

2019 Yearbook

2018 Laureates



Prince Albert Fund
managed by the King Baudouin Foundation



Dear Friends of the Prince Albert Fund,

“Beyond PAF 2.0”

Congratulations to the new cuvee of PAF Laureates. And thank you to all the companies who dared to offer them this life-changing opportunity. Unlocking the full potential of young professionals remains the core purpose of the Prince Albert Fund, within the overall values embodied by the King Baudouin Foundation. Since 1984, PAF has delivered successfully on the vision of its founders. See our latest statistics, and browse the fascinating stories from our 19 laureates present in this yearbook.

Following the establishment of a new board mid 2014, we launched an intense change chapter in our PAF story at the April 2015 Ceremony, nicknamed “PAF 2.0”. The ambition was to create the possibility for the PAF jury to select up to twice as many top quality candidates - up to 30 per year, versus up to 15 before. That required 2 key actions: 1) a deep strategic review of the changing development needs of future candidates in an ever dynamic “war for talent” landscape, and 2) a comprehensive overhaul and upgrade of our own underlying support model and capabilities.

It is my honor and pleasure to announce **we have actually reached our PAF 2.0 ambition**, but **the work does not stop here**. The next exciting chapter is already carefully being prepared, under the leadership of a new incoming Chairman. You will hear more about it at the May 2019 Ceremony.

In this 5th and last Chairman letter, please allow me to express my deepest gratitude for having been able to serve: to all PAF Alums who gave back in so many ways, to the host companies, to the incredibly dedicated rejuvenated PAF Board, to the King Baudouin Foundation, and to all our donors for their ongoing trust and support. My sincere appreciation for HRH Princess Astrid’s unwavering patronage. Last but not least, a special shout out to Anne-Catherine and Anneke, for 5 years of great collaboration behind the scenes.

Please join me in a toast to continued PAF reinvention, and to many more young talent’s lives changed.

Chris Burggraeve

Chairman Prince Albert Fund (2014-2019)
PAF Alum 1989

► Our Steering Committee

The Steering Committee of the Prince Albert Fund is responsible for its strategic direction.

Composition of the Steering Committee (2018)

Chairman

Chris Burggraeve, Founder, Vicomte LLC, Alumni 1989

Members

Valérie Busquin, Managing Director, MarkQuest, Alumni 1993

Michiel Deturck, Partner, Vendis Capital, Alumni 1990

Hans Maertens, Managing Director, VOKA

Luc Tayart de Borms, Managing Director, King Baudouin Foundation

Olivier Joris, Executive Manager International Department, FEB-VBO

Floriane Uyttenhove, Segment Marketing Manager Carbonates EMEA, Imerys, Alumni 2014

Kristel Van den Bergh, Corporate Innovations, Materialise, Alumni 2014

Olivier de Wasseige, Managing Director, UWE

Olivier Willocx, Managing Director, BECI

Management team

Anne-Catherine Chevalier, Managing Director, Prince Albert Fund

Anneke Denecker, Knowledge Expert, King Baudouin Foundation

► Our mission

Helping young talented Belgian professionals acquire experience in conducting international projects

Our mission is to help talented young professionals discover and develop their true international leadership potential and so to contribute to the development of the Belgian economy and Belgian international business by leveraging Belgian companies and organizations.

For more than three decades, the Prince Albert Fund has helped young Belgian professionals develop an international career by giving them the opportunity to manage a 12-month business development project for a Belgian company outside Europe. This very selective entrepreneurial international experience has contributed to the careers of some 440 young people, who since have achieved senior leadership positions as entrepreneurs or in international business, thus succeeding in its aim to drive talent that will make a difference to society in general.

► Our history

A princely tribute to Belgian foreign trade

The Prince Albert Fund was set up in 1984 by the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (VBO-FEB) and the King Baudouin Foundation to mark the 50th birthday of His Royal Highness Prince Albert, later to become the sixth King of the Belgians.

The Fund's aim was to embody the vision of a group of captains of industries to promote Belgian business abroad.

It is since 2015 under the patronage of HRH Princess Astrid.

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“This project increased my confidence, enabling me to make decisions and realize that nothing is crystal clear in the business world, you have to take an educated risk and make sure you can back it.”

Project countries: Australia and New Zealand



Vitaline Bouckaert

► Role

Vitaline Bouckaert's assignment was a mix of project management and business development for the launch of an entirely new flooring category for Unilin.

► Responsibilities

More specifically, **Vitaline** was tasked with the responsibility to research, develop, source and launch new ranges of flexible and rigid vinyl flooring products in the Australian and New Zealand marketplace. Consequently, she had to change task throughout the day, working as a product manager in the morning, a marketing manager and graphic designer in the afternoon, and a technical and operational manager at other times.

► How she benefited

This Prince Albert Fund experience significantly improved **Vitaline's** social and soft skills as she had to keep all the teams focused and driven for the launch of the new product.

She also had to gain their trust and respect so that she could bring everyone on board, capturing their enthusiasm and interest.

