



Cora Heijnen (front) &  
Tabita Picavet-Verburg in  
Dow's Terneuzen facility

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**Cora Heijnen**  
Dow Benelux

### **Dow Benelux Discovers Taleo's Global Reach Produces Tangible Local Benefits**

Dow is a leader in science and technology, providing innovative chemical, plastic and agricultural products and services to many essential consumer markets. With annual sales of \$40 billion, Dow serves customers in 175 countries and a wide range of markets that are vital to human progress: food, transportation, health and medicine, personal and home care, and building and construction, among others.

Committed to the principles of sustainable development, Dow seeks to balance economic, environmental, and social responsibilities. Of the 43,000 employees in Dow worldwide, 2,600 are located in the Benelux, where Dow has six production sites and three offices. This includes one of Dow's largest production sites outside the United States which is located in Terneuzen, The Netherlands. This location houses several dozen manufacturing plants, storage facilities, and offices.

A Six-Sigma company, Dow believes in reaping the benefits from new technology. Dow people around the world develop solutions for society based on Dow's inherent strength in science and technology. For over a decade, Dow has embraced and advocated Responsible Care® — a voluntary industry-wide commitment to safely handle chemicals from inception in the laboratory to ultimate disposal. Dow's philosophy is that this worldwide commitment helps consumers lead better lives, customers succeed, stockholders prosper, employees achieve, and communities thrive.

Since the selection in August 2000 of Taleo as its automated staffing management solution, Dow has improved global business processes, increased Sigma by 50 per cent, improved staffing efficiency by 30 percent, and added value through the reinvestment of working capital.

Dow achieved a return on investment in Taleo in the first month of implementation, and after the first year, an ROI of 6:1. Furthermore, the Taleo suite of solutions is flexible and can be applied to multiple business processes, business cycles, geographic regions, and hiring and staffing models to create additional organizational value.

### **Global Outreach, Local Sensitivity**

With many global business software solutions, there is a natural concern about their applicability to local situations, customs, and cultures. In Dow's Terneuzen, Netherlands offices, Cora Heijnen is a Taleo subject matter expert who has four years experience on the Taleo system and extensive territorial responsibility, covering Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

In Terneuzen, Cora works closely with Tabita Picavet-Verburg, herself a Work Force Planning (WFP) specialist within Human Resources for the Benelux region, which comprises roughly 2,600 people with 2,200 in the local manufacturing plants. There is ongoing demand for financial experts, R&D specialists, environmental health and safety experts, and engineers in manufacturing, process control, development, and automation. For the Benelux region, Dow recruits, on an average, some 60 people every year.

There are both global and local challenges which impact the work of Human Resources in the chemicals industry. These include a cyclical business, emergence of new manufacturing production needs in China, issues of early retirement at 60 years in Benelux, and a current

## TALEO CASE STUDY

### Dow Benelux

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shortage of skilled technical people. Locally, the Taleo system integrated fairly seamlessly and without too much effort or change to the existing local staffing processes.

“Now all of our HR records are in a single database that can be accessed globally using the same global process for all countries,” says Cora Heijnen. Nowadays, with an extremely mobile and diverse workforce, the challenge has become one of identifying and prescreening recruits wherever they may be.

A person's geographic proximity is not as important as their technical skills or career objectives. So an English process engineer based in France could fit neatly into a Chinese manufacturing plant. Or a Dutch R&D scientist presently working in South America may well feel the need to finish her children's education back home in Holland by finding the right job on the beautiful Zeeland coast.

#### **Mobility for Long Term Careers**

“Dow's philosophy is for life-long careers,” says Picavet-Verburg. “Our goal is to give employees as much mobility as they need within their career plan while meeting the needs of the business.”

Taleo has contributed to this objective for the HR staff in Benelux. Locally, the company's needs were to decrease hiring cycle times while increasing the value of candidates, making more use of spontaneous applications now coming in regularly through the Taleo-powered jobs application form on the company's website.

“There's a very positive psychological effect in that applicants feel much more confident about going anonymously to the website,” says Picavet-Verburg. “And thanks to the structure of the Taleo web interface, which is totally branded to Dow's corporate graphics, HR has immediate communication with candidates.”

There are other advantages. Using Taleo, people can be directed to open positions in a much easier way, with HR able to take advantage of prescreening and profiling within the system to see if candidates are suitable. In the Benelux region alone, hiring costs have been reduced dramatically, partly due to the fact that with Taleo local HR staff can reach global audiences with a greater ease to open access to more job applicants.

#### **Quality Assurance**

“We have found that the quality of our candidates is better assured as we have more choice — which means that we can also be more selective,” says Picavet-Verburg. “In fact, we are now capable of making amazing time savings. To give an example, we needed a research engineer. So checking our database revealed that we had 170 potential candidates for the position. The Taleo system allows an automated search, ranking zero to 100 percent in terms of suitability. So the system can show the top 20 percent for our managers to work on while automating the process of sending letters to the 80 per cent that does not fit our criteria.”

In total, there are 169 HR people around the world actively using the Taleo system. Business unit managers who need staff have access to the system to communicate with HR staff.

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#### **Real and Tangible**

Though global savings of millions for Dow may dwarf local benefits, local savings are real and tangible, and not only for HR productivity. “Now we have no need to advertise. In 80 percent of the cases, a single advertisement will cost around €100,000 per page. This tool is providing substantial savings which have an immediate impact on the hiring manager's budget,” explains Picavet-Verburg.

It takes HR staff around two months to become comfortable with the Taleo system, which is where Cora Heijnen's subject expertise helps. She works with HR staff in different locations, helping with permissions and access management, defining different levels of user involvement, and giving colleagues the benefits of the four years of valuable experience she has accrued by working with the Taleo system.

Both Heijnen and Picavet-Verburg agree: “As HR people, we're very proud of using Taleo. We appreciate the system every day as it allows us to do much more. We're very positive, and in our daily working lives, we find that this is a great system.”

#### **Creating Local Value**

The Taleo Enterprise Edition has six key components: Taleo Professional, Taleo Hourly, Taleo Agency, Taleo Workforce Mobility, Taleo Compliance, and Taleo Campus. Taleo offers a completely integrated solution for managing all enterprise workforce logistics to eliminate process defects, drive better quality hires, increase consistency, and produce efficiencies that enhance organizational value.

HR staff in Dow's Terneuzen offices appreciate this automated staffing solution for their process workflow, 24/7 service and support, easily configurable applicant tracking software, support for internal job opening possibilities, and easily reflecting Dow's brand and image in the job portal section of the company's website. It's changed the appreciation of their own jobs, too - they are now seen as professional advisors rather than HR administrators.