

**We  
are Set  
and ready for  
the future**



## From start-up to scale-up

Developing strong supply chain teams with a scale-up mindset

### **"Our target is 100 million happy sleepers"**

A conversation with Wouter Kooyman van Guldener, Somnox CFO

### **Pieter Pot scales up supply chain**

Interview with Sjoerd van Bekhoven



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Supply chain professionals who make a difference

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## Preface

# Just try it

Eighty percent of all agricultural land on earth is used for livestock farming. Just for meat and dairy products. And then these animal products only supply twenty percent of the calories that humans need. Meanwhile, the global population is increasing, whereas the amount of available land remains equal. This old food system is not sustainable.

Things can be done differently. Thanks to technological innovations such as vertical agriculture and the use of drones, we can multiply the efficiency of harvests. And if we replace our dairy cattle with stainless steel cows, i.e., milk robots in which grass is inserted, processed into dairy proteins and ultimately into milk, we profit even more. Furthermore, thanks to a steak machine there would be no need for us to first fatten a cow before we can eat a nice piece of beef. Due to these innovations, we can continue to put food in every mouth and at the same time have more space, not less, for humans and animals to live freely.

I have always really enjoyed eating meat. But like most people, I don't like the downsides of meat consumption.

 **Jaap Korteweg** - Ninth generation farmer and founding father of The Vegetarian Butcher and Those Vegan Cowboys

Nobody is pleased that we need such incredible amounts of land, water, and energy for animal products. It makes nobody happy to see unhappy animals, kept indoors. On top of that, eating meat is not good for our health. Why do people still do it? Because we become addicted to the taste of it.

What's more: if we had not become so addicted to the taste, I am sure that everybody would be vegetarian by now.


I set up The Vegetarian Butcher based on my own needs, as I found it difficult to stop eating meat. I wanted to continue eating meat, but without the misery. And I was convinced that it was not only me. Not that I was an expert or anything. I was not (and I am still not) a food technologist or chef. At first, I tried to find the essence of meat on my own: the bite, the structure, the taste, that juiciness. I travelled up and down the country to taste products and I tried to develop some of my own in my farm kitchen. At the same time, I talked to many people to test my ideas and to improve them. I took the time to do that and learned from criticism; after all, you learn nothing from people who only say yes and amen.

I was lucky that at an early stage I joined the right people with whom I was able to form a strong team. With the growth, I gave my staff the task to always try to find people who would do a better job than they

**"Don't count on success, but if you don't try, you will definitely not achieve it"**

could. Everybody was given total freedom, so they could grow in a way that suited them. Sometimes, it took some getting used to, especially if new staff were used to strong control and strict organisation.

My motto is: don't count on success, but if you don't try, you will definitely not achieve it. To a large extent, success is a question of luck, but if you don't give luck a chance...Well, then vertical systems, new drone techniques, stainless steel cows and steak machines would never have been developed. If you have a good idea for the world, just try it. What else can you do?

I wish you every success with your sustainable, world-changing company, if you by any chance have one. And if you don't, of course I also wish you all the luck in the world. 



**Marielle van Gastel** - Set  
**Ujendre Ramautarsing** - Set  
**Evie Jetten** - Set



5 minutes



Set supply chain professionals

# The power of the personal approach

"This year everything has fallen into place", says **Marielle van Gastel**. Together with **Ujendre Ramautarsing** and **Evie Jetten** she forms the Set team (formerly Inspired-Talent). As a team they are committed to helping supply chain professionals develop and thus contribute to the clients' success. "After a year where the Corona crisis was dominant, followed a year wherein the team was confirmed in their strength, Marielle continues. By focusing on the individual, the talent, and the client's wishes, Set is managing to "settle in the market as a reliable partner."



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"We have grown together"

## From Inspired-Talent to Set supply chain professionals

First let's talk about the name. In 2021 it changed from Inspired-Talent to Set supply chain professionals. Why is that?

Ujendre: "It emphasizes the change that we've been through this year. We have always been good at understanding what supply chain management involves. Because we know what is going on in a company, we know which competencies are needed. That combination of knowledge of the supply chain and business insights has always been what we stood for. However, for the outside world we sometimes had three different names: Inspired-Group, Inspired-Search, Inspired-Talent. It was not always clear what they could get from us.

If we were primarily building the foundations in 2020, Ujendre says, 2021 was a year that lived up to expectations and the team carried on building full of confidence. "The year was a confirmation that we were on the right track." More new trainees joined than in the preceding years. The contacts with companies also became stronger, due to the collaboration with the team and Marielle's focus, as it turns out.

In 2020 Inspired-Careers and Inspired-Talent merged. "In the past there had been some coordination between the companies, but at the same time they were separate little businesses, while this year we really joined forces. It gave me the opportunity to focus entirely on the relationship with the companies", Marielle says. She thinks it is important to be able to fully understand the client: what does the supply chain department need? "You have to be well aware of what is going on economically and what is needed. Next, you have to know how to translate this into candidates and the personality that fits the client. In other words, cultural matching and finding the appropriate competencies, and that is more than just a good CV."

"We have grown together," Marielle says. "It feels like a huge step forward. There is trust in each other, there

is a team we can build on. Ujendre is a key factor in all this. I think he is an exemplary leader. He gives you room to be who you are. It makes you feel motivated to give it your all, be creative and make progress."

Ujendre: "This is precisely the core of our traineeships. Exercising self-leadership in what you do starting from that self-esteem. Only then will you be able to develop true leadership and will people follow you."


## Finding the right person as a strength

The company's mission stays the same, even with the new name: developing the leaders of the future. To create a new name, the trio brought in an external party. Ujendre: "We are supply chain and HR-professionals. Changing a name is not our area of expertise. What we are good at, is finding the right person who does have that expertise."

Evie: "The three of us could never have thought of that name." It was preceded by a whole process, during which the team went back to the basis of the company. Ujendre: "To me it felt like a confirmation, that we have the same vision. That is really good."

"The name Set stands for: placing someone somewhere, deploying them somewhere", Evie explains. "That is the core of what we do. It also stands for a "set", which comes down to a part of a whole. Someone is part of a team, but we look beyond that. We look at someone's talents and at a company culture. At the same time 'set' is also the link to the supply chain, which exists of a variety of different parts, but is a whole. You cannot look at just one part. Lastly, to us Set feels like settled, a certain home base. That home base is always there, the trainees 'fly out' to assignments. They can always come back to that home base. And to further emphasize that we specialise in the supply chain, the name is Set supply chain professionals."

## Discovering your strengths

To Evie the name also indicates how tight knit the company is. "The new team members who joined this year were 

naturally integrated into the team. It is important that we consider very carefully whether someone fits in with our values. It feels as if our team has been working together for years. That strong bond is partly the result of the training that the talents receive". Evie says. "A very personal trajectory, led by trainers Cindy Bucher and Theo de Rouw." Evie followed both trainings. "They are about self-esteem, discovering your strengths, where you can develop yourself and where you want to go. It can be ambitions in your work, but also knowing how you want to live your life and what you find important in life. Theo and Cindy do that really well. That personal aspect is also present in the interview that they conducted with each other for this magazine."

"It is not only the training that makes Set a strong team, but also the way we treat each other", Evie continues. Ujendre: "Everyone who attends one of our team meetings for the first time says, 'what a nice team you've got here.' Everybody is very open towards each other, there is a safe atmosphere."

Sometimes the talents say goodbye within three years to make progress elsewhere. Ujendre: "Clients are keen to offer trainees permanent contracts. The other day someone said that he can see one of the talents becoming a leader in his company. Or another one told us that one of his staff members, who has been with the company for 30 years, said that she accepted everything from our trainee, because she fully trusted her. I am really quite pleased to hear that." The talents who are making progress elsewhere, do stay connected. Evie: "We have a book club that old trainees also take part in, and we regularly have group activities where everybody is welcome."

#### **Pride**

Ujendre is most proud of how the talents have developed over the past year. "After all, it was a very difficult year. Not only for our trainees, but also for the supply chain managers and their teams. There were many restrictions, for instance capacity shortages in transport and extreme

shortage in the labour market, which meant less people had to do more operational work. Working at home makes it even more difficult for many people. Plenty of people were stretched to the limit for a long time. A challenging situation, also for our trainees, who felt the pressure."

Despite that pressure and the fact that many of the trainees were mostly doing operational work, they managed to find a way. Ujendre: "They'd just started out on their first job and wondered whether this would be the work they would be doing for the rest of their careers. If you see how they are operating in the companies now, a lot has changed. In a year time I have seen how they created space to tackle things differently and on a permanent basis. I saw how they dealt with setbacks and how they converted their frustrations into a positive impact. The clients are very happy."

#### **A scale-up mindset**

The theme of this edition of the magazine is scale-ups. Not altogether by accident, says Ujendre. "It is no longer taken for granted that people want to work for a multinational. New companies fit into these times of change - companies that can respond to those changes quickly, such as start-ups and scale-ups. To make a scale-up successful, a certain mentality and competencies are necessary. We see that our people not only do well in multinationals, but also in scale-ups, precisely because they have that mentality and those competencies: the ability to learn fast and to adapt. Looking ahead to next year, Ujendre wants to address the needs that arise in the market, because it is expected to remain volatile. Marielle adds: "Even in this time of crisis so much is still going well. There are still so many chances. Our people have the capacity to make the difference, in whatever situation. It is not always about a CV, but primarily about the person behind it."

