

SECRETARY VISION

Special edition 15 years Secretary Plus • A magazine
for managers and management support personnel
• Volume 11, issue 1/2008



Secretary Plus
exists
15 years



Become the Management Assistant of the year 2008!

Do you have at least five years' experience in a management support role? Then you could take part in our third Management Assistant of the year 2008 competition. Register between 7 January and 22 February at www.secretary-plus.be. Maybe you will become the new ambassador for the management assistants in Belgium!

Vacature.

références

**NEXT
travel**



Vanessa Smets, Management Assistant of the year 2005 and Marianne Wagner, Management Assistant of the year 2004



Good Intentions

Dear reader,



Stop smoking, live a healthier lifestyle, make more time for loved ones... we always start the New Year with the best of intentions. But Secretary Plus doesn't just make new resolutions - we carry them through. And we've been doing just that for fifteen years. The results are there for all to see. Today, we can be proud of our business - we are number 1 in the recruitment and employment of management assistants.

We owe our success to the loyalty of our staff. With every new day they make sure our

customers and candidates are satisfied. Their competencies are our trademark. This character of quality, inspiration and enthusiasm is evident throughout our network of establishments, at home and abroad.

In 2008 we are stronger than ever. Thanks to the staff in our group, USG People, we hold a strong position on the Belgian market. The number of branches keeps growing, we are expanding supply through new divisions, and we are strengthening our presence abroad.

Where do we stand, in what direction will we continue? It is a good idea to pause for breath now and then and take stock before getting back in front. The New Year is the ideal time for doing this. Above all, in 2008 we will have been around for fifteen years. Reason enough to look back on the past, with one eye on the future.

We wish you a warm and happy 2008!

Christine Van den Eynde
General Manager

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Colofon

Secretary Vision is a publication from Secretary Plus Management Support NV.
Editors: Mieke Van Damme, Nadine di Meo and Jean-Philippe Pry (Schrijf.be)
Translation: Data Translations
Photography: Event Attitude and Studio 62
Concept & lay-out: Universal Communication
Pre-press & impression: Godefroit
Responsible publisher: Christine Van den Eynde, Secretary Plus Management Support NV, Avenue de Tervueren 216, 1150 Brussels

- 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
- E-mail: 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: 37,000 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.

A Backward Glance

In former days

The Dutch temping agency, Secretaresse Plus, was founded in 1990 based on a new vision of working, and one that better reflects the latest changes in the workplace. This is because companies are always looking for more flexibility in the recruitment of personnel. The key words here are flexibility and quality, two values which are still central to this day.

Abroad

In 1993 Secretaresse Plus sets up a subsidiary in Belgium: Secretary Plus. A few years later it goes fully international with branches in Germany (1997), France (2006), Austria and Spain (2007). This internationalisation is a deliberate choice, to gain a firm foothold in the European labour market. Back home, Secretary Plus Management Support opens one new branch after another - a logical development given the huge corporate demand for highly qualified management assistants. All new offices satisfy the Secretary Plus standards: top locations, tranquil atmosphere, no garish signboards, magnificent town houses, plenty of woodwork, subdued colours, all combined with a warm and friendly welcome.

Strong group

Since 2001 Secretary Plus Management Support has been a part of a strong international group: USG People, which is listed on the Euronext exchange, Amsterdam. Thanks to this structural framework, it has evolved in recent years to become a strong organisation with a strong position on the Belgian labour market. In 2005 the group doubled in size with the takeover of Solvus Resource Group. USG People became number two in Belgium and number five in Europe. The group is made up of thirty operating companies, which are active in eleven countries. It offers a broad range of HR services and strong brands. The international operator, Secretary Plus, serves as a typical example of this specialised service provisioning.

Broad range

In the meantime Secretary Plus Management Support has discovered several variations on the theme of flexibility: recruitment and selection of management assistants employed on a temporary or permanent basis. The Direct Team offers continuity in management assistants for long-term projects. Experience Plus focuses on the rich experience of management assistants. We specialise in highly qualified profiles, young potentials, Legal Assistants, international profiles, Office Managers/ Personal Assistants, etc., and use the best methods available to screen our candidates. And yet Secretary Plus is more than just a selection office. Not only do we help our candidates find new challenges, but we want them to feel good in their new working environment. This is why we started offering our management assistants optimum coaching and guidance through our Open Academy Plus courses since 2005. Open Academy Plus provides a broad range of training courses on topical subjects, designed for anyone who is looking for a better personal balance, a better quality of life on the work floor, or new skills.

Thank you colleagues!

Secretary Plus Management Support owes its success to the talents of its staff. Their competencies are our trademark. They make a difference with every new day and keep our customers satisfied. Our last quality survey revealed that the professionalism of our staff is valued highly. Our network of branches at home and abroad shows a similar character. It is this very solidarity that makes us an organisation with confidence and one that enjoys the loyalty of its customers.

Timeline

You can accomplish a great deal in fifteen years, as Secretary Plus Management Support has demonstrated. We show the main events on a timeline, running through the pages of this article. It all started in 1990 with the formation of the Dutch parent company. Now we are devoting a little of our time to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the Belgian Secretary Plus. But then we will be heading onwards again, in the right direction, ready to push on even further ahead.

