an absolute must for extra value seekers.

## Bonhomme Carnival



Quebec has a long tradition of Carnival. Back in 1894, the French colonials celebrated the end of a severe winter with a huge feast of eating and drinking. That feast soon grew into the annual Mardi Gras. In 1954, a few visionary businessmen further expanded the winter celebrations into a tourist attraction. They created the Bonhomme Carnival - Bonhomme is a big snowman with a red hat and a multicoloured sash around his waist and has become known world-wide as the symbol of the winter celebrations in Quebec.

## The capital city Montreal

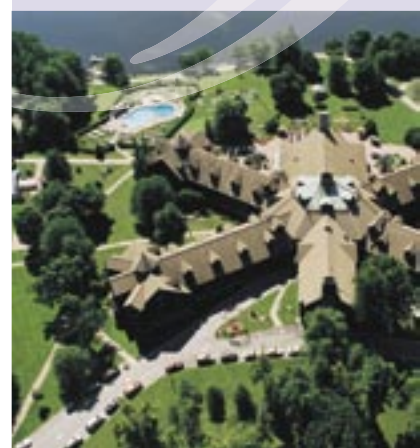
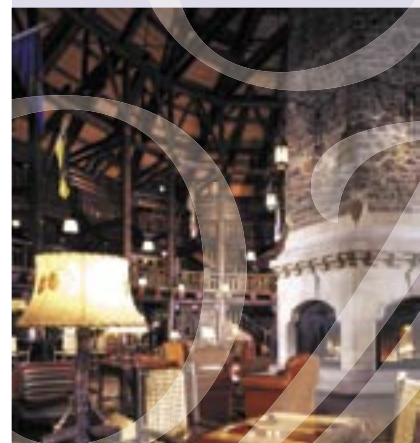
Montreal is the capital of the province of Quebec. In this city North American modernity is perfectly interwoven with European charm. Montreal was originally just a small French colony. Today, it is the second-largest French-speaking city in the world. Montreal has almost 3.5 million inhabitants and is an international centre for commerce and finance. Its location, barely 60 km from the American border, has certainly played a role in this.

## Rich metropolis

Montreal displays a remarkable dichotomy. In order to keep the commercial infrastructure going during the ice-cold winters, a network of more than 30 km of underground, heated shopping streets has been built. This network is linked to the best hotels, theatres and concert halls through an extensive and safe metro network. Above ground you will find a rich, multi-cultural metropolis. Top international hotels, wonderful museums and enjoyable neighbourhoods give the town a creative and dynamic image. From the 125-year old Parc du Mont-Royal, you will enjoy spectacular vistas of the city. The Old Town is an absolute must if you want to savour some peace and quiet. The Place St. Gabriel still has a typically French atmosphere and the famous Auberge St. Gabriel is a silent homage to the rich history of the district. In the Auberge we discover that nouvelle cuisine has made its mark. Here you can still find the best cooks in the land who use the best produce from Quebec.

## Typical winter sports

Canada offers its own variety of typical winter sports. A ride with a dog sled is a unique experience. The enthusiasm with which the husky dogs steer the sled through the loose snow demonstrates their untameable natural instinct. Would you prefer something more peaceful? You could choose a game of curling, ice fishing or broomball (a variation on ice hockey). However, the ultimate adventure is a day trip with a snowmobile. Quebec has around 32,000 km of trails especially adapted for these vehicles. Such a trip is as unique as it is dangerous. Snowmobiles usually have over 500 cc of pure power which cannot be let loose on small snow tracks. Would you like to have a day of pure speed on the snow? In that case, you will have to be aware that Quebec has a zero tolerance policy towards drink driving which also applies to snowmobiling.



*Fairmont*  
HOTELS & RESORTS

## Outstanding Hotels

### Fairmont Chain

The quality of the hotels in Quebec is exceptional. The Fairmont chain in particular offers some magnificent accommodation. In Quebec City, the chain runs the world-famous and impressive Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac. This is one of the most luxurious hotels in Canada, and probably the most photographed in the world. Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac dominates the view of Quebec City. It is situated in the heart of the old town and the view of it from the St. Lawrence River is impressive. The hotel was built at the end of the 19th century on the initiative of the General Manager of Canadian Pacific Railway. Over the years, the hotel has been greatly expanded. Today, Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac is the standard for luxury and comfort and the perfect solution for the demanding traveller who wishes to enjoy a rich cultural and historically inspired environment.

Montreal boasts the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth, which was recently recognised as one of the 500 greatest hotels in the world. Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth offers superior gastronomy. You can experience Canadian cuisine at its best in Le Voyageurs Lounge, Le Montréalais bistro-restaurant and in the award-winning Beaver Club. The hotel also has a Health Club with an indoor pool, steam room, whirlpool and state-of-the-art equipment. Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth also has a direct access to the city's extensive underground network of shops.

### Chateau Montebello

Fairmont Le Chateau Montebello also owes its origin to the Canadian Pacific Railway. The hotel is completely built out of red cedar logs and is the largest roundwood hotel in Canada. Fairmont Le Chateau Montebello exudes a unique peaceful atmosphere and this is reinforced by its location on the banks of the St Lawrence River and proximity to the Laurentides region. The gastronomic range offered by the hotel is of the highest quality and its recreational facilities are unrivalled. The hotel boasts an olympic swimming pool that can be reached through an underground tunnel. It also has a Health Club, indoor tennis courts, squash courts and even a curling rink.

In the winter, you can practise all sorts of Canadian outdoor sports in the hotel grounds. Montebello has its own snowmobiles and nearby you can take a trip with a dog sled. You do not even need to leave the hotel's extensive grounds to practise cross country skiing. In the summer, the hotel organises supervised hunting parties.