"That doesn't mean we have to sell 100 million products per se, but we do want to help that many people sleep better." Four years ago, the idea for a sleep robot came to Julian Jagtenberg, the current CEO of the company. Julian's mother had sleeping problems. He saw what too little sleep does to your resistance and energy. It's a problem that a quarter of the Dutch population has to deal with. Jagtenberg found out that breathing is the key to a good night's sleep. That's how the idea for Somnox was born, with sales of 8,000 units till now.

Wouter has been there from the very beginning, together with Job Engel and Stijn Antonisse. "We decided together to go for the sleep robot. It can really help people. That's what made me decide to fully focus on this. The impact we can make is why I still enjoy working hard and with passion for Somnox."

**Frank:** How did you find your first investor?

**Wouter:** "We want to help people. We looked for an investor who matched. After looking for more than a year and after many conversations, we found one. You see that searching pays off. Last year we had a rather difficult period. This investor suits our core values, and that's precisely what helped us so much to get through that difficult period. You really try to find a way together."

**Nick:** That difficult period last year, do you mean the Corona crisis?

**Wouter:** "Yes, we saw that sales were dropping from March, April, while we were aiming for growth. That was very hard. It meant making choices about people in the office, a different strategy and trying to keep your shareholders and stakeholders happy. In the end things started looking up again from August, luckily. In February and March 2021, we had two very good TV moments, on Omroep Max and Dragon's Den. Those moments brought back an acceleration in our growth. It's really nice to see that things have

 Wouter Kooyman van Guldener - Somnox  
Frank Hagendoorn - Set  
Nick de Fouw - Set

 6 minutes

 Scale-up

# "Our target is 100 million happy sleepers"

The Somnox sleep robot is conquering the world. What began as a student project is now a scale-up. The four founders even put their studies on hold for a year. The start-up took its first steps with assistance from the YesDelft acceleration programme. The collaboration with the Auping company resulted in a scalable product. Magazines like Linda and Quote wrote about the soft, bean-shaped, breathing sleep robot. The attention it's getting is huge, especially after appearing in Dragon's Den, where the start-up landed a 2-million-euro investment.

A conversation between **Wouter Kooyman van Guldener**, Somnox CFO, and Set's **Frank Hagendoorn** and **Nick de Fouw**.





● Somnox, the soft, bean-shaped, and breathing sleep robot.



turned around completely in one year time."

Subsequently, one of the biggest challenges for Wouter was the planning. "As a young company you have no idea how many sales you're going to make and how many products you need. That is still a challenge for us. After our win on Dragon's Den, for example, there was suddenly so much exposure that we sold a hundred robots a day. Before we only sold a couple a day. Predicting those sales is and remains difficult."

**Nick:** You started a crowdfunding campaign. How did that go?

**Wouter:** "Just after we started, we presented our product at a trade fair. That's when we were still students. We wanted to launch a Kickstarter campaign (crowdfunding platform, eds.) during the summer holidays, so we would have a certain amount of money on September 1st. That amount of money, we thought, would be sufficient to continue developing Somnox while we were students. That proved to be too optimistic. We ended up postponing that campaign for a year. And rightly so. We sold around four hundred robots within one month. In the end we were able to deliver the first product in March 2019."

**Nick:** So, there were 18 months between the campaign and the first delivery. What were the challenges during those 18 months?

**Wouter:** "Development. We had prototypes after that campaign, but they weren't fit to be sold. That's when we started a partnership with Auping. They produced our first robot. We had a prototype that we had more or less put together with nuts and bolts. That version was not ready for production. We had to find the right batteries, among other things, and the software hadn't been written yet. The robot also needed to be certified. Those were all steps in development that Auping helped us take."

We thought it would take six months, but it took 18."

**Nick:** Seems like a very difficult period to me, but very interesting at the same time.

**Wouter:** "Very interesting indeed. We have learned a lot from our collaboration with Auping. At Auping, product development is a very strictly organised process. Everything has to be finished completely first, before going to the next step. It meant we had to adapt because we definitely wanted to launch on time. We also learned that everything has to be finished down to the last detail to get your product certified. And how do you use consumer tests and what do you document? It was all very useful for our next product that we are now developing."

**Nick:** A successor?

**Wouter:** "Yes, we have taken all user feedback to heart. A list of wishes came out of that. We used it to make a smaller and lighter version, easier to handle and with better sound. You can almost use it as a speaker in your living room. You can also feel the breathing better. The connectivity and user interaction has been improved as well."

The second version was developed in-house by the company.

**Wouter:** "Together with partners working under our direct control, we actually started all over again. Of course, Auping contributed again but now we have our own manufacturer under our direct control. We also know all the suppliers. We are in direct contact with them about the orders and deliveries."

"We know what has been ordered and what stocks a supplier has. We try to keep the number of suppliers as small as possible, so that we don't have to work with dozens of suppliers. For us, the price-quality ratio is important. That comes from the design. We translated

Somnox 1 one-to-one from prototype to production model. With Somnox 2, we really looked into which chip would best fit the next product. For example, we first had a separate chip for bluetooth and a separate chip for the processor. We now have a chip in which it's all integrated. That's also cheaper than two separate chips."

**Frank:** So, there are many challenges that you come across. Is that also what drives you to continue?

**Wouter:** "I love being able to optimize. At the start it was really setting things up and solving problems. Over the past year we've been able to stabilize. Before, it was constantly new people, growth, new markets, new customer routes and so on. Since last year we've focused on direct sales to consumers, with as few intermediaries as possible. We want to know who the customer is and approach the customer ourselves. We also created more focus internally: who is responsible for what, who does what? Just taking time to stop and think. We are even considering an ERP system. Setting it up takes a lot of time, but once we have such a system, it offers us even more possibilities for tighter reporting and analysis. Then we can improve even more."

**Nick:** What keeps the work fun for you?

**Wouter:** "The continual need for optimisation. Plus, the team and our core values. We also select new staff members based on those values. After a session on content, we zoom in on how someone fits into our team. Does someone embrace our core values? As a result, we have a very tight-knit and connected team. I think that's important."

**Nick:** Do you also select your new employees based on sleeping problems?

**Wouter:** "People often ask me that question. You have to have a certain affinity with sleep or sleep problems, of course. I myself sleep well. But I always have a Somnox alongside my bed or the couch for when I've had a busy day at work or want to wind down during the break. Then I'll grab it for 15 minutes or half an hour and lean back. Just to relax a little."

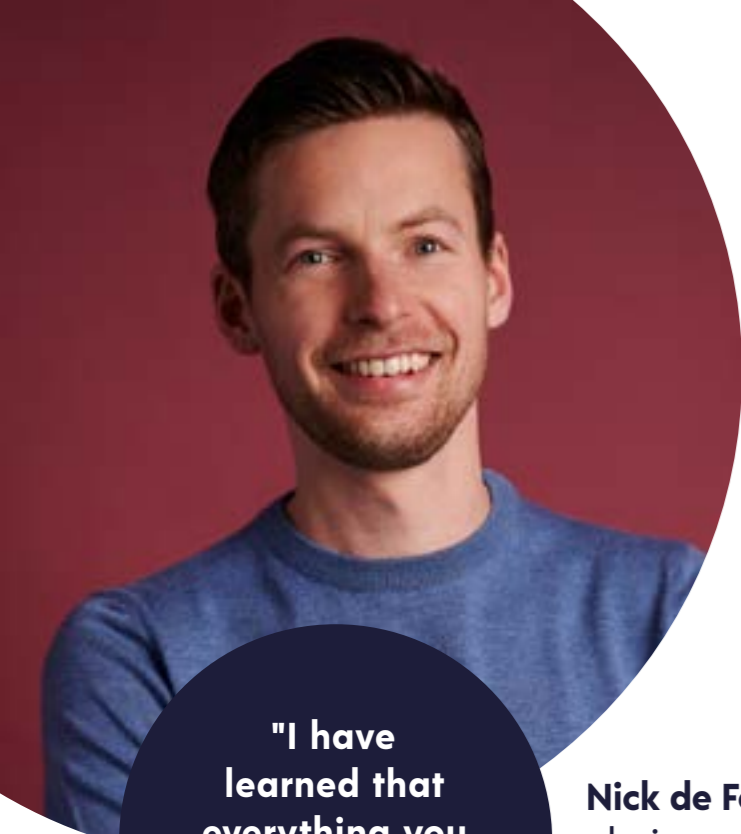
**Nick:** And of course, at work you want people who feel well-rested. That might also be a reason for Somnox' success.

**Wouter:** "Yes, absolutely, one of the core values is


"We select new people based on our core values. As a result, we have a very tight-knit and connected team"


"We are a pro sports team', by which we mean that we train hard together and work towards a common goal. You have to make sure you don't get hurt. It is our philosophy to take breaks on time, to plan moments of rest, to look after each other and to work together towards the finish line." ●





 Nick de Fouw - Set  
Jill van der Tuin - Set

 5 minutes

 Traineeship

# Trainee Nick de Fouw about the added value of his traineeship at Set

"I have learned that everything you do is essentially about people"

**Nick de Fouw** has been working at Set supply chain professionals (Set) as a supply chain trainee since 2019. He studied Business Administration at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, spent six months at the Copenhagen Business School and took practical courses such as Operations Management and Organizational Change. "That practical way of looking at things appealed to me", he says. That is why he chose to do

the master's degree in Supply Chain Management at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. He then went on to do volunteer work in Vietnam to "work with local youngsters to contribute to the economic development of their region in a sustainable way", because he attaches great importance to sustainability.