“This year has been the perfect bridge between my past and future career - the bridge I needed from the legal world to the economic and business world. It shed new light on the evolution of my career on the long term.”

The company - Unilin

Unilin produces laminate floors, engineered wood, vinyl floors, boards, decorative panels, finished products, roofing elements and insulation panels. The Belgian company is part of the American company Mohawk Industries Inc. Its head office is based in Desselgem.

“In terms of Vitaline's input, there is no question among the entire team that her extensive market research, product development, range selection and contribution to leaders of all internal departments, gave rise to a very successful sales result.”

“Not only have I re-skilled and rebranded myself, but I am also better prepared for the challenges in the digital economy.”



Project country: United States (Silicon Valley)

Andries Brys

► Role

Andries Brys helped establish a strategic marketing plan in the USA. for Clickshare, Barco's wireless presentation system, by actively engaging with the sales and channel team.

► Responsibilities

After an initial research phase, Andries primarily focused on a business plan for Barco's ClickShare wireless presentation system. **“My objective was to give a higher exposure to the ClickShare device in a larger number of meeting rooms, where a lot of visiting decision makers could experience this technology and interact with it.”** He also added the videoconferencing solution, thus creating a complete ecosystem.

► How he benefited

Andries strongly developed his project management skills. **“I made specific recommendations in terms of product management and development, sales organizations and marketing based on extensive research. I thus gained a lot more experience in how to take on a large goal, divide in subtasks, and coordinate with others”,** he explains. **“This also means working with SMART goals, clearly defining a timeline and implementing a transparent follow-up system for everyone”.**

The company - Barco

Barco is a global leader in networked visualization solutions, designing innovative collaboration systems, helping a variety of selected professional markets (enterprises, healthcare, entertainment) to make meaningful connections. Employing 3,250 people in more than 90 countries, Barco enables customers worldwide to optimise productivity and business efficiency.

“Andries is a bridge-builder, seamlessly interfacing in and between teams in a matrix organization. Thanks to a thorough analysis of business situations he came to a full understanding and was able to identify strategic patterns.”

“This project has stimulated my sense of entrepreneurship. It made me less risk averse, I needed to make it happen and deliver concrete results!”



Project country: United States

Isabelle Cammaert

► Role

Isabelle Cammaert’s mission was to develop a long-term portfolio strategy for the U.S. commodities segment of Puratos and define an ideal assortment and implementation plan. She also needed to develop clear and uniform processes.

► Responsibilities

Isabelle had to identify a national, regional, and channel-specific portfolio based on sales data analysis, customer interviews, and internal stakeholder interviews. She re-categorised all of the commodities to give both sales representatives and customers a more intuitive view of Puratos’s portfolio.

► How she benefited

Working with higher management pushed Isabelle to the next level in her professional career. It enabled her to take on a more structured approach in solving business problems.

“Understanding how a business works is the start of every good business strategy. I learned to listen to the objections of all the stakeholders before developing my own point of view.”

Moreover, working for such a large-scale business in the U.S., taking into account the country’s significant socio-demographic differences, made her even more aware of the specific regional customer demands in the food industry. **“I became better at identifying customer segments and adapting the portfolio and price setting accordingly.”**

The company - Puratos

Puratos is an international group offering a full range of innovative products, raw materials and application expertise to the bakery, pastry and chocolate sectors. Its headquarters are just outside Brussels (Belgium), where the company was founded in 1919. Currently its products and services are available in over 100 countries around the world and, in many cases, they are produced by a network of local subsidiaries.

“Isabelle found value added products to add to the portfolio, which benefited the segment’s overall profitability. She also was responsible for helping us to improve processes used in the commodity segment such as pricing, SKU rationalization and vendor management.”

“One of my main goals when I embarked on the Prince Albert Fund adventure was to enter a fast-evolving industry such as energy technology and gain an in-depth understanding of this sector.”

Jasmien Coolen

► Role

Jasmien Coolen’s mission was to act as the “bridge” between EnergyVision’s offices in China and in Belgium. She was also tasked with professionalising and structuring the company’s Chinese office in Tianjin.

► Responsibilities

As China is a very promising country for solar photovoltaic projects, one of EnergyVision’s goals was to install a significant number of solar panels in 2018. But **Jasmien** faced quite a few challenges, even in this high-potential market, before she was able to fulfil these objectives in an efficient and profitable way. She started by analysing the current situation and its weaknesses, then drafted new processes. **“A substantial part of my project consisted of assisting and motivating the local employees and helping them to understand the new project set-up and work according to the new processes.”** The second part of her project consisted of business development and strengthening relations with European partners.

► How she benefited

Jasmien learned how to manage and motivate a team, how to push people and inspire them to give their best, in order to work towards a common goal. She feels there is a clear “before and after” Prince Albert Fund, especially in the context of EnergyVision’s Tianjin office: she was able to provide the “foundation” for its future sustainable growth.

