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PDN MAGAZINE

Independent Chairman, Arend de Jong:

‘Playing a connecting role and building bridges’

PDN takes over
administrator, DPS

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2023 is already almost at an end and a new year awaits us. December is traditionally a time when people enjoy both reflecting and looking ahead. What were the high points or challenges? Who did we take with us and what did we leave behind? And how do we move forward?

As a pension fund, this is something that is always on our minds. Looking at where we came from, what we did, and what we want now while focusing on the future. Because we want to do the best for the future of our members now.

A NEW YEAR

Enjoy reading all about PDN in this magazine. We have an exciting new year in store, as we've recently acquired our administrator DPS, and we'll be making many preparations for the transition to the new pension system. Our Board is helping us with this, with a new and experienced independent Chairman at the helm. In an extensive interview, Arend de Jong tells you all about himself, and how he sees PDN and the pension fund's future.

And, of course, you can also read about the people affiliated with us. We take you to DNP in Venlo, to Envalior, and Maastricht, where Marcel Warner recently started his own pension journey. And while we're talking about reflecting and looking forward.

We'd like to wish you every joy in the new year ahead. Let's make a real success of it.

Happy reading,
Babette, Karin, Monique and Mark

Scan the QR code to visit the PDN website.



Arend de Jong, the new independent PDN Chairman



‘I want to play a connecting role’

He was aged ten when Jan Janssen won the Tour de France. ‘The true fans out there will immediately know I’m from 1958’, he said, smiling. Meanwhile, Arend de Jong now has a lifetime of knowledge and experience behind him. He’s been putting that knowledge and experience to good use as PDN Chairman since June 2023. Who is Arend? What is important to him and what’s his vision for the future?

After studying Business Economics, Arend started working for KLM. He still works there now and is responsible for KLM Treasury. He also has twelve years of pension-related work experience as employer representative and Vice-Chairman of the KLM pension fund for ground staff. He’s now starting the final year of his working life at the airline. ‘When I stopped with my pension work in 2021 after three terms, I’d always intended to start doing that work again at a different fund. I was approached for the role of external PDN Chairman and said yes.’

Speed and energy

Arend explained how he made a very conscious choice for PDN. ‘I’d always found dsm-firmenich interesting (along with the other affiliated companies) and observed it from a distance. For me, it’s

a company that’s good at transforming. It’s been through quite a journey, and I think it’s so clever being able to reinvent yourself like that. There’s also so much dynamism and innovation, driven by a culture of curiosity and a pursuit of new developments. People working here have such a huge hands-on mentality, as well as a high level of engagement and commitment. That results in tremendous speed, energy, and capacity for change. It’s something I find really appealing.’

Board and administrator

Arend is impressed by the fund’s Board and administrator, DPS. ‘DPS is an extremely high-quality administrator that can offer its members all kinds of pension services. Many funds now outsource parts of their services, but at DPS we keep them close. That offers members many advantages. Now that

DPS is continuing independently (see page 8 in this magazine, ed.), we’re expecting even greater advantages. The fact that two operational directors are also on the Board is really good, as is the fact that they made a conscious choice for an external, independent Chairman. And of course, that’s not at all down to me. The fund took these steps under the responsibility of my predecessor, Edith Schippers. An invaluable step.’

Building bridges

How does Arend view his role as independent Chairman, and what does he want his contribution to be? ‘Being independent means that you can build bridges in a natural way between different viewpoints, without taking sides. I feel comfortable in such a role. I don’t necessarily need to have the decisive vote in a Board.

‘As an independent Chairman, you can build bridges in a natural way between people with different viewpoints, without taking sides. I feel comfortable in that role.’

The land of pension funds is and will always be about the “polder model”: working with your team and with the minimum use of authority and formal powers to maximise coordination and deliver added value. As an independent Chairman, it is easier to play a connecting role in the Board and towards other parties such as the Accountability Council, the Supervisory Board, and external parties.’

Haarlem oil

Arend: ‘I want to ensure that things run smoothly between parties and stakeholders. I already started doing that over the past few months. I got to know so many people: fund body members, DPS staff, and members of associations of pensioners. I also want to ensure that we have a good and professional approach to preparing decisions and reaching decisions on the Board, so that everyone is heard and comes into their own. I don’t really need to do very much to make that happen, as everyone participates actively in the meetings. Working on trust and having genuine conversations are my goals. If you trust in the process and in how others deal with your point of view, a Board will

function properly. One of my mottos is: “It’s all about people... and behaviour.” On paper, you can have a really good team where everyone complements each other, but it will only be a winning team if you genuinely respect each other, listen properly to each other, and appreciate each other.’