**Jill van der Tuin** interviewed Nick to find out what he finds so appealing in supply chain management and what made him choose to work at Set.

**Jill:** What do you find so appealing in supply chain?

**Nick:** "It is tangible: there are goods and there are the people who work with these goods. If you make a change or an improvement, you'll notice its effect pretty quickly in the numbers or on the work floor. Streamlining a process in a factory is more tangible than thinking about a marketing campaign to increase brand awareness, which is also interesting, but which I find less satisfying. Also, supply chain is a very broad field, it changes constantly and there is always something that can be improved. So really, you can keep doing it and enjoying it for the whole of your working life."

**Jill:** What made you decide to go and work at Set?

**Nick:** "The main thing is that you can do so many different assignments in a short time. After completing my masters, I wasn't really sure yet which aspect of the supply chain I would find the most interesting. It is so broad: purchasing, planning, transport, and what you have. At Set I come

in contact with many different sides. Apart from the amount of work experience I gain, I also receive guidance from someone with a lot of supply chain knowledge, so that is why I thought this was a good choice."

**Jill:** What kind of guidance do you get from Set?

**Nick:** "My coach is Ujendre, founder of Inspired Talent as it was then called, and he coaches the Set trainees. You set up a programme together with him. During the three years of your traineeship, you follow a standard training programme and there is room for extra training, such as a training in personal effectiveness and a personal assessment in the first year. That assessment helps you find out what your strengths are and what your potential pitfalls are. You start working on these pitfalls in a purposeful way, setting new goals every three months. For instance, I have become more confident in talking in front of a group. Every three months, I discuss my goals with my coach Ujendre. Of course, I also keep track of how things are going but it's nice to have a coach as a sounding board. And when you're doing an assignment, you can always call your coach to act as a sparring partner to discuss content issues or your skills."

Also, you have another trainee as a buddy, who you can always call upon. My buddy is Carola. We started on the same day, but she already had a few years of work experience. For the first three weeks of my assignment at Vivera, she came along. She helped me get my head around the assignment. And there is a team meeting with my fellow trainees every quarter, where we discuss things that we are confronted with, and we learn from each other's experiences. It is a small group of trainees, which makes it feel like a tight-knit team to me."

**Jill:** What have you learned from your various assignments? What is your key take-away?


**Nick:** "Being open to change and learning how to get along with my colleagues at the client where I work, who are less open to change. Sometimes I can understand

things just that little bit faster, but you have to work together to complete an assignment successfully. Sometimes I have to slow down a little to understand my colleagues and win their support. A change has to be of real added value to them, as they will keep on working for the company. If they don't accept the change, I may have worked very hard on it and my operation may have succeeded, but the patient will have died. Sometimes there are different interests involved, which makes it seem as if someone is not willing to cooperate. I have learned to recognize that. At the end of the day, everything you do is essentially about people."

**Jill:** One of Set's core values is taking self-leadership. Have you been able to apply this during your assignments?

**Nick:** "That is actually ingrained in Set's structure. You are given a personal assessment that makes clear what your strengths and pitfalls are. It is up to you to work on them. You take on an assignment on your own, so if you don't take self-leadership, who will? Your coach and your colleagues are there to support you, but at the end of the day you have to bring out the best in yourself. You have only yourself to blame if you don't. One advantage of the assignment structure is that if on one occasion you haven't quite handled things as you should have, you'll get another chance very soon to go about it differently."

**Jill:** Looking back, would you have chosen Set again?

**Nick:** "Yes, absolutely. Apart from the guidance, working in several organisations also has a lot of added value. I can see all my fellow trainees taking huge steps when they go from their first assignment to the next one. If I compare myself to my friends or old classmates who hold the same position after two years, I find that they are less aware of their value in the labour market. Sometimes they stay with companies that are not suited to their personal values at all. I am glad that by doing the traineeship at Set I have developed a better view of what it's like to work in the supply chain field and to learn what my strengths and challenges are." 



**Nick de Fouw**

Age: 26 years  
Education: Bachelor Business Administration and Master Supply Chain Management

**2019 – Present:** Trainee at Set supply chain professionals.

**2019:** Supply Chain Specialist at Vivera, a producer of plant-based meat substitutes. The company is growing rapidly. There was a need for a more structured supply chain such as a clear division of labour, and planning and coordination with external parties.

**2019 – 2020:** Operations Planner at Bejo Zaden, a breeder and producer of vegetable seeds. In this company, Nick took on the roles of two production planners, who had dropped out in a short space of time. In the end, Nick merged the two positions.

**2020 – 2021:** Supply Planner at Lamb Weston/Meijer, a world player in frozen potato products. At this company, Nick's responsibilities included tactical planning for one of the factories in the Netherlands.

**2021:** Demand Planner at Vivera. Second assignment, this time as Interim Demand Planner. The main target was to increase Forecast Accuracy, to expand Slimstock for demand planning and to actively participate in the S&OP cycle.

**2021 – Present:** Pool Planner & Project lead at CC European Retail, supplier of reusable load carriers in a pool system in Europe. At this company, Nick is the link between the IT development team and the planning team in developing and implementing new planning software.



Melvin Loggies - Seepje  
Marit van Beuningen - Set  
Freek Hamers - Set

5 minutes

Sustainability

Seepje:

# "Take that first step and go for it"

Sometimes you see an opportunity that you simply have to grab. That is what **Melvin Loggies** and Jasper Gabrielse did. Eight years ago, they saw on television how people in Nepal were making soap from fruit peels. Using their student grants, they scraped together a starting capital of 4,600 euros and contacted a supplier in Nepal. That is how Seepje started, and it turned out to be a golden move. Their laundry detergents, fabric softeners, all-purpose cleaners, dishwashing detergents and hand soaps are now on sale in around 6000 shops, not only in the Netherlands, but in Belgium and Germany too. In the space of eight years, the company expanded to a team of fifteen, with a turnover of around 5 million euros. **Marit van Beuningen** and **Freek Hamers** sat down for an interview with Melvin. What can we learn from Seepje?

**Marit:** What made you want to set up a company during your studies?

**Melvin:** "In the Netherlands, we all use lousy chemical stuff to do our laundry. We saw an opportunity to market a sustainable and healthy product in the Netherlands, while at the same time making sure that the people in Nepal who harvest and process the peels can earn a fair living under decent working conditions".

When the Sapindus mukorossi peel comes into contact with water, it works like soap. In Nepal it is a common detergent, Melvin says. Using their starting capital, he and Jasper imported their first batch of peels to the Netherlands.

**Melvin:** "Of course it all starts with a great idea, but it was even more crucial to quickly validate whether the peels could clean well." The two students used their mothers as testers. "At the time, we didn't know anything about washing." The testers liked the product, so Jasper and Melvin next went to a supermarket with their product under their arms and spent a whole day asking everybody who was coming and going what they thought of it. How could it be improved and were people prepared to pay for it? The guys found out that people thought it was interesting and were willing to pay for it.

**Freek:** Did your rapid growth pose any challenges?

**Melvin:** "It mainly brought us many chances. Chances for efficient production, for implementing innovations and for improving sustainability. I think our suppliers and production partners like collaborating with us, because we focus so much on increasing sustainability. For some suppliers the volumes we are now offering are not yet very attractive. However, they see Seepje as an ideal partner with whom to co-develop sustainable innovations and bring them onto the market. By way of example Melvin refers to the 100% natural fabric softener that the company has brought onto to the market. "We are the first in the

"We seek collaboration with large multinational companies that have far more developmental power than we do"

world to do that. We don't do it on our own, we seek collaboration with large multinational companies that have far more developmental power than we do. They are keen to collaborate with us because we work fast, we are not afraid to genuinely realise our dreams and we are committed to sustainability. If sustainability was not important to them, they could have chosen a different - cheaper- party to work with. Our product is available on the shelves within a few months. Another product that the company is developing is a new dishwashing detergent: a dish soap. Melvin: "It is actually like a bar of soap that you use for washing

your hands. But now you use it to do the washing up. You put it under a running tap and that is how you make soapy water: The advantage is that the bar doesn't contain any liquid, so there is no need to use plastic packaging, which contributes to more efficiency in transport and in the supply chain."

As a company, Seepje wants to convince the consumer to support the transition in eliminating petroleum from cleaning products, Melvin says. "This of course means convincing other traditional brands as well. If they see that the consumer is ready, they will take the step."



**Marit:** How do you create an impact in Nepal?

**Melvin:** "The problem is that farmers in Nepal are not highly organised. They have a few Sapindus trees on their land, from which they harvest once a year. Between Seepje and the farmers are two middlemen and our regular supplier.

