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The **RIGHT** hire

Randstad Australia has been shaping the world of work for 25 years. As the company celebrates this milestone, its CEO is looking to increase its profitable growth and brand recognition.

Images by Scott Ehler

Randstad Australia has been shaping the world of work for 25 years. As the company celebrates this milestone, its CEO is looking to increase its profitable growth and brand recognition.

With a host of specialities to its name, Randstad Australia has long been a prominent player in the recruitment industry. As the company continues to grow and influence the world of work, CEO Frank Ribuot is positioning the company to become a true market leader in its field.

The CEO Magazine sat down with Frank to discuss the future of Randstad and the Australian market.

***The CEO Magazine:* Randstad is celebrating 25 years. What do you think lies behind its longevity?**

Frank: I think it's our complete commitment to shaping the world of work. Randstad was created by Frits Goldschmeding in the Netherlands 55 years ago, and he's still a major shareholder. Frits was one of the global pioneers of our industry. Our global mission is to shape the world of work for companies and for jobseekers.

As a recruitment company, people are your core asset. How have you built the team at Randstad and developed a productive culture?

We're in the process of doing that. I was appointed around eight months ago, and I really spent the first few months defining the message in terms of what we're trying to achieve and how we need to speak to our employees, communicate to people around us, and look at the day-to-day management of individuals.

Another aspect is determining whether we have the right people in the management team to drive that message. The first few months were really about strategy setting, and then it was about execution and putting the right people in place at the management level to make sure everything we talk about actually happens. There are a lot of demands on the management team because we need to be inspiring when we talk to our employees. It's not only a question of managing KPIs or everyday activities; it's more around helping people, coaching them, and actually showing them the way.

What values and principles are core to Randstad's operations and approach?

The global values of Randstad are to know, to serve, to trust, to strive

"Our global mission is to shape the world of work for companies and for jobseekers."

- Frank Ribuot

for perfection, and simultaneous promotion of all interests. When you look at the way they influence us in Australia, I've found that we're very true to the values of the company: the type of people we recruit, the atmosphere we have in the organisation; everything we do is really linked to our values.

A lot of people, including myself, have commented on how inclusive, communicative, and team-oriented the culture is, and it's really something that is core to Randstad. It's about being part of the one Randstad, rather than just being an outpost.

Our international head office is extremely supportive; they're very aligned with what we are aiming to achieve locally. We're headquartered in Amsterdam, and the team there are very consultative in the way they work with us. They really look at helping us and finding the right solutions and the right way to go to market.

You believe that recruitment companies can be a good indicator of a country's overall economic health. Where do you see Australia and its economy going in coming years?

Recruitment is a very good indicator of the short-term economic health of a country. Looking at where a country would go in the next three, four, five, or >



six months, we're a very good indicator because our business looks at temporary staffing, specialised recruitment, and a lot of HR solutions that deal with recruitment and management of the workforce.

Depending on where the economic cycle is or the complexity of the legislation or other external factors, we can see some of the businesses growing faster than others. Australia is definitely showing a very strong appetite for flexibility, and if we look at the trends today I think that's mostly linked to the economic uncertainty. You see a lot of growth in the temporary contractor market.

You have companies who just don't want to take the risk of employing somebody permanently, so they just put him or her on a contract. The 'test before you buy' kind of approach seems to be becoming more and more prevalent as people are rethinking where they invest in terms of people.

The interesting thing that we've seen after the global financial crisis is that companies have become used to working with a certain level of staffing and they are very reluctant to go back and increase their staff unless they have a very strong clarity around the future—and that's not always the case.

How have partners and suppliers contributed to Randstad's continuing competitiveness?

They contribute greatly to it. Our partners could be the people that source the right individual, or they could be some of our own associates or contractors who know intimately what the clients are like and who can help us source the right people. We have a pretty large community of partners.

If you look at suppliers and the influence technology has had—and is still having—on our business, they play a critical part in our success. We have to have agile



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technology partners who can help us find solutions that will make sense.

How are you strategically positioning Randstad to compete in Australia's shifting environment?

We're increasing the range of services that we provide. We've got 14 specialist divisions within Randstad. We're providing solutions that didn't even exist in Australia a few years ago—things like how we can help companies with their workforce planning for their casual workforce. The reason why we do that is to help companies drive costs down.

We want to make Australia a more competitive place to work. If we can achieve savings by managing workforces better, then we can encourage more companies to stay here. •



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