The company - EnergyVision

EnergyVision offers complete energy solutions and implements energy projects around the world. The company’s head office is in Ghent (Belgium), and it also has offices in Casablanca, Khouribga (Morocco) and Tianjin (China).

“Jasmien’s presence in the EnergyVision Tianjin office was very important to professionalize the Chinese office in line with the company strategy of EnergyVision Belgium. Thanks to her, we achieved a significant improvement in terms of local turnover, number of projects realized and gross margin.”

Project country: China



“I am honored and grateful for the support of the Prince Albert Fund, as it has given me a priceless opportunity in international business.”



Project country: Colombia

Junior-James Cuigniez

► Role

As part of the “new markets team”, Junior-James Cuigniez provided support to the La Lorraine Bakery Group (LLBG) for its expansion to Colombia. He has set the entire basis for starting a commercial activity in this region of the world.

► Responsibilities

The La Lorraine Bakery Group’s aim was to expand its business to Colombia and draft a logistics master plan for the import and distribution of frozen bakery products. As the first employee in the region, **Junior-James’s** objectives were to establish the new entity locally, to define and price an adequate product mix, to obtain all the permits required to do business in the country and find logistics solutions before initiating sales. **“In just one year, everything was in place to scale up the Colombian activities. We succeeded in implementing a reliable logistics solution to import and distribute frozen bread products throughout Colombia.”**

► How he benefited

Junior-James gained a lot of confidence, by overcoming all the challenges associated with his mission. He became a more resilient and flexible person, and was able to better put things in perspective. He developed his problem solving capabilities and gained a sound intercultural awareness. He gained a deep understanding of international logistics and expanded his management skills.

The company - La Lorraine Bakery Group

La Lorraine Bakery Group is a 100% Belgian-owned family company active in the European milling and baking sectors. It is structured in 4 innovative Business Units, such as ‘Bakery Fresh’. The company has been the Belgian market leader for bread and pastries that are prepared fresh daily for over 50 years. Its products are distributed in 2,300 supermarkets. The group has major ambitions and continues to invest in its international expansion.

“Junior-James was able to achieve all the objectives that were set. In addition to this, he established interesting industry contacts and identified potential joint venture partners defined such as major Colombian retailers as well as coffee chains and the hospitality industry.”

“Coming from the academic world, the project has opened new doors for me. In the future, I want to bring my academic and industry knowledge together to enable more collaborations.”



Elke De Witte

► Role

Elke De Witte was put in charge of LynxCare’s business development in the USA. This technological platform provides accurate tools to aggregate data across various hospital data sources.

► Responsibilities

Elke felt responsible and accountable for the company’s objectives very early on. She conducted market research, defined a sales strategy, built the marketing strategy, set up a legal structure and also generated sales. She also pushed to apply for the Alchemist accelerator, a venture-backed business incubator focused on accelerating startups.

“We achieved our results as we closed our first sales in the first 6 months”, she says proudly.

► How she benefited

The Prince Albert Fund has definitely opened new doors for Elke in industry.

“I am still learning a lot, but this startup experience has given me the chance to learn all about it in just one year. Combined academic and industry knowledge/experience is also highly valued in healthcare and technology companies, which is definitely a plus in my case.”

The company - LynxCare

LynxCare is a Belgian start/scale-up company that built an AI-powered Big Data platform to help hospitals and clinics aggregate data around their outcomes. It was founded by a team of healthcare providers (MD, PharmD, RN, ...) and data scientists, building proprietary technology tailored to clinician’s needs.

“Elke built a new market and set up a new company from scratch. From scanning the initial market, contacting key stakeholders, applying and getting accepted in one of the top accelerators (Alchemist Accelerator) in the USA, enabling a great group dynamic and team spirit, hiring an intern and managing the U.S. office.”

Project country: United States



“I guess this experience was the best MBA I could imagine!”



Project country: India

Lisa Dewulf

► Role

Lisa Dewulf's main task was to support the setup of a pilot project for Greenyard Fresh in India, with the perspective of building a full-fledged distribution center in the near future.

► Responsibilities

Lisa had the opportunity to focus extensively on the analysis of the export potential together with the four different business units of Greenyard. The most intensive project she worked on was the setup of a supply chain for fresh ginger from North-East India. **“As we were the first to bite the bullet and as North-East India is an underdeveloped market, a lot of ground work was required to make this project happen.”**

► How she benefited

As the mission took shape, Lisa found herself analyzing Mergers & Acquisitions opportunities, developing a data analysis tool to predict the imported fruit market, designing customized solutions for customers, preparing board meetings and coaching team members on sales and marketing all at once ... **“Even though I only had limited experience in these fields.”** The volatile market, the many stakeholders and the possibility to help develop the farmers' business makes this a very exciting experience for her.

The company - Greenyard Fresh

Greenyard is one of the world's largest suppliers of fruit and vegetables. The group offers healthy food products - fresh, frozen or prepared - for any lifestyle, age group or consumption. It has operations worldwide and serves a global customer base, which includes most of the leading retailers in Europe. The group has more than 8,000 employees in 25 countries worldwide.

