

# the **best job** in the world

the ideas and practice of **Frits Goldschmeding**, founder of Randstad



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# foreword



As CEO of a growing multinational, I have a tendency to look ahead. How can we as Randstad continue to make a difference in our rapidly changing world? Are we ready for the future? Our world is one of uncertainties where traditional patterns are no longer a guarantee for success in future markets. As a company, you have to be open to new developments. To continue to be relevant, you have to reinvent yourself all the time.

At the same time, we at Randstad are very aware of our past and how that past defined us as a company, now and in the future. Randstad was founded over fifty-five years ago. Since then, the staffing services set up in 1960 by Frits Goldschmeding and Ger Dalebout has grown from a small office in a student room in Amsterdam into a global organization with thousands of subsidiaries in 39 countries and a turnover of around 19 billion euros. Millions of people have found jobs through Randstad and thousands of clients have found personnel. And that success is undoubtedly thanks to the brilliant entrepreneurship of its founder, Frits Goldschmeding.

You cannot necessarily formulate your future on the basis of that historic fact. Nevertheless, it is important to understand how Goldschmeding's legacy has made our company what it is today. It forms the foundation for Randstad and gives us our virtually invincible and unique position in our core business: connecting clients to the talents they seek and matching job seekers to the companies that need them.

This book therefore explains Frits Goldschmeding's commercial ideas for us and future generations. His vision on entrepreneurship, brand and market and the philosophical and ethical principles on which he based Randstad still provides us all with a benchmark by which to test our choices and decisions. The resulting corporate culture continues to motivate our employees to make the most of their talents. Anyone familiar with the inspiring mental legacy of Goldschmeding will understand the soul of our company.

Obviously, today's world is very different from the one in 1960. Technology, digitization, the rapidly changing labor market, the global economy: we must constantly be aware that what we are doing today may not be good enough tomorrow. Frits Goldschmeding has always known this too. Resources and services change and will continue to do so. But one thing will always remain the same and is the direct result of Frits Goldschmeding's impassioned vision: our fundamental belief that by showing sincere interest and confidence, we can help talented people and businesses move forward. It is this belief that guarantees a successful future.



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the legacy of  
Frits Goldschmedding

passionate  
entrepreneurship



*‘Working hard, doing what you do best and doing your utmost to be the best’*



It is a legendary story: how one night in 1960, student Frits Goldschmeding was cycling home with his fellow student Ger Daleboudt and decided to set up a private employment agency. ‘Ger asked me: when? I said: now! Three o’clock in the morning seemed like the perfect time. We went to my room and while he wrote a letter to future temps, I wrote one to future clients. And because I had no funds to buy stamps, I went and delivered the letters myself. So yes, we were off to a flying start. And at the end of the first year, we were employing some twenty temps.’

The idea that the future lay in the as yet untapped market for temporary employment sprung from Goldschmeding’s graduation thesis. In this thesis, he stated that the current labor market with its rigid organization by the social partners did not meet the growing demand for new types of jobs and evolving work patterns. His conclusion: between 4 and 5 percent of the total labor market should comprise temporary work.

This was a new approach compared with the current ideas about social security and job creation. But when Frits Goldschmeding actually went ahead and set up his own employment agency, his University Professor read him a lesson. Because Goldschmeding had been educated as an economist, not as an entrepreneur. Yet he was doing exactly what one of his heroes, the great economist Joseph Schumpeter, before him believed when he stated that the economy as a whole will advance through changes brought about by the implementation of new combinations. For Schumpeter, entrepreneurship was key in economic theories. He described the entrepreneur as a person who, through spirit and perseverance, is ready and able to turn a new idea or invention into a successful innovation by creating new economic activities or by transforming existing ones.

Entrepreneurism was running through the veins of Frits Goldschmeding. It had been a part of him from a very

early age, and he never lost it. As he put it: 'A true entrepreneur never grows up. He always remains a child at heart – a teenager at most. I don't believe that an entrepreneur will ever become a manager of a consolidated company with no plans for expansion. If they do, they were never entrepreneurs at heart. Real entrepreneurs will continue to create business. They will always be coming up with new ideas.' So, despite the fact that his employment agency had already grown into an impressive international organization and Goldschmeding could have rested on his laurels, he 'kept suffering from brain waves'. Goldschmeding: 'I kept coming up with new ideas – ten times the number that could ever be realized. That's what makes an entrepreneur tick. You keep spotting opportunities to improve. You want to achieve things and stand out from the crowd. Development is embedded in our organization's DNA. I don't believe in consolidation. It's also about enjoying achieving things. And that's exactly what I've been



doing.’ In other words, according to Goldschmeding, entrepreneurship is a way of life. ‘It affects your social life, your economic life, your biorhythm – everything. You have to use everything you’ve got and discard everything you don’t need to ultimately achieve your goal.’

In 55 years, Randstad grew from being a tiny office in a slightly hostile environment and with an annual profit of just nine guilders into a global company with tens of thousands of staff, employing hundreds of thousands of flex workers, with turnover of billions and profits running into millions of Euros. That unprecedented success is all down to the passionate and all-embracing entrepreneurship of Frits Goldschmeding. He saw opportunities that others didn’t, was convinced that hard work would enable him to put ideas into practice, demonstrated amazing perseverance, was never daunted by the skepticism of others, and always appreciated good suggestions from the people around him. Moreover, he understood that





success is the result of teamwork. That he had to gather the right talent around him and continue to inspire them day in, day out with his enthusiasm and vision. That his DNA had to become the DNA of the organization. Goldschmeding: 'Entrepreneurs don't invent things. They spot something and then use it. You make new combinations of existing possibilities and resources, and start up new processes. I didn't invent the flexworker. But as an entrepreneur, you're the one who takes the risk of turning it into a large-scale phenomenon, because you see its potential. You then have to convince others of your vision and inspire them to work hard to achieve it. And in such a way that they have fun too! At the same time it's vital that they see the result of their efforts. Not just by giving out bonuses – money is never employees' first priority – but by devoting attention to them and helping them experience the importance of their work. So you need to create systems so that even in a large company you can show people that their work is appreciated.

That ensures the continuity of the relationship. And then the entrepreneurial side follows; you can teach people that. Throughout Randstad, there are entrepreneurs with the same passion as I have. Like me, they feel that putting people to work is the best job in the world. And it's not something you can do yourself. You need to use all everyone's qualities to achieve a common goal. That's real teamwork.'

Frits Goldschmeding has never felt daunted by the repeated setbacks he met along the way. On the contrary: in the same way that a stone on a palm tree will make the tree grow faster, resistance boosted the motivation to succeed. In the early years, for example, he had to defend the concept of 'temporary staffing' and often used political opposition to his advantage. He developed new strategies and creative tactics to promote his ideas and turned threats into opportunities for growth. Thus, despite the economic downturn in the 1980s and 90s, he went

against the grain and hired people. 'Because I recognized that certain fluctuations came in cycles. Economic recovery in the US would reach Europe via the UK, which would subsequently result in an upturn for the labor market. It's a phenomenon you have to look out for. And after each fluctuation, our market share increased because we were always ahead of the competition. If I'd retired into my shell, nothing would have happened.'

He took calculated risks, but always made sure that growth was gradual. So that he remained in control of the expanding organization and ensured that growth could be sustained. 'But I made some stupid mistakes too. Like in Germany in 1968, when we set up too many subsidiaries at the same time. And shortly after, when we took over the German Stahlwerke – a market we were not familiar with. You mustn't bite off more than you can chew. I'd always made sure I stuck to one thing and when I didn't, it almost killed us. It was too much, too



soon. We lost a fortune. And in 1983, after the economic recession, we grew too fast. Our organization was unable to keep up. And our people were confused and dissatisfied. Still, you learn from your mistakes. I always believed that tomorrow would be better. And if not, the day after. The one who wins the match is not necessarily the best boxer, but the one who knows how to take the hits. As a company, you mustn't necessarily aspire to be the biggest, but the best. The leader. Once you've achieved perfection, growth will be inevitable. And if you keep doing it wrong, you'll disappear. It's that simple.'

'If you want to sell something,' Frits Goldschmeding once said, 'you have to believe in three things: God (or some other ethical concept), your product – people need it and they'd be foolish not to buy it –, and yourself.'

The 'Mayor of Randstad', as he was known in the media, has thoroughly saturated his organization with this view. His example and approach of 'working hard, doing what



you do best and doing your utmost to be the best' are also firmly anchored in Randstad. But his most important legacy may be the communication of a deeply felt philosophy: entrepreneurship isn't about making a profit, but about leaving the world in a better state than when you started. And obviously, a good financial result is essential too, because you need profits to achieve your goals. But ultimately, it's about nurturing what you've been given. Goldschmeding: 'The first words people learned from the Creation story, were "build" and "maintain"'. Together, these concepts formed man's cultural task. We have to be both progressive and conservative. It's not about money, but about increasing value. I've always tried to be a good steward and fulfill all the duties involved.'

Being both an entrepreneur and father of the business. The unshakable conviction that a company should only exist if it adds something to society. The deep belief that work makes life meaningful and gives it purpose. Based

on these principles, Frits Goldschmeding has developed a corporate philosophy and a corporate culture that not only continue to drive entrepreneurship within Randstad to great heights today, but have also helped shape the company's identity and that of its staff. An identity that is so strong that Randstad can be managed in a decentralized way. Even when international companies are acquired, they are usually quite easily transformed to match the Randstad brand. Goldschmeding: 'Randstad is a huge network of independently operating branches. The stronger the corporate philosophy and culture, the easier it is to manage. In fact, you hardly need to do anything else, because everyone in all those locations is thinking and acting along similar lines. They all know what to do.' And in Frits Goldschmeding's world, his philosophy and culture are thus functionally and inextricably linked to entrepreneurship. 'Everything I did as an entrepreneur was aimed at the continuity of our organization. It all had a reason.'







philosophy  
 the Randstad **DNA**

*‘Constantly asking questions and looking beyond the answers’*



As an entrepreneur, Frits Goldschmeding spotted opportunities and seized them. As founder of a company, he felt it was his mission to find answers. Who are we? What place does the business have in society? What will your business policy be? Who or what guides your actions? What will you base your choices and decisions on? In other words: what are your basic beliefs?

Seeking inspiration from science, philosophy and theology, from day one Goldschmeding went in search of the basic principles and duties of his enterprise. ‘You have to use expressions starting with “I believe...” and “I think...”. You have to describe how you view people and society and the role of the company. You have to define your starting principles. To be able to formulate these, you have to keep asking questions and always look beyond the answers.’

This quest for meaning is first mentioned in the introduction of the Randstad Annual Report of 1975. Here the

company is described as 'a partnership involving many groups, both directly and indirectly'. During the years that followed, Randstad's philosophy was gradually shaped. In many of the brainstorming sessions, coworker Ed Bolk was the sparring partner. In the Annual Reports of 1977, 1978 and 1979 particularly, and again in 1984, Goldschmeding formulated in increasing detail the basic principles of what he called 'Randstad's DNA' and which have since guided the company's operations.

'I want to emphasize the ethical aspect, in which love plays a role,' says Goldschmeding. 'In Greek, you have 64 words for love, one of which is *agápe*. This word originates from the Old Testament. It's a giving, rather than demanding form of love. It focuses on the needs of others. It is unconditional and selfless. This type of love has three features: to know, to serve, to trust. By operationalizing these concepts for all the issues facing a company, I believe we can create "coherent integration".'



This coherent integration describes the social role that Randstad sees for itself: to achieve every aspect of the interests of all those both directly and indirectly involved. At the same time, the basic principles determining the striving for continuity, growth and profit are established. And taking human imperfection into account, all parties involved are always expected to strive for perfection in everything they do.

Simultaneously promoting all interests, to know, to serve, to trust, and striving for perfection: these are the three basic principles of the corporate philosophy developed by Frits Goldschmeding which still forms the ethical foundation for the Randstad organization today. This 'golden triangle' determines the strategic choices and ambitions, as well as the culture of the expanding company. The 'company's distinctive drive' provides the criteria on which any employee anywhere in the world can test their performance. This is not a complete system of do's and

don'ts, but one that can be understood instinctively. And that's why the corporate philosophy is not just a vision but a practical tool for the entrepreneur Goldschmeding, who has the unique ability to put ideas into practice. It's a philosophy that attracts the right people and gives them clear guidelines, however far away they are from you. It is the underlying power for growth and success.

Goldschmeding: 'I needed this substantiation. People need certain starting points. A cultural task, like that in the Christian tradition. When you remember that the Creation story gave Man two tasks, which were not by definition opposed to each other but complementary, i.e. "to build" (progressive) and "to maintain" (conservative), then it's inconceivable that antinomies exist that cannot be overcome. There can be no conflict between the creating and the maintaining aspect of a company. Ideally, these will always be complementary.'



# the golden triangle

What is the foundation for Randstad's strategy? And what view of people and society is it based on? Frits Goldschmeding formulated three basic principles, forming the Golden Triangle which still governs the corporate philosophy today. It's a philosophy that underpins and substantiates Randstad's cultural task – responsible management and meaningful development, as part of the society it belongs to.

## 1. simultaneous promotion of all interests

**The company is regarded as partnership in which the simultaneous promotion of the interests of all parties directly or indirectly involved ensures the continuity of the company.**

The company is a joint venture that reflects society. A dynamic entity, just like the society to which it belongs. In fact, a subsystem of the larger social system. In a continuous interaction, society and the enterprise both impact on each other. Because the partnership not only comprises the company's own employees, but also the flex workers, clients, suppliers, shareholders, banks, government, other companies in the sector and social partners. In short: any parties that directly or indirectly depend on the company's operations.

To ensure the continuity of the company, all aspects of all interests, of all those involved, have to be promoted simultaneously. This means that while the company represents a source of income for one party, for example, for another it is primarily a safe environment in which to develop. That also means that making a single interest, for example the value for shareholders, absolute, would be detrimental to other parties with different interests. No one can demand more than his due without endangering the continuity of the organization.

And continuity is important. Not just for the survival of the company, but for society as a whole. Society will thrive if the labor market thrives. People thrive too if they have a fulfilling job.

The mere fact that a company depends on the social environment does not relieve the company from the task to look after all aspects of the interests of all parties involved. That may be difficult or even impossible at times. But the task remains. As a company, it's your duty to integrate all



aspects in the best possible way. If a conflict arises, this is by definition a fault. For example, if an economic interest seems to conflict with care for the environment, then as a company you must acknowledge that this is a case of short term rather than long term thinking. If you have to fire people, then the hiring policy or planning is wrong. By contrast, good integration will generate optimum profit – everyone will benefit.

## 2. to know, to serve, to trust

**To know, to serve, to trust represent the ethical aspects of things in which love plays a role.**

The three core concepts of simultaneously promoting all interests are: to know, to serve, to trust. They have therefore become the core values of the company. Each of the concepts also represents the giving form of love. Love is not just at the basis of these core values, it pervades all three of them. As a result, the company's most important task is to achieve *agápe*, the giving form of love.

As part of society, the company must promote the interests of all groups within this community. At the same time, it depends on these groups. It is therefore necessary to know each of these groups, to trust them and acquire and maintain their trust. This is only possible if communication is open and honest. Serving the interests of these groups contains an element of reciprocity: serving them means serving yourself as well. If you don't, you may as well give up. Without reciprocity, it's impossible to ensure growth and continuity of the enterprise.

**to know** – In order to promote the interests of all involved, you need to know yourself, the other party, your job, and the world around you. And as a company, you need to make sure everyone knows you too.

**to serve** – The desire to serve is essential.

**to trust** – Trusting others will be rewarded by being trusted by them in return.



## 3. striving for perfection

**And while nobody's perfect, each party involved is expected to strive for perfection in everything they do.**

This third principle of the corporate philosophy directly results from the principle of simultaneous promotion of all interests. In a perfect world, a company will realize all aspects of all interests of all parties involved in that company. But since nobody's perfect, all we can do is 'strive to be'. A company is focused on increasing value and should therefore build as well as maintain. That means that selling products and services – the purpose of a company – should be done as effectively as possible. Profit is the financial reward for the company's effectiveness in a competitive environment and a necessary precondition for growth (building) and continuity (maintaining). Being able to continue guaranteeing the highest possible quality is vitally important for the survival of the organization. For that reason, you need to strive for perfection in everything you do.





‘Making sure you surround yourself with the right people, who know how things should be done’

**Ed Bolk** | retired (worked for Randstad 1976 – 1998; last position: director strategy development and external relations)

‘Frits Goldschmeding’s strongest point is his memory. He has a memory like an elephant’s – he can think diachronically and tell you all the turnover figures for every year that has passed. That’s a unique character trait. What’s also unique: his stories. Which he believes in as well. Fantastic stories, but they sometimes made me cringe. He’d sound so sure of himself that reporters swallowed them hook, line and sinker. But in such a geographically decentralized organization like ours, it never does any harm to develop myths – to create conditions where people can identify with a mythical leader.

Randstad’s greatest strength lies in its people. The person-related services they provide depend on the service provider. The consultants play a key role in that success. I started work here as international controller – a bookkeeper of sorts. However, I observed like an economist, an organization expert. I wasn’t just a controller, I also kept an eye on the organizational aspects. In short: I made sure we surrounded ourselves with the right people, who know how things should be done. Randstad is an organization that is permeated by a common culture. So its management has to ensure that everyone is aware of this culture.

When I put this to Frits, he told me we should write that down. Put into words what we stand for. Explain our philosophy, where Randstad stands in society, our corporate culture. These became the introductions to our Annual Reports in 1977, 1978 and 1979, and further elaborated

in 1984. This time, we formulated the ‘company’s distinctive drive’, which was to become the framework of and criterion for all of Randstad’s actions and the behavior of everyone in it. I believe Frits was always looking for a sense of purpose, and how to incorporate it in everything we do. I concluded that if everyone professes the same religion, this would greatly simplify matters. The way they profess it would be a personal thing. As long as the basic principles are in order.

I once compared this concept – and tried to convince Frits of it – to the Cistercian Order. A multi-stage system of branches, guided by a general chapter. A strongly centralized system, with a firm doctrine. Lead by indoctrination, you might say. Whether Frits agreed with me, I don’t know. However, I believe that Frits’ most valuable contribution to Randstad’s success is probably his acknowledgement of the necessity of his doctrine. Ensuring that every key position is occupied by people who believe in the same principles, share the same beliefs and remain their authentic selves. In other words: management by culture.’

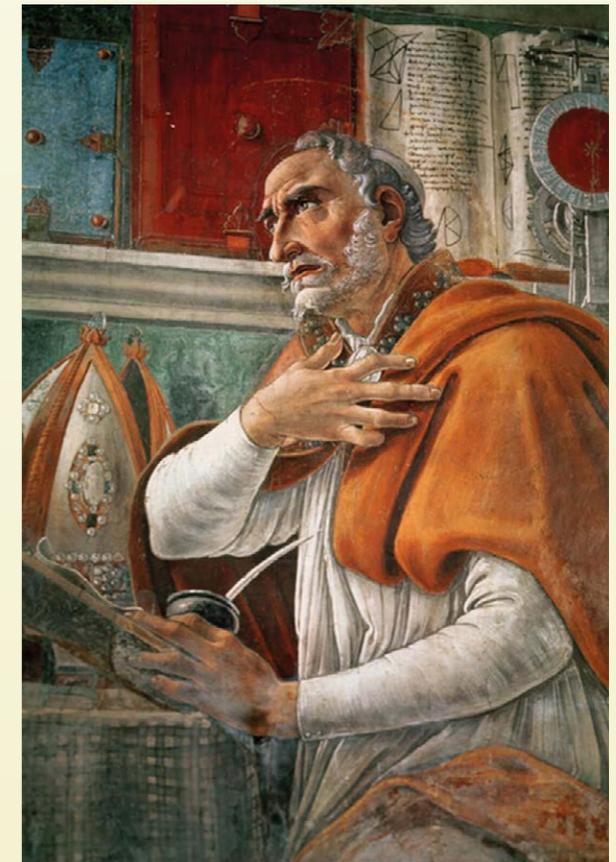
## the ethical aspect of things

All parts of Randstad’s corporate philosophy, as formulated by Frits Goldschmeding, emanate his tribute to Christian tradition, particularly as taught by the emeritus Professors H. Dooyeweerd and T.P. van der Kooy.

Goldschmeding’s views on how a company should function in society are directly based on Dooyeweerd’s teachings about aspects. According to Dooyeweerd, every individual or society represents many different aspects. The economic aspect, for example, is just one of the many aspects that comprise an individual or society. Other aspects include the physical, psychological, social, esthetic and ethical aspect. All these aspects are expressed in community relations and concrete things and are arranged in a particular way: one aspect is based on another. The economic aspect, for example, presumes the social aspect, since the value of things will not become apparent until people are communicating with one another. In turn the economic aspect will enable other aspects to be developed. The ethical aspect – the field of love – is the second highest aspect in Dooyeweerd’s philosophy (the highest one being the pistic aspect of religion).

His knowledge of aspects prevented Goldschmeding from seeing a single aspect as the absolute one and allowed him to consider all aspects as part of being

human. The human being, his work and the economy he feels cannot be viewed without considering the life and general wellbeing of a man, organization, enterprise or society. Goldschmeding himself puts it as follows: ‘It has become clear to me that the “isms” – such as liberalism and socialism – are based on incorrect principles. One cannot but conclude that the many aspects that comprise life should be integrated, rather than one aspect being regarded as the absolute one. Interpreting this commercially will reveal clear anchor points. For example, one cannot create value for shareholders without creating value for others as well.’ T.P. van der Kooy taught Goldschmeding how to further interpret ‘the multi-faceted reality in which man operates’. Goldschmeding: ‘He inspired us, with all our faults, to think about the principles of a society based on human dignity. He believed that man was made to know, love and serve. And thus take responsibility. That’s why I selected these three key words when I developed my own and Randstad’s philosophy: to know, to serve, to trust.’



**Henk Janssen** | retired (worked for Randstad 1974 – 1981 and 1984 – 2006;  
last position: managing director Portugal)



‘We weren’t  
guided by any  
rules; we merely  
thought the  
same way’

‘As a high school student, I attended a seminary; I wanted to become a priest and improve the world. Which is actually what I was able to do when I joined Randstad. It was a company resembling a sect, with Frits Goldschmeding as the Great Helmsman. Everything he said, we believed. And no wonder, it was all very consistent and well thought-out. He’s a man with great charisma, a clear head on his shoulders, and excellent with numbers.

And Frits knew like no other how to surround himself with the right people. Each of them shared his ideas about quality and service. This fact has been vitally important throughout Randstad’s history. The psychologist Hammelburg played an essential role in this. From the early 1970s, he tested each new employee to make sure they had the right skills and thus helped create a very homogeneous work force. He also selected the new management desperately needed by Randstad after a period of tremendous growth. He hired people like Frits Drost, Wil Kitslaar, David van Gelder, Cleem Farla, Fred Farber, and Jan de Wit – each of whom were key figures in Randstad’s development. Hammelburg spotted our commercial and service-oriented attitude, as well as our striving for perfection. We were all nitpickers, each and every one of us. We weren’t guided by any rules; we merely thought the same way.

I joined Randstad in Den Bosch as a consultant. I was attracted by the amazing quality emanated by Randstad. I wanted to be a part of it. After just a few months, I was appointed branch manager. Apart from a single sidestep, I never ventured

outside of Randstad. I never needed to: thanks to the company’s growth, you had endless opportunities. I wasn’t a great manager, really, but I knew how to work. I was a man of action. And because I was actually looking after my own patch, I had a wonderful time.

In 1983, I was asked to help further develop the recently acquired staffing services of Tempo-Team in Amsterdam. Frits made sure that it was marketed differently from Randstad: its people were older, less academic, doers rather than thinkers. Tempo-Team served the cleaning, catering and industrial sectors. This concept of having two market brands provided healthy competition. I believe it was one of Frits’ best decisions. Within three years, we went from thirty employees to over two thousand in Amsterdam. Amazing. Following Frits’ example, during the recession we hired two hundred extra people. That meant we had two hundred qualified consultants ready to serve the market the moment the economy picked up.

Later on, I joined the international team to develop Randstad abroad. In the UK, Italy, and Portugal. And again, we started from scratch. In the same way that Frits once presented his first temporary employee to his first client on a bike, I set up the Italian branch together with Marco Ceresa, with little more than a desk. Our office didn’t even have electricity. But we knew that we had a rock-solid concept. It was just a question of duplication. And surrounding ourselves with the right people.’

## philosophy in daily practice

Considering every aspect of the interests of all involved has become a key starting point for Randstad. Two simple examples show how that works in practice.

