Roland Pechtold has a rock-solid CV and extensive business experience. His time in oil at Shell and Anglo was followed by Nova Terminals. Then he decided to head into the sewers; since August, he’s been CEO at vandervalk+degroot sewer cleaning and inspection, a fantastic company that is making huge strides in innovation. The image of ditch-diggers is completely outdated; our work is all underground. When we inspect pipes and sewer lines, we use robots that are equipped with GPS, cameras and high-pressure equipment. Water is used to clean the inside of the pipes, but the latest innovation is to use shaved ice blasting – even more powerful than water. It’s extraordinary what technicians and high-tech equipment can achieve these days, vandervalk+degroot was founded in 1962 in the Westland region and has grown significantly since then, with 48 branch locations and 500 employees in the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK.

Roland Pechtold was unfamiliar with the sector, but his fresh, open perspective is a welcome addition to the company and a driver for further innovation. He is very enthusiastic about the company’s future and sees lots of opportunities for the sector, especially in using data and calculations points. By combining the two, it will eventually be possible to calculate which sewers need immediate attention and which will not need to be checked for the time being. This saves costs and prevents unnecessary inconvenience for the people in the city. Although this sector is a permanent fixture, as a solid foundation for a healthy life in residential neighborhoods, he feels responsible to keep innovating and make a contribution.

“Instead that need to be an awareness of the potential tension between innovation and current regulations. A good regulatory framework is essential, but should not inhibit innovation. Sadly, there are far too few examples of this; society is experiencing exponential change, ratcheting up the tension as a result. “CleanTech offers major added value. You have to think exponentially; you have to move away from the linear approach, from incrementalism. It is important that society understands what you’re doing. Technology makes jobs disappear, but it also creates new jobs. That’s difficult for some people to follow, which is why you have to spend lots of time explaining this and constantly keep communicating. That is also part of our responsibilities. The company has a great deal of knowledge, and a lot of what is happening in Rotterdam bears certain similarities to our work. That combination offers interesting options for our city and region. CleanTech is not a threat at all, it offers opportunities.”

Roland Pechtold and his family lived in New Zealand for years, but his time in oil at Shell and Anglo is something he will always bow to people – especially in the public sector – who decided during the crisis to build the Markthal and De Rotterdam. It was an investment, but look at what it delivers. Businesses and local inhabitants are happy to jump on the bandwagon.” The changes in the city are progressing rapidly. Social developments are just as important as economic ones, because you need to be at the heart of society. Speaking of changes, he mentions the following example: “I ordered a Tesla, an electric car with lots of high-tech features. It’s the car of the future – but that really makes it the car of today. This car abandons lots of traditional assumptions in the automotive sector and offers a platform for more than mobility. I can store energy and feed it back into the network for sale; improvements are uploaded, so I don’t have to wait for the next iteration. I have a guarantee of continuous evolution. And it will hopefully be self-driving soon, so I can spend my time more effectively. The Tesla is a nice example of his innovative perspective on today’s world.”
New Arrivals

In recent years we’ve seen the rise of many start-up companies worldwide. The Netherlands is no exception, especially in Rotterdam. Companies like Mendix, Coolblue and Ampelmann are well known and frequently mentioned examples for successful recent start-ups in our region. But there are many more already and more to come.

Start-ups in the US have generated over three million new jobs per year on average, while existing businesses have actually cut jobs, about one million each year. These figures underline the need for new businesses to maintain healthy economies. New companies are mainly driven by new ideas – that crucial element of innovation.
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CleanTech and Sustainability

Sneak peak into a new world of CleanTech

The companies in the CleanTech cluster in Rotterdam have achieved a great deal in recent years. They lead the global market in water and delta technology. An extensive heat transfer network is present in the urban area, serving countless households with residual industrial heat. A network of charging posts has been set up to recharge electric cars.

The focus is shifting from CO2 reduction to cleaner air, greener public spaces, cleaner energy and energy efficiency and more conscious use of raw materials.

In its Sustainable 2015-2018 program, the Municipality of Rotterdam has three ambitions:
- A green, healthy, future-proof city;
- Cleaner energy at lower costs;
- A strong, innovative economy.

The city aims to attract 800 million euros in investments to the region.

Trends
- Global trends are the growing world population, increasing demand for energy, climate change, the technological development. Lots of developments are in clean technology, such as recycling, energy (wind, solar, biomass, biofuels etc.), information technology, green transport, electric engine, green chemicals. And then the digitization. Everything is connected via the internet. Rapid information exchange, which means better, faster response and real-time management, leads to smart manufacturing, and e.g. smart grids for exchanging electricity.
- The customer intimacy means Internet has changed a great deal for consumers; new sales channels and more information about products. Consumers demand faster, better service.

Global challenge
- The challenge is to create maximum added value throughout the value chain. To build an ecosystem where companies supply each other's needs. The same applies to energy. Energy is a significant part of the budget for households and businesses, which makes it an important factor in deciding to settle in Rotterdam.

To gain long term objectives, innovation should take place both in the field of renewable energy and CO2 reduction in Hardware (e.g. energy storage) and Software (e.g. Smart Grid).

CleanTech and Sustainability

RiTS Solar
a joint venture
RITEK & TSEC

Two big technology firms from Taiwan joined forces in 2013 to form RiTS Solar, targeting the European market for solar energy business. Managing director Richard Vong has been living and working in Rotterdam for 24 years and is familiar with the port city’s unique advantages. He is also the chairman of the Taiwanese Business Association (TBA) in the Netherlands.

“The two parent companies are ambitious market players. Ritek has been listed on the stock exchange for over 25 years now; since its start in 1988, it has grown to employ 6,000 people. As a technology firm, they are now also targeting solar businesses. TSEC manufactures high-efficiency solar cells for many well-known brands of solar panels. Their state-of-the-art solar cells achieve 21% efficiency, which is very high. Their products arrive here in the port, as RiTS Solar, we do not handle manufacturing ourselves.”

Richard Vong continues: “We maintain contact with our logistics partners in the port to bring our products into Europe. Rotterdam is a very affordable place to operate a business, in terms of office space, storage capacity and logistical services. We are also able to find the well-trained personnel we need here. Lots of people in the area are internationally oriented.”

B2B matchmaking event

The CleanTech Summit & Networking Dinner will take place in Rotterdam on NOVEMBER 18 & 19, 2015. The focus is on showcasing the best investment opportunities within the CleanTech industry in Europe. This summit is an initiative of the Tech Tour and the International Venture Club (IVC), hosted by the City of Rotterdam. The IVC Roundtable and Venture Academy for Emerging Companies will take place on November 18 & 19, 2015. Rotterdam Partners, CleanTech Delta, the city of Rotterdam and InnovationQuarter are hosting partners of this event.

The summit includes 40 company presentations by CEOs, discussion panels, keynotes and top-level networking, including the Networking Closing Dinner on November 19th. 150 guests will be present at the dinner, representing the ‘Who’s Who’ of the CleanTech and Venture Capital market. They are invited to join the Tech Tour delegates, including top executives from blue chip technology companies, international venture capitalists, investment bankers, specialized press, service providers and advisors coming from all around the world.

SAVE THE DATE
CleanTech Summit and Networking Dinner

Rotterdam & Taiwan

Vong came to the Netherlands 24 years ago, when many Taiwanese SMEs came to the Netherlands. “The Taiwan Trade Centre set in motion that Taiwanese companies can easily serve the European market here. Now you see that many large Taiwanese companies come here as a stepping stone to China. That will continue to grow in the coming ten years. Taiwan’s investments in the Netherlands have seen a shift too. We’re now seeing an influx in major international Taiwanese companies looking for strategic partners.”

Established businesses need to work on this in cooperation with new start-ups. Start-ups can sell their products to corporates as launching customers, while corporates can outsource their developments.

ENERGY IS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE BUDGET FOR HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES, WHICH MAKES IT AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN DECIDING TO SETTLE IN ROTTERDAM.
The story of DoubleA Paper may be a precursor of a development we’ll be seeing more often in the future: an Asian company that grows rapidly, opens a secondary office in Europe, and then relocates part of its production to Europe. General Manager Ben Veldman has been working for DoubleA in Europe for almost ten years, and sticks strictly to the facts: “We are now one of the biggest paper producers in the world. Production therefore takes place at various locations across the globe, including in Europe.”

DoubleA Paper was founded in Thailand in 1990 and is now among the biggest Thai companies in the Netherlands. What makes the company so unique is the innovative production techniques it developed. The paper trees it used supply more fibers per gram, which produces stronger paper. Another unique aspect is that those trees grow around the millions of rice paddies in Thailand, in places where trees were previously mainly viewed as obstacles. These trees were planted by 1.5 million farmers especially for paper production. In other words: how much more sustainable can you get?

Global expansion was a rapid process for DoubleA. The company conquered Asia in the years since 2011, moving on to Australia and the Middle East, and finally opening offices in Europe, Africa and North America. The company currently has a presence in 120 countries on six continents.

Ben Veldman manages affairs in Europe from Rotterdam, from the office on Boompees. He and the Rotterdam staff appreciate being able to enjoy their quality of life in their own country. “We started operations in Rotterdam in 2000; my task was Sales & Marketing targeting the European market. Rotterdam was chosen for its perfect logistics and distribution options for the surrounding countries. Step by step, we opened local offices in various European countries to maintain a stronger focus on local marketing & sales. But it’s all supervised from Rotterdam.”

Market share grows exponentially
DoubleA doubles its market share every year, globally. “There are no paper producers that put a brand on their products the way we do,” Veldman concludes. “They compete on price, while we compete on quality and reliability. Our motto is ‘No jam, no stress’; every office knows why when the copier gets jammed again... Our paper is extra-strong and almost never jams.

In 2013, we acquired a French paper producer in Alizay which handles production for DoubleA for the market in Europe and the Middle East. The advantage is fewer containers required an investment of 60 million euros. The company the world’s biggest producer of bio-propane is equivalent to fossil-based propane and is suitable for use in LPG systems. Neste has a contract with SHV Energy to market bio-propane. We will be supplying 200,000 tons of bio-propane to them over a four-year period for them to sell on the European market.”

Neste applies six different certification systems to ensure the sustainability of the raw materials it uses. For instance, the palm the company uses in its renewable diesel has to come from plantations that have achieved sustainability certification. The animal fats they use are certified by European standards.
"Compared to our competitors, CSB Battery entered the European market relatively late," explains Bart van der Hoek, European Sales Director. "European and Japanese competitors have already been operating on this continent for over 30 years. Despite that, CSB is proud to have acquired such a significant market share in a relatively short time frame. We are now among the biggest battery producers in the world – and CSB is not even 30 years old. Established in 1987, CSB specializes in high-end Valve Regulated Lead Acid (VRLA) batteries. We supply batteries to 25 top manufacturers of critical power units, including APC (Schneider) and Eaton."