Greenyard Fresh, one of its divisions, is a global market leader in fresh and prepared fruit and vegetables and growing media.

“Lisa's initial objectives changed during the project time span as some of the priorities changed. Along the way she clearly identified areas where she could help to develop the organization and opportunities that could benefit our company in terms of exports. We highly valued Lisa's no-nonsense entrepreneurial approach.”

“Experiencing the macroeconomic consequences of politics first-hand has shown me how interconnected our world truly is.”

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Project country: South Africa



Katrien Haegeman

► Role

Katrien Haegeman assisted LC Packaging on various projects, mainly growing sales of their Big Bag products by developing marketing tools in Southern Africa.

► Responsibilities

The main aim of the project was to increase exports of Big Bags to the Central and Eastern African region, with a focus on the Copperbelt area (Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia, Tanzania).

Katrien developed relationships with customers and key departments within the global structure of LC Packaging, conducted a market survey and performed a competitive analysis, and managed the logistics tender for South Africa.

► How she benefited

Thanks to this project, Katrien was able to gain extensive knowledge and experience in international sales. In addition to the explicit knowledge that she acquired of the sales process, finance and global supply chain planning, she also acquired several soft skills.

Being exposed to the mining industry in Africa also taught her a lot about globalization and how a trade war between two countries can have an acute impact on other places around the world.

The company - LC Packaging

LC Packaging provides sustainable packaging solutions for different manufacturing sectors and key industries. The company has 14 different subsidiaries across Europe and Africa, organized in three main divisions: agricultural packaging, FIBCs (flexible intermediate bulk containers, also known as bulk bags) and Cardboard. The division in charge of Africa is based in Belgium.

“Katrien was the right woman in the right place to witness the cobalt boom in the DRC. She managed to ensure LC Packaging was well positioned to take advantage of the sudden uptick in demand for quality packaging for the cobalt mines. Her efforts were instrumental in strengthening the company’s reputation as the leading quality supplier of FIBC’s in the region, despite selling them at a premium price.”

“My expectations, although already pretty high, were far exceeded. The project is more than moving, living and working abroad!”

HALIO
Smart-Tinting Glass



Project country: United States



Katrien Herdewyn

► Role

Katrien Herdewyn's role was to contribute to the successful launch of Halio, a smart-tinting glass, on the North American market, for Halio North America (HNA), a strategic partnership between AGC Glass Europe.

► Responsibilities

Katrien mainly concentrated on the following priorities: the sales lead generation program, the comparative study of the competitors, the Halio Outreach Program, digital marketing, technical certificates and communication material, and participation in trade shows.

► How she benefited

Working on a project that focused on the simultaneous launch of a product worldwide meant weekly interactions with partners or coworkers outside the U.S., in Taiwan, Japan, Ukraine, Singapore, and Belgium. Although the days were long, with very little sleep because of the different time zones, this was also a very educational and energizing experience for Katrien.

“Things that I considered a challenge a year ago are now well within my comfort zone, such as PR, web design, and asset management.” In addition to business development and strategy, this project also gave her the opportunity to grow her technical engineering skills as well as her creative skills.

The company - AGC Glass Europe

AGC, the world's leading flat glass manufacturer, produces, processes and distributes flat glass for the building industry, the automotive industry and other sectors (transport, solar power and high-tech). The AGC group has 200 companies in over 30 countries with a workforce of more than 50,000 employees, focusing on 4 main business segments: Glass, Electronics, Chemicals and Ceramics. The European HQ are based in Louvain-la-Neuve.

“Katrien has very high standards, which she worked hard to maintain no matter how many projects she was juggling. Her academic knowledge, along with some of her entrepreneurial experiences, enabled her to make significant contributions during her tenure. She met deadlines and exhibited good judgment when reprioritizations were required.”

“This year allowed me to move from ideas to reality.”



Project countries: Tanzania and Ethiopia

Marie Herman

► Role

Marie Herman helped Casibeans to develop a project aimed at increasing supply chain traceability and achieving more direct trading, as an alternative to standard trading practices.

► Responsibilities

The tasks outlined in the project description were numerous and the targets to be achieved very challenging. After three months, **Marie** had visited all the main potential bean suppliers in Tanzania and performed an analysis based on a framework that she developed herself. She later conducted the same exercise in Ethiopia. This resulted in a report that gave the company's Board of Directors a better understanding of the possible options.

► How she benefited

This Prince Albert Fund year opened up a whole new world for her, during which she learned about trading, the importance of quality specifications, dealing with business as a woman in a male-dominated business landscape. In addition, she discovered how to move on quickly when an initial idea did not work out instead of accumulating frustrations and the importance of building up genuine relations to facilitate reaching the targets.

“It was extremely satisfying to see the 48 tons of Ethiopian beans – an operation I set up from scratch – in our warehouse in Antwerp!”