Together with our supplier we now plant seeds every year. In the summer of 2021, we distributed 5,500 trees among nine farming families in Nepal, at our own expense. We pay those farmers annually to look after these trees, because the farmers will only start earning in five years' time. That is when the trees bear fruit. This way we know which trees are on which farmer's land and we make sure that we can buy directly from the farmers. Now that the supply chain is shorter, we can train these farmers, give them purchase guarantees and pay a fair price." ▶

**Marit:** Since last year we've been facing a global pandemic. How do you respond to that, in an international chain?

**Melvin:** "The pandemic started in China and all factories there shut down. This resulted in a huge challenge to supply the shops, because the pumps on our bottles of hand soap are produced in China, while the demand for hand soap soared in the Netherlands. And this is where Seepje's strength comes in. We are so entrepreneurial that we managed to be the only brand that was always available at Etos drugstores and Albert Heijn supermarkets, where our hand soap is sold. Perhaps it wasn't very sustainable, but at the time we decided to have these pumps flown in, making sure that there was hand soap in stock in this crisis situation."

**Freerk:** Where do you find the talent that works at Seepje and how do you ensure that they stay with your company?


**Melvin:** "We believe that a strong team and the right colleagues are the most important thing. Perhaps even more important than the product you sell. We go to great trouble to attract the right people and to retain them. We also create a pleasant workplace, we give people responsibility, and we celebrate success. Last year, for instance, we set up a collective bonus scheme, which means we all profit from growth. And we now make it possible for our staff to participate in Seepje so that the company is really ours."

**Freerk:** You are keen to make an impact. What would your advice be to young professionals who want to make an impact themselves?

**Melvin:** "You don't need to have a bizarre idea or become an entrepreneur per se. Especially as a young

professional you can add a great deal of value within existing companies with your talents. Make a conscious choice as to where you want to put your talents to work. Do you want to do so in a company whose primary aim is to make money? Or in a company that can bring about positive change in an industry? You can make an impact in a small, fast-growing enterprise, but you can also deploy your talents to make an impact in a large organisation. In fact, many large parties are yet to make the transition to sustainability, so you can be of great value there."

**Marit:** What would you like to say to people with a great idea?

**Melvin:** "I think that many people with a great business idea primarily see many obstacles to taking the first step. But that is what it's all about: take that first step. Then validate your assumptions quickly and simply. It doesn't have to be perfect all in one go. That's not how things went in our case. Absolutely not." 



"We believe that a strong team and the right colleagues are most important"



 **Marco Verberne** - Celanese  
**Ujendre Ramautarsing** - Set


## 'Customer of the year award 2021' for Celanese

Celanese is an American chemical company, manufacturer of high-quality products for applications in various industries, such as the automotive sector, the medical sector, electronics and the construction industry. The European head office is located in Amsterdam. Marco Verberne is Director Supply Chain at Engineered Materials and knows Set supply chain professionals very well. In 2014, when he was working at DSM, Marco was the first client with whom an Inspired-Talent trainee started working. Last year the ties were strengthened again because there were many issues in Marco's team. There was an imbalance between supply and demand and a new planning system was being implemented. So several trainees started at Celanese.

Ahead of presenting the trophy, Ujendre explained why Celanese had been selected. He thinks supply chain management is primarily about good coordination in the chain with other companies. Now that "the war for talent" has broken out, good collaboration with recruitment agencies can be decisive in attracting the right people to help your organisation progress. Companies that aren't used to working together as equal partners will also miss opportunities in their collaboration with recruitment agencies, because their expectations aren't communicated well or aren't realistic.

Set supply chain professionals carried on the annual tradition of putting a client in the spotlight. In 2021 the award went to Celanese. Because of the Corona measures, the award ceremony was a rather modest, yet personal lunch with **Marco Verberne** and **Ujendre Ramautarsing**, with the prospect of celebrating the award with the Celanese team as soon as possible.

In his comments Ujendre voiced his appreciation for the way Marco makes it possible to think about good solutions. Marco takes time to explain the supply chain situation and the challenges it involves, also within his own team. As a result, joint solutions were created, and this led to the placement of two trainees at Celanese. Subsequently these trainees were given good challenges and guidance and allowed the freedom to decide how to fulfil their role. Everybody has really appreciated Marco's ability to balance his time between giving good guidance to the trainees and coordinating with Ujendre. In a challenging period, the trainees have made an important contribution to a successful year. Ujendre emphasizes that giving starters a chance during challenging times is a sign of leadership. Especially with people working at home, that's not an easy thing for many clients. "One of the essential tasks of a leader is to put together a strong team and allow employees to grow. Celanese is very good at that."

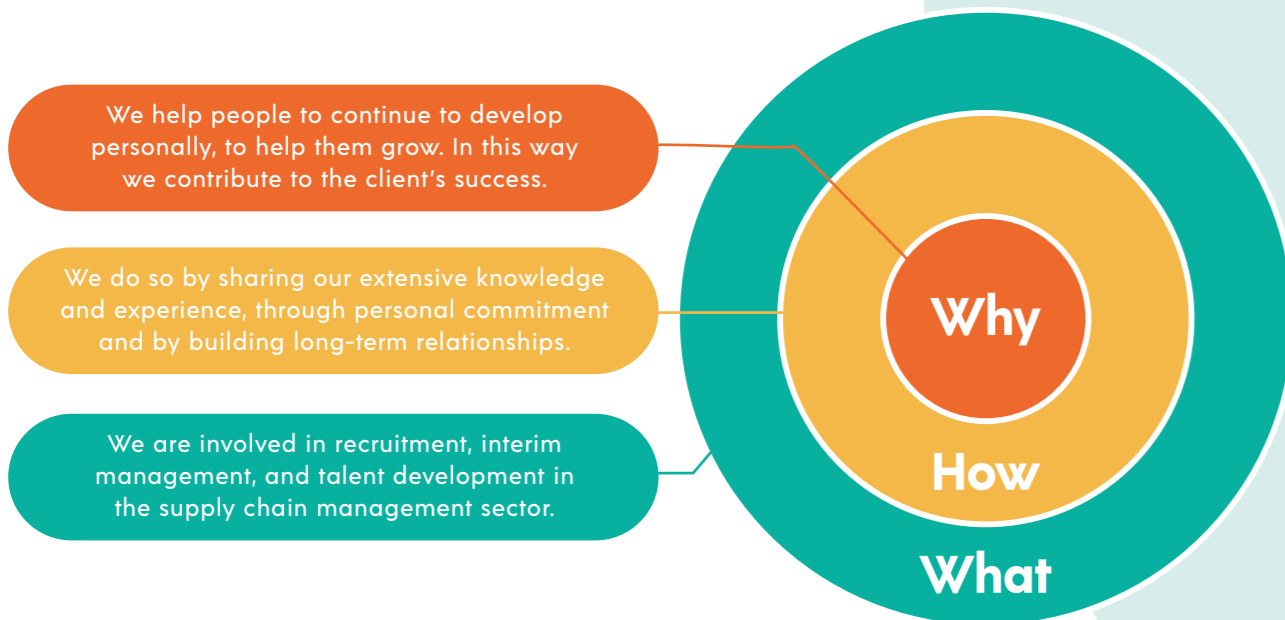
Marco was pleasantly surprised with the award and the words of praise and stressed the importance of celebrating success. "In marketing, celebrating success comes more naturally. But in these times of shortages, the supply chain is under a magnifying glass. The team is putting in an enormous amount of work and they solve many problems, but work is never finished in the supply chain. Especially in a global organisation this never stops. The team deserves appreciation and I think that in general we as supply chain professionals don't show that appreciation enough. It's very inspiring to see how your trainees have grown this year and what they mean to us, professionally and in terms of team spirit. I hope we can celebrate this award with the team very soon, because it was earned by the whole team." Marco went on to show his appreciation for the way of working together. "I've known you for years already and last spring I saw our workload increase rapidly. The need to attract people from outside to set up new robust planning systems and processes also increased. So, I thought of you and I'm glad that my expectations have been fulfilled." 



A new name, a new look

# Back to the core

Ujendre Ramautarsing, Evie Jetten and Marielle van Gastel asked Lisan Peters of Studio Flix to design a new name and house style. During the process with Lisan they took a step back from their daily activities. By means of various exercises, the trio was taken back to the core of the business.



We help people to continue to develop personally, to help them grow. In this way we contribute to the client's success.

We do so by sharing our extensive knowledge and experience, through personal commitment and by building long-term relationships.

We are involved in recruitment, interim management, and talent development in the supply chain management sector.

**The name**  
As Set supply chain professionals we like making connections, between people, teams, and disciplines. Making connections is reflected in our name and our logo. Set literally stands for: placing someone in a specific place or position. This is what the Set team does as a recruitment agency: placing supply chain professionals in a new position that suits that person's experience, development, and vision. Set also stands for a collection of objects (elements). This points to both sides of our discipline: recruitment as well as supply chain management. Recruitment, the search for the right candidate who fits the position and fits in with the company culture. Different elements that need to match for a successful placement. Supply chain management, Set's field of expertise which consists of different systems and links that need to be well coordinated. This is also reflected in the logo.

**The logo**  
The circles are a nod to the past; Inspired-Talent's logo was also a round shape. At the same time, they stand for innovation. The circles together form a chain, symbolising the systems and different links of the supply chain.

Indirectly they also refer to the word 'set', as together they form a whole. In addition, the circles indirectly form the letter S as in 'set' and 'supply chain'.