Greater Rotterdam area

In the Rotterdam area, CSB Battery arranges the storage, logistics, marketing & sales and battery assembly. The company used to have storage facilities in Ireland, France and Italy as well, but storage activities are now concentrated in Rotterdam. "This has significantly cut costs and facilitated optimal efficiency in handling our product. We import about 1,000 to 2,000 heavy shipping containers each year on average, so the port is vital to our company. The Netherlands also offers interesting fiscal advantages. Logistics are good here. It's even more efficient to bring containers for Scandinavia or farther away to this port and transship them to a ferryboat to Finland, a ship to St. Petersburg, or a truck heading towards inland Europe," Van der Hoek clarifies. "Our clients are primarily in Italy, Germany, France, Spain, the UK and the Benelux." Bart van der Hoek and managing director Chris Shiao started out with the two of them in a tiny office. "We thought it would be difficult to find the right people, but well-qualified personnel are easy to find here - and multicultural, too. We operate globally, so we have employees from all sorts of countries. Bart was the only Dutch person on staff for quite a while. But the more variation we have, the better it works for us. We are also expanding constantly; we recently hired a French engineer."

Recycling and sustainability

CSB Battery offers a one-stop solution for customers in its full-service center. They recycle the batteries for their customers, accepting used units via their own distribution centers in 25 countries. Van der Hoek: "Two years ago, we contacted Rotterdam Partners because we want to build an R&D center in this region. We also want to do more as an assembly, and Rotterdam Partners gave us an idea that helped with our blueprint for the future. We hit 10% growth this year and plan to continue. Not only do we recycle the batteries (unlike all our competitors), but we practice strict waste separation and recycling at our company and conserve energy by using solar panels and LED lighting. We also found ways to reduce our carbon footprint. CSB has its own environmental policy, which includes stringent sustainability requirements. Not just for the offices, but absolutely for production as well. We work with Japanese technology that meets the very latest environmental standards. All our personnel are trained in sustainability. Our batteries are labelled according to high European standards and certification requirements."

Indorama Ventures started its journey in 1994 with the production of wool yarn in Thailand and in 1995 the establishment of its first PET plant also in Thailand. Today, it is the world’s largest polyester value chain producer. "Half of all the diapers worldwide are made from Indorama Ventures’ products. The same holds true of one in every four airbags, and one in every six PET bottles. We are in the commodity business and we sell our products to the world’s most well-known brands. We purchase our raw materials from all the largest global petrochemical manufacturers too. Our integrated plant, in close proximity to both customers and suppliers in the Europoort, coupled with the Netherlands’ business-friendly environment attracted us to acquire this plant in Rotterdam."

Working on expansion

Managing director Sumit Bahl is the epitome of modesty and heads the chemicals complex at Maasvlakte. The complex was established in 1998 by well-known chemical company Eastman Chemicals and has its own jetty and is set in a large garden area. Indorama Ventures took over the complex ten years later in April 2008, expanding the facility by setting up one more PET plant of the same capacity and purchased local utility assets. "We are now working on the expansion of our existing PD plant (PTA is one of the basic feedstocks used in producing polyester) with an investment of approximately €350 million. Commercial production is expected to start in mid-2016," Bahl assures, praising the company’s relationship with Rotterdam Partners as a major help during expansion.

Indorama Ventures is listed in Stock Exchange of Thailand with majority stake held by the Lohia family. The company is headed by Mr. Aloke Lohia and is headquartered in Bangkok. The multinational has seen massive growth over the past twenty years and now operates 36 factories in 30 countries on four continents, employing nearly 14,000 people worldwide with revenue of $7.5 Billion. Indorama Ventures has seen exponential growth in the period following the acquisition of its Rotterdam facility in 2008 and has taken a largely inorganic route, acquiring related businesses worldwide. "There have been acquisitions in Canada, Turkey and Thailand this year and the company continues to grow," Bahl underlines.

Sustainably responsible

“Our world class research facilities are led by the best team in the industry, enabling IVL to continuously innovate to provide solutions today to tomorrow’s questions. At Indorama Ventures, sustainability means long-term viability and encompasses the entire operations of the Company. Being sustainable means acting in a socially, environmentally and economically responsible way in everything we do. We have several facilities globally for recycling of PET Resins and Fibers, we produce BIO based PET bottles, use solar panels in Thailand, a wind turbine in Lithuania and also work on reducing our carbon footprint,” Bahl concludes.
The largest independent commercial real estate developer in the Netherlands, OVG completed the world’s most sustainable building last year: The Edge in Amsterdam, also for Deloitte. “That’s what OVG represents: innovation, sustainability, energy conservation, technology and redevelopment,” Jan-Hein Lakeman, commercial director at Rotterdam OVG, states emphatically. “As a customer-oriented developer, we first listen to what the customer wants, and then build accommodations that suit those preferences. We partner with companies like Philips, leading architects such as Rem Koolhaas (OMA) and Winy Maas (MVRDV) and acclaimed construction firms.” Lakeman (51) has been working for OVG for ten years now, since graduating from Erasmus University Rotterdam with a degree in business administration. Founder and CEO Coen van Oostrom started work in property and real estate development in 1997, back when he was a 27-year-old student of economics at Erasmus. OVG also has a presence in Germany’s biggest cities, as well as operations in investment management and inner-city development and redevelopment.

Customer-oriented

“WindChallenge wants to be a leader in this segment, and we are targeting remote off-grid locations, like a building site, or for recharging electric cars,” Sander says. “It’s a good country for pilot projects, though including other innovations.” WindChallenge wants to become international market leader in this segment, and its unique product could make that possible. “The wind turbine uses a blade-filling technique that allows the turbine to keep spinning even when at high wind speeds. Other small wind turbines have fixed blades and are less flexible. Our product involves lower CO2 levels during production and takes less material installation does not require a crane, nor does it demand structural calculation for rooftop use: the weight is comparable to solar panels.”

Sander continues: “We face competition from mass-produced Chinese solar panels, which is why we opt for countries that have less sunshine. We are targeting remote off-grid locations, like we see in the Scandinavian countries. You can combine our product with lamp posts or temporary locations, like a building site, or for recharging electric cars with renewable energy.”

Since their move to the SuGu location, the former E.ON power plant in Rotterdam West, WindChallenge is ready for its second up: “The port is interesting in terms of transport for our products, and the industrial setting appeals to us because it has less sunshine. We are targeting remote off-grid locations, like the Vietnamese province, or for recharging electric cars with renewable energy.”

WindChallenge wants to become international market leader in this segment, and their unique product could make that possible.
Vincent Taapken
New Industry
“Create meeting points in the city center”

“New Industry is a creative, distinctive developer and consultant on project development and urban development. We don’t produce buildings, we create dynamic, multifunctional meeting points.” Vincent Taapken founded his company as an answer to traditional property management culture. He talks about Rotterdam, now and in the future.

New Industry focuses on sustainable urban development through redevelopment and transformation, in combination with new buildings that represent striking feats of architecture. Characteristic spots that have their own story, such as industrial and cultural heritage, act as the drivers behind the development of neighborhoods and areas. “How people behave and what they need are the main priorities,” Taapken explains. “The effects of trends and exponential changes resulting from e.g. digitization, mobility, the sharing economy, and the aging population will have a major impact on changes in the coming decades. Our aim is to breathe new life into the city by making beautiful, exceptional, stylish spaces and settings for people to live, work and meet in. Above all, working on the city should be fun and challenging.”

New Industry therefore constantly looks for local partners that complement its knowledge, experience and competencies. Vincent is a business administration graduate with a professional experience at DHV Management Consultants (Amersfoort), the Dudok catering group (Rotterdam), Mecanoo Architects (Delft) and OVG Project Development (Rotterdam), he started New Industry at the end of 2008.

OUR AIM IS TO BREATHE NEW LIFE INTO THE CITY BY MAKING BEAUTIFUL, EXCEPTIONAL, STYLISH SPACES AND SETTING'S FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE, WORK AND MEET IN. ABOVE ALL, WORKING ON THE CITY SHOULD BE FUN AND CHALLENGING.

City and port
“The Port of Rotterdam Authority is a major player; they bring a lot of revenue into the city. But the focus on the port sometimes feels compulsory. Rotterdam is a city and port that were once separated from each other. That makes it difficult, because a modern city needs concentration; it needs lots of functions in close proximity; within cycling and walking distance. The essence of a city is about encounters. So the port companies shouldn’t have their offices in the port, but right in the middle of the city. People work closer together there; the offices downtown fill up again, facilitating chance encounters.”

“Rotterdam should concentrate more, focus all its efforts on the city center around the river. Tourism is an important opportunity for a driver for the urban economy. It generates lots of different types of jobs; from cleaner to chef or branch manager. People who don’t hold university degrees need work too. The port is becoming more and more technology-oriented. If you don’t have as much training and education, it is not that easy to find a suitable job here anymore.”

For the first time in history, Rotterdam is a city of leisure on the river, instead of a city of work by port. That shaft needs to be reflected in the buildings. Create more economic activity by making the city more enjoyable, offering better culture and appealing outdoor spaces. Art, Culture & Culinary are still key drivers of a unique city, without losing sight of the port. Rotterdam’s greatest strength is its diversity and its layers. The multicultural mix of people and various architectural styles make Rotterdam unique compared to other world cities.

The city needs to be structured in such a way that it invites you to spend time outside; that’s where you’ll meet people who might be interesting. “If you cross the Rijnhavenbrug, the new bridge to the Katendrecht peninsula, you’ll see lots of people heading over to Delplein, a city square lined in restaurants. It combines the best of big-city cuisines with village-style local charm, thanks to its compact structure. Isn’t it great how different worlds converge there in this city?”

Attracted by locals
One of the key reasons for a company to settle here is its potential workforce. “Rotterdam needs to be focused on more than just bringing companies here; the city needs to be a really great place for businesses to be. Build high-quality homes that cost more, not social housing projects. Just like Apple, you should make a product that’s so good that people are willing to pay more. Quality needs to go up, and that’s only possible if people are willing to pay more,” Taapken says.

Innovation and Technology

Brinme is a Belgian technology firm that initiated development of their Brinme Box four years ago and started a pilot in Leuven at the end of 2014. Brinme is a start-up with commercial operations in Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. “We opted for Rotterdam because the location had a mindset and mentality that suited Belgium’s culture best, and was conveniently located in terms of proximity to Belgium. Furthermore, we associate Rotterdam with technological innovation.”