New pension system

One of the important issues currently being addressed on the Board is, of course, the new pension system. Everyone, including the social partners, is working hard on a transition plan that includes choosing the contract form, as well as making all kinds of other agreements. ‘That’s something we’re focusing on as a Board’, stated Arend. ‘Our main focus is what this means for our members. I feel positive about the future with the new system. We’re moving to this new system because it will be more robust and will ultimately lead to improved pension results for our members, particularly because other indexation rules will apply. We see more opportunities than threats.’

Communication

Arend is full of confidence and has

several clear goals for fulfilling his role in the coming period. He will certainly be seeking contact with fund members. ‘With all the imminent changes, communication is key. And it shouldn’t be just about sending out information from our fund to the members; we need two-way communication. For instance, I’ll be working with Board member Eiko de Vries to organise discussions with pensioners and young people. We can then have informal chats, in a relaxed setting, to hear what they think of certain choices. What are their views and opinions? We also want to bring pensions to life via other, creative means of communication. I’m really looking forward to it.’

‘It’s important that we keep working together to build a sustainable pension for young and old’



‘I grew up in Kunrade, South Limburg. I now live in Best, Noord-Brabant with my wife and three daughters, aged 10, 8, and 5. After obtaining a doctorate in Applied Physics, I began working as a researcher at the DSM Materials Science Centre in Geleen in 2014. In 2019, working as a developer, I made the switch to DSM Advanced Solar. In that same year, I also became a prospective member of the Accountability Council, on behalf of the employees. When DSM sold our business unit some two years later, we continued as Endurans Solar and became affiliated with PDN. Since 1 August this year, I have been a Board member on behalf of the affiliated companies. My work for PDN is a fantastic change from my daily work, and I’m learning lots of new things. I also like doing my bit towards ensuring a sustainable pension for all generations.’

New Board Member, Peter Pasmans
Town/city: Best
Age: 39
Position: Developer at Endurans Solar



Willy Bours, DPS Pensions and Communication Manager:

'We're delighted with the acquisition by PDN. Many things will stay the same. A sale to a different party may also have led to a different focus or to change. We trust PDN, and they trust us. That's great. Our services won't change. We won't make any concessions on that. As always, we'll continue to work hard for PDN and SPF members. They come first, and they're why we do our work. There's still a lot to do in the coming period, and while that will take time and focus, it's also energising. If all goes well, members won't notice anything of what we're doing behind the scenes. Our shop will remain open during renovations. We're looking forward to setting up our new workspace and support departments, and moving into the future on full power and with confidence.'

As a member or pensioner, you are affiliated with Pensioenfonds DSM Nederland (PDN). DSM Pension Services (DPS) provides all pension services to support PDN, such as administration, asset management, advice, contact with members, and Board support. Until recently, the administrator was owned by dsm-firmenich. As DPS was no longer really a match for its core business, dsm-firmenich decided to divest DPS. PDN then acquired the DPS shares, enabling DPS to move forward independently, but with their trusted knowledge, experience, and services.

PDN takes over administrator, DPS What does this mean for you?



PITground Sittard

Will this acquisition change anything for members or pensioners?

No. DPS was always PDN's administrator and that remains the case. The DPS service that you're used to, and which most members are extremely satisfied with, will stay the same. The only difference is that DPS is not part of dsm-firmenich; PDN is the new owner, which has its advantages. Bringing DPS within our own pension fund creates an organisation that can take decisive action, offering opportunities to further strengthen DPS's already high-quality services. It's great that all services will stay under one roof, certainly now there's a lot

of work to be done on the introduction of the new pension system.

Now that DPS is no longer part of dsm-firmenich, will they also take on other clients?