1990

Establishment of the temp agency Secretaresse Plus the Netherlands

Start Recruitment & Selection in the Netherlands

1993



Opening first agency in Belgium, Antwerp

Customer satisfaction

In 2007 Secretary Plus Management Support gained the Q*For quality label with distinction for the second time: 90 percent of our customers have indicated their satisfaction with our services. The Q*For label is a quality guarantee. It means that our recruitment and selection activities, as well as our Open Academy Plus courses, satisfy the strictest quality requirements. Our selection ability is the result of years of procedural refinements and searching for innovative methods. We are permanently looking for and finding good quality candidates through advertisements, recruitment evenings, recruiting sites, a huge network of agencies with long opening hours, school leaver campaigns and publications such as our professional journals Vision and PlusNews.



1994

Opening agency in Brussels

1995

Opening agency in Ghent

1997

Opening agency in Leuven



Perfect match

Secretary Plus Management Support promises to find the perfect match between the needs of the customer and the personality, wishes and talents of the candidate. Our knowledge of how things work between managers and management assistants is what makes us succeed in living up to this promise. Via regular surveys of the labour market, we refine the profile of the ideal management assistant, so as to better meet the needs of the manager. In 2003 for the first time we carried out a large-scale study of the essential competencies of the management assistant. The trend we noted then is still very much confirmed today: the personality of the management assistant is the most important thing of all, and one of the basic prerequisites for operating well. At the top of the managers' wish list we find soft skills such as discretion, reliability and adaptability. The management assistant, on the other hand, expects her manager to create the conditions necessary for proper cooperation.

Full service organisation

Secretary Plus Management Support is constantly on the move. In the last ten years we have evolved into a full service organisation. Our formulas are more relevant to the new world of work. The Direct Team in particular is presenting itself to more and more customers as the one and only solution for longer-term projects, because this is the way in which many companies operate today - on a project basis. Be it the launch of a new division, a restructuring, or an event: there are always new projects that require extra staff. Since it was set up in 2004 the Secretary Plus Direct Team has seen a rapid evolution in the number of customers. The formula guarantees flexibility and continuity, two values essential in maintaining a strong competitive position in the current business world. Moreover, it satisfies the actual demand from the labour market for quickly accustomed, multi-lingual, qualified, mobile, flexible and dynamic Management Assistants. Our Direct Team-Assistants are permanently in our employ. This means that they can ensure continuity in your company on longer-term projects. Secretary Plus Direct Team is not short of ambition. In September we started on the development of an international division. Many big international companies are seeking to recruit extra staff for certain projects. In cases like these, the Direct Team is the perfect solution. Not only that, but we will be starting up a new division early in 2008 - Office Management/Personal Assistant.

New look secretary plus

Secretary Plus works towards change at all levels and we are proud of it. In 2006 we unveiled our new house style and logo. Seven years after the initial change in 1999, our established brand name acquired two graphic elements. The figure establishes the link with the USG People group and reflects our focus on people. The plus sign visualises one of the core elements of our mission: to create added value. But it doesn't stop at the logo: the house style is also new, with a balanced choice of colours, graphic design, font, typography, images and photography. The new look reinforces our image as a dynamic trend-setter. In 2007 we switched to a new computer system: Ambitions. This is because a strong ICT infrastructure is essential in guaranteeing optimal service at all times.

Thank you customers!

The loyalty of our customers is the second cornerstone of our success. Their satisfaction means everything to us. This is why we regularly send out quality surveys asking for their opinions. Secretary Plus is a trendsetter, they say, and, moreover, a professional and reliable organisation, with an excellent reputation on the market.

1998

Opening agency in Kortrijk

Launch website

1999

Change of name, into SECRETARY PLUS MANAGEMENT SUPPORT + first change of logo



Opening agency in Geel (former Herentals)

2000

Opening agency in Hasselt

... with an eye to the future

Co-managers

If Secretary Plus Management Support has undergone a metamorphosis in the last fifteen years, so too has the profession of management assistant. The requirements set by businesses and managers are no longer the same as they used to be: they want more than just executive assistants. And, at the same time, management assistants want to do more than just assist. The management assistant is evolving from a secretary to a co-manager. Today she is a pivotal figure in the life of the business, with the ability to adapt to all kinds of working environments. Her job calls for creativity, autonomy and high-grade competencies. She shows initiative, thinks proactively and is given important responsibilities. The Dutch magazine "Secretaresse" typified this evolution when it changed its name to "Management Support" in 2000. The magazine persuaded twenty-five companies to stop using the term "secretary" in their internal and external communication, because the title no longer reflects reality.

What's in a name?

The term "management assistant" covers about twenty different functions. And there are differences from country to country, region to region. The French 'assistante' differs considerably from the Dutch 'secretaresse'. Under no circumstance does she want to be called a 'secrétaire', whereas, it is with some pride that her Dutch counterpart will note 'secretaresse' on her calling card. And the Belgians? They prefer to be called management assistants. A study of final year students in secondary schools in 2001 confirmed that young people find the new name of management assistant more hip and attractive than secretaresse.

And will the real management assistant now rise?