The company - Casibeans

A family company since 1935, Casibeans is a trusted supplier of safe, sustainable and nutritious specialty crops and related products. Based in the port of Antwerp, the company mainly supplies dry pulses to the food industry such as beans, lentils, peas and chickpeas.

“At one stage, Marie moved to Ethiopia, where at her own initiative, she conducted a comparative study of the agricultural sector in both Tanzania and Ethiopia, and this from different aspects - farmer organizations, quality levels, pesticides, and so on. Impressive and very useful to us!”

“I was eager to further develop my entrepreneurial skills and I was not disappointed!”



Project country: United States

Laurent Huenaerts

► Role

Laurent Huenaerts' mission was to assess whether Unify's successful business model in Europe could be replicated in North America, and to initiate activities in this region.

► Responsibilities

After a first phase of market analysis, **Laurent** concentrated on building a sales tunnel. One of the main results was the participation of Unify in the drone Integration Pilot Program initiated by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the signing of a first major contract. These successes led the Board of Directors to approve the creation of a U.S. subsidiary.

“I had to manage very diverse aspects of a company and wear multiple hats the same day: from business development to project management, tax or marketing and communication.”

► How he benefited

In Unify **Laurent** found a company and a team that offered exactly what he was looking for in terms of professional objectives, including being more impactful within an organization, by significantly contributing to its development and by actively participating in its long-term strategy. In light of the promising results, Unify decided to set up the U.S. subsidiary that will be led by **Laurent**.

The company - Unify

Established in 2015 by aerospace experts, Unify is a software company with a platform for the safe integration of drones in airspace. This award-winning spin-off company of VITO (the Flemish institute for technological research) specializes in aviation software development. Its main mission is to develop applications that facilitate drone traffic in the very-low-altitude airspace.

“When Laurent started out, Unify was unknown in the United States. Those who had heard of our company wondered why we would bother trying to sell anything in the U.S. Today – and to a large extent thanks to Laurent's efforts – Unify has become a well-known name in the Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) community in the United States.”

“This hands-on experience was the best training I could have ever imagined to strengthen some of my talents.”

Jonathan Lambregs

► Role

Jonathan Lambregs was asked to expand Tiger Power’s presence on the renewable energy market in Uganda and East Africa.

► Responsibilities

Tiger Power wanted to expand its business activities to the East African market, by focusing mainly on the development of solar mini-grids in Uganda. The priority was to sign a commercial agreement with the Rural Electrification Agency of Uganda (REA), which was “by far the biggest challenge”.

“At every step along the way, additional requirements surfaced. The only way to overcome these obstacles was patience and persistence”, explains Jonathan. He was also tasked with targeting different market segments, of which the mini-grid sector and the telecom sector were the most important.

► How he benefited

On the professional level, this Prince Albert Fund project taught Jonathan to focus on the target objective, especially working in a location with a different ‘business reality’. Moreover, this experience has significantly contributed to his strategic planning skills.

Jonathan succeeded in building a supportive network for Tiger Power to grow its business in East Africa. As a result, the company was shortlisted for an international tender to develop, finance, build and operate 25 mini-grids in Northern Uganda.

The company - Tiger Power

Tiger Power is an innovative Belgian start-up company that offers a cost-competitive, zero-emission, plug-&-play, 24/7 autonomous, transportable renewable energy solution. It combines renewable energy production with an innovative energy storage concept based on battery technology and a hydrogen-cycle.


“We especially appreciated Jonathan’s perseverance and passion, his ability to take responsibility, his presentation, communication and networking skills, his constructive cooperation, his out-of-the-box and creative mind-set, his amicable character and analytical and verbal skills, and most of all, his desire to continuously develop and learn.”

Project country: Uganda



“For the first time ever, the way I resolve daily problems has huge implications on a balance sheet.”



Project country: Chile 



Jonathan de Smet

► Role

Jonathan de Smet's main task was to organize and optimize logistics for Lhoist's products from the exporting port in Chile to the final customer.

► Responsibilities

As Lhoist had to externalize all aspects of its logistics, **Jonathan** was tasked with reviewing the subcontractors, the routes and the storage capacities for the lime products. ***“I had to change certain things related to the port, the warehouses, the trucking companies, the chemical analysis company and the client to manage operations.”***

► How he benefited

As **Jonathan** has a background in engineering, he had always worked in technical positions and had never been exposed to customers, subcontractors or regulatory organizations. Thanks to all the support he received from his colleagues and from Lhoist, he has now developed a much better understanding of international companies.

“I learnt a lot about many aspects of the quicklime business: purchasing, importing, subcontracting, financing, billing, negotiating, casting, pricing, performing strategic and commercial analysis, security, regulatory and technical aspects.”

The company - Lhoist

Established in Belgium since 1889, the Lhoist Group offers a wide range of mineral, calcic lime and dolomitic lime-based products. It has expertise in a broad range of sectors such as the steel industry, refractories, the environment, construction and civil engineering, agriculture, glass and chemistry.