Brinme Rotterdam is based in the Groot Handelsgebouw, due to its central location and easy accessibility. “Our ambition for the coming years is to install our Brinme Box in as many office locations and apartment buildings in the Netherlands and Belgium as possible and to maximize the number of users.”

Brinme is the new way to send and receive parcels. Brinme.com links a system of smart boxes to a mobile app. People can have everything they order delivered to one of these boxes, at home or at their work. The mobile app sends the user a real-time notification when the parcels (or orders) have arrived,” explains Farid Rached, Business Development Manager for Brinme in Rotterdam.

Brinme’s goal is to let their users receive and send packages at the places where they spend most of their time: at home and at the office. “Our designer boxes contribute to an aesthetically pleasing interior for corporate offices. Moreover, there are no costs for the user; the participating company pays the fees for the boxes. And we offer a completely open platform; every webshop, local retailer or courier can deliver in our Brinme Box.”

“Companies that are eager to invest in their employees’ satisfaction opt for our system, in view of the work/life balance. It is also an efficiency tool; a reception desk or facility management office is no longer overworked by the flow of parcels. Our clients also contribute to sustainability, by combining parcels for several recipients at the same time, a courier decreases the number of trips he has to make. And our Brinme Box is always there to receive a package, so a courier doesn’t have to come back to try again. As a bonus, our boxes are an attractive feature in any reception area and contribute to a company’s innovative image.”

Rached praises Rotterdam Partners: “They supported us through the process of finding the best location and is helping us to set up networks with corporations and real estate agencies. They also put us in contact with VNO-NCW and their network.”
DJI, the most popular drone maker, landed in Rotterdam region at the beginning of 2015. It’s world leading image-capturing technology is redefining industries. DJI has experienced several years of consecutive triple-digit growth, making it one of the world’s fastest growing companies in the hi-tech industry. Last year, Fast Company released their 2015 World’s Top 50 Most Innovative Companies in Consumer Electronics and ranked DJI among the top 3, together with Google and Tesla.

DJI Europe started this year with 3 employees and currently employs 21 people in Rotterdam region, mainly in logistics, customer support & after-sales service.

In March 2015, Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte and Vice-Mayor of Rotterdam Maarten Struijvenberg made a visit to DJI headquarters in Shenzhen, organised by NFIA and Rotterdam Partners. DJI founder and CEO Frank Wang received them and they exchanged opinions around the topic of “What is innovation?” Frank Wang said the main reason for DJI becoming a world leading company is because it respects every dream and blazes new trails in technology. DJI will continually produce the best products and help extend their use to more industries. On the other hand, DJI will continue to foster innovation at large, through supporting its R&D team and holding contests for students to help more young people realize their dreams and increase the attractiveness of becoming a creative engineer.

Mark Rutte stated, “A lot of people have dreams, but few of them dedicate their lives to realizing their dreams, like Frank Wang is doing.” Mark Rutte believes more people around the world would be willing to join DJI in the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship. They discussed the possibility of the Netherlands cooperating with DJI to hold more international events to spur innovation and Mark also invited Frank to speak at universities in the Netherlands to inspire young talent.

Headquartered in Shenzhen, widely considered China’s Silicon Valley, DJI benefits from direct access to suppliers, raw materials and a young and creative talent pool necessary for sustained success. Drawing on these resources, DJI has grown from a single small office in 2006 to a global workforce of over 3,000. Their offices can now be found in the United States, China, Japan, Hong Kong and Brazil. As a privately owned and operated company, DJI focuses on its own vision of support—creating, commercial, and nonprofit applications of their technology.

Today, DJI products are redefining industries. Professionals in filmmaking, agriculture, real estate conservation, search and rescue, energy infrastructure, and more, trust DJI to bring new perspectives to their work and help them achieve things safer, faster, and with greater efficiency than ever before.

DJI drones redefine industries

XYZprinting sees a future for 3D printers

“We have offices all over the world, including California, Brazil and Shanghai, China. For our European office, we opted for Rotterdam, mainly as a logistics base for reaching the rest of the Europe. We also offer maintenance and service to our European clients from Rotterdam, which is why we have a storage facility here.” Fernando Hernandez is sales director for New Kinpo, a major 3D printer company from Taiwan with factories all over the world.
BYD Europe is a driver of growth in e-transport

Chinese manufacturer BYD continues to surprise the world with its progress in electrifying transport on the world’s most congested and polluted city streets. A strong focus for the company is the European market for pure electric buses. At its European headquarters in Rotterdam, more and more people are working in sales and marketing and BYD Europe has announced that it is even considering building a bus assembly facility somewhere in the EU. Following a two-year pilot with two cars, the number of electric taxis in Rotterdam will soon be expanded to 22. With these results, it’s easy to see what BYD stands for: Build Your Dreams.

European managing director Isbrand Ho: “35 electric buses from BYD are now carrying passengers at Schiphol Airport and the Schiermonnikoog Island uses a fleet made up of 100% of our clean, electric buses. Even so, Europe represents only 2.8% of our brand’s global sales. That must and will go up. We will be focusing fully on electric transport in this part of the world. Europe is a promising growth market in this field. We expect growth to show a hockey-stick pattern: slowly moving forward, and then suddenly shooting up.” Since 1995, BYD has developed into the world’s largest rechargeable battery manufacturer. Their know-how is used to manufacture top-of-the-line electric cars and buses. Their vehicles are absolutely packed with innovative technological features, since BYD is also a major supplier of parts for the smartphone industry. They don’t advertise those activities much, but many people are already using products made by this global brand.

And passenger cars too?
“The BYD office (it just moved into a new, larger building) has doubled in staff over the past two years, now employing 50 people,” Isbrand continues. “We have been bringing electric taxis and buses to the European market for the past four years, primarily serving the business market. Even so, since we started our European headquarters in Rotterdam in 1999, Rotterdam Partners has helped us expand our activities. We will be building a workshop here now, too, which means more jobs. We also have a storage facility for bus parts in Venlo. We are now focusing on the large-scale introduction of electric and low emission passenger vehicles for consumers which may be as soon as the Geneva International Motor Show in 2022.”

BYD is the world’s biggest manufacturer of electric buses for passenger transport. Other car manufacturers do not make their own batteries; BYD worked the other way around, building a series of vehicles based on its batteries. “We are also responsible for the ‘Brand New China’ slogan, an innovative initiative focusing on high-quality technology. It made the news when two young Dutch people drove from Shanghai to Rotterdam in a BYD car, covering 20,000 km in three months without a hitch. They helped us show that we have transitioned from ‘Made in China’ to ‘Designed in China’.”

IT’S EASY TO SEE WHAT BYD STANDS FOR: BUILD YOUR DREAMS.

BYD has a soft spot for Rotterdam

In recent years, Korean firm Intellian experienced impressive expansion worldwide, with the maritime sector as a key growth segment. “The new international logistics center in Rotterdam allows us to serve the market most quickly, supported by highly trained engineers and professional technical support staff,” states Mr. Eric Sung, President and CEO of Intellian.

“People currently insist on incredibly fast connections, even at sea. Data flows increasingly dictate the standard of operational efficiency on board. They are also part of how appealing life at sea seems as a career choice. Intellian expects demand for our products to continue growing rapidly. Rotterdam can play a central role in meeting the shipping industry’s need for fast connections and is at the heart of our plans for expansion in the European maritime sector.”

Sung frames the ambitious plans from Rotterdam from an extremely positive perspective. The Korean company is a global leading producer of stable satellite antenna systems. Their systems are based on patented technology for radio frequencies and stabilization and detection technology. The Intellian products support a broad spectrum of industries, including commercial maritime companies, the offshore energy sector, intelligence companies and defense, and private luxury yachts. “Our extensive range of antenna systems includes satellite TV, VSAT, Global Xpress and broadband solutions. Our company headquarters are in the Korean capital, Seoul with a maritime technical center in the port city of Pusan. We also have offices, storage facilities and technical centers located in the world’s most important shipping destinations.”

Why Rotterdam?
Eric Sung states: “Intellian is focused on solving day-to-day market challenges in response to client demand. In line with that focus, we recently quadrupled the size of our logistical center in Rotterdam. The expansion in office and training facilities is the best way to meet the growing global demand for our products. Rotterdam is the Gateway to Europe. It has developed into one of the main industrial centers and the biggest logistical hub for all sectors in the maritime world. “From the facilities in Rotterdam, Intellian is strategically positioned to meet rapid response times and the accompanying service that our clients demand. That requires rapid product delivery while supplying the necessary training and service. The investment in Rotterdam solidifies our position as the only hardware provider for the industry, thanks to our supply chain across three continents: Europe, North America and Asia.”

THE ROTTERDAM RED CARPET 4th edition - October 2015

CURRENT INVESTOR

Innovation and Technology

CURRENT INVESTOR

THE EUROPEAN MARITIME SECTOR.

Innovation and Technology

THIS PORT IS AT THE HEART OF OUR PLANS FOR EXPANSION IN THE EUROPEAN MARITIME SECTOR.

October 2015

International Trade & Investment

INNOVATION FOR RÁY?.

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INNOVATION FOR RÁY?
"21st-century manufacturing industry needs to be completely up-to-date in its methods in order to face global competition. Many industries in Europe have not yet reached that point, so demand for our experience is growing. Rotterdam will help with further growth in the European market," explains Mark Takaki from Callisto Integration Europe.

"Manufacturing solutions, including the Internet of Things unites people and processes with data, materials and machines. Communication and IT are essential in modern industry, smart manufacturing is the motto," Takaki is clear about why he chose Rotterdam. "Rotterdam Partners and NFIA gave us all the information we needed and put us in contact with the right people and organisations. That helped us get off to a quick start. Our Rotterdam team is focused on Benelux and on supporting our teams elsewhere and the Rotterdam Partners expat bureau can help our people from other locations to settle here."

"Growth market in Europe" Europe will remain a growth market in the future, he states unequivocally. "The biggest challenge facing the manufacturing industry is to get their IT and automation up to world class standards. Keeping up with and anticipating rapid developments is the key to gaining competitive advantage." Operational excellence is vital to maintaining a competitive edge in the global arena. Quality management is only part of that; product knowledge and product development are also important.

"Rotterdam Partners provides active support for our activities, and we see that they are building a network that benefits us. That is essential to the development of Daiwa Kasei Europe. In Rotterdam, we can build a solid foundation for further expansion."

"We distribute and sell small automotive parts. For example, a Toyota Prius contains 300 parts that we supply. All those small components contributed to enriching society by offering more safety and comfort. You hardly ever see our products, if at all, but you do notice their effects," Mr. Tetsuya Aoyama from Daiwa Kasei Europe smiles expansively in his new Rotterdam office.