Fairmont Le Chateau Montebello also offers a different kind of accommodation to cater for those who fancy something more adventurous and who want to experience Canadian wilderness firsthand: Fairmont Kenauk, consisting of wooden chalets, or 'Kenauks', set in a wilderness wonderland. These chalets offer basic facilities and when you stay here you are completely left to your own devices in splendid isolation amid breathtaking scenery. A couple of days in a cosy Kenauk are guaranteed to make you feel completely rejuvenated.

### More information about trips to Canada

All Travel  
Headoffice Bree  
Witte Torenstraat 2  
3960 Bree  
Tel. 089 46 43 42  
Fax 089 47 39 31  
info@alltravel.be  
www.alltravel.be

### Exclusive trip to Quebec

#### 10 % discount for our readers

All Travel and the Fairmont chain have devised an exclusive trip to Quebec in June 2006 especially for Vision readers. All transfers during the trip will be by luxury coach. Hotel accommodation will be on a bed and breakfast basis.

#### Programme

- Flight Brussels - Montreal
- Welcome reception at the Fairmont The Queen Elisabeth, Montreal
- Two nights at the Fairmont The Queen Elisabeth
- Guided tour of Montreal; exploration of the old town with guide
- Transfer to Montebello
- Spectacular open-air welcome reception
- Fairmont Le Chateau Montebello, including the use of the SPA and Health Club facilities free of charge
- Survival trip and wild bear watching at Fairmont Kenauk
- Transfer to Mont Tremblant
- Welcome reception at the Fairmont Tremblant
- One night at the Fairmont Tremblant, including use of SPA and Health Club facilities free of charge
- Transfer to Quebec City
- Welcome reception at the Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac, Quebec City
- One night at the Fairmont Le Chateau Frontenac
- Explore Quebec City with guide
- Flight Montreal - Brussels

#### Interested?

Send an e-mail to  
hedwig.neesen@alltravel.be.  
You will receive more information and price details.



# RECRUITMENT

The right man or woman in the right place, is it a vain hope? Not at all! It is the primary concern of every company manager who is looking for a new employee. So what is the answer? The world of personnel selection is becoming more specialised every day, which has led to a substantial increase in the number of technical terms used by HR managers and selection agencies: direct search, body shopping, outplacement, outsourcing, and headhunting. Secretary Vision explains them.



# TERMS explained

## Recruitment

Recruitment and selection are the basis of any hiring policy. A company in need of a new employee goes in search of candidates and selects the best one for the job. However, before the company starts its search, it must first carefully consider a number of questions:

- Who exactly does the company need?
- Which competencies and what potential must the candidate have?
- How do I determine whether the candidate is a suitable future employee?
- Which method is appropriate to achieve that objective?

## Choices

A recruitment agency helps the company choose between various methods:

- Media search: together with the company, the specialists draw up an advertisement that they will publish in the appropriate media: newspapers, specialist journals or websites.
- Direct search: the company already has a list of potential employees with the right experience, knowledge and training for a specific position. They could approach these people directly. However, this is often not ethically appropriate, so the company hires an external bureau to do this for them. Is it a highly specialised or management function? Then the headhunting method may be required (see further).
- Body shopping: a company brings in (mostly temporary) foreign contractors to work for them at lower salaries. This term is primarily used for IT staff.

## Outsourcing

Outsourcing = tasks that do not form part of the company's core activities are contracted out to reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Outsourcing became popular at a time of serious personnel shortages in the IT sector. For example, in the 1990s, the Ministry of the Flemish Community was no longer able to recruit competent IT personnel at public service salaries. Consequently, they decided to outsource all IT tasks, hardware and software purchasing (including programming and network management), to an external company.

Outsourcing is mostly done on the basis of contracts that include Service Level Agreements (SLAs): the external service provider undertakes to maintain certain standards, and penalties are incurred if it fails to meet those standards. For example: a SLA specifies that the corporate network cannot be unavailable for more than 1 hour during working hours.

## Stability and client bonding

"Outsourcing is no longer limited to IT functions. Corporate business is increasingly tending to call on specialists and flexible employment formulas," says Alain Hosdey, HR expert at USG People. "For example, a company needs an extra person for only two days a week for a fairly long period of time. Or it may need extra people during a traditional peak month, perhaps three times per year.

"In these situations," continues Alain Hosdey, "employers often choose outsourcing over temporary employees. Why? Firstly, because they want stability - they get the guarantee that they can call on the same person over a long period. Secondly, there is the element of client bonding - if the employer likes the employee, he will be inclined to go back to the same outsourcing firm for another project." Outsourcing is very common among larger companies but less so among SMEs. "In a small to medium-sized enterprise, the boss prefers to keep matters in his own hands."

## BPO: Outsourcing processes

Initially, only well-defined tasks or sets of tasks were outsourced. However, in recent years, more and more companies have started using Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) - they subcontract a complete process from A to Z. For example, a production company wants to introduce a new product in the market and entrusts the entire process of launching and marketing to a specialist firm. The essence of this is that specialist companies outsource any activities that are not a part of their core business (in this case, making innovative products).

## Employee advantage

"Outsourcing also offers numerous advantages to employees," observes Alain Hosdey. "I am thinking in particular of career plan management. When people start out on their career, outsourcing offers opportunities to progress rapidly from starter to experienced profile. After a number of years of experience in outsourcing, you will have considerable advantages when applying for a lucrative permanent position. Alternatively, you may receive a spontaneous offer of employment from the company to which you have been assigned.

"Employees use outsourcing to find work that suits their part-time wishes. I have observed a first peak at the start and a second peak at the end of people's careers. Specialists who were previously in full-time employment offer their services at times of crisis, for example, but also people who prefer part-time work in certain months of the year or who perhaps want to work only 4-5 hours per day rather than 8."

