



Customer case **Diepenbeek**

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Diepenbeek invests in 'employee empowerment' for its migration to Microsoft 365

When it comes to migration projects, implementing new technology is only half the battle. The other half consists of effectively integrating the new technology within your organization. To ensure all employees at the various municipal departments are fully involved in the migration to Microsoft 365, the Diepenbeek local government called on the expertise of ICT partner Inetum-Realdolmen.

Nestled between Hasselt, Genk and Bilzen, the municipality of Diepenbeek has a population of around 19,000 residents. "Our municipal services try to serve all these citizens as effectively as possible," states Lieven Scrayen, Internal Affairs project manager for the Limburg municipality. "We count on some 350 employees to do this, including around 125 PC users."

Digital (collaborative) work with Microsoft 365

"The world is changing," states the local project supervisor. Many changes have a genuine and sometimes far-reaching impact on the operation of municipal services. For example, a great many services for citizens have also moved to the Internet in recent years. "As an organization, we need to find an appropriate response to this growing demand for online services. One way to do so is to ensure that our employees have the proper tools to work and collaborate online."

Besides laptops and other mobile devices to enable home and remote working, Microsoft 365 also provided the municipality of Diepenbeek with a set of advanced software services for digital (collaborative) working. During the migration to this new digital office environment, however, Lieven Scrayen and his colleagues came to realize that this was a project requiring a much broader interpretation.

"A migration project of this kind is about more than just tools," the project manager points out. In addition to the purely technological side of the migration, there were also more business-related, process-related and, above all, human aspects to the whole Microsoft 365 story. "For instance, we found that some employees were starting to find their own way around the software. This caused a lack of uniformity and productivity in its use, which in turn created uncertainty and unnecessary upheaval."



Managing change

"This is precisely why it is so important not to rush straight into the solution itself when you want to make an important change, but to take a step back first," explains Lieven Scrayen from experience. "From this perspective, we asked ourselves: how can we make this migration work as an organization, regardless of the tool? We came to the conclusion that the best way to do so is to involve and 'empower' our employees as much as possible in the migration process. This also allows them to continue working independently and maintain or even increase their productivity in the Microsoft 365 environment."

Lieven Scrayen and his colleagues did not have the expertise required to properly manage this aspect of the migration project, which is why they began looking for a partner with the necessary expertise to guide them through the change process. "We needed additional outside support. We found it at Inetum-Realdolmen, the ICT partner that had already supported us with the technological aspects of the project. When they were able to provide us with extensive knowledge and experience in the area of change management in ICT projects, we immediately stopped looking for other partners."

Specifically, Inetum-Realdolmen proposed setting up a series of workshops. In these workshops, a core group that reflected the organization well could dive deeper into a number of topics and formulate clear answers to various sub-questions. "The result of that experience is a report with an overview of exactly where our priorities and needs lie, broken down into various themes such as involvement and productivity. The report also sets out the direction we want to take as an organization in the longer term."

Made-to-measure employee empowerment

"The report also contained a number of practical tips and recommendations," states Lieven Scrayen. "Inetum-Realdolmen gave us a lot of practical tools and resources to successfully complete the change management part of any migration project. This is a clear benefit in terms of our own self-reliance. It also means we will be better equipped to manage the change ourselves during future projects."

The ultimate goal of the workshops was to have empowered employees who are engaged, self-reliant and productive. The workshop participants avoided focusing on a generic interpretation of the term. Rather, they tried to grasp what an 'empowered employee' meant specifically for the municipality of Diepenbeek. "Ultimately, it's about empowering our employees based on the specific needs and questions of the municipal services that serve our citizens, namely the residents of Diepenbeek."

Inetum-Realdolmen's successful practices to empower employees have now led to the creation of a framework that provides Lieven Scrayen and his colleagues with a certain amount of support while allowing them to experiment to the fullest. "We no longer have to rely solely on our gut feeling. At the same time, this framework serves as a basis for further projects, allowing us to tackle our work in a broader sense."

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About Diepenbeek : www.diepenbeek.be
About Inetum-Realdolmen: www.realdolmen.com