TESTIMONIALS
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Ten good reasons to work with Passwerk

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**Swiftness**
Thanks to the excellent match between the natural talents of our test engineers and the assignments for which they are committed, Pass workers work at an above-average pace. Our test engineers also work faster by dint of the fact that they are less likely to engage in chit chat about the weather and this and the other with their colleagues.

**Price/quality ratio**
Passwerk’s services are made available at a market compliant price/quality ratio. Customers may rest safe in the knowledge that the services provided bring quality at all times, at a market-compliant and transparent price. At all times, Passwerk endeavours to cater to the customer’s needs in a duly effective and efficient manner. Passwerk is committed to developing partnerships with its customers, to ensure the services provided are geared and adjusted to the customer’s requirements to optimum effect. By the same token, this enables us to consistently focus on stepping up the desired level of know-how and expertise of the test engineers, thereby systematically optimising the quality of the services rendered.

**Unique solution**
Thanks to their exceptional skills, unique people turn in peak performance. The innate qualities of Passwerk’s test engineers ensure that the assignments entrusted to them are executed successfully within the space of time agreed. Their exceptional eye for detail, their meticulousness, structured approach, analytical mindset, ability to concentrate, good memory, strong focus of attention, and sense of perseverance are just some of the qualities that make them unique and exceptional testers.

**Complementarity**
Thanks to the commitment of the Pass workers, our customers’ members of staff can concentrate on handling their core duties. The test assignments, which are usually not part of their area of interest and the results of which are crucial to enable the business to continue to deliver optimum services, are methodically and professionally carried out by experts under their supervision. In practice, it ap-
pears that the colleagues of the Pass workers are very concretely aware of and duly rate the added value and complementarity they bring.

**Experts**
The Pass workers are like a duck in water in the test environment they work in. The activities they perform are entirely in keeping with their own innate areas of interest and experience. As a result, they are greatly interested in these activities, which means they quickly devote themselves entirely to the applications they are testing. After a while, they go on to become true experts who often know the ins and outs of the application and its concomitant peculiarities like no other. Often, their feedback goes much further than what is asked of them as part of the test assignment and the test events.

**Professionalism**
The test engineers are selected with the utmost care from candidates who come forward of their own accord. Just 20 to 30 % of candidates are allowed to take up duties with one of our customers. After they are recruited, they are given a tailored training course that enables them to pass the exam and to obtain the ISTQB certificate. After they have completed their training as a test engineer, they are familiarised with true to life situations in a simulation environment. Before they are assigned to a customer, technical test experts first conduct a technical content analysis, with the job coaches mapping out the work environment to enable us to commit the best suited tester. During the assignment, the job coaches are on hand to offer the test engineers a permanent fall-back position, whilst making sure they are given appropriate support to allow the test engineers to concentrate on getting the job done and achieving the targets set out. As nothing is left to chance, the approach and the results are rated as highly professional by our customers.

**Added social value**
By committing Pass workers, our customers are showing they are alive to the added social value offered by Passwerk. Obviously our customers first sit down to carefully assess if they are looking at the right price/quality ratio, but they attach equal importance to the social relevance of our business.

**Continuity**
Passwerk has sufficient human resources of its own in place to ensure continuity of service. In addition thereto however, we can always call on the services of additional testers, courtesy of our close collaboration with M2Q (Cronos Group).

As such, Passwerk – together with its two partners – is able to vouch optimum and guaranteed results. In the awareness that there is a considerable degree of turnover in the post of executive test engineers, it is well worth calling on the services of specialist outside testers who ensure continuity of service.

**Total solution**
As a CVBA met sociaal oogmerk (Co-operative Company with Limited Liability with a social purpose), Passwerk has easy access to specialist human resources at M2Q (Cronos Group). If our customers so wish, this enables us to commit supplementary test co-ordinators or test managers who work for our partner, so that they can handle the test co-ordination or provide input and advice on the test ap-
proach and strategy as a whole. Courtesy of our privileged relations with this partner, we also have very easy access to the Cronos know-how. This also enables us to stage training courses for our test engineers at short notice in consideration of specific needs the customer may have as part of a specific assignment. Thanks to the test know-how in place with our partner, we are also able to advise on the use of specific test management or test automation tools.

Positive dynamic

Our customers testify to the fact that our test engineers not only turn in results that are of an exceptional quality level, with their presence in the team, they prove on the ground that diversity brings added value in a very natural way. The presence of Pass workers on the shop floor considerably changes the way the customer’s regular staff reflect on certain elements of their own lives. Often, things are seen in their true proportion, enabling people to put things into perspective.

These are just the first ten reasons to consider hitching up with Passwerk

Undoubtedly, our flexibility in terms of deployability too is likely to have a positive impact on the decision to call on our services. The opportunity to be able to commit temporary extra test resources or attract quality test resources without incurring payroll debts are added strong suits. In a practical sense however, it turns out that there is absolutely no grounds for having cold feet. Our satisfied customers are proof positive.
Testimonial Belfius: Belfius teams up with Passwerk

Belfius is a locally-centred banking and insurance group with a number of strong fundamentals:

1) A stable basis as an autonomous banking and insurance group whose shares are not quoted on the stock market;

2) More than 50 years' experience as the local bank and insurer for 4 million private individuals, liberal professions, self-employed people and companies;

3) 150 years' experience as a partner in the public and social sectors.

An important point for Belfius is that it can demonstrate its added value for society. Belfius started a special partnership with Passwerk in mid-September. Since then three members of the Passwerk staff have joined the test teams in Brussels for electronic banking applications. The story of teamwork that leads to success! Speaking is Gert Vanhaecht, Head of IT Distribution Channels, CRM & Development Architecture in the ICT management of Belfius Bank.
Striving for quality by deploying the right expertise

Applications for electronic banking are devised in the department where Passwerk is active. "Those applications are used by our customers. So we are aiming for perfect quality. The only way to achieve this is to ensure that the applications are thoroughly tested before being launched," says Gert. The external conditions are becoming ever more extensive and complex. For example, Internet banking is supported on a whole series of different operating systems, browsers, and even then on various versions of them. If we look at mobile banking, the quality of the mobile apps must be guaranteed on a whole series of Apple and Android devices. And in the future the Windows 8 platform will certainly be in the picture. So tests on dozens of smartphones and tablets will have to be repeated, always with the same attention and accuracy. "Given the ever more extensive testing and the specific expertise needed for it, we started looking for a structural solution. We scanned the market, and that's how we came into contact with Passwerk. After a thorough study - during which we went to the Federal Government Department of the Economy, among others - we came to the clear conclusion that collaboration with Passwerk was more than logical," Gert relates.

Special qualities and socially relevant

Belfius confirmed that the expected top service is inherent in the specific talents of people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. The people at Passwerk are powerful logical and analytical thinkers. They have an eye for detail and can concentrate intensively even in repetitive work. So an assignment such as software testing is ideally suited to them.

"Testing is an expertise in itself," says Gert. "With their outstanding qualities and knowledge, the people at Passwerk are making great strides in the production of our flagships, Belfius Direct Mobile 2.0 and Belfius Free Time, red-hot applications that are now on display in the online shops of Apple and Google." Belfius noticed from the start that colleagues at Passwerk knew how to use ASD positively. The bank sees it as a real talent that they have, for which those people must be given extra appreciation. Gert makes no bones about it: "Our motivation must be entirely based on our quest for expertise and the aim for quality in our applications. The fact that this can be combined with assuming our social role is a great bonus, and certainly played a major part in the decision-making process."
Guidance is needed