That's possible in the long term. DPS currently works for two pension funds: PDN and Stichting Pensioenfonds SABIC (SPF). The focus in the coming years will be on the introduction of the new pension system. That comes first. Once that's properly arranged, there may be scope to start offering services to other pension funds too. That could be advantageous to PDN, as with a larger customer base,

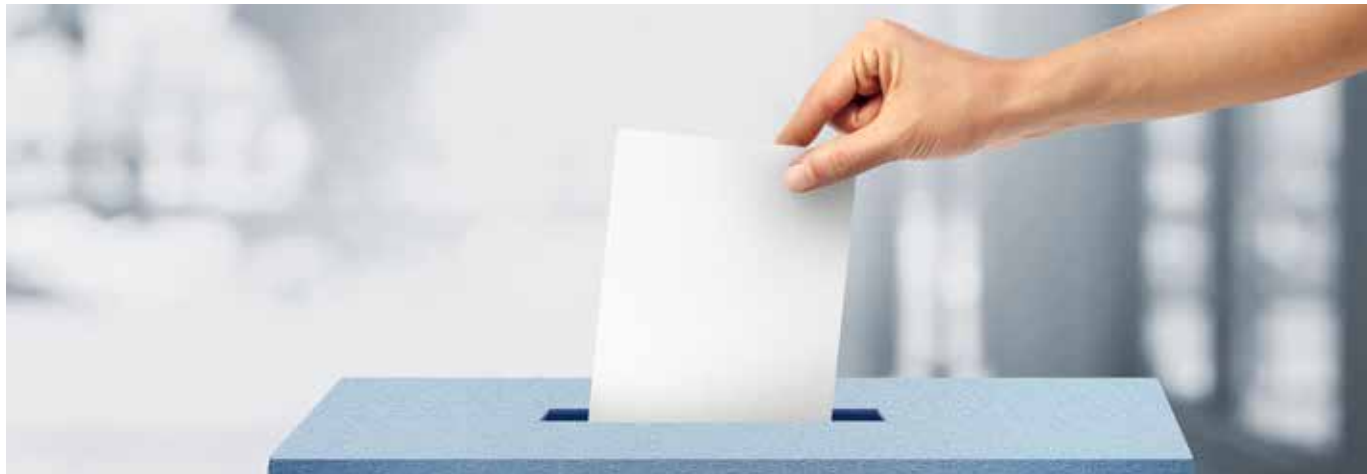
it may be possible to reduce the cost per member.

What does this change mean for DPS itself?

DPS is currently working to further structure itself as an independent company. All seventy employees are relocating from Heerlen to PITground in Sittard. There will also be a new Supervisory Board, and all kinds of services, such as IT and Personnel, need to be arranged independently. Again, as a member, you'll not notice any of this if all goes well.

Results of Accountability Council elections

Elections for PDN’s Accountability Council pensioner representatives were held in October. There was plenty to choose from, with eleven enthusiastic candidates for four available seats. A total of 12,986 invitations to vote were issued, with over 15.5% of pensioners voting. All candidates and PDN would like to thank everyone for voting.



The following result was announced after an election period of four weeks:

	Name	Votes
1	Ton de Boer	383
2	Feike Hylarides	352
3	Arno Smeets	325
4	Marjon Doggen-Muijres	178
5	Albert Noteborn	151
6	Etha van de Wiel	147
7	Francine Beij-Mos	130
8	Hans van Nistelrooij	126
9	Henk Lukkezen	125
10	Frank den Ouden	53
11	Ron Kurvers	48
	Total	2.018

Two seats were also available to represent all employees who are accruing pension with PDN. Two candidates put themselves forward for this, which is why no elections were needed.

The pensioners were appointed as prospective members until 1 July 2024, and as Accountability Council members from 1 July 2024 until 1 July 2028. Both employee representatives immediately became Accountability Council members. Retiring members and members who were not re-elected will complete their term (ending on 1 July 2024). The new term with these elected Accountability Council members starts on 1 July next year.

We would like to thank all candidates for putting themselves forward and wish the new Accountability Council members a good term of office.



Ton de Boer
Born: 1953
Town/city: Brunssum
First term



Feike Hylarides
Born: 1945
Town/city: Maastricht
First term



Arno Smeets
Born: 1953
Town/city: Susteren
First term



Marjon Doggen-Muijres
Born: 1961
Town/city: Echt
First term



Marc Silvertand
Born: 1968
Town/city: Heerlen
Re-appointed
Third term



Jan Schreuder
Born: 1960
Town/city: Den Hoorn
AC member effective, immediately
First term



Pension Payment Dates

PDN makes pension payments on the 27th of the month (with the exception of December). If the 27th falls on a weekend, your pension will be paid before then.

