

Carlo Schreurs: using consultancy expertise in the CIO office

I got to know Carlo Schreurs around 6 years ago. Over the years we were in contact about a few opportunities in the market. Then, in spring 2012, VA-Search started working for FrieslandCampina. The request was to find a new worldwide Head of Infrastructure the match seemed ideal; Carlo had been involved in IT (Outsourcing) for 17 years at Cognizant, Fujitsu and IBM. After a swift recruitment-process Carlo started at FrieslandCampina. Still a lot of companies are not so keen to consider a 'Consultant' for a senior line management role in the 'The Industry', Carlo's story shows that companies should consider this more easily

What was the biggest surprise when you started 1.5 years ago at FrieslandCampina?

It was a bit of a hectic start at FrieslandCampina. A few months into my job I was asked to be CIO-ad interim, till Erwin Logt joined as the new CIO 4 months later. The 'CIO-ad interim' came on top of my normal job.

At the start as Head of Global Infrastructure I was asked to solve a number of "hot topics" to bring infrastructure services to the next level continue to globalise. FrieslandCampina decided to outsource a number of infrastructure components after the merger, these were carried out in three major outsourcing projects over a short period of time.

When I started it was soon clear what went well, but also what

needed to be improved. Optimizing the outsourcing agreements, solving a number of critical issues was crucial. I felt comfortable in this role since I had been working for 17 years at IT providers in roles such as Project Manager, Manager, Project Executive Operations Director. Many of these roles were directly exposed to outsourcing issues, so that was knowledge skills that I could bring in. It was in my new role even more important to keep an eye on support alignment within the organisation. My commercial drive gives a tendency to speed things up make decisions, and that's fine! But you need to win support too, without sacrificing speed."

What should you assess when interviewing for a job in Global ICT:

What is the role of IT within the company; is it seen as a commodity or a strategic partner for the business to jointly generate competitive value. What is the spend on IT as a % of sales? To whom does the CIO report into? What is the vision of IT, where does Global IT want to be in 2-3 years? What is the current customer satisfaction with IT and where are the main improvement areas? What is the company's vision on digital and digital initiatives? How easy is it within the culture of the company to switch between other business units and IT?

What are the differences between working for an IT provider and 'the industry'?

At an IT provider the main driver is growth by selling more services to

customers. The focus is commercial and you're very dependent on the budget cycles of your potential customers. The commercial focus makes the work cycles shorter than in 'the industry'. When joining FrieslandCampina I had to change this focus; providing value add to the business. Focusing on providing commodity services at competitive costs. In the industry the cycles are longer and you're able to work on a longer term plan. I worked 17 years at tier 1 global IT service providers like IBM and that is a fantastic base to move from to an IT function in industry.





You are really seen as a trusted advisor and implementer who not only tells how it could be but actually shows that there is experience in concrete implementations. You take the necessary “battle ribbons” and “scars on the back” from commercial and implementation projects at other relevant companies. That has a lot of value. When I joined FrieslandCampina I noticed the large number of people who had been at the company for a long time; in IT consultancy moving jobs happens much more frequently. At FrieslandCampina there is a lot of knowledge in people’s heads, on how things are set-up and why it is so. The advantage is that there is a great deal of knowledge in the organization, in particular on existing (legacy) solutions. The disadvantage is that there is not always access to the latest ideas, solutions and awareness for the need for change. People who switch from consultancy to the Industry are therefore in a strong position to bring added value as they are aware of latest developments. Often ex-consultants have worked with many different companies and know what is, and what is not working in daily practice.”

How do you assess the last 1,5 years:

I see that the financial predictability of the CIO Office has improved and a number of significant quality improvements have been made focused on customer satisfaction and stabilizing sourcing delivery. IT customer satisfaction score

is 7.25- that’s almost a full point higher than a year ago. That is also what is great about working in the industry, you can really work on specific topics and develop a longer term vision and improve consumer satisfaction. The new CIO, Erwin Logt, has been in for over half a year and an additional 2 new colleagues in managerial positions from outside FrieslandCampina have joined. The feedback from our Executive Board is that ‘a new tone’ is coming from Global IT. As part of the change within IT, it was decided that our infrastructure and application management teams would join together into 1 new organization. That is a unit of around 250 employees spread across Europe and Asia, supplemented by 3 large outsourcing contracts. I am end-responsible for this unit as Director Development Operations as of March 1. As you see, a year and a half after my start at FrieslandCampina I’ve hardly had a breather.

Besides the further professionalization of our IT delivery and optimizing sourcing, we are also working at a number of very interesting new developments in the area of Digital Marketing / Sales, Analytics, and a new workplace for our employees. This also means we are creating a 2 speed IT organization. On one hand we develop and maintain our global SAP backbone with industrial speed and quality, while on the other hand we more iteratively want to develop new digital solutions in a matter of weeks.

Knowledge and expertise from a Tier 1 service provider are very appreciated at FrieslandCampina Especially if you’re willing to be hands on and show that you can step in “where the fire is”.

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