

# » Newsletter International

Netherlands



- » [Greeting](#)
- » [Team](#)
- » [News](#)
- » [The Dutch way – Experiences of a new colleague](#)
- » [Impressum](#)

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## Greeting

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### Headline



***„Als de lente komt, stuur ik jou tulpen uit Amsterdam“ (Dutch folksong: „When spring arrives I'll send you tulips from Amsterdam.“).***

Summer has finally arrived in the Netherlands but we are still waiting for the economical spring as the local economy went into its third recession in four years time. This is mainly caused by a complete standstill of local consumer spending who have lost trust in the economy as real estate prices have been dropping consistently since 2008 and are expected to drop further in 2013 and 2014. Real estate prices have dropped 20% by now and another 5-8% is expected. This has had a dramatic effect not only on the construction industry and all its suppliers but also on many other businesses. Companies are reluctant to invest in new ventures and expansion, instead they are forced to downsize and weed out management levels.

But confidence is slowly, slowly on the rise. The real estate price drop is bottoming out and US and Japanese economies appear to be growing again and last but not least the German economy is keeping its grounds. Germany is Netherlands most important trading partner. What many do not realize is that the Netherlands is the second largest trading partner of Germany, after France but before China! Other important trading partners for the Netherlands are Belgium, France and the UK. The fastest growing trading partners for the Netherlands are China, Taiwan, Turkey and Indonesia. Export is currently one of the few drivers the Dutch economy is thriving on. Export grew 9% year on year in the past two years.

Top sectors for the Dutch economy are food and food ingredients (second largest exporter in the world), agri raw materials (second largest exporter in the world), chemicals, pharma, water engineering/construction, consumer goods, electronic equipment and of course logistics. At Kienbaum Netherlands we have built up expertise and clients in these most promising industries the Netherlands has to offer.

We have an experienced, motivated, international team driving for quality and high service not only in the field of Executive Search but also in Management Audits, Coaching and NewPlacement.

As a team we truly enjoy and appreciate cooperating with you, our international colleagues, both in KMC and KEC, as well as KC and KMS and express our wish to expand and intensify these co-operations. In the meantime we thank you for your attention and send you tulips from Amsterdam!

With best regards,

Hans Jonkers



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## Team

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### The Amsterdam Team



Currently, there are 9 colleagues working at the Kienbaum office in Amsterdam: Hans Jonkers (Managing Director), Melanie Sikkes (Senior Consultant), Laura Boege (Senior Consultant), Anisha Wai (Senior Associate & Chinese Desk), Leonie Wiedom (Associate), Daniëlle Anli (Office Manager/Finance), Tasja Manolarakis (Office Manager/IT/Marcom), Kai Carbaat (student) and Malou Bolhaar (student).

From left to right: Laura Boege, Tasja Manolarakis, Gamze Sahan (left in 2013), Daniëlle Anli, Melanie Sikkes, Hans Jonkers, Anisha Wai, Leonie Wiedom.

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## News

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### Kienbaum Amsterdam - Much more than Executive Search

At Kienbaum Amsterdam we pride ourselves on the diversity of projects and clients. Due to the market size of the Netherlands and the comparably small size of our office, we offer a broad range of services which is reflected in the projects we have worked on these previous months. Many of these are joint projects with other Kienbaum offices, whether it's KMC, KEC or KC and KMS. Examples of these are the Executive Search for a CFO for SNCF, three Management Audits for Schueco and a Leadership Echo for Rehau.

Since 2008, activities in the area of HR services have expanded greatly and we have partnered with many international colleagues in the area of Management Audits, Coaching projects, Global Assessment Centers and NewPlacement. In fact E.On Benelux is now one of our larger clients and we recently completed a number of HR Placement Audits for them. We have also been able to grow the local Dutch client base in this area. We believe our strength lies in the fact that as trained Executive Search Consultants, we employ our vast knowledge in the areas of industries, market changes and demographic developments to help us in the other services. In addition to this, the tools we use for Executive Search are very similar, e.g. structured interviews. More importantly, we aim to grow services outside of our core business, Executive Search, such as Management Audit, Coaching, Training and NewPlacement. We have been expanding our expertise in these areas by doing joint projects for Dutch clients together with our expert German colleagues in these fields. At this point we would also like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued co-operation with us so far and we look forward to many more joint projects – be it in the area of Executive Search, NewPlacement or Management Audits/Assessment Center, Coaching and so on.