It has successfully expanded the business to the United States (80's), Eastern Europe (90's), and now to Latin America and Asia. The Group operates 90 mines in more than 100 countries.

“Jonathan's profile matches our company values: he has respect, courage and integrity. His commitment to quality, growth and improvement inspire people to strive for the same. Jonathan is clever and possesses a clear vision of the business as a whole. Combined with his technical background and creativity, he often inspired me to think outside the box to find innovative solutions and exceed our customers' expectations.”

“Exposure to many different experiences, across different industries, roles and countries is key to develop a fulfilling international career.”



Project country: United States



Antoine Smets

► Role

Antoine Smets was tasked with implementing a new version of the product Cubigo previously developed for the USA. The mobile platform provides convenient access to qualified services for senior citizens.

► Responsibilities

When the product turned out to not be as market-ready as expected, it undermined Cubigo’s credibility among its customer base. **Antoine** succeeded in regaining the trust of the company’s clients, making the product market-ready and finalizing a first successful implementation. The second phase of his mission consisted of the relaunch of the U.S. operations, taking into account the learnings of the past 6 months. **“My priorities were to execute the sales and implementation plan that had been agreed upon with the rest of the management team and the board.”**

► How he benefited

“The Prince Albert Fund experience opened many doors for me. I can now help companies gain valuable time and limit risks when entering a new market. I won’t let this experience and lessons learned from it fade over time. I also find it very important to invest my energy and time in projects where I can have a significant impact and invest my efforts in projects that pursue greater goals.”

Working for Cubigo fulfilled all of those requirements: **Antoine** was able to take on a crucial role that helped the company move forward with a product that improves the lives of senior citizens and their families.

The company - Cubigo

Cubigo, which was established in 2011, has developed a cloud-based platform that empowers people to live an independent and healthy life by supporting and stimulating self-care. The platform connects senior citizens, caregivers, family and businesses with a user-friendly, modular User Interface, offering a wide set of functionalities. The company has offices in Belgium, Spain and the United States.

“Antoine did not only perform well on his core task, he also took it to the next level by starting to standardize the way Cubigo carries out client implementations. He also finetuned the strategy/business case framework, tailoring it and ensuring it was rooted in overall trends.”

“I had the pleasure of working with a lot of people who were experienced in the field of strategic turnaround projects and this enabled me to work on more strategic projects in a demanding setting.”



Project country: United States



Peter-Jan Sonck

► Role

Peter-Jan Sonck worked as a support to the Supply Chain team at the Le Pain Quotidien USA, helping them rethink their supply chain quality and effectiveness in a fast-growing environment.

► Responsibilities

Le Pain Quotidien's supply chain had to be reviewed and simplified, to adapt to the evolutions of the stores on the American market. Besides offering over-the-counter bakery items and dining, each store also sells retail items and grab and go items. **Peter-Jan** contributed to the development and implementation of a new strategic plan, helping to move to reduced stock and suppliers and one production facility.

► How he benefited

Peter-Jan conducted his project with a lot of perseverance in a particularly challenging setting with the organization in full transition mode.

“The fact is that there are so many different possible solutions to deal with in a difficult situation. It definitely requires re-engineering your mindset. Being in a company that is undergoing such a significant change was a real eye-opener. It also opened doors for me to work on more strategic projects.”

The company - Le Pain Quotidien

Le Pain Quotidien is a Belgian bakery and restaurant chain that has expanded across the world and now has over 240 stores on four continents, including 95 restaurants in the USA. The company was founded in 1990 by Alain Coumont and has a strong history of operating bakery/restaurants since opening its first point of sales in Brussels.

“Peter-Jan performed his duties at an extremely high level, both from a technical level and in terms of professionalism. He greatly assisted our company, contributing his analytical skills to help us improve our logistics, data analytics and systems. Peter-Jan served in a major role supporting the transformation of the system.”

“This project has opened a new career path for me. I feel that I now have all the tools in hand to make a reasoned decision about my future career.”



Project countries: Ivory Coast, Ghana, Senegal, Angola



Jennifer Swertvaegher

► Role

Jennifer Swertvaegher managed The Impala project. The objective was to gain a thorough understanding of the glass market and the business environment in four selected countries - Ivory Coast, Ghana, Senegal and Angola - and to make recommendations on how best to enter these markets.

► Responsibilities

Exploring four countries over a limited period of time was very challenging, Jennifer collated detailed information (facts and insights) about these markets, comparing their dynamics, the differences and similarities between them, in the glass and construction markets. The work done by Jennifer will allow AGC Glass to be quickly operational and benefit from the right network to effectively start their operations there.

► How she benefited

In addition to gaining an insight in business structures and activities, Jennifer also developed a way of working on a day-to-day basis in a challenging environment such as Africa. Managing her own project, with a clearly-defined goal, also required managing her working hours in a way she hadn't done before. This job involved much more planning, responsibility and decision-making, so her skills in these areas developed tremendously during the past year.