# Sharing knowledge about circular supply chains

The world is changing fast. New products are developed, adapted, discarded all the time. In our current economy, which we can see as linear, we mine raw materials, process them into a product, and when we stop using that product, we throw it away. As the population grows and prosperity increases, resources are becoming increasingly scarce and the climate problem is getting worse.

At Set supply chain professionals we want a bright future where we handle our raw materials in a conscious way, without wasting them. This makes us ask questions such as: What do we do with our old things? How do we look after the planet? How do we deal with the things that are available (in limited supply)? We want to strive towards a circular economy: an economy with as little waste as possible, where raw materials are put to optimal use and are reused. This requires a different way of thinking and of structuring the supply chain. Fortunately, there are many initiatives and changes in progress and we don't have to reinvent the wheel – and that's obviously sustainable. :-)

**Inspiration**  
At Set we consciously reflect on our influence on a circular economy. The question 'What can we contribute?' circled around in our team. The answer lay in our strength: making

Follow our vlogs!

connections and sharing knowledge. As Set we don't claim to have all the answers. In our work we keep looking for what we can learn from others. To us, knowledge sharing is essential, and every change starts with awareness. That is why we made a series of vlogs about the circular economy. In these vlogs we combine insights of companies and show the importance of sustainability and circularity in the supply chain. The vlogs are intended to inspire. We present examples of how companies apply the principles of the circular economy.

- The five stages of a circular economy:**
1. Design
  2. Obtaining resources
  3. Production
  4. Supply management
  5. Product recall (reverse logistics)

A company can add value to the circular economy within each of these stages. To get a clearer picture, we zoom in on each stage to show how companies are going about it. For instance, we discuss Stage 1 with WasteWorks and zoom in on Stage 4 with Signify. These videos will be posted on our website and on social media this year. Keep an eye out for them!

Delivering groceries to homes in reusable jars with a practical return system, that is what Pieter Pot does. This way the company wants to lower the waste mountain and reduce carbon emission. The ambition is huge and so are the supply chain challenges that emerge when the model is upscaled. How does **Sjoerd van Bekhoven** tackle them?

Sjoerd, who also happens to have just arrived at one of Pieter Pot's sheltered workplaces, walks up to me when I drive into the parking lot at five minutes to eleven on December 7. "Have you heard the good news?", he shouts, as he approaches me. "Yes", I say enthusiastically, "I just heard on the radio that you raised 9 million euros in a second investment round. Great!"

It is especially great because Pieter Pot is a brilliant concept. Pieter Pot was founded in 2019 by Jouri Schoemaker and Martijn Bijmolt based on the mission to reduce carbon emission and the amount of waste produced by the food industry. The concept is simple: packing groceries in reusable jars and bottles again, just like the old days. However, the execution is much more complicated than in the past when the milkman used to come to the door. The attic where Pieter Pot was started was soon replaced by the warehouse of a sheltered workplace. And with the money that the two men raised in the first investment round they were able to recruit Sjoerd van Bekhoven as jack-of-all-trades in all operations. Soon the position developed into a full-fledged supply chain role and Sjoerd is now responsible for planning, purchasing, production and logistics.

 **Sjoerd van Bekhoven** - Pieter Pot  
**Marielle van Gastel** - Set

 5 minutes

 Scale-up

# Pieter Pot scales up supply chain

"In every element of the supply chain we are trying to find the most sustainable alternative"



## The specific supply chain challenges of package-free groceries

### Complex return logistics

Sjoerd is from the tech industry and has a master's degree in Computer Science. His analytical way of thinking comes in handy in his new role. It is hardly a problem that he does not have specific supply chain experience. "We are an online supermarket. This company is structured so differently from regular supermarkets. Even the difference with Picnic is gigantic. The two greatest differences are the return logistics and the cleaning process of the jars. With us that is the core of the operational process, while with other online supermarkets it plays a subsidiary role at best."

### Upscaling is necessary

The company has made the strategic choice to be primarily an office organisation and to outsource a large part of the production work, including logistics, to partners. "We ourselves only do fulfilment and returns. By outsourcing a lot of work it is actually easier to upscale and this way we keep our company flexible", Sjoerd says. Upscaling is necessary, not only to start making a profit, but also to make the production processes even more environmentally friendly.

"Because it makes a great difference whether a partner has to fill, ship or clean 400 jars a week, 4,000 jars a week or 40,000 jars a week. No party wants to make a costly investment for four thousand jars a week, but they will for four hundred thousand jars." That's why it's great that Pieter Pot is growing. In 2021 the production went from four thousand to sixty thousand jars a week. In 2022 the company will grow to three hundred thousand jars.

### Reusable bulk packaging

In every element of the supply chain Pieter Pot's professionals are trying to find the most sustainable alternatives, beginning with the purchase of groceries. "We work together with large manufacturers who want to work in a more sustainable way themselves. For them it is nice to say that their products can also be bought in our reusable packaging", says Sjoerd. But then it's important to have these groceries supplied in the most sustainable way possible. That is quite a

challenge, he says. "We would prefer our suppliers to also use reusable packaging, such as buckets and big bags. However, we are still too small to make that a hard demand, so sometimes we have to make pragmatic choices and accept that suppliers use disposable packaging. But we notice that as our purchasing grows, suppliers are more willing to consider reusable packaging. It also pays off for them in view of a future that will be increasingly greener. Take chocolate sprinkles. At first, they were sent to us in disposable packaging, now in 600 kilo big bags."

### Mechanical filling

The next step is filling the packaging. To do so, Pieter Pot collaborates with a sheltered workshop so that people at a disadvantage in the labour market can do useful work. Now that the company is growing so quickly, it is time for increased mechanisation. "The number of jars is simply getting too large to fill them all by hand", Sjoerd says. "Together with our partner we are doing research into filling machines. The first machines have already been purchased."

### New jar

Before making decisions about filling machines, it was essential to develop better jars. "We are now still using the traditional Weck jars. They look nice, can be washed often and can be closed easily. But for several reasons they cannot be cleaned easily. On top of that, glass is rather heavy, and a lot of transport capacity is lost because of the round shape. That is why last year we developed a new, square jar. It can be washed more easily and takes up less space during transport."

### Carbon-neutral delivery preferred


To deliver the groceries Pieter Pot has a partnership with PostNL Food. This distributor has a nationwide transport network and can take care of the return logistics. "PostNL themselves are busy trying to work more sustainably. In 2021 they already succeeded in delivering emission free in Amsterdam. In 2028 the company wants to deliver parcels emission free all over the Netherlands. This way we tackle the whole chain together", Sjoerd says.

### In-house developed sales & operations planning tool

In order to plan this whole process from purchasing and filling jars to the logistics and cleaning of them

as well as possible, Sjoerd developed his own sales & operations planning tool that enables him to calculate how much capacity he has to reserve with partners every week. Although the software works well, he is talking to a few major suppliers to professionalise the tool. "Now I am using Google sheets and a couple of Python models. We want to turn it into a tool that everybody can work with, so that it becomes scalable. The same goes for ERP, which at the moment is also an in-house developed programme using Google Sheets. That software needs to be re-developed to make it a standard package that everybody can use."

### Duplicable blueprint

A duplicable blueprint is needed because Pieter Pot has also already taken its first international steps. The company is active in Belgium and there are concrete plans for the German market. "We serve Belgium from the Netherlands right now, but Germany is much too large to serve from the Netherlands. We need to set up an entirely new organisation to do so. That is why we are very busy making the Dutch model duplicable. We are developing a blueprint that we can use in every country. Of course, that includes a professional ERP system and a sales & operations planning tool." Pieter Pot's ambition is big: reaching the masses with package-free groceries. The money for growth is now also available. So, there is work to be done. "We have shown that you can create a business model of working with reusable packaging, but to make a profit we need more scale. We also need that scale to improve sustainability. We have taken major steps forward in our company's transition to the next phase of growth. But we still have a long way to go. That is what is so enjoyable about my work. There is still so much to improve!" 

# A conversation with Helma van Seggelen

## Operations Director Prowise

The digitalisation of education has been an attractive growth market over the past decade. The corona crisis has given this market a huge boost. At 12 years old, Prowise is a relatively young company and an important and successful supplier of learning solutions. Even though the organisation has grown fast, with around 240 staff members, its culture is still entrepreneurial and informal. With sales in 28 countries and with 275,000 users, there are still opportunities for continued growth, especially internationally. This poses higher requirements for the organisation and the work processes. We sat down to discuss this with **Helma van Seggelen**, Operations Director at Prowise, who is responsible for logistics, installation, planning, assembly, and facility management.

"Working in supply chain keeps me motivated, because we are involved in all aspects of the company and clearly have an impact on customer satisfaction"

Prowise is a Dutch company offering digital learning solutions primarily for educational institutions. In the Netherlands, Prowise is the market leader. People who regularly enter classrooms are very likely to come across a Prowise digital blackboard. The Prowise head office is located in Budel. One third of the staff has a background in education and is in daily contact with pupils, teachers, and school administrators in order to be able to offer optimal solutions. What is unique in this approach is that the products are not purchased off the shelf but are developed by Prowise itself. As the development and production processes are carried out in-house, further development of hardware and software can be done independently to comply with the highest safety standards.