In 2006 the Social-Economic Council of Flanders commissioned a professional competencies profile containing a new definition of the profession. But, given the diversity of the job, few management assistants recognise themselves in the description. So what does the management assistant actually do? The name says it all: she assists the manager. But there is not one definition to sum her up. She might serve as the right hand of just one director, or she might support a group of managers, or a complete department. Sometimes she is one of a team of assistants, or then again, the manager may ask her to coordinate a project temporarily. In almost every case she is the pivotal point between her manager and the department. She helps her manager manage his time, organises travel, meetings and congresses, she is the first contact to customers and visitors and she screens mails and telephone calls. Briefly, she operates in the company's control tower. In Belgium she is a woman in more than ninety percent of the cases, and almost invariably so. The feminine image of the management assistant reflects the situation on the ground, in Belgium and in the rest of Europe.

Management Assistants' Day 2008

Do you fancy coming along to Management Assistants' Day? Then mark the afternoon of Thursday 17 April 2008 in your diary. Then Secretary Plus will be organising several workshops to further strengthen your professional capacities. Curious about the subjects on offer? Starting February 2008, surf to www.secretary-plus.be, under the heading Management Assistants' Day 2008, for practical information.

2001

Opening agencies in Aalst and Mechelen

Take over of Secretary Plus by United Services Group (currently USG People)

2002

Incorporation of Avenue Louise Interim into the Brussels agency

2003

Opening agencies in Wavre and Liège

Launch Direct Team Brussels

2004



Education

Changing the name from Secretary to Management Assistant was a necessary part of upgrading the profession's image. And like some companies, a few colleges are also following suit. From now on the Secretary-Languages course in the Dutch education system is termed "Office Management". And the French education system is also taking initiatives in this direction. Not only

the name, but also the content of the course is changing. The introduction of the bachelor-master system in higher education provided the ideal moment. The new trend in the world of education lays the emphasis on co-management and prepares the students for greater responsibilities. The profession has all the characteristics that makes it highly recommended and attractive to talented

young people. The opportunities for growth are enormous. Not only that, but there is a huge demand for Management Assistants. Almost all graduates find employment right away. A third to half of final year students have already been offered a position before they graduate. And yet, the inflow is too small: the number of students will have to grow by half again just to satisfy the demand from business and industry.

2005

Opening agencies in Bruges, Vilvoorde and Mons

2006

Opening agencies in Antwerpen Noord Waasland, Roeselare and Turnhout

Opening first agency in France

Launch Direct Team Flanders

Second change in logo

+ **secretary plus**

2007

Opening agency in Woluwé

Wanted: candidates and customers

Were you a candidate for a management assistant job via Secretary Plus in 1993? Or have you been working with us to recruit management support personnel since 1993? If so, we are looking for you. We will feature your story as a candidate or customer in a special report in the next edition of Vision. Contact Joëlle Tay at 02 600 43 25, or send an email to jtay@secretary-plus.be.