The Japanese company celebrated their fifteenth anniversary of European operations this year, marked from the start of their office in the UK. "But many of our products arrive in the Netherlands. And our customers are also in Europe. So we moved to Rotterdam in June 2015 to be closer to our customers and suppliers. There's a good reason the city is called 'The Gateway to Europe' – our office on Wewa puts us eight in the middle of downtown Rotterdam, near the Central Station. There are five of us working here now, and we plan to expand that in the coming years."

Managing director Aoyama knows from experience that there will be no difficulties finding highly qualified personnel in Rotterdam, supplementing the highly motivated staff who have relocated to the area. And they are close to their logistics company in Tilburg, which they use for all deliveries in Europe. This was the main reason the company moved to the Netherlands.

"Rotterdam Partners provides active support for our activities, and we see that they are building a network that benefits us. That is essential to the development of Daiwa Kasei Europe. In Rotterdam, we can build a solid foundation for further expansion."
Hans de Boer (59) is the president of employers’ federation VNO-NCW (Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers), VNO-NCW is the largest employers’ organization in the Netherlands. VNO-NCW is a lobby organization that promotes a strong business and investment climate and in addition represents the common interests of Dutch businesses on a national and international level.

We’re halfway through 2015. What do you think is going well in the Dutch economy, and what isn’t? How do you see the economy growing in 2015-2020? “After seven years of stagnation, the Dutch economy has regained the level it was at in 2008, and the prosperity level next year will be equivalent to 2008 again. Growth is at 2 to 2.5%. Those are positive signals. We have clearly made it through the worst of it all.

At the core, the Netherlands is a strong country economically; the Dutch economy ranks fifth in the world. I am pleased to see an incredible amount of innovative entrepreneurship around me again. “But there are a number of structural issues that we cannot ignore. Unemployment is still high and we face challenges in areas like access to funding, the instability in the Eurozone, the pension and housing market, and the high administrative burden. People experience a very large difference between gross and net income. That’s why we are emphasizing the importance of growth ambitions for the Netherlands, with several clear choices aimed at facilitating growth in our export position, boosting our innovative capacity via the Top Sectors policy, and ensuring that all the ingredients are in place to achieve the best climate for entrepreneurs to thrive. That also means continuing to invest, for instance in Rotterdam as a maiport. It should be noted, and I’ll keep mentioning that: growth is not an economic hobby. It’s about people and about the quality of society. Growth generates jobs and income. And if a Dutch candidate and an equally qualified candidate who is now overlooked due to factors like disability or ethnicity can apply for two jobs instead of one, society will be a better place. Growth ambitions are essentially social ambitions.”

VNO-NCW is the biggest employers’ organization in the Netherlands. Many organizations are seeing their membership decline. Is this an issue in the business community as well? “We have been delighted to discover that businesses continue seeking contact with each other as much as ever, not only in sector associations like VNO-NCW; but also through the SME efforts of MKE-Nederland. We also intensified our partnership with PZO-ZP: the platform for independent entrepreneurs, and they are also working from the Malietoren in The Hague. I suspect that the reason for this is that companies have also realized that joining forces is absolutely vital in order to achieve results. Forming a united front in discussions with politicians, government authorities and other parties has always been a very effective approach. A great deal of innovation also takes place. Consultation is far more extensive than it has been in the past. Last year, an Energy Pact was signed between more than 40 civil society organizations. That also brings massive contributions to the business community. We see the same innovation in sector associations. Innovation has become a major theme among companies, and sectors often play a key role in engaging with companies, from providing information to offering tangible assistance. Shopping assistance, for instance, unites countless sectors on the topic of innovation in retail. And I see tangible entrepreneurial initiatives in the field of sustainability. That’s fantastic.”

You have had a great career, solid and extremely diverse. Is there any one person who played a key mentor role for you during your personal development? If so, what specific feedback did you welcome? “Oh, there were so many. I ran into people every day who teach me valuable lessons. But I am glad that my headmaster at primary school, Mr. De Groot, told my father 50 years ago that I should attend the highest level of secondary school and take Greek and Latin. And I’m pleased with the sailing instructors who showed me the way 42 years ago to discover the fantastic student life in Amsterdam. Instruction and education, these are key in a human lifetime.”

If you had a crystal ball, what would be the next big innovation in the SME segment and/or in general? “It’s impossible to predict a tangible innovation – or at least, if I could predict it, I’d be working on it. But you do see a number of interesting developments that are already clearly shaping up to be major breakthroughs. It’s not entirely clear what the latest technology can do, and sometimes it has that flavor of robotization, displacement, but it’s certain that innovation will follow. I mainly expect classic boundaries between sectors to blur. Google Car may be the best-known illustration of that, but logistics and ICT are also completely entangled by now, for example. Issues like food security also demand a combination of creativity, technology and collaboration that will be key features shared by the new major innovators.”

If you had a key that would fit any door, which door that had previously been closed would you open first? “The Kremlin. I would love to sit down and have a man-to-man talk with Putin, see if you could still find a way to work together. The increasing international tension is a cause for concern, and a diplomatic route to find a solution for the conflict and achieving peace seems crucial in this context.”

Do you think that the Dutch business community will ever produce a new Philips, Unilever or Shell on the same scale? Hennes & Mauritz? Or have we permanently lost that drive as characteristic of the Dutch East India Company? “I am convinced that this will happen, in fact, that drive never left. Look at ASML. It emerged in the mid-1970s in a new building on the Natherl building in Eindhoven as a joint venture between ASM and Philips, and now it’s a global leader. The same holds true for companies like NXP. Or like Bijenkorf. And there are many more examples, and they will keep coming. What it comes down to is that we need to create a good, stimulating environment for those companies that helps them keep growing. For that purpose, we need less regulation and more flexibility, and above all: appreciation for people who have the courage to stick out their necks.”

FORMING A UNITED FRONT IN DISCUSSIONS WITH POLITICIANS, GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES AND OTHER PARTIES HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH. A GREAT DEAL OF INNOVATION ALSO TAKES PLACE.

Is anything lacking in the Dutch capacity for innovation? And what can we and should we be doing about it? “Government investments have been neglected a lot in recent years. If you look at what the Dutch government spends on R&D, it’s fairly low in an international context. Research shows that when governments pursue innovation more strongly, businesses do too. The Scandinavian countries do this well: they take government revenues and reinvest them in giving companies the resources to innovate. Germany is also investing well in innovation. I’m not saying that nothing’s happening in the Netherlands, quite the opposite, but we do need to constantly engage in dialogue about funding cuts for innovation tools.

Politics and business are sometimes diametrically opposed in this country. The Netherlands has become the country of rules and regulations, whereas companies and the business community as a whole need freedom. What is your perspective on that? “Rules and regulatory oversight are necessary, especially in a complex society like ours, where all the functions are intermingled: living, working, housing, nature, safety and security. But yes, it often gets out of control. For instance, in terms of regulatory oversight, a single sector or field may sometimes be surrounded by 15 or 16 different regulatory authorities. You see the same thing in the financial sector. It is clear that certain measures were productive and necessary there, but the sheer volume of rules that have been added there in the last few years has a direct impact on the funding options for Dutch companies and the economy. Risk mitigation measures are valid, but this approach means that the Netherlands is investing more than the Eurozone standards, which really ties our hands. What I view as positive developments are the areas where the business community clearly listens and responds to things. You see that in Safety First! Veiligheid Staat (Safety First: Security Stands). Dutch companies in the chemicals industry in cooperation with related sectors and VNO-NCW to increase safety in terms of hazardous materials by using our own approach.”

Good business climate factors are incredibly important in terms of attracting and retaining foreign companies. An attractive fiscal regime and the labor market (for university graduates) are key. Could you offer your views on

INTERVIEW

Hans de Boer
President of employers’ federation VNO-NCW

“Rotterdam’s inhabitants show initiative and courage”
This May, the 2015 World Expo took off in Milan on the central theme: Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life. Thanks to the municipal- ity of Rotterdam, the World Expo includes a magnificent Holland Pavilion. ‘Share, Grow, Live’ is the motto for the Netherlands. A Westland-style greenhouse, food trucks, the port of Rotterdam, and a focus on food innovation: it’s all on display in Milan.

The Dutch pavilion presented Rotterdam as the ‘Food Delta of Europe’. The port of Rotterdam is the gateway to the European market, representing nearly 500 million consumers. 1.5 million tons of fresh products come into this port every year and 15 mil- lion tons are exported. The port uses the most innovative methods to add value to food, as the seminar on Food Logistics showed.

Inland from the port, the Westland area is the world’s leading center of glasshouse horticulture. The large innovations and sustainable developments in technology, trade, international trade, energy, food and water are all happening right here. For in- stance, glasshouse horticulture uses vari- ous colors of LED lighting to influence growth rate and flavor. The Westland also leads the industry in seed breeding.

DUBAI 2020

The World Expo 2020 will take place in Dubai and Lotte Schippers from the Dutch consulate in Dubai explains how this city- state is experiencing this upcoming event. “Everything is focused on making 2020 a success, because UAE is in fact a wealthy but developing country that has only exist- ed for 43 years. The Expo is very much being prepped for the future. The new infra- structure will make sure that everyone will be able to visit the Expo location, be- cause tourism will increase. The new air- port and the state-of-the-art railway connec- tion will be established at the event site, near the border with Abu Dhabi. More hotels will be built as well, for instance on the festival grounds.”

“The Expo forces Dubai to be creative and in the end serve as a knowledge center. I would like to see Rotterdam not only emphasising the waterfront, but also focusing on more office space for logistics service provid- ers in downtown Rotterdam. The new Central Station is a clear advantage in that respect.”

“After the Expo, this area will be the loca- tion of the new World Trade Center, since the current WTC is bursting at the seams. The Expo is the stepping stone to the fu- ture. Evidence that it is a driving factor in society can be seen everywhere: the logo can be seen in every newspaper, on metro trains, and even on police cars. Everyone supports the Expo, and that is important given the fact that it is the first of its kind in the Middle East.

“The Expo forces Dubai to be creative and in the end serve as a knowledge center. Dubai is expecting 25 million visitors, es- pecially people from out of town. In order to make everything appealing, there will be three theme parks, which will attract extra tourists all on their own. Of the many array of new options should be very diverse and offer a permanent fixture for the future.”

“Dubai has a budget of 12 billion euros available for parties with innovative ideas. After the nomination in November 2013, everyone was talking about it. Following the big celebration party, a lot of thought has gone into the actual operations. We are now in the phase of the first contracts for major infrastructure projects. “Rotterdam should attempt this too; the Expo is a tool for development, not an ob- jective in itself. A way to increase develop- ment in both Rotterdam and the Netherlands. A way to take new approaches and ways to connect. It will boost employment, but it will also serve as a way to enhance our nation’s profile.”