“The project allowed me to experiment with my skills in a completely new environment, and the conclusions were very valuable to me.”

The company - AGC Glass Europe

AGC, the world's premier flat glass company, produces, processes and distributes flat glass for the building industry, the automotive industry and other industries (transport, solar power and high-tech). The AGC group has 200 companies in over 30 countries with more than 50,000 employees, focusing on 4 main business segments: Glass, Electronics, Chemicals and Ceramics. The European HQ are based in Louvain-la-Neuve.

“By exploring 4 countries, Jennifer brought to us a diversity of perspectives that were extremely valuable and allowed us to balance the findings, to select the priorities and to adapt the entry strategy for each country instead of adopting a ‘common approach’ for all.”

“What is so great about the Prince Albert Fund is that you also join a very dynamic community.”



Project countries: Japan & China

Chloé Thevelin

► Role

Chloé Thevelin’s goal was to work on the future growth of Neuhaus in Asia, with a focus on Japan and China, by penetrating the market with an adapted strategy.

► Responsibilities

Chloé’s objective was to help Neuhaus assess the best route to market in the challenging Chinese and Japanese markets. In Tokyo, she initially focused on two distribution channels: the key department stores (preparing the Japanese Valentine) and the e-commerce activities by developing different online platforms. In China, she concentrated on e-commerce on China’s leading platform Tmall, for the promotion of the Neuhaus flagship store in Shanghai. She also identified the right social media partner for working on the No. 1 platform in China (WeChat).

► How she benefited

Chloé felt that one of the most challenging aspects of the project was the simultaneous confrontation with two completely new cultures and language barriers.

“I have learnt to adopt a chameleon approach and adjust myself to my interlocutor efficiently. On a business perspective, I have developed new technical competencies and skills that will be very valuable for my future career.”

The company - Neuhaus

Neuhaus is a manufacturer of Belgian luxury chocolates, delicious biscuits and artisan ice cream. The company was established in Brussels in 1857 by Jean Neuhaus, who opened his first store in the Galeries St.-Hubert. In 1912, the company launched the chocolate ‘praline’. Today, Neuhaus is a very popular brand, with over 1,000 points of sales in 40 countries. All Neuhaus delicacies are made in Belgium and exported worldwide.

“Chloé had the right attitude for an export mission. She took full ownership of the mission, doing a perfect job, even though she had to enter unknown markets and learn new skills. Ultimately, both projects were a success – the Valentine’s Day commercial event and the launch of our brand on Chinese social media – and she completed the job within the set timelines.”

“Thanks to the Prince Albert Fund, I have gained an operational and commercial experience in a whole new product market.”

Manu Uylenbroeck

► Role

Manu Uylenbroeck’s project consisted of developing a road-to-market strategy for the flooring division of Decospan on the West Coast. Decospan had entered the East Coast a few years ago but not yet the West Coast.

► Responsibilities

The main challenge in this project was the long sales-cycle of a wood flooring product and the multitude of parties involved in the decision-making process. A second challenge was the fact that California as a market is not only huge but also highly competitive and saturated. In order to build a successful strategy, **Manu** met with all the people involved in the process, listed the different parties and the type of products they were currently using, identifying the links between them.

► How he benefited

By conducting his research from San Francisco, **Manu** gained an in-depth view of the West Coast flooring market. Thanks to his project, he was able to experience the pressure of having to build something from scratch first-hand and take the end responsibility for the result.

“As I come from a finance background, this project made me realize the value and difficulties that come with a business development and sales job.”

The company - Decospan

Decospan, which was established in 1978, is a Belgian manufacturer of wood flooring solutions. The company has since become one of the world’s leading manufacturers of veneer wood panels and floors. With its treasure chest of more than 160 wood species, its state-of-the-art machines, sustainable business model and flexible employees, the company can develop new products that meet the needs of all stakeholders.

“Thanks to Manu we obtained an in-depth view on the flooring market on the West Coast. Thanks to this insight, we could interfere on the specifications of competitor’s products and adapt them to Decospan flooring products to be able to enter the market.”

Project country: United States

“This mission has been an eye-opener, in that it gave me a good insight in a number of new professions and gave me a much better idea of the job I want to do.”

Koen Vandepaer

► Role

Koen Vandepaer’s mission consisted of providing assistance for the “launch” of Beeple, an all in one application for staff management, in the United States.

► Responsibilities

The two main objectives were to set up a legal entity and manage it, called Beeple U.S., as well as to create success stories among U.S. clients. **Koen’s** tasks included following up on sales opportunities for the app, directly or through the network and existing clients of the employment agency Adecco (a shareholder in Beeple).

“My job was to sell the application by building business cases, implementing the software in the existing delivery model, following up with customers and validating the business/use case.”

► How he benefited

Koen learned to work very independently while maintaining continuous online communications with his colleagues. *“On a professional level, learning to work in a remote team was a big change for me.”*

The Prince Albert Fund project gave **Koen** the opportunity to prove himself in a more commercial and operational role. It also offered him a chance to drastically improve his soft skills. Ultimately, he achieved success stories by closing sales transactions with satisfied final customers.