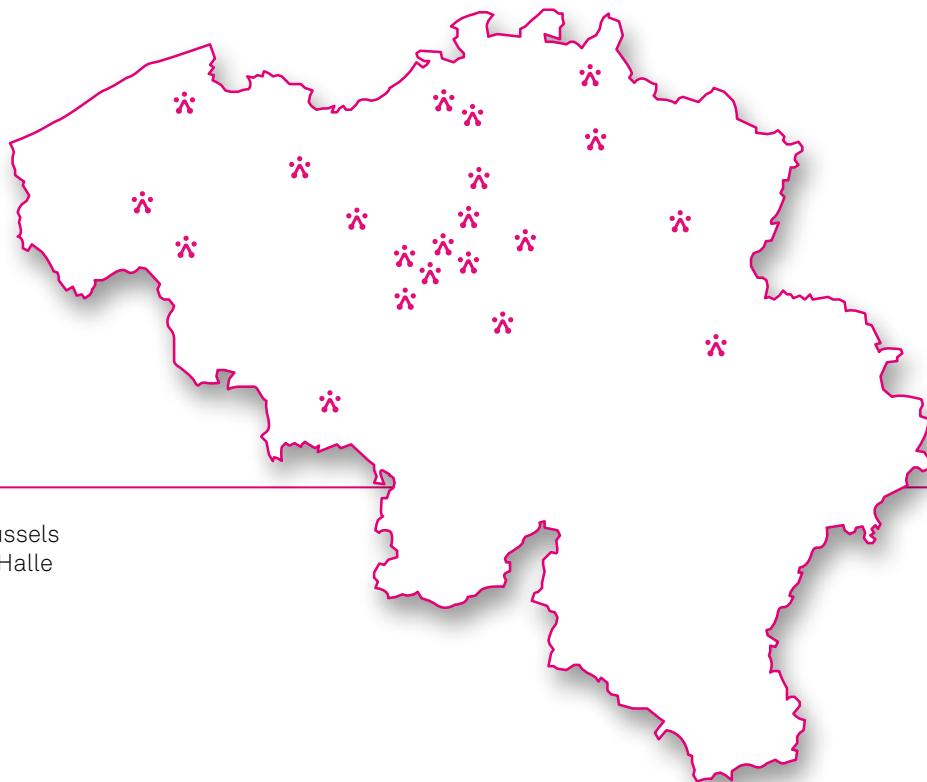
Bottleneck profession

Therefore the job of Management Assistant remains a bottleneck profession. It has developed into a key position in the life of the business, but is often saddled with an outdated image. No, the Management Assistant does not serve the coffee around, nor does she has to learn shorthand. And yes, she can earn just as much as an industrial engineer, for example. It seems that the clichés are hard to shake off. This is why Secretary Plus Management Support keeps its finger on the pulse. We improve the image of the Management Assistant through eye-catching campaigns, surveys and participations in workshops. Thus, for the third time in a row, we are organising our national competition for final year students: Bachelor Office Management of the year. Every year since 2004 representatives from colleges, employer's organisations, professionals and the public have voted for their "Management Assistant of the year". He/she is the ambassador of all the Management Assistants in Belgium. In 2007 the book "Beroep: managementassistent" (Career: Management Assistant) appeared on the market, the first ever book on Management Assistants in Belgium. It gives an up to date picture of the profession and brings the assistant behind the manager into the spotlight.

Long shall she live

In 2007 Secretary Plus Management Support opened its 18th agency in Belgium. Demand is huge, success guaranteed. But the challenge is still there, because we are not easily satisfied. We have a solid and sustainable base and our plans are an investment in the future. We don't aim to expand just by opening new branches, but by continually improving ourselves as well. Therefore we keep improving quality and innovating year after year, to ensure that our assistance gets better and better.

In 1993 we toasted the beginnings of Secretary Plus Management Support in Belgium. Now, fifteen years down the line we are older and wiser - and more professional too. There is a world of difference between the old days and the Management Assistant of today. But one thing has remained the same: our passion for our work.



2008

Opening agencies in Brussels
(Quartier Léopold) and Halle



Become the driving force behind Secretary Plus

Grow together with Secretary Plus as our new colleague! Choose quality in your career. Bringing together highly-trained, qualified assistants and demanding employers is a real challenge but, fortunately you have come straight to the number one in this niche market. This is an innovative, stimulating environment in which you can grow. You will get every opportunity as a (m/f):

CONSULTANT

REGIONAL CONSULTANT

OFFICE MANAGER

ASSISTANT OFFICE MANAGER

Secretary Plus Management Support offers you:

- a varied function in attractive surroundings in which you immediately feel involved
- the exciting dynamics of a niche market leader
- lots of attention to training and development
- an attractive salary with a monthly commission system
- luncheon vouchers and a group and hospitalisation insurance
- a company vehicle for the position of consultant after the trial period.

Are you interested?

If so, send your cv covering letter to evankeymeulen@usgpeople.be or to P&O Secretary Plus, attn. Eva Van Keymeulen, Frankrijklei 101, 2000 Antwerpen.

You can find full function descriptions and vacancy overviews on www.secretary-plus.be

A word from our colleagues

“The passion remains”

Secretary Plus believes in itself. Old talent or new zest, we all work together to achieve our goals. We attach a great deal of importance to permanent relations with employees who are prepared to commit themselves on the long term. This profile is common to all our colleagues. Take for example Ilse, Joëlle and Barbara. They have been working at Secretary Plus for a long time now. And today, more than ever, they feel involved in the ins and outs of their organisation.

Barbara Stadsbader started at Secretary Plus as a consultant in January 1999. She was, and still is, one of the driving forces behind the Direct Team. In early 2008 she will be given a new job - as our national business development manager she will be deciding the main lines for our new divisions.



Barbara: “Actually, I arrived at Secretary Plus by coincidence. I thought the organisation had an attractive character. So on the off chance I went along to the Ghent office, only to emerge a little later with a contract. The job of consultant was in line with my early work experience: project manager at L&H. At Secretary Plus I was given plenty of opportunity to develop a great career. After doing consultancy work for two years I was promoted to office manager, and then three years later to district manager. I got to know Secretary Plus as a young and dynamic company with a professional approach. And it has always stayed that way. The structure is bigger now, and we have more resources, but the challenge is still there. After being here for nine years I can say that Secretary Plus more than exceeded my expectations. Although I still have a few more, I’m happy to say!”

Barbara Stadsbader
National Business Development Manager

Joëlle Tay started at Secretary Plus ten years ago, on 1 July 1998. As a marketing manager she is constantly looking to further the name of Secretary Plus. Via marketing campaigns, online campaigns, optimal media planning, flyers, brochures, surveys and an attractive website she promotes the career of Management Assistant and generates interest from potential candidates.

Joëlle: "My job application ten years ago was handled very professionally. I was genuinely impressed by the friendliness of the consultants (and still am, as a matter of fact!). And the stately mansion on Tenboschstraat in Brussels radiated an incredible amount of class. I found that the people in that work environment were hugely influenced by it! I still remember my first teambuilding exercise. It took place on a Saturday and my first workday had been the Wednesday before! Back then, the parent company in the Netherlands still read all the copy for the advertisements and mailings, which had to go out that week. Talk about a baptism by fire! In the meantime I have grown into the job and have learned a lot more about marketing. Secretary Plus gives you the confidence and autonomy to develop your talents. That is one of its strongest points. It is a healthy organisation with a good atmosphere and a sociable, ultra-professional manager. I don't ever think about changing jobs. I feel as if I'm the internal memory of Secretary Plus. I have been through a lot, but still have plenty of passion for my job, the organisation, and the social contact with colleagues."



