

## New Way of Working



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**Organisation:** Federal Public Service (FPS) Social Security

**Country:** Belgium

**Level of government:** Central government

**Sector:** General public services

**Type:** Human Resources, Organisational Design

**Launched in:** 2008

**Overall development time:** 3 years

**Link to the innovation's website**

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# Description

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Our innovation is about the creation of a more dynamic workplace where new ways of working have been implemented to promote practices such as desk sharing, home working, increased focus on results and more flexible ways in which teams are structured and work. Our business objective was to become a sexy and sustainable federal public service in order to achieve three main HR challenges: to find talented people, to retain the right people and to make our people happy.

Our approach was very simple: people at the FPS Social Security had to be in charge of their own life; it does not matter anymore when, where and how they work. Only results are important and evaluated. Why? Because we are convinced that this approach will make people happy to work for our organisation and happy people provide a better service to our customers.

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## Why the innovation was developed

In 2005 the FPS Social Security faced a new challenge: how to find and retain the staff it needed. We are always looking for highly-skilled people with skills in sociology, economics, law, technology, and communications. But we are not the only organisation on the labour market wishing to attract and retain those supermen and superwomen. Previously, we could convince people to work for us by offering job security and a state pension. Nowadays, many young people choose an employer rather than a job. Moreover, job security and a state pension are not unique selling points to come and work for our organisation. These advantages are offered by many government institutions. Retention of current employees and recruitment of new staff were therefore the main reasons for introducing this project in our organisation. We wanted to be a sexy employer who gives confidence and freedom to its staff, where people are happy and proud to work for us.

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## Objectives

Develop staff capacity, Improve effectiveness, Improve service quality

- Changing our organisational culture through value-driven people management and a results-oriented approach.
  - Digitalising our work processes and encouraging e-working.
  - Implementing a dynamic office where no one has their own desk and where the wellbeing of our people comes first.
  - Studying the satisfaction of our clients and improving our global accessibility.
  - Guiding our people in this change process and applying a transparent and open communication policy.
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## Main beneficiaries

Government bodies, Government staff

- Our own staff (+/- 1 200 employees).
  - Our business partners.
  - Our clients (e.g. people with a disability, local social workers, etc.) benefitting from the FPS SS's improved productivity and efficiency.
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## Existing similar practices

### Flex working

In public administration of my country

Federal public services

Telework (home working) already exists in several federal public services. Some are also experimenting with new ways of working like culture shift, dynamic office, and no time clock.

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# Results

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## Efficiency

- 30% reduction in office space saves the federal government EUR 6 million each year. Since 2009, we have vacated more office space and are therefore saving even more than EUR 6 million a year.
  - A 55% reduction in the use of paper for printing.
  - An 88% reduction in the number of printers: from 450 to 50 printers.
  - A 60% reduction in office furniture expenditure.
  - A 22% reduction of paper-based archives and documents.
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## Service quality

### Responsiveness:

People with a disability can consult online their own case file. The entire process from their demand until our decision is digitalised.

### Other:

The FPS was announced to be the best employer in the Belgian federal administration.

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## Other improvements

- Improved employee satisfaction:
    - Young graduates opt more than before for our organisation within the federal administration: from being ranked 10 in 2005 to being ranked 3 in 2009.
    - Lower turnover rate: 4.36% in 2008, 4.77% in 2009 (compared with a federal average of 10.7%) and 3.32 % in 2011 (compared with a federal average of 5.79%)
    - Decreasing absence rate: 5.47% in 2009, 5.32% in 2011 and 5.13% in 2012.
    - 88% of our colleagues are happy to work for our FPS, 84% are proud to work for us.
    - Benchmark among 14 federal institutions demonstrates that our people are most happy.
  - Increased productivity: productivity gains in some departments of about 20% (e.g. faster decisions by our department for people with a disability).
  - The buildings agency of the federal administration recently produced new rules about the office space to be attributed to each employee (in square meters). Thanks to the dynamic office concept, the FPS Social Security fully respects those norms.
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## Evaluation

- Satisfaction survey among employees.
- Other indicators as listed above.