2023/2024 Payment Dates

- 21 December
- 26 January
- 27 February
- 27 March
- 26 April
- 27 May
- 27 June

PDN Funding Level

One important indicator of a pension fund's financial health is the funding level. This shows the relationship between PDN's pension assets and PDN's pension obligations, both now and in the future. If the funding level is 110%, for example, then for every €100 PDN has to pay to pensioners, PDN has €110 worth of assets. PDN publishes the figures on the website quarterly.

The table below shows the funding level from 2019 onwards

As at end	Funding level	Policy funding level	Interest rate	Max. yield
2019	104.0%	102.3%	0.7%	12. 7%
2020	99.7%	95.5%	0.1%	4.0%
2021	115.5%	108,9%	0.5%	8.2%
2022	123.7%	127.1%	2.7%	-13.8%
Q1 2023	125.6%	129.1%	2.6%	2.9%
Q2 2023	127.2%	128.5%	2.7%	3.9%
Q3 2023	133.1%	128.7%	3.2%	1.6%

When making decisions on awarding indexation or making cuts, pension funds must refer to what is called the 'policy funding level'. This funding level is the average of the funding levels over the past twelve months.



SOONER
OR LATER

Tell us a bit about yourself.

‘I support polyamide 6 projects in the Envalior factory. These factories are located across the world: in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, China, and Taiwan. In my research role, I work to improve processes and support our global technical product managers if they have problems with products or processes in the factory. We work in a team with chemists and technologists whose expert knowledge contributes to the projects that land on my plate. This multi-disciplinary approach makes our work really great. We recently became Envalior and that also offers us fantastic new opportunities.’

What’s your dream plan for your retirement?

‘I’d like to stop work before my 67th birthday, preferably at the same time as my husband. I do want to do it in phases, though. I can’t see myself going from a hundred to zero in one go. I always say: holidays are great because you can work in between them. But once the time comes, I’m sure I’ll enjoy myself. Helping others by doing voluntary work, for example, and a lot of walking. We’re already walking sections of the Camino each year. When we retire, the stages will get a bit longer.’

What are you doing to make that retirement dream come true?

‘First of all, of course, I’m accruing pension at PDN. I’ll keep doing that, too, even though we’ve switched from DSM Materials to Envalior. I used to be a member of a PPS scheme for pre-pension but that doesn’t exist anymore. I also have annuity insurance. I think pension accrual has been cut back quite a bit in recent years, and I’m not yet convinced that the new pension system offers that many advantages. My husband and I both work and we don’t have children but I’m so pleased I also initiated things myself on top of my normal pension accrual.’

KARIN:

‘I think awareness about pensions is very important’

Looking back, is there anything you felt you should have done differently?

‘I don’t think so, no. Because I’m older, I’ve been able to take advantage of the “good times” as far as pension accrual is concerned. I’m afraid that it will be more difficult for younger generations. Is there anything she’d like to share? Be sure to study everything about your pension. For example, take a look in your pension planner. It’s such an easy tool to use, and it gives you so much insight. I think awareness about pensions is very important.’

Do you have any tips for Wilco?

‘I don’t need to teach Wilco anything. He’s very involved with his pension and thinks about it carefully.’



Karin Bronsaer and Wilco Appel

SOONER...

Name: Karin Bronsaer

Age: 61

Position: senior expert in process technology

Retiring: preferably before her 67th birthday

...OR LATER

Name: Wilco Appel

Age: 40

Position: senior expert in polymer chemistry

Tell us a bit about yourself.

‘I’m a polymer chemist. In that sense, I’m Karin’s counter-part. I also help monitor things if there are problems in a factory. If it’s a technological problem, Karin gets to work on it. If it’s chemical, it comes to me and my colleagues. We also work together with product developers who make new products based on specific customer requirements. I then check with them which polymer belongs to a particular material and whether we can make it. I’m in the lab quite a lot, which I also really enjoy. So what we do in our team is very broad and involves chemistry, plant support, and supporting product managers. We all have our own expertise and enjoy working together.’

Do you think about your retirement?

‘Yes. I’m married and have three children. My wife doesn’t work for health reasons, which has made me more aware of the fact that I need to make proper arrangements for my pension.’