## Would you like more information?

In collaboration with the KU Leuven, Federgon has published a study about the arguments for and against outsourcing, 'HR Outsourcing. Threat or opportunity?' You can download this study from [www.federgon.be](http://www.federgon.be).

## Headhunting

Headhunting = the quest for rising stars with sufficient growth potential and highly-specialised knowledge and experience.

With Direct Search, a firm looks for the most suitable candidate in a specific target group, for example, a trilingual sales person with experience in selling heavy goods vehicles. Headhunting is effectively a sub-category of Direct Search - and is used for executive positions or positions with very specific job requirements.

### Pitfalls

Headhunting also has its origins in the IT world - a severe shortage of seasoned IT specialists to deal with the Y2K bug. Headhunters do not find their candidates in the open market, but among specialists who are already employed. Usually, a headhunter is paid only if he has found the ideal candidate and if the company who commissioned him actually employs this candidate.

"It is therefore very important that headhunters use the highest ethical standards," says Alain Hosdey. "A group within Federgon works out the rules for headhunting, which is a good thing. Furthermore, candidates have to be careful as well. It is often very tempting to chase an opportunity. However, I know a lot of people who climbed the career ladder rapidly, only to run adrift at a high level and to find themselves stuck - they get their notice and then no headhunter is interested in them anymore."

### Management Assistant: enemy and assistant no. 1

"The greatest enemy of a headhunter is the Management Assistant! Let there be no doubt about that," states Alain Hosdey. "A good Management Assistant meticulously manages the diary of her boss and filters all calls. The headhunter has to get round this. A word of advice! Deal with this situation discreetly and ethically - discuss with your Manager what policy to follow if headhunters call."

Headhunters appreciate Management Assistants who help them in their quest. They are an ideal right hand, because they have outstanding language skills and use their communication skills to reach and persuade potential candidates.

## Outplacement

Outplacement = guidance to help dismissed employees to find new employment as quickly as possible or to become self-employed.

### At each dismissal

In Belgium, every dismissed employee over the age of 45 has a legal right to outplacement services. This right also applies to collective dismissals. "Outplacement is a major help," says Alain Hosdey, "because after ten years or more in a post, you have acquired many skills but you no longer know the employment market. Furthermore, you are morally and psychologically shocked by your dismissal or will become so after your application has been rejected ten or twenty times. In outplacement you entrust yourself to a coach who helps you to determine a strategy and who supports you every step of the way.

"I regularly meet disillusioned people. On dismissal, they thought, 'Just give me a payoff instead of outplacement. I'll soon find a new job.' After a series of shattering experiences, they come to us, dispirited. Finding a new job is not only difficult for the over-45 group. There are those who are still unemployed five years after they graduated. We put this group on the right track as well."

### In summary

Outplacement involves a number of well-defined guidance aspects:

- Composing a balanced list of competencies: talents, strong points, education;
- Defining realistic aims and objectives;
- Drawing up a professional CV and letter of application;
- Getting to know the recruitment channels;
- Preparing for interviews.

"An outplacement coach will have an excellent network in the sector in which the candidate is seeking work," says Alain Hosdey, who is an outplacement coach himself. "For that reason, Secretary Plus is an exceptional guide for Management Assistants. They know the sector like no-one else and enjoy high credibility, which opens doors with employers."

Statutory outplacement services entitle candidates to a total of sixty hours of guidance.

Sixteen members of the National Association of Outplacement Bureaux (NVOB) work together in the Federgon 'Outplacement' department. They represent around 90 percent of the sector's turnover in Belgium.

Alain Hosdey,  
HR expert with USG People



# Tips & Tricks

## A good archive saves time and frustration

Maintaining an archive is one of the tasks for which you as a Management Assistant will often be responsible, but can you handle it? Are you a born archivist or is your archive a mess? Secretary Vision provides tips on how to archive in a structured and orderly manner.



### Why archive?

In an archive you store important documents, for example contracts or personnel data as well as memos, signatures and letters. The archive is the memory of a business. There are two ways to build an archive; a physical system using filing cabinets, and a digital system. The latter is often more practical, because it requires less space and the information is more readily available. However, a contract or any other signed documents will also usually have to be handled physically. That is why most businesses opt for a combination of the two systems.

### Order amid chaos: tips

1. Use the same search code in both systems - date or name, etc.
2. Group the files and separate different subsets of the archive by means of colours.
3. Keep information together and avoid creating several different folders.
4. Immediately throw away anything that is not needed. This prevents the archive from becoming unwieldy.
5. Be sure to respect the legal retention period.
6. Clear out the archive at least once a year.
7. Use the digital archive to protect sensitive information with a password.

### Outsourcing

Is archiving too big a task? If so, you can outsource it to a specialist company. Here too you can opt for a digital or physical archive. All items must be scanned first. You can download the details from the Internet. When documents have to be retrieved, this will take a little longer when they are stored in a physical archive. Some archive companies can provide items in a few hours. With others, the transfer may take at least 24 hours.

### Lost Data: what now?

Important data or databases can be subject to damage or loss. Always make a backup of the most important items from the archive and keep this backup in a different place. However, this does not mean that you have to build a duplicate archive. Just make sure that any essential data is copied. You can scan physical items and copy them to a CD.

### Child's play

More space and time are the main advantages of a good archive. Furthermore, it will save you a lot of frustration. You will never have to search for very long. You can also determine access rules. For example, you would store data with restricted access digitally. You would keep the remaining items in a filing system.

### How long should you keep items?

For specific items there is a mandatory retention period. You will find a handy overview at <http://www.merak.be/belg/en/products>.

## Archive your e-mails

Many e-mails are archive documents or have administrative or legal value. You may not destroy them and they must be kept in a good, orderly manner and be accessible. This also applies to documents that are sent as e-mail attachments.

The first step in the archiving process for e-mails and attachments is to build a digital filing system. This applies to all digital office documents in your company. Keeping e-mails and attachments in the e-mail system can only be a temporary solution for e-mail archiving. It is best to file e-mails and attachments in the digital filing system as soon as possible after sending or receiving them.

**What?** This filing system constitutes the organisation's digital memory and is the central location for all digital documents. You will also file e-mails and attachments with archival value here.

**Where?** In principle, you can build a digital filing system anywhere. If possible, the digital filing system should be managed within a document management or a records management application. This type of advanced information management application should include such functions as version management, metadata registration or full text indexing. However, you can also maintain a digital filing system on a regular file server or a shared hard drive.

**How?** Current operating systems (Windows, Mac, Unix/Linux) offer sufficient functionality for basic folder and file management. Don't forget to make regular backups of the digital filing system and its complete contents!

Working in ...

# the transport sector

“All links together form a single chain.”

A company can be read like a book. It says something about the people who work there and about the company culture. Delta Transport Services is no exception. The tale told by this transport company is a compelling story about enthusiastic employees and fascinating challenges. And the end is nowhere in sight.

“There are no Management Assistants here, only management co-workers,” says Wim Konings, speaking frankly. Wim Konings is General Manager at Delta Transport Services, a company which handles transport for companies and carriers. I am talking with him about the content of management support positions in the transport sector and about Delta Transport Services in particular. One thing is immediately clear: the transport sector is a unique world with specific skills and tasks, which are difficult to compare with positions in other sectors. And this of course has consequences for the recruitment of new workers.

## New Feature

The perfect Management Assistant doesn't exist. Each assignment is different. Each company is different. And even each sector is different. This is the starting point of our new Vision section ‘Working in ...’ In each issue we will analyse a sector and a company in detail, and explore the role of Management Assistant. The transport sector with Delta Transport Services takes the first turn.



## Human interaction

Schools today do not necessarily cover the daily activities of a transport company. A diploma therefore has limited value for a job application. What then is the decisive factor? Wim Konings says: “The transport sector is a service sector. We provide a service, often in difficult circumstances due to operational barriers or market conditions. We are looking for colleagues who are willing to take up the challenge on a daily basis in order to make a success of our company. We have people here who are performing management support roles without any higher education and yet they have made it. Why? Because they offer added value at a human level. The more things are automated and computerised, the more important the human factor becomes. Right down to the last link in the chain - the driver - our company's activity consists of human interaction. All links together form a single chain and it is the responsibility of the individual in a management support role to get that point across to everyone.”



### Strong recruitment

A management support role requires many qualities. Wim Konings talks about being able to work independently, taking initiatives, having a flair for organisation, experience, insight, ability to think outside the box, being stress resistant, etc. Francis has it all. He works in the sales department prospecting for new customers and supporting existing customers. "You have to open the right door at the right time. But you also need to know what to say. We aren't selling a product such as a washing machine: we're selling a service. Communication is extremely important, as is extensive knowledge of languages as well as an understanding of how transport works. You represent your company, so it is important to portray a positive image. OK, this requires a lot of flexibility and effort. It is not a nine-to-five job, but what you get in return is great. Working for a transport company is very diverse and very challenging. No two days are the same."

### Young and dynamic

Delta Transport Services has around 40 employees, mostly young people - the average age is 28. And the company is growing. Last year, fifteen people joined the workforce. Wim Konings says: "It isn't easy to find somebody with the right skills and knowledge to work in the transport sector and to make a difference. In addition, he or she has to fit in with the company culture. Our co-workers are not tied into a specific role or job description. There are many growth opportunities in the company. We explore the intrinsic capabilities of our co-workers in order to put them to use as soon as possible. That is why it is important to have the services of a company such as Secretary Plus. We gladly work with them for the recruitment of our new employees, because they take the work seriously: they are motivated to learn about our business and they constantly refine the profile requirements. The link between our demand and their supply is perfect.

They understand perfectly that we require added value from our employees, but also that we provide added value to them, just as we provide our customers with added value."

### Are you interested in a management support position?

Then point your browser to [www.secretary-plus.be](http://www.secretary-plus.be) or send an e-mail to [info@secretary-plus.be](mailto:info@secretary-plus.be).

Do you want to know more about the transport sector?

The Federation of Belgian Transport Companies can be found at [www.febetra.be](http://www.febetra.be). Or surf to [www.sav.be](http://www.sav.be).

Do you want more information about the company Delta Transport Services?

Take a look at [www.deltatransport.be](http://www.deltatransport.be).

# Secretary Plus Roeselare: the human factor

The new agency on the Grote Markt of Roeselare meets all of the Secretary Plus standards: a great location, a peaceful atmosphere with no gaudy signs, a beautiful old mansion full of woodwork combined with soft colours, and a warm and welcoming reception area.

## Friendly

"Friendliness is our trademark," confirms Liesbeth Ghesquière, Office Manager. She has been running the new agency in Roeselare since January. The walls were still a virginal white when the interview took place. "Later on I'll choose a few reproductions from the catalogue," says Liesbeth, beaming. "That is one of the nice aspects of the job." Well, judging by her radiant smile, we would guess that there are very few negative points in her work.

## Enthusiastic

Liesbeth is a warm, sociable and very enthusiastic person. She used to work as a Project Manager in an organisational agency. This experience is very useful to her in her current position of Office Manager. Liesbeth says: "In Human Resources, you have to be able to get on with people. I learned to do that in my job as a Project Manager." Last year, she took a radical turn in her career. She signed up for training with Secretary Plus. "Actually, the reason I went to Secretary Plus in the first place was to apply for a position as an interim worker. I was immensely impressed by the professionalism, the atmosphere and the friendliness of the staff. I knew immediately that I wanted to work here."