ROTTERDAM 2025

Lendhoven is one of the initiators in trying to get the 2025 World Expo to Rotterdam. These are the main reasons: “The world is in a state of transition; we are moving from a carbon-based to a bio- based economy. That is a sustainable economy. That is an ecological necessity, and we are trying to turn that into an economic opportunity for Rotterdam. That means we need a ten- year schedule with New Economy as its focus. We have the opportunity to display Rotterdam to the world on a global stage. The proceeds are estimated in the billions.”

“The program runs along three lines of thought. First, the event will be profitable in itself. Secondly, the exploitation of real estate and investments in infrastructure and accessibility - investments that were necessary anyway will be moved up on the schedule. And third, all infrastructure and pavilions will be available for re-use. We are already in the process of thinking about its purpose.

“All in all, it will be a complete program, for everyone and all regions. We expect the creation of 50,000 jobs because of the Expo 2025. These will be mostly jobs in construction, services. We are now in the process of developing the Holland 2025 program. In that year, Amsterdam will be celebrating its 750th anniversary, and the World Expo in Rotterdam will be taking place from May to November.

“A great deal still needs to be done, but there is plenty of enthusiasm for Rotterdam to put in a bid. It is a wonderful example of a private-public partnership. We will be funded by the business community and expect a decision from the Government in 2014 on the national and regional levels.

“We have already joined forces in the Netherlands. The Supervisory Board in- cludes Dutch industry leaders: Charlotte Inzinger (formerly Eramus MC), Marielle Koppenberg (Houthof Buruma), Frans van Houten (Royal Philips), Roland Prechtsch (Vd Veld - de Groot) and John Walls (sev- eral supervisory board memberships).”

For more information, see also www. WORTEBu2025.nl
Wilma Franchimon, president of the executive board

“Codarts is far more than music, dance & circus”

“Innovation is an intrinsic part of the arts: whether you're playing music, dancing or performing as a circus artist, you're innovating all the time. You have to have the courage to stand out; you are a living, breathing source of inspiration. Unafraid to fall flat on your face, learn from your mistakes, practice self-reflection, and start again.” From Rotterdam herself, Wilma Franchimon has been president of the executive board at Codarts, University of the Arts Rotterdam, since 2014. She holds very clear opinions about the international arts academy that she heads.

With 600 international students from all across the world enrolled at Codarts, her pride is justified. Combining the Rotterdam Conservatory (founded in 1931) the Rotterdam Dance School (founded in 1950) and the circus school (founded in 2006), Codarts is now a modern university of the arts. Its main campus is in downtown Rotterdam, with the World Music Dance Center (WMDKC) in the west of the city and the circus school on De Kaap. Franchimon studied classical singing at the conservatory, performed extensive and went on tour. Her past education and experience offer a small sampling of what students can look forward to.

“The focus is on performing for an audience from Day 1: no art without a social context, as we say here. Withdrawing into your own little cocoon and keep your art to yourself, that's not part of our experience here. We offer Bachelor's and Master's programs in jazz, pop, classical music, world music, music theatre, dance and circus. Performing for an audience is a key part of our programs. That's what they will eventually be housing their career on and earning money doing. Being able to present yourself is part of that; they have to have the courage to be enterprising.”

Franchimon talks about the international focus at Codarts.

“The graduates perform all over the world: in concert halls, in theaters, on the street, for municipalities or businesses, at embassies, for the royal family, all sorts of places. The work itself is dramatically diverse. That's what makes it so essential for Codarts to maintain its national and international contacts. We recently went along on the Dutch university and trade mission to Canada, which was incredibly educational and well worth repeating. Rotterdam and Codarts could still mean a great deal more to each other in partnerships like that.”

We also offer the dance therapy program at the Master’s level. You can also continue studying to become a music or dance teacher, or go on after your Master's to get a PhD in cooperation with Leiden University or Erasmus University. One student of ours was recently the first in the world to get a PhD in ‘creating and recreating Tangos’. In our Bachelor’s program for the circus, we want to develop a kind of building.

Wilma Franchimon proudly describes how passionate the students are: “They start early in the morning, and many don’t leave the building until it closes. The drop-out rate here is very low, less than 10%. Only people who demonstrate true dedication to develop their talent are admitted. Codarts has 900 students and 30 teachers, international guest lecturers, and support staff, making it a relatively small organization. But that exclusivity actually benefits the quality of the programs and gives our students a realistic chance at finding a job. Codarts is known all over the world for its profile and quality – this is where tomorrow’s artists are being trained.”
"We put the various organizations together, at the CEO level, since the corporates (big businesses listed on the stock exchange) can learn from the start-ups and vice versa. This will foster new developments that strengthen our country’s economy. That is why Minister Kamp is the driving force behind this summit. The Ministry of Economic Affairs sees innovation hubs like YES/Delta spring up all across the Netherlands, but they are not yet widely known. If you treat all these parties to a fantastic event, it is possible—no, it’s absolutely assured that something new will emerge.”

Hendrik Halbe’s enthusiasm is irresistible; he rattles along at high-speed about what all their plans entail. Halbe is the managing director of the Erasmus Centre for Entrepreneurship (ECE), an expertise center at Erasmus University, ECE is organizing the How To Get There Summit in conjunction with StartupDelta. The event will take place on various floors of the ECE Campus, in the Science Tower on Marconiplein. Arko Veeankind signed on to help organize the day’s activities.

Start of the future

“We expect about 2,500 people, who need to be entertained in interesting ways. No boring conference here; the whole tower is bubbling with activity now. We’re thinking about setting up food trucks by the entrance where you can eat in between all day long. And we’ll have presentations by surprising start-ups from all across the country, so corporate CEOs can see what’s happening in the Netherlands. The future is now, and fresh new enterprises are everywhere. These small companies will be in the spotlight in an excitable finale of Get in the Ring (see box) with the six best start-ups, selected from a pool of 100 candidates.”

Veeankind notes that at least 100 start-ups from all across the Netherlands will be attending. CEOs can expand their networks by adding hundreds of new connections. The aim is to foster dozens of new experiments between corporates and start-ups. “You could see it as an innovation festival where every prospective, new and established entrepreneur will find what they’re looking for. Experts like Jeremy Rifkin offer their perspective, from top speakers in the world of business. The event will start with a closed consultation between Neelie Kroes from StartupDelta, Minister Kamp of Economic Affairs, and the CEOs.”

Rotterdam Partners is one of the key partners to this event, alongside the municipality and the Port of Rotterdam Authority.

Our goal is to link 100,000 start-ups across the world to 100 million fans.

Erasmus University

The ECE has been years in the making: launched in 2013, it moved into the Science Tower last year, creating the ECE Campus. The ECE has been years in the making; it launched in 2013, it moved into the Science Tower last year, creating the ECE Campus. The ECE is intended to do value to the business community. Our activities are run by a small team of fifteen people, supported by about thirty researchers and three professors, including Justin Jansen, professor of Corporate Entrepreneurship. Investing in entrepreneurship will create the jobs of the future. Now people see lots of jobs vanishing due to automation, but new jobs that we don’t even know about yet will be replacing them.

Veeankind 

Get in the Ring

“One tool for increasing enthusiasm for entrepreneurship among teens and students is to find a fun way to make it exciting. The Get in the Ring is a great place to do that, although these matches are not about sparring verbally rather than physically. This ECE idea has become popular worldwide. Its widespread popularity has led to Get in the Ring becoming an independent organization. Erwin Koenraads offers more on this homegrown Rotterdam concept.

“The non-profit foundation works all over the world and was launched in Rotterdam. Our goal is to link 100,000 start-ups across the world to 100 million fans. Those fans contribute capital, customers, talent and expertise. After the 2012 launch in Rotterdam’s Laurenskerk, it proved to be a fantastic idea. Get in the Ring meetings are now organized in 70 countries, where start-ups tell their story and the audience decides who’s best in various categories. The audience consists of young entrepreneurs who recognize a good story when they see it. We showcase start-ups, give them the platform they deserve.”

The concept is the same all over the world, focusing on entertainment, networking, education and partying. Koenraads explains that the combination appeals to young people all over the world. “We work with local networks or ‘entrepreneurship ecosystems’. They bring investors, business representatives, students and top entrepreneurs together for an evening. The current competition, which runs until 2016, has 130 events going all across the world, all part of the Get in the Ring initiative.

Now people see lots of jobs vanishing due to automation, but new jobs that we don’t even know about yet will be replacing them.

Our concept is that established events for start-ups were often poor quality and unexciting. That needed to be improved. Events for start-ups in the Netherlands used to only target our country. In a global economy, international collaboration is vital. We also saw a need for a platform for young start-ups, for entrepreneurs who are still at the beginning of their initiative. Now they can tell a focused audience about their problems and their successes. Those elements together create the success of the Get in the Ring formula. We were operating in 64 countries within three years.”

In the Netherlands, local finals were held this year in Amsterdam, Utrecht, Eindhoven, Groningen and Rotterdam. The final event will be on November 19th in Rotterdam during How To Get There.

Get in the Ring

Innovate faster together

HENDRIK HALBE

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The ECE has been years in the making: launched in 2013, it moved into the Science Tower last year, creating the ECE Campus. Hendrik Halbe: “Erasmus University enjoys worldwide renown as the university that cultivated the Port of Rotterdam Authority. Experts like Jeremy Rifkin offer their perspective, from top speakers in the world of business. The event will start with a closed consultation between Neelie Kroes from StartupDelta, Minister Kamp of Economic Affairs, and the CEOs.”

Rotterdam Partners is one of the key partners to this event, alongside the municipality and the Port of Rotterdam Authority.

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Rotterdam Partners is one of the key partners to this event, alongside the municipality and the Port of Rotterdam Authority.
the China-based Jirong Europe will be serving as a logistical center for the European and Asian markets.
How many people accompanied you to the Netherlands?
“We came to the Netherlands in 2013, in the company of my wife and daughter, who was twelve years old at the time. We had lived in the USA before that, but we had lived as expats before in Munich and Leipzig in Germany. As an American, it is interesting to have the opportunity to live here in the Netherlands because of the connections the Netherlands and USA have had for a long time, over at least 200 years.”

Is your daughter attending school here?
“Our daughter is attending the American International School of Rotterdam, an international school with students from various countries. She is gaining experiences, and enjoying sports and all sorts of activities. I believe it is important for the city to support a school like that in order to promote growth, since it is an important resource for every expat relocating to Rotterdam.”

How long will you and your family stay in the Netherlands?
“We will stay here another three years for my work.”