# Development

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## Design

Board members initiated the project and put together a dedicated, inter-departmental team of 11 people to work for three years on the implementation of a new way of working.

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## Testing

- 2006: installation of a dedicated team (called the NoVoteam) to lead five programmes. The team consisted of 11 people responsible not only for managing the different projects but also for budgeting and staffing the projects. They worked during three years full time on the project on the following programmes:
    - NoVoResult (HR and culture).
    - NoVoDO (dynamic office).
    - NoVoDIG (digitalisation).
    - NoVoClient (client orientation).
    - NoVoComm (communication and change management).
  - 2007: test environment dynamic office and stop of time clock with 45 people from three different services (including the President of the Board of Directors).
  - 2005 - 2007: board members and some staff members (60 in total) are using teleworking.
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## Implementation

### Tools used:

Some of the tools used were:

- Bi-annual 360 degree evaluation of all managers by their team members with approximately 50% of employees participating in the evaluation.
- Coaching of 50 managers to improve their leadership competences.
- Organisation Culture Inventory (OCI).
- Satisfaction surveys.

Five NoVo programmes were implemented:

- Culture shift and result orientation by NoVoResult:
  - Motivate staff members and promote team spirit, initiative-taking and personal development.
  - Integrate the concept of team objectives through enhanced accountability of supervisors and optimised evaluation methodology.
- Dynamic office by NoVoDO:
  - Create modular working and living areas.
  - Offices are no longer assigned to people; the agent chooses the working place that is best suited to the assignment he is carrying out (dynamic office). He totally vacates the working station at the end of the day to allow a colleague to use it the following day (clean desk).
  - Special attention to the concepts of welfare and design.
- Digitalising and e-working by NoVoDIG:
  - Provide FPS staff members with ergonomic, reliable, high-performance tools to enable them to work efficiently together.
  - Concrete solutions to better manage the lifecycle of paper and electronic documents.
- Client orientation by NoVoClient: provide quality services and increase accessibility and responsiveness, for the public's greater satisfaction.
- Communication and change management by NoVoCOM:
  - Managing the changes introduced by NoVo, by supporting all programmes and themes.
  - Better communication facilitates greater clarity, transparency and participation.

### Resources used:

- Total investment of EUR 10 million, including all the costs for implementation.
  - 11 full time employees during three years responsible for implementation.
  - Around 200 staff were supporting the implementation through workshops and volunteering.
  - Several consultants helped with specific inputs such as interior design, architecture and the culture survey.
  - The lump sum investment of EUR 10 million was offset after 1.5 years by the saving of EUR 6 million per annum through reduction in office spaces.
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## Partnerships

### **Buildings Agency of the Federal Administration in Belgium**

Other Public Sector

They had a supporting role in developing the dynamic office concept.

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### **State Archives of Belgium**

Other Public Sector

They had a supporting role in document management and took over valuable archives from us.

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### **Federal Public Service Personnel and Organisation, Belgium**

Other Public Sector

They supported the result-oriented aspect e.g. proposing tools for the realisation of surveys with accompanying analysis.

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### **Consultants**

Private sector

Several consultants were associated with this project, but their input remained limited (e.g. interior design and architecture, culture survey, etc.).

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## **Lessons Learned**

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### **Lessons Learned**

- Change management is the biggest challenge.
  - Communication matters: you communicate too much, not enough or too late. You need always to search for the right balance.
  - The involvement of and listening to employees was a key factor in the success for the project.
  - Clear vision and strategy coming from the top of the FPS.
  - Programme management approach is essential.
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### **Conditions for success**

- Engagement of top management.
- Build on the talents of your own employees.
- Possibility to invest.
- Autonomy to the project team.

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