What’s your dream plan for your retirement?

‘Retirement is a long way off. I think it’s important to live now. We do so many fun things with the children. And once I retire... My father has a huge allotment, so that’s something I’d like to get involved with. I like staying active.’

WILCO:

‘It’s important to think carefully about later, even if that seems a long way off when you’re still young’

What have you already done to make that retirement dream come true?

‘I’ve been accruing pension at PDN for twelve years, and it’s not been indexed for ten years. That’s partly why I started looking at what else I could do to supplement my pension. I enjoy doing that, too. Finances and everything associated with it really interests me. I started investing. If you start small now, you can achieve good results later on. It’s important to think carefully about later life, even if that seems a long way off when you’re still young.’

Do you have any questions for Karin or will you do anything differently after this interview?

‘I don’t think so. But I do agree with Karin’s appeal to young people: study everything you can about your pension. You may be able to do something now that will improve your situation in the long term.’



Introducing... DNP Venlo

Did you know that there are more than fifteen different employers affiliated with PDN? Not only dsm-firmenich employees in the Netherlands accrue their pension at PDN; employees of the other affiliated companies do, too. This column usually takes you to one of the affiliated companies. This time, however we chose DNP (DSM Nutritional Products) in Venlo. DNP has been part of the dsm-firmenich family for some time and will also join the PDN family from January 1, 2024. We talked with Fred Niessen, head of global warehousing operations, and Chanel Balendonck, distribution service team lead.

DNP in Venlo is relatively small entity within the big dsm-firmenich organisation, but one that has a huge impact. It is the global distribution centre (GDC) for the former DNP and partly for the former DSM Food Specialities. Materials arrive at GDC from over a hundred suppliers including our own factories and external suppliers. These are stored there under the required storage conditions before being exported and distributed across the world. The products go to regional and local distribution centres, or directly to customers.

A world in itself

‘Sixty per cent of the dsm-firmenich business is handled physically or administratively by us in Venlo’, explained Fred. The GDC, and everything associated with it, is really a world in itself. ‘Some forty dsm-firmenich employees work here, spread across the Distribution, Warehousing, Planning, and Quality departments. We’re all in one building at this location with our partner Geodis, with whom we’ve been working for thirty years. They are our logistics service provider for warehousing and carry out all physical transactions in our GDC.’

Warehouses in all types and sizes

Various impressive figures: the GDC comprises five vast warehouses, including the one in Venlo. There’s also

one in Rotterdam (De Rijke) for materials storage. Frozen materials are stored at -18 degrees in another warehouse in Venlo (Eurofrigo). Hazardous substances that need to be stored below 8 degrees can be found at NTG in Klundert. And finally, in Austria (Schenker), there’s a warehouse for the storage of animal feed additives. Due to high stocks, the GDC is currently working with four other

overflow warehouses to be able to store everything.

Fred explained proudly: ‘The main Geodis warehouse in Venlo has a surface area of 50,000 square metres. We can store around 53,000 pallets there and process some 380 million kilos of materials per year, which results in over five million pallet movements per year.

Chanel introduces herself:

Employer:

‘I’m the distribution services team lead at DNP. We are responsible for the export of goods that go through the GDC. We ship goods by air freight, sea freight, and road transport. Our department is responsible for the cooperation between the warehouse, the transporters, and the internal customers. I absolutely love logistics. My father used to be a lorry driver, and my sister also works in logistics. I stepped into this man’s world as a young girl. And I definitely stand my ground.’

Pride:

‘We’re an extremely diverse club: men, women, of different ages and backgrounds. Everyone’s welcome here. We feel responsible. You don’t

need to push people here to go that extra mile.’

Own pension:

‘I find the pension world and investing interesting, so I do delve into it from time to time. What gives me peace of mind about PDN is that they have everything in-house. It feels accessible and friendly. I also think it’s important that you live now and not wait until you retire to do the things you want to do. I’ll wait and see how things go with my retirement when the time comes.’

Personal life:

Age 30, in a relationship, one dog and two cats.



Fred Niessen and Chanel Balendonck

We ship to over 120 countries across the world and to 3,000 different addresses.'

Precision comes first

The work brings many challenges, explained Chanel. 'We work with delicate materials that are used in food for people and animals, which is why we set strict requirements on our staff. Errors can cost lives. Precision is a top priority of ours.'

