



Solvay CSP

Michaël Lans (Febrap) and Benjamin Beeckmans (SBS-EM) tell us about their new collaborative venture!

Interview with Michaël Lans

WHAT'S FEBRAP?

The Brussels Federation of Adapted Work Companies (**Febrap**) brings together 11 workshops from Brussels who employ 1500 disabled workers. These companies are the product of the social economy because their objective is social but their assets are merchants. In fact, these organizations offer more than 60 different services to generate turnover, which sustains the employment of the target audience.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN YOUR COLLABORATION WITH SBS-EM?

Febrap aims to support **research and development of new activities** to ensure the long-term viability of each of these 11 structures. We turned to Solvay for **the organization of personalized coaching** for our managers in order **to improve their entrepreneurial skills**.

We want to develop the entrepreneurial boldness of our managers and give them the necessary skills and tools to let innovation emerge, and manage it in their respective economic realities. In fact, the structures and the economic activities of the 11 sheltered workshop members of Febrap are very heterogeneous.

HOW DOES THE PROJECT WORK?

17 participants follow a course of one afternoon per month during a semester. The sessions address the most relevant themes related to the development of a project and the emergence and the management of innovation. **E-learning sessions and individualized coaching** complement the 6 and a half days course dispensed in "plenary" and also allow for more confidential themes that are specific to the business envisaged.

WHY DID YOU REQUEST THE SOLVAY BRUSSELS SCHOOL'S EXPERTISE?

The services of our companies are relatively stable. But we have noticed that the demand has considerably restricted. The scarcity of subcontracting manual trades (our core business) pushes us **to diversify our activities to maintain the volume of employment**. We must therefore **innovate**. On the scale of Belgium (and even more to the scale of Brussels), the Solvay Brussels School has emerged as an **excellent training organization** for materials related to innovation and to the management of commercial projects. After a comparison of all business oriented universities and high schools, the offer of Solvay was chosen because it **suited our expectations better** on both the form and the substance.

HOW WAS YOUR EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH SBS-EM?

The experience is still in progress: **we are in the middle of courses** at the time of writing these lines. So far, **the participants are delighted** to find themselves, after several career years, back on the university benches! And this without the constraint of time consuming exams at the end of the course.

WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS OF SBS-EM DURING THIS PROJECT?

During the initial briefing, we were quite demanding on the practical aspects (the progress, the work to provide outside sessions, the individualized coaching...) and we are very pleased to see that the **rigor or flexibility discussed is respected**.

But it really is the **dynamism of the coaches and their "tool box" approach** which fully meet the expectations of our group.

Do you see a difference before and after your collaboration with SBS-EM?

I coordinate a team of two business developers who also participate in the program. **This training gradually changes our methodology of work.** Previously, we were tempted to rapidly launch a quantitative study to test our hypotheses. But now we **gradually integrate these**

tools in our practice. Other "more" undeniable outcomes of our participation include: we are encouraged in our belief that interactions are a powerful engine, that change of perspective is not a failure, and that our "common sense" tinted with a strand of audacity must remain our ultimate guide and our guard rails.



Michaël Lans

In charge of promotion and development of economic activities at Febrap

Coordinator at Dev'Up Team

Interview with Benjamin Beeckmans

CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT WITH FEBRAP?

The SBS-EM has been selected to run a **business transformation project** for the Brussels Federation of Adapted Work Companies (Febrap).

Traditional businesses, like customized mail or sample preparation, have gone down in **volume** recently due to **technology improvement** (e.g. email vs. paper), changes in customer habits and increased international competition. The objective was thus to **help business unit managers identify new and incremental opportunities** and design launch plans accordingly.

The business transformation journey designed by the SBS-EM stretches over 6 months. Each month **we review the key steps** of the entrepreneurial toolbox: Creativity Tools, Design Thinking, Value Proposition Design, Business Model Generation and the Lean Canvas.

That effective learning framework empowers the business unit managers to come up with new ideas and to address their challenges while acquiring content knowledge in a deep, engaging, meaningful and purposeful way.

At the SBS-EM, rapid prototyping and testing is an integral part of the entrepreneurial process. We help design solutions that are immediately put in real customers' hands for feedback, validation and further

improvement. This is how we believe Febrap can best respond to its challenges and craft thoughtful solutions.

We designed a dedicated online learning platform to expand on the information given in class, share background information, key concepts and resources to get started. Self-assessment tools are also available to measure progress and content acquisition.

Individual coaching is also offered to participants as part of this program by dedicated trainers from Solvay. Their role is to fully anchor the content in every participant through personalized examples, tips and best practices.

WHAT'S YOUR FEEDBACK REGARDING THIS PROJECT? WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

The motto of Febrap is "*On s'adapte!*" - so did we.

Creating a long-lasting and impactful environment for handicapped people has been fully embraced by Solvay's team and faculty. We utilized all of our skills to move Febrap to the next level and help everyone in Brussels become a productive member of society to the best of his or her capabilities. We only provide the framework - Febrap does the real job: making an immediate and comprehensive impact on the world.

We look forward to see their new projects come to life!



Benjamin Beeckmans

Director of the [Company Specific Programmes](#) at the Solvay Brussels School - ULB