The first involves the elevators at the head office. When the building was constructed, Goldschmeding had indicated that not only did the elevators have to be fast (from economic and physical points of view), but their energy consumption was to be reduced to a minimum (biotic aspect). Moreover, people shouldn’t have to wait any longer than absolutely necessary (social aspect). This would be ensured by prompt closing of the doors, which would also be more attractive (esthetic aspect). The engineers protested: a faster elevator would be more expensive and use more energy. But Goldschmeding calculated that integrating all aspects and interests would eventually result in considerable savings. He was not concerned with how much energy the lift would require per hour, as the engineers put it, but per meter of transportation. Within a few months, the extra investment had paid for itself. Whereby it should be noted that the elevator speeds later had to be adjusted – they made users feel sick. Another aspect to remember, of course.

A second example involves the free lunch for all employees that Goldschmeding introduced. He made sure that the tables in the canteen were laden with the

same food that people would have at home: bread, milk, jam, two types of sliced meat and cheese. Compared to a situation where employees ordered their own lunch from a serving counter, it turned out that the time saved increased capacity by 35 percent (economic aspect). Even including the fiscal disadvantages of a free lunch, costs were significantly reduced because fewer catering employees and less equipment were needed (economic aspect). And because people weren’t walking around as much, a smaller canteen could suffice (spatial and physical aspects). Managers, clients and warehouse staff all ate in the same restaurant, which was good for relationships (social aspect). It also raised the general level of conversation, according to Goldschmeding. And finally: every employee felt welcome and appreciated (social and moral aspects). Today, people have to make a small contribution to the lunch, which has to do with the increased taxation of this ‘payment in kind’. Taking all aspects, including the economic ones, into consideration, this led to another decision.



## profit an accountancy error?

Frits Goldschmeding often wondered why people don't take the opportunities that arise. 'Like any entrepreneur, I want to say: take them!' Which doesn't mean it's all about money for him. 'Of course, nobody wants to make a loss, but money has never been my primary goal. To ensure the continuity of our company in the long term, we always reinvested our profits. If you look at it purely objectively, profit doesn't really belong to anybody, really. Not even to the shareholders. I'm not a communist, but you can't give all the money to the shareholders. First you have to make sure that "all aspects of all interests of all parties involved, directly and indirectly" are looked after. Nobody can say that the money is theirs. If you don't misuse your position to exploit suppliers and take advantage of your employees, but distribute the money fairly among all the parties you are dealing with, you'll be left with a profit. That profit should be used to improve the product or be put aside for tough times. In that sense, I believe profit is an accountancy error. Profit is a premium for the future.'



'You have to look  
beyond your own  
interests and your  
own time on this  
planet'

Sytsck Amerins Kiestra | senior key account & delivery manager

'Frits once told me: "Ultimately, it's all about love." And that's what I found when I joined Randstad as a consultant in 1984. It was a very humane company. Where people wanted to do something meaningful, for customers and flex workers. The philosophy of to know, to serve, to trust matched my personality. Not being driven by money, but by the desire to help people find work and bring them together. It's an attitude that still exists in the company today. Despite the fact that margins are under pressure and the focus lies on efficiency, we must take care not to put processes above the pursuit of helping clients and temporary employees. But whenever I visit one of our offices, I still see it. People love their job, respect people, are service-oriented and greatly value mutual trust. Another important factor is the idea that it's not all about today. We are very much aware of our responsibility to look after the world around us – good stewardship, in other words. To look beyond our own interests and our own time on this planet. To contribute to a better society. Today, this is called corporate social responsibility but Frits was actually one of the first people to introduce this concept with his ideas about simultaneously promoting all interests. To be a responsible businessman and pursue good stewardship. To take all interests into account and choose the optimum solution. Money and turnover are then no longer not a goal in themselves but rather a consequence. A means to further boost one's

efforts to serve people. This cultural heritage is Frits' most important legacy. A fine example of this simultaneous promotion of all interests was the construction of the Clipper Stad Amsterdam. In 1998, I was asked to set up an employment project for this purpose. It was an important pillar of the plan: to help long-term unemployed young people who were at a disadvantage on the labor market. We felt we had to be there for everybody. Including youngsters who were at risk of falling between two stools. We take them on, give them a job and a future. It's a concept that is actually reflected in the current Dutch campaign *#wordenwiejebent* (become who you are). Around 135 disadvantaged young people were employed. During the construction phase, as well as, later on, on the ship. It wasn't always smooth sailing, though. There were drug addicts, who we sometimes had to pick up from home, so that they wouldn't pass Central Station where all the dealers gathered. Or people who were homeless. At a later stage, we expanded our efforts to include students from the Nautical College who needed work experience. To Frits, it was an incredibly important project. Not only because he loves sailing, but also because he believes that this connects people, even today. That's when we first became close. We both wanted to do something meaningful for others. And then you get a lot in return.'



‘Thus working with corporate business was very special to us’

**Pauline Krikke** | formerly alderman of Amsterdam and Mayor of Arnhem, currently member of the Dutch Senate, consultant and supervisory officer

‘Frits used to say jokingly: “You’re my most expensive girlfriend.” When I was appointed alderman, the construction of the Clipper Stad Amsterdam was about to commence. It was a joint 50/50 project between Amsterdam and Randstad. I still had to get the municipal council to approve. It was a politically sensitive project and I was the alderman responsible for the financial end result. Of course, the construction turned out to be more expensive than expected. The municipal council absolutely refused to provide more funding, but didn’t want to relinquish its share either. On several occasions I had to go back to Frits, who was obviously well aware that more funds were needed. And he continued to contribute without protest, yet still being happy with a 50/50 interest. Very admirable. From the very beginning, I thought this was a wonderful project. We were building and maintaining cultural heritage, while also investing in technology, knowledge and skills. And I loved the fact that it was a work experience project, raising people’s chances of obtaining a job. But I also loved the idea that while gaining experience, they were making something they could be proud of. Moreover, we were able to use the ship for liaison purposes, for example to attract foreign companies. And Sail, a huge event in our city, was given a boost because of the Dutch flagship.

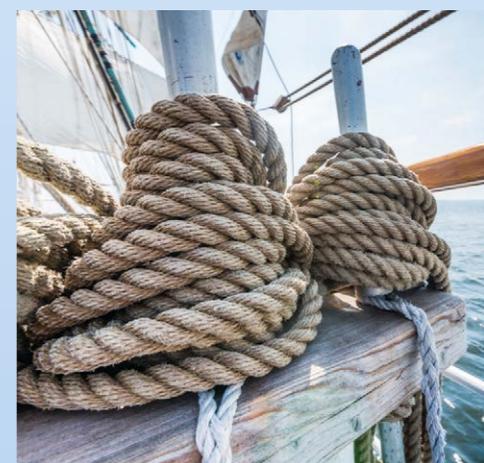
Collaboration with corporate business was very special. Such projects are usually initiated by

the government, but this time it was set up by Randstad. Randstad provided the funding. And after I left, Randstad acquired a larger share of the Clipper than the municipal council, which gave them more control. So the council’s share ultimately decreased after all. Now Frits is actually captain of his own ship. That hadn’t been the intention, but that’s how things went. From time to time, the municipality suggests selling its share of around 40 percent, but fortunately the present Mayor has no intention of doing so.

However you look at it: without Frits, the ship would never have been built and would certainly not have been so beautiful. But Frits has done so much more. Regarding this project as his greatest achievement would do him an injustice. He does a great deal of good on the quiet. He has always given back to society. But the Clipper was his great love. He was interested in everything related to its construction. Its speed, its curves and which material would make it better while costing less – he knew all the details. Not just some, but every one of them. He knew the exact status of construction, experienced every challenge and kept a very close eye on the costs. Because cost-efficiency is his middle name. He knows exactly how to spend his money. Although he doesn’t mind spending a lot on something he believes in, he has never tolerated wastefulness. I believe this also characterized his leadership of Randstad. It’s easy to work with Frits: you know exactly where you stand. A deal’s a deal, and that’s

just the way I like it. And if you don’t agree, just say so. Any discussions merely serve to clarify differences of opinion. And he’s a particularly good listener. He’ll also pick up any underlying messages, one by one. If you have good arguments, he’ll allow you to change his mind.

And above all, Frits is great company. Having a chat over a glass of wine, while staring into the sunset... Each conversation as fascinating as the next. Because he’s interested in so many things and knows a lot about a great many subjects, he always has an opinion on something. A genuine, warm person, that’s Frits Goldschmeding.’



## staying on course

It isn’t so surprising to find that Frits Goldschmeding expressed his ideas about the simultaneous promotion of all interests in the building of the Clipper Stad Amsterdam. He loves sailing. For many years, one of the few frivolities that the frugal Goldschmeding indulged in was his own yacht.

‘Sailing is a great passion of mine. Whenever I can spare a moment, I go sailing. Perhaps it’s the challenge that attracts me. There are so many different aspects to keep an eye on. Take the trimming of a sail, for example. There must be thousands of different ways to do it. It’s not something you can learn from a book. It’s something you have to do. You have to develop a feel for the sail and the ship. To see what the possibilities are. Some people may think that sailing the seas all boils down to the same thing. Waters may be rough or smooth, but you’re always doing the same thing. Well, I dare them to go and find out. You have to stay on course, look after passengers, make sure the equipment is working, carry out repairs... It’s like running a company! You need the same striving for perfection: to do everything well and avoid mistakes. Sailing, staying on course, achieving something, departing from different starting points, and plotting new courses – it’s just like entrepreneurship.’

So why not stick to the Frisian Lakes? Why cross the ocean? ‘Well, the water was there and I had to cross it. If there hadn’t been any water, I wouldn’t have crossed it. It’s as simple as that.’

## THE CLIPPER STAD AMSTERDAM

# About what can be achieved by building a ship



*In the Clipper Stad Amsterdam, everything envisaged by Frits Goldschmeding as an entrepreneur comes together. It's a project that connects people and contributes to the society to which Randstad belongs.*

During the late 1980s, Frits Goldschmeding goes on a sailing trip with a friend. The journey takes them to Lelystad. While they are passing through a lock, they notice a shipyard being built. For the man whose greatest passion for sailing was only matched by his passion for entrepreneurship the urge to go and investigate is irresistible. His sailor's heart is not disappointed. He discovers that, initiated and supervised by master shipbuilder Willem Vos, a replica of the famous 17th century ship the Batavia is to be built by a group of unemployed youngsters. A wonderful idea, he thinks, one that Randstad should adopt as well. That would kill two birds with one stone. As an employment agency, you can use your knowledge about the labor market to make a valuable contribution to society. At the same time, the ship would be a brilliant instrument for advertising and PR. The ship would host clients, staff, flex workers and other relations from one harbor to the next, in a way everybody enjoys. And you can employ young people who are at a disadvantage, thus demonstrating that you take corporate social responsibility seriously. Next day, his enthusiasm is received with great

skepticism by his coworkers. Nobody believes in the plan. And in fact it takes years before Goldschmeding finally manages to persuade all the members of Randstad's executive board to help him fulfill his dream. His moment comes during Sail Amsterdam 1995, where the Netherlands are not really represented. Unbefitting a seafaring nation of old, which had thrived thanks to its mercantile spirit, according to Goldschmeding. The Mayor and Aldermen of Amsterdam apparently feel the same way. Finally, concrete plans are made to build a beautiful clipper ship together.

Inspired by the merchant ship De Amsterdam from 1854, the Clipper Stad Amsterdam is to be a historically correct construction, based on drawings of 19th century clippers, which are renowned for their speed. It will also be fitted with advanced technical equipment. However, the most important pillar for the project is to be a jointly financed employment project for 'young people at a distance from the labor market'. After all, anyone with a lot of money can have a boat built, but this project aims to show what can be achieved if you join forces.



*Everyone believes in the binding value of the ship*

An operating company is set up, in which Randstad and the municipality of Amsterdam both have equal shares. And in December 1997, the building finally starts. Young unemployed people and drop-outs become apprentices, supervised by experienced professionals, in order to learn the tricks of the trade that will give them a head start on the job market. Because the project also serves as a teaching ship, its construction time is extended by 15 months to a total of three years. Each year, at least 150 young people will be employed. Eventually, the Clipper will provide 200,000 man-hours in direct and indirect employment.



Despite Goldschmeding's enthusiasm and the ambitions of the Council, initially the project encounters various problems. The construction costs turn out to be higher than estimated – a politically sensitive matter. And the envisaged income from visiting tourists to the yard also prove overly optimistic. However, Goldschmeding's belief in the binding value of the ship is sufficiently great for Randstad to foot the bill for the higher costs, thus relieving the municipality and, indirectly, the citizens. As a project for the unemployed, the Clipper Stad Amsterdam is dealing with an improving economy. Welders and joiners are scarce and regular contractors and subcontractors have to be hired for the construction. Moreover, the job requirements prove to be too high and too specialized for many underprivileged youngsters. As a result, the original objectives have to be departed from. Nevertheless, 136 unemployed people manage to find work – not a bad result in the current employment climate.

The ship is completed in 2000 with Sail achieving the turnabout. Media and public are hugely enthusiastic. The proud ship embarks on a brilliant future. In 2005, the Clipper Stad Amsterdam makes its first voyage up the IJ, as the flagship of Sail. At the helm, none other than crown prince Willem-Alexander. Trips with the ship are fully booked. Very often crewed by unemployed people. The Clipper is also used as a training ship. Randstad makes optimum use of the Clipper Stad Amsterdam for many events, in which the company's philosophy can be communicated. Amsterdam uses the ship to promote the city and nurture relations. On remaining days, the ship is exploited commercially. And with success. And thus the Clipper Stad Amsterdam has become the ultimate sailing example of Goldschmeding's philosophy, whereby the promotion of all interests of all parties involved will create value.



culture

the **company's**  
distinctive drive



*‘The jointly supported culture gives Randstad enormous power’*



You can describe corporate culture as the organization's shared values and standards and the resulting behavior. At Randstad, that culture is completely derived from the convictions and views of Frits Goldschmeding. It all starts with his inspiring enthusiasm about his profession: providing temporary employment. 'We don't sell just anything; this is a socially relevant product. This really is the nicest job there is. To be honest, I don't understand why not everyone wants to do it. It's a profession where all senses are stimulated, your thoughts, your feelings and your actions. Finding people a suitable job and thus helping them to live meaningful lives and develop themselves is incredibly inspiring. The satisfaction and pleasure it gives you... it really is the best job in the world.'

His enthusiasm still inspires many people today. It has permeated the organization and forms the intrinsic motivation for many employees. It is a shared feeling that boosts performance and thus the company results.

It ensures that people provide the highest quality services and fulfill their potential.

But that motivation does not just stem from Goldschmeding's enthusiasm and the example he sets. Right from the start, Frits Goldschmeding realized that the success of his company needed a particular type of people. 'Careful selection, during the early years carried out by our very talented in-house psychologist Hammelburg, resulted in the hiring of people who matched the profile needed for the job: enterprising, service-oriented, honest, people-oriented and always striving for perfection in their work.' And because these selection criteria were, in turn, applied by the Randstad staff hiring their own employees, a Randstad family was created whose members all had the same goal in mind. A goal which they then passed on to the next generations. Selection of this specific type of people also resulted in a flywheel action: it attracted candidates who were naturally

drawn to the challenges offered by Randstad. Thus a cast-iron foundation was created to support the values and standards that Goldschmeding had anchored in the organization during the 1970s, when he wrote about his corporate philosophy in the Annual Reports.

The combination of passion and love for the job, the specific character traits and talents of the employees and a corporate philosophy that provides meaning and direction to everyone's actions has created a culture that is still recognizable in the organization today. In the strategic ambitions, in relationships with the outside world, in the behavior of employees toward clients and among themselves, in the behavior of the company toward its employees – in short: in the thoughts and actions of all. From the managers at head office down to the independently operating staff in Randstad branches around the world, everyone knows these values and standards, feels connected to them and acts accordingly.



Frits Goldschmeding: 'It gives Randstad enormous power. It's a culture that forms the heart and soul of the organization. Moreover, this culture is an important management tool. A company can only be managed if the procedures are laid down. Not by means of job descriptions, but by describing the culture. And that is not merely a matter of writing down a few sentences. As the Executive Board you have to gather around the table and conduct animated discussions in order to find exactly the right formulation. It is vitally important that this comes straight from the heart of those at the top and that they act accordingly. Each employee should be able to call the management to account. A company is obviously no democracy, but you do need to listen to your people – to the whole organization. And that's where you find this communal language. The company's distinctive drive. And then it's important to keep passing it on to each other and to the next generations. You have to use every opportunity and all your resources to communicate these ideas, this

knowledge and this behavior. So that all your employees, whether they are in Atlanta, Paris, Munich or Den Helder, know exactly where they stand and what the company stands for.'



# the Randstad culture

Culture is about perceptible matters within a company, such as the working environment and working conditions, the values and standards that determine how things are done and about the employees' underlying convictions and beliefs. At Randstad, these aspects are seamlessly matched.



## the core values

Randstad's five core values comprise the concrete interpretation of the corporate philosophy developed by Goldschmeding: to know, to serve, to trust, simultaneous promotion of all interests and the striving for perfection.

These core values determine the corporate culture. They clearly define how employees behave towards each other, their clients and everyone around them. Together, these are the criteria by which employees make their daily choices and decisions.

## blue blood

Pride and a strong sense of connection with the organization are important components of Randstad's corporate culture. All over the world, employees feel part of the greater Randstad family. They feel they have 'blue blood' running through their veins. Modern management literature describes these cultural traits as success factors, but Goldschmeding has always intuitively felt that these are basic human needs. If you fulfill these, you'll go far.

And it starts with autonomy. People want to be autonomous; they need to feel free to act and take decisions, so that they can fully endorse their own behavior. This autonomy was achieved by creating an organization based on small, independent units with full responsibility for their results. Goldschmeding: 'Around 95 percent of the work done by consultants is done autonomously. I've always encouraged people to be true entrepreneurs. For example by challenging them, preferably incorporating a fun element. And by giving them space. By ensuring that they enjoy their work and are proud of their achievements. They then automatically become great entrepreneurs.' Autonomy also requires skills, something which has always been high on Goldschmeding's list of priorities. 'Good training that ensures that employees have the right skills is vitally important. That's something you constantly have to invest in. And not just through training: you have to set the right example and keep communicating. And support them with the right tools and give them plenty of feedback.' His assumption was that people are always willing to improve themselves: 'If a client tells you they don't need you, you may be angry that you can't convince him

otherwise, but in fact you're angry with yourself. You obviously haven't provided the right arguments. Being slightly angry with yourself will inspire you to do better next time. That's how you learn. You'll find that an employee who's been with us for a few years, who's gained a lot of experience and received ample training, is able to serve their clients more easily and intuitively than they did during the first few months.'

A third basic need that Goldschmeding was very aware of is that people need to feel connected. One of the ways he fulfilled this need was to always make sure that Randstad's success reflected on all the employees. 'It's very important for employees to see the results of their efforts. And feel appreciated.' It also helps if a company has a high quality image and has an excellent reputation. 'Employees will be proud of this and will, in turn, emanate this quality image.' Other factors that help create that unique Randstad feeling are an attractive and pleasant working environment, good career opportunities and excellent remuneration. And above all: a lot of personal attention. 'Communicate, inspire, praise. And then not with bonuses. People don't work for bonuses. We're not dogs chasing a bone, are we? It's better to offer new opportunities all the time and facilitate personal growth. This also generates loyalty.'



## inspiring leadership

Striving for perfection means that the company has high expectations of its employees. Goldschmeding expected his people to do their best in every possible way. His role as a leader was to get the most out of them. Goldschmeding: 'I didn't build Randstad all by myself. That would have been quite impossible. You have to use all the qualities and talents of the people you work with to arrive at a common goal. And that needs a structured approach.'

Goldschmeding inspired and motivated employees in a number of ways. On the one hand, he set the bar high. On the other, he stimulated autonomous thinking and acting, allowing employees to come up with solutions themselves. This is a management style which organizational psychology describes as 'transformational leadership' and which has had such a great influence on the very much alive Randstad culture. Four behavioral aspects are essential here. First of all, attention for the interests and the needs of employees must have top priority. Then there is the intellectual stimulation to promote autonomous thinking and acting. Inspiring motivation is achieved by setting high and meaningful goals whilst expressing complete confidence that these goals will be achieved. And finally, there has to be a role model to set an example. Goldschmeding: 'Actually, these factors reflect the three principles of our corporate philosophy. The simultaneous promotion of all interests is reflected in personal attention for employees. The concepts to know, to serve, to trust are interwoven with stimulating autonomous thinking, providing feedback and expressing confidence in your people. Striving for perfection means setting the bar high. You can thus show how that philosophy works in practice.'

## horizontal communication

For many years, Frits Goldschmeding had branch managers call their regional manager every Friday night to discuss the week's results. In turn, they passed these figures on to their own manager, who passed them on to head office. Goldschmeding: 'This was followed by a chat, involving expressions such as: "That's great, well done", "That's too bad. How come?" and "How will you tackle this over the coming week?".' And when computers arrived, which were able to process the figures far more efficiently, Goldschmeding still didn't want to relinquish the system of calling. 'What I found much more important was that phoning through the results meant that every branch manager, in every country, contacted their manager on a Friday. And, in turn, they contacted their boss. This way, there would be at least one contact moment between all these people every week. And that's what I was especially concerned with: personal contact and direct communication. It shows people that their job is meaningful, thus boosting their commitment to the results.'

According to Goldschmeding, horizontal communication and a flat organizational structure have always been important ways to spread the Randstad culture. The right information immediately reaches the right person. And it motivates as well, because everybody is invited to have their say, creating solidarity. People stimulate and correct each other in a direct way, with the core values being the framework as well as the criteria. Goldschmeding: 'During meetings and gatherings, I frequently got on my soapbox to explain about the background of our



philosophy. I may have clarified some things like that, but eventually I realized that communication isn't top-down. Communication mostly happened from one consultant to another and from one manager to another. They taught each other how people within Randstad should behave. And it still works that way: people communicate with each other. And now if you wake an employee up in the middle of the night and ask them to describe Randstad in a few words, you'll hear: to know, to serve, to trust.'





‘He found it difficult being a manager as well as an entrepreneur’

**Hielkje Beetsma** | secretary to Goldschmeding 1970 – 1998

‘I worked for Frits for 27 years. He was an incredibly nice boss. I suppose I know him better than most. An easy-going man who understood mistakes, because he knew that he made them himself. A boss who showed confidence in his people. There was always open communication. He was a great entrepreneur – very creative. I was always surprised when he came up with solutions time and time again. But he never expressed them directly. As a man of many words, it always took a while before we understood what he meant. That’s just the way he was. Frits is also a real teacher. It’s in his nature. He knows all about everything or at least, that’s the impression he always gives. When I’d been to Indonesia, he started telling me about the ingredients of Indonesian food. If he was asked a question by the works council, he could talk for ages. When he finally asked whether he’d answered their question, they would just say ‘yes’. He simply overruled you. Perhaps you need this character trait if you want to build up a multinational – you need to be a visionary, a teacher, a sage. But you also need perseverance. And that totally describes Frits. Particularly in the latter years, his powerful personality created a kind of myth around him, to the extent that I think people were sometimes frightened. Totally unnecessary. But if people couldn’t make clear that they wanted something else, he’d obviously implement his own ideas. In fact, most of the people around him had been trained by him anyway and had

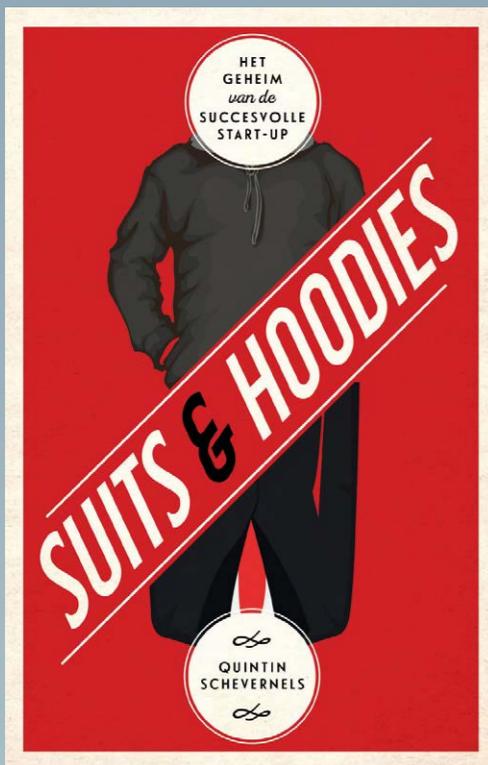
worked at Randstad for many years. As the company grew, this turned out to be a great advantage. He could rely on them. They all agreed with him on the course the company should take. On the other hand, it may have resulted in a slight lack of new visions regarding internationalization. Expansion into foreign markets did not always follow the same principles as we were used to in the Netherlands. Actually, it wasn’t until Frits had retired that Randstad was finally able to conquer the world. His whole life revolved around Randstad. He was always thinking about his mission, how to match temporary employees to clients. In fact, he sometimes found it difficult being a manager as well as an entrepreneur. He really took temporary employment to a higher level. He arranged for social benefits, contracts and a collective labor agreement. His strategy was to reach for the highest possible quality; to stand out from all competition. He selected the best design agency and conducted the best advertising campaigns. He built the most attractive offices. And he had an exceptionally good salary and remuneration system. He gave many people fantastic opportunities. And then there was the stock option plan, which everybody could join – from managers down to canteen assistants. He expected us to work hard, but he looked after us well. He always said: we’re in this together and everybody plays an important part. So he wanted everybody to reap the benefits of the company’s success. I mean, that’s great isn’t it?’