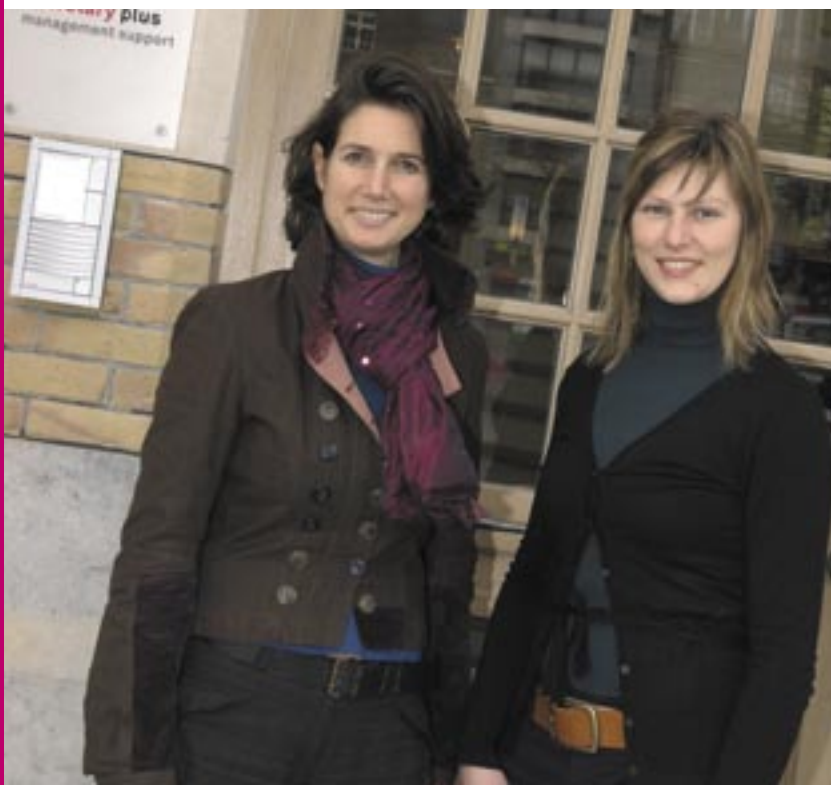
## Personal

After a few months of working at the Bruges agency, it finally happened: Roeselare was given its own agency. "This is no luxury," says Liesbeth. "The employers in this area like Roeselare. They would rather not rely on Bruges and they prefer to have an agency in their own town. In West Flanders, a lot of things are still done quite informally. Personal contact is extremely important here. I'm from this region, so I know most of the companies in the area. That's certainly an advantage."

## Motivation

It is a real challenge to set up a new agency and yet Liesbeth is not starting completely from scratch. The client base is made up of Roeselare companies and candidates who used to go to the Bruges agency. Liesbeth says: "The hardest thing is to set priorities. Everything is always urgent. I make appointments with existing customers to present the new agency. At the same time, we have to work flat out prospecting for new customers. Everybody has to know as quickly as possible that there is a new agency and we wouldn't get very far without candidates to fill the vacancies."

Liesbeth Ghesquière, Office Manager    Kathy Snoeck, Region Consultant



## Support

Luckily, Liesbeth is not completely on her own. She receives a great deal of support and assistance from Secretary Plus. Liesbeth explains further: "I go to the head office one day per week for training. I'm learning the most efficient way to conduct phone calls, negotiate, select, recruit, etc. Moreover, I was able to get help from a consultant during the first few weeks."

## Expectations

The Roeselare agency has all the assets necessary to develop into a fully-fledged Secretary Plus establishment. What are the plans? Liesbeth believes, "To grow naturally and, if that works, to expand - but that is really something for the future."

# Explore

## the Champagne region by bicycle

The area between Reims, Epernay and Chalons-en-Champagne is the heart of Champagne region and is an absolute must for pleasure-lovers and fans of short weekend trips. This golden triangle is only a few hours' drive from Brussels. The region is still very rural and lightly populated.



### Where grapes become bubbles

There are about 120 wineries in the region - good for 250 million bottles of Champagne per year. Would you like to learn about Champagne cultivation from behind the scenes? You can take a tour of one of the largest Champagne houses or visit a number of small wine growers. The Route Touristique du Champagne is 700 km long and takes you through a host of charming Champagne villages, each more picturesque than the next. The waymarked cycling trails across the vineyards are unique. Would you like to combine cycling with a visit to a wine cellar? Then you need to be careful - the region is hilly and cycling could be hard work with all those bubbles in your system!

### Epernay, cosy provincialism

Epernay is more or less at the centre of the Champagne region. This is where three large wine regions come together and where all the important wineries have their home base. Beneath Epernay, there are more than 100 kilometres of tunnels on three levels. The temperature always ranges between nine and twelve degrees, ideal maturing conditions for the divine drink of which two hundred million bottles are stored here. Despite all this activity, Epernay has retained the feel of a small provincial town and this makes a visit even more worthwhile.

### Reims, capital of Champagne

Reims is the Champagne town par excellence. However, the town has more to offer than bubbly alone. The monumental Notre Dame cathedral dating back to 1211 and the Palace of Tau, used as a museum, are certainly worth visiting. This also applies to the Basilica of Saint Remi, a Unesco World Heritage Site. Reims is first and foremost a town that you have to explore in a relaxed manner.

In Reims, you will find welcoming shopping streets and pleasant busy restaurants offering a great gastronomic experience.

### A few facts

- Champagne is made from pinot noir, pinot meunier and chardonnay grapes.
- The alcohol content of Champagne is usually around 13%.
- Champagne does not have a date on the bottle. Exception: the Champagne Millesime. This one gets a date, because it is made of grapes from a very good wine year.
- You can visit the many orchards in the region all year round. Champagne tasting sessions are organised on a virtually permanent basis. Advance booking is required.

### Links

- Epernay Tourist Information Office: <http://www.ot-epernay.fr/>
- Reims Tourist Information Office: <http://www.tourisme.fr/reims/>
- Champagne-Ardenne Region: <http://www.tourisme-champagne-ardenne.com>
- Reservations for wine tasting sessions: 'A la découverte des champagnes' on +33 326 640 813.

For more information or an offer, send an e-mail to [info@alltravel.be](mailto:info@alltravel.be)

# New survey on the competencies of the Management Assistant

“Personality is a basic requirement for being able to function well”

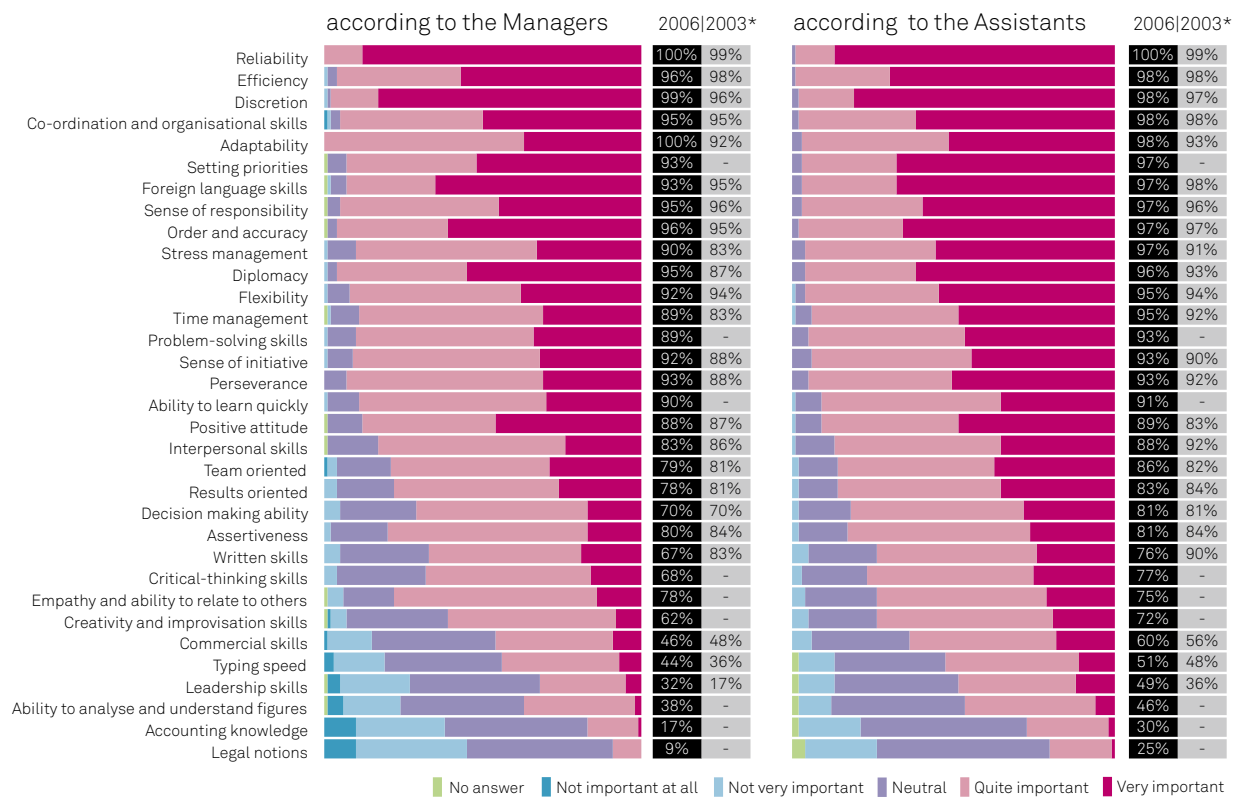
Secretary Plus Management Support is a market leader in the recruitment and placement of management support functions. We want to continue this activity on a professional basis. For that reason, we have our finger on the pulse and we regularly assess the expectations of Managers and Management Assistants. Consequently, in December 2005, we undertook a new survey on the competencies of the Management Assistant. We have summarised the most important details for you.

First and foremost, we draw your attention to two important graphs – the essential competencies according to the Management Assistants themselves and according to the Managers. You can compare the results from 2003 and 2006.

## On one hand ... and on the other

### 1. Communication

On one hand ... Managers attach considerable importance to the appearance and the personality of the Management Assistant. This is due to the external contacts that the Management Assistant will have. A cultivated presentation therefore scores highly by comparison with the results of the previous survey. ... and on the other Management Assistants are aware of the important role that they play in the area of internal communication. They must be proactive and develop a relational network in their organisation. External communications are also important so external networking is gaining in importance.



## 2. Autonomy

**On one hand ...** 93% of the Managers want their Management Assistants to work fully autonomously.

**... and on the other** Only 73% find that they do that. This difference is perhaps explained by the fact that the Management Assistants do not know if they are allowed to do that.

## 3. Training

**On one hand ...** To be a good Management Assistant, sound language and IT knowledge is essential. Managers therefore find that training in secretarial/office management is desirable. Communications are continuously more important. Both in the areas of internal and external communications, an outgoing personality is an essential requirement.

**... and on the other** Management Assistants also find that language knowledge, IT knowledge and training in communications are indispensable. In particular, they attach more importance to other training than their Managers.

## 4. Knowledge

**On one hand ...** Managers attach considerable importance to language knowledge (92%) and IT knowledge

(76%). In recruitment, experience is a major criterion (85%). French and Dutch are an absolute must. Knowledge is now less often required than in 2003. In the area of IT, all Managers expect good knowledge of MS Office programs, except for Access. The demand for good knowledge of the Internet is increasing.

**... and on the other** Management Assistants think that the expectations of the Managers are higher than is the reality – an interesting observation. We have noticed a shift in the area of knowledge of the sector - Management Assistants would like to put this to their Managers, although they don't feel that they are in a position to do so.