Once the collaboration was confirmed, a preparatory phase began in which the job coaches of Passwerk played a key role. A number of staff members from Gert’s department were selected as the primary point of contact for the new staff to start working. Gert: “This added an extra dimension to the job of those staff members. So they were very enthusiastic right from the start about being able to look after the people from Passwerk. They surround them with the attention and care they need, and keep an eye on their stress levels, together with the job coaches. This does those people credit.” Thus, Sofie De Raes and Sofie Vekeman were the first to be familiarised with the ASD problem by Femke and Katelijne, who guide and assist the Belfius Passwerk staff. After that, the entire department and a number of other interested people in the bank became involved. During a packed info session, Femke explained what ASD meant exactly, how best to deal with people with ASD, and what the social environment of those people looks like. That session only increased the enthusiasm of the Belfius teams even more. “From little things we can indeed see that these people are, for example, more susceptible to external stimuli than others. Certainly at the beginning we avoided shaking hands, because than can disturb some of them. The Passwerk people have a separate workstation, their desk telephones are disconnected, they can work with a headphone. If there is a fire drill, Hilde Meere, the responsible Team Manager, is warned in advance and she guides the Passwerk guys to the exit beforehand,” Gert relates. The Belfius staff also confirm that it is sometimes troublesome to make adjustments to agreements that have already been made. Modifications have to be fitted in correctly and passed on in good time. In concrete terms, that might for example involve priorities that suddenly change or test data that are not available. To avoid surprises, a short harmonisation meeting is held every day. As regards communication, metaphors are best avoided and the Belfius staff have been careful from the start to be very direct, which soon won them trust and confidence as well. Because people with ASD are inclined to take things very literally. The question "Shall we go for a drink?" can, for example, be met with the answer "No, I’m not thirsty..." Gert: "But we are mindful of that. And the job coaches are always on hand if little problems crop up. And in any case, they regularly come along to Brussels for a chat with the "internal coaches" and the Passwerk people themselves. Without this support and internal guidance, the collaboration could never result in success."

Integration

The Passwerk people are really appreciated for the work they do by the other staff. They feel that too. Thus the project leaders are already coming to ask whether the Passwerk guys can do their tests. That goes without saying! It also gives an extra dynamic to the workplace. People are confronted with colleagues who are "different" and begin to look at reality in a new way to a certain extent. And they can see that ASD can bring with it a number of decided advantages. The integration of Bert, Kristiaan and, since the beginning of January, Marjan is going very smoothly. Recently, a modest drink was organised to celebrate the success of the launch of the new Belfius Mobile App. Bert was there. During the last train strike, Kristiaan did carpooling with one of the Belfius colleagues. This would never have happened if those people did not feel accepted.
The collaboration is a success

Gert concludes as follows: "The staff of Passwerk are genuinely part of this and tell us that they feel very happy with us. It was clear from the start that collaboration with Passwerk was going to be rewarding. The staff of Passwerk contribute to the positive dynamic in our team and provide top quality." I personally find it delightful that an initiative like this is possible at Belfius - and what's more, that it is carried to the highest level in the firm and actively supported."
Testimonial Smals

With more than 1,700 employees, the non-profit firm of Smals is one of the biggest ICT service organisations in our country. Under their motto 'ICT for society', the focus is on ICT support for the public institutions of social security and health-care. The core activities of Smals are development and evolutionary maintenance of customised software applications. Of course, there is an important place here for software testing.

Half a year ago, Smals selected Passwerk to complete a test programme for an application for the State Social Security organisation. From the Smals site in Ghent, Jimmy - tester and Passwerk staff member - works closely with the project team.

"We decided not to have the functional tests for this project done by the analysts or to go and automate them," explains project leader Thomas De Rycke. "After all, you have to be able to set aside sufficient time for your analysts, while the availability of the analysts for this project was a real bottleneck. So for this reason the choice of Passwerk was logical."

Profitable choice

A thorough analysis was done before selecting Passwerk. "We decided to go for them on the basis of a SWOT analysis," says Thomas De Rycke. Smals knew the strong points of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder, such as high precision, concentration and motivation in repetitive testing. On the other hand, their business and legal knowledge is of course not the same as that of an experienced analyst or tester who has already been working for years in social security. "But we didn't expect that from Passwerk. We really got what Passwerk promised us." "I'd like to emphasise that our choice must primarily be profitable for the project," says Thomas De Rycke. "So we don't look at Jim-
my as someone special. The main thing is that he carries out the scheduled tests well, and that was certainly the case. The fact that he also got on well with his colleagues was much appreciated."
"Knowing what we know now, would we do it again? Sure," he opines. "In fact it's more than likely there will be another project."

Social contact
For people with ASD you can't just assume they will make social contacts. So Passwerk provides guidance and recommendations for the client. Thus, one colleague always acts as the contact person - for Jimmy, that's Dirk Joye, test coordinator on the project. "We did things that way at Passwerk's request. But actually, contact with Jimmy seems to be going just fine. Other colleagues regularly talk to him directly about work-related matters, too," he recounts. There are regular group times, like when the team goes out for a bite to eat together. "Jimmy regularly goes out to eat with the others. He feels he's part of the group, which I think is extremely important," Dirk Joye continues. "He won't often join in with all sorts of social talk. But I do see him smiling when one of the colleagues tells a joke. I really have the impression that Jimmy feels happy here. That's not something we can just assume. I think we have a team with a really open culture." "I have never found Jimmy's social skills to be a limitation. I have the feeling that he has really been embraced by the team," Thomas De Rycke also thinks.

Bright for his age
At the age of 21, Jimmy is far and away the youngest in the workplace. But this doesn't seem to widen the gap with his colleagues. "Does it matter whether someone is 21 or 51? For me, a tester is a tester. Generally speaking, we are extremely satisfied with what Jimmy does. Keep up the good work!" says Thomas De Rycke. Jimmy has gradually expanded his work from purely operational tests to related tasks. "So there's a functional databank with a number of datasets. And Jimmy manages that too," Dirk Joye relates. "And during the course of the project Jimmy learned to make test cases himself, among other things by processing test data in XML and by learning about TestLink, our soft-
We have been working for nearly nine months with Passwerk now, the organisation that finds jobs for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Forget about Dustin Hoffman in Rainman, but think instead of Einstein or Darwin and other illustrious predecessors with whom the borderline between being socially handicapped and being a genius was razor-thin. Precise and extremely thorough, highly focussed and with an eye for the smallest detail - these are just a few of the characteristics of people with ASD. Research shows that more people with ASD are to be found around places like Cambridge and Silicon Valley, which perform magic tricks with technology and data. At AXA, we are cautiously taking the first steps in IBT³, the IT and Business Transformation department. And that experience is good. Very good - according to a recent survey.

"It's part of our corporate culture to help people with a handicap and give them opportunities," says Ingrid Anthonissen, Manager of the Delivery Center Testing Bank. "In this case there is even a win-win situation. For the WEVOL project, where we provide a new PC with Windows 7 and the latest Internet Explorer browser for all internal AXA staff, we have to test whether all our applications keep working. It is time-consuming precision work in which people have to look for differences between two apparently similar situations. A few years ago we already had a pilot project going because Els Blaton, our former Head of IT and Business Transformation, believed very strongly in this kind of project. We had already worked successfully with AXA in the past, but that was a long time ago.

Johan Cappaert, Test coordinator for the WEVOL project and himself a person with ASD was immediately sold on the idea of bringing in people from Passwerk. "Jelle joined my team in September 2011. Since we were delighted with his work and efforts, we asked Passwerk to send us a second person. So it was that Roeland joined the team in December. Working for a giant like AXA has its advantages and disadvantages. The good thing is that you can learn lots of new things. The not-so-good thing is that it's not always easy to find the right people within the company to ask for information about a particular application. People tend to lose their way in the huge structure that AXA is. Fortunately, here we can count on the help of Chantal Van Herck, Team Leader DCT, who helps in case of specific problems. Despite the fact that our little club of three consists entirely of people with ASD, close cooperation can by no means be assumed. We are three different individuals, and that fact that all three of us have ASD does perhaps bring us a bit closer to one another, but does not alter the fact that each of us chooses to take his own path. Our minds and personalities are very different - loners in the true sense of the word. That doesn't cause too many problems, so long as the work is clear-cut and we are not too dependent on information from outside. Give us an application to be tested, and we'll set to work. The way people work at AXA isn't always suited to people with ASD. To a large extent, people make time for consultation and explanation of what has to be done. For example, the whiteboard sessions don't always have the desired effect, because people only discuss the formal aspects of the work (due dates, planning, reporting, estimates, man-days,
high-level test scenarios, etc.). The matter of content never comes up. What's more, the activity around the whiteboard is a group event, and that's precisely what people with ASD have difficulty with. Nevertheless, we succeed in finding a place that works for everybody involved. We know our place, complete our tasks and that sometimes has advantages, too. Jelle, Roeland and I prefer to do the work itself rather than talk about it." Jelle opines: "If, over the last six months, we had stuck to the actual work and not held discussions about it, it would have been done in one month. That speaks volumes!"