What is your opinion about this city?
“Rotterdam is a pleasant city. It is easy to go anywhere by public transportation and very safe to travel by bike. The city center is modern, has excellent infrastructure and convenient restaurants, shops and lots of great activities. The port is attractive and very interesting and the city is eco-friendly, with many green spaces. Many Americans love to live here, not least because there is a sizable American community here.”

What do you miss from America, which is different here?
“The only thing we miss here as Americans is a sense of community with your neighbors. We do not have that here yet. I think that is the difference between our cultures. The people are friendly, but as an expat it takes longer to build relationships in a social network with the local community. We also miss the convenience to be able to shop until late in the day.”

What could Rotterdam do in order to improve an expat’s life here?
“Even though almost everyone speaks English here, you still get that feeling that you don’t belong if you do not speak any Dutch. Learning Dutch is really important for all type of communications. But one should be able to choose from a different language than Dutch in order to get help from certain instances like medicals or municipality. Would be great to have an international medical practice here; I hear that from other expats as well.”

Chinese expat Ms. Jiong Feng is a General Manager at Jiong Europe BV, responsible for operational management and also for business development, HR and reports to the board of directors.

How many people accompanied you to the Netherlands?
“I live in the Netherlands, together with my daughter.”

Is your daughter attending school here?
“My daughter is studying languages at a school in Rotterdam, which she enjoys very much.”

How long will you and your family stay in the Netherlands?
“For the next five years, I will stay in the Netherlands together with my daughter.”

What is your opinion about this city and what do you consider fascinating?
“Rotterdam is brimming with creativity and concepts. It is a lively international city, full of passion. One of the things that fascinates me the most is that people and animals live harmoniously in a modern business city. Dogs, ducks, swans and rabbits can be found everywhere, which gives both me and my daughter great pleasure.”

What do you miss from China, which is different here and what is the big difference between the two cultures?
“In China, most of the shopping malls are open until nine in the evening, so people can go there after they finish work. The Netherlands and China are both referred to as cyclists’ paradise, but I do see the difference between the two countries. In China, people ride their bikes in the ‘classic’ way. Here you can observe people on bikes in all sorts of ways: sitting, standing, reclining. Here you can see personal freedom reflected in the way someone uses a bike. I would love to ride a cargo bike together with my daughter.”

What could Rotterdam do in order to improve an expat’s life here?
“I would love to see more signs and directions in English in public areas, such as along the road, on websites, on products in supermarkets and so on.”

What is your experience with the aid and services offered by the Expat Desk and Rotterdam Partners?
“They helped with the procedure in City Hall to register as a new resident and with the immigration authorities. They also gave useful information, such as how to make an appointment with the Municipal Public Health Service, how to find a GP searching for language schools and much more.”

Is there any room for improvement in the Expat Desk?
“They should have a higher profile, so more expats would know they exist and they could provide the assistance they are looking for. I think this would be interesting for every new expat.”

In closing, would you like to add anything?
“The first week we came here, my daughter suddenly became ill during the night. Ms. Yixuan Xu from Rotterdam Partners sent me to the emergency care department in the hospital, literally in the nick of time for my daughter to get the treatment she needed. I am very grateful to her for that act, especially because it happened outside of working hours.”

Norman Stallard from the USA is Director of Finance for Europe, the Middle East and Africa at Nuplex in Bergen op Zoom.

Chinese expat Ms. Jiong Feng is a General Manager at Jiong Europe BV, responsible for operational management and also for business development, HR and reports to the board of directors.
The Dutch Insurance Exchange Association (VNAB) is the sector association for the business insurance market. VNAB represents the sector’s interests in various ways. It has an efficient electronic insurance system (e-VNAB) and promotes the exchange and transfer of knowledge. It puts key social and commercial themes for the sector on the agenda. And it pursues active policies to enhance the reputation of the sector.

Why Rotterdam?
With a great risk & insurance heritage, the Port of Rotterdam, The Hague Airport and the new VNAB (The Netherlands Insurance Exchange Association) knowledge and meeting center, the city of Rotterdam offers perfect dynamics for the insurance industry. Reasons for Willis to make sure they are well established in this area.

Top three Insurance Brokers
Willis is one of the top three Insurance Brokers in the world. The company is founded in 1849 and with 40,000 associates and 400 offices across the world they are working globally. With the firm offer to buy Gras Savoye and the recently announced merger with Towers Watson Willis will strengthen their position in the insurance market even more. A few of the many famous items insured by Willis include the Titanic, the Hindenburg zeppelin in 1937 and the reconstruction of the World Trade Centre in New York after 2001.

Value of Rotterdam
Willis, a leading global risk advisor, insurance & reinsurance broker who consults on all risks aspects of medium to major clients. Their services range from Corporate Insurance to Human Capital & Benefits. Headquarters is located in Amsterdam and besides this Willis has offices in Beverwijk, Rijswijk and Rotterdam.

The Rotterdam office is headed by Kees Starrenburg, Director Logistics and Thoen Hage, Director Marine Power & Utilities. They are supported by Eugene Koster, responsible for Construction and Engineering and Edward van Giibberk who will be active in Construction and Engineering as well. This relatively new Willis office will provide optimal services to Public Entities and (International) Corporate Clients as well as to clients located in the Rotterdam area.

Kees Starrenburg: “The value of Rotterdam to the insurance industry is almost self-explanatory. The challenging and dynamic environment offers an exciting work place and lots of opportunities.”

Thoen Hage: “With our engaged and personal approach we aim to strengthen our footprint in the Rotterdam area.”

DUAL Marine & Energy

DUAL Marine & Energy is the first DUAL branch in the Netherlands, which opened in the Rotterdam WTC in April 2015. Manager Harry Mulder: “DUAL is the world’s largest international underwriting agency and Lloyd’s largest international cover holding, providing products and global distribution to local markets”. DUAL is part of the UK based Hyperion Insurance Group and has 24 offices in 15 countries around the world.

The Rotterdam office was opened as DUAL recognizes the importance of a local presence in this international maritime market. Rotterdam is already becoming the insurance center of the Netherlands. DUAL Marine & Energy has a strong focus on the Dutch maritime industry – port activities, cargo, hull & machinery shipbuilding and repair and so on. At this moment other ME&O offices are located in Aberdeen, London, London, Finland and Australia.

Rotterdam as a launching pad
The company is targeting the maritime sector and will also be able to service energy inquiries in close cooperation with the London office. If required DUAL can provide risk reviews, project site surveys, etc. The office will also be a launching pad for DUAL’s non-marine products in the Netherlands. That will include engineering and liability. For other specialist classes of business dedicated teams of underwriters operate out of the London office.

The insurance market is competitive. DUAL will distinguish itself as a leading underwriter by supplying high quality underwriting and claims handling and a prompt service. The decision by the Dutch Insurance
Zener Maritime Solutions from India opened its Rotterdam office in 2015, but CEO J.D. Singh already knows the port well. “We have been working with Dutch Clients starting 17 years ago and since then me and Joe has been visiting Rotterdam 2-3 times a year. Zener started 17 years ago in Mumbai with just one technician, one machinist and me. Now we operate globally from Singapore, Mumbai and Rotterdam.”

He got to know Rotterdam as a maritime business center and returned two or three times a year. “Rotterdam is a perfect location for doing business with Europe, the Middle East and Africa. That’s why we decided to open a branch location here. There are a hundred people working in Mumbai, and since six years we’ve had a presence in Singapore, that location grew from three people to 20.”

Zener conducts wide-ranging ship inspections and has established a good name for itself in a relatively short time frame. Country manager Joe Singh says that the company had to choose between Houston, Rio or Rotterdam. “Three factors made the difference: first, our CEO’s familiarity with the city, but also the quick, effective assistance provided by Rotterdam Partners and NFIA, Singapore. And third, the business partnership with Holten de Vries, who will be working as our General Manager.”

Dutch talent
“In our business, there are two ways to stand out: by building a market reputation for delivering quality and by ensuring globally competitive costs. You have to use a multidimensional approach, regardless of whether your customer is from Japan, the US or Greece. We managed that just fine in Singapore, and now we’re going to do it in Rotterdam. It’s all about integrity, offering appealing terms, and being able to conduct inspections on time.”

CEO J.D. Singh adds: “The presence of well-educated, multilingual personnel is another advantage that Rotterdam offers. We want to have talented Dutch employees in our company, starting with three to five people and possibly expanding from there. Our people are the heart of the company. We are proud that Zener is one of the world’s leading maritime inspection companies. We also offer advice on ship design and architecture upon request. Now we can also support our customers in Singapore and Hong Kong in Rotterdam.”

The MOCs production facility on the RDM campus is partly screened off by fences displaying their logo. It’s immediately apparent that an innovative product is being developed here. Co-founder Peter Madlener states that knowledge needs to be protected. “Our intellectual property is one of our greatest treasures.”

Why opt for Rotterdam?
“The infrastructure and facility are ideal for the work we do, and RDM is a great location thanks to quick, easy access from our headquarters in Delft and the fact that the Aquadiner and the water taxi can get you anywhere you need to go. Almost everyone at MOCs lives in Rotterdam.”

As Peter heads towards their production location, he draws inspiration from the surroundings, especially the large-scale industry. “This location can seem intimidating at first, with all the huge machines. Just look at our cranes, which can lift up to 100 tons. But we’re getting used to it. It’s been inspiring us to think ‘bigger’.”

“I love bringing clients to the RDM Campus. The location is fantastic and could be even better if more maker-industry production were added. There needs to be even more activity. It’s a great place for start-ups.”

Call to action
“MOCs focuses on smarter civil, offshore and maritime structures so our clients can be more distinctive in their operations. We achieve this goal by incorporating alternative materials, using smart engineering software, and implementing measurement systems to monitor the structures. If your company works in one of our target sectors, we would love to meet with you to discuss where we can make a difference to your operations.”

The Maritime & Offshore sector in the Rotterdam region covers the complete chain from exploration to production and maintenance.

2,857
Companies

52,961
Jobs

63,475 million
Annual turnover in euro’s

SOURCE:
PANTEIA 2015
Korean firm STX Marine Service moved to a location near Rotterdam Airport this year to facilitate further expansion of its business in the future. The company has had a presence in the region since 2012; however, when the European headquarters opened in Spijkenisse, the rapid increase in activities and growth in the workforce from four to twelve professionals made it crucial to arrange a new workplace.

The two Korean managers in Rotterdam are Captain Daniel Jongjun Gim, managing director, and Savoie Bae, business development manager. The core of STX Marine Services is supplying total solutions for shipping. Their services encompass ship management, crew composition, engine maintenance (incl. engine spare part), technical service, safety and audits, as well as environmental inspections and all technical services.