### Recruitment is very challenging


What stands out in conversation with Helma is her pride in the product and the drive to supply pupils with the best products. As a result of the company's growth, one of the key challenges is to recruit good people. Due to the shortage in the labour market, recruitment strategies have been adapted. Helma explains: "The recruiting department has been expanded and we are using all channels to reach candidates. We ask our staff to actively think along with us to see whether there are good people in their networks that they could introduce. This has always been very effective for us as the quality of these people is very high. It is equally important that we continue to develop our own ERP CRM system, so that newcomers can find their way more quickly through the systems and so that the processes are less complicated. Also, we select people on the basis of their competencies, rather than their experience. Learning ability and adaptability have become more important. One engaging example, I think, is the chef we recruited recently who we think has the right competencies to become a good installation engineer. Attitude is crucial, during the recruitment process applicants' curiosity becomes clear through the questions they ask. We make an effort to find out what somebody is passionate about."

### Supply chain challenges

When asked what the major challenge is in operations and planning, Helma is quick to answer. "Of course, we also face operational disruptions caused by faltering supply lines from Asia, but we anticipated well with regard to our manufacturers by factoring growth into our orders in time. As far as transport is concerned, things are not going the way they used to but we can now anticipate better when we can expect what. The top challenge for 2022 will be to set up the planning process effectively in our ERP CRM system. This is an important transition for us and we are pleased that a Set supply chain professionals trainee is coordinating this trajectory

for us in-company. I am confident that together we can create support in the organisation to improve the process and that the planners will embrace it. It is in fact very pleasing to see that a trainee who knows the process, because he also takes part in planning, plays a key role in developing good, functional specifications that the team can also stand behind. The trainee is doing very well, while it is his first assignment as a trainee with Set."

### Female leadership

After completing her degree in Industrial Engineering at Eindhoven University of Technology, Helma worked for Vlisco for 27 years. Vlisco is a Dutch brand that designs batik-based textiles and serves African consumers. Helma has been working with Prowise for the last three years. The diversity of positions she has held have always been in line with her studies. "Operations and supply chain management give me a lot of energy and keeps motivating me, because we are involved in all aspects of the company. It has a clear impact on customer satisfaction. Dare to dream and go for it, that is my motto. Women tend to be a little too modest in that respect. One suggestion I would like to give them is: stay true to yourself and find an environment that suits you. Female traits and well-developed soft skills are important in supply chain leadership, because collaboration with several different parties is necessary if you want to be successful. It is good to use those traits consciously and to continue to build on them." 



**Helma van Seggelen**

Education: Industrial Engineering & Management

1991 - 2019: Management positions in IT, Logistics, Supply Chain and Operations at Vlisco.

2019 - Present: Operations Director at Prowise.



# The place and tools to make a difference

In addition to work experience, trainees at Set supply chain professionals (Set) receive intensive training. **Cindy Bucher**, of United Talent, and **Theo de Rouw**, of Aeffort, are the trainers. Theo mainly offers tools for personal development to the talents. As a kind of walking library, he knows how to connect a quotation from a writer to every situation. Cindy primarily tries to go to a deeper level with the talents. She challenges the talents to explore what drives them, what the values are that shape their lives and what their unique style is in making connections and in making an impact.

**Theo:** Cindy, tell me, how did you get to this point?

**Cindy:** When I introduce myself during a training, I always think: what experience in my life could be valuable in this conversation for the people I am talking to now? Why would they take anything from me? Not because I have a qualification (she studied occupational and organisational psychology, eds.). I don't make an impact with that. It's rather because of who I am and what I have been through; that I (too) have been in hot water and faced major difficulties. That I have chosen not to break or become hard, but to become more powerful and to learn about life, that gives some perspective.

For now, I can tell you this part of my story. I have to go back twelve years. To the outside world, I made it. I was married and had a nice big house. No children, but I did have two dogs, two nice cars outside the house and I was working eighty hours a week. So was my husband. We were very ambitious. When I was about 30, the doubts came. About who I was and what I was doing. Looking back, I started working straight out of school and always did things the way I thought it should be done and the way I thought was expected of me. But it felt empty. That was when I first started soul searching. It led to a number of rigorous choices: I left my husband, I left my job and

got rid of all my belongings. I went in search of who I was without the things and the roles that I based my identity on.

**Theo:** You had collected a lot of stuff around you to base your identity on? We all do that, don't we?

**Cindy:** Yes, and I thought I was going to carry out my 'self-exploration' in the rice fields in Thailand, but I ended up harvesting potatoes in the Eastern region of the Netherlands. It wasn't that easy to sell our house, that was a reality that hit home. I spent 18 months without a house, without any possessions, just staying with other people in the Netherlands. A whole different way of living, but I experienced what I wanted, I found out how other people lived. You don't have to travel far to do that, here in our own country there are huge differences too.

**Theo:** Is that how you felt as well? People don't know their own environment, but they insist on travelling far away. That has always surprised me as well. Because of Corona, I have seen places I had never seen before. You slow down when you ride a bike or go for a walk. On your way you meet people, you stop people to have a chat. You could write a book every day about those encounters.

**Theo:** In fact, it is a question of having and

being. A philosophical question perhaps: do I need to have a high status, a lot of decorum, a lot of possessions or can I just be a human

**Cindy:** That was in essence the question I was asking myself. Do people think I'm OK, if I'm not somebody's wife, if I don't have a certain job, earn a certain amount of money, and live in a certain area? What do I really find important in life? Who do I really want to be?

**Theo:** So, you realised that your life no longer brought what you needed. That was a valuable and beautiful journey.

**Cindy:** Looking back, yes! But at the time, I also felt lost. I

found my way and worked with private parties for seven years. I did great things with them, but I was missing the impact that you can make in companies. I had left business mainly because of a huge prejudice. At the time, I thought it was all so short and ad hoc when we were doing trainings. At the end of the day, if we had to make cuts, it was always development that was cut first. In my mind, business was all about performing. But if that was my view, nobody was going to accept

anything from me. To really make a difference, I had to abandon that view and the idea that it was right.

**Theo:** Your thoughts! Byron Katie wrote a book about it (The Work, a book about the way to discover and explore the thoughts that cause all the suffering in the world, eds.) ▶

Two trainers,  
each with their  
own working method  
and their own story. They  
met for the first time and  
interviewed each other  
for this magazine.



## Trainingen

Our trainees follow trainings together and individually. There are three courses everybody follows. In the first year, this is the training in Personal Effectiveness, developed together with Theo. The second year, Cindy gives the Personal Impact Training. And in the third year, they follow the Project Management Training. Where possible the group of participants is expanded with other supply chain professionals. Because all participants work in the supply chain, the learning effect is greater. People learn from each other, in terms of soft skills and hard skills. This is of added value for our clients. Interested? Please send an email to: [evie@setsupplychain.com](mailto:evie@setsupplychain.com).

Katie says that every thought you have is not right. That is what it's all about. We should not try to change the world according to our thoughts, we should explore our thoughts.

**Cindy:** That is what I find appealing on your website. You focus on what can be influenced and what is changeable. My experience is that there are always more possibilities than we think. Some five years ago, I came across United Talent, a team whose motto is: 'Inspiring all people to be fully alive'. You experience aliveness at the intersection of support and challenge. On the one hand, I find it important to provide a safe setting. A setting where you say: 'There is nothing wrong with you as a person, as a team or as an organisation.' And I am there for you, even outside

the training room, to do what is necessary to reach your goal. On the other hand, the process challenges you to step out of your comfort zone. It is precisely outside the sessions that you encounter yourself, and your comfort zone will try hard to pull you back. I like being there at those moments, to create a lasting breakthrough.

**Cindy:** But Theo, what is your story?


**Theo:** After finishing secondary school, I first spent a few years in youth work. Cultural work, a lot of pop music, pop festivals, the days of Doe Maar, Frank Boeijen and other Dutch-language music. I refused conscription, but I did do community service, moving to Hoorn to do that. At the time I also spent a lot of time in America, California. That's where I was when I got that particular phone call. My father had died, of a heart attack. I was 25. It was a traumatic experience; I hadn't had the chance to say goodbye. It was traumatic for my mother as well. Because I wanted to live near her, I applied for a job in Den Bosch. I worked for a year with young addicts, but it got to me. You can help a few people, but there were some who I thought found it very comfortable to play the victim.

It was costing me too much energy, that's why at twenty-seven years of age I decided to study occupational and organisational psychology. There I was, in 1990, in a high-class consultancy agency in Eindhoven, in a villa, giving business advice and conducting assessments. You can ask yourself which world is more pleasant. That world with young addicts was not pleasant, but I also found this terribly pompous. I came in contact with a company called Next Roads that builds large hydraulic installations, all very technical. The boss of

that company asked me to come and work there for two days a week as their talent manager. That is what prompted me to start my own business and I have been running my own business now for about 25 years.

A few years ago, I wanted to do something else, other than just sitting in an office. I started organising retreats. Not to make money, because it is only costing me money and time. But the funny thing is, I come back very happy every time. And the people who take part become my best clients. I choose a few people who I think need a break. We prepare meals together, go for walks, get to know the area. Just enjoying the simple things. One of the people I took along called me the other day, saying: 'Theo, I finally have a commission for you.' That was not what I was after at all, but that's how it goes. It does not all have to be perfect. I live in an old house, built in 1830. It's full of cracks and it is creaking. The walls are leaning so much! My 26-year-old son says: 'I can't believe you can live here'. My answer is: 'I think one day you'll change your mind about it, I cherish the cracks.'