Joëlle Tay
Marketing Manager

Ilse De Schrijver came to Secretary Plus thirteen years ago in search for a fascinating job. Having gained her secretary diploma she had already worked at several companies. From receptionist to secretary and entertainment officer -adventure and the heat of an exotic island were a strong draw. But that wasn't an area she wanted to develop into. Something that Secretary Plus had taken good notice of, for a few days later they got in touch to tell her they were looking for an office manager in the Ghent branch.

"They saw in me the perfect candidate, whereas I had never once wondered if I was commercially minded, or if I had the potential to be. But, it sounded like an interesting challenge to me, so I drove about, in and around Ghent, looking for companies and management assistants who might want to throw in their lot with Secretary Plus. I put my heart and soul into my work for five years, then my daughter Laura came along. I decided to slow down a little and started working for a company closer to home. In the first two years I was really happy, but after a while it started to eat away at me: I missed the drive of winning a contract, or convincing a great candidate that I had found the ideal job for him or her. So I took the plunge and sounded out Barbara, who had taken over my job at that time. And it worked, because about a year later, there I was in my new office, back in my old job as office manager in Ghent. Much had changed since I'd been away. We had been taken over by USG People and a new manager had arrived. Secretary Plus had become even more professional. It was a relieve to be part once again of a company with big ideas, like the Direct Team. That was a challenge, because we were - and still are - the only company in the market to outsource management assistants. But we believed in it, and everyone in the organisation did their bit towards it. A few years later, what started out as a dream, had become reality. The Direct Team met with huge success and became a small company in its own right. For the last months I have been the accounts manager and I am spending all of my time developing the Direct Team in Flanders. A challenge I welcomed with open arms, and one that my colleagues and I will put our hearts and souls into in order to make it a huge success. Will I ever move to another company again? Maybe, but only if it means serving cocktails on a pearl-white beach on the Pacific Ocean ..."



Ilse De Schrijver
Account Manager



Secretary Plus Direct Team: Direct assistance to all your projects

Through Secretary Plus Direct Team, managers call on top assistants for projects of at least six months in management support or department functions. Our new Direct Team 'International' division provides companies with highly-qualified assistants of English, German or Spanish mother tongue and with international experience. The new Direct Team 'Office Management/Personal Assistant' division links managers with ideal co-managers. Secretary Plus Direct Team is the only company that offers this management support formula. Because of the many assets of our Direct Team assistants, such as adaptability, flexibility, communication talent, etc., a perfect match with your own team is assured.

Through Secretary Plus Direct Team, you can find highly-qualified, multilingual (m/f) assistants for all your long-term projects:

(Senior) Management Assistants

Legal Assistants

Product Management Assistants

Office Managers

International
Management Assistants

Personal Assistants

Marketing Assistants

HR/Payroll Assistants

For more information surf to www.secretary-plus.be
or e-mail to direct.team@secretary-plus.be

Still driven by the same passion



Sandra Gilot
Graduated in 1993

Who still remembers 1993?

And to answer in unison, it was the year Secretary Plus was founded!

Sandra Gilot will tell you that she graduated in 1993 and that 15 years have gone by since then.

Secretary Plus is blowing out its 15 candles and Sandra Gilot still has an inordinate love for foreign languages and plenty of projects for the future ...

What did you study? "I have always loved foreign languages. After completing my secondary studies in modern languages and going through a Comprehensive School in Great Britain, I made an initial attempt with Germanic Philology. Unfortunately, this path was not focused enough on the practice of languages, so I began an Executive Secretary degree program. With, of course, as many foreign languages as possible: TFE (final school project) in English and internships in Germany."

This path seemed to suit you?

"Absolutely! Since as early as I can remember, I have loved to speak "differently". At the age of 7, I had already begun to learn English. I dreamed of becoming a flight attendant or teacher. And then, as the years went by, I became naturally oriented towards secretarial work. This study gives you many career prospects!"

What were your first work experiences? "I first worked in a real estate agency in England, which made me realise that working abroad was really stimulating to me. Then, a position in the human resources department at Interbrew confirmed my career path. I also worked in Germany, in the translation department of a metallurgy company. All these different and varied experiences were very enriching in many aspects."

And your current position? "I am fortunate to have a multidisciplinary job in a sales environment. I am responsible for organising seminars and meetings as well as recruiting and managing staff. And, the icing on the cake is that I work for a German company, so I get to speak a lot of German, French and Dutch."

With 15 years of hindsight, how do you look back on your career so far?

"I would not change a single thing about it, but if I had to I would learn even more foreign languages. My career has been extremely varied. I have worked in many sectors, among others a power plant, a bank and in the world of sports."

And how about in 15 years? "It all depends on the opportunities I come across and on my personal life... Why not Italy - I am learning Italian! You know, in life you have to seize the opportunities available to you."

Any advice for those who follow?

"These days, one must know how to combine versatility and accuracy, which can sometimes seem contradictory! One more thing: since as early as I can remember, I believed that foreign languages would guide me in life and probably open doors for me. Now, I know I was right!"

Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

Small, multicultural and cosmopolitan



The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, so close yet so entirely different, is opening its doors. We give you fifteen irrefutable reasons for discovering this neighbouring country.

Concise English-Luxembourgian dictionary

Along with French and German, Luxembourgian is also an official language.

Luxembourgian	Lëtzebuergesch
Good day	Gudde Moien
Goodbye	Äddi
Good night	Gutt Nuecht
Thank you	Villmools Merci
My name is	Ech heeschen
See you tomorrow	Bis mar
Darn it	Nondikassi
How much does that cost?	Wat kascht dat?
Where is the station?	Wou geet et op d'Gar

1. Easy to reach

It takes less than two hours to drive to Luxembourg from Brussels (213 km). But it is quicker and more comfortable to travel by train. Not only that, but the Tourist Board is based in Luxembourg Central Station!

2. Twice the Cultural Capital of Europe

Luxembourg is the only European Capital to have been given the title Cultural Capital of Europe twice: in 1995 and 2007. The old fortified city and historic city centre more than justify this title. Well-known are the "Casemates du Bock" (a system of underground passageways), the Grand Ducal Palace (an architectural jewel from the 16th century), the Museum of Modern Art (designed by the Chinese-American star architect, Leoh Minh Pei) and the Philharmonia and its various concert halls.

3. Astounding nature

A well-known part of Luxembourg is Mullerthal in Little Switzerland, an ideal area to go for a walk. The many rock formations, caves, waterfalls and trees contrast with the vastness of the Mosel Valley and its vineyards.

4. Bustling nightlife

The City Night Bus crosses the city of Luxembourg at night time. Start your ducal tour with a visit to the trendy cafés in the old city centre - and discover the many bistros along the riverbank. Fall to temptation in the picturesque Grund area near the old prison, where English and Irish pubs rival for a place among neighbourhood cafés. Listen to pop, techno and hard rock in the Hollerich area. It is no coincidence that the City Night Bus terminates at the Down Town, one of the country's best-known discos.

5. Wellness at the Thermal de Mondorf Domaine

Mondorf-les-Bains has been known for the healing powers of its hot water springs since 1847. Since then the area has grown to become a paradise for anyone who loves taking the waters and relaxing. It offers endless wellness facilities: swimming pools, fitness centres, saunas, steam baths and whirlpools.



6. Rich and varied gastronomy

In Luxembourg, French art de vivre goes hand in hand with German abundance. Nowhere else will you find as many Michelin stars per square kilometre! Local specialities are Ardennes ham, game of all kinds and fried fish, served with one of the many outstanding local wines or beers.

7. Wine for the connoisseur

Luxembourg is a small country, but it has a number of large winegrowers. Their predominantly white wines are elegant with a crisp character. They also make sparkling wines, of which the best carry the title Crémant de Luxembourg. The total area devoted to wine? Approximately 1600 hectares, split into many small vineyards.

8. Cradle of Europe

On 9 May 1950 Robert Schuman, minister of Foreign Affairs for the French government, (born in Luxembourg in 1886) made his plea to set up the European Community for Coal and Steel (EGKS). We remember this day as the "Europe Day". On 14 June 1985, on the cruise ship MS Princesse Marie-Astrid, moored in Schengen on the Mosel, the protocol agreement of Schengen was signed. With this, the signatory countries declared their agreement to dispense with ID checks at their borders.

9. Cosmopolitan character

The enormous variety of nationalities in Luxembourg can be explained by its tumultuous history. Time and again the country has been occupied by European peoples. Then there were the huge Italian and Portuguese immigration waves after the Second World War. Every day more than 110,000 foreign workers cross the border to work in this tiny country.

10. Paradise for sports lovers

Walkers need to look no further than the many adventurous rambling paths. Cyclists enjoy the special circuit for mountain bikes, with "biking stops" on secluded roads or in the nature parks.

11. The place to be for shopping

Luxembourg is known as a rich city. Hundreds of shops, traditional markets, modern clothing boutiques, bookshops, etc. are all waiting for your visit.

12. Traces of the past

Of the 109 mediaeval castles, a good 76 have withstood the ravages of time. Their main job was that of military defence. Renaissance, baroque, rococo and neoclassical have all left their traces. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries we start to see palaces and mansions in the art nouveau style.

And then came modernism. Highly recommended is Château de Vianden, magnificently restored and furnished in 1977. The remarkable ruins of Château de Beaufort also make a strong impression.

13. High quality hotels

In Luxembourg you will find prestigious chains as well as independent, charming hotels. With more than 3250 rooms in the 3 to 5 star bracket, Luxembourg offers exceptional quality, comfort and cosiness.

14. International meeting place

Luxembourg is a city of banks. Their importance is strengthened by Luxembourg's role in the European Union. Businessmen meet at congresses and seminars. The European and financial institutions take their place on the 360 hectare 'plateau van Kirchberg', which is linked to the old city via the red Charlotte Bridge.

15. Your ideal City Trip

There is plenty of information to be found on Luxembourg to help you plan your trip in the finest detail. Surf to www.visitluxembourg.be and www.ont.lu. Or contact Next Travel. This Brussels travel agency will introduce you to the many tourist attractions and the attractiveness of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and its capital city.