The company - Beeple

Beeple is the market leader in online staff management. It has developed an online tool to manage temporary and flexible employees. With more than 530 features, this application is the most complete circle of staff management on the market.

“Koen never lost sight of the company’s primary objectives. He was always professional, accurate and transparent. Thanks to his business development skills, Beeple learned how to improve its product for U.S.-based customers.”

Project country: United States



The Prince Albert Fund

A Unique opportunity for candidates
and companies alike

► For candidates

Are you ready to kickstart your international career?

If you're keen to broaden your horizons and take on the challenge of an international career, the Prince Albert Fund might be just what you need.

Essentially, it is your chance to manage a one-year business project of your choice for a Belgian company outside Europe, giving you invaluable business and inter-cultural experience, as well as accelerating your international career as a member of a select network of the Fund's alumni.

How does it work?

The first step is to apply for the grant online (application from November to mid January).

You don't need a project to apply – the first thing we look at is the quality of your candidature as an individual via a thorough selection process.

Once you're selected as a candidate, you'll receive a number of training and coaching sessions. Here, you'll be able to choose your own project and destination, either an opportunity from one of our candidate companies, or from your own contacts.

You get a Tax-free compensation of €25,000 from the Prince Albert Fund, while the company will pay for your housing, flights and mission related expenses.

And then you'll be off – one year, one country, one project, and it's up to you to make it work. Hand in a successful project report at the end of your mission and you have a chance to become a Prince Albert Fund Laureate, a distinction that carries real recognition in the world of international Belgian business.

Who can apply?

The ideal candidate:

- Is Belgian or is a EU citizen with a clear link with Belgium
- Holds a master's degree preferably in the field of economy, law, marketing, finances, engineering, economical sciences or in any other field with an additional degree in management
- Is fluent in English
- Is mature, motivated, eager to learn and to discover new cultures, open-minded and with an entrepreneurial mindset
- Has at least 2-3 years of professional experience
- Is not older than 30

Interested?

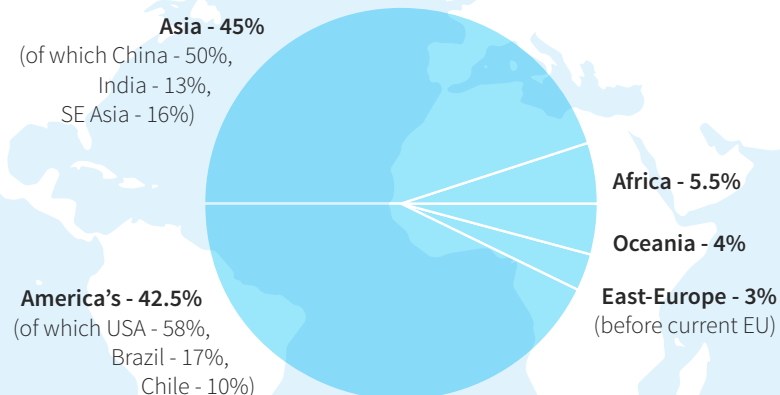
Find out more on www.princealbertfund.be
or join one of our info sessions and decide
whether you're ready to spread your wings and take off!

► Key figures: 1984 – 2019

440 alumni around the globe

32% women - 68% men

Project destinations



We are very grateful to our corporate donors
and to all the individuals and alumni who support us.

McKinsey & Company



► For companies

Looking for highly motivated young talent for your international business development?

The Prince Albert Fund offers a fantastic opportunity for Belgian companies with an existing international presence or planning an international expansion to take on pre-selected, high potential management candidates for a one-year contract at a low risk and attractive cost ratio for your company.

We are always on the lookout for challenging business projects abroad to match our grant participants.

How does it work?

The Prince Albert Fund carefully selects the best candidates each year. Once selected, they will be able to choose a company, project and destination.

As high potentials, they are not junior trainees – they should be given decision-making power and autonomy to encourage initiative and allow them to acquire relevant international experience.

The project must offer a challenge to explore and set out new strategies for your business. For each project, you should appoint a coach or mentor within your organization.

The Prince Albert Fund provides the participant with an annual scholarship grant. The company pays no salary, but pays a contribution to the Prince Albert Fund to help cover operational expenses, as well as paying for the candidate's housing, flights and mission related expenses.

Who can apply?

Any company that fulfils the following criteria:

- Is Belgian
- Has or is developing an international presence outside the EU
- Has a challenging international business development project to offer
- Is prepared to take a Grant candidate on board as project manager for a year
- Is ready to support the candidate with appropriate coaching during the assignment

Interested?

Find out more on www.princealbertfund.be
or contact us to propose a project!

Now is the time to help us make a difference
in a future's candidate life.

Dear PAF Alums & PAF Friends,

Help us fund a grant and offer a life-changing opportunity
to the next generation of "PAFers".

Thank you!

Prince Albert Fund

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