**Cindy:** What a nice thing to say. I also find this important in my trainings at Set. That the talents start seeing the value of their life experience, apart from the knowledge and working experience that they have. It is not only about the degrees that you take, but also about who you are and what your story is. Then you can make an impact precisely by staying very true to yourself.

**Theo:** Yes, that we give them the place and the tools, as part of set, to keep making an impact in a world with changing needs. 

**Theo de Rouw:**

**"Keep making an impact in a world with changing needs."**



● Experiencing the bullwhip effect during a game



● Stan enjoys the Boerenkool Run



● Project Management training



● Stan together with a colleague at the client's company



● Marielle gets a tour at Pieter Pot



● Marit and Nick interview Shypple in Rotterdam



● Jip receives her certificate on completing her traineeship at Set



● Evie reveals the new company name to the team



● Ujendre and Evie at Studio Flix



● Giving an online guest lecture for Maastricht University



● To measure is to know, even during jeu de boules

# Reading tips about challenges in collaboration, business growth and a sustainable economy

If we zoom out from the hectic schedule of daily life, we are confronted with various challenges from macro to micro level. More and more people find achieving climate goals and chasing the holy grail of economic growth incompatible. More (young) professional find sustainable companies more attractive than large established multinationals. It is crucial for these companies to grow with the right employees. The Corona crisis has shown once again that strong supply chains are characterized by good collaboration within the chain. Sustainable growth is only possible if the chain partners also go along with it. We've chosen four books that discuss the challenges that come with these subjects.

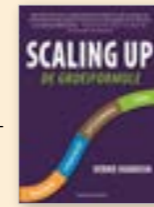
Investments  
should also be  
based on social and  
ecological value



## Sustainable capitalism

Willem Schramade

In this book Willem Schramade argues that there is a way to create room for sustainable investments in our current capitalist system. At the moment financial institutions evaluate investments based on financial value, but social and ecological value should also be considered. Here lies a task for financial institutions and for companies with a one-sided financial view. Schramade is not arguing against economic growth, but for a wider view. We attach too much value to pure financial growth. It can be a result of what you do, but it should not come first as a separate value in itself. In addition, Schramade emphasizes the importance of the individual. An individual can be a consumer, employee, traveller, inhabitant, and investor. In different roles you can take different actions that have an impact on a more sustainable system. There are obvious changes in behaviour for a traveller (flying and driving less) or for the food consumer (consuming less meat and dairy products), but it's less obvious for roles such as the investor. As an investor you can choose whether to invest your money in a sustainable or traditional portfolio. If you don't invest in shares directly, you must realise that you invest indirectly through your savings in your bank or through your pension fund. For each organisation in which you invest you can find out whether they contribute to the transition to a more sustainable economy. They don't? Then their business model is at risk, which probably still makes them a bad investment in the long run.



## Scaling up

How a Few Companies Make It... and Why the Rest Don't

Verne Harnish

In this book Harnish provides you with practical tools to make your business grow. The author uses various illustrative cases of growth firms, bringing the theory to life. In addition, there are many tools and formats that you can use with your team to make your business grow faster, from a strategic plan to an operational plan. The book feels like a workbook that you want to put into practice with your team.

It feels like  
a workbook

The book focuses on four decision-making areas: people, strategy, execution, and cash. There is an introductory question on each decision area:

People: Are all interested parties satisfied (employees, clients, and shareholders)? Are they committed to the business, and would you involve all of them again?  
Strategy: Can you describe your company's strategy in simple terms and is this strategy the driving force for sustainable growth of the turnover and the gross margin?  
Execution: Are all processes executed smoothly and do they lead to the highest profitability in the sector?  
Cash: Do you have a consistent cash flow, preferably generated by the company itself, to feed your company's growth?

If you can't say 'yes' to these questions but would like to, then this is the right book for you.



## Taking off with the best people

Growth Guide for start-ups and scale-ups

Sprout

This book focuses on recruiting and growing with the best people. The preface comes straight to the point. "Forget about experience, find out whether people are smart and keen to learn. The culture match, that's what's important. Perhaps that sounds soft, but it'll make your business rock-hard." The Sprout journalists base their book on the experiences of Swapfiets, Picnic, Coolblue, Tony's Chocolonely and others. The book makes slightly more light-hearted reading than scaling up. And the checklists at the end of the nine chapters are clear and easy to apply. The theme is proactivity - to be prepared for growth and to plan for success - from the first chapter on taking on staff to the last chapter on letting staff go. There are various recognisable situations in the book. For instance, it often happens that a temporary contract is extended with another temporary contract. Usually, the company already knows that the staff member is not good enough. As an employee, you can also be proactive and draw your conclusions. For HR a checklist is included for every stage of growth of the company, specifying the importance of and the connection between culture, values, and familiarisation programmes (onboarding). In addition,

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there are frequent references to well-known models. For instance, Simon Sinek's model of a company's rationale, Daniel Pink's model of motivation or Lencioni's model for working in strong teams.



## The secret behind successful partnerships

Mirjam van Drimmelen

A characteristic comment by Martin Christopher, Professor Emeritus of Cranfield University is: "Supply chains compete, not companies". Though the comment is older than our trainees, it's still relevant, resulting in the need to reflect on how best to set up partnerships. Many forms of partnerships begin with enthusiasm but fizzle out, because they lack shared confidence, values and vision. A book about partnerships, written by Mirjam van Drimmelen, is therefore a must if you want to make a serious attempt at improving collaboration in the chain. The book consists of three parts. The first part is about the why of working together, types of collaboration and the causes of problems that can arise in the collaboration. In the second part the author explains the VIA method that she developed. Collaboration goes through various stages: exploring, structuring, and joining. Van Drimmelen offers a tool for discussion that leads to mutual understanding. The third part can be read separately from part 1 and part 2 and discusses various factors that you 'are confronted with' in the process of collaboration. This part helps you to continue to approach things from a constructive perspective and to make progress in the collaboration.

One of the subjects in the third part is trust. This part cites from a column by academic, university administrator and

writer Louise O. Fresco, written in September 2018 and still relevant. "Trust is oxygen for the mind and the heart, a human cannot do without it for a second. And just as a brief lack of oxygen causes serious damage, so does a lack of trust cause lasting social and individual damage." Van Drimmelen continues with: "Restoring trust in a society, in friends, in your (business) partner starts with yourself, with the will to lay your own prejudices, opinions, interests and convictions on the table." I hope that these words encourage the reader to start shaping collaboration in the chain in an unprejudiced and well-prepared manner.

This book is a  
must-have if you  
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chain



**Naomi van Nederpelt** - Shypple  
**Erwin Herfst** - Shypple  
**Hanna Steenstra** - Shypple

**Marit van Beuningen** - Set  
**Nick de Fouw** - Set



5 minutes



Scale-up



week, Erwin tells us. "Shypple gives back control of the shipping process to the shippers." For example, they can book containers within minutes, view all costs, tariffs, and documents. And all partners are kept informed automatically by the platform. "We ourselves don't have lorries, containers, sea ships or airplanes. The only things we have are assets such as laptops and telephones, and the knowledge that our people have."

That digital platform was the start of a company that now, 5 years later, has 150 staff members. The recent take-over by Milestone Logistics Group has helped the scale-up take huge steps forward. "We are expanding our services", Erwin says. Milestone handles refrigerated freight, or reefers, which is a clear addition to the containers that Shypple started with.

#### Planning ahead

Marit: "It has perhaps been difficult since Corona, but how do you guarantee that there is always space?"  
 Erwin: "We try and find the most suitable and available space. If a client wants to go to Singapore, we warn them that they have to book an x number of weeks in advance. Apart from being a track- and-trace and communication tool, our platform is also an actual planning tool for the client. As soon as a client knows when there is room available, they can let us know straightaway that the goods are ready to be picked up. This enables us to plan ahead too. That is important, because we have to know whether, say, Thursday's sailing is suitable for the goods. We take multiple aspects into account. It's not just: 'Oh, you've got space next week, so we'll plan it with you.' We try to think along with the client."

In the past a traditional freight forwarder's work was done when a full container had been delivered for loading on the loading date, but with Shypple the work continues, Erwin explains. "We keep monitoring the freight and keep track of where the container is. If a cargo stays in the transshipment port for a long time, we can also inform the

client. This way the cargo is not unnecessarily delayed. We can then decide to push the shipping company."

#### Personal contact

About 18 months ago Shypple was still a start-up. Despite the Corona crisis - there are few empty ships and containers at all - the company managed to grow into a scale-up. The company also tackles challenges such as containers in the wrong locations, ports that are not available or an energy crisis in China, where sometimes the government shuts off electricity. Erwin: "You have to make sure you always keep your clients posted and inform them well. Personal contact is very important in that regard."

Marit: "How do you make sure you can keep providing that personal contact?" "It's very difficult to grow in this market", Erwin says. "As a result of the take-over we are growing vigorously. The pressure to integrate is stronger, but now we do have a lot of knowledge in the company. If we land a big new client, we are ready."