It is a given that AXA attaches great value to sustainable commerce, supports diversity and offers opportunities. So working with Passwerk fits in with that philosophy, but would never have been possible without the outstanding support of Els Blaton and her management team. We all win by deploying the skills of people with ASD in the Test team of IBT2. Defects are specifically sought and quickly found (nearly 500 up till now). People with ASD process information in quite a different way from those without it, and are little inclined to fanciful notions. Everything is concrete and absolute. So, sayings and proverbs mean little to them. But making analyses is just their cup of tea. They look at everything, store it, catalogue it and work in a highly structured way, which means that defects can be found faster and solved better.

As far as AXA is concerned, working with Passwerk is highly recommended. The quality of the work done is excellent and the Passwerk people are excellently helped and supported by Passwerk's job coaches, who regularly come along to make little suggestions about how the working environment could be adapted to the needs of people with ASD. At the moment, a third person is being sought from Passwerk to work for AXA. There is no finer proof that we are satisfied.

**AXA in Belgium**

Three million customers rely on AXA for their insurance and banking products, or one family in two. For this reason, AXA works with 5,000 insurance brokers and 920 independent bank agents, and employs more than 5,000 people. In 2011 AXA Belgium made a turnover of €4.2 billion.
CM is comprised of the organisation’s central headquarters in Brussels and nineteen regional mutual health insurance societies up and down the country. As a whole, the organisation employs 6,000 members of staff.

Although a lot of people will chiefly be familiar with CM as the organisation that reimburses medical bills, CM is more than just an insurance society. CM also offers its members a comprehensive and contemporary range of services and benefits. In addition, it is also a dynamic social movement that numbers some 70,000 volunteer workers. CM’s operations are hinged around values that include solidarity, respect for persons and attentiveness to others, with particular reference to the most vulnerable people in society. Home to 4.5 million members, CM is the country’s largest mutual health insurance society.

**CM vs. Passwerk**

Setting out from CM’s social ethos, we thought it would be expedient to work with Passwerk.

Our organisation’s mission is particularly clear in this respect: ‘Its operation is hinged around values such as solidarity, respect for persons and attentiveness to others, with particular reference to the most vulnerable people in society’. Passwerk employee Dirk was posted to CM’s ICT department, which numbers some 300 staff.

We had been looking for the right test profiles to join our team for some time already. That is how we got in touch with Passwerk and Dirk ended up joining us as a Test Engineer. ‘The first time I heard about the Passwerk scheme, I was immediately taken by what they do. As must be the case for many user organisations, there was some reticence on our part at the outset, but given our own values and the social ethos of our organisation, Passwerk continued to show up on our radar. In 2010, we set up a joint scheme and our experience with Passwerk and Dirk in particular has been nothing but positive,’ explains Erik van Overloop, IT Assistant-Manager.

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The Brussels head office of the National Association of Christian Mutual Health Insurance Societies
Working with Dirk

Our Pass worker Dirk started out with us in early 2010 and is now on his third project. His first project was testing an application in the field of industrial accidents for which he worked closely with one of our Test Engineers, Chu Chi How. Chu Chi How felt that being allowed to work with Dirk lent added value to his job. Dirk has a very pleasant manner and soon adjusted to his environment.

A stroke of good luck for our organisation is the fact that Dirk is bilingual (Dutch/French), which means language is not a barrier. Working with a Pass worker requires a clear framework to be in place. Which means an unambiguous and stable environment in which the Pass worker is able to do his or her job. A clear identification of what Dirk’s duties were and how he was supposed to carry them out was required to enable him to work to his full potential. The industrial accident project was well documented and under control, which only benefitted the way Dirk was able to perform. Once we had a duly pegged out framework in place, Dirk was very meticulous, sedulous and detailed in the way he went about his duties. He truly excelled himself. Chi How: ‘He spotted things we failed to notice. He brought a strong focus of attention, with a keen eye for detail.’ The few odd times there was no framework, Dirk had problems carrying out his assignments. Stressful situations and uncertainties are best avoided. As soon as we were wise to this, we were able to attune to his needs.

Dirk was also very strict: if something did not work, it did not work and he was unafraid to say so. Or, if he saw room for improvement, he indicated this too. Which is definitely an added value to an organisation such as ours, which, amongst other things, handles the pay-out of benefits to our members. If something goes wrong when an application goes operational, this immediately impacts on a wide number of people.

Not all of CM’s IT projects are such that a Pass worker could be involved, if only by dint of the fact that elements such as flexibility, a due technical background and skills in seeking out information are sometimes required from the testers concerned. Set deadlines and potential delays also see our testers facing stressful situations, which is best avoided for Pass workers.

Dirk and Chu Chi How would sit down together twice a day. In the morning to go through the things that needed to be handled that day, and in the evening to look at the results together. Follow-up and the odd remedial action were required. To Chu Chi How, coaching Dirk came on top of his regular duties, but he only has positive things to say. He feels that coaching Pass worker Dirk gave added value to his job. Chu Chi How was pleased with the work handled by Dirk. As an organisation, we also welcome our collaboration with Passwerk: provided the right conditions are in place, the contribution made by a Pass worker brings great added value.
Testimonial Anubex

Anubex NV operates on the ICT market and specialises in the automated migration of legacy systems to target systems.

The company was set up in 1988 and today has a 25-strong workforce, twenty of whom are based in Belgium and five in Israel. After years of successful experience with major customers in various parts of the world (including Citibank in fifteen countries across four different continents, the Ministries of Finance of Belgium and France, AON in the United Kingdom and Canada, and the National Association of Christian Mutual Health Insurance Societies in Belgium), Anubex is ready to take on the responsibility for major migration projects that may involve various components, including:

- Hardware platforms, from Mainframe to a Linux/Unix/Windows environment for instance;
- Development environments and programming languages, from 4GL languages to Object-Oriented languages for instance;
- Databases, from non-relational (such as IDMS and Adabas) to relational (such as Oracle, SQL Server and DB2) for instance, as well as
- User interfaces

For the past six months or so, Kris Ceuppens has been coaching a Passwerk worker. He is happy to offer a word of explanation.

Our test engineer at work at Anubex

For the past six months or so, Kris Ceuppens has been coaching a Passwerk worker. He is happy to offer a word of explanation.

Our experience: concrete analyses and tests are performed swiftly and accurately.

Further to a positive trial project at the tail end of 2010, our Pass worker has been working with us since early 2011.

In joint consultation with Passwerk, we decided on this approach because the duties we had in mind went beyond strictly testing applications. We were looking to assign the Pass worker to conduct the migrations (including any manual duties involved) as well as to handle the detailed technical problem analyses. Which meant we needed someone who has excellent computer skills and solid logical reasoning skills.

To be honest, it took us a little longer to integrate our Passwerk member of staff on a fully produc-
tive basis than we had originally bargained for.

This longer induction period was largely due to the fact that we had to ask our various project directors to register the Pass worker and assign him to the project team handling the functional tests where he could fully focus on these duties. Another important element was having to explain the various tools developed by Anubex that are used in these duties, including the Automated Testing Framework. Fortunately, this is all behind us now and we are seeing matters making fast progress much to the satisfaction of everybody involved.

A peek into the near future

As we are currently handling several major projects in parallel, each with a significant aspect being interactively and functionally tested, we are even considering calling on the services of a second Passwerk member of staff to enable us to handle the large volume of test and analysis work and meet the tight deadlines.

As soon as this has been decided, the second Pass worker is certain to have the benefit that the path has already been smoothed and our project director will be keen to include the new Passwerk colleague in the project team without delay. We are certainly looking forward to our continued collaboration.

Kris Ceuppens, Business Unit Manager
Pass worker is just as reliable as DNS

DNS stands for Domain Name System. DNS sees to it that Internet users manage to find Google among the millions of web servers and the even greater number of websites, and do not end up landing on the wrong page. This transmutation takes place in every transparency to the Internet surfer, not to mention at breakneck speed to boot.