## 5. Competence

**On one hand ...** Reliability remains the absolute number 1 requirement and scored almost 100% (from important to very important). Discretion and efficiency (organisation) follow as the most important competencies the Managers expect from their Management Assistant. Personality therefore comes before knowledge and wins in importance by comparison with the 2003 survey. More specific aspects, such as bookkeeping or legal notions, are less often required.

**... and on the other** Listening, watching and discretion are also perceived as

important by the Management Assistants themselves. They even rate the expectations of their Managers higher in the area of reliability and discretion and think moreover that their Managers demand more skills and competencies than in 2003. Adaptability, stress management and positive attitude are increasing, while the growing importance of personality is emphasised.

## 6. Creativity

**On one hand ...** In contrast to the beliefs of the Management Assistants, Managers find that their Management Assistants do not have to play a really creative role.

**... and on the other** Management Assistants think they have and they attach considerable importance to the proactive identification of opportunities, development of contacts, follow-up of delicate dossiers, transfer of specific information, etc.

## 7. Satisfaction

**On one hand ...** In the responses of the Managers, we found no unfulfilled expectations.

**... and on the other** For the Management Assistants, the demand for new tasks is not large. Both parties are in general satisfied with the tasks carried out.

## Summary

This survey confirms the results of our previous survey and the trend is even stronger - the personality of the Management Assistant is the most important. A strong personality is a basic requirement for being able to function well and scores higher than knowledge. The ideal Management Assistant is reliable, discreet and efficient. This is, moreover, the opinion of the Managers and of the Management Assistants.

Of course, knowledge is also important and must be held by the Management Assistant in a number of competencies. Just as in 2003, the importance of good language and IT knowledge is dominant. That is the main reason why most Management Assistants had a training in translation/interpretation or office management/secretarial languages.

In view of the expectations of the Managers and the varied task content, the function of Management Assistant offers considerable career possibilities. Just as the technological evolution has considerably changed labour organisation in companies, the content of management support functions has also become more interesting.

## Comprehensive survey

At the end of 2005, we carried out a new survey on the essential competencies of the Management Assistant. The previous survey dated from 2003. This time, we also gauged the opinion of the Management Assistant and the Manager with regard to the expectations and actual competencies of the Management Assistant. For that reason, there were two lists of questions; one for the Managers (what did they find important?) and one for the Management Assistants (did their image differ from that of the Managers?). The survey followed the same line as that of 2003 but with the addition of three themes:

- the entrusted tasks (and those that would be happily entrusted or accepted);
- the training level of the Management Assistants;
- the expectations in the area of language knowledge.

## Ordering the brochure

More than 1,200 Managers and Management Assistants contributed to the survey. This article is a résumé of their responses. Would you like to know more about them? If so, you can order our free brochure with a detailed overview of all results from: [info@secretary-plus.be](mailto:info@secretary-plus.be).

## 2 x 4 tickets for EuroDisney

How many people contributed to the survey?

That was the question. Did you know the answer? **1,254**

Then perhaps you are one of the lucky winners of four tickets to EuroDisney?

The winners are:

- Parent Eva from Wondelgem
- Cédric Demannez from Rixensart

## Eat well in Comme chez Soi

Three Managers knew the right answer to the question 'What was the total age of the personnel of the 14 Secretary Plus agencies on 1st July 2005', asked in our quality survey (summer 2005). They each won a voucher worth 300 euros for an exclusive meal in the Brussels three-star restaurant Comme chez Soi. One of them is Ann Bex (Lawfort, Sint-Stevens-Woluwe). "I rarely enter competitions and when I do I never win. So, I was amazed at the result of the Secretary Plus competition. I was very happy because Comme chez Soi is not just any restaurant. I have not yet used my voucher but I will do so within the next few months. Thanks, Secretary Plus and may I take the opportunity to congratulate you about Vision. This is a magazine that really talks. I am very enthusiastic about the fascinating articles and the interesting facts!"

Meera Parmentier - from school leaver to Sales Secretary at VCM Belgium

## “Go for it”

“I need a bit of luck to be happy”, said the Greek philosopher, Aristotle. Meera Parmentier is a living example – she radiates luck. This positive radiance made an enormous impression on Katrien Vandeputte, HR Manager at VCM Belgium. In August 2005, Meera was looking for a fresh school leaver through Secretary Plus and took her on immediately.

“I have just one tip for school leavers in search of an interesting job - go for it!” beams Meera. That is what Meera did after training in business translation/interpreting at the Economics High School in Heverlee - and not without success. In August 2005, she got her first work experience at VCM Belgium, a company that imports and markets Volvo Construction Equipment. She is now Secretary to the Sales Department. “My studies suited the business world perfectly. My language knowledge is very useful. I get people from several countries on the line and I have to be able to handle them. I work in a team of six sales people and it's a nice atmosphere. They are all men and that only has advantages. Men are more direct - that avoids misunderstandings. I like the style. I have

lots of challenges in this job. I learn something every day.”

### Working, learning and ... enjoying

“Your first work experience is enormously important”, confirms Katrien Vandeputte. “You must have a bit of luck there. Secretary Plus has a great responsibility in the support of school leavers. I really want to help with that. We are seeking a balanced composition of our workforce and encourage long-term working relationships. Of course, you can't expect a school leaver to sign a contract for life. That is not realistic but what I would like is that, later on, Meera says about VCM, “I worked hard there, learnt a lot and also enjoyed it.”

