



Culture & Organisation

Dominique Leroy, CEO of Proximus, shares her thoughts about transformations in an organisation.

How to transform a big organisation? The importance of culture

BY DOMINIQUE LEROY

The world is moving fast and also disrupting telecom



Today the world is more connected than ever with internet being made available in even the outer corners of the planet. Smartphones are everywhere and being connected anywhere and anytime is part of daily life: we watch movies and videos, connect on social media and everything we could ever need can be bought online.

And when we speak of a changing world, there is one driving force which is really making things go faster than ever before: **Digital**. The digital revolution in our society is the reason things are speeding up. And not just in a steady-growing upward line, but exponentially.

As we see in our industry, the **digital disruption** is accelerating, forcing Telcos to reinvent themselves to benefit from new opportunities and to protect themselves against core business disruption. This is f.i. the case with the emergence of new players such as WhatsApp or Skype threatening Telcos traditional voice business. At the same time the emergence of the Internet of Things (IoT) and the explosion of connected objects open the doors to a world of new applications.

The digital revolution is only **at its beginning** and will lead to innovations that we can't imagine today.

Fit for Growth strategy



To prepare and embrace this digital evolution, over the last few years, **Proximus** has been going through **the most profound and the most challenging transformation** in its history. An ambitious strategic 3-year plan called **Fit for Growth** was deployed in 2014 in

order to return to sustainable and profitable growth.

The Fit for Growth strategy aimed to drastically transform the company from a historically technology-based player to an innovative business, **focusing on customer experience**. The transformation is built around **four blocks**.

First, make sure that we **put the customer at the centre of everything we do**. This means not only marketing simple and easy-to-use solutions but also developing a client-focused attitude for more than 5,000 frontline employees.

Second, we have evolved from 2 brands and 2 companies to **one main commercial brand** and then one company name. With the new Proximus, the ambition was to evolve from a functional into an emotional brand with a clear brand promise.

Third, we create a **more agile and efficient organization**, flattening the hierarchy and redesigning processes.

And **finally**, we **simplify the business at all levels: from products to IT platforms**.

At the beginning of the process we also worked on our reason of being, asking ourselves why we are in business. Companies who engage behind a sense of purpose have more engaged employees and are able to deliver better results. The sense of purpose of Proximus is to 'connect everyone and everything so people live better and work smarter'. When a company has a purpose, it's important that everybody knows and understands it.

Key in the process was to **share the sense of purpose and the strategy** throughout the entire company, making sure people understand what we were doing and why and engage them behind the strategy.

People make the difference

Getting people aligned on the strategy and ready for the challenges ahead implies that we as a company had to **implement a true cultural change**. We focused on developing a growth mindset among our employees. People with a **growth mindset** know that they can develop their competences, have a strong wish to personally grow, are open for feedback and want to embrace new challenges. For Proximus, this concretely

means **putting into practice our company values**: accountability, collaboration and agility. By adopting a growth mindset, a company will be more successful than its competitors.

The Good to Gold journey

Proximus' cultural change was driven by **the implementation of a program called 'Good to Gold'** which started as a project but is now supported throughout the company. In essence **it's the glue holding all the pieces of the strategy together**.



We started in 2014 by developing a common language thanks to the Good to Gold principles (team, respect, feedback and transparency) and our company values. It was very much about **helping people to understand how to work together**. If, as company leaders and in teams, you can live these values every day in the way that you behave, it really starts to change the way people work together and brings a lot of creativity to the company.

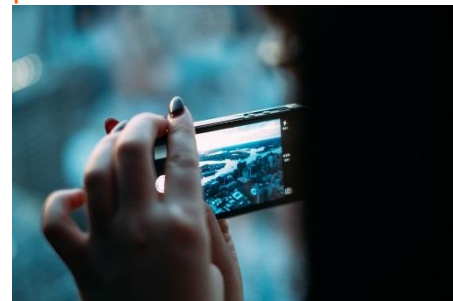
Then, we focused on training teamleaders on 'Coaching & Feedback', giving them the necessary instruments to actively support the personal development of their employees. Our managers push their employees to take **initiatives** themselves in order to enable everyone to unleash their full potential.

In 2016, we started working in a **more transversal way and put a strong focus on improving collaboration** across the boundaries of our various Business Units. The way we work together as a **team** is fundamental for the future success of our company. So, is the personal development of our people. Therefore, we also put in place the tools and processes to drive personal growth, manage talents and foster internal mobility.

It was important to engage the whole leadership team in this journey. We had to make sure that they understood where we wanted to go as a business, why we needed to

shift the culture and what their role was in the whole culture-shaping process. At the same time, the process could not stop at the leadership population. To get a deeper level of engagement, about 200 people were coached to become champions and facilitators. Progressively all team leaders have been trained and have then engaged their own teams. This new culture really spread into the whole organization.

Becoming a digital service provider



Our strategy and new company culture brought us back to growth one year ahead of plan, both top and bottom line.

Now, to anticipate the ever demanding, fast evolving customer needs, we have decided to **accelerate our Fit for Growth strategy over the next 3 years and become a Digital Service Provider**, bringing new technologies in an easy way to our customers and improving their lives and work environment. It's Proximus ultimate objective to service its customers and offer them a superior customer experience with a quality and service that can be experienced through its best quality integrated network, easy-to-use and innovative solutions, best accessibility & local reach, and proactive servicing. We want to favour a new digital eco-system, open to partnerships and collaboration with new emerging players and offer our customers access to new technologies and their benefits in an easy and customer friendly way. It's by means of new application-led and service-oriented solutions (like smart home, smart cities, smart mobility, new ways of working, smart retail) that customers will experience the true meaning of Proximus' customer centricity mission.

The Good to Gold culture will be a key enabler to drive the behavioural change to achieve our ambition of becoming a digital service provider.



Dominique Leroy

CEO of Proximus (since 2014)

After graduating from Solvay Brussels School in 1987 with a degree in Business Engineering, Dominique began her career at Unilever, where she held posts in marketing, finance, logistics, sales and general management.

In 2013, Dominique received the title of Master Marketer from StiMa (Stichting Marketing). She won the Trends Business Woman Award in the CEO category in 2014. In 2015 she won the Harvard Club of Belgium Leadership Prize and was elected Manager of the Year. Dominique recently won the LEAD-IN Leadership Award.

She is very active in Belgium as a member of several professional and management associations (e.g. Women on Board, Young Professional Organization, UBA, and Guberna).

Besides her family and job, she has a passion for music, traveling, modern art and sports.