Dynamic

A dynamic and interesting world. That's how Fred and Chanel see it. Fred added: 'We're in the heart of the supply chain between the suppliers and the customers or regions. We work with almost all dsm-firmenich departments, as we have to work in so many different areas: laws and regulations, customs, production, sales, you name it.'

Chanel continued: 'That's also exactly what defines us in logistics: being the focal point, hub, and having the control to move ourselves between all these different organisational units. You can't be afraid to take decisions. It's really interesting and fantastic work. Once you've tried logistics, you don't want anything else.'

'Sixty per cent of the dsm-firmenich business is handled physically or administratively by us in Venlo'

Fred introduces himself:

Employer:

'I've been working at dsm-firmenich and its predecessor Roche Vitamins for some 23 years. I've been head of global warehousing operations for 2.5 years. It's a challenging and varied role.'

Pride:

'We're a small organisation within dsm-firmenich, but still of huge importance. There's almost no department we don't have contact with. We're a real hub. We have a small, permanent group of employees and everyone has worked here for a long time. That says something. There's a family-like atmosphere, which is nice.'

Own pension:

'Now that I'm fifty, I'm slowly starting to approach pension age. We're also switching over to PDN on 1 January. We've been accruing pension at Zwitserleven until now. After the information meeting we had with PDN recently, I felt a certain peace of mind and confidence that things are properly organised here.'

Personal life:

Age 50, married, two children.

Sustainability policy with a focus on biodiversity

The air you breathe, the water you drink, and the food you eat all depend on biodiversity. That's why the current biodiversity losses form a serious threat to the ecosystems that are essential for our economic and social well-being.



In conversation with companies

Together with other pension funds, Columbia Threadneedle holds discussions with companies on their impact on the environment and nature on behalf of PDN. We're currently talking with various companies from different sectors to stop activities that are harmful to global biodiversity. For instance, in the food sector, palm oil and soy have been identified as high-risk raw materials. It's not easy to determine the origin of these raw materials, and there's also the lurking risk of deforestation. That's why we're stimulating food-sector companies to improve their policy in this area. This is one way we can work together to strengthen biodiversity and prevent deforestation.

For instance, we're currently talking with Ahold Delhaize. Within its chain, this company is focusing on biodiversity and preventing deforestation. They do

not buy meat from Brazil, for instance, as such products are linked to rainforest deforestation. Basically, Ahold Delhaize is doing a good job. Nevertheless, we think it's important that we engage with this leading retailer to discuss how they can even better monitor business activities in their chain and strengthen traceability. They will be coming back to this in detail soon in a follow-up meeting.

The importance of engagement

These discussions help us make good choices together with the parties in which we invest. This process, which we call engagement, is a crucial instrument in our sustainability policy. As a pension fund, this is how we take our social responsibility seriously. Our ambition is for our investments to have as much positive impact on the world as possible and the least negative impact. We believe that influencing company

policy through engagement and voting at shareholder meetings is an extremely effective way to achieve this goal.

Long-term process

Engagement processes can take a long time. As long as we make progress, that's not a problem. However, it is important to formulate clear goals and measure results regularly. If there is insufficient progress or companies do not heed our call for change, there are consequences. For example, we exclude companies from our investment portfolio if they make no progress for three years, unless there are special mitigating circumstances.

Would you like to know more?

Would you like to know more about what PDN is doing with respect to sustainability and investing? We produced an overview of our activities and results in 2022: Sustainable Investing - A Good Pension with a Bright Future Scan the adjacent QR code or visit 'Sustainable and Responsible Investing' on the PDN website.



Marcel Warnier's pension journey

Marcel Warnier talks just as enthusiastically about his retirement as about his long DSM and Sitech career. It feels good to have stopped working, he said. Time for new things, old hobbies, friends, and family. Although that time at DSM was also fantastic. We chat about his work across almost all the world's continents and hear his thoughts about the future.

Marcel joined DSM in 1981 when he was almost 22 and had his mechanical engineering diploma from a secondary technical school. Between that start and his retirement, he grasped every opportunity to develop and he saw almost the entire world.