VCM Belgium  
Woluwelaan 9  
1800 Vilvoorde  
tel.: 02 254 14 11  
[info@vcmbelgium.be](mailto:info@vcmbelgium.be)  
[www.vcmbelgium.be](http://www.vcmbelgium.be)



# Bachelor Office Management of the Year Award

23

For final year students, shortly to receive a secretarial diploma (Level A1) the Bachelor Office Management of the Year Award is a piece of cake. Secretary Plus has a nice set of prizes in view for the three winners: a trophy, a city trip for two to Seville – and especially, an employment contract of indefinite duration with Secretary Plus Direct Team. Getting so many goodies all at once is therefore no surprise. The three selection rounds will cover language and computer tests, an interview in front of a jury of professionals and an assessment exercise. The twenty participants have the chance of a nice prize.

With this competition, Secretary Plus is again putting the profession of Management Assistant in the spotlight in an original way.

## Secretary Plus agencies

### Aalst

Stationsstraat 6, 9300 Aalst  
tel.: 053 76 61 30, fax: 053 70 87 43  
aalst@secretary-plus.be

### Antwerpen

Britselei 80, 2000 Antwerpen  
tel.: 03 800 40 50, fax: 03 800 40 59  
antwerpen@secretary-plus.be

### Brugge

Sint-Amandstraat 37, 8000 Brugge  
tel.: 050 47 00 10, fax: 050 47 00 19  
brugge@secretary-plus.be

### Brussels

Place Stéphanie 6, 1050 Brussels  
tel.: 02 346 44 64, fax: 02 346 49 14  
brussel@secretary-plus.be

### Geel

Stationsstraat 62, 2440 Geel  
tel.: 014 25 81 00, fax: 014 23 70 57  
geel@secretary-plus.be

### Gent

Kouter 26, 9000 Gent  
tel.: 09 233 25 28, fax: 09 233 95 70  
gent@secretary-plus.be

### Hasselt

Leopoldplein 21, 3500 Hasselt  
tel.: 011 26 96 86, fax: 011 32 48 36  
hasselt@secretary-plus.be

### Kortrijk

Casinoplein 5a, 8500 Kortrijk  
tel.: 056 25 29 22, fax: 056 21 89 98  
kortrijk@secretary-plus.be

### Leuven

Vital Decosterstraat 7, 3000 Leuven  
tel.: 016 23 60 42, fax: 016 29 21 80  
leuven@secretary-plus.be

### Liège

Quai de Rome 53, 4000 Liège  
tel.: 04 229 98 70, fax: 04 229 98 79  
liege@secretary-plus.be

### Mechelen

Korenmarkt 45, 2800 Mechelen  
tel.: 015 45 09 70, fax: 015 29 15 19  
mechelen@secretary-plus.be

### Mons

Boulevard Dolez 8, 7000 Mons  
tel.: 065 55 10 00, fax: 065 55 10 09  
mons@secretary-plus.be

### Roeselare

(since January 2006)  
Grote Markt 7, 8800 Roeselare  
tel.: 051 66 00 00, fax: 051 66 00 09  
roeselare@secretary-plus.be

### Turnhout

(open in the course of 2006)  
Kasteelplein 23, 2300 Turnhout  
tel.: 014 80 00 00, fax: 014 80 00 09

### Vilvoorde

Hendrik I Lei 49, 1800 Vilvoorde  
tel.: 02 600 47 60, fax: 02 600 47 69  
vilvoorde@secretary-plus.be

### Wavre

Place Bosch 17, 1300 Wavre  
tel.: 010 23 80 40, fax: 010 23 80 49  
wavre@secretary-plus.be

[info@secretary-plus.be](mailto:info@secretary-plus.be)  
[www.secretary-plus.be](http://www.secretary-plus.be)



# 6 steps to natural talent

## Open Academy Plus.

Dealing with business spontaneously and creatively enables you to deliver a better than usual standard of work. The business world is constantly in motion and personality makes a bigger contribution than ever – an interesting thought because you can develop business intelligence.

Secretary Plus Management Support, the number 1 in the selection, recruitment, placement and guidance of management support personnel offers you reactive study with an extensive training programme: Open Academy Plus 2006.

Practical seminars of a half or a whole day to sharpen up your knowledge and skills as well as to improve your self-confidence, teach you to think systematically and take control in situations in which Assistants and Managers find themselves – so, you can expand your horizons.

### 1 Think like Leonardo da Vinci

Passport to a renaissance full of ideas – awaken slumbering creativity, create sparkling thoughts and, on the basis of Leonardo da Vinci's principles, make a new project out of every problem. Creativity is the solution.

### 2 The Winning Attitude

Strength that you never thought you had. Communicate more efficiently and let your surroundings hear more from you in exchange for more self-confidence and a better image of yourself. Both professionally and privately, you will come out stronger.

### 3 Achieving Personal & Corporate Excellence

For performance-oriented employees and teams, increase your performance with a deeper insight of yourself as an individual and as a team member. Contribute to better team and company results with sharp vision, clear objectives and well-defined values.

### 4 Mind Mapping®

Use your brain in another way. More easily acquire, retain and use the knowledge that you really need and make your life more agreeable – a fresh mental facelift for every professional.

### 5 Networking

Show me your network and I'll tell you who you are. Increase your market value: create a network and exploit your relationships. Enlarge your social capital for more personal and business success.

### 6 Advanced written skills in Dutch

Freshen up your Dutch and get to know the new spelling – a concentrated course for everyone who has to deal with language professionally.

**Further information** about the programme, price and location:  
Véronique Plumet, Luchthavenlaan 10, 1800 Vilvoorde.  
Tel.: 02 600 70 00. Fax: 02 600 71 09. E-mail: [info@secretary-plus.be](mailto:info@secretary-plus.be)

Secretary Plus Management Support is recognised as a training provider.  
For advantages, surf to <http://opleidingscheques.vlaanderen.be>

To subscribe: visit our website  
[www.secretary-plus.be](http://www.secretary-plus.be)

Open Academy Plus 2006.  
Get your daily work under control.