

# Success lessons, Paul Danneels, CIO, VDAB, winner of the 2015 European CIO of the Year Award



Stephen.Ibaraki Microsoft MVP 15 Jun 2015 1:19 PM 0

I am reporting live from the field as noted in these series of daily articles:

[Journal: NYC, Pennsylvania, Geneva, Brussels-CIO CITY, Amsterdam, Paris](#)

[Success lessons from Mattias Ulbrich, CIO, Audi AG, EU CIO of the Year](#) (large enterprise)

[Success lessons, Piera Fasoli, CIO of Gruppo HERA, Italy, winner of the 2015 European CIO of the Year Award](#) (public sector)

[Success lessons, Jean-Luc Martino, CIO, Raiffeisen Banque, Luxembourg, winner of the 2015 European CIO of the Year Award](#) (medium enterprise)

This is the next article in the series:

[Success lessons, Paul Danneels, CIO, VDAB, Belgium, winner of the 2015 European CIO of the Year Award](#) (public sector)

In this [video captured at CIO CITY](#), I overview what the EU CIO of the Year Winners embodied having chaired the panel session with the EU CIO of the Year winners.

**Quoting from the CIO CITY 2015 Digital Leadership Report by Nils Olaya Fonstad and Frederic De Meyer and discussed in the panel session with the EU CIO of the Year winners:**

## Paul Danneels, CIO, VDAB

Category: Public Sector

Activity: Official employment agency for the region of Flanders

Turnover (budget) (EUR): 0,67B €

Employees (FTE): 4700

## About the IT division

Full Time Equivalents: 70

% of Total IT Budget from last year spent on:

Operations and Maintenance: 70%

New Application Development: 30%

## A selection of recent accomplishments

· Installed a business disruption lab to enhance the agility of VDAB and to harness the possibilities of co-creation for bringing new services to the market. The lab has 6 guiding principles: 1) from digital support to digital first; 2) from service provisioning to ecosystems; 3) from offering services to coordinating service journeys; 4) from 'have to' partners to 'want to' partnerships; 5) from traditional planning to agility and 6) from 'ad hoc' initiatives to continuous development of organizational capabilities. This outside-in approach has led to the development of specific apps to help school-leavers land their first job effectively. By a smart use of the ecosystem these apps are delivered to 70,000 youngsters with a minimum of budget and employees.

· Moved open government data into open job-matching services of the VDAB, which is recognized as a best practice by the International Public Employment Services. The rule-based matching engine consists of an in-memory database of 3 million search objects allowing up to 50 matching requests per second with a response time of 17-20 milliseconds/matching search. This has made incremental services possible such as competence based matching, online assistance to suggest vacancy improvements and advanced CV-based matching. This tool is integrated with private interim-offices applications, and adopted by the employment agency in Malta. Other European countries have shown great interest in adopting this tool as well.

· Established an Agile Software Development Factory consisting of 100 people in 8 teams. The SAFE framework is now applied on all development and maintenance activities throughout the organization. Priorities are set in common agreement with business owners, who work next to each other. Instead of yearly planning VDAB now runs on quarterly releases with 2-week sprints starting on Tuesdays.

## A selection of key lessons and advice

· *Develop the capabilities to include smaller, specialized providers in your sourcing portfolio instead of exclusively working with global players.* Multi-sourcing with smaller, specialized providers has worked well for VDAB. Not only has it enabled a better monitoring of improvements, overall it has also led to around 25% savings on the total contract volume. Though this needs some organizational shift as well, each contract is monitored and managed by a dedicated service delivery manager, headed by an end service delivery manager.

· *Help the CEO become a leader of digital innovations.* The vital role IT plays in the innovation efforts of VDAB undoubtedly has to do with the particular attention its CEO is bringing to technological developments within his organization. This close partnership between CEO and CIO has permitted to leverage the potential of IT as a business innovation enabler to a maximum.

· *Foster synergies across projects.* Danneels hosts a two-day planning exercise, where participants look at the requirements and needs across multiple projects. "This has helped to foster a culture where the bigger objective of what the IT team is doing is constantly focused on and, hence, deeply understood."

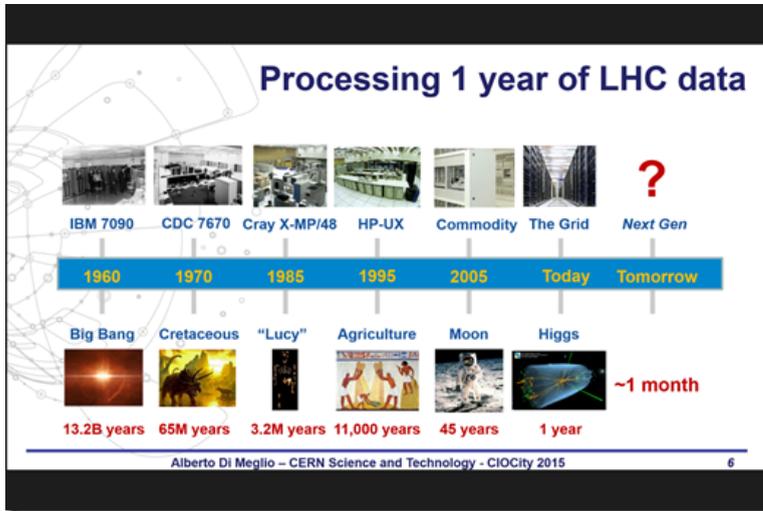
## Quote

"I give my team as much responsibility as possible so that they can take ownership and make change happen."

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The [CIO CITY Summit](#) has a series of very fine speakers:

Director of CERN Openlab [Alberto Di Meglio](#) provided an interesting perspective of the advances in technology in his presentation:



Here are [videos from the CIO CITY event](#).

Earlier, I had a [long discussion with the founder of CIONET, Hendrik Deckers](#). CIONET is the largest community of IT executives in Europe with reach into Asia, South America and now North America. Bringing together more than 5000 CIOs, CTOs and IT directors from wide-ranging sectors, cultures, academic backgrounds and generations, CIONET's membership represents an impressive body of expertise in IT management. CIONET's mission is to feed and develop that expertise by providing top-level IT executives with the resources they need to realise their full potential.

Here is an added earlier chat with Frits Bussemaker Program Director, Partner and Liaison International Relations CIONET: <http://blogs.technet.com/b/cdnexperts/archive/2012/07/09/chat-with-frits-bussemaker-cionet-partner-founding-top-global-leader.aspx>

More information about CIONET can be found at [www.cionet.com](http://www.cionet.com)

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