## a stock option plan for all employees

Frits Goldschmeding sees Randstad’s success as the result of a team effort by all employees. You do it together, so everybody should be able to share in the success. In 1988, he takes the first concrete step to achieve this: he transfers 25 percent of his shares to ‘his people’. Also because he is convinced that employees will now feel even more connected to the company and make an extra special effort towards achieving the communal goal: continuity for the company. The stock option plan is introduced like many of Goldschmeding’s previous plans. During a boat trip with the Executive Board, he suddenly tells them of his plan to provide each employee, from the financial director down to the canteen assistant, with an equal number of stock options. Wil Kitslaar, one of those present at the time: ‘He often did that. Put forward something he knew in advance would be met with mixed reactions. And he would concretize his plans based on the heated discussions that he knew would follow. Why he did this, I’ll never know. But the result was that the discussion was no longer about the stock option plan itself, but about the way it was to be implemented. To what degree could you say that a canteen assistant contributed equally to the success of the company as a consultant or a regional manager? Whatever, we were all pretty surprised and rather shaken. However, we agreed that it wasn’t bad news. But obviously, we couldn’t quite get our heads around it. Little did we know...’

That same year, the Randstad Stock Option Fund is set up. At first, it only involves Dutch staff. Employees abroad will follow later. Everyone who has been with Randstad for more than two years and who works at least twenty hours a week can join in. The number of stock options are linked to a person’s salary. Still, people are initially rather reluctant. According to the executive secretary at the time, Hielkje Beetsma, this is due to lack of familiarity with the phenomenon of stock options. ‘It was really rather a novelty. People didn’t understand it, were taken by surprise. We knew very little about what happened in the stock market. You had to buy the stock options, so in fact you had to invest before we could benefit. In some cases, people’s parents or spouses forbade them to join. But in the end, lots of people benefited. And when the company was later floated on the stock market, these stock options became more and more valuable. That’s when all the employees finally realized what a great step it was.’ Through his stock option plan, Frits Goldschmeding once again emphasizes his concept of simultaneous promotion of all interests. Wil Kitslaar: ‘It was a fantastic gesture. There were moments when we just couldn’t say how much value had been added per day. It seemed like a fictitious sum, but the moment it is converted into cash, it’s obviously an awful lot of money. We were able to do a lot of nice things with it. And it generated a great deal of loyalty.’





## the ultimate personification of corporate culture

He wrote a book about what makes startups successful or not. Quintin Schevernels, former Randstad employee and former CEO of the successful startup Layar, regards culture as a crucial factor. 'Whether it concerns recruitment and selection, saying goodbye to people, or the way you manage a company. It's very clear how you do things.' He considers the CEO as the ultimate personification of the corporate culture, who sets the example of how he wants them to behave. In his book, Schevernels tells about his experiences with Goldschmeding – a superstar in his eyes. 'The man built up this great company from scratch. A hugely impressive achievement.'

*When I was working as a branch manager at the Randstad office in Aalsmeer, in the 1990s, the founder Frits Goldschmeding was still CEO of the company. In those days, Goldschmeding would regularly pay a surprise visit to one of the Randstad branches. Aalsmeer was one of them. Late one spring morning, a rather elderly gentleman in jeans entered our office. He naturally didn't introduce himself as Frits Goldschmeding. He wanted to register as a welder. Which was nothing unusual. The consultant led him to a table and gave him a registration card and a cup of coffee.*

*After filling in the card, he had an intake interview. The consultant was assessed by Goldschmeding according to the criteria he had personally drawn up in such great detail. After all, this system had been the basis of Randstad's success. It had been described in detail and was included in the training programs of consultants. It was regularly assessed by employees who had been hired specially for this purpose. Still, from time to time, Goldschmeding wanted to see things for himself. After the intake interview, Goldschmeding revealed his true identity to the delighted consultants and then asked if he could join them for lunch. During lunch, he would learn more about his company's culture than he would in a month at head office in Diemen.*

*To Goldschmeding, these were invaluable meetings. It enabled him to ensure that the Randstad DNA was being kept intact, despite the company's massive growth. The mere fact that he did this illustrated the culture of 'his' Randstad.*

From: Suits and Hoodies – The secret behind a successful startup Quintin Schevernels. Business Contact 2015.



'At some point, his words begin to run through your veins'

**Wil Kitslaar** | retired (worked for Randstad 1971 – 2009; last position: director finance & administration)

'I was with Randstad for 38 years, 35 of which I was directly involved with Frits Goldschmeding. And for 35 years, I listened to the same story. Word for word, it was exactly the same story. About visits and mailing and telephone conversations with clients. All the ins and outs of the job. And he'd explain them over and over, and over again. At a given moment, his words begin to run through your veins. What I especially remembered was that small clients were as important as major ones. It may seem logical to put a lot of effort into acquiring a big customer, but Frits would always say: a client is a client, they are all human beings who do not necessarily fall in love during a first date. And although a bigger client will bring in more money in the long term, the effort you put into acquisition is the same. Our psychologist Hammelburg called this democracy. Why should one person suffer from the majority's opinion? Something small below something big? That idea. It says something about how you approach people. Frits had also determined that each member of the Federation of Private Employment Agencies in the Netherlands was to be given one vote, irrespective of their size. He said: if I can't win by argumentation or persuasion, I don't want to win just because I happen to be bigger. His views on democracy permeated the whole company, including the Executive Board. I've never seen a vote. It was always about arguments. Which was something Frits was obviously very good at. And he was always

right. If he said the market would pick up in September, and people should be hired now, nobody would question his judgment. It wasn't so much a vision. Rather, it was a matter of standing out from the competition. Always striving for perfection, that's what permeates Randstad. Once, when I was with Finance & Administration, I got in the elevator together with two temporary employees. I overheard one of the girls say that she hadn't been paid yet. Impossible! It was a challenge, but Frits was very keen to make sure that everybody was paid in time. Not just 95 percent, but everyone. We always paid our invoices in time too. Frits didn't want to pay too early – it wasn't just about being nice – but he believed that it was a way of building up trust, that suppliers would know that we were reliable. It was a business decision. And it created loyalty. You could never ever rest on your laurels. If you'd achieved a goal, he'd just formulate a new one. And that's what made him cleverer than anyone else. I believe that his greatest strength is his striving for perfection. Day in, day out. Indefatigable. And at the same time, allowing people to think for themselves. Or maybe I should say: presenting the idea of striving for perfection in such a way that you believed you'd come up with it ourselves. I look back on my time with Randstad with great pleasure. If I could, I'd go back tomorrow.'

## valuable Randstad celebrations

Frits Goldschmeding was never one to sprinkle compliments and Randstad still doesn't. However that doesn't mean that Randstad doesn't reward employees in other ways. One way of expressing appreciation is the tradition of huge parties for everyone.

At first, Frits Goldschmeding would take his employees to the theatre or to see a show. Soon he would organize larger events. When Randstad celebrates its tenth anniversary in 1970, a huge party for 150 people is organized in the Amsterdam Hilton Hotel and the new offices in Buitenveldert, which they have recently moved into. Belgian, German and British coworkers are also invited. When he arrives, Goldschmeding briefly wonders what he's got himself into. But it turns out to be great fun and from that moment, it becomes a five-yearly tradition.

In 1995, the five-year celebration takes place centrally for the last time in a huge tent near the head office. The growing organization has made logistics more challenging too. How do you transport so many employees from all over the world to Amsterdam? And where do you accommodate them? That last time, there's a twelve kilometer long tailback of buses from Schiphol Airport. So it's

decided to organize the next five-year celebrations in a decentralized way, with direct video connections between all the locations.

We see what this means in 2015, when the company celebrates its 55th anniversary. The theme is Route 55, symbolizing the road travelled by Randstad. On one day, all 29,000 coworkers from all around the world are welcomed and connected to each other. Following the world clock, the festivities start in Tokyo and end 24 hours later in Los Angeles, with all the celebrations displayed in real-time on huge screens. An incredibly complex organization with one single objective: to bring together the entire Randstad family. Route 55 transcends all cultural differences, focuses on Randstad's values, connects and engages.

Anyone wondering about the value of such a costly investment soon think again: a month after these festivities, Randstad has outshone its competitors in every single market segment. After the party, people seem to pick up the phone a little more enthusiastically. Go the extra mile. Thus getting better results.



‘Here you feel that there’s attention for people in everything’

Ans Lardinois | manager communications, events & sponsoring

‘Randstad is very good at corporate storytelling. Where we come from, our values, the sense of being one big family: you really feel it. And Frits Goldschmeding has always been important in that. When he was in the Ziggo Dome for the launch of our new Dutch campaign *#wordenwieje bent* (become who you are), you saw the same thing. The man's like a movie star: everyone wants to have their photo taken with him. That says a lot.

Personally, I'm very grateful to Frits. I've worked here for 26 years and like many others, I started as a consultant. I then moved on to marketing & communication at head office. Five years ago, I joined the holding. Here we're given plenty of room to develop, although you have to work hard. Because I can work part time, I'm able to have a good work-life balance now that I have children. The stock option plan allowed us to buy a house, which was exactly what it was originally intended for. The Randstad culture set up by Frits is still very strong. You can feel the focus on people in everything. You feel appreciated. Not so much with compliments; we're expected to work hard. But in other ways, like when we reach milestones or achieved targets and we find a gift on our desk. Also important: we all eat together in the staff restaurant. Including the Executive Board – everyone is treated equally. That gives the message that Randstad is the sum of all our efforts, not just a few people at the top. In the past, we didn't pay for lunch. Frits felt that employees, like guests, shouldn't

have to pay for their food. Of course, he considered the fiscal benefits as well, but it did give us a good feeling. And then there are the global anniversary celebrations. Randstad is really unique in this – Frits introduced them in 1965 and they're still a great success today. Every five years, festivities are organized together with coworkers from all around the world. These exuberant parties reverberate for years after. What other company does that on such a scale, preceded by a whole year's engagement program? It gives such an incredible boost! Because of my position, I have an organizing role, which is an amazing experience.

Once a year, we carry out a global people survey, which shows that our internal coworkers are very positive about Randstad. People on the outside may not always be aware of this. They just see us as that big, blue giant. So our image could do with a bit of livening up. But that connection with each other, that strong culture of people who are engaged with each other, that's all down to Frits. That's why we were employed. We all realize how important work is in everyone's life. It's business of course, but it's actually about connecting people.’



‘Whichever way  
you look at it, Frits  
is a brilliant man’

**Bart Overmars** | friend and business partner

‘Frits and I have been friends since high school. Even then, Frits was very enterprising. To earn some pocket money, he sold insoles at the local department store. And he was always dealing in second-hand pocketbooks. I’ve no idea where he got them.

Later on, he set up that employment agency, to finance his studies. Together with Ger Dalebout, a boy we also knew from school. I was working as a civil engineer at the time and he hired me to renovate his first office building on Oranje Nassaulaan. That was purely business. But as friends, we continued to visit each other at home, even after we both had kids.

Over the years, we’ve done a lot of things together, like skiing vacations. What was already evident was his simplicity. Even when Randstad had become a kind of empire, he’d say to others: “I work for an employment company.” And on vacation, when he could afford much more than we could and I felt we should stop going on joint vacations, he’d ask me what my budget was and didn’t take a cent more with him. This way, he avoided me feeling awkward. And before the next skiing vacation, he’d call me and ask: “Bart, did you get a raise this year?” When Randstad needed a new head office, he contracted me to manage its construction and coordinate the whole project. We were responsible for Time, Budget and Quality. Moreover, our agency looked after the construction of the offices and parking garage. And Frits kept himself entirely up to date – he was involved

in every little detail. Showed off his knowledge and insight at all the work-group meetings when the going got tough or when people came up with useless propositions. He mastered the whole process. An extremely well informed client who understood the situation, who had an unrivalled knowledge of details and who had good motives for each decision. And he put complete trust in the people he had surrounded himself with. He and I never had any problems about the building – the result was fantastic. Sometimes he’d go against my advice, because he liked the other option more or because he wanted to remain loyal to his supplier, but he never complained if that resulted in financial damage. At most he’d ask me to limit the damage. And that’s a very different approach from that of many clients.

Frits is a philosopher. Recently, he’s sometimes invited my wife and I to join him on a sailing trip on the Clipper Stad Amsterdam. Then he brings along a big group of friends and in the evening we sit around having deep discussions. Frits always does most of the talking, of course. Not because he likes the sound of his own voice, but because he always has something interesting to say. He always has a philosophy about everything and he’s just fascinating to engage with. Whichever way you look at it, Frits is a brilliant man. And very loyal, too. I’m sure if more people were like him, the world would be a much nicer place. Really, we’re friends for life.’



## THE HEAD OFFICE

# The philosophy of Randstad cast in concrete

**A building to match the company's distinctive drive. That's not just contemporary and invitingly open, but which also represents the simultaneous promotion of all interests – down to the smallest detail.**

During the first few months of 2016, Randstad's head office in Diemen is transformed, floor by floor. Instead of corridors with rooms on both sides, separated by walls, an impressive landscape of open and transparent rooms is created. Where employees no longer have a fixed place to work, but where they are free to find their ideal workplace according to their particular activities – either in a group or in a partitioned-off location where they can concentrate. It is the concretization of a new era, in which flexibility and the application of new technologies have top priority.

This multidisciplinary vision of The New Way of Working, as it is called today, had been unheard of when Frits Goldschmeding commissioned the construction of his new head office. If the concept had existed back in the late 1980s, it would have perfectly matched the program of requirements he drew up for architect Wim Quist.

The document from 1987 demonstrates how Goldschmeding wanted to express the Randstad philosophy in the building's exterior and interior. A 'bricks and mortar demonstration of the promotion of all aspects of all interests'. He also acknowledges here that the Randstad culture

harbors several apparent contradistinctions. But the architect is tasked with 'finding a form that integrates the standards we set'.

Openness is the main criterion of the program of requirements, followed by: informal yet businesslike, extravert but not extravagant, interaction with the community, diversity, prestige, and the simultaneous promotion of all interests as the company's mission. The latter is translated into a number of standards: the building must be energy efficient, sustainable, low maintenance and cost-efficient. It must be sober, yet look aesthetically pleasing and inviting. It must welcome the outside world in every possible way. 'These aspects must be integrated in the same way as the mathematical, stereometrical, and chemical aspects (the correct proportion of cement and steel, taking into account the economic aspect).'

Giving a number of examples, Goldschmeding indicates how apparent contradictions can be integrated in such a way as to provide sound solutions. For example, a low price per square meter must not lead to negligence of the esthetic



aspect, because this would encourage inefficient use of the building, ultimately leading to potentially higher maintenance costs. Moreover, a high quality image will attract high quality personnel to Randstad. And although, from an economic point of view, Goldschmeding expects the contractor, the architect, the engineers and other suppliers to build the offices as efficiently as possible, he also believes in the emotional aspect: it must still be a challenge for suppliers in order for them to do their work well and with satisfaction. The openness of the internal organization of Randstad and the need for mutual direct communication must never be at the expense of the 'privacy everybody needs'. An open plan office is not desirable, but the structure must be such that it is easy to visit each other, promoting an informal atmosphere. Even if not all communication is purely business. After all, that is also an important social aspect. However, attention for the individual at Randstad must not lead to disproportionate attention to personal wishes, such as plant pots and pictures. Everybody must be aware that they are working within a community with a certain style. At the same time, the esthetics of the building's interior must ensure that people feel comfortable and at ease.

For architect Wim Quist, Goldschmeding's program of requirements challenges him to create openness and to promote all aspects of all interests of all parties involved in a structure of steel, stone and glass. Goldschmeding is a patron who is concerned with the smallest details of the design. From elevators which have to go faster to a sophisticated low-noise air circulation system and sloping windowsills to prevent employees from placing trinkets in the window – he contributes ideas and

solutions everywhere. And always based on the thought that if it is impossible to integrate conflicting aspects, the wrong solutions have been chosen and more thinking is required.

*Goldschmeding proves to be a veritable patron, who concerns himself with the tiniest details of the design*

On 6 April 1990, the new building is officially opened. A streamlined, natural stone building, 54 meters high and 100 meters long. Its sides are beveled, ensuring a smooth fading into the background. The interior emanates openness and calm and gives the users the space to give the building their own colour. Today, after 26 years, the building still looks high quality and surprisingly modern. And with the latest interior modifications, Goldschmeding's requirements for openness and informality are given a modern interpretation, whereby the building optimally meets the expectations of today's and future generations.





market treatment  
entrepreneurship  
at the basis

*‘Actually, I was repeating what I’d been doing from the very start’*



When, in 1960, Frits Goldschmeding, economics student, set up a private employment agency together with fellow student Ger Daleboudt, providing temporary employment was still largely unknown territory. People were employed for life. There was very little information about temporary work, no literature, no statistics, nothing. Potential clients didn't have a clue either. Frits Goldschmeding: 'We learned the profession through trial and error. Going door to door to distribute our phone number was our way to acquire clients and temporary workers. Notes and flyers explained our objectives. And at the end of the first year, we were employing some twenty temps.'

But the driving force behind Randstad's growth has always been Goldschmeding's systematic approach, which he had demonstrated from the very start of the company. A system of basic actions, which actually defined the new profession. Not rooted in existing knowledge, but in experience and a firm belief in his own entrepreneurship.

'You can call it intuition: actually, I was repeating what I'd been doing with clients from the very start and which had proved successful. By visiting clients and doing the hiring myself, I learned in practice what worked and what didn't.'

As the organization grew, Goldschmeding shared his experiences as an entrepreneur and his expanding knowledge of temporary employment to those who would be doing it in practice. At the same time, he ensured their autonomy and independence, to enable them to continue improving and reinventing themselves. He expected each employee to be an entrepreneur and gave them the confidence they needed to achieve that. 'Temporary employment is not like working on a production line. Our staff must be able to create their own solutions. I can share my knowledge and experience with them, and show them the basic actions that have had success for me. But they then have to build and develop their

own business. Find their own way. That's one of the most exciting challenges of this job. My source of inspiration has always been entrepreneurship itself and I have always tried to pass this on to others. By teaching people how to be enterprising the way I learned it myself.'

Goldschmeding is convinced that anyone can become an entrepreneur. 'By copying the example of others, learning to watch. You don't need to try and reinvent the wheel, just see how you can implement existing solutions. For example, you spot something, perhaps a nice billboard, and you think: how can I use this idea myself? Who was the designer? Why did they decide on this particular location? How could I improve this concept? You might call it associative intelligence. And this associating of things is something anyone can learn. If you think and act like an entrepreneur, you will always be learning: about economics, about assessment systems, about the role of marketing... You learn something new every day.'



Enterprise in community: employees are expected to be enterprising, within a clear framework of brand, philosophy and culture and with supporting tools in the form of a number of clearly described and proven effective basic actions to approach the market. Goldschmeding: 'Randstad's success is thus based on communal effort. We have really built the business together. Much of our approach has been developed in practice, by sharing experiences, working together, through discussions. Numerous discussions about how you did or didn't do things. I wouldn't say that it's all been my doing. It's also based on the ideas and experiences of others. Nobody knows everything about temporary employment – that's impossible. It's about looking at other people's stories and using them to your own advantage.'



# the basics

With detailed descriptions of all the basic procedures to be used by every consultant, at Randstad the temporary employment profession becomes synonymous for high quality and superior services.

## database



Addresses, that's where it all starts. Addresses of potential clients as well as potential candidates. Back in 1960, these addresses are gathered from telephone directories and by distributing homemade flyers. By applying canvassing stickers to public phones and by sending tiny white envelopes inviting potential temporary workers. This is how the first database of clients and temporary workers is created: an increasingly full card index box with colorful tabs pointing the user in the right direction. At a glance you can see whether a company is an active client or whether it needs attention. Over the years, this database has expanded and the card index has now been digitized. It's no longer just a database in which employees are matched to clients. In fact it offers a wealth of information about the labor market and can be used to make hundreds of millions of crossings. So how many are relevant? A few hundreds, says Frits Goldschmeding. As an entrepreneur, he has

always had his doubts about the benefits of digitization of the database. He feels it has limited value: it costs too much time to analyze and apply the data. Obviously, the present generation of Randstad employees, serving innumerable clients around the world with many different concepts, has quite a different view on the matter. But for Goldschmeding, the profession is still largely based on human intuition. If you are peering at the computer screen all day, you aren't thinking, you're merely processing information. It doesn't give you a feeling for the people in your self-filled index box. A card is like a person – it contains physical information. Without this card, you miss the *fingerspitzengefühl* and the passion required to achieve a successful match.



## the 360 degree model

Matching temporary workers to clients is people's work. You can write down the most important points on a piece of paper but not everything. Skills must be combined with other factors, like age, origin, talents and character traits. That's how you know who does or doesn't fit in a company. So it's important to have one coordination point for supply and demand. Instead of delegating acquisition and sales to different members of staff, the function of 'consultant' is created: people who bring clients and candidates together. Later this matching process is supported by the Job-Boss-Company fit model. In this model, all the qualities that make a candidate more or less suitable for a particular job, boss or company can be combined, in order to achieve a well-founded match. But during the early years, these choices are based on the consultant's own knowledge and intuition. Like spiders in a web, consultants continuously watch all threads of their network. And with this template – later dubbed the 360 degree model – they are given even more responsibilities to enable them to monitor the complete chain of services. From acquisition and sales to coaching and administration. In modern terms, you'd call this empowerment. It's all about trust: the consultants are trusted to do what is best for the client, using all the resources at their disposal.





## working in units

How do you ensure that all-important human and intuitive approach in an ever-expanding organization? Autonomy turns every consultant into a small enterprise in itself, whereby the tried and tested success formula of the early years is repeated and expanded from top to bottom. This effect is further optimized by having consultants work in units of two, combining as many different aspects as possible, such as different age groups, different types of work, various levels of experience, etc. These units ensure continuity: the duos know each other's clients and temporary workers and they can step in whenever needed. Moreover, the duos learn from each other. The working methods, culture and views of the organization are transferred via direct, short lines. Incidentally, some branches work in units of three.

## flat organization

The autonomous way of working and an organization in units make it possible to manage with very short lines. These units all represent tiny companies, run by entrepreneurs who are managing the entire chain. Different units are combined in a branch, and because all the branches use the same system, they only need a minimum of supervision by a limited number of district managers. These district managers are supported by a very small number of people with specific, coordinating and facilitating tasks, such as human resources, accounting & administration, marketing & communication – together forming the executive board of



management. Goldschmeding likes to compare this structure to that of the Catholic church – with priests at the bottom, supervised by bishops who report to the Pope at the top. A flat organization governing two billion churchgoers. And that's only possible because of the underlying philosophy: everyone knows what is expected of them. So the stronger the philosophy of Randstad, the better people know what is expected of them and the further the organization can reach.

## ratios

:40

Through trial and error, it is established how many clients and candidates can be handled by each consultant. How many visits can a person pay each week? How many job applicants can they receive? How many people from the card index box does a consultant really know? The ideal ratio is apparently 1 to 40: one consultant to every 40 candidates. Some people can work with this ratio without any problem; others need a year to eighteen months to learn the ropes. If anyone cannot reach this level, there's no room for them in the organization. The system of ratios is still used today. New technologies may have made it easier to make preselections, for example, but there's still a limit to the number of people one consultant can handle efficiently. Practical experience has

shown that this ratio has been considerably adjusted downward. Today, some 30 thousand consultants are helping 600 thousand people find a job – a ratio of 1 to 20. This is related to the great differences between countries and occupations, but particularly to growth. If you want to grow by 15 percent each year, you need to keep opening new branches. These start with a 1:1 ratio and this will bring down the average. And if you want to raise the ratio by cutting back on costs, you won't be able to grow at this rate.



## contact chain

Marketing and market approach go hand in hand from the start. The contact chain managed by each consultant is vital to Randstad: a carefully followed procedure that turns inactive businesses into active ones. As a branch, find around two hundred companies, call them, record what they say and use that information to set up a regular visiting and calling cycle with interesting companies. Interesting because they are regionally important or because the segment has potential, or because they represent a specialty you wish to serve. By establishing a contact chain, you gain structural insight into the market and you can systematically approach this market. During the initial years, a contact chain list was based on information acquired from the local Chamber of Commerce. Today, national and global digital information can be retrieved by a single mouse click. The methods may have changed, but Frits Goldschmeding's principle still stands.



## VTSR



VTSR stands for Visit, Telephone, Send, Request. VTSR is the procedure followed within the contact chain in order to raise awareness. It takes into account business ups and downs; if a company does not need you today, it may need you tomorrow. VTSR will help you anticipate this. After all, structurally maintained contacts will ensure that your agency remains top-of-mind with your clients whatever the circumstances. So you make sure they hear from you frequently, by visiting the companies, calling them and providing them with information. Small gifts will also contribute. Examples include phone stickers, notepads, memo pads, caps and pens with the Randstad logo printed on them. To this very day, the importance of this anticipating, proactive approach is fully recognized. Just after summer, for example, when the holiday workers have returned to school and you know that companies need flexworkers again. Frits Goldschmeding called this the 'After-Summer Action' or the 'Action Vacation Rat': because vacation time gnaws at your turnover... Today, there are client-oriented programs, for example regarding 'young job seekers'. Or the campaign *#wordenwiejebent* (become who you are) which not only focuses on young people starting out on their career but also on branch employees so that they can provide suitable coaching for their flexworkers. This will prevent people you have acquired through the front door from leaving through the back door. VTSR or national campaigns: these are all aimed at seizing opportunities whenever and wherever they arise.

## relation management



From the very start, Randstad has been investing in relation management. Not just by regular contacts, but also by organizing special activities. Under Frits Goldschmeding, these are events to share knowledge, for example: conferences and meetings are organized about themes involving the labor market and the economy, under the name *MensenWerk* [People Work]. In the new head office built in the 1980s, special conference rooms are set up for this purpose. Many prominent speakers are invited, including political leaders like George Bush and Gorbachev. These conferences not only enable Randstad to maintain the loyalty of a large group of relations, they also high-

light the organization as being the ultimate labor market expert. As a Randstad employee, you need to be seen. You need an extensive network in order to find temporary work for a limited number of people. So you make sure that you become a member of local client networks, such as storekeepers' associations and Rotary Clubs. And the same applies to your contacts with candidates, which you now maintain via social media networks like Facebook and LinkedIn, for example.

## education



You learn from your coworkers, that's where it starts. But it's not just about knowledge transfer: learning from your own experiences is essential. This requires a culture in which you are allowed to make mistakes (to some extent). Provided you can learn from these mistakes. In order to analyze your experiences, learn your lessons and apply your newly acquired knowledge in your job. These experiences are logged in a so-called Branch Almanac – a book describing the complete communal knowledge. A handbook for and by employees, based on their day-to-day practical experience. Thus employees also feel that they are taken

seriously, that their work is appreciated, and that their efforts are effective. In fact, the Branch Almanac evolves into a veritable book of instructions. In addition, staff receive training in the form of courses. In which staff are taught how to think and act commercially, how to visit clients and assess candidates. But the basis is still formed by the communal experience acquired.



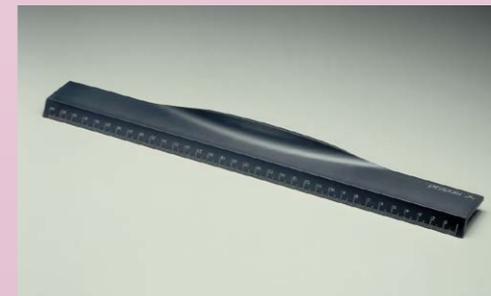


## ‘The secret behind Randstad is the consultant who makes the match’

**Peter Feld** | operational managing director the Netherlands

‘The way we access the market today has not changed much since I started as a consultant and branch manager thirty years ago. Or since Frits Goldschmeding set up the company 55 years ago, for that matter. You base yourself somewhere, stake out your market, gain structural insight into that market, and endeavor to match supply and demand. The world has become faster, we use IT to support our methods and there’s more transparency in the matching process, which are all good things. This means we can work in a more structural and focused manner, handle larger numbers, and actually work more economically. Yet the basis has remained the same. Today, we use the term ABFS – activity-based field steering. You could just as easily call it “The Frits Way”. The smallest enterprise within the organization is the unit. The unit sets a target, resulting in objectives for turnover and margins. We roll that out across the globe. Thanks to IT and transparency, we now have better insight into what works and where we can copy this. And we can learn from things that aren’t successful. Looking back and looking ahead. In the past, we’d get the figures somewhat belatedly from the head office. Today a single key stroke enables us to view the current, real-time, situation on our dashboard. The secret behind Randstad – as laid down by Frits Goldschmeding – is the consultant making the match. The only difference is that we are now able to prepare, facilitate and speed up

this match using big data. We can use the economy of scale. Rather than placing small adverts in newspapers, we now make use of social media, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, but in fact we are still operating according to Frits Goldschmeding’s original methods. Frits Goldschmeding’s golden rules – comprising the unit structure and the consultant as the enterprising 360 degree all-rounder, linked to the mystics of the match, complemented by the 24/7 availability of big data – make us quite invincible. Frits has put all his passion into the company. And we join Randstad because we love working with people. We feel we can make a difference, it’s an intrinsic need. And that’s why we give our all, day in day out. Some companies pay their personnel high salaries, resulting in employee loyalty. At Randstad, the terms of employment are good, but not the best in the world. We want people to choose us because they love the job, not just because we pay them well. The official job requirements are the same for everybody, from recruiter to sales manager: authentic, person-oriented, passionate and having the desire to grow. And when someone walks into my room, I think to myself: does this person want to win? Do they have the strength to get back up after falling? Joining Randstad doesn’t mean you have it made; you have to make it yourself. You must be completely dedicated to making a success of it. And then, you can go a long way.’



## dialog between form and functionality

It’s one of Frits Goldschmeding’s basic principles: make sure you are visible to the client. Leave them something they’ll appreciate which has the Randstad logo on it. Like a memo pad or a diary. Something useful and attractive which enhances the story of our product. And something consultants can be proud of.

In the 1990s, Goldschmeding and his marketing department’s search for high quality and useful promotional gifts brought them to designer Bruno Ninaber van Eyben. This master in designing attractive but also clever and useful objects said later: ‘A product is as good as its client. Randstad doesn’t choose to give away just anything, but has something new developed. They are willing to invest. Randstad wanted promotional gifts with a strictly business character and not tied to rank or gender. It’s very exceptional when a company approaches its clients and its personnel in such a thoughtful manner, and knows how to express their wishes so very clearly as well.’ Based on the principle ‘more would be unnecessary, less would be impossible’, Bruno Ninaber van Eyben designed a desktop line emanating perfect simplicity and combining form and functionality.

Each object tells its own story. The blade of the sellotape holder doesn’t come out until you pull the tape, so you can’t cut your fingers.

And because the bottom side of the ruler is beveled slightly upward, it doesn’t touch the paper, allowing you to draw a line without any ink flowing underneath the ruler. Even the paperclip holder floats slightly, thanks to a magnetic field that also holds the paperclips together. The bottom of the penholder is concave so that pens present themselves to the user.

This wonderful range provides the ideal icebreaker for consultants when visiting new clients. And it is yet another example of everything Frits Goldschmeding stands for: the striving for perfection and the simultaneous promotion of all interests. It also demonstrates his astute business sense. When the MOMA in New York showed interest in exhibiting the range of desktop accessories, Randstad’s marketing team immediately responded by selling the designs and the rights to market the desktop line. The desktop line is still being sold today in museums around the world, including the MOMA and the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.



## ‘The mind and heart of Goldschmeding’s Randstad still stand’

**Robbin Brugman** | managing director group business concept development

‘Don’t be surprised if someone enters the room with a vacuum cleaner. We believe, like Goldschmeding always has done, that cleaners must be able to do their work in the daytime, rather than only at night. It’s our social conscience.

However, the world has changed. The old way of working no longer fits the bill. We still provide highly personalized services, but we communicate and interact differently. Both with clients and with candidates. Take the Netherlands, for example – over 50 percent of the orders are received online. We are involved in complex matters like central recruitment, MSP & RPO, and Total Talent Architecture, which are quite different forms from those in the early days. The new generation of candidates uses social media, such as WhatsApp, Facebook and LinkedIn. Very personal, but no longer just face-to-face. And candidates are no longer interested in money and long-term prospects – they are looking for short-term experience. Work has to be fun and offer concrete milestones. Preferably, they want top positions from the very start. So they search in a different way. Today, we use many human resource technologies that are almost automatic matching. Often, you don’t even need physical offices: presourcing and sourcing can be done from India or Malaysia, or anywhere in Europe. The consultant’s role is shifting more towards advice and sales. It’s becoming a different balance of tech & touch. There’s a war of talents

going on, so we have to search passive labor markets, professionals who are employed elsewhere, by building up networks. These talents no longer visit a branch office, but search their own communities. And these are just a few examples.

You can say we have adjusted to today’s reality. Still, a number of Goldschmeding’s basic principles still stand. Both in terms of business logics and culture. I like to call it mind and heart. There aren’t many companies that have a strong concepts department. Such concepts have proven their worth: valuable basic processes that work in 80 percent of all countries around the world. The other 20 percent depend on local culture and laws. In other words, it’s a form of standardization. It exemplifies Goldschmeding’s lily pad model – which is to split up and copy a process as a growth model. It also describes the principle of managing the smallest entity – a team – rather than managing on averages. We also share our culture and our standards and values wherever we can.

The old guard may believe we’ve become hard and that everything today is about money, but we still invest more time in people than any other company. We give them plenty of opportunities to develop and are still very person-oriented. That still has a big influence on our way of working. Goldschmeding has always managed to perfectly balance business logics and culture, and we still do that today.’

**Paul van de Kerkhof** | managing director India / Nordics



## ‘Matching always involves a human factor’

‘When I was working as a branch manager in Apeldoorn, during the early 1980s, I remember seeing people bringing us flowers or a bottle of wine because they’d been given a chance thanks to the match we made for them. Having a job means a great deal to people. It makes you feel that you matter. Wherever you are – in the Netherlands or India: you can make a difference to people.

I’ve worked at Randstad for over three decades. The company has changed; it’s gradually evolved into a multinational. In the early days, Apeldoorn seemed further away than India does today. You worked on an island in your own market. We only received information once a week, by courier. It was a blue envelope containing news, instructions and the pay lists for the temporary workers.

In his day, Frits took the first hesitant steps towards internationalization. But Ben Noteboom really turned Randstad into a real global company. A complex operation. I’ve worked in sixteen different countries and have seen that our cultural values often require a lot of explaining. It wasn’t easy to incorporate them in every country. Trust is a core value, for example, but in some countries control is crucial. Interestingly, in countries where we managed to inject our cultural values prominently into the senior management, we had more long-term success and management continuity.

Over the years, I’ve seen Randstad evolving internationally to become a multinational

like many others. Focusing more on quarterly results and thus the short term. That’s not a disqualification, it’s just reality.

Yet you can still clearly see Frits’ vision in many things today. Frits didn’t believe in market research. He said: you do that yourself. And we still do, actually. Even though I find it sometimes hard to explain, for example in India. But you just have to be continually present, be top of mind for the client. And you still see that we as a company care about people. Perhaps we used to attach too much importance to our role in society, but I feel Frits’ vision still stands. The core of our business touches on the *raison d’être* for people: having a job. And matching between companies and people always involves a human factor.

Only now it comes into the picture at a later stage. Technology can be used to do a lot of preparatory work and globalization requires a more scientific approach. But when you close the deal – when the match is made – the human factor is still most important. And if you can optimally facilitate and motivate people, you win. To know, to serve, to trust are essential values in this company. That culture, that passion. And that still makes Randstad the best company to work for. Totally. Intrinsically, that also gives me the motivation to make the most of my work, as I am now doing in India, for example. I want to shout it out loud: Randstad is really great and it can be great in this country as well!’



**Judith Franssen** | director international marketing



## ‘Every Monday, you knew exactly whether you had to make just that extra effort’

‘I’ve been working at Randstad for nearly 30 years, but I started with Werknet, which was still an independent company at the time. That was actually the first in-house concept. At the time, I looked at Randstad through the eyes of a competitor. But always with admiration. I’d say that Randstad has made the market. Women’s liberation at work was greatly facilitated by Randstad, because Randstad specifically addressed women in advertisements. In the field of marketing, Frits really set the standard for the temporary employment sector. His view on branches, marketing, advertising, corporate identity, core values, the human factor – they made Randstad stand out from the competition. Randstad seemed to have an answer to everything and we were quite jealous of that. Although after the acquisition of Werknet, I saw that in some areas we were rather more advanced than Randstad; we really learned from and complemented each other.

The focus is also remarkable: Frits was right on the button and expected the same from everyone. On Monday, all the branches would call up head office with last week’s results and he and his team immediately knew exactly where we stood, how many people were employed in the Netherlands, and how this compared to the previous week or the previous year. It was a weekly routine: counting job sheets. Making predictions without the help of computers. Every Monday, we knew exactly

whether we had to make just that extra effort or whether it was time for a small celebration. In fact, from the way Randstad approached the markets, you could see the personal effect each branch employee had on the overall results. And every one of us shouldered the responsibility. We still do, in fact. It’s entrepreneurship at every level. We’ve acquired more complex products and technology has changed a lot, but a tool like activity-based field steering is actually very much like the method we used in the old days, when we were counting job sheets. Obtaining insight, anticipating and achieving targets.

My job involves supporting a number of countries and applying the best marketing technologies and concepts as well and as quickly as I can. Insights that we observe in the rest of the Randstad world, or which we develop here, centrally. You draw up concepts that can easily be implemented locally. So that everybody benefits from being a part of Randstad. Helping our local colleagues become the best in their particular market. That makes me proud. Putting people to work. Everyone you help get a job is a happier person. And ultimately, we therefore make the world a better place to live in. That’s quite different from selling just anything. We all share this passion for work: in all its forms, in all the markets, in all times. Randstad is and will always be a wonderful company to work for. I enjoy being here every day.’

OPERATION CLASSIC

# How Frits Goldschmeding revitalizes his organization

During the early 1980s, a passionate Goldschmeding personally rouses the slightly dormant organization. He visits branches, emphasizes the basic actions once again, and demands their perfect implementation.

The fact that the basic system set up by Goldschmeding works is not only reflected in the success of the rapidly growing Randstad organization, but also by the failing of branches where the basis is not good. During the early 1980s, Randstad gets into difficulties for the first time: the oil crisis is still reverberating, the economy is stagnating, interest levels are higher than ever and many people are suspicious of entrepreneurship. There has also been a change in Dutch law reducing the maximum time for people to be temporarily employed from six months to three: the potential turnover of placing a candidate is suddenly halved. For the first time, staff are laid off. 'A black page in our history,' Frits Goldschmeding says later. Against this backdrop, he decides to personally fight the slump. He cuts straight through the organization's hierarchy and goes to the front himself: the branches.

In 1983, Paul van de Kerkhof, now managing director India / Nordics, has just been appointed branch manager of a poorly performing

branch in Apeldoorn, when he receives a visit from Frits Goldschmeding. 'He told me that he wanted to carry out an experiment in a few branches to find out how he could give them an extra boost. He intended to revitalize the company. I suspect that he thought: things aren't going well, I'm going back to the basis, so that I can get the organization moving from the bottom.' Operation Classic allows Goldschmeding to do what he does best: communicate what he's found to be successful strategies. He brings the basic actions back to everyone's attention and requires them to be perfectly implemented. Paul van de Kerkhof: 'He visited our branch a number of times and



all he did was sit around the table with us and discuss how we were doing. These meetings were incredibly inspiring. He got us to look at the market systematically. To accurately map out the companies present, the competition, and the opportunities to be seized. After that, we were instructed to make plans to haul in potential clients. And visit them in person, because what we were selling was trust. He compared it to courting a girl – you have to build up a relationship. And find reasons to make more visits. One of the results we thought up was the Vacation Planner, a folder in which a company could note down periods of absence, when replacements were needed. This was later used throughout Randstad. And we

always had to leave something behind for the client to remember Randstad by. Useful things, like note pads or desk-top mats, prominently displaying the Randstad logo and our phone number. Each week we were to publish at least five vacancies in the newspapers, often for rather more qualified candidates than usual so that we would get the pick of the bunch. He created the position of telephone consultant – someone who called companies for several hours each day. Not using aggressive selling techniques – we never did that – but to have a pleasant conversation in order to gain their trust. After that, we sent them a gift. And visited them. It was a chain to build up contact.'

*'He made me feel that I was the boss in Apeldoorn, and that I had to make something of this branch'*

The operation gives the organization a real boost. Within a few months, turnover is on the rise, as is the market share of many branches. 'The structural market approach, the drive, the ambition to become the largest – he infected us all with his enthusiasm. A spirit of success. And he rewarded us when we achieved our targets. That was amazing. There were two very important sides to his approach. He made me feel that I was the boss in Apeldoorn, and that I had to make something of this branch. He had huge respect for local entrepreneurship. Enterprise in community, he used to call it. And for him, it was all about the consultant. Not the management, not head office, but the girls at the base. They had to be facilitated in order to achieve the highest possible targets.' At the same time, new experiences are regarded as lessons. In Apeldoorn, for example, Frits Goldschmeding introduces evenings around the theme 'How to work miracles', when coworkers are able to share problems and solutions. Paul van de Kerkhof: 'And he was very good at making you feel that you'd thought something up yourself. He'd say: good idea, I'll sort it out, we're going to do this. That feeling of ownership he gave you was highly motivating. We all went for it, together.'



# Brand

brand

creating a unique **identity**



*‘Your visual identity is one of your basic assets – and it shouldn’t be changed’*



A strong brand shows all the strengths a company possesses. From its logo and typography to its advertisements, tone of voice and color. It should be omnipresent and always recognizable. Your brand is your personality, your identity. You communicate that to the market, but also to your own employees.

Frits Goldschmeding realized from the start that a clear visualization was the basis for communicating service provision, still a rather a vague concept at the time. He thus became one of the first true brand builders in the Netherlands. ‘We weren’t a trading firm with a family name, we had to become a brand. And you have to support and communicate that brand. So that we could distinguish ourselves from the many amateurish typing and translating agencies that were mushrooming at the time. Nor did I want all the badly assorted flyers and advertisements that I saw our competitors producing. I wanted to clearly distinguish myself in a very positive way.’

At first, Goldschmeding admits, this was done in a rather dilettante way. 'In our pioneering phase, we managed to get the daily newspaper Het Parool to give our advertisements different standard dimensions from other classified ads, so that we could surround our message with more whitespace, thus attracting more attention. It was a first and our larger 12 point font was widely imitated. But I quickly grew out of the design produced by advertising agency Nijgh en Van Ditmar, to whom I turned in 1963, such as a logo with a rather curiously shaped R.'

After that, Randstad invested systematically in positioning, design and communication. Soon, Goldschmeding managed to turn the 'rather vague' company into a strong and recognizable personality. A serious, reliable partner in society. An organization on a par with leading companies such as KLM and Philips, leaving the competition far behind. Choosing design agency Total Design proved to be a crucial decision. 'It didn't take me long to decide –

this was it for me.' Total Design represented clarity and functionality, as well as unity in all forms of communication. From logo and letterheads to tables and chairs. It was a revolutionary approach that seamlessly matched Goldschmeding's ambitions. The Randstad corporate identity – a novel term in those days – as developed by Ben Bos at Total Design, was created in close consultation with Randstad. 'The clear, no-nonsense style went perfectly with our marketing ideas and professional businesslike approach.'

This interaction between visualization and corporate identity has made Randstad one of the finest examples of cast-iron brand building. The basic concept was never tinkered with: in over 55 years, Randstad has retained its house style nearly unchanged and has used it consistently in all forms of communication. Goldschmeding: 'We have always guarded it. Your visual identity is one of your basic assets – you shouldn't change it.' The very minor changes



and modifications that the logo has undergone over the years have been the result of changing circumstances and new views on the identity of the business. For example, the strong growth and the opening of many new branches around the world during the late 1980s required the development of a standard package of corporate identity elements that could be applied anywhere.

Another important influence on Randstad's corporate identity was the development of the corporate philosophy, based on the simultaneous promotion of all interests, to know, to serve, to trust, and the striving for perfection. Goldschmeding wanted the ethical foundation that this philosophy gave to Randstad's activities to be reflected in the company's house style. 'What it boiled down to was: what are the core elements of how we deal with people? These can be applied to our relations with people as well as with matter. That interaction between house style and business identity resulted in subtle modifications in



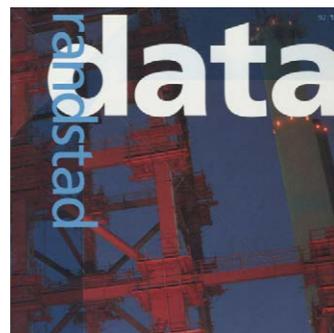
typography and use of color. However, we never made any radical changes to the brand. The pattern, the philosophy behind it, remained intact. And that's been our strength over the years.'

## building blocks

If you are selling services rather than a physical product, image is crucial. That's why building a strong brand has been vitally important to Randstad. A brand that stands for trust. So that people believe in your company and turn to you rather than to a competitor. And that's when they experience the quality of your services.

## positioning

Starting up his company at a time when temporary employment is quite a new phenomenon, Frits Goldschmeding realizes that strong positioning is vitally important to building up the Randstad brand. So he focuses on the social acceptance of his controversial profession and thus his company. Randstad must be regarded as world leader in the world of work. *A Thought Leader*. In every possible way, he makes sure that his organization is seen and heard by *influentials*, such as social organizations, authorities and ministries.



So parties which could help you or give you trouble if you weren't careful. For example, Randstad launches Randstad Data, a distinguishing opinion-forming publication about the labor market. It is published in that form for ten years. The annual Work Pocket is an important marketing tool even today. This guide presents a wealth of information about the world of work, from trends to guidelines, laws and procedures and is distributed free of charge to a hundred thousand interested parties.



## the name

The cast-iron name of Randstad, well-known around the world, is the result of intuition rather than know-how. The name of Goldschmeding is not considered for the new staffing services, since it is already being used by family running a piano company. And a fabricated name will not do for this rather unfamiliar sector. A geographical name based on the location of establishment seems more appropriate: Uitzendbureau Amstelveen. But the ambitions of founders Frits Goldschmeding and Ger Dalebout extend a lot further than Amstelveen and its surrounding region. When branches are opened in cities like Leiden, Haarlem and Delft, they decided on Randstad, the Dutch name for the urban agglomeration of western Holland. And when the first tentative moves abroad are made, it turns out that this name is also easily remembered by Belgians, Germans, Americans and even the Chinese. Although the name doesn't mean anything to foreigners, its subliminal impression is substantial. A psychologist establishes that the name 'Randstad' gets under your skin, never to leave the body again. (Incidentally, a pleasant circumstance is the fact that Randstad happens to be an anagram of Standard, a concept that suits Randstad very well.) And because a special house style has been developed which can easily be used internationally, there are no further discussions. The name is good, global and it works.



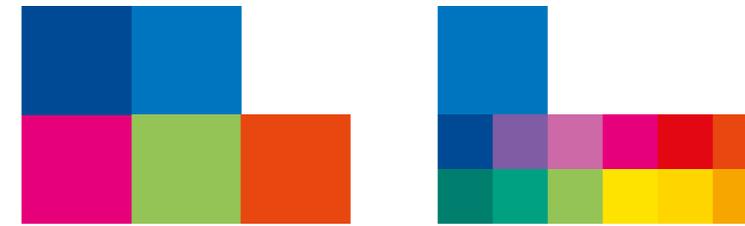
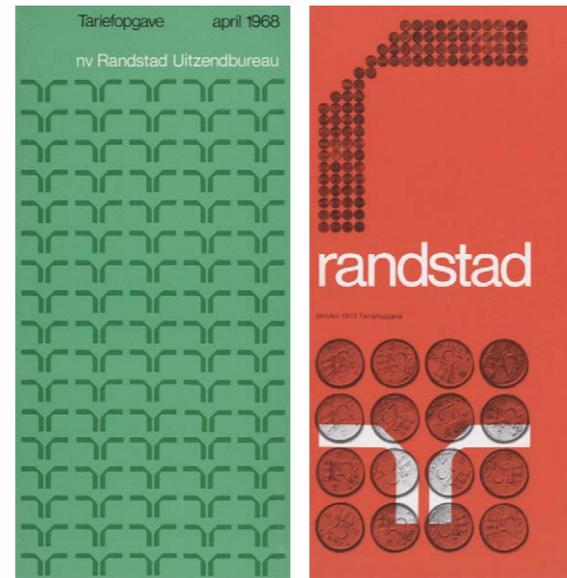
# corporate identity

The Randstad corporate identity is everything Frits Goldschmeding represents: no-nonsense, well-ordered, long-lasting. And with a little room to maneuver where necessary. He realizes that a complex story is harder to get across than a simple core message. Particularly when your organization grows and becomes global. The more you grow, the more important it becomes to present a clear message to all. Simplicity is the key word.

So that's why everything in the corporate identity can be reduced to the orderly square grid. The same applies to the logo: the lower-case, mirrored 'r', as designed by Ben Bos, with the word 'randstad' underneath it, is not merely a picture but a complete symbol that includes the invisible square around it.

The ample use of whitespace stands for transparency. In a world where as a company, you are constantly fighting to prove how honorable your sector is and that it contributes to a better society, you must be completely open and clear. Using only a limited number of colors, that grid and the whitespace, you ensure recognizability. Just as with the choice of name, choosing the color blue as the principal color was also a pragmatic decision. The colors red, orange and green couldn't be used because legally you needed to be further than 150 meters away from traffic lights. Which left blue. However, blue has a short wavelength, which makes it hard to distinguish text from a distance. So blue is used for the background with Randstad in white letters.

The typography is kept simple and functional. The sanserif font Helvetica, which stemmed



from the minimalist Swiss School, was quite novel in those days. Today, it is very widely used. It epitomizes Randstad's striving for clear, no-nonsense communication.

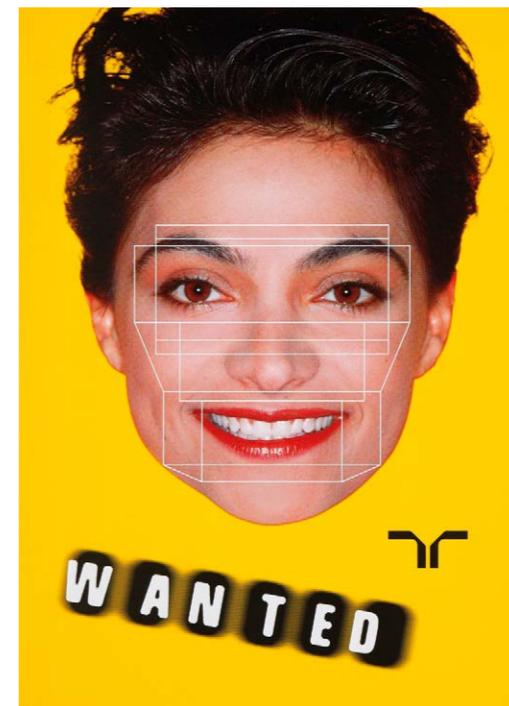
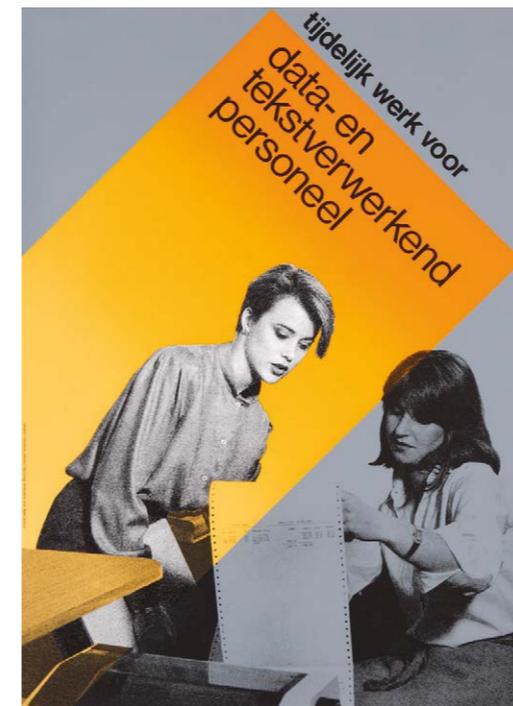
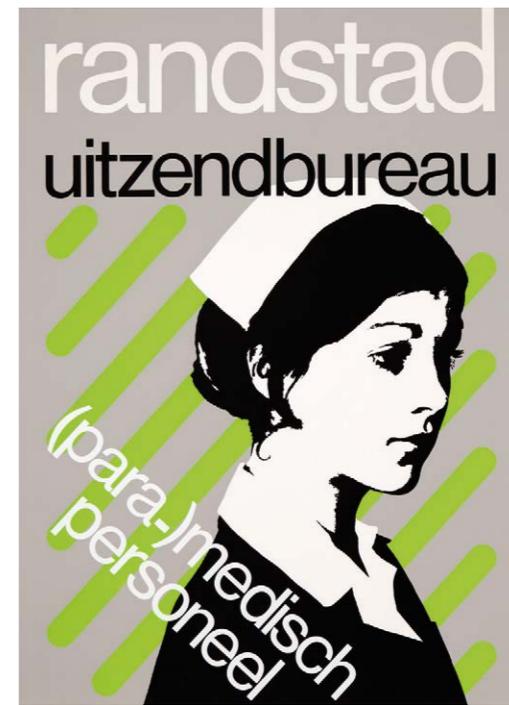
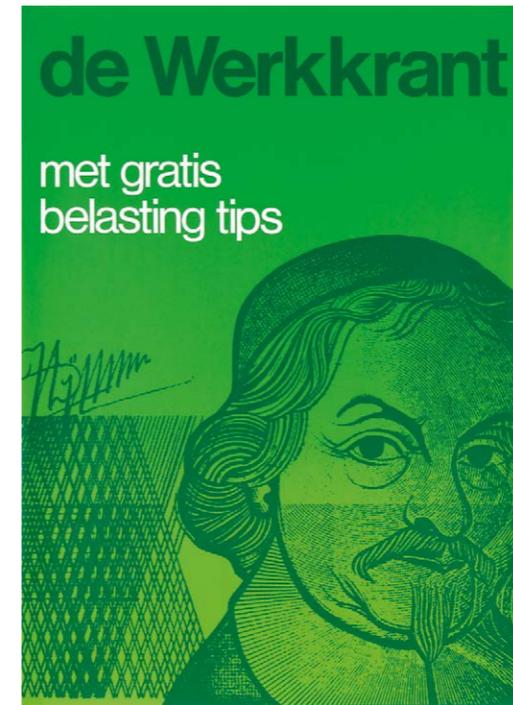
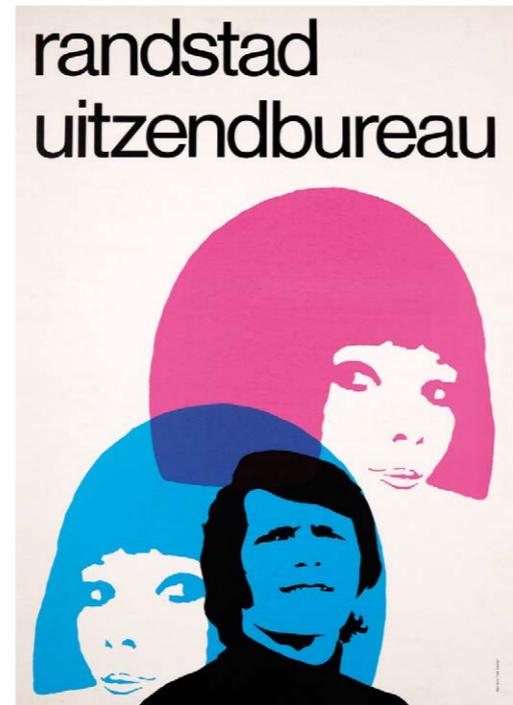
Photography also plays a major role in Randstad's corporate identity. It is an ideal medium to make an abstract product – a service – visible and radiate the identity of the organization. At Randstad, it's all about people, so the style of photography is personal, warm, human and inviting. Portraits of real people, as they are. Active, busy doing something.

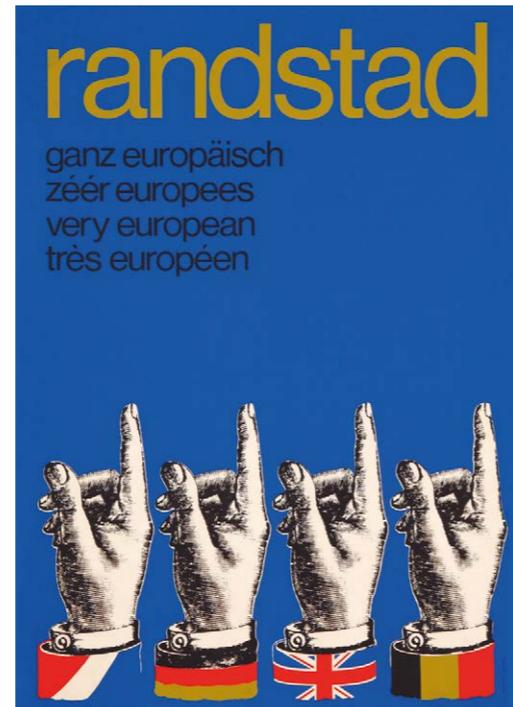
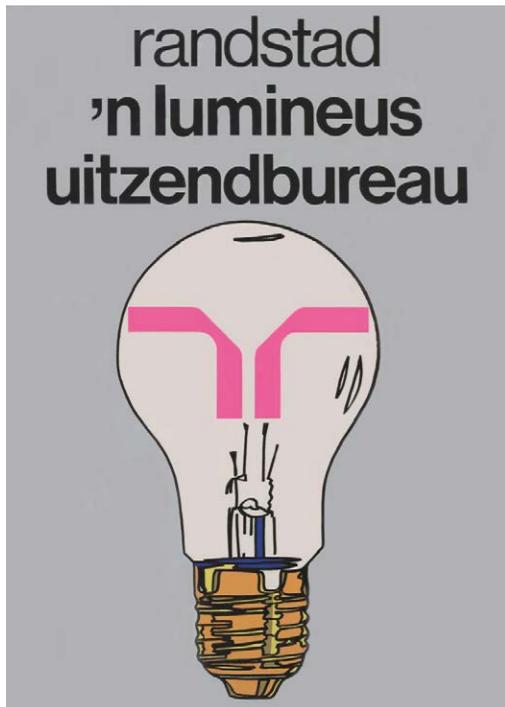
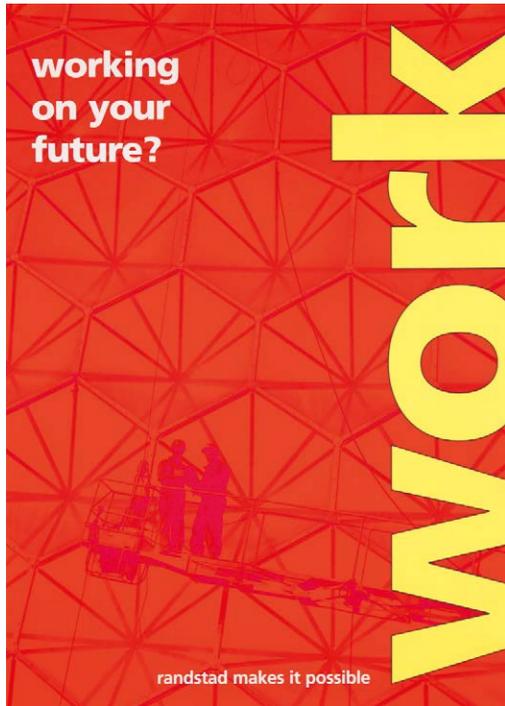
The corporate identity is consistently applied on posters, forms, business cards and carrier bags and in brochures, annual reports, diaries and magazines. Three-dimensional designs are created for illuminated advertising, signs and the interior design of branch offices. Little has changed since the early years. In 1987, the now overused Helvetica font is replaced by Frutiger, a slightly more open font. A subtle change, which is barely noticed. But it works. During the years of massive international growth after the departure of Goldschmeding, studies are carried out to establish what works in terms of colors in other countries. Three shades of blue are decided on, with three additional colors: green, orange and pink. This is also the moment when the first truly international communication concept is developed: *good to know you*. It marks the transition from the visionary corporate identity of the small organization during the 1960s and 70s to an international standard for the entire Randstad brand, applied and visible in 39 countries.

# advertising

The first advertising agency that Randstad works with, Nijgh en Van Ditmar, also introduces the first slogan: *Randstad – voor de inspringkracht die eruit springt*, roughly translated as: Randstad, if you need a stand-in that stands out. The printed advertising material, with illustrations of typewriters, telephones and envelopes, literally shows what the company does: deploy office personnel. But Frits Goldschmeding soon finds these forms of communication too limited. After all, his ambition is to make a giant leap forward. Like the new corporate identity designed by Total Design, advertising must make the company's approach visible. Since then, Randstad has launched a large number of innovative, well thought-out advertising campaigns. The form may differ, depending on the period in which it was developed, but the message is clear: Randstad can help you take a new step in your life; with a job you can give your life meaning.

Thus in 1972, when the first TV commercial is broadcast in the Netherlands, Randstad focuses on its primary target group: the women and girls that Randstad needs as employees. There are not many working women at the time, but Randstad shows them that a paid job allows them to pay their own bills.

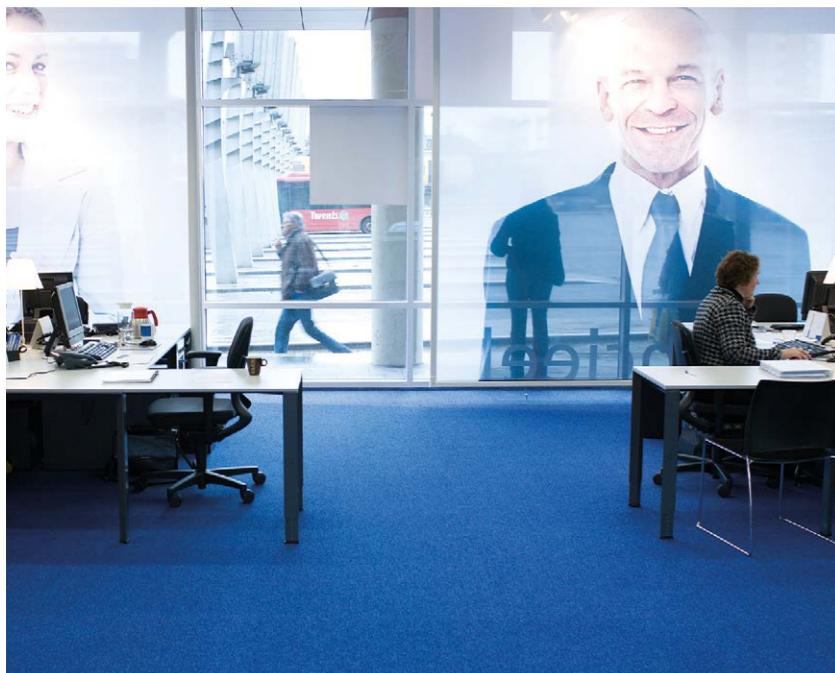




During subsequent years, the emphasis shifts towards making the quality of Randstad's services visible. As the face of Randstad, the American actress Jane Anderson shows what a consultant does for her clients: she visits you, uses the acquired knowledge to make a better match between the company and candidates, looks after you.

In a later campaign *Randstad houdt niet van half werk* (Randstad does not like a job half done), Randstad presents small scenes from a consultant's daily life, providing insight into the her work. A campaign which is innovative in form too: the launch is a three-minute commercial during Saturday night prime time.

Many campaigns follow, Dutch ones at first and, as Randstad grows, international ones too. Always striking and high quality. With the latest Dutch brand campaign, *#wordenwiejebent* (become who you are), Randstad has returned to the basis: helping people find a suitable job or providing them with just the stimulus they need. It's an inspiring story about talent, using your potential and fulfilling your dreams and ambitions. Exactly how Frits Goldschmeding has always regarded the core of his profession.



‘When I’m creating something, I often think: what would Frits say about it?’

Wim Vos | international design manager & sponsor manager

‘I’ve worked at Randstad for thirty years, so a long time. And it’s the only company I’d want to work for. Because it is so special. I recognize myself in the idea of striving for perfection, constantly improving. Each and every day. Besides, if I didn’t, all those Frits-like people here would soon arrive on my doorstep to check on me.

What I’ve always found so special about Frits is that he loves architecture, art, design, as well as economy. Few people can say that they’ve got business acumen as well as a feeling for beauty and creativity. He always knows exactly what he wants. And that applies to our design too. When I’m creating something, I often think: what would Frits say about it?

Whenever you visit us, anywhere in the world, you’ll find the same core values. The quality of our services is reflected in the designs. And our reliability. If Randstad were a bank, lots of people would think: at Randstad, my money will be safe. Consistency plays an important role in this. Our logo, the colors and the font we use, they’ve hardly changed at all since they were first developed. If it works and it still looks surprisingly modern, don’t change it. Change can indicate insecurity. We have to tell the same story over and over again, so that we can continue being who we want to be. So in our new Dutch campaign, *#wordenwieje bent* (become who you are), we actually repeat Frits’ story: having a job you enjoy will make you happy. And we at Randstad want to help

you find that happiness. Whether you’re looking around or you need a job because you’re currently unemployed, we’ll make sure you find just the job you’re looking for. That story works internally too: that consultants understand the difference they can make in people’s lives. When Frits saw the campaign video for the first time, he immediately recognized the message. He’d felt quite emotional, he told us later.’



‘Monitoring the corporate identity often meant endless listening, talking and trying to convince people’

**Kari de Wilde** | former employee (worked for Randstad 1983 – 1995, last position: manager international marketing services support)

‘I’m a perfectionist, so it felt like coming home when I joined Randstad, a company which is all about striving for perfection. I wanted to be part of that! And when you can then communicate that quality – one of my responsibilities was the international corporate identity – then it’s an amazing experience. In 1983, I started as a consultant with the minor subsidiary Capac. After a stop-over at Tempo-Team, around the time of the merger, I joined Randstad in 1985. First as head of Client Services and later for the holding as Manager International Marketing Services Support.

I loved the Randstad culture. Nice coworkers and the company treated its personnel well. It was hard work here, day and night, but that’s what we were hired for. But if you had an idea, wanted to develop something or do a training course, you were always given the opportunity. I left the company in 1995 for personal reasons. I couldn’t combine my job – which involved a lot of traveling – with looking after children and a husband who ran his own company. And I enjoyed my job too much to swap it for something else at Randstad.

Since 1988, my job involved monitoring the international corporate identity. A new position. The internationalization of Randstad was just starting. We had offices in Germany and France, but mainly in Belgium. For many years, I’d drive once a week to these foreign

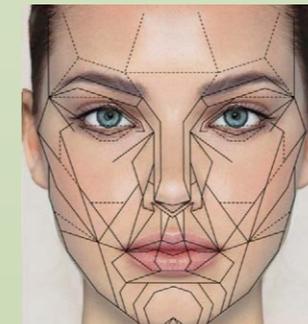
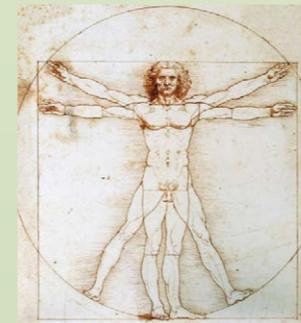
offices and spend two days working there. In all those countries, I had to make sure that the Randstad image was properly conveyed and that it was reflected in all the advertising. I really had to stay right on top of it. It was quite a tricky job. The offices were often rather localized and I was often told that their culture was different from the rest of the world. That meant that I was constantly listening, talking, trying to convince them.

I also experienced the first steps in America. The attitude to work in the US was quite different from ours, and they viewed temporary work in a totally different way. It was really difficult to communicate the Randstad philosophy in a short space of time. The secret was to implicitly pass on the Randstad values by setting an example myself. By showing what I stood for.

I loved the fact that Randstad was always leading the market, including with its house style. When the corporate identity was modified in the late 1980s, a lot of time and money was made available. Even though the differences were very minor. Another font was chosen, for example; the Frutiger was slightly more open than the Helvetica we’d been using until then. That’s what it was all about: more openness. Subtle, but really important for the image. That’s typically Randstad.’



**randstad**



## Fibonacci and the golden section

The logo and the typography of the Randstad name: these were modeled by Ben Bos to perfectly reflect the golden section. The golden section or ‘Divina Proportia’ presents a perfect proportion of lines perceived. Two lines a and b fulfill the golden section if the sum of the two lines relate to a in the same way as a relates to b. In other words, if  $a+b/a$  equals  $a/b$ , then the result of this division equals the golden section.

It’s an example of ancient mathematics, represented by the Greek figure  $\Phi$  (phi), which is approximately 1.618. The arithmetic behind the golden section is based on a series of numbers published back in 1202 by Leonardo Fibonacci. Apart from the first two numbers, the Fibonacci sequence comprises a series of integers whereby each number equals the sum of the two previous ones: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, and so forth. In 1611, the astronomer Johannes Kepler discovered that whenever you divide a number from the Fibonacci sequence by its predecessor, the result is virtually equal to the figure  $\Phi$ . For example, 21 divided by 13 equals 1.61538.

The golden section is reflected in nature, music, art, architecture, and even determines our perception of human beauty. Scientists are still debating whether the

golden section is merely coincidental or whether there is a reason for it. Some see it as proof that there is a God – if so many things fulfill the same law, there must have been a preconceived plan. Coincidence or divine intervention: Frits Goldschmeding has always been very aware of these ideal proportions. These proportions played a role in the design of the logo, the house style, the choice of colors and even the well-known commercial tune composed by Rogier van Otterloo.

Goldschmeding has always been fascinated by the golden section and the underlying Fibonacci sequence. One of his favorite stories is the one in which economist Bert de Groot discovers that Goldschmeding’s calculations demonstrating the correlation between the number of candidates with a job and the economic trend at the time reflected the mathematical law behind the Fibonacci sequence. Goldschmeding: ‘According to Bert de Groot, I’ve always instinctively used the sequence, and ran my company accordingly. I told him not to exaggerate, that it was purely coincidental. But it was very nice to know that I could use that calculation ad infinitum.’



## ‘The DNA of Frits Goldschmeding can still be felt throughout the organization’

**Machteld Merens** | director group communications

‘I recently overheard an American and a Canadian discussing our logo. They genuinely believed that our logo, with the mirrored r, was based on the handlebars of a bicycle. Brilliant! Frits Goldschmeding is well known for the fact that he visited his first clients on his bike – how Dutch can you get? That’s why internationally, we are considered to be a family business, with Goldschmeding as our founding father. We regularly tell these stories about Goldschmeding and our history in our internal communication. People love it. I’ve been here for nine years. Which isn’t very long by Randstad standards. I’m just a newbie, really. Of course, it makes a difference that I work at the holding, rather than Randstad Nederland. Randstad Nederland employs quite a few old-timers who have been with us for decades. If you are looking for the legacy of Goldschmeding, that’s where you’ll find it. But the world and Randstad have changed tremendously. Especially over the past ten years. When I started, we had offices in twenty countries. But when we took over Vedior in 2008, this number increased to fifty. Today, it’s 39, but all in all we did double our size. Out of the 30,000 people working at Randstad today, maybe only a thousand know Frits and have worked with him.

But his DNA can still be felt. The way he used to work, the way he positioned the company, the social role we all have to fulfill – these are the values we still uphold. And I believe that

we place more importance on them than other HR Services. Of course, every self-respecting company has its own business principles, but ours are really based on our core values. Our mission: ‘shaping the world of work’ has also evolved from Frits’ mental legacy. After the acquisitions of Vedior, FujiStaff, SFN, several European units from USG and recently the Scandinavian Proffice, we’ve obtained many new offices over the past few years. All over the world. They have almost all become Randstad. It’s important to make sure that everyone is aware of the strategy, the core values and of the fact that they are a part of a major multinational. In turn, they will convey this message to their own communities. The same applies to me: when I started here, I didn’t know much about Randstad. But I’ve grown to love Randstad. I really believe in what we do and how we do it. This also has to do with our field of activity: the world of work. You help people find jobs and you help companies find the right talent. That’s all extremely valuable and socially important. And that’s exactly how I feel about my work, about communicating with stakeholders, about the positioning of Randstad, about issues concerning reputation. That importance is what we try to show in everything we do.’

*As of 1 January 2017, Machteld Merens no longer works for Randstad.*



## THE STORY BEHIND THE CORPORATE IDENTITY

# Making the intangible tangible

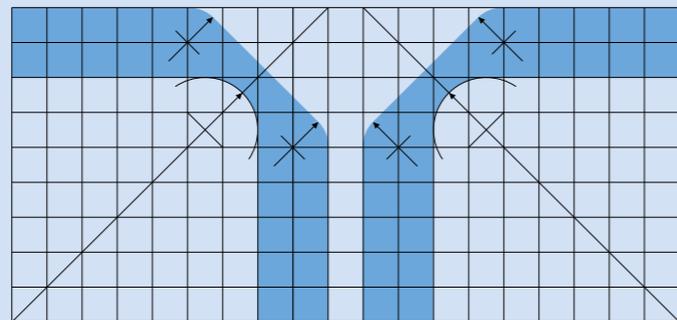
An entrepreneur who thinks in numbers and a designer who believes in clarity, functionality and beauty. They find each other in their striving for perfection.

When Frits Goldschmeding sets up his private employment agency in 1960, the phenomenon of temporary employment is about as unfamiliar as the term corporate identity. But what Goldschmeding knows for sure is that he has a good product – the services he is going to provide – and this is the message he will convey to the world.

In around 1966, investor Dick Schwarz introduces Goldschmeding to the innovative and multi-disciplinary design agency Total Design, of which Schwarz is cofounder and which produces work that Goldschmeding immediately recognizes as being in ‘a class of its own’. Total Design, with its designers Wim Crouwel, Friso Kramer and others, stood for order, form and novelty – for an optimistic belief in progress that roused the rather provincial Netherlands. It is the first design agency in the Netherlands to focus on integrated solutions with visual identity programs for their clients. The extremely functional and well thought-out designs developed by the agency are based on the minimalist Swiss School and seamlessly match the prudent and sustainable style that the enterprising and future-oriented Goldschmeding has in mind for Randstad Uitzendbureau. It’s a match made in heaven.

Designer Ben Bos (who passed away in January 2017) once told the story of how Goldschmeding arrived with a stack of unsightly printed matter produced by other private employment agencies, saying that this was exactly what he did not want. ‘He immediately starting talking about the Mercedes star and the PAM drop and said he wanted something similarly strong. Unique tours de force.’ At first, Ben Bos is rather skeptical about designing a logo for such a new and vague concept whose products were so intangible. How to solve this problem? What finally wins him over is Goldschmeding’s promise that he will be involved in all aspects relating to Randstad’s image – not just in his design. Even the interior design of the offices, right down to the choice of flowers on the receptionist’s desk. For someone who had once stated in one of his publications that a corporate identity could only be effective if the trucks were not only decorated appropriately, but also regularly washed, that question indicates vision and the desire to enforce his ideas.

It results in a flourishing relationship that lasted for decades, the first result of which is the Randstad logo. Ben Bos finds the design solution to visualize the abstract product Randstad in typography.



*Goldschmeding immediately recognizes the work as being in ‘a class of its own’*

‘I thought: I just have to make a really attractive R.’ He uses the computer alphabet called ‘New Alphabet’, designed by his coworker Wim Crouwel, who had predicted that computerization would radically change the design process. Ben Bos uses a lower-case r to create an image depicting an efficient and business-like organization and which makes a good impression on clients, but whose subtle, decorative details appeal to the – predominantly female – candidates. By mirroring the r, he was able to balance the symbol. ‘It meant nothing, but it looked good. And it reminded people of the welcoming gesture of open arms, which made the abstract organization more personal, whilst expressing the role Randstad would play in helping people find a job.’

Ben Bos, convinced of the strength of his design, presents only one proposal and Frits Goldschmeding is wildly enthusiastic. ‘He recognized it as a timeless design that would serve Randstad well for many years to come.’ The logo forms the starting point for the Randstad corporate identity, which is consis-

tently implemented and which represents the face of Randstad from that moment onward. And as long as Ben Bos and Frits Goldschmeding are involved, it will never be abandoned.

Today, more than 55 years later, it is clear how far ahead of his time Goldschmeding was. The small Dutch company has since grown into one of the largest global players with thousands of branches. But the visual identity developed by Ben Bos is still as contemporary as ever. Bos believed that this was merely the result of professionalism. ‘A design has to be based on a clear structure or foundation. A certain order. In case of the logo, this structure is very simple. The image was perfectly projected on 171 squares. This would ensure the durability of the intrinsic quality of the design. Over the years, we’ve made minimal changes to the house style, but never perceptibly touched the brand image.’





reputation  
the fight for **recognition**

*‘Providing perfect quality  
in everything was a  
precondition for survival’*



When Randstad celebrates its 35th anniversary, Frits Goldschmeding states in his preface of the anniversary publication that if Randstad had not yet existed, he would certainly have set up a private employment agency again. ‘I cannot imagine a more fascinating business.’ ‘Via our operating companies, we work with professional and motivated people from all disciplines. And because of the prominent role we play on a social level, we help determine the course of society’s development. For many years, we have been a worthy interlocutor to ministers, officers, employers’ organizations, trade unions, companies and social organizations. This is what makes our profession so exciting, every day.’

And no matter how self-explanatory this vision seems to the man who founded the extremely successful Randstad concern as we know it today, this prominent role in society was not so clear at the start. When Randstad was launched in 1960, the concept of temporary employment was still new and unfamiliar. In fact, during the first years, the government was very unwilling to commit to the idea.

And trade unions were actually horrified by the thought of it. As a new entrepreneur, Goldschmeding was confronted rather brutally with the preconceived ideas of politicians, who were quick to compare his creation with the illegal practices of moonlighting labor contractors. And trade unions were outright disgusted. They felt that candidates pushed out permanently employed workers and, moreover, regarded them as potential finks, who would severely disrupt the solidarity among employees. 'Obviously, this considerably limited our possibilities as a young company. Still, a challenge is there to be tackled. So we persevered and did everything we could to turn temporary employment into a recognized and accepted concept.'

In 1961, the ABU was set up, the Dutch Federation of Private Employment Agencies. Frits Goldschmeding was one of the very first members of this association. The ABU fought the resisting trade unions and authorities

with their limiting rules and regulations that were based on a superseded social reality. A lot of lobbying and many meetings later, new legal frameworks were created, as well as new terms of delivery and codes of conduct. In 1971, Goldschmeding initiated a collective labor agreement. While many ABU members were still unwilling to talk to trade unions, Goldschmeding did enter into discussions with them. 'This was essential to become socially accepted and ensure the development of our sector.'

Also important was the realization that recognition was also determined by getting your own act together. That's why the temporary employment sector rapidly professionalized, including quality assurance, official training courses, and a thorough internal regulation. Goldschmeding: 'Providing perfect quality in everything we did was a precondition of survival. Among other things, this was one of the reasons I've always done my utmost to convince every branch manager to make sure that everything they did was perfect.'



Today, the temporary employment sector is no longer regarded as a problem, but rather as one of the solutions for a smoothly operating labor market. And Frits Goldschmeding will undoubtedly go down in history as the man who made the Dutch labor market flexible. He received important recognition of his efforts when, in 1985, he was appointed Knight in the Order of Orange Nassau for his role 'in the development of the temporary employment sector in general, and of Randstad in particular.' An exceptional feat, according to the former Minister of Social Affairs Jan de Koning, who pinned the decoration on his jacket: 'Private employment agencies have become a greatly valued part of society.' The later Minister of Economic Affairs, Hans Wijers, heightened the effect in 1998 when he stated: 'I am convinced that the development of the temporary employment sector has helped the Dutch economy become more competitive.'

'If all this resistance had not existed, we should have invented it ourselves,' Goldschmeding once said. Goldschmeding: 'It is this resistance that has stimulated us to do our very, very best. We competed with other private employment agencies, but we were forced to collaborate with them in drawing up guidelines that would ensure a healthy and correct rivalry. We strove to achieve top marks in all areas, in order to generate general respect. In the end, this greatly benefited the sector as a whole.'



## Randstad in society

Social acceptance of temporary employment has always been crucial to Randstad's development. In turn, a well-functioning Randstad greatly benefits society.

## standing up for the right to exist

As the 'inventor' of the Dutch private employment agency, Frits Goldschmeding spends many years justifying the existence of the phenomenon of temporary employment so that he can build up a successful business and continue to grow and expand. Using figures and statistics, he demonstrates the added value of flexible labor. He pays his temporary employees when they are ill or go on vacation. He harnesses the Federation of Private Employment Agencies (ABU) in the Netherlands to oppose the unreasonably limiting rules laid down by the government in their 1965 Private Employment Act (the TBA Act). Twenty-two lawsuits are entered into, involving even the Dutch Council of State, twenty-one of which are won by the temporary employment sector. In 1971, as chief negotiator, Goldschmeding succeeds in signing a collective labor agreement with the trade unions, giving temporary labor a social profile. Also at European and even global level, Randstad continues to fight for recognition of the private employment sector, for example by lobbying for amendments to the existing international convention. In the Netherlands, it isn't until 1977 that things finally seem to be changing for the better when the government sets up its own private employment agency called Start, aiming to combat the rapidly rising unemployment. This is the first time that temporary employment is considered a possible solution for the poorly operating labor market. In practice, however, Start mainly proves to be an example of unfair competition. But in 1982, recognition of the private employment sector is finally achieved when the Lubbers cabinet incorporates in the

Queen's speech that a more generous policy should be adopted regarding temporary employment. Together with a rapidly recovering economy, this recognition provides Randstad with the impetus to push forward. But the public debate about temporary employment and flexwork – a debate that is actually about the design of the social security system and how to create more jobs – is far from settled. In the 1990s for example, the temporary employment market is in danger of being halved by the memorandum Flexibility and Security, which aims to treat temporary employees in the same way as permanent ones. Eventually, the memorandum is dismissed, but the resulting scope for flexwork is abused by employers. Once again, the sector meets with resistance. It leads to the Dutch Work & Security Act, adopted in 2015, in which people with a temporary employment contract are given more rights. In fact, this is something that Randstad has already provided for many years, in the form of a growth model in which temporary employees build up more rights the longer they work. Over the years, the struggle for recognition leaves a mark on Randstad's development and growth potential. Nevertheless – the flexibilization of the labor market in the Netherlands, initiated by Goldschmeding, has caused a revolution regarding the nature of work and employment. But in other European countries and across the globe, flexible labor has been gaining ground as well. Today, we cannot imagine a world without flexworkers.

## good entrepreneurship

The fight for recognition provided the temporary employment sector with prestige and social standing. Entering into collective labor agreements, joining national and international trade associations, membership of the Dutch employers' federation VNO, collaboration with employment offices, and the temporary employment sector meeting the highest quality standards – all these milestones contribute to the sector's social acceptance. Goldschmeding, more than anybody else, is aware of the importance of this: a strong reputation will create opportunities for Randstad to develop. But his efforts aren't just pragmatic. They are also based on his vision of good entrepreneurship. To Goldschmeding, a company is a part of society as a whole. He sees his company as 'a partnership in which many groups are connected, both directly and indirectly'. And, as he formulated in his corporate philosophy in 1976: only if a company is able to simultaneously promote all interests of all parties involved, will the continuity of the company be assured. So, like any other company, private employment agencies must continuously strive to improve their operation. One of the ways to achieve this is to ensure a good legal position for temporary employees by means of a collective labor agreement. And by setting quality standards, regarding existing as well as new offices, whereby the latter should be supported by the knowledge of experienced branches. Training courses will also improve an agency's operation, as will career guidance given to temporary employees. Today it is still Randstad's absolute belief that running a business should always go hand in hand with responsible behavior toward society. Profit should only be a means to reach this end. A good reputation and the resulting social support are invaluable instruments to achieve these objectives.



Alex Mulder, founder of one of Randstad's competitors USG People, once said that he, with his virtuous Calvinistic background, worshipped two gods: God and Frits Goldschmeding, the god of temporary employment. The latter attended the same church as Mulder. One day after church – it was in the early 1970s – he mustered up all his courage and approached Goldschmeding to tell him that he'd set up a private employment agency too. 'Well, young man,' Goldschmeding said, 'in that case I have to disappoint you: the market has already been snapped up.' To Alex Mulder, this was just the stimulus he needed. And of course, Goldschmeding later said: 'That's why I said it.' Frits Goldschmeding fought in every way he could to get the Dutch labor market flexibilized and invited his competitors to join his efforts. Perhaps not merely through magnanimity but through his belief that every well-functioning private employment agency would contribute more to the social acceptance of temporary employment in general, thus opening up the market for Randstad. Internationally, Goldschmeding also endeavored to change public opinion about flexwork wherever he could. And the Flex Agreement (1996) which he helped achieve, the Dutch solution for creating a good balance between flexibility and security by making the temporary employee a regular part of



labor law, was adopted across Europe. Germany in particular, with its extremely rigid laws and sharp opposition between employers and trade unions, was closely monitoring the developments in the Netherlands. Gerhard Schröder, social-democratic candidate for the chancellorship at the time, even visited Randstad offices in Utrecht and Rotterdam in 1998. He personally met with Frits Goldschmeding to learn about the Dutch approach. And they kept in touch, even after he became the German Chancellor. The result: from 2001, he bravely introduced modifications to flexibilize the German labor market which were clearly inspired by the Dutch solution. His measures were not popular at the time and they cost him his re-election. But his successor Angela Merkel will undoubtedly have been very grateful to Schröder as she took advantage of the years of great prosperity that followed.



## ‘He shaped the social profile of temporary employment’

**Fred van Haasteren** | retired (worked for Randstad 1982 – 2012, executive vice president social and general affairs from 1990, then president CIETT from 2012 – 2015)

‘In the 1970s, the temporary labor market was still rather controversial. At the time I was with a research agency called Stichting Maatschappij en Onderneming. This agency had been set up by a number of progressive companies who wanted to emphasize the relationship between society and trade & industry. I had the opportunity to investigate the phenomenon of temporary employment, and that’s how I met Frits. In 1977, we published *Uitzendbureaus ter sprake* (‘Discussing Private Employment Agencies’), in which supporters and opponents of temporary employment were allowed to give their opinion. Frits went to the trouble of committing his soul to paper. Which was quite a task for him, because he’s a fast thinker. But in it, you find his business concept, his innermost feelings. Frits regarded temporary employment as a type of contracting, outsourcing of work. He stated that there was a need for it, because ‘management’ had become an extremely scarce production factor in the economy. To keep management easily manageable, in this increasingly complex world, a manager must be able to focus on the core process and leave matters of minor importance to others, who can turn these tasks into their own core process. This can eventually result in major companies with a leading market position and great advantages of scale, while flexibility increases as well.

Over the years, the social aspect was given more and more attention – Frits had always been a really social entrepreneur. Simultaneous

promotion of all interests – and the awareness that the crystal of truth has many facets – had been one of his convictions from the start. He was one of the first to contact trade unions in order to draw up a collective labor agreement for temporary employees and I’m proud of the fact that I’ve been able to second him in this process on many occasions. In 1982, I was appointed Manager Human Resources with Randstad Nederland. Later, I joined the holding. In the late 1980s, the holding was preparing to further internationalize. But I became particularly involved in public affairs and how to get temporary employment firmly anchored within the Dutch laws and regulations. And I negotiated with the trade unions. In the latter years, I was chairman of the global umbrella organization CIETT, having previously been chairman of the European Eurociett for many years. Frits has always been aware of the importance of shaping the social profile of temporary employment. And not just in the Netherlands. Globally, we have to deal with the international labor standards of the ILO, the International Labor Organization, which have been anchored in treaties. These standards were actually against temporary employment. It took a lot of time and effort to change this vision. It wasn’t until the late 1990s that the new Convention 181 was created. This convention laid down temporary employment as an acceptable business model. And that’s when the phenomenon really took off.

In many countries, the fear for exploitation and for undermining of trade unions still exists. And this results in limiting measures. We kept saying that temporary employment met an economic need and that it would lead to more work. You just had to make sure it was all done above board and in all fairness. In the 1990s, we had to fight really hard to turn Melkert’s Flexibility and Security memorandum into an Act in which temporary employment would be featured as an acceptable special labor agreement. If we hadn’t succeeded, we’d have had to offer all temporary employees a permanent contract, which would have cut the market by half. Incidentally, it also resulted in other types of flexwork which Lodewijk Asscher, the Dutch Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, now wants to restrict with his recent Work and Security Act. We’re now actually in a phase in which you find old discussions reappearing, also because the new flex types haven’t been regulated properly. This is obviously an important discussion, because it concerns how we organize the labor market together in terms of flexibility and security. That discussion is not only taking place here in the Netherlands, but all over the world. I rather think Frits would like to get actively involved in it again.’





‘He raised the whole sector to a level of respectability’

**Alexander Rinnooy Kan** | professor of Economics and Business, University of Amsterdam, member of the Dutch Senate

‘I first met Frits Goldschmeding at the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers VNO, in 1991. An imposing personality. And a lot of fun. He was interested in you, didn’t avoid discussions and would sometimes take up unexpected viewpoints. Original, provocative, yet always constructive – he always looked for the good in people. Very inspiring. We were very happy to have someone like him involved in our confederation. At the time, I’d been parachuted into the role of chairman of the VNO. As a professor, I had little access to trade & industry. So I needed people who were willing to share their vision of the VNO in Dutch society. Frits was more than willing to do so. And it wasn’t the manager or director talking to me, it was the person. A true entrepreneur. Not just busy running a major organization, but focused on his product. At the time, temporary employment was quite a new phenomenon and he raised the whole sector to a level of respectability. He had a great sense of corporate social responsibility at a time when nobody had heard of CSR yet. He wanted to make a constructive contribution to the Dutch economy – upgrade it, so to speak – and take it to a higher level. And he made sure that everyone knew of his plans. We all had great respect for his ideas on social responsibility. And he was given center stage because anything he came up with was incredibly successful. You need such people to convey the message and it becomes all the

more convincing if people also happen to be successful in business. Randstad has built up an important pillar of our economy. Thanks to Goldschmeding, we have discovered that a healthy labor market is a flexible one. He even managed to convince the trade unions of this. A major feat. He valued a constructive relationship with the trade unions. Trade unions around the world saw temporary employment as a threat to people with a permanent employment contract, but Goldschmeding never avoided this discussion. In fact, he made sure that a collective labor agreement was developed for private employment agencies. Rather a contradiction in terms, really. To me, Goldschmeding epitomized the way Dutch employers are always willing to enter into a dialogue. They regard employees as partners: people you must listen to and can learn from. In that respect, the Netherlands has a rather feminine culture: we don’t like to fight but prefer to compromise. We get along. It’s a formula that works. And Goldschmeding is the epitome of it. It’s one thing to set up a company that is pleasant to work for, but to turn it into a competitive international player as well – you have to be very clever indeed to achieve both.’

## the other side of the coin



The way Frits Goldschmeding sharpens his opinion is phenomenal. Many people who have worked closely with him will confirm this. Fred van Haasteren: ‘At the time, Marcel van Dam presented a television program called: *De achterkant van het gelijk* (‘The other side of the coin’) To Frits, every day was about the other side of the coin. When, in 1992, the takeover of Flex was within reach, he asked all his coworkers – including the coffee ladies – what they thought he should do. In the end, everyone concluded that he shouldn’t go through with it. The whole organization was against it. It involved a lot of money. Until he met the then CFO in the men’s room and exclaimed: “You want me to hold on to my money, but what will my money do then? If I don’t go through with it, my whole internationalization program will go down the drain!” And he did go through

with it. It was bizarre. The British lawyer who conducted the takeover process even ended up in hospital after having succumbed to the strain of the lengthy negotiations. But in the end, it proved to be the right decision. A golden deal, in fact. That was a great example of his entrepreneurial intuition.’ At Randstad, decisions often took a long time, because there was always the other side of the coin. That’s why Goldschmeding preferred to surround himself with brilliant minds who would challenge him. And he allowed himself to be convinced by their arguments. In practice, this could also mean that he would change his mind once again, frustrating his discussion partners who wondered who had advised him otherwise. And that too was the result of his natural tendency to constantly look at the other side of the coin, at alternative theories and

models, at the unexpected. As his successor Hans Zwarts once said: ‘Like every other person, I accepted the fact that a bus has two doors. But not Frits. He’d always be wondering why that was and look for reasons. And arguments to do it differently.’

And another thing – everyone will agree: Frits Goldschmeding wants to be proved right. No wonder he was always in for a bet. For example to boost performance (‘bet you can’t grow as fast’); bets he obviously loved to lose. But he also loved discussions in which he would be proved right – those were the bets he always won. And if he didn’t, he’d just come up with another one straightaway. Or he would deluge you with words, with so much persuasiveness and passion, that you would finally just acknowledge defeat. Joost Schriever, director international marketing, expressed it well in an interview for the Dutch daily newspaper *De Volkskrant*: ‘Which doesn’t mean that he actually was right. It’s just that he has the ability to create the impression that he knows all about everything. Ask him what time it is and he’ll explain about our solar system. And he’ll do it with great aplomb, as if he’s thinking on a totally different abstraction level. But when you think about it properly, sometimes you can shoot his theories full of holes. I’ve been at management meetings where he’d be lecturing about Kant and Schumpeter and our profession, and we’d get completely muddled within minutes. However, his passion was incredible and we’d give him a standing ovation afterwards. We thought: if you can think about these things like that, it’s an absolute honor to be able to work for you. Extremely inspiring.’



## ‘Frits always felt a sense of social commitment’

Eberhard van der Laan | mayor of Amsterdam

‘In January 2015, the new Randstad building was opened in Vijzelstraat in Amsterdam. The building also houses several startups. So in my opening speech, I referred to Frits Goldschmeding and how he made a success of his business, which he started up in an attic back in 1960. His story is a shining example of how a startup can grow. He’s done a lot for the Amsterdam economy.

I got to know Goldschmeding as a person who not only accepts people as they are, but who will also bring out the best in them. He knows how important it is for people to have work and, with Randstad, he helped a great many people find a job. They gained experience doing temporary jobs, or they found permanent employment this way. A great example of his social commitment is the Clipper Stad Amsterdam, which was built sixteen years ago by young job seekers who were able to use this project as an important stepping stone in their career. Moreover, such a good partnership between trade & industry and the authorities was something which had never been done before. This was another way in which he demonstrated his social commitment. That collaboration still continues today.

Frits has been a real Maecenas for our city. And there’s a lot more besides the Clipper. He supports the National Maritime Museum, the Hermitage, the Concertgebouw and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Rijksmuseum, the Amsterdam Cancer Center... it would be easier to list the things he doesn’t support.

Of course, we have honored him for his sense of responsibility. In 1998, we presented him with the Silver City Medallion, the Zilveren Stadspenning. And in 2013, I had the privilege of presenting him with the golden version, the Gouden Stadspenning, with which he joined the ranks of Mandela.

I know him well personally. We meet on a regular basis. He still feels very committed to Amsterdam. He’s a very special man, with a very special wife. Warm, welcoming and approachable people. You know you can count on Frits whenever you need him. And we did on several occasions – for example after that terrible tsunami in Japan, when Ajax wanted to play a benefit match to raise money for the victims but didn’t have enough money to cover the costs. He provided them with a loan. He took less than thirty seconds to decide. He’s always ready to help. As a mayor, that’s a comforting thought.’



## STOCK MARKET FLOTATION

# Becoming visible on the global market

The decision to float the company is just another step on the road to recognition. A step not prompted by the need for money, but by the desire – and the necessity – to become visible internationally and gain broad public support.



As Randstad evolves from a small boat into a supertanker, it's time to become visible on the global market: the company is floated. It's 1988 and Randstad has been market leader in the Netherlands for many years, but is 'only' fifth internationally, following Manpower, Kelly Services, Adia and Ecco. The first preparations are made to float the company, one of Frits Goldschmeding's most fervent wishes. 'Not to attract money,' Goldschmeding explains looking back. 'We didn't need that. As a matter of fact, we had excessive liquid assets. No, we especially wanted to increase our visibility. And receive recognition for our work. Many people had a distorted view of Randstad. The financial world, for example, had no idea of how big we were – they estimated our turnover to be 2 million, achieved by no more than a dozen offices. When in fact our turnover was already over 2 billion at the time! This made it very difficult for us to attract high-quality talent.' And Goldschmeding feels that the stock option plan, allowing employees to share in the success of the company, requires the flotation of the company as well. Although the Option Fund has enabled him to transfer 25 percent of his shares to his employees, a stock market flotation will help determine the real value of these options. 'We needed this benchmark to make the value of the stock option plan visible.'

After careful preparation, the gong is sounded on 5 June 1990. However, the introduction on the stock market is not an immediate success. The introduction quotation of 48 guilders proves too high. Institutional investors ignore the shares and the AMRO Bank is left with 2 million of the almost 4.5 million shares. There is great disappointment. The Board of Randstad openly reproach themselves, saying that 'obviously, we felt too big for our britches and were aiming too high with our introduction quotation'. The bank is blamed for not having done enough to present Randstad to the analysts. According to Fred van Haasteren, who had been responsible for the communication toward investors: 'The Randstad roadshows and the AMRO Bank just weren't good enough – and our story failed to convince people. There was a lot of misunderstanding. It was generally assumed that Goldschmeding was selling his business before the sector collapsed. Unthinkable to Goldschmeding, but who knew him well enough to understand the details? Yet the essence of the problem was that the phenomenon of temporary employment was still too vague. Frits had underestimated this problem. And we made the biggest mistakes one can make in such cases. For example: we'd put reporters and analysts in the same room. That's asking for trouble: whenever an analyst asks a question, reporters immediately assume



something fishy. Frits' idealist story that he wasn't doing it for the money but purely for the company's reputation just wasn't bought.'

When a young Dutchman from Goldman Sachs finally does understand it and openly sides with Randstad, he single-handedly manages to turn the tide. Randstad's shares are given a tremendous boost. And the excellent results during the early 1990s drive up the value even further. The employees watch their options rise in value by ten, twenty, thirty percent, and the stock option

*'We also needed this flotation to make the value of the stock option plan visible'*

plan becomes the success that Goldschmeding had in mind after all. By floating the company, Randstad achieves its goals on all fronts. And more, as Frits Goldschmeding will confirm: sailing a lone ship is rather different from participating in a regatta. 'This competitive ingredient has done us a world of good. It's what everybody needs, really. Whether you are a manager or a member of the office staff: a challenge will give you a lot of energy.'

And if you think Randstad changed under the pressure of shareholders, think again. Remember the firmly anchored Randstad culture. Moreover, Goldschmeding is still principal shareholder. Maximization of profit just for the benefit of shareholders is still unthinkable, even in the years following the flotation. Leo Lindelauf, member of the Board of Directors between 2001 and 2015: 'We've always said: we are running a company, not a share price. Of course, it's great that Frits is still our principal shareholder – he'll always be able to oppose any flippancy and short-term thinking. So we don't feel the pressure of the analysts to any great extent. We take care of all of our stakeholders, not just the shareholders. Everyone is given honest information and the opportunity to get involved. But no decisions are taken merely to push up the share price. First priority has been and always will be the continuity of the company. It affects everything we think and do.'





growth

shaping the **global**  
labor market

*‘You need to grow because that’s the best way you can fulfill the interests of all parties involved’*



In 1960, Frits Goldschmeding created a market that did not yet exist and he started up a company to meet its needs. Today, over half a century later, Randstad has become so huge that it’s now one of the leaders of the global market for staffing and recruiting. And it will continue to be of consequence for many years to come. This second largest full-service HR organization in the world is consistently growing and shows a matching impressive value on the stock exchange. ‘And still,’ Goldschmeding says, ‘I feel that Randstad is still too small. Because the bigger you are, the better you are able to efficiently manage costs. And the more you can achieve as a result.’ And thus he makes it clear that growth has never been a goal in itself. ‘But growth is necessary to achieve our goals. You need to grow because that’s the only way you can fulfill the interests of all parties involved. Everyone benefits when a company does well: employees gain more security and more opportunities to develop themselves, you attract more high-quality talent, enabling you to serve clients more effectively. The entire

labor market will thrive as a result. Even our competitors benefit from the fact that we raise the image of temporary employment to a whole new level.'

From the very start, Goldschmeding proved to be steady on course and Randstad grew fast and consistently. Thanks to his ideas and ability to put them into practice. Taking control of the circumstances – with vision and passion, he defended the image of temporary employment against a hostile government – and taking control of the organization, which he set up 'as a monastic order, leading a great many people by way of short management structures'. He combined these factors with the vision that growth can only be sustainable if it is autonomous and gradual. 'If you add a few new candidates every day, you'll soon have 500 thousand on your books.' Convinced that the temporary employment market would grow by itself when Randstad produced top results, Goldschmeding chose to serve the market with a proven, infinitely



self-copying concept. 'Our investment is in knowledge, you accumulate know-how and its acquisition costs a lot. These costs had to be shared by as many branch offices as possible.' So successful units were split up and duplicated into several units, led by people he could trust and who had absolute belief in Randstad's philosophy and corporate culture. 'This gives you the scale and the volume you need to become a successful player.'

Goldschmeding used the lily pad model for Randstad's growth: first you fill a pool with water lilies and you don't swim in new pools until the previous one has filled up. Goldschmeding: 'You have to continuously look at the critical size of the activities. What is the optimum size that will allow you to perform your tasks well? When we first went abroad, in 1965, we didn't do it because the Dutch market was saturated, but because there weren't enough opportunities for temporary employment outside of the urban areas at that time. You'd need at least

1 percent of Dutch workers to be employed on a temporary basis before it would be profitable to expand further in the Netherlands. In cities like Brussels and Antwerp and later also cautiously in bigger cities in the UK, Germany and France, we were soon able to achieve a small turnover.'

Autonomous growth and the lily pad model are still the basis for the huge international expansion that Randstad has undergone in recent years, although a number of acquisitions have also taken place – including even a few major ones. Not every acquisition proved successful, which brings us back to the value of Goldschmeding's growth model: if you go too fast, the organization will not be able to keep up.

Goldschmeding: 'Even while I was in charge, we sometimes made the wrong decision. For example, between 1983 and 1985, we were growing by 60 percent a year; among other things because we'd bought Tempo-Team. And it turned out we couldn't handle this. I had to send my best

managers to other companies and we were left with very few employees who had more than two years' experience. The Randstad feeling was being watered down. It turned out all right in the end, but it had cost us a lot of money and effort. We learned a lot from this experience.'

And there turns out to be a limit to the continuous duplication of the existing success formula. In today's market, it's no longer merely about temporary employment, but about offering a complex range of services. Moreover, cultural differences between countries require a different approach than the Dutch one, as well as specific interpretations of the proven success formula. 'But there are many opportunities for further growth. In a number of countries, Randstad is a relatively minor player. And there are many new occupational groups and service concepts that will help Randstad to grow. You just can't force things. If you take it slow, you can continue to offer quality. And when you do, the possibilities are endless.'



## roadmap to the top

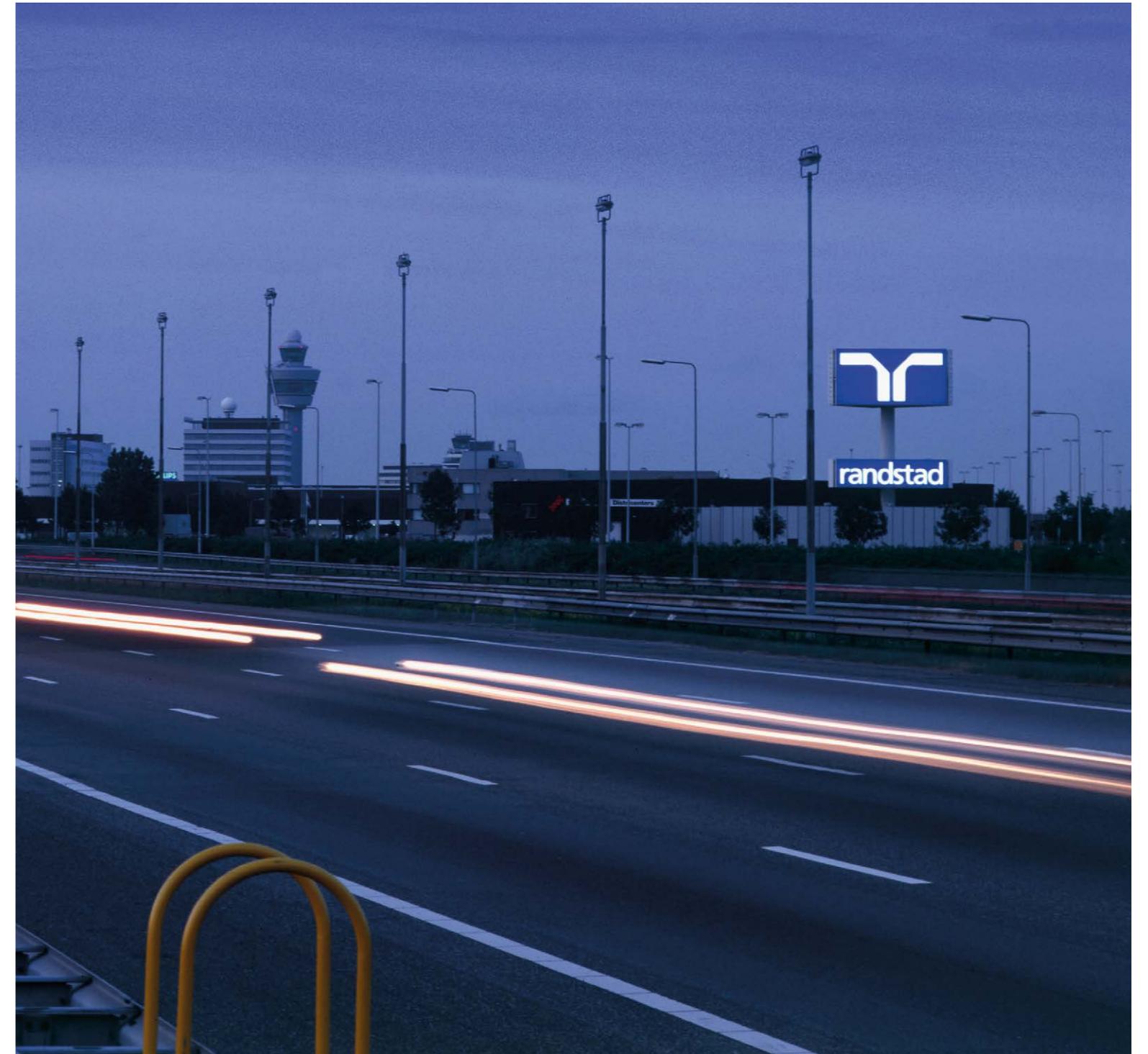
From a single office in Amsterdam to over 4500 branch offices around the world. Growth has been a constant factor throughout Randstad's existence. And the end is not yet in sight.

## the growth model

The stronger the philosophy and culture of Randstad, the better people know what is expected of them. This is – in brief – the principle applied by Frits Goldschmeding to ensure the growth of his organization. The fact that growth is necessary is beyond dispute. Growth is necessary to ensure the continuity of the company, to attract high-quality talent and offer them opportunities for personal development, and to become a major player. One that makes a difference. Goldschmeding has always systematically stimulated growth. It all starts with selecting and training the right people. People who are all going in the same direction. Nearly every manager started their career as a consultant in a branch office and learned how to perfectly apply the company's services in practice. The Randstad philosophy and culture are instilled in every single employee. Every branch office becomes a concentric circle: the best people go on to start up new units, helping the company to expand. Divide, duplicate, grow, and divide once again. Thus the know-how acquired by Randstad, which took such a lot of time and energy to gain, is spread across as many branch offices as possible in a very logical way.

When there's no more room to expand temporary employment activities locally, the lily pad strategy is applied: you look to other pools to plant and grow your water lilies. Again, according to the same growth model of Randstad's key figures, who set up new units and imbue these with the Randstad culture. The same model applies to takeovers: there should always be plenty of Randstad people to help incorporate the new into the organization party in an organic way. Goldschmeding is quite clear about it: if you

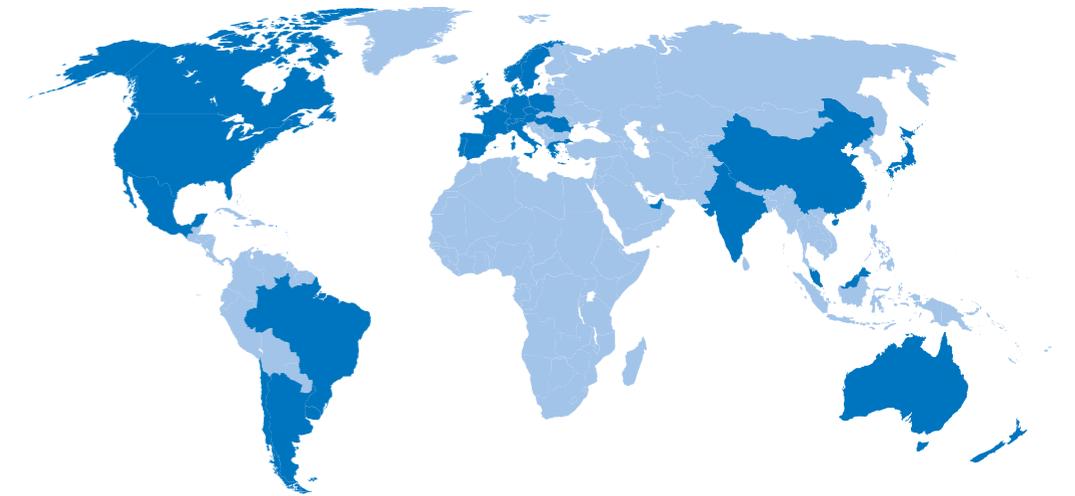
don't have enough people for this, don't even think about it. It would cost too much time, money and energy to get all the new people in line with your philosophy. This also demonstrates the limits to growth: if the growth is more than 15 – 20 percent, a shortage of management and expertise will arise. There must also be enough common ground, so that the party taken over will be able to offer the same high quality of services within a reasonable period of time. This way, one huge army will be created, with soldiers all going in the same direction. An army that can be led via very short management lines. This principle still applies in Randstad today. The world has changed, there are sometimes great cultural differences between countries that demand a specific approach, the range of services has become far more diverse than the mere provision of temporary employment – yet the basis is still formed by the smallest entity: the unit. These units are still managed individually, rather than averaging all units. In the meantime, based on Goldschmeding's principle of dividing and duplicating units, Randstad has become very successful at standardizing services and copying proven concepts from one market to another, supported by the specialized market know-how demanded by today's global economy.





## global expansion

In 1965, Randstad opens its first foreign branch office, in Belgium. Followed in 1967 by the UK, in 1968 by Germany and in 1973 by France. Meanwhile, the organization is steadily growing at home in the Netherlands. One office after another appears in the Dutch shopping streets. In 1991, the 500th Randstad branch is opened. Shortly after, in 1993, Randstad crosses the Atlantic to establish in the US. Branch offices follow in countries across the world, including Spain, Denmark, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Italy, Portugal, Greece, Poland, Sweden, China and India. In 2007, one year before Frits Goldschmeding steps down, Randstad's thousandth branch office is opened. This international expansion did not proceed particularly smoothly. Apart from Belgium, the foreign adventures are not initially very profitable and in the 1970s it is decided to put them on the backburner and concentrate on reinforcing the Dutch basis. Until the early 1990s, the Dutch operating companies form the backbone of the Randstad Group, generating three quarters of the company's turnover. One of the reasons why Randstad initially has trouble making headway abroad is the resistance against temporary employment that still exists in many countries. Just like in the Netherlands, it will take years before laws and regulations finally do away with the illegal aura that seems to cling to the temporary employment sector. Another cause is the series of recessions, like the one in the early 1980s. And finally, a certain lack of familiarity with the local situation plays a role: the idea that a smoothly operating Dutch concept will automatically prove as successful abroad does not prove to work in practice. Adjustments are needed before it can be rolled out in other countries. The implicit basis for Randstad's success is not necessarily present in other countries, for example due to a different work culture or if the market position



does not match Randstad's market-leader strategy. It isn't until the early 1990s that the internationalization really takes off. Besides organic growth, the opportunity is created to facilitate growth by acquisition. Through acquisitions of existing organizations, a strong position can be built up within a relatively short period of time. The takeover of Flex, for example, in 1992, a company that operates in many European countries, helps Randstad to a second position on the European market. However, after Frits Goldschmeding retires in 1998, his successor Hans Zwarts overstretch himself in the US: the chain of private employment offices Strategix Solutions, with its 300 branches, proves very difficult to integrate and puts a great strain on Randstad. But when Zwarts steps down in 2001, he aptly states in his parting speech that, while he had been in charge, Randstad 'has evolved from a Dutch player with foreign offices into a multinational with a strong position in its home market.' Randstad has learned its lesson: don't attempt too many changes within too short a period of time,

because this will cause the company's division of head and heart. That's why, during the first decade of this century, Frits Goldschmeding's strong basic principles are reinstated by the new CEO Ben Noteboom, albeit with modifications to match the international context. The new building blocks are: strong concepts (the different services), high-quality employees (with the consultant at the heart of the enterprise), excellent execution (striving for perfection by standardizing processes) and superior brands (with Randstad as the main global brand). In the years that followed, Randstad succeeds on the basis of this strong foundation in achieving tremendous growth – on average, three countries are added each year – and a structurally superior performance compared to the competition's. With the acquisition of the temporary employment giant Vedior in 2008, which operates in more than fifty countries, Randstad becomes a true global player; in fact, the second largest temporary employment organization in the world.

# diversification and innovation

Despite the excellent logics applied by Frits Goldschmeding to develop Randstad, step by step, into a major player, there have been times when things haven't gone so well at all. In the early 1970s, Randstad chooses to diversify. In addition to providing temporary employment to office staff, it taps into the cleaning and security sectors. In 1978, Randstad Holding is established and each of the activities is provided with its own division. The thought behind this diversification is not just to spread the risks, but also to present a wider range of employment opportunities. Until then, the temporary employment sector has mainly focused on young people, while the cleaning and security sectors were open to employees from all age groups. Still, the idea of diversification never really takes off. Which is not surprising, really, since these sectors do not fit in with Goldschmeding's army. The growth model driven by the corporate culture just doesn't work there. The culture of many of the acquired cleaning and security organizations do not match Randstad's and the organization is unable to make them fit in.



In 2001, a few years after Goldschmeding's retirement, the poorly paying divisions are sold, allowing the organization to fully focus on its core activity: matching supply and demand on the labor market. Innovation rather than diversification of core activities ultimately ensures the strong growth of Randstad of recent years. Led by Ben Noteboom, and later by Jacques van den Broek, the company develops from a classic private employment agency into a full-service

HR organization covering all target groups and sectors. Under different labels, Randstad now presents the full range of services to clients around the world – from temporary employment, inhouse services, recruitment & selection and payroll solutions, to strategic HR consultancy and full-service recruitment solutions. As a result, Randstad has become what Goldschmeding had always envisaged: a company playing a central role in the world of work.

## Goldschmeding's economic forecasts

Whether it was his unerring sense of timing or a clever interpretation of economics – the entrepreneur Frits Goldschmeding always knew when to make new investments in the Netherlands. When, during a recession, the competition decided to lay off people and wait patiently until the economy recovered, Goldschmeding was quick to hire new people. After all, when the market improved and requests once again flooded in, you had to be ready.

The outside world concluded that Randstad was apparently able to predict the future. Like a canary in the coalmines, they assumed Randstad could feel a top year coming after years of economic slump before anybody else could. Yet Goldschmeding was able to perfectly underpin his economic barometer. Thanks to the weekly job sheets he received from all subsidiaries, he was well provided with financial data. By processing these in logarithmic graphs, he obtained strategically useful information and indications of future market developments. In addition, he analyzed economic fluctuations covering many years and noted patterns that correlated with the demand for temporary employees. For example, he knew that the economy would soon be recovering if the length of the contracts increased. Employers would then employ their temporary staff for a longer period of time. And as the economy slowed down, employers became more cost conscious and would cut down on temporary staff. As a result, Goldschmeding knew exactly when to step on the brakes and when to accelerate.

Fred van Haasteren, HR Manager at Randstad Nederland at the time, was taken by surprise during the crisis of 1982 when he was told to hire new managers. 'The first thing I needed to do, as a personnel manager, was to lay

off thirty people – something Frits absolutely loathed. But while I was right in the middle of this, he stormed in and shouted: "You have to hire ten managers! Now!" He had a perfect sense of timing and patterns – he knew in advance when demand would soon be rising again. He is highly quantitative. He is no econometrician – that specialty had yet to be invented – but he could very well have been one.'

In 1997, Goldschmeding entered into yet another bet, this time with economist Bert de Groot, one of the members of the board of Randstad at the time. According to Goldschmeding, you could predict, on the basis of his data and analyses, that 2000 would be a top year, followed by a slight decline in 2001, and that things would improve once again by 2004. His prediction was spot-on. And that inspired Bert de Groot to base his thesis on Randstad's temporary employment data and the proven predictive quality of the temporary employment sector in the Netherlands regarding economic cycles. De Groot developed the Econometric Institute Current Indicator of the Economy (EICIE). This study of economic indicators is continued today in the project *Conjunctuur – Business Indicators* ('Market Trends and Business Indicators'), which is performed by Erasmus Quantitative Intelligence (E.Q.I.), one of the programs supported by the Goldschmeding Foundation voor Mens, Werk en Economie ('Goldschmeding Foundation for Man, Work, and Economy', see page 154). Based on the belief that public interest is greatly served by the accurate prediction of economic instability and, as a result, better control of it, this program focuses on the search for indicators that may help predict approaching crises or help protect the economy against external influences. Still, Frits Goldschmeding's successors have commented on his macroeconomic forecasts on a few occasions. For example, they say that the company has grown too big for this: globalization



involves many more unforeseeable factors than was the case in the economic context of earlier decades. Robert Jan van de Kraats, current CFO of Randstad, points out that Dutch business today only represents around 15 percent of the overall turnover. 'Frits Goldschmeding's many years of experience in the Netherlands cannot automatically be copied onto a global scale. And certain segments in the economy may – temporarily – act differently. For example, the crisis showed a peak for call centers in banks. In the end, it's all about agility and the ability to rapidly move with the trends in micro markets and micro segments in almost forty countries.' Robbin Brugman, currently managing director group business Concept Development, also mentions the importance of keeping a close eye on the costs. 'In the old days, Goldschmeding could afford to accept a lower profit in the short term in order to invest in the long term. He could afford to employ more people than he needed because he was convinced that the economy would soon improve.' Goldschmeding's anticipation has now been replaced by an adaptive system that has been

rolled out across the globe. Goldschmeding's successors at Randstad have considerably invested in this. Robert Jan van de Kraats: 'It has already proven its value. While the economy was booming until 2007, we managed to make timely investments. And in 2008 and 2009, when the economy contracted, we were able to quickly respond to the deteriorating market circumstances. Since then, the system has supported day-to-day business management and the continuous adaptation of organizations in various countries.'

Finally, a remarkable outcome of Bert de Groot's study of economic indicators: the individual cycles that he determined – alternatingly 5.2 and 10.58 years – not only allowed him to make long-term forecasts, they also came very close indeed to the mathematic Fibonacci series (see page 109). Obviously, this did not surprise Goldschmeding in the least.

Robert Jan van de Kraats | CFO and vice chairman of the board of directors



‘Think big – no thinking is ever big enough where Frits is concerned’

‘Frits had already been gone as CEO three years when I came to Randstad in 2001. The company was not doing well at the time. 60 percent of its turnover was achieved outside of the Netherlands, but the Dutch division was making more profit than the group as a whole. Randstad’s reputation was mediocre and several people had even warned me against accepting this position. But I was 41 at the time and was presented an attractive offer to join the board of directors of a listed company. I could see many opportunities. I met Frits during the selection procedure and after I was hired he showed me the ropes. I ‘d never met him before, but in the two-year process during which I visited him on many occasions, I got to know him as an inspiring mentor. His knowledge was based on a great many years of experience, first in a small company, later in a medium-sized one and finally, in a leading multinational. His tutoring has given me great joy. And still does. Frits is one of the few people who were able to keep converting their business model in such a way that it worked in a wider environment without running aground. He clung onto processes for a long time – “this is how we do things”. Later, he looked for culture – a way of thinking and acting – in order to keep everything under control and continue to grow. During the internationalization, things got rather stuck. There was a lack of international experience at Randstad. From its head office in Diemen, the Netherlands, the rest of the world was approached in a very Dutch way. For example: when Frits

took over TempForce in the US in 1993, he stood in front of his troops and explained how the system of bonuses and commissions would be replaced by a higher basic salary plus a profit-sharing system. A good idea, from an intellectual point of view. And today we know that he was right. But how were we to change the American mentality at the time? Americans still believe in a system of bonuses, commissions and targets. That’s how things work. It took us a long while to set things straight again. And another example: the managers who were sent abroad were very Dutch indeed: they wanted to implement a system they knew to be successful back home. And that just didn’t work. Because the cultural differences are often immense. When a new board of directors was instated in 2001, first with Cleem Farla as CEO, succeeded by Ben Noteboom, and including members like Leo Lindelauf, Jim Reese and myself, we were seriously wondering where we were missing the boat. Under the leadership of Noteboom, the board of directors reintroduced a number of things from Frits’ time, adjusted to suit the new, international situation. For example, the basics of our company were reformulated as four international building blocks. Our processes form the first building block. Processes are much easier to convey than culture. In other words: how do you organize the work of a consultant, how do you approach candidates and clients, how do you serve a client (at the office or inhouse), how do you organize a branch office, and do clients

pay for their services? All these matters were standardized as best practices in *strong concepts*. Which could be rolled out across the globe. Just like Frits used to do things: think something up, try it out, and subsequently implement it across the nation. The second building block was based on this: *excellent execution*. The building blocks *best people* and *superior brands* go back to the times when everyone was aware of the fact that everything had to be of the highest possible quality; this awareness was also retrieved from the past. Using these four strategic pillars, we were able to make the company successful once again. And a relevant part of this is based on Frits’ ideas. One thing that is very different, however, is the fact that we switched from organic growth to a combination of organic growth and growth by acquisition. A takeover the size of Vedior was needed to raise our company to the next strategic level. Frits’ views about growth had been formed in a different time and context. I am sure he realizes the importance and necessity of the takeovers. Take the digitization process.

Considering our gigantic size internationally – today, the turnover in the Netherlands represents only 15 percent of the overall turnover – the intricate system Frits had come up with concerning macro-economic planning was no longer feasible. He had originally organized his company around these macro-economic plans, whereby investments were made anticyclically. We switched to quickly responding locally to up-to-the-minute detail data from the organization. An almost instant response. We developed a standardized approach for this as well. This helped us enormously during our years of growth, as well as during the crisis in 2008 – 2009. What has been Frits’ most important legacy? The ability to think without limits. Think big – no thinking is ever big enough where Frits is concerned. And think fundamentally as well – make sure you know all the details of all the facts. This is reflected by the building blocks: thinking in concepts, in best practices that allow us to learn from each other. And a great focus on stakeholders. Frits has really institutionalized long-term thinking.’



**Leo Lindelauf** | retired (worked for Randstad 1979 – 2015, member of the board of directors from 2001)



‘Frits always knew how to maintain the drive and continue to grow’

‘In 2008, we acquired Vedior – a major acquisition. Every one of us in the Board of Directors owned Randstad shares at the time and we all lost money in the short term as a result of this takeover. But we were all just thinking about the deal we were about to close. It was so important and would be so good for our future – these were the aspects that drove us. Continuity. And not short-term profit. That’s what Randstad is all about.

Thirty years ago, I came to Amsterdam from Maastricht after setting up a couple of branch offices there. I knew Frits from way back – Operation Classic – and I still remember the impact he made in the Limburg office. He’d take people by the shoulders and ask them: how many units do you think you can accommodate here? Just by asking that question, he got people focused on growth, made everybody aware of the possibilities. He carried an attractive briefcase, filled with classic items that consultants could present to clients when they visited them. He was just like a missionary preaching his gospel with a bag full of mirrors and beads. His view on visiting clients and motivating people – his results orientation – matched my own vision completely. You had to perform, but you were supported all the way. Enterprise in community.

Frits always wanted to maintain that drive – to keep moving and growing. With respect for history and for the principles. That’s a nice balance. Why throw everything you’ve learned

away when you move on? People shouldn’t have to keep reinventing the wheel. Give them some baggage and let them use that knowledge and baggage to take their own steps. A toolbox containing knowledge, as well as spiritual items, such as to know, to serve and to trust. Tell them to use this toolbox to find their own way. It’s a method that can be copied anywhere and everywhere! From the US to Japan and India. It’s like an anthem we sing together and which is alive. That’s our great strength. I’ve worked abroad for around fourteen years in all. Obviously there are cultural differences in the nearly forty countries where we operate. And, of course, we can’t just copy and paste the successful Dutch Randstad concept in each of these countries. We always sent Dutch people abroad to set up new offices. Well trained executives who could roll out our model. That gives you concentric circles. But there are disadvantages – a German or an Italian is very different from a Dutchman. So that growth did involve growing pains. From that, we’ve learned that we need to interpret the Dutch model into a local version. You have to look at different markets through different glasses. But we’ve always stuck to our principles. I mean, you can’t be slightly pregnant. You either are or you aren’t.’



**Marcel Wiggers** | CEO and chairman Randstad Japan



‘Our philosophy proved an important connecting factor here’

‘I’m a typical Randstad person: I started as a temporary employee, then I became a consultant. I worked in the Netherlands for around ten years and was subsequently posted abroad. In my case, Italy. In 2004, Ben Noteboom called me. They felt I was the adventurous type, because I’d crossed Africa on my motor-bike, and since Randstad intended to establish a base in Asia, they came up with the plan for me to set up a Japanese subsidiary. So that was the ‘business plan’.

After a few months of research, I discovered that Japan represented a major and very interesting market, where we would do well to establish our own branch office. Ben said: ‘Go ahead’, and that was business plan 2. Assisted by eight people, I opened our first Japanese office in Tokyo, and I took my time investigating the possible success factors in Japan. To the surprise of many, there was an existing market for temporary employees. Most people think of Japan as the country of lifelong employment, where you work for the same company from graduation to the grave. However, Japan is one of the largest global markets for our types of services. We quickly grew to around eighty coworkers. That’s when I started looking for takeover partners and building up relationships. After four years of karaoke, we were able to take over a family business ten times our size and started to integrate it.

Philosophy proved to be the connecting factor. People recognized the long-term focus, some-

thing that’s very important in Japan. Japan is a country that seeks harmony. Everyone belongs a group. You’re not just in it for yourself, you take care of each other. So simultaneous promotion of all interests is a very attractive concept here. And finally, our striving for perfection. The Japanese love perfection. We now have around one hundred branch offices and Randstad’s core values adorn every wall. They even start the day quoting these core values aloud! They’ve really embraced Goldschmeding’s philosophy. And you can see that: the Randstad house style is applied everywhere. Goldschmeding’s principles have really helped me establish a firm foundation in this country. I also helped set up offices in China, Australia and Hong Kong. Everything’s quite different there – our philosophy doesn’t really appeal to the people there. You can’t just copy the Dutch success formula. That’s why you need managers who are culturally sensitive. Even here in Japan, where I’ve been managing the offices for ten years, I understand perhaps half of what is going on. Decision-making processes are different. People express themselves differently. You have to recognize that. If you don’t, your best-laid plans will come to nothing. I suspect we may have exported too many Dutchmen in the past who thought they knew it all.’

*As of 1 January 2017, Marcel Wiggers no longer works for Randstad.*



## ‘Goldschmeding’s mental legacy is still tangible in the very core of our work’

**Ron Bosma** | managing director Randstad Sourceright EMEA

‘At Randstad Sourceright, we carry out recruitment, talent management and management of all flexworkers within a company, on a European scale. This is quite new to Randstad – it represents a totally different type of service from the traditional provision of temporary employment that has made Randstad great. Goldschmeding had retired by this time. On one occasion, we took him to Philips in Drachten so that we could explain what this service entailed, but he didn’t seem very interested. He was more interested in the people who worked there, how long they’d been in the plant, that kind of thing. His old field.

They say that Frits Goldschmeding took quite a long time before he was ready to adopt innovations. Like the fax, for example. And digitization. As for him, he’ll be quick to tell you that it was his staff who had cold feet. But one thing’s for sure: some developments went against his views on client relations. He’d listen to you, but he would have little to do with it. He just went his own way. We certainly weren’t the most innovative company in the world. But that was often because he wanted you to think carefully about something. If you wanted to change something, you had to come up with strong arguments. One thing I’ve learned though: no matter how long Randstad blocked new plans, once the decision was made to go ahead, things happened very fast. And then we’d be leading the market again in no time.

Goldschmeding’s talent was to standardize all processes, so that they could be implemented quickly in times of growth. It’s a talent we haven’t lost. And his mental legacy is still tangible in the very core of our work. That core is simple: it’s service provision. The tools may have changed, but if you look at the core, if reaching the client continues to be the goal, then it still works, even today.

He’s certainly left his mark. Setting up your own branch office may have felt like running your own store, but you were still doing things Frits’ way. He had great powers of persuasion. I remember my first central meeting, on 1 November 1986, which had been organized in a tent accommodating one thousand people. The organization was rather confused by the rapid growth. Goldschmeding stood up and told his story – and I noticed many people near me had tears in their eyes. He received a fifteen minute standing ovation. I thought: what on earth is this? People applauding and crying about a speech? But it was the passion that he emanated. He made people feel they had a future. And then at the end of the meeting, we were all presented a little bag containing 111 guilders and 86 cents: 11/1/86 – November 1, 1986. The effect was incredible. He’d stir emotions and make you feel a part of this family where things were done for the client and for each other. We were so proud to be a part of it all. Very clever, really – it didn’t cost him much, but we all worked doubly hard as a result.’

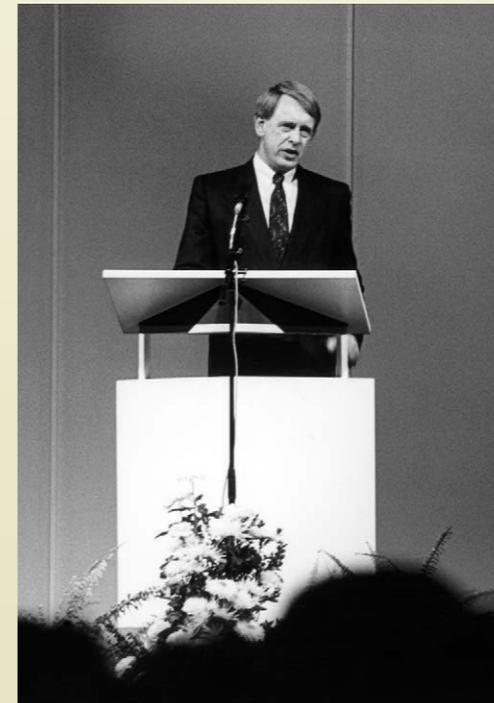
## charismatic speeches

Frits Goldschmeding’s status is almost like that of a movie star – employees, past and present, adore him. That’s because he always managed to inspire and motivate them. One of the ways he did that was by organizing huge meetings at which he would passionately convey his belief in a successful future to his employees. As he put it himself: ‘I just sometimes had to be charismatic and tell them an appealing story.’

Which is necessary, for example, when the tremendous growth of the 1980s has left the organization slightly confused. It’s all too fast: turnover of staff is high, the Randstad feeling is eroding and there’s a lot of unrest. The employees’ questions are gathered and they are all invited to come to Diemen on Saturday 1 November 1986 to learn what the answers were. In a packed tent, erected on the site where the future head office will be built, Goldschmeding addresses his people for more than an hour. He explains things, sets minds at rest, emphasizes everything that Randstad should be proud of, and at the end of his glowing speech, he divulges the slogan of the new advertising campaign: *Randstad houdt niet van half werk* (‘Randstad does not like a job half done’). The effect is enormous: the employees give him a standing ovation and their spirit is euphoric. At the end of the meeting, everybody is presented with a walkman – symbolizing the new era – and a check with a value of 111.86 guilders – the date in cash – to compensate for the half-weekend they have

forfeited in order to attend this meeting. The old feeling of solidarity is back. In fact, the organization has new vigor: everybody is ready to set their shoulder to the wheel, together.

And just before Randstad is floated on the stock market a few years later, the entire workforce is again invited to gather in Diemen for another fantastic experience. From all over the country, employees are picked up in buses and driven to the new head office, which is still under construction. Traditional Dutch refreshments await them in the bare rooms. Afterwards, the entire group – numbering around 1500 people – takes the metro to Amsterdam Central Station. Damrak – the Wall Street of Amsterdam – has been cleared and through the colorful colonnade adorned with Randstad banners, the group is led to the Stock Exchange, where they are welcomed by Goldschmeding, who treats them to an impassioned speech about the flotation. With his unique fervor, he explains the background, highlights the impact of a flotation and its significance for the stock option plan for employees. It is a historic gathering for the employees, who once again gave up their free Saturday. This time, their compensation is a discman – the very latest gadget – but, actually, no compensation was needed. The employees have drunk in Goldschmeding’s words and are exuberant. They are all looking forward to a bright future.



## OLYMPIC FLAME IN AMERICA

# From minor player to global brand

Anyone targeting an international top position in the temporary employment sector needs the US. But as market leader of the Netherlands, how do you conquer the home market of the largest temporary employment organizations in the world? The 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta presents Randstad with unprecedented opportunities.



In 1969, Frits Goldschmeding goes on his first exploratory journey to New York. For an entrepreneur for whom big is never big enough, the United States are an irresistible challenge. But securing a position in this land of endless opportunities is like a very distant dream at the time. Goldschmeding is still struggling with the rapid growth his company has been undergoing in the Netherlands and Europe.

As it turns out, Randstad does not expand globally until after his retirement in 1998. Still, some twenty years after Goldschmeding's first visit to the US, the first steps are taken in that country while Frits Goldschmeding is still in charge.

In 1992, the country is still high on his wish list. After all, in order to become a global player, you need a strong position in the domestic market of major competitors like Manpower and Kelly. In Europe, Randstad has a strong second position in the market and there are ample liquid assets. Goldschmeding believes that the time has come to cross the Atlantic.

Member of the Board Erik Vonk is assigned to explore the possibilities. A year later, in 1993, Atlanta, Georgia, is chosen as home base to conquer the market. This is a strong economic center, with many high-quality service providers, in a region where the ongoing recession is showing the most promising chances of recovery. Ten million dollars are invested in the takeover of the



local private employment agency TempForce – an organization with twelve offices, a workforce of ninety, and a turnover of 22 million dollars – and the first Randstad flag is planted in American soil. Six months later, Randstad expands its presence into neighboring state Tennessee when it acquires Jane Jones Enterprises. By mid-1994, Randstad Staffing Services owns 32 offices and has a modest turnover of 30 million euros. Every day, around 5500 temporary employees are deployed.

How should a minor player position itself in this strongly competitive market as a global brand with great potential? The opportunity arises when the Olympic Games are held in Atlanta in 1996. Randstad seizes it with both hands. A contract is entered into with the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games to provide temporary employees, with the promise to help these temps obtain jobs after the end of the Games. A dream deal: Randstad is given global exposure as sponsor of this large-scale sports event as well as being an expert in arranging temporary work. Goldschmeding himself experiences one of his finest hours when, in full view of the world, he is unexpectedly given the Olympic Flame to carry for two kilometers through Nashville towards the Olympic stadium. In 1996, Randstad is omnipresent as Official



*With 16000 temporary employees, Randstad is omnipresent at the Olympic Games*

Staffing Service of the Centennial Olympic Games, with sixteen thousand temporary employees on the books. The organization provides administrative and technical personnel, bus drivers, translators, catering people, cleaners, IT specialists and managers. All temporary workers are clearly recognizable in their blue polo shirts featuring the name and logo of Randstad. No advertising is allowed at the Olympic Games, but the Randstad Public Information Booths that appear everywhere boost its visibility. Moreover, Randstad is allowed to use the Olympic logo in its own advertising campaigns.

Of the 15 million dollars that Randstad has invested in the Games, 3 million are immediately recouped. But the real profit is in the brand awareness – in Atlanta alone, this grows from 15 to nearly 99.5 percent – and in the tens of thousands of new contacts to be entered into the American subsidiary's database.

Big companies in the region have had an amazing introduction to Randstad and the way Randstad does business. Randstad is on the map outside America too: around 4.5 billion people have been watching the Games on television. And as Goldschmeding observed at the

time: 'Every day, they spotted the name of Randstad among the credit titles.' The Olympic Games of 1996 also mark the beginning of strong relationships with top-class sports, which would last until beyond the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro twenty years later. A logical relationship: Randstad and top athletes find each other in their striving for perfection. As partner of NOC\*NSF, for example, Randstad contributes to the sports world both financially and with knowledge. Its programs help thousands of top athletes find a job during or after their sports career and support the professionalization of sports federations. Randstad also sponsors individual athletes, like Dutch snowboarder Nicolien Sauerbrey and hockey player Maartje Paumen.





continuity

a hundred-year plan  
for a **better world**

*‘The perfect society doesn’t exist, but we still feel it’s our duty to strive for it’*



If ‘build and maintain’ is a person’s cultural task, they will never cease to strive to fulfill their ideas. Not when they retire. Not ever. With the same passion that he demonstrated when he built up Randstad, Frits Goldschmeding intends to pass on his legacy to future generations. ‘It’s all about continuity. I want to convey what I believe in and use my mental legacy to try and improve society. It’s something we should all strive for. I don’t see a finishing line.’

Goldschmeding feels that the economy is now playing a too dominant a role in our daily lives. He wants ‘a better world by thinking from the point of view of the other party’s interests.’ The form that he’s chosen is a foundation: the Goldschmeding Foundation voor Mens, Werk en Economie (‘Goldschmeding Foundation for Man, Work, and Economy’). With a large sum of money from the accumulated capital in Randstad, this foundation sets up socially relevant and scientifically substantiated projects focused on the Man-Work-Economy triangle.

‘Making a profit and personal interest seem to have become more important in corporate businesses than values such as striving for a communal goal together, or even love for each other. People have become easily replaceable profit robots. Companies no longer strive to look after the interests of all stakeholders. For the foundation, we use the same principles as the ones I based Randstad on. Thus: *Agapè*, the ancient Greek word for universal love, is the central concept. It’s all about looking after other people’s interests and acting accordingly. Because in that way society gets better and the world becomes a nicer place. The core values we formulated for Randstad – to know, to serve and to trust; the simultaneous promotion of all interests; and the striving for perfection – stem from this concept. These core values ensure that the company focuses on others, whilst also looking after its own interests. They emanate from all parts of Randstad. These same core values also form the basic principles of the foundation.



They govern our selection of programs and the projects we support.’

A world in which love for the other is leading – something that’s practically unheard of in today’s tough commercial world. ‘Call it a dream, if you wish. A better world. Just a better world by doing these things. Of course, we realize that the perfect society doesn’t exist, but that doesn’t mean it’s not our duty to strive for it. You can’t just do nothing. You do whatever you can. It’s your duty. One thing’s for sure: *agapè* as the basis for decision-making on all levels will improve society. That’s the message I want to convey. I’m hoping that this value will be globally adopted.’

With his foundation, Frits Goldschmeding has provided a future for his mental legacy and work principles. But it also concretizes his conviction that the capital he has built up belongs to everyone who has contributed to Randstad’s success. ‘Of course, I’ve gathered quite a little nest egg,

but it doesn't just belong to me. Our success lies in society. And you need to return the favor. I want to use my capital to benefit society, using the same philosophy I applied while building it up. That's why I set up the Goldschmeding Foundation. I'll make sure that sufficient capital is made available to ensure the Foundation's continued existence for at least a hundred years, although I strive for infinity. Of course, I'd like to say: "Let's take five minutes and get it done", but I fear that's not the way it works. Still, I hope that we will have achieved a great deal over the next hundred years or so.'





timeline



1960

Frits Goldschmeding and Ger Daleboudt found Uitzendbureau Amstelveen



1961

Uitzendbureau Amstelveen deploys 20 people

foundation of the ABU, the Dutch Federation of Private Employment Agencies

1962

move to Koninginneweg in Amsterdam



1963

more than one hundred people are deployed by Randstad

1964

the company changes its name to Randstad Uitzendbureau

1965

purchase of the company's first computer: an accounting machine



1966

new Head Office at the Oranje Nassaulaan in Amsterdam



1967

introduction of the new Randstad logo

foundation of the Confédération Internationale des Entreprises de Travail Temporaire (CIETT)

Randstad opens its first branch office in the UK



1968

foundation of the Randstad Pension Fund

Randstad Zeit-Arbeit opens its branch office in Germany

1969

Vedior established on the Dutch market

German award for the Randstad logo

1970

new Head Office at the A.J. Ernststraat in Amsterdam

1971

Introduction of the position of 'consultant'

1972

first Randstad television commercial



co-founder Ger Daleboudt leaves Randstad

**1973**  
acquisition of Votre Bureau in Paris, marking the start of Randstad's activities in France



Randstad sets up Capac, thus creating a second brand in the Netherlands

**1974**

startup of cleaning activities in Germany

**1975**

acquisition of Belgas provides Randstad with access to the Belgian cleaning

**1976**

acquisition of Korrekt enables Randstad to set up a cleaning branch in the Netherlands

**1977**

between 1973 and 1977, turnover rises from 51.2 million euros to nearly 137 million euros

**1978**

foundation of Randstad Holding nv

introduction of the principle 'simultaneous promotion of all interests'

as of 1978, Randstad publishes the annual Work Pocket



**1980**  
foundation of security branch Randon

**1982**

Dutch politicians decide to stimulate temporary employment in order to combat the economic crisis

**1983**

acquisition of Tempo-Team



**1985**

on the occasion of Randstad's 25th anniversary, Frits Goldschmeding is appointed Knight in the Order of Orange Nassau



**1979**

opening of the 100th Randstad office

introduction of the corporate philosophy

new Head Office at the Wildenborch in Diemen



**1987**

architect Wim Quist is invited to design the new head office



**1988**

the Randstad Option Fund Foundation is set up

**1990**

opening of the new Head Office in Diemen: Diemermerre



Randstad is floated on the Amsterdam Stock Exchange



between 1985 and 1990, turnover doubles from 2.3 billion euros to 5.2 billion euros

**1991**

opening of the 500th Randstad office

**1992**

foundation of Eurociett

**1993**

acquisition of TempForce and Jane Jones Enterprises marks Randstad's start in the US



**1994**

opening of Randstad's first branch office in Spain

Frits Goldschmeding receives an honorary degree from the University of Rochester in the US



**1995**

on the occasion of Randstad's 35th anniversary, Frits Goldschmeding is appointed Knight of the Order of the Netherlands Lion

start of Randstad's activities in Switzerland

start of Randstad's activities in Luxembourg, under the name of Randstad Interim

**1996**

Frits Goldschmeding receives the King William I Award from Prince Claus, Prince Consort of Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands



Adia and Ecco merge into Adecco

in the Netherlands, the Flex Agreement is entered into

official supplier of the Olympic Games in Atlanta



**1997**

recognition of temporary employment on a global level by the ILO Convention 181

acquisition of Seijersen Gruppe in Denmark

opening of Randstad's first branch office in Canada

opening of the 1000th Randstad office

Frits Goldschmeding is chosen Topman of the Year and comes third in the election of the Entrepreneur of the Century

start of the construction of the Clipper Stad Amsterdam

**1998**

celebration of 65th birthday and stepping down of Frits Goldschmeding as CEO

Hans Zwartz is appointed CEO

**1999**

start of Randstad's activities in Italy

start of Randstad's activities in Japan

in Belgium, Frits Goldschmeding is appointed Commander in the Order of Leopold II

**2000**

introduction of the brand Yacht in the Netherlands

start of Randstad's activities in Portugal

launch of websites Hedson and newmonday.com

**2001**

legalization of temporary employment in Greece

**2002**

Cleem Farla is appointed CEO

**2003**

Ben Noteboom is appointed CEO

**2004**

partnership with non-governmental organization (NGO) Voluntary Services Overseas

start of Randstad's activities in Poland

takeover of Arvako in Sweden

start of Randstad's activities in Hungary

**2005**

start of Randstad's activities in China

start of Randstad's activities in India

**2006**

start of Randstad's activities in Turkey

Frits Goldschmeding receives honorary degree from Nyenrode Business University and was donned the title of Prof. Dr.

**2007**

Randstad formulates its mission 'shaping the world of work'

takeover of Vedior

Randstad becomes the second largest temporary employment organization in the world

active in more than 50 countries

**2008**

adoption of EU directives for temporary employment

**2010**

Randstad celebrates its 50th anniversary



takeover of Fujistaff in Japan

**2011**

takeover SFN Group in the US – Randstad becomes third largest temporary employment organization in the US

start of the Frits Goldschmeding Academy

**2013**

takeover of temporary employment activities of USG in 6 European countries

on the occasion of his 80th birthday, Frits Goldschmeding receives the Golden Medallion of the City of Amsterdam

**2014**

Jacques van den Broek succeeds Ben Noteboom as CEO

start of the Randstad Innovation Fund

**2015**

Randstad Award celebrates its 15th anniversary in 23 countries

29,000 employees celebrate Route 55, Randstad's 55th anniversary, in 26 locations around the world

**2016**

start of the Goldschmeding Foundation



takeover of Risesmart in the USA, Twago in Germany, Obiettivo Lavoro in Italy, Careo in Japan, and the Proffice Group in Sweden, Denmark and Norway

takeover of Monster Worldwide and public bid Ausy France

# colophon

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In 1960, when having a permanent job was still considered the ultimate goal in life, Frits Goldschmeding had tremendous foresight and founded the staffing services Randstad. History has proved him right – flexwork has become an indispensable part of our economy. And Randstad has become an extremely successful globally operating company, keeping around 600,000 people in 39 countries employed on a daily basis.

Determined, driven and with great power of persuasion, Frits Goldschmeding crystallized his ideas. Careful thinking followed by action. Ideas based on his very consistent philosophy of life, which still forms the soul of Randstad today. Over the years, the world has changed, and the company has grown enormously since the days Goldschmeding was in charge. Still, Randstad's success remains firmly rooted in the founder's vision and unsurpassed entrepreneurship.

This book is about this vision and that entrepreneurship. About the culture that forms the backbone of the company, about rational growth, consistent marketing strategy, adventurous brand development, and about forging a cast-iron reputation. And above all, about how looking after all the interests of all the parties involved in the company forms the basis for creating value. For the company and for society.