The company is rapidly becoming more professional. Erwin: "For example, things are becoming more structured, and we are improving the efficiency of our processes. Also, there is more differentiation in positions: sales, operations, procurement, people, and culture. Everybody has a great deal of autonomy in the way they work. But everyone is keen to keep on improving our platform. If you hear something from a client, you take action. This way we have input from all sides, enabling us to make improvements."

#### Growing together

As a result of the take-over, forty new staff members joined in one go. And Shypple is continually looking for new employees. Marit: "Being a dynamic scale-up, are there any special traits that you are looking for?" Naomi: "Of course there are certain traits necessary to make you successful in a rapidly changing environment. You have to like it and be open to it. Be willing to take initiative and have the freedom to do so. It is a two-way process. You have to be able to adapt and switch quickly."

Erwin: "Yes, that flexibility is essential. And being able to work independently. Because of the Corona crisis people are now often working from home, which requires a fair amount of discipline." Naomi adds: "You really have to be able to take the steps to create your own challenges." At Shypple there are plenty of opportunities and challenges to do so."

It is also a question of collaboration, thinking along with other people. "I think it's important to appreciate each other's creativity", Erwin says. "If somebody has a new idea, there's always someone who will listen to it." Naomi: "What I myself really like is that, because of our strong growth, there's a very good opportunity to grow together with the company."

#### Kitchen table

Naomi thinks it is also important to really speak to each other in order to keep stimulating each other. "Not just online with a short question about how it's going, and then move on and start the meeting, but showing real interest in each other and meeting live."

In the Shypple office a large kitchen table takes pride of place. Erwin: "That's where we always have lunch together. And there



**The platform is a matchmaker for freight companies**

are also sitting areas to have our formal conversations in an informal way. I think, the possibility of always being able to just sit down with somebody and our open atmosphere contribute to Shypple's success.

Naomi: "We really do it together. You cannot grow this hard if everybody stays on their own island. That is the prevailing atmosphere, we all want to help each other."

"That personal element is reflected in the way we approach our clients", Edwin explains. "Clients can always call us or contact our customer success department. But there's always room at our kitchen table too."

#### Sustainability

Nick is keen to also briefly look ahead to the young company's sustainability ambitions. "Transporting a sea container is a pretty polluting business." For instance, TNO research institute states that the shipping industry is responsible for 3.15 percent of all carbon emissions. "That is not much less than air traffic", it says on their website. Research shows that if ocean freight were a country, it would rank sixth in terms of emissions. "Do you think that you have an impact in this regard on shipping companies like Maersk?"

Hanna: "We are paying more and more attention to this. We are already compensating for carbon emission by planting trees in Tanzania. As a company we work entirely 'carbon positive'. At the end of 2021, we organised a kick-off on the subject. Biofuel is a new option that clients can choose. If possible, we compensate with a different shipping, as not all carriers can sail on biofuel. Clients who choose biofuel in this way, and do not ship cargo themselves, thus contribute to a general reduction in emissions by the shipping industry."

Erwin is clear about the future: "We want to connect as many companies as possible via our platform. Then we are helping each other speak the same language."

# We are Set

## Supply chain professionals who make a difference

Companies do not compete with companies; supply chains compete with supply chains. It is people who still make the difference in that process and good people will continue to make a difference.

We help companies to attract good people and to develop. Our passion for supply chain management and our experience in developing future leaders results in extraordinary experiences and collaborations, with people contributing from their position to the success of their company during different stages of their career.

In 2014 we set up our supply chain traineeship. The master students that we employ take on assignments with various clients in a variety of supply chain roles for the duration of three years. Often is planning combined with process improvement. Apart from trainees, we have also strengthened our team over the past years by adding a number of experienced project managers. In collaboration with the client, we set the bar high in contributing to improving the clients' results.

Experience shows that we make a difference in this regard. Based on our experience and knowledge of the market, we are well qualified to think along with clients about possible solutions to realising a good staffing level and forming a balanced team.

That is why recruitment and selection, and interim commissions, are also key activities that form part of our expertise. As a result, we can always offer a suitable solution.

## We work according to our four core values



### Exceeding client expectations

From the start to the end of a commission we keep in touch with the client and make their expectations as explicit as possible. We translate these expectations into goals and do our utmost to achieve them well.



### Multiplying knowledge

We are keen to learn, and we are curious, therefore we are always looking for new knowledge and experience. We are open to other ways of working. By sharing our ideas, we show that we are an innovative partner.



### Exercising self-leadership

We make conscious choices that are in line with our values and motives. We bring out the best in ourselves by welcoming feedback and taking responsibility, resulting in accelerated development and a constructive image.

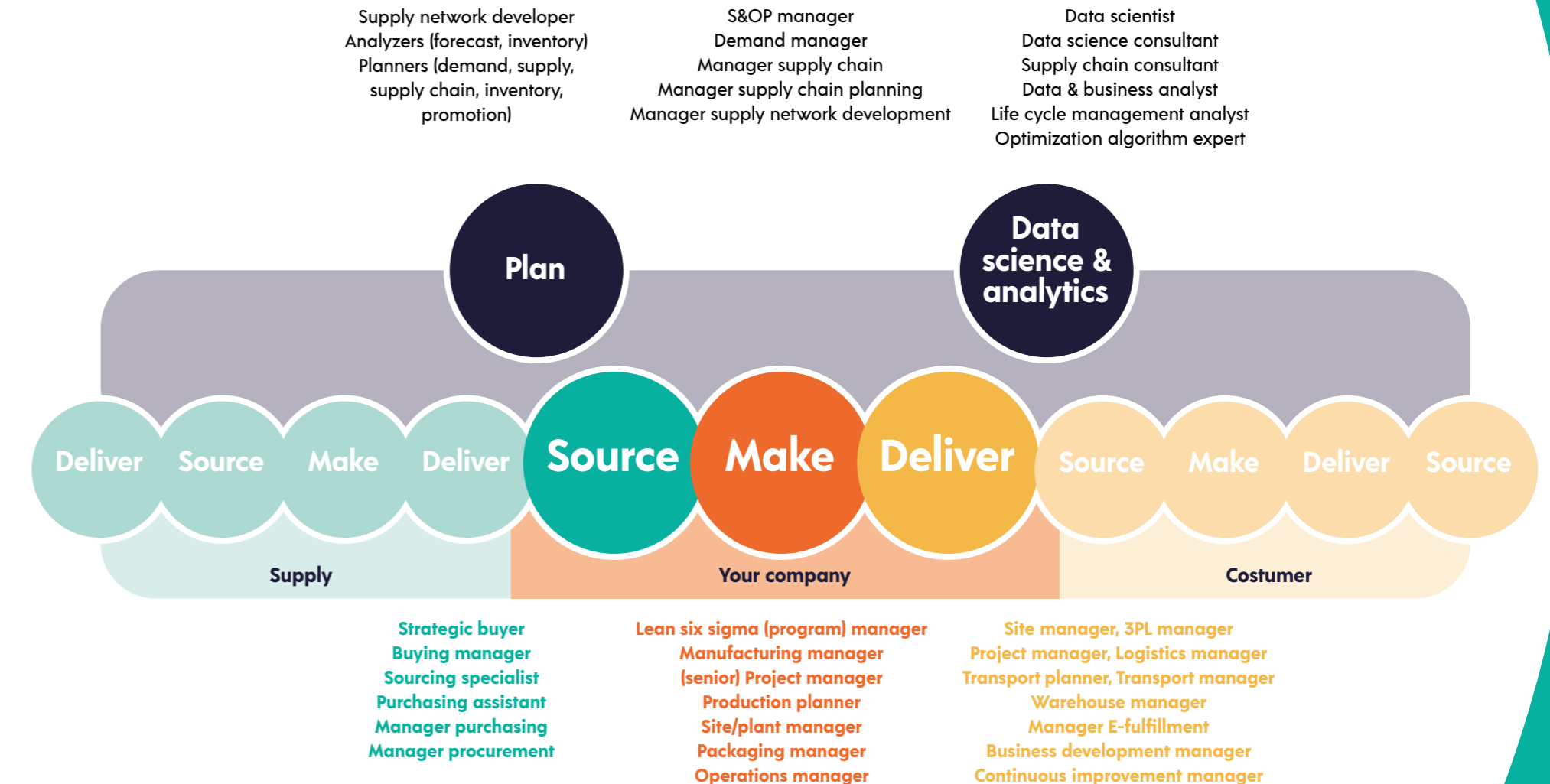


### Demonstrating commitment

We develop meaningful relationships by really wanting to understand the other person and help them progress. Our actions result in long-term relationships with our partners. We do our best to contribute to positive team development in the client's organisation as well as in our own team of trainees..

## Our professional expertise: the SCOR Model\*

The Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR) Model forms the framework of our professional expertise and specifies four key supply chain processes: planning, manufacturing, purchasing, and logistics. Because of the ever-increasing relevance of data science and analytics in supply chains, Set thinks that it is imperative to include a fifth element in the SCOR model: data science and analytics.



\* Source: Supply Chain Council





ready  
set,  
go!

A talent  
does not  
develop  
on its own

**Together we develop the supply chain leaders of the future**

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