

Message to the stakeholders



The bpost group in 10 keywords

bpost group Chairman of the Board of Directors, François Cornelis, and the brand new CEO, Jean-Paul Van Avermaet, have great ambitions for their company. In their opinion, digitization offers as many opportunities as risks. And thanks to strategic acquisitions and investments, bpost group should play a more important role, including at an international level. Here is their New Year's letter, in 10 keywords.

Ambition

François Cornelis - Chairman of the Board of Directors:

“Above all, our ambition is to transform bpost group - a traditional postal operator - into a leading player in the field of e-commerce logistics. Consumption patterns have radically changed in recent years, and our business must be able to respond to them effectively. I think consumer expectation brings many challenges in this regard, but at the same time, I see it as a solid growth driver that can offset the decline in traditional mail. The internal transformation that the company has undergone in recent years, combined with external acquisitions, help us meet this challenge. E-commerce is a sector in its own right, a profession with its specific skills. We acquired more of these skills since the acquisition of Radial, among others. The major challenge will be to integrate these new skills and the additional expertise into the company as quickly as possible.”

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet - Chief Executive Officer: "Our society is digitizing, and that is why we need to transform. In my opinion, it is crucial to involve everyone who works with us in order to offer them a new future. As for the 'last mile', we already acquired a great deal of experience with the traditional mail; we still need to extend this expertise to an efficient and satisfactory 'last mile' distribution model for parcels."

Services

François Cornelis: "The postman's daily passage is a unique asset. This physical presence allows us to offer other services. To this end, we have established a number of partnerships. We will continue to study the possibility of offering new services in the coming years. In doing so, we hope to create other sources of revenue that could offset the decline of traditional mail."

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet: "These new services can build on the 'last mile' and our unique proximity to the customer, but also exploit the know-how and the strengths that we have accumulated over time. Think of our collaboration with the Federal Public Service within the framework of the traffic fines platform, for example. In the future, we could work with the authorities in other areas to help them make their services towards citizens more efficient and more user-friendly."

Sustainability

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet: "In recent years, we have made considerable efforts to build a greener fleet, from simple

electric bikes and mopeds to cars and cargo bikes. Where possible, we want to continue to focus on sustainability. We see sustainability in a broader sense: for example, our automatic Cubee parcel lockers help reduce the number of kilometres travelled by allowing customers to collect their parcels themselves. We have noticed that municipