



Realdolmen delivers the right expertise for automation at ArcelorMittal

Steel giant ArcelorMittal is increasing its commitment to automation and developing completely new software for planning and monitoring its production over the next few years. But the steel manufacturer needs many more IT experts than it has in house for this. Realdolmen is therefore providing the right knowledge at the right time. 'We're also trying to keep these people on board for the long term,' says Geert Van Canneyt, Team Leader at ArcelorMittal.

The software project is ArcelorMittal's first development on such a grand scale, and expectations are high. The organisation deliberately chose to build a customised .NET application because this makes it possible for ArcelorMittal to distinguish itself from its competitors.

'We're developing a completely new supply chain application, which is a huge challenge,' explains Didier Marichal, Team Leader at ArcelorMittal. 'Extra help from outside was more than welcome for such a large project, considering we needed around 80 extra IT employees, and Realdolmen is one of our main suppliers. The large number of consultants working at Realdolmen – around 1400, of which around 1000 are permanent employees – means they can quickly help out clients in need.'

TEAMS WITH SPECIFIC EXPERTISE

Marichal explains the importance of IT for ArcelorMittal and the new software project: 'IT is very important for us: the business, factory and production aspects are all highly integrated in terms of IT. You simply can't achieve the same level of efficiency if you're working with just pen and paper or in Excel. That's why we've digitised and automated everything as much as possible. The automation ensures we can work faster, optimise more, and so on. It also makes it very easy for us to find all the information we need about our materials, purchases, orders, who's done what, quality control, etc. The software

development we're currently working on is a huge project that can deliver great financial benefits and give us a competitive advantage. It's a European project with around 85% of the development taking place in Ghent. It's important that we make sure it's a complete success.'

'We've been collaborating with Realdolmen for a long time already, so we were quick to go knocking on their door,' says Van Canneyt. 'But this was a new project for us with a large team, so we also needed new knowledge and methodologies. We therefore created teams around a specific expertise, such as integration or .NET. The new employees already had experience of this, so they brought their expertise with them. This resulted in everything running much more smoothly, also in terms of testing and reporting,' adds his colleague Ken Wauters. 'The number of employees we have with us from Realdolmen is steadily growing.'

PROACTIVE SCREENING OF CANDIDATES

Marichal: 'It's often difficult to find people with the right knowledge, which is why Realdolmen's support is so helpful. We first described some specific profiles for them so they could look for matches among their recent graduates or existing consultants at the end of a contract and wanting to do something new. Realdolmen anticipated this and gave us the opportunity to look through CVs and interview candidates in good time, so the right

people could get started with us as soon as they were free.'

'The more people we have in our team from Realdolmen, the more familiar they become with the project and the better they know what we need. So they suggest candidates for us proactively, taking our needs into account. The very precise screening by Realdolmen means that we hire a much higher number of candidates proposed to us than normal, so we don't lose so much time selecting the right people, and we have valuable external employees on board to push the project forward straight away.'

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THE BIGGEST TALENTS, FRESH FROM THE TRAINING GROUND

The IT managers at ArcelorMittal are very appreciative of Realdolmen's acADDemICT programme. 'It's become a recognised concept amongst IT organisations and young academics,' says Marichal. Realdolmen selects the biggest talents from graduates in every discipline, and gives them intensive training for three months. They don't just look at their technical knowledge, but also at their soft skills, so they can be employed and useful straight away.

'You know in advance that you're getting someone in who already has a good basis,' explains Van Canneyt. 'Realdolmen also involves us in the project exercises undertaken by the acADDemICTs, which ensures an even stronger start. So Realdolmen doesn't wait for us to make a request – they're always consulting with us and constantly screening potential new employees, holding evaluation interviews, seeing if their employees require extra training and so on. This continuity is important. It helps us build knowledge

within the teams and collaborate better and more efficiently. Also, if someone is off sick or away on holiday, it's easy for someone else to take over so that we still meet our deadlines.'

'The way Realdolmen works with the acADDemICTs isn't just positive for us; it's also very beneficial for the young professionals themselves. It enables us to see them in action while at the same time giving them a taste of our environment, the type of work we do, the business we're in, and so on. Working in IT at ArcelorMittal is very different from working in a bank, for example, or at a pure IT company,' says Van Canneyt. 'Employees can develop themselves further here too,' adds Marichal. 'They're in constant contact with a team manager from Realdolmen who they can always ask for advice. We also invest time in them ourselves, and help them feel like they're growing in their jobs, so they'll want to stay with us for longer.'

LONG-TERM FOCUS

Marichal provides a view of the future: 'It's a long-term project, possibly even for the next ten years, so we want consultants to stay for a least a few years to help build something strong. We want to avoid always having to integrate new people. Realdolmen takes this into account and ensures its employees stay on board with us for as long as possible, for example by only selecting people who don't live too far away.'

'What it boils down to is the fact that Realdolmen always supplies us with competent employees. That's why we're hoping to continue this collaboration for a long time to come. After this project, we'll need more external people for the maintenance, and Realdolmen will definitely be able to help in any subsequent phases,' says Marichal.

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