How was his journey after that first day in 1981? 'I started in Research, which was then known as CRO. I worked in non-destructive research, a part of the material and corrosion research department. Non-destructive research uses methods such as X-rays and ultrasound measurements to monitor and survey installations and pipelines. It's important and fantastic work, as heavy chemical installations that operate under high pressure and with chemical substances, need to be safe and we need to monitor them carefully.'

Proud

Marcel worked in this department until Copernicus, the reorganisation of Chemelot in 2005. He has many happy memories of that time and of the progress he made. 'As a secondary technical school graduate, I'm proud of my career. When I started, there was a big budget for developing new

survey methods. I was given so many opportunities and was involved in many developments. In early 2001, I completed corrosion expert training in Utrecht. I did a welding course after that too. It was a combination that was crucial for my later career.'

Stamicarbon

Shortly afterwards, Marcel started work for DSM company, Stamicarbon. That company sold process licences worldwide. One of these processes was the urea process. Stamicarbon built factories for this across the world. Marcel and his colleagues travelled regularly to conduct inspections, which took them to all the continents, apart from Australia. 'I first went to America in 1982 for a job near New Orleans. From that point on, I was often on the road for Stamicarbon: from 1984 to 2004, I worked abroad for some 1,200 days. I was often away from home. My wife was alone a lot with our daughters during those years, but she always gave me that opportunity. I'm extremely grateful to her for that. Japan, Taiwan, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, India, Canada, Qatar, Egypt... I went almost everywhere. Of course, they weren't holidays, but I did get to see lots of

things. I think I know New Orleans and Saint Louis better than I know Amsterdam.'

At home more

All those business trips ended in 2005. 'My department was then called MPS (Mechanical Plant Services). DSM divested the business, and I became a technical support engineer at DMC: DSM Manufacturing Centre. I didn't travel anymore for Stamicarbon and was no longer allowed to visit DSM plants abroad. In hindsight, I'm really glad that happened. My eldest daughter was fourteen when the business trips abroad stopped, so that happened at just the right time. It helped me build a good bond with both my daughters. It's important that you're there for them, particularly during adolescence. It was a great time, and I enjoyed seeing them mature and express their own opinions. Stopping all the travelling was something that was forced on me, but I'm actually really grateful for that.'

VOP course

DMC became independent in 2008 and changed its name to Sitech. Marcel worked there until last summer. Was it hard to retire? 'No, just the opposite, in



'I think I know
New Orleans and
Saint Louis better than
I know Amsterdam'



Ureum-factory Qatar, 1989

‘As a secondary technical school graduate, I’m proud of my career’

fact. My working life was fantastic. The VOP course (preparation for retirement) taught me that. It was a fantastic course that my wife enjoyed too. It gives you insight into the impact that your work has on your life. We needed to draw a kind of spider’s web to investigate where you are and your connections with colleagues, friends, and family. For me, it quickly became apparent that I found my work important, but that I had no close friends among my colleagues. I still had a life on top of my work, and I’m starting to pick that up again. A month after I stopped, I said to my wife: “I don’t think about my work anymore”. I still dream about it sometimes, but it’s fading into the background. I think that’s how it should be’.

Freedom

Marcel isn’t bored. He’s still doing some work in his field via his contacts with a former colleague, but in his own time. ‘It’s a completely different feeling than at the start. I no longer need to get up at 6:45 AM, and I have more freedom now in how I organise my day. I also love cooking. I take inspiration from cookery books and then make my own tasty dish based on that. And I’ve been a member of a whisky club for a long time. We

hold regular tasting sessions and visit Scotland once or twice a year. That’s so much fun.’

Sculpture is another a new direction Marcel wants to explore further. ‘I made something from stone for someone a while back. When I left, my colleagues gave me a block of white marble and chisels. Let’s see if I can hammer away in the garage to warm myself up in the colder months.’

Marcel Warnier’s passport

Born: 2 May 1959

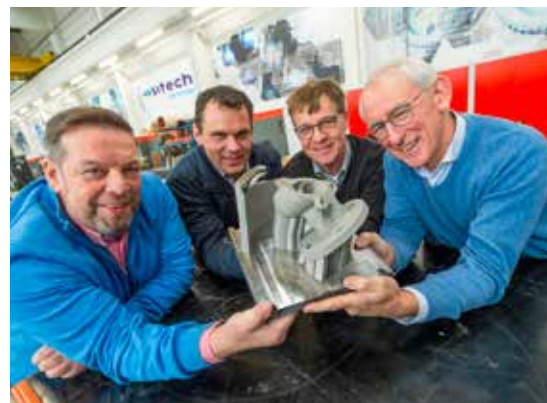
Town/city: Maastricht (born and raised)

Married to Germaine, with two daughters aged 32 and 29

Career:

- Started working in non-destructive research in 1981, a part of the material and corrosion research department at DSM research - CRO;
- Made many foreign trips for Stamicarbon from 1984;
- Later worked for MPS (Mechanical Plant Services) and DMC (DSM Manufacturing Centre);
- DMC later became Sitech.