**THANKS TO THIS NETWORK. WE CAN MEET ANY CUSTOMER’S DEMAND QUICKLY, ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.**

“Rotterdam is our most important base for supplying ship parts to all of Europe. The city also functions as our service center for handling all customer questions. We receive support in these activities from two branch locations in Germany and Greece, so we have coverage across Europe. We do see significant future growth in the trade in ship parts and ship management as a service.” Director Gim explains that everyone in the office works hard together to achieve the company’s objectives. The company headquarters pursing the objective of being the best in the world in its specialized field.

**50 years of premier service**

“STX Marine Service started operations in 1966 and reached its current state through various acquisitions and name changes,” adds Bae. “Offering premier service anywhere in the world for almost 50 years. Besides our global headquarters in Pusan, Korea, we have a presence in 140 countries to support our customers. We cover North America from Houston, reaching South America from Sao Paulo in Brazil. Our office for the Middle East is in Baghdad, Iraq. Outside Korea, we serve Southeast Asia from offices in Singapore and China from a separate office in Shanghai. Thanks to this network, we can meet any customer’s demand quickly, anywhere in the world.”

Rotterdam is the perfect location for them, due to its infrastructure and good logistics services. The availability of well-educated personnel, the ability to live in a safe, clean city, and lots of opportunities for business growth are all key factors. The support they receive from Rotterdam Partners is described as superb, with particular appreciation for the assistance from the Expat Desk.

**Japan Wind Power Delegation**

The Netherlands and Japanese offshore companies plan to collaborate. Offshore wind energy attracts attention all across the world, and Japan is also increasing its interest and investments in this sector. Rotterdam Partners was able to welcome a delegation from the Japanese Wind Power Association to the World Port Center in June 2015. Nearly fifty Japanese delegations and fifty local stakeholders in the offshore wind industry got to know each other better.

“Japanese delegation was pleasantly surprised by the vast knowledge and innovative companies in the Dutch offshore wind industry, and specifically in the Rotterdam region,” explains Bart Brinkman, Maritime & Offshore manager at Rotterdam Partners. “They thought Denmark was big in offshore wind, but it’s Dutch companies that are doing the big projects all across Europe. Most of the megawatts are located in Denmark and the UK, but those wind turbines were often installed by Rotterdam-based companies.”

Various experts covered the potential of offshore wind energy in the greater Rotterdam area in detailed presentations. Holland Home of Wind Energy (HHWE) and the Japanese Wind Power Association (JWPA) signed a partnership agreement detailing how both parties will work together to develop offshore wind energy in the Netherlands, Japan, and beyond if possible. The Netherlands and Japanese offshore companies plan to intensify their collaboration to facilitate those developments.

Arjen Schatten, HHWE director, has high expectations for the partnership: “The Japanese offshore wind market will see explosive growth in the coming years; the Dutch can contribute their vast store of offshore knowledge and experience. We see this partnership agreement as an important first step. We are seeing real results. The first contracts are already in the works.” Before the agreement was signed, a traditional Japanese Kagami biraki ceremony was held, in which a barrel of sake is breached. The sake that splashes over the rim is seen as a sign of prosperity.

**WE SEE THIS PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AS AN IMPORTANT FIRST STEP. WE ARE SEEING REAL RESULTS.**

The Japanese delegation also visited other locations in the Netherlands. The delegation consists of thirty companies, headed by the Japanese Wind Power Association (JWPA). The five-day program included visits to many companies, such as Bow Terminal, Damen Shipyards, ECN, Falck, Marin, Royal HPC, and Knowledge Centre WMC. The Japanese delegates also visited several offshore wind farms and the famous Westermeerwind. HHWE is an export association for Dutch wind energy companies, operating primarily in emerging wind energy markets in Europe and Asia.

**EVENT**

Baseball slash Community Management Event

The biannual Rotterdam World Port baseball tournament is not just a thrilling sports event, but also a place where Rotterdam Partners can facilitate networking. In its own skybox, Rotterdam Partners receives new and longstanding contacts from all across the globe. Since baseball is wildly popular in Taiwan and Japan, a special invitation was extended this year to representatives from the business communities in those countries.

In cooperation with Baker Tilly Berk accountants, some 50 members of the Taiwanese business community were received in Rotterdam in July. The official representative of Taiwan in our country, Mr. Chou, was present, and Taiwan had the honor of throwing the first pitch of the tournament. The Netherlands beat Taiwan by a narrow margin of 6-5 in terms of baseball, but both countries had a successful evening where business was concerned.

A few days later, the Japanese business community was hosted, again involving about fifty visitors. Their team also met with defeat against the strong baseball performance of the Dutch team. The atmosphere was congenial nonetheless, and even a ball that unexpectedly flew into the skybox did not spoil the moment. The Japanese guests were delighted to attend the baseball event, since tickets are almost always sold out quickly. It should be noted that the Dutch met their match in the final against Cuba; the Cuban team took home the victory. All in all, it was a very successful community event with these key Asian investors in the Rotterdam region.

Paddy Roomer, commercial director of the tournament, mentioned that the tournament was so successful that the next edition will be aimed to get awarded with an A-ranking tournament. “We got many positive feedback from important stakeholders and scored a 14% increase in visitors.”
World Expo Rotterdam 2025, Rotterdam as an appealing
destination for business, culture, and innovation. The driving force behind Rotterdam’s development as a port for entry for imported fruit. In 2000, Vellerman & Tax was acquired by Irish company Fyffes. When the merged company split several years later, part of it continued under the name of Total Produce. Michel Jansen, managing director, has been working in the field for over 28 years. “Total Produce has a global turnover in excess of 3 billion euros. As specialists in overseas fruit, we hold a leading position in production areas in South Africa, the USA and Latin America. We also aim to be leading in our key sales markets: the Benelux, Germany, Scandinavia and France.” Total Produce imports various products, including pineapple, ginger, grapes, apples, mandarins, oranges, melons, pears and grapesfruits, but also various stone fruits like cherries, nectarines, peaches, apricots and plums. “The majority of fruit and vegetable sales in Northern Europe take place via retail channels. However, we also supply wholesalers. Total Produce supplies retailers across all of Europe, as well as caterers, hotels, restaurants and ship chandlers that supply cruise liners.”

Changes
As Michel Jansen puts it, a company with over 160 years of history needs to be willing to change. “In essence, we shape change rather than allowing ourselves to be dragged into it. That means that you’re constantly occupied with trends and developments. Sustainability, for example: That factor has become increasingly important to clients and end-users. I think it will become a ‘license to operate’ within 5 years. Consequently, we’d like to have the entire chain be sustainable in 2020. That means healthy crop protection, economic use of resources (people and planet), a focus on food safety, and also on social sustainability – a fair price for the producers with whom we co-manage various projects. 18 months ago, Total Produce appointed a sustainability manager.”

Total Produce constantly works to innovate its services and products. As an example, Jansen mentions the mini watermelon. “It’s grown in Brazil with specially bred seeds from our Israeli seed supplier, and adapted to the taste and preferences of Western consumers. The melon has the same flavor as a large watermelon, but is more convenient in size and will be available year-round once the new production starts in Senegal, Brazil, Spain and Hungary.”

Michel Jansen manages a company with over 160 years of history and is willing to change. This is important for a company that has a global turnover in excess of 3 billion euros. Total Produce is committed to sustainability, and this is reflected in their practices and innovations. They are constantly working to change rather than allowing themselves to be dragged into change. This approach is important for maintaining a competitive edge in the market.

Total Produce is a Rotterdam-based business established over 160 years ago. Founded by Messrs Vellerman and Tax in 1850, the company started as an importer of overseas fruit and was one of the driving forces behind Rotterdam’s development as a port for entry for imported fruit. In 2000, Vellerman & Tax was acquired by Irish company Fyffes. When the merged company split several years later, part of it continued under the name of Total Produce. Michel Jansen, managing director, has been working in the field for over 28 years. “Total Produce has a global turnover in excess of 3 billion euros. As specialists in overseas fruit, we hold a leading position in production areas in South Africa, the USA and Latin America. We also aim to be leading in our key sales markets: the Benelux, Germany, Scandinavia and France.” Total Produce imports various products, including pineapple, ginger, grapes, apples, mandarins, oranges, melons, pears and grapesfruits, but also various stone fruits like cherries, nectarines, peaches, apricots and plums. “The majority of fruit and vegetable sales in Northern Europe take place via retail channels. However, we also supply wholesalers. Total Produce supplies retailers across all of Europe, as well as caterers, hotels, restaurants and ship chandlers that supply cruise liners.”

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Diederik van Dommelen is a partner at PwC consultants, chairman of VNO-NCW Rotterdam, and a member of the Rotterdam Economic Council. He elaborates on the added value that the Council offers and his role in that context.

"The Rotterdam Economic Council was formed by Rotterdam Partners. The council includes representatives from companies, civil society organizations, cultural centers and knowledge institutes. By providing access to their knowledge, expertise and experience, the members contribute to widely supported economic policy, in close coordination with the council of mayor and aldermen and the municipal authorities. Rotterdam Partners uses that expertise for activities that enhance the economy, such as attracting companies, conferences, business events and projects. The REC members are also international ambassadors for Rotterdam. I have been involved in this city for a very long time, not least through the EBRD, the predecessor of the Rotterdam Economic Council. All the REC stakeholders are part of the ‘golden triangle’ formed by government, business and knowledge institutes. In the business community, you cannot and must not sit back and wait for the government. By addressing issues together, you also develop a lot of brainpower from lots of different angles. And those differing perspectives are important for achieving a growing, healthy economy together."

In your role at the REC, you chair the working group on the business climate in the greater Rotterdam area. What involvement do you have in this specific topic?

"The business climate in the Netherlands, and specifically in Rotterdam, is eminently important to the economy in this city. Rotterdam Partners, the Port of Rotterdam Authority, Deloitte and VNO-NCW Rotterdam made the business climate a priority item on the agenda for the council of mayor and aldermen; mutual efforts are being made now. The business climate that makes it so appealing for companies to open offices here includes hard and soft elements, and is relevant to established and new companies alike. We work together to address a number of themes, such as the international fiscal climate, the position of the port, and the position of Rotterdam The Hague Airport. And of course also the job market, education, infrastructure, and a level playing field in Europe in terms of laws and regulations. We do some things together, while other issues are more a matter for the national government, but that means we need a good, joint lobby in Brussels and The Hague."

EVERY COMPANY NEEDS TO EMBRACE RESPONSIBILITY. NOT JUST THE NATIONAL OR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

Why is a business climate that encourages cooperation among stakeholders so important to the city and the greater Rotterdam region, and who is affected?