DNS is every bit as important to the Internet as electrical power is to the citizen. But in the same way as it became necessary to upgrade the electricity infrastructure from 110 volts to 220 volts, DNS too sometimes needs an upgrade. These upgrades need to be sedulously prepared and performed and all domain names with related web server addresses need to be 100 percent accurate. If not, the websites are simply no longer available.

The FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister administers the domain names for the federal government. The infrastructure to maintain this administration was in need of an upgrade. Because of an incompatibility between the old and the new system, it was impossible to copy all the information in an accurate and/or automated manner in full. Which was when Passwerk came to mind as the best placed service provider to handle this precision work. Especially as the entire operation had to be performed quickly as well as being 100 percent accurate. No mean feat when you consider that we are talking several thousands of domain names, aliases and web server addresses.

Passwerk felt Joeri was up to the task in hand. The first day, escorted by two friendly ladies, Joeri called round to go through the entire project with us. We gave Joeri’s on-site coach the necessary information, explained to Joeri what his duties would entail exactly, and what the ultimate aim of the exercise was. We also told the Passwerk team how important this project was to the government, as the sites would need to remain available online without interruption. We showed Joeri the application he would be using for the data migration and the next day he was already able to perform his duties on a self-reliant basis.

The swiftness with which he managed to work his way through this huge amount of adaptations was remarkable: in just a few days’ time, he had gone through all the names and addresses, and had entered, adapted and linked them. He even detected a number of inconsistencies among the several thousands of names he had entered previously.

The entire upgrade was flawlessly performed in a duly transparent manner, thanks to Joeri’s punctilious work, without a single government site going offline and becoming unavailable.

Well done, Joeri! Congratulations and our sincere thanks. We look forward to calling on your services again in the future.

Leslie Goossens, expert at the FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister
Mark Dillen, Adviser-general FPS Chancellery of the Prime Minister
Yves Vander Auwera, ICT Shared Services Director
Testimonial Itineris

ITINERIS NV operates on the ICT consultancy market and specialises in the implementation of IT projects for utility companies. With a workforce of 100 staff, the company administers projects for energy, distribution and water companies in Belgium, The Netherlands and beyond.

Frederik and Wim, ITINERIS colleagues and the coaches of 2 Passwerk workers are happy to provide chapter and verse on the collaboration between Passwerk and Itineris.

Our experience: a perfect quality assurance resource

For quite some time now, Itineris has been looking for testers to check the quality of our IT applications. Given the shortage on the labour market however, we are struggling to find the right profiles. We had previously had positive experiences with Passwerk and so, as an organisation, we decided to call on the services of Passwerk and its workers on a structural basis. This soon saw us being presented to 2 Passwerk staff who work in our organisation today.

These two staff members work on projects of a certain scope. Amongst other things, they are part of the WSI product team for the Vlaamse Maatschappij voor Watervoorziening (VMW) (Flemish Water Supply Company) and Antwerpse Water Werken (AWW) (Antwerp Water Works). The aim of this product implementation team is to provide the Flemish water companies with the very latest technology available in the area of ERP solutions. Within the scope of this project, the Passwerk staff members ensure the quality of the project and of the work delivered by performing tests on an ongoing basis.

Based on our recent experience, we are delighted to report that concrete and standardised duties, such as regression tests, are performed very swiftly, meticulously and incredibly quickly by the Passwerk workers. What is more, the quality of work delivered exceeds the average level we find on the market. Some duties require consultation, a sense of initiative and self-reliance. We noticed that these duties were a little more problematic. The good news is that these duties are certainly not beyond the realm of what is possible. The deciding factor for the chances of success of this type of duties is the coaching that is offered by the user organisation. Which can weigh down a little on the coach(es) of the Passwerk staff, as these people often take on these duties in addition to their own everyday jobs.

A great exercise!

‘Boasting’ a Passwerk worker is a great exercise for the company as a whole, for the in-house staff who assume the task of coaching the Passwerk worker and for the Passwerk worker himself.

All three parties are taken out of their comfort zone and are required to adapt to the situation.

As a young and dynamic business, it is anything but a matter of fact assignment for us to assume this new role and to show our social commitment. Especially when you look at the markets in which we operate as a business: energy, water and distribution companies. In addition, as an IT consultancy business, we are required to contend with tight deadlines, major projects and demanding custom-
ers.

Amongst other things, these customers think nothing of demanding a certain degree of flexibility. Given Passwerk’s activity radius this was not an easy combination for us.

Even though the investment on the part of the company organisation is fairly considerable (coaching/adjusting one’s own work routines, etc.) and this sometimes weighs down on the initial level of return, we are happy with our 2 Passwerk colleagues. Their presence enables us to relieve our regular members of staff from some of their duties, thereby reducing the pressure of work.

The future and continued collaboration ...

For our organisation, the presence of a Passwerk worker is fairly new and we still need to grow into our role as an organisation, but we are certainly open to continuing our experience with Passwerk.

As an organisation, we would also like to offer Passwerk a tip on coaching on the ground ... At Itineris, we think it might be a good idea for Passwerk to also be in attendance on the shop floor.

This is the only way for Passwerk to gain a proper understanding of the culture and philosophy of a given company organisation, whilst sampling the day-to-day operational situation. This is certain to enable Passwerk, its workers and our own organisation to act in even better response to one other, which in turn will only act to strengthen our collaboration in the future.
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At NISSE, a new test methodology was introduced as we were looking to optimise the quality of the business-specific applications. In due course, we were eager to not only systematically try out all new applications, but also retest important applications with each major upgrade or new version to be released. This method of operation, especially compiling test scripts – and the execution thereof – is particularly labour-intensive and we currently do not have a sufficient number of in-house staff to fully handle this by ourselves,’ explains IT manager Patrick Vanderbauwede. ‘Which is why we set out in search of an external partner who was able to commit the right people to this end. We soon felt Passwerk to be the best choice.’ To which business analyst Caecilia Soetlana Sendjaja goes on to add: ‘It soon became clear to us that, by their very nature, people with autism spectrum disorder make excellent testers.’

‘As part of our company application, we initially started out with a single Pass worker. We enjoyed the collaboration so much that after a while, we posted a second Pass worker to the preparations of the .Net migration of the pension application. Both Pass workers compile test scripts. The start-up of the collaboration with the Pass workers was very swift to get under way. From the earliest stage, we made sure that they were able to get started in the most favourable conditions, in a quiet office. The other members of staff were prepared for their arrival by way of an information meeting on autism by one of the Passwerk job coaches,’ Patrick Vanderbauwede explains. ‘We also made sure we had a central contact in place within NISSE as well as
proper coaching. The result was well worth the effort.’

‘These coaching efforts produce satisfied members of staff who bring high productivity and come with an equal measure of motivation. To me, the Pass workers are highly capable people with a high sense of motivation and exceptional intelligence,’ Caecilia adds. ‘They work faster and with greater accuracy than people who do not have autism spectrum disorder. They are very quick on the uptake and they are highly motivated to constantly learn new things.’ ‘One thing to strike me,’ says Patrick, ‘is that the Pass workers are very focused, which means they virtually do not lose any time on things that are nothing to do with their job. They are also very reliable and punctual. It is safe to say that the duties for which they are committed are handled faster and more accurately than by most other IT staff.’

‘As far as I am concerned, the collaboration with Passwerk has at least three positive sides to it,’ Patrick offers. ‘First of all, there is the fact that we have additional staff available to us to perform specific testing-related duties. Secondly, there is the professionalism and commitment of the Pass workers and in third place, there are the rates adopted by Passwerk. The deployability of the Pass workers who joined us surpassed our initial expectations and is often on a broader level than we had expected. Our endeavour was also to work with motivated testers who were prepared to work as test engineers over a longer period of time. This expectation too has certainly been met.’

‘The commitment of the Pass workers also brings a highly positive dynamic to the shop floor,’ according to Caecilia. ‘The Pass workers excel at discovering contradictions and erroneous logic which sees them making an added contribution to the team. Having the Pass workers around also prompts us to improve the way we structure our own work and we are all more attentive to a clear allocation of roles and responsibilities. That too brings added internal value.’