Marcel retired in October 2023, aged 64.



Test with 3D printing of a valve, 2018

You don’t have to do anything

Did you lose a sense of purpose? ‘Certainly not’, said Marcel. ‘And what’s more, it’s good to sometimes just sit for a while and stare. Feeling a bit bored, just relaxing, sitting comfortably in the garden. That’s an advantage of retirement: you don’t have to do anything.’

Your pension: fact and fiction

PDN has full control over pension communications.

We’d like to clear up an important misunderstanding. There is a myth circulating that PDN completely controls what pension information we send you. That’s far from the truth.

Sending statutory pension information such as the Uniform Pension Statement (UPS) and letters about elections is strictly defined and mandated by law. All pension funds need to provide this information according to the prescribed regulations. The government closely monitors the content of information we send and when it is sent.

But here’s the good news: you do have control over non-statutory pension communications. You have full control in our member portal, My PDN Pension. Under the ‘My details’ tab, you can choose which non-statutory information you do and do not want to receive. This means that you have control over receiving newsletters and announcements about events. Lastly, not everyone has the same needs with respect to information about their pension. PDN is committed to an approach that reflects your requirements and needs.

We also work hard to keep our communications as personal and transparent as possible. We want you to receive information that is of interest to you. By changing your communication preferences in My PDN Pension, you can take control of this. We want you to be satisfied and to ensure you have clarity about your pension. PDN is ready to support you in this.

Will you help us save costs?

If you’re not using digital communications, go to My PDN Pension and under ‘My details’ tell us that you do want to do this. Be sure to check your email address, too. If it’s not stated there, please enter it. If it is there, please check that it’s correct. Tip: send us your personal email address.



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Column by Irene van den Berg

Negotiating with empathy

It's probably not the best thing to say as a self-employed person, but I hate negotiating. So whenever I read about the negotiations about the new pension agreement, such as in this magazine, I feel a huge sense of awe for the people sitting around the table. After just a few hours of talking, I'd sigh: 'OK, whatever you want. Can I leave now?'

Maybe I think like that because I'm a woman. Women have a reputation for being poor negotiators. For instance, Dutch women earn some 7.5% less than their male colleagues for the same work. And we don't make good arrangements for ourselves at home either. Women spend an average 26.5 hours per week on household chores such as tidying, cleaning, and looking after the children, compared with men at 'just' 17 hours.

How is this possible? Scientific research has shown that, on average, women have more empathy than men. And that sometimes really gets in our way during negotiations. Being better able to empathise with others' feelings seems like a skill to be proud of. But not if it means we accept a lower fee because we empathise with our client for 'having so many problems because of the higher energy costs'. Or that after a long day's work, we're still cleaning out the dishwasher because hubby's too tired from working out.

On the other hand, that surplus empathy can also work to our advantage in negotiations. For example, understanding and identifying the other person's emotions during negotiations, can enable you to discover their interests.

Research also shows that women are better negotiators if they negotiate for someone else. So, women might find it useful to think about who else, apart from themselves, may benefit from a good negotiation outcome. Such as the children, if their father works less overtime, for example. Or their partner, if they start earning more and can therefore deposit more money in the joint account. The pension negotiators are also talking on behalf of others, including on your behalf, as members.

So, I'd like to make another heartfelt appeal to you: if you don't negotiate yourself, but others do that on your behalf, it's good to remain empathetic. Even if the outcome is not entirely what you'd hoped for. And sometimes, dear ladies and gentlemen, it can help to ask yourself whether you could have done it any better.

Irene van den Berg is a journalist and columnist, specialised in money and mind. Her articles take a closer look at our economic behaviour. Irene writes for AD, Radar+, and Psychologie Magazine.



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