

Martijn van Glabbeek from Architecture to Business

In 2008 the IT Strategy and Architecture team at Nuon was keen to find an Enterprise Architect. Nuon had been on the lookout for this profile for a while. It was the first opportunity for VA to work for NUON and we screened the market and Martijn van Glabbeek was hired. Initially Martijn focused on architecture, IT strategy and governance, but he soon got deeply involved in innovation, the energy transition and smart grids. About a year after Martijn started, Vattenfall took over Nuon, and Martijn's position changed to Architect in the Group IT Architecture team. In 2011, Martijn decided to leave Vattenfall/Nuon, and join Alliander. Alliander manages the energy network in several provinces in The Netherlands serving 3.3 million clients.

How did your career develop?

I started my career at LogicaCMG and later Atos. I enjoyed projects where I was involved in long-term delivery projects at several telecom operators and service providers. I worked on long assignments, averaging 3 years per assignment. Although I was working as a consultant, working for a client so long I felt like being part of that organization. When Atos started to operate more in a 'bodyshopping-mode', the contracts became shorter and I felt the connection with the client was gone, at that time I became open for career suggestions and I moved to Nuon. I studied 'Bestuurlijke Informatiekunde' and moved into IT but was always connected to the business. In most roles I was focussed on improving customer processes supported by complex IT systems.

How have the last five years been for you at Nuon/Alliander?:

It has been very good. I liked joining the 'other-side of the table' (from a consultant's perspective) and really being part of a company. There have been a lot of developments and this has been positive for my progress. At Nuon there was a lot of attention on innovation, the merger with Vattenfall triggered the start of a 30% cost reduction in IT which shifted the focus more on the 'here & now' of the IT/application landscape. At that time it became clear that many exiting (business and IT) innovations regarding the energy transition and smart grids were happening at Alliander, the CIO and IT Manager of Nuon moved to Alliander, and Jeroen Scheer followed soon after. I joined Alliander as Manager Information Management Customers & Markets. My most recent promotion moved me out of IT completely; I'm responsible for the business support office within the customer service business line. This team is about 55 people now and is focussed on optimizing business processes and developing ideas to improve market processes and customer experience. As the 'product' Alliander is offering is very virtual, the 'client experience' is very important in attaining our business goals. Television programs like "Kassa, and Radar" constantly highlight the importance of treating your customers well. These stories clearly indicate that there is room for improvement.

What are the differences between being a consultant and working on the "other-side of the table":

As a consultant I was able to distance myself from office politics; you see it happen but you don't need to be involved. When I became part of NUON and then Alliander I had to accept being an element within a big organisation and work within this reality; I had to change my behaviour. Both NUON and Alliander are so big that you need to influence people to make an impact. I believe that anything you give your energy to grows. There are no fixed rules how you should behave as long as you strive for what you believe in. There is still a lot of improvement to be achieved at Alliander; we need to combine the strive for operational excellence with constant attention to innovation and implementing new products and services. What I found attractive in consultancy is that you have a 'home-base' where you can 'step-out' of the client setting and take a step-back; you can reflect and gain objectivity. This you don't have in the industry, but you do get a lot of other good stuff in return - like real involvement, ownership and being part of a team that makes a real change. Because my experience as a consultant had been longer term assignments, it was easier. If you're a consultant who enjoys the short-term projects you're less likely to do well transferring to the industry.