‘We held out high expectations for our collaboration with Passwerk and these expectations have certainly been redeemed,’ Patrick Vanderbauwede concludes.
As stated before, the Passwerk activities are no longer solely confined to testing software. Our focus clearly continues to go out to the testing of software, but we are also available for other quality assurance assignments, such as data cleansing, data or text migration, compiling user manuals, data entry and interactive scanning. Below is the testimonial from De Ideale Woning (The Ideal Home) about the digitisation project of the case record files of prospective tenants, which Pass workers were assigned to over a number of months.

The project

As a social housing organisation, we deal with a large number of candidates looking to rent a social home. In order to apply for a social housing unit, candidate-tenants are required to fill in an application form to be handed in to De Ideale Woning, together with all manner of documents and certificates. In the intervening time too (i.e. the time spent waiting before a social home becomes available), new documents are frequently added (correspondence, composition of household, documents relating to relocation, etc.). Consequently, record files get bigger over the years, which also means they are frequently taken out of the filing cabinet and the binder to be consulted, which is obviously highly time-consuming.

When someone is working on any given file, it is unavailable to anyone else. Plus there is also the risk that record files are completely destroyed in case of a disaster. Which is why we decided to digitise our record files, some 7,400 in total. Scanning operations needed to be performed in a duly structured fashion. For starters, all staples needed to be removed and the documents needed to be sorted according to document type. To avoid documents from being scanned under the wrong file number, an interactive check against the name that was linked to the file number was required for every single document. In addition, all scanned record files had to be marked to avoid double scanning during the further course of the operation.

Project start

As the organisation’s own staff simply did not have the time to handle these extra duties, De Ideale Woning set out in search of a different solution. Through our chairman, Dirk de Kort, we were made aware of the fact that Passwerk has people with autism spectrum disorder available to also handle scanning duties. Further to an extensive presentation by Passwerk’s Dirk Rombaut, we decided to
run a trial scheme, involving two part-time Passwerk workers.

This was to be followed by an evaluation and we would decide whether or not we would continue working with Passwerk.

Before the Pass workers took up their duties, we were extensively informed by the job coaches of the limitations as well as the strengths of their people. Together, we discussed ways for us to adapt the work environment to their needs and requirements as best as possible. Which ultimately turned out to be no trouble at all. The scanner was set up in a small separate office, so the Pass workers could attend to their duties in a quiet and peaceful setting.

Assessment

As the start of the project coincided with the July and August holiday period, we also took on a number of motivated student workers. It soon emerged that the students struggled to maintain their concentration to keep performing this repetitive monotonous work for an entire day.

You will not be surprised to learn that the Pass workers’ level of productivity was nearly double that of the students! They went about their duties with absolute precision and consistency. Something which the job coaches had told us ahead of time. And it turned out to be true. Our own members of staff too, who were scanning the new case record files themselves by now, were simply astonished at the Pass workers’ pace. So, after comparing with a few more potential candidates, it was decided that Passwerk would be allowed to complete the remaining scanning operations.

Project accomplished

The project is now nearing completion. We are highly satisfied with the work performed by the Passwerk people. Their drive, patience and sense of motivation to handle this kind of work are a credit to them. Quite a few employees would do well to take a leaf out of their book. Passwerk is probably still something of an unknown quantity to a lot of businesses, but I am confident that for certain jobs, they positively bring added value.

*Geert Van Winkel, IT manager, De Ideale Woning*
AGIV uses Team Foundation Server 2010 as central information source for development project

The task of AGIV is to optimise the availability of geographical information in Flanders. The Flemish government commissioned AGIV to develop an IT system that provides access to the information needed for the e-service linked to the right of pre-emption on land sales. This online service will allow notaries to quickly check if there is a right of first pre-emption applicable to a plot of land that comes up for sale.

The IT department of AGIV asked Ordina to help with this project. The aim is optimal integration, so AGIV always works with Microsoft technology. Besides Visual Studio and .NET, Team Foundation Server is also being used for the project.

Team Foundation Server serves as a central source of information where all the parties concerned can view the correct information and the current state of affairs. In this way, communication is very efficient and AGIV and Ordina can monitor the project together. Ordina is doing the software testing with the help of Passwerk, working with people with autism spectrum disorder. As a result, the quality of the final result is even better.
**solution**

Ordina is developing the new application, in consultation with AGIV, with the help of Visual Studio and .NET. Moreover, the project is also using Team Foundation Server as the central information source. The software testing is being done by BusinessHunters, which employs people with autism spectrum disorder.

**benefits**

- Open technology
- Always have access to up-to-date information
- Smooth communication
- Efficient project monitoring
- Good integration in the existing environment
- End result of a high standard

**software & services**

- Visual Studio Team Foundation Server

**Developer Tools**

- Visual Studio .NET
- Visual Studio 2010

**Windows**

**Desktop Applications**

**Business Solutions**

**Microsoft Services**

**Microsoft Technologies**

**Microsoft Security**

AGIV (Agency for Geographical Information in Flanders) is a government organisation that manages and provides access to geographical data and geographical information systems (GIS) in Flanders. This is happening increasingly via online applications. Recently AGIV was commissioned by the Flemish government to develop such an application. For this it used the help of Visual Studio 2010, the .NET Framework and Team Foundation Server 2010.

**Simplifying administration**

“The Flemish Land Agency is developing an e-service for notaries linked to the right of pre-emption on land sales,” says Joef Robbrecht, manager for software architecture and development at AGIV. “We received an assignment to provide a web service alongside the e-service to support the administrative processes relating to the right of pre-emption by making public the right of pre-emption that applies to a plot of land. On top of this, we also had to provide a web application and a web service for the beneficiaries of the Flemish right of pre-emption. This will give them the opportunity to state for which plots of land they would like to exercise the right of pre-emption. This online application had to be developed by the end of April 2010. The project is part of the process of simplifying administration.”

The right of pre-emption means that public bodies or organisations – for example the Flemish port authorities, city services and nature associations – are sometimes the first to have the right of pre-emption on buying a plot of land. For every purchase, the notary has to check if such a right of pre-emption exists by consulting all possible sources of information. So far, this has been happening through various manual, written, standard procedures. This is a very time-consuming process that is also open to errors.

**Tremendous time-savings**

So the new online application provides notaries with access to a very useful tool for the purchase of land. “All the information is online and can be consulted centrally,” explains Joef Robbrecht. “This means the whole procedure is much faster and more correct. When using the e-service, notaries can go online, type in the plot number and instantly see who might have a right of pre-emption. The online application automatically sends e-mails to these parties to check if they are interested in buying the plot. Previously this was all done through letters. The time-
savings are tremendous.”

Koen Lemarcq, project manager at AGIV: “The online services allow notaries to work much faster, without running a big risk of making errors. For its part, the party entitled to the right of pre-emption has greater legal security of their rights being respected. And ultimately the public can be more confident that the correct procedure is being followed for the sale or purchase of land.”

AGIV looked for a suitable IT partner for the extensive development project. It decided on Ordina. “Ordina offered an environment that met our needs,” explains Koen Lemarcq. “For optimal integration where everything fits together perfectly, we made a strategic decision to opt for Microsoft technology. This means we can get the most out of the software.”

Current state of affairs always accessible
It was already decided from the start that AGIV would develop the online application with the Microsoft technologies Visual Studio and .NET. Team Foundation Server came along later. “It was very important for us to develop a high-quality solution,” says Bart Williams, application architect at Ordina. “That’s why we suggested to AGIV that it use Team Foundation Server as the central information source for the project. In this way everyone could always access the correct information and AGIV could also access the current state of affairs. So communication was very efficient and we were able to monitor the project together. We worked according to the Scrum method. At the start of each phase we conferred bilaterally about the next phase.”

Optimal project management
Visual Studio was used for the project management and the integration of the testing. “At Ordina’s suggestion we changed over to Team Foundation Server and Visual Studio 2010 because these offer more possibilities than the previous versions,” says Joeri Robrecht. “For instance, we can use models to generate code faster and there are dashboards that give you a very clear picture of how things stand. Moreover, we have access to worksheets. All this ensures optimal project management.”

Software tests by people with autism spectrum disorder
On Ordina’s initiative the testing was largely carried out by the staff of Passwerk, an organisation that employs people with autism spectrum disorder as software testers. “Developers don’t usually like systematic testing, but people with autism spectrum
disorder do," explains Erik Jannen, project manager at Ordina. "We have worked with Passwerk before and this was a positive experience. Thanks to the perfectionism of the people at Passwerk, we can count on the results of the development being of a high standard."