"An attractive, healthy business climate is important for attracting international businesses and experts, but also for retaining established companies and local inhabitants. When there’s enough activity in the region, it creates job opportunities, which is obviously good for the Rotterdam locals. It also brings in outside talent looking for jobs that offer good prospects. In turn, that creates a friendly, welcoming atmosphere in the city. The business climate is developing well. There is a constructive dialogue between all the stakeholders to elevate the business climate to an even higher level. Lots of investments are being made in young, innovative companies. What does concern me is that young university graduates too frequently leave the city after they’re done studying. We need to work together to turn that tide; the presence of talented professionals is one of the biggest reasons for companies to settle somewhere."

How would you assess the business climate in Rotterdam?

"The business climate is developing well. There is a constructive dialogue between all the stakeholders to elevate the business climate to an even higher level. Lots of investments are being made in young, innovative companies. What does concern me is that young university graduates too frequently leave the city after they’re done studying. We need to work together to turn that tide; the presence of talented professionals is one of the biggest reasons for companies to settle somewhere."

"For instance, our tax authorities are willing to give firm assurances in advance regarding what a company’s fiscal obligations would be if they go ahead with a proposed investment. The aim is to avoid redundant taxation. That legal assurance is one of the crown jewels of our fiscal business climate. Other contributing advantages include our network of tax treaties, the participation exemption, and the 30% tax regime for expats.

And yes, sometimes the system is abused, for instance by tax haven companies, and the national government will need to take a pro-active, strict approach to address those issues. But they do not need to pursue companies that actually have an active business here in the Netherlands, hiring expert employees. Those companies contribute to good employment opportunities and positive economic growth. It is the fringe elements that cloud a clear impression of the actual situation."

BY ADDRESSING ISSUES TOGETHER, YOU ALSO DEVELOP A LOT OF BRAINPOWER FROM LOTS OF DIFFERENT ANGLES. AND THOSE DIFFERING PERSPECTIVES ARE IMPORTANT FOR ACHIEVING A GROWING, HEALTHY ECONOMY TOGETHER.

"From the perspective of PwC, we have an exceptionally good fiscal climate and system here in the Netherlands. Our system prevents international companies from paying taxes twice. Unfortunately, international impressions do not always correspond to this reality. The G20, the EU and the OECD have a negative impression of our country, fiscally speaking, and we are often mentioned in the same context as Switzerland, Ireland and Luxembourg. And that is unwarranted. Our ruling policy and the innovation box are under fire. We see increasing pressure to tax foreign companies more heavily. The Netherlands’ appeal as a place for businesses to settle is absolutely related to taxes. But even more so to the reliability of our legal and fiscal systems – it can be attributed more to the expertise of our tax authorities than to how high or low our tax rates are."

"We are looking for a lot of things in your area. When we think about the business climate, we need to think about the employment climate. But also the health care climate. And the cultural climate."

Interview with Diederik van Dommelen, Chair of the Rotterdam Economic Council

"A strong business climate is key to the Rotterdam economy"
Market Size of the Food Cluster in Rotterdam Region and Netherlands, 2013*

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<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>SIZE in Rotterdam region</th>
<th>SIZE in Netherlands</th>
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International congresses promote awareness of your sector

The number of international association congresses in Rotterdam has increased in recent years. Rotterdam Partners are eager to continue and reinforce the image of the various strong sectors in the city and strengthen the focus on Rotterdam. They offer economic benefits for the city, and Rotterdam’s growing reputation as a high-quality knowledge center attracts more international congresses, companies and students. An international conference, convention or congress puts your sector more solidly on the map, promoting the exchange of knowledge and contributing to developments in your field at the national and international level. Moreover, a congress helps you build your network.

In Rotterdam, congress and convention initiatives are never on their own – Rotterdam Partners Convention Bureau provides assistance by offering independent advice free of charge throughout the entire preparation process and bid procedure. Rotterdam Partners works with you to produce a bid book. The bureau also offers financial support for international association congresses coming to Rotterdam for the first time, if they comply with certain terms. This assistance is known as the Rotterdam Incentive Fund. In the organization and implementation phase, Rotterdam Partners offers a city-wide network for professional assistance throughout the process, so you can ensure that your congress attains the quality and style you’re aiming for.

You are cordially invited to contact Rotterdam Partners to explore which future congress we might be able to bring to Rotterdam through our joint efforts in your sector. For an exploratory interview, no strings attached, please contact the relevant account manager at Rotterdam Partners, Ms. Mirjam van de Kamp.

m.vandekamp@rotterdampartners.nl

Agrofood

Koppert Cress chooses flavour

In the promotional clip that Koppert Cress features on its website, a number of keywords stand out: flavor, architecture, global, intense, innovative, independent, passion. Koppert Cress is a company that produces cresses, the sprouted seeds of unique plants. The best-known cresses are garden cress. But the company produces many other types as well, all providing surprising flavors, primarily supplying restaurants and wholesalers.

Koppert Cress, situated in the Westland area, is part of the agro-food cluster in and around the port of Rotterdam, serving other companies – for instance in the hospitality sector. “The aim is to make products that allow us to surprise the chefs and let them surprise their customers,” explains Rob Baan, managing director and owner. Baan has been working in the sector for 30 years. “Our company now offers a series of over twenty flavors, and we add new ones every year.”

To get good feedback from his clients, Koppert Cress organizes various ‘Cressperiences’ throughout the year. Chefs from all over the world drop by to share inspiration and exchange knowledge. They take part in workshops at the company’s premises in the town of Monster, where a professional kitchen is available for the visiting chefs to try out the products and test new varieties. Koppert Cress has won various prestigious awards for its approach, presented by the produce sector and by restaurant owners.

Global

Since Rob Baan acquired Koppert Cress in 2002, the company has seen massive growth, not least in its physical size; its greenhouse production now covers a total surface area of 8.6 hectares. Koppert Cress has over 100 employees worldwide and its own production locations in Long Island (USA), Japan and Turkey. The company continues to grow year on year, even flourishing during the crisis.

Before embarking on this venture, Rob spent years working in Japan and Korea, which is where he developed his passion for beautiful products. “Sustainable, healthy, delicious food: these are important starting points. We currently achieve almost energy-neutral production and hope to attain a negative energy balance in future, by supplying heat to the surrounding area.” Besides his focus on sustainability, Baan is also a proponent of healthy, balanced foods. He advocates a diet that consists of no more than 20% meat and 80% vegetables. “People are herbivores by nature; we are not made to walk around carrying a can opener or eating pre-packaged, ready-to-eat meals.”

Underconsumption

Produce prices in the Netherlands are under pressure due to overproduction, Baan refers to it as underconsumption. “We’re a relatively expensive country, so we shouldn’t go for cheap production in an attempt to compete with cheap countries. Our strengths are in knowledge and quality; we make top-notch products, and they’re allowed to cost more.”

His dream: “To establish a partnership with Erasmus Medical Centre, Leiden Medical Centre and the universities in Rotterdam, Leiden and Delft, including the produce sector, to demonstrate that fresh products have clear added value for public health. The knowledge is available, and the Netherlands could play a leading role worldwide in this field.”
The major world ports of Shanghai and Rotterdam have had strong twin-city ties since 1987. Companies started operating in both ports, moving back and forth with ease and significantly boosting trade. Launched especially to support Dutch companies and government agencies, the Rotterdam Commercial Representative Office (RCRO) helps these organizations do business in China. “We are the Gateway to China,” emphasizes Tony Huang, managing director of the RCRO.

“RCRO was founded in 1987 to strengthen ties between Rotterdam and Shanghai. We are also a stepping stone for Dutch companies who want to do business with Chinese companies or government agencies. RCRO was established by the Municipality of Rotterdam, Rotterdam Partners, the Port of Rotterdam Authority, the Chamber of Commerce and various prominent companies, such as Steinweg, Spliethoff and Cadic. In addition to our office in Shanghai, an office opened in 2011 in Chongqing, a city in western China with a population well over 7 million. That part of China also offers excellent potential opportunities for Rotterdam and the Netherlands.”

Huang explains that the RCRO naturally also assists Chinese companies seeking to do business in the Netherlands. “We work in close collaboration with Rotterdam Partners. The International Trade & Investment at Rotterdam Partners acts as the front office for the RCRO in Rotterdam and the Netherlands. And RCRO has been the strategic partner for Rotterdam Partners in China for years, especially on trade missions and in attracting Chinese investments to Rotterdam. “We also work with the Dutch government and their foreign offices. Dutch companies can always present their companies and assistance with business meetings arranged with Chinese companies and participation in RCRO. The participation activities can be tailored to the companies’ individual needs. China represents a huge sales market for Dutch companies. Priority sectors like agrofood, healthcare and high-tech are growing rapidly. Strategic partnerships in other sectors are encouraged actively by the Dutch and Chinese governments.

Interested in learning more? Contact Rotterdam Partners; Chantal Roest (c.roest@rotterdampartners) or RCRO; Tony Huang (tony.huang@rcrochina.com)

The leading solution towards finding global talent. Recruiting global talent is an expensive and time-consuming process, utilizing appropriate networks to find the right candidate is a rather daunting process. For this reason, companies often choose to outsource the recruitment process to the organization with the largest international network: AIESEC. AIESEC is a non-profit organization founded in 1948 and is connected with 2,400 universities in over 125 countries. Facilitated by over 85,000 students worldwide on voluntary basis, AIESEC is the largest student-organization in the world. Their mission is to develop young, sustainable and entrepreneurial leadership, stimulating students to have a positive impact on society. They do this through providing practical leadership experiences, such as international internships.

Rutger Wentzel, Vice President for incoming exchange at AIESEC, “Our extensive network enables us to accommodate a wide range of needs. We can provide a tailored match between your company and an international intern because we have access to a worldwide database of 7,000 academ- ics. Rotterdam is a highly innovative and multicultural city which has a continuous need for students with, amongst others, a background in IT and engineering. AIESEC fulfills this demand through the wide range of academic backgrounds that our database of students has to offer”.

Rutger continues, “We coordinate the arrival and support of the interns as well as providing accommodation, a social network, personal development and integration in Rotterdam. Additionally, we provide a full range of support services that help make the experience as smooth as possible. It is a flexible and effective business solution that can scale with multinationals across markets, or support fast growing SME’s to expand globally. This makes AIESEC the ideal and most cost-effective solution for attracting international talent”. www.aiesec.nl

Peruvian cuisine is trendy in restaurants worldwide, but was not yet represented in the array of Rotterdam dining options. Patricia Lavado made a delicious change, filling that gap with her new Ceviche y Maas restaurant and Pisco bar which she launched in September at Delistraat 2. The restaurant name includes the Peruvian national dish ‘Ceviche’ and the ‘Maas’ river that flows close by, Maas - when spoken with a Spanish accent, means ‘more’, which is exactly what they offer.