Contact

NEXT
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Days of old

1993, a year full of

The formation of Secretary Plus wasn't the only thing that made 1993 a memorable year. Other important events are worthy of a top spot in our annual overview. We'll run through them briefly here

Unification of Europe



In January 1993 the internal borders are removed: the common European market is now a reality.

In November, the Maastricht Treaty comes into effect. This is the official starting shot for the European Union.

Antwerp is capital



Antwerp becomes the Cultural Capital of Europe.

Start of spamming



An error in a computer program by Richard Depew results in an article being sent to two hundred newsgroups at the same time.

Joel Furr comes up with the term spamming to describe the incident.

Nobel Prize goes to De Klerk and Mandela



Frederiek De Klerk and Nelson Mandela receive the Nobel Prize for peace, for their work in bringing an end to apartheid in South Africa.

Fellini dies at the age of 73



Hollywood loses one of its most talented directors of the twentieth century: Federico Fellini. His most famous films are his (partly)

autobiographical dramas: *La Dolce Vita* (1960), *Otto E Mezzo* (1963) and *Amarcord* (1973). In 1993 he wins his fifth and last Oscar for his lifetime's work - talk about drama.

Murder of toddler shocks the world



Robert Thompson and John Venables murder two-year-old James Bulger. Both are twelve at the time.

Bomb in New York



The World Trade Center in New York is hit in a bomb attack. A car bomb explodes under the north tower, killing six people. More than a thousand are injured.

State reform



The process of Belgian state reform, which started in 1970, reaches its conclusion with the fourth constitutional amendment. The Belgian state

becomes a fully-fledged federal state with four governments. And we are also given a tenth province: Brabant is split into Flemish and Walloon Brabant.

The King is dead, long live the King



King Baudouin dies of a cardiac arrest at his country home in Motril, Spain. Albert, brother of deceased King Baudouin, is crowned King Albert II in August.

Tyrannosaurus Rex



1993 is the year of the Tyrannosaurus Rex, thanks to Steven Spielberg's film Jurassic Park. This is because Jurassic Park is more than just a film - it is a phenomenon. For the first time in film history

computers are used to animate living beings. In next to no time Jurassic Park sets the absolute record for box office returns.

War



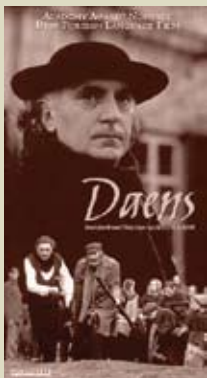
America starts its aerial bombardment of Iraq on 13 January. President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, announces a Holy war against the American Satan and its Allies. Bush gains support for the aerial bombardment from Great Britain and France.

Too much water



Belgium and the Netherlands have to contend with huge floods after a series of heavy downpours. The Meuse and other rivers overflow their banks. Christmas Day 1993 is anything but a holiday for many Belgian, Dutch, French and German citizens.

No Oscar for Daens



Mid March, a Belgium torn by political squabbling once again flies its colours of black, yellow and red: the film *Daens* appears to be on its way to winning a well-deserved Oscar. Disappointment reigns when the French *Indochine* snaps up the Oscar for best foreign film. And still on the subject of films: *The Piano* and *Farewell to my Concubine* share the Golden Palm at the Cannes film festival.

Water too dirty



Off the coast of the Shetland Islands (Northern Scotland) 85,000 tonnes of crude oil pour into the sea from the oil tanker *Braer*. Only six months later it seems that the natural environment has been able to make a complete recovery.

Football



Anderlecht wins the Belgian league. Standard comes second, Mechelen third. Club Brugge only makes it to sixth. In the Netherlands, Feyenoord finishes in front of PSV and Ajax.

Gaston without Leo



On 18 March Belgian comedian Leo Martin passes away in Ghent, at the age of 68. He was part of a comic duo with Gaston Berghmans.

Seles attacked



Tennis star Monica Seles is knifed in the back between matches in Hamburg. She is not fatally wounded. The attacker is unable to accept Seles ousting the German, Steffi Graf, from the top spot. Seles is out for the rest of the season.

Zappa dead



On 4 December all-round composer and guitarist Frank Zappa dies of prostate cancer in Los Angeles at the age of 52. In his early career he frequently worked with Captain Beefheart. In the mid 1960s Zappa was a member of The Soul

Giants. He was the band's guitarist. Not long afterwards he became its leader and renamed the band The Mothers of Invention. His lyrics and music were shocking, but always well considered. His strongest point was his championship of free speech. He released more than 60 LPs and CDs.

Mickey Mouse celebrates his 65th birthday!



A rock-solid career!

Throughout the cement industry, Holcim is a name that evokes admiration and respect. And rightly so, since this world class Swiss group is present in more than 70 countries and employs nearly 90,000 people. In Belgium, the group has established a production plant in Obourg. Patricia Laurent knows the premises well as she has worked there since March 1993.

