

The Dutch Red Cross Transitions to a Professional Project Organization

Het Nederlandse  **Rode Kruis**

By Gijs Verrest
Consultant, Kepner-Tregoe



With the slogan "Clear Thinking for a Complex World," Kepner-Tregoe is helping organizations to bring clarity to the way they are working. This leads to tangible results, as the Dutch Red Cross demonstrates.

The Dutch Red Cross consistently runs numerous large and small projects. In many of them, it is necessary for departments to cooperate effectively among themselves. "In those situations it's crucial that everyone speaks the same language," says Kepner-Tregoe (KT) consultant Gijs Verrest. "We provide the structure for definition, planning, and execution of projects. Gradually we organize the people, the thinking, and the activities. See it as a functional mind-set that lasts, which people embrace and accept as the normal way of working. With it they have a scalable tool to control and manage both large and small projects. We have provided the Dutch Red Cross with a toolkit that allows them to get better results from projects."

Jeroen den Tex, Chief Marketing Officer

"A COMBINATION OF USEFUL THEORY WITH DIRECT APPLICABILITY"

Chief Marketing Officer Jeroen den Tex is responsible for marketing and fund-raising, and is very pleased with the support offered by KT. Jeroen den Tex:

"We see the nature of our work change, there is a shift happening from a 'production' to a project organization. It is therefore important to increase the skills of employees. KT's methodology is not only clear and thorough, but also very accessible. Anyone can utilize it and it allows management and the rest of the organization to speak the same language. That is not self-evident, because a word or a technical term could have a very different meaning for different people. As a manager, I now see a smoother flow of projects and I have a better overview. This obliges me to keep the KT principles high on the agenda."



Eric van Leeuwen, Project Manager

"WE KNOW IN ADVANCE WHAT TO EXPECT"

Project Manager Eric van Leeuwen engages in fund-raising from inheritances, and leads multiple projects to get people interested. The frequent programs are a combination of marketing, fund-raising, and database management that requires activities to be coordinated carefully. Eric van Leeuwen: "KT has helped me to align people of different disciplines. Previously, individual departments had their own way of planning, and their own opinions of how things should happen. Now everyone has an overview of the project in advance and understands exactly what needs to be done. As early as the preparatory phase, we see the tasks, duration, cost, and the difficulties we could face. And, if during the project things need to be adjusted, then everyone understands immediately how and why. That's because we all speak the same language during project meetings."



Marga Euser, Human Resource Advisor

“A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR EVERYONE”

Human Resource Advisor Marga Euser is co-responsible for professional development of the employees. One objective is to pro-actively strengthen and broaden people’s competencies. This is where KT has been contributing. Marga Euser: “We needed people skilled in project management. Three of our employees had previously attended a KT training workshop and they were immediately very positive about the clear and usable methods. This is why we opted for an organization-wide rollout which generated shared enthusiasm as a result. No complicated sheets and formats, just practical tools to collaborate more easily in projects. Everyone thinks and acts at the same level and speaks the same language, which is much better than individual training for project managers and project staff. We now all have the same solid foundation that has created a common understanding. The project management training is evaluated as excellent and we will certainly continue working with KT.”



Frederike de Graaf, Project Manager

“ONE WORD SHOULD BE ENOUGH FOR YOU”

For over ten years Frederike de Graaf has been leading major projects at the Dutch Red Cross. Two years ago the National Volunteer Day needed organizing and last year was the launch of the Princess Margriet Fund at Carré. At present, she is working on a portfolio describing all ongoing national and international projects. Frederike de Graaf: “Since KT’s project management training, I can clearly see that we have made progress, certainly in large projects. Through the practical insights and methods we have a better grip on all steps involved. There are enormous gains especially in the preliminary stages. The daily reality often requires fast, faster, fastest. Then, in projects, it is key to get people’s heads together in time for thorough preparation. If you reach agreement about objectives and responsibilities beforehand, then the execution of the project will go much smoother and cost a fraction of the time and effort. Also, if everything is clear in advance, it is also much easier to adjust the plan. This clarity can only be achieved by everyone speaking the same project language, which is crucial particularly in multidisciplinary projects emphasize. Then one word should be enough for you.”



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About Gijs Verrest

Consultant, Trainer and Facilitator

As management consultant for Kepner-Tregoe, Inc., Gijs Verrest has facilitated many organizations on their improvement journeys, from operational excellence to strategy formulation and implementation of new processes and skills.

With more than 15 years of experience he has a firm belief in the great potential of employing better structured thinking processes for transforming the performance of organizations. He mastered the use of KT's core methodologies and has extensive experience in process improvement and issue resolution.

He works with executives designing consulting and skill development interventions to maximize the operational impact, from shop floor to management level. Inside KT he has product management and development responsibilities to further improve KT offerings.

He has worked in many industries and for a broad range of international clients such as Airbus, Akzo Nobel, Cargill, Hallmark, Heineken, Philips, Sara Lee, Sony Ericsson, Total and Unilever.

Gijs brings to KT extensive experience in the field of creativity and innovation. Prior to joining KT he worked seven years as a consultant, trainer, and facilitator of Creative Problem Solving in product development, marketing, and other business areas. Gijs holds a masters degree in Industrial Design Engineering—specialization in Innovation Management—from the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands.

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About Kepner-Tregoe

For over 50 years, KT is the 'gold standard' in critical and clear thinking and a global leader in transforming organizations to work more efficiently and effectively. The KT approach is characterized by a combination of advice, skill development and coaching with the purpose of get a better grip on improvement efforts while embedding them in the daily operations.



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