The collaboration between AGIV and Ordina went smoothly. Attention was also paid to knowledge transfer, so that AGIV itself can take responsibility for the maintenance after the new application goes live. "There are still numerous projects in the pipeline for making even more geographical information available online," concludes Koen Lemarcq.

"Developers don't usually like systematic testing, but people with autism spectrum disorder do. Thanks to the perfectionism of the people at Passwerk, we can count on the results of the development being of a high standard," says Erik Jannen, project manager at Ordina.

For more information

For more information about the Microsoft products and services described, call +32 (0)2 603 31 10 or visit www.microsoft.be/cases. There you will find other companies that use similar applications.

For more information about Ordina, call +32 (0)15 29 58 56 or visit www.ordina.be.

For more information about Passwerk, visit www.passwerk.be.

For more information about AGIV, visit www.agiv.be.
The Process and Information Policy section (PIP) comes under the Public Governance Department (PGD) of the Flemish Government (FG).

The PGD supports the minister in the preparation, management, follow-up, verification and assessment of policy. The actual thematic policy areas covered by the department are particularly varied.

They include human resources, organisational development, ICT, e-government, facility services and real estate management.

In order to create broad support for the various decisions, the department not only provides supporting services to the entities of the Public Governance policy area, but to the Flemish civil service as a whole.

One of the aims of the PIP section is to collate all manner of data about the Flemish Government from a variety of different data sources, including personnel details, organisational data, data on regulations, etc. These data are supplemented, cleansed, combined, stored in a datawarehouse (DWH) and transformed into operational reports and various policy instruments for the benefit of the FG. This reporting apparatus is chiefly built around components from the IBM/Cognos suite.

In cases where there are no registration systems in place at the PGD to collate the required data, the section develops web applications or customises and configures existing open source applications by itself. More often than not, these applications are in PHP and MySQL. The nature of these applications is particularly diverse and covers applications to measure the administrative burden of rules and regulations, the follow-up of the targets of the PGD’s sections, the financial monitoring of work applications, etc.

In addition, the section also provides solutions where there is a need for applications that support business processes. Documentum BPM is used for this purpose.

Although the PIP’s focus of attention does not chiefly go out to the development of all manner of tools and applications, a small team of some ten analysts, designers and developers works within the section that numbers around thirty staff in all, to cater to the needs and requirements outlined above.

In part due to the fact that the PIP section was set up fairly recently (some three years ago), and had a major inflow of experienced and inexperienced staff alike over the last two years, guaranteeing the quality of these applications is something of a challenge. Which is why a fair deal of attention has been paid to the development, test, acceptance and production environment in recent years, and
why a version management system and a bug tracking system were brought into service. Also, standards and templates were imposed to perform analyses, with due attention paid to the description of use cases (or functionalities).

Logically, the next step in raising the quality of the analysis and development process was to improve the test procedures. The tests were no longer to be confined to the tests performed by the developers themselves and a general acceptance test by the users at the end of the development path. Especially as this meant that the thoroughness of such tests was too highly contingent on the pressures of time and the profiles of the developers and future users.

To guide us in stepping up the quality of the tests, the PIP is following two avenues. For one thing, a test co-ordinator is being trained at the section who, in due course, will assume a crucial role in setting up and following up on test procedures, templates, etc.

For another thing, since January 2010 we have been calling on the services of an experienced Passwerk test consultant for three days a week.

Chris Logghe, Head of the IT Systems Cells, testifies:

‘From the experiences I heard of and read about in other businesses and organisations, I was soon convinced that a Passwerk test consultant would bring added value to our team. My biggest concern centred much more on the human aspect: to what extent would a consultant with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) be able to get accustomed to and thrive in an open landscape environment and a highly mixed team where it is simply impossible to guarantee perfect silence at all times.

To a degree, my concern was mitigated during the visit by the permanent coach who supervises Johan, the test consultant who would join us. After an audit of the work environment, we were given a number of recommendations such as providing a permanent work station for Johan to work at, and providing a limited number of primary contacts for Johan within the section.

A few weeks before Johan was set to join the PIP, the entire section was given a presentation that honed in on the benefits and focus areas of working with people with ASD. I have to say, the section was very positive about the initiative to post a test consultant to the section.

How do I feel about this collaboration, some nine months down the line? It soon emerged that Johan also exceeded my expectations in a professional sense. One of the major benefits of this collaboration is the fact that, as a team, we are all steered to an extent by the regimented methodology Johan sticks to: presenting the project, going through the analysis if available and seeing if the use cases have been sufficiently documented to enable us to derive test cases, consistently using the bug tracking system when running tests and following up on errors, etc.

It is true to say that, since Johan has joined us, we are recording more bugs about our user applications before we hand over applications to the users. Which is very much reflected in the reduced workload for corrective maintenance after our applications have been commissioned.

Johan’s flexibility is another major strong suit. In recent months he has been testing Business Intelligence systems, registration systems as well as Business Process Management systems.

He has been writing technical manuals for a number of applications, taken part in the technical description of a fairly complex upload and conversion algorithm and screened an application for compliance with the Anysurfer quality hallmark.
We certainly still have some way to go in raising the quality of our tests. As far as I am concerned, that certainly includes committing an experienced Passwerk test consultant to perform the actual tests, insofar as permitted by the available budgets.

In short, for each and every one of us, Johan has become a permanent member of the team, who has very clearly proven his added value, both on an interpersonal and on a professional level.’

**Petra Cuppens, trainee test co-ordinator, shares her experiences:**

‘Until recently, my involvement in the tests performed at the section was confined to actually testing applications as a developer. In part thanks to the fact that Johan was posted to the section, it has become very clear that we need a test co-ordinator at the section. A role I am happy to assume. Ultimately, it is an important role if the section means to develop custom applications that meet with the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

Johan has certainly proved that properly and consistently performed tests, in accordance with regimented test scripts derived from the analysis, have their use. In my new role, I am certain there is a lot I will be learning from Johan in times to come’

**Marijke Verhavert, head of section, goes on to add:**

‘As far as the technical follow-up is concerned, I am happy to let Chris get on with things, together with Johan. I have noticed there is a great deal of mutual respect between those two. But more than anything else, I have noticed a rise in the quality of the work products we deliver, as well as a rise in the focus of attention paid to the test cycle. Tests have been made greatly more efficient, which is also pleasing to our customers. Before we have even managed to invite them to take part in the acceptance tests, Johan is already hard at work. The handovers we are now producing for the purpose of the acceptance tests are already of high quality. For the Vlimpers upgrade, the entire reporting environment had to be tackled as well. Various services within the Flemish civil service have taken part in the tests. But it was Johan who was the first to go through the reports, comparing the old and the new data. He did a very good job on that. Other development teams within our policy area have since learned of ‘our’ Johan and have approached us asking if they could call on his services as well. We are happy to agree to these requests, be it confined to short-term pilots. We are confident that they too will soon be looking to commit a Pass worker of their own.’
Member of the Antwerp Provincial Executive in charge of ICT, Marc Wellens was convinced of the deployability of people with an ASD as part of the Sindala project from a very early stage.

This project was put in place to replace the system that was used for the follow-up of files on the mainframe, including environmental permits, planning permissions, water resource policy and town and country planning for instance, by a new document and process management system. Because of the scope involved, a three-year time frame has been set aside to roll out the project in full.

‘The qualities of people with an ASD are often underrated and they are all too often – unjustly so – made to contend with a huge degree of stigmatisation,’ says Marc Wellens. ‘Which is why I felt it was particularly important to give Passwerk a chance on Sindala. ‘Needless to say, the right value for money and the right match in committing outside parties was our first concern. The first trial period we ran showed that Passwerk was able to bring considerable added value to Sindala, and was the most suitable partner to conduct the functional testing operations. The fact that Passwerk is not only alive to the economic dimension but to the social dimension too, gave the launch of our collaboration an extra added value to my mind,’ Marc Wellens explains.