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## Our strenghts

We have extensive knowledge in the field of:

- Retail: Fashion, Department Store, Super Markets, Electronics
- Food and Food Ingredients: Dairy, Active Ingredients
- Oil & Gas: Upstream, Mid Stream and Down stream
- IT & Telecom & Media: Infrastructure, Content, Television, Software
- Logistics: Rail, Bus, Reverse Logistics, Warehousing
- Automotive: Coatings, Plastics, Shock absorbers, Electronics
- Chemicals: Plastics, Coatings, HSE, Compliance
- Pharma: Generics, Packaging
- Construction Materials: Claddings, Flooring, Kitchen
- Energy/Utilities: Wind, Sun, Bio, EPC
- Engineering/Manufacturing: Glass, Semi-Conductors, Pumps, Filters, Steel, EPC
- Water Management/Engineering/Construction

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## Some of our important clients

More information:

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## The Dutch way –

### Experiences of a new colleague

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#### Leonie Wiedom - Associate

##### **The “Kuilengravers” (=Sandpits diggers) among the “Kaaskoppen” (=cheese heads)**

Sometimes – when I am stuck in day-to-day traffic jam, when I am having my so-called “lunch” that leaves much to be desired (Who would seriously call a cheese sandwich with milk a lunch?) or when I hear my German friends talking about their number of national holidays – I ask myself “Why did I actually decide to move to the Netherlands and start working here?”

I am not the only one. Tens of thousands of Germans are working in the Netherlands these days. Three of them are employed by Kienbaum in Amsterdam.

I should have become suspicious when I got invited for an interview at the Kienbaum office in Amsterdam that involved me being interviewed by 6(!) Kienbaum employees – in other words half of the office. I thought I was well prepared but I did not expect questions like “What was the craziest thing you have done in your life?” Now, one year later, such an approach is totally reasonable for me. Fitting in the team and a good sense of humor is at least as important for the Dutch as relevant studies and work experience. Furthermore, this is living proof of the Dutchies’ fondness of their “Polder-model”: Even though individual input and suggestions are highly valued, the Dutch place a high importance on consensus, which often leads to rather slow decision making (and indeed also lengthy negotiations in business life) since input from everyone is being considered.

I like the relaxed and pleasant atmosphere in the Netherlands. A literal “open-door-policy”, being on a first name basis with the boss as well as the client, wearing tight trousers at half-mast combined with funky tops and ties, not starting a meeting without a “kopje koffie” – these are just a few examples of the Dutch working culture. Furthermore, the Dutch enjoy their work-life balance and it is not uncommon for them to end a work week with a “Borrel”, i.e. after work drinks, which cannot be better described by any word other than by the Dutch word “gezellig”.

Some expats might, however, misinterpret the casual/non-hierarchical working relationships and believe that there is not much to be expected in the Netherlands with regards to work performance. The opposite is true. In addition to meeting one’s role requirements, dialogues between management and staff are strongly encouraged and seniors welcome – and actually even expect – input from subordinates. Along with creativity, self-initiative and independence might this probably be the biggest challenge for “the hierarchical German” in the Netherlands. On the other hand, Germans bring a variety of traits to the table that are highly appreciated by the Dutch. Next to being well-educated, Germans are known for their punctuality, discipline, reliability, loyalty as well as high levels of motivation and their quality of work. Thus, in general, reservations towards Germans rarely exist anymore. Germany even is one of the most popular holiday destinations for the Dutch nowadays. The number of Dutch professionals in Germany is growing as well.

Besides the working atmosphere, there are some hard facts that may further motivate Germans to start or continue their careers in the Netherlands. The country has solidly established itself as a leading site for European (e.g. Nike, Tata, Sabic, Sara Lee, Starbucks) and global (e.g. Shell, Unilever, Philips and ING) headquarters, not least due to its neutral, pro-business and economically rather stable nature as well as a supportive corporate tax structure. This is complemented by an abundance of multi-lingual and multi-skilled employees and an excellent physical and telecommunications infrastructure – not to mention strategic location. Some professionals are also attracted by a better salary or secondary benefits in the Netherlands. Next to a company pension system the Netherlands also offer tax benefits (30% ruling) for professionals from abroad. Others may be tempted by the rather flexible job market and a high value placed on work-life balance. Working part-time is very common and especially attractive for young families. Moreover, Dutch employers invest significantly in sportive activities, i.e. by organising cycling tours or tennis, football or fishing tournaments, which is in part certainly based on the fact that they are obliged to pay up to two years of sickness allowance. With this, legislators want to force employers in the Netherlands to better pay attention to the health of their employees.

In sum, there are a couple of factors that may explain why a career in the Netherlands can indeed be attractive for Germans and that also motivated me to pursue a career at Kienbaum in Amsterdam. And even though it was kind of “disappointing” for me to realize that none of my Dutch colleagues travel to work by bicycle or boat, smoke joints during the weekend, own a caravan or wear wooden clogs, the good news is that at least there are some windmills and tulip fields on my daily way to work. Which make the daily traffic jams actually quite acceptable ...

*Leonie Wiedom, Associate at Kienbaum Executive Search in Amsterdam since 2011*

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## Impressum

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