

BUSS

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REAL ESTATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR | CLUB TROUW | 7 STEPS TOWARDS A MORE EFFECTIVE CARREER | SOCIAAL MEDIA & MANAGEMENT | CROWDFUNDING IN REAL ESTATE | START UPS | ACADEMIC VIEWS ON INNOVATION | COLUMNS AND MORE...



Social Media and Management - 7 questions

Vincent Maaskant

Almost everybody carries a telephone around in today's world. Majority of students today ironically have their heads more fixed on the screens of their phones than their books. Times are changing and communication has taken a serious twist. From telegraphs to telephones to ping and now to whatsapp and tweets, digital communication has shaped the world we live in. It is evident that the future of society is very much dependent on technology and social media is gradually forming our perception of human interaction.

Recently word reached us about a renowned project management company in Amsterdam that makes use of Social Media in a rather positive way as a communication tool during construction management processes. It turned out this approach is extremely efficient and effective and we decided therefore to conduct a short interview with one of the pioneers of the phenomenon, Vincent Maaskant. Below is a summary of this interview, which depicts the history of the company, how the idea came about, how it is implemented, the challenges and how it has shaped the company's prospects towards the future.

Keywords: social media, Db-m, management, communication

1. How did it all begin?

db-m was founded in 2010 by two experienced projectleaders: Hans Colijn and Vincent Maaskant. Both men have over 15 years of experience in supervising large and complex construction projects in the initial as well implementation phase. Based on the success of a number of projects the two decided to join forces to establish one bureau that would embody all their expertise. This is how db-m was born.

db-m

The unique combination of the two is also characteristic of the company. db-m helps various commercial and non-profit organizations to take and maintain control of their projects. Significantly, services such as construction project management, construction management, contract monitoring and quality are combined with project communication and social media; unique in the Netherlands. The interests of the client are always central. Db-m is noted to operate on a so called 'champions league level and has a contemporary and digital process which is a breath of fresh air in the construction management.

Despite a solid theoretical background db-m's consultant always work from a practical perspective and this approach has been very fruitful. In each phase of the project, db-m's advisors level the field for clients, consultants and contractors involved to ensure fruitful deliberation and decision making. The effective communication strategy of db-m which is termed 'the no-nagging warranty', prevents miscommunication or misinterpretation and ultimately guarantees projects being successfully completed without worry.

Similarly, db-m supports integrated consultancy and project management, preventing uncertainties from being overlooked. The company therefore offers the total package that is efficiency and effectiveness ensuring short lines and rapid knowledge transfer. When necessary, external specialists are employed to achieve the best result.

2. What makes db-m unique?

Unique combination: construction management & communication
Communication is an important part of the building process. Not only is the success of a project dependent on the internal communication but also external communication is rather significant. This inherently builds support, reduces misguided feelings and simply contributes to a good image for the project and your business. Although communication may seem irrelevant, a construction project cannot do without it. db-m therefore offers a total package, which fuses communication with construction management; online and offline. In addition, you have everything in one hand, as db-m ensures proficiency and adequacy, with regards to that which is externally communicated.

3. How did this concept come about?

db-m (Vincent Maaskant) has for a number of years been involved in the construction of the new Hague Central Station. This station was demolished and rebuilt 'with the shop open': trains keep riding, shops

Vincent Maaskant

Co-founder and construction manager of db-m. Vincent has guided many projects towards success. In 2010, he founded db-m together with Hans Colijn. Currently Vincent also works for ProRail (The Hague New Central) and MAB Development and Fund- ASR (shopping Terwijde).



"Citizens become much more verbal, supporters and opponents are easily found through social media and everyone shares his opinion easily."

and services are always available. Communication is crucial during such a complex project by which one has to deal with several stakeholders (travelers, residents, shopkeepers, tenants, HTM, NS, ProRail, the

Municipality of The Hague, Ministry IenM, RET, contractors and subcontractors, etc.). ProRail (main client) employed Katja Torbijn for communication during the construction, which was significantly based on

online communications and social media. Lately, the importance of communication during construction projects is on the rise: citizens become much more verbal, supporters and opponents are easily found through social media and everyone shares his opinion easily. This fact combined with the excellent cooperation between Vincent and Katja made this new collaborative process obvious.

4. How it is implemented and incorporated into management?

Communication and social media are not only used in the projects of db-m, but are also an important part of business. With regards to the incorporation of social Media into Management, there is firstly, a strategic communication plan that is updated annually. Subsequently, the contracts of the employees states that they present themselves positively and are active in social media. Those who are not familiar with it are given the necessary aid.

5. What are the advantages of this approach?

Advantages of a joint approach for the entire construction management including communications are mainly the fact that as a client of db-m has everything under one roof. This means construction management and communication are very dependent on each other; there is familiarity, corporation and clarity on what is expected from various parties. In addition, the lines of communication are short and direct, making communication transparent and all aware of what is going on. E.g. communication through 'WhatsApp groups.'

6. What are the challenges?

The main challenges are internal and essentially time related; that there is always too little. Therefore our own communication sometimes disappears into the background or has less priority. On the outside, the challenge lies in the fact that not everyone understands that communication is really needed, and therefore sometimes much persuasion is needed. Yet we see that more and more companies recognize the usefulness and necessity as they want to apply similar tools, but do not know how.



Two projects where Vincent Maaskant is currently working on. 1: Den Haag Central Station. 2: Shopping Terwijde Utrecht

We, in many cases, help or assist such companies or projects.

7. What inspires db-m?

Fortunately we are surrounded by a number of ambitious companies. These companies outside the building are very inspiring because just like us, from their own point of view, they make use of social media. We can therefore learn from each other. We also get inspired by our enthusiastic followers as well our blog readers or clients who read our articles and parts. They all bring to the table, a certain energy that motivates us to continue to expand and keep up with new development in the world of social media.

Some projects that have benefited from this approach are

The Hague Central Station: <http://db-m.nl/station-en-omgeving/station-den-haag-centraal,-den-haag>

Shopping Terwijde Utrecht <http://db-m.nl/woongebouwen/winkelcentrum-terwijde,-utrecht>