‘In a practical sense, we are also very happy with the commitment of Pass worker Stijn,’ Sindala project manager Ingrid Croket with the Province of Antwerp. ‘Stijn’s complementarity with our test co-ordinator Erik Boelen brings a stunning final result. Eric sees to it that internal communications with other parties that are involved in the project are smooth-paced, whilst lending the necessary structure and applying priorities to the way in which the tests are handled. This kind of framework really does justice to Stijn’s special quali-
ties. Stijn is capable of absorbing a lot of information in a short space of time, he has a keen eye for every detail and very considerable perseverance to continue performing certain repetitive processes with untiring focus and concentration,’ Ingrid Croket goes on to explain. ‘In the start-up phase, I have to admit working with Stijn was a little wearying,’ Erik Boelen adds.

‘Because of his eye for detail, he was constantly asking a myriad of questions, which in turn caused me to start questioning a lot of things myself. After the induction period, it appeared that Stijn attains an above-average work pace, by virtue of his disciplined work method. The overall bird’s eye perspective, which for me often tends to come first, is supplemented by Stijn’s focus on details and that is one hell of a benefit. But it is important to make sure the Pass worker does not lose himself in the details, as this drags down the level of efficiency of the work.’

‘Two other things that are distinctive in the way Stijn works are his punctiliousness and accuracy,’ Ingrid Croket adds. ‘I can only advise other organisations not to feel deterred and to work with Passwerk. If the Pass worker is offered the right coaching and has access to the right contact, working with Passwerk in a test project will enable any organisation to notch up considerable added value.’

‘We can tell Stijn enjoys the work,’ Marc Wellens concludes, ‘and that he knows the application inside out, which means he continues to remain a major asset for Sindala, day after day. To us, this collaboration is a real win-win situation.’

Sindala project manager Ingrid Croket
Sindala test co-ordinator Erik Boelen

Antwerp
Province house
Testimonial Flemish Water Supply Company (VMW)

Pass workers test customer management system of the Flemish Water Supply Company (= Vlaamse Maatschappij voor Watervoorziening, VMW)

The Flemish Water Supply Company has been using a new customer management system since 2008. The software brings a user-friendly solution for increasingly complex billing operations, but the underlying programme logic is quite intricate. The VMW calls on Passwerk testers on a regular basis for the preparation of new releases, much to the satisfaction of all parties concerned.

The Flemish Water Supply Company is Flanders’ biggest drinking water supply company and, as an integrated water company, also acts as a partner in the development of municipal sewerage networks. Moreover, the VMW devises tailored water projects for private enterprises. The VMW supplies drinking water to 2.6 million customers in 170 towns in West and East Flanders, Flemish Brabant and Limburg.

Since the introduction of the integrated water bill, alongside the costs for the production and supply of drinking water, this bill also specifies a contribution for the discharge and treatment of said water.

The IT infrastructure that underpins customer management and the integrated water bill was no longer up to the task of keeping up with fast market developments. These customer applications were developed in a mainframe environment. Which is why the VMW set out in search of a cheaper and more flexible system for automated billing and improved customer follow-up. In March 2008, the new customer management system going by the name of ‘Arcado’ was commissioned. This user-friendly and dynamic software comes with more features and is more flexible in terms of billing and following up on changing rules and regulations.

Each year, this software generates 6 million bills, at a rate of 25,000 bills a night, representing an annual turnover of 470 million euros. Needless to say, the VMW cannot afford for wrong bills to be sent out. Each outgoing bill needs to be spot on from day 1.

Passwerk tests new versions adopting a methodical approach

From the outset, the VMW called on the services of Passwerk to perform the acceptance tests of the new versions. For each release, a large number of regression tests are carried out and the newly added features are placed under the magnifying glass. In all, over 500 test scripts have been compiled by the software supplier using Quality Centre.

Jan Hammenecker, business systems and communications manager: ‘The integrated water bill software is complex and the programme logic is fairly intricate. But the Passwerk testers managed to get up to speed in double quick time: one of them even discovered an error in the complex billing module while he was still in training.’

Since Passwerk has been handling the tests, all parties are under obligation to adopt a predefined structure. During the test phase, all parties are required to systematically devise and plan things ahead of time, which certainly benefits quality. From day one, the VMW was asking for a solid structure to be set up. VMW staff and the software suppliers fully understood how Pass workers need structure and showed every goodwill. As a result of this formal method of operation, all releases are
of excellent quality by the time they go live.

Quality improvement starts as early as during the test script compilation phase. The Pass workers debug the test scripts that have been prepared (over 500 at this point) by the software supplier and test them out in terms of completeness. All test scripts are clustered in Quality Centre, a test management tool that ensures communications between the testers, the developers and project management. Subsequently, the test scripts are most rigorously carried out. Each test, from first to last, is handled with the same degree of meticulousness, entirely in line with the planning schedule that has been set up. The very strict compliance with the planning schedule certainly is a great quality the Passwerk testers have to offer.

By now, this is the third time the VMW is calling on Passwerk to carry out the tests. Jan Hammenecker: ‘At the outset, procedures and the working environment need to be adapted a little, but thanks to Passwerk’s quality coaching and intake interviews, we became convinced of the quality of the work delivered. We have now got to the point where the collaboration with Passwerk has become a matter of routine. We have made sure the testers can work in a separate room, enabling them to focus on performing the tests, at their ease and undisturbed.’

The Pass workers were continuously assisted and coached by a test co-ordinator, who made sure a realistic and clear planning schedule was put in place. The test pace was constantly high, with a lot of test cycles being covered, which resulted in the expected quality of the production environment of the new releases.

Pivotal in all of this is the attendance of a good co-ordinator, who draws up realistic planning schedules and who handles communications with the VMW. Communications between VMW staff and Pass workers do not pose any problems, even though in practice the Pass workers themselves are less active in seeking out contacts with the VMW regulars. This is probably also to do with the fact that they are committed for short time periods of a couple of weeks at a time.

Jan Hammenecker: ‘After the first release, we were so pleased with the quality of the test work that we continued to call on Passwerk for the next releases. We currently have another very important release upgrade in the pipeline for June 2010 and the entire regression test will be handled by Passwerk. By now, our software supplier and integrator has also become so convinced of the efficiency of using Passwerk staff that Passwerk’s services are being hired in that environment as well. This serves to significantly raise the continuity of the learning curve of staff. In a nutshell: the VMW is very pleased with the quality of the work delivered and we are very confident in the added value that Passwerk staff bring to the table.’

Jan Hammenecker
Business Systems and Communications Manager
In early 2009, ICT Bpost was approached by Passwerk, asking if the testers they were seeking were also allowed to be people with autism (or people with Autism Spectrum Disorder = ASD, to be more accurate). Bpost got on board, which subsequently saw Sam and one of his colleagues, who were both working at Passwerk, join the test team of PostStation (Bpost’s counter application) on 16 February 2009. Sam’s colleague soon reported that the job content failed to meet with her wishes. To her replacement, the office landscape proved to be a major obstacle to overcome. But Sam adapted to the situation in hand as best he could and has now been a member of our test team for over a year. Generally speaking, people with ASD do not mind doing repetitive work. And when you ultimately manage to build a good rapport with them, you get an awful lot in return. However, it also takes a very considerable amount of time to get through to people with ASD. You usually sense that something is wrong, but it takes a lot of time to find out just exactly what it is, and how you can help. In Sam’s case, he has a huge amount of drive when it comes to performing the tests, he has no problem whatsoever in repeating the regression tests over and over again, ad nauseam if need be, and he has a very keen eye for detail (he spots every change, no matter how minute). By the same token, he constantly challenges and notices everything. And I mean everything. He will go through every single test script down to the smallest detail, and challenge every minute change or deviation from the test script. The office landscape we work in and the background noise/that comes with it is not particularly conducive to Sam: a squeaking door, the many different ring tones, someone clicking their biro, the many discussions among colleagues, ...

Sam catches everything and stores it in his ‘system, which can sometimes be an added stress factor for him. We try and mitigate matters by using ear plugs, allowing for short breaks, etc.

But it is not always a straightforward matter to find a clear and structured framework in an existing, and sometimes hectic, (test) organisation. It is a constant effort to strike the right balance between changes, the pressures of time, budgetary restraints, fellow testers and Sam’s extra needs.