Change obviously does not scare Patricia Laurent. This 41-year-old from Mons with a degree as an English-Spanish interpreter has so far had a rich and varied career. After being a secretary in a Spanish company and then a sales employee, she is currently responsible for local presence matters for Holcim in Obourg. However, she got her foot in the company's door as an executive secretary!

Very specific secretarial work

"In an industry, an executive assistant's work is very specific. In particular, one must learn to master the industry jargon to understand everything that is being said and done. By adopting a curious and proactive approach, the work I performed in my position evolved quickly, with more responsibilities in the end. I have even chaired meetings myself, the authority for which I was given from my manager. The position of executive secretary that I held until 2002 thus went far beyond the old stereotype of the secretary in charge of typing and making photocopies and serving coffee!"

A factory established in its surroundings

How does one find their niche in the cement industry? And what is day-to-day life like for a local presence manager?

"One of my reasons for coming to Holcim was geographical proximity. Once I was here, I was immediately fascinated by my job and the industry. Since Holcim produces cement, concrete and aggregate, the work is always varied!"

What does my job as a local presence manager entail? First and foremost, it consists of settling the factory into its surroundings and therefore remaining in constant contact with the authorities, area residents, administrations, etc. In this context, I am responsible in particular for sponsorship and promotions. I am also in charge of internal communication, more precisely the task of correctly incorporating group directives."



Patricia Laurent

Contact and diversity equals constant motivation

"What I like about this job are the many contacts. For most of my assignments, I play the role of an intermediary. Since I know the company and my region well, this coordination work suits me perfectly. I also enjoy the versatility of the assignments, since in one day I often handle issues that are completely different! For me, the varied nature of my career is the result of personal investment. To stay motivated, one must, in my opinion, continually set new challenges. This makes it possible to keep moving forward and grow!"

Bachelor Office Management of the year 2008 Award

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Win this competition and kick start your career by joining an elite team!

Are you a highly motivated student? Do challenges stimulate you? Can't wait to start your working life?

If you can answer 'yes' to these questions then enter Secretary Plus's annual competition: the Bachelor Office Management of the year 2008 Award!

Secretary Plus organises a competition for all students in Office Management who will graduate in 2008.

After 4 selection stages, the top 3 Bachelors Office Management will have the opportunity to join the Direct Team, a position offering numerous advantages such as interesting high level work experience, a company car, a free mobile phone and further training. The lucky winners will also receive a city-trip for 2 people to Lisbon awarded by NextTravel, a gift voucher offered by Wellness-Paladins and other very attractive prizes!

Discover more about the selection stages and subscription procedure on

www.secretary-plus.be

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Work: does it mean the end of your private life?

You like your work. But you don't want to sacrifice your personal life and all your friends for it. Is your personal life at odds with your professional life? These tips will help you bring an end to this conflict situation and improve the quality of your life.

15 tips to reconcile your work with your personal life

Fill in an application

A new career, promotion, a challenging project? Fill in an application, and go for it. Show your enthusiasm. But show that you set boundaries too.

Communicate

Who does what around the home? Talk to your partner and children about sharing the chores and family responsibilities. And make workable arrangements that everyone can stick to.

Delegate

You don't have to do everything yourself. Delegate tasks to other people. Why not hire a cleaning lady or ironing service, which you can pay for with service cheques?

Negotiate

Suggest working hours that suit you better and negotiate flexibility and flexitime hours with your employer.

Budget your time

Plan your week, your day, or your morning/afternoon if you need to. And make sure you fit in plenty of breaks.

Learn to be realistic

There is no point in planning a thousand things at once. You probably won't be able to cover everything anyway, and you will end up getting frustrated on top of it all.

Set priorities

Leave the less important things until you have more time. Or ask someone else to deal with them.

Manage stress

Deal with stress constructively. Look at all the factors involved, find realistic solutions, and, above all: talk it over with your employer.

Relax

A little stress now and again is not a problem. But make sure you find time to relax in between.

Don't demand too much of yourself

Nobody is indispensable. And the world won't come to an end because a kitchen towel hasn't been ironed.

Don't be too demanding of others

Nobody is perfect, but, of course, nobody does things as well as you do. Turn a blind eye every now and then, or you will always be on the go.

Ration your availability

They're handy, those mobile phones. But switch it off once in a while. You are simply not available, so allow your Voice Mail to take over sometimes.

Keep track

Buy a good, well-organised diary. Or would you rather keep track of things electronically? In that case, remember to back your information up on a regular basis.

Learn to say no

Working sixty hours a week doesn't make a nicer person of you, unfortunately. So, don't automatically say yes to everything.

Believe in yourself

Wind against you? You might be going in the wrong direction. Now is the time to take a look at yourself and choose the right direction. And believe in yourself. It might be a cliché, but it works.

Secretary Plus celebrates its 15th anniversary.

But you will be the star of the party!

For our 15th anniversary we are placing thousands of clients and candidates in the spotlights.

How? By giving away prizes to everyone who worked with us in 2007 or who will collaborate with us in 2008. Take your chance and participate in the monthly competitions that will be organised throughout the year.

Have you answered the monthly prize question correctly? And has your answer to the subsidiary question made it the top 15? In that case, you can win attractive prizes, such as **event tickets, bottles of champagne or a wellness package.**

Take your chance and go to www.secretary-plus.be