Together with Sam’s job coach, I try and establish the best way for us to approach matters. They call round on a regular basis to see how Sam is getting on, which is much needed, especially at the outset. Prior to the project we now have in place with Passwerk, I had never been in contact with people with ASD. I was provided with a mind map which gave me a fairly good idea of Sam’s personality, even though I should add that I am only just now starting to understand him a little better through my personal contacts with Sam. I imagine I will never ‘really’ know Sam fully. Especially as he is so adept at hiding/concealing things at work that it is not always clear if something is happening because he feels that is the way it should be happening on the shop floor (instructions from the boss should simply be executed, like it or not), or whether he also wants it done like that.

My current impression of working with Passwerk and people with ASD is a positive one, even though I do feel that close coaching over at the employer’s premises is absolutely vital to see this kind of project brought to fruition. Without coaching, weekly follow-up meetings, a ready ear, etc. this type of project would not be feasible in our structure. But by working at and by striking an equitable balance, we have managed to hang on to Sam as a valued member of our test team for over a year now. And as far as myself and his colleagues are concerned, we would be glad to see him stick around for a bit longer.

Ingrid van Eycken,
Test Lead RSS, ICT Application Services
One of the benefits of scientific progress is that we are gaining an increasingly better understanding of the make-up of man and the kind of things that can go wrong. And it turns out that man is anything but perfect. These days, schools are packed with children who have learning and behavioural disorders (dyslexia, ADHD and autism). In the old days, these people barely got any attention. Dyslectics of Einstein’s calibre were simply expelled from school. Progress has seen to it that we are now finding out more about how to deal with these people.

As we were expanding our QA team in 2008, we were asked if the testers we were seeking to attract were also allowed to be people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). That is how we learned of Passwerk. Ultimately it does not matter who handles the job, as long as it gets results. However, we still had a couple of questions that needed answering. Together with Passwerk, we looked at 2 aspects that are important in interacting with our new colleagues: reducing external impulses and putting in place clear structures.

At Verizon, we have office landscapes. Obviously we still have individual offices but these are the preserve of people who are higher up in the chain of command. Which meant that putting a number of Pass workers in an individual office of their own might send out the wrong message. So we set up their workstation in a quieter corner of our office landscape.

As we deliver our production output on a monthly basis, and tests consequently need to be conducted each month, things can get rather hectic at our R&D department. To screen off the Pass workers from this hustle and bustle, they were assigned a confidant. This person is responsible for tending to the Pass workers at such times. When everybody is under pressure, this may prompt a lack of understanding for the other party. In cases like these, development and test departments are often found to be on different wavelengths.

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**Assignment**

- Testing new releases of Online Guardian (OG)

**Duties**

- Testing the various OG front-end and back-end components (Care, security and operations dashboard, Cure, …)
- Regression tests of the same components using the Fruit and Quick Test Pro tools
- Reporting and follow-up of errors through Quality Centre

**Project**

- All OG released, including service packs and hot fixes
What have we learned since? That integration gets under way once the Pass workers take up their duties. And that, generally speaking, this integration is slower-paced than with other contractors. The confidant is there to assist in this respect. Ultimately, a lot of colleagues that pop round to our department do not even notice that these Pass workers are ‘different’.

Interviewing Pass workers is not a good idea. Call it an introduction where you simply get to know each other a little. Interviews throw people off balance and create stress, which does not mix well with ASD.

We have also learned that having an entire QA team made up of Pass workers is not a good idea, not in our situation anyway. Because of the short time span between 2 releases, we also need people who require less structure. Or, put another way: people with ASD do not see the wood, they see the trees. You need people like that who notice the details, but in addition any balanced team also needs people who retain a bird’s eye perspective, people who see the wood.

We would like to point out that the entire team still continues to deliver the way it used to. The results needed are returned at the right times and at the right price. Ultimately, that is the only yardstick that matters. On the other hand, our regular employees are actually quite proud of the fact that their company is able to give Pass workers a meaningful and challenging job.

Paul Bussé,
Applications Development Manager
In May 2009 the Scholarships department faced the challenge of a large project: testing the application for scholarships with the strict deadline of August 15. The IT coordination service (DIC) of the ministry of Education recommended Passwerk. It was, amongst other things, thanks to the cooperation with Passwerk that the deadline was met.

The new project on scholarships was principally about handling simple dossiers automatically, without the interference of a file handler. The Passwerk workers turned out to be wizards in drawing up test scenarios. They made test scenarios of complex business processes for automatic file handling. We had hoped to get the work done in three weeks, but they managed in just one.

Subsequently, the test cases were programmed by EDS as unit tests. The Passwerk workers also performed manual tests for a new interface to make redundant the manual input of data about reclamations in the Orafin accounting system. They turned the most exotic test data into different test files, ensuring that few problems arose in production.

Furthermore a connection was made with the platform MAGDA (Maximal Sharing of Data between Administrations) and with VFP (the Flemish Fiscal Platform), and the interface with DHO (Database Higher Education) was adapted, for which processes the Passwerk workers made test scenarios, which they executed expertly. The Scholarships department was helped tremendously by the effort and accuracy of the Passwerk workers. The collaboration enabled us to contribute to a large social project of which the profits flow back to people with ASD in another way than through giving scholarships. We can only recommend this cooperation to colleagues in the Flemish government.

Marleen Deputter
Head of the department Scholarships


**Testimonial Fedict**

![Fedict Logo]

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**Extraordinary eye for detail**

The mission of Fedict (The Federal Government Service for ICT) is to make the government administration for citizens and companies as simple as possible through IT. Our efforts are yielding rewards: Belgium is one of the leaders in e-government. In early 2009 Fedict entrusted Passwerk with a test assignment.

**Quickly settled**

“The employees of Passwerk were quick to find their stride – much quicker than we thought possible”, admits Chief Technology Officer Peter Strickx. “This project demonstrates the importance of testing. It also showed that complimentary tests, apart from those performed by our developers themselves, are not an unnecessary luxury. Testing is a specialization in itself. Time and time again the reported test results showed the excellent quality of the test work that had been delivered.”

**Lasting concentration**

“The Passwerk workers regularly surprised us with their exceptional eye for detail”, says Project Manager Bert Beyl. “They discovered how capital letters and small letters in the extension of a file sometimes created problems. Their attention didn’t slacken – as was proven by a major bug that appeared at the very end of the testing process. Their lasting concentration was also evident from the constant quality of each test cycle, even though some scenarios came back ad nauseam. Good to know: while waiting for the next assignment, the Passwerk workers often spontaneously carried out additional test work.”
Testimonial Department Work and Social Economy  
(Flemish Government)

Passwerk has its place within the ICT services of the Flemish government. Not only to a social purpose, but also because of the growing importance of testing and verification. The more web services we provide directly to citizens and companies, and the more we value efficient and effective management, the more attention we have to give to testing. Good products require good testing.

By now a whole network of CIO’s has grown within the Flemish government, keen to use the services of Passwerk. Passwerk provides a fast answer to a growing need for good testers that do their job precisely and passionately.

This is what sets Passwerk apart. It is a strong social project of which the profits go primarily towards better opportunities for Passwerk workers. Opportunities for self-development, both professionally and privately.

*Jef Van der Wee, CIO Department Work and Social Economy (Flemish government)*
"For one of its priority projects (the calculation of the price index), which the FPS is migrating to a new modern application, we urgently needed someone to write a clear user manual. This is a particularly meticulous and specific kind of job, as it requires the author to sedulously go through all the new screens of the application, one by one, to be translated into a clear and user-friendly user manual. We felt it would be an advantage if this were to be handled by people who were not involved in the project as such and who accordingly were best able to simulate the interpretation of an outside user. At Passwerk, we found staff who have the right skills to handle this assignment. They meticulously and productively went through the application and delivered a manual that is both understandable and usable to our users.

This positive experience has prompted us to set up a second project with Passwerk. The new project fits in with the comprehensive restyling of the website of the FPS Economy. One of the duties to be performed as part of this project is the entry and conversion of the different texts into the WebContentManagement (WCM) tool Tridion. The Passwerk colleagues will be getting an appropriate training course about the technical manipulations that need to be performed to be able to enter these texts in the WCM. We are talking about a total of well over 1,500 pages in text! The project is set to run from December 2008 until the end of March 2009.

We do not rule out calling on the services and skills of Passwerk again during the course of 2009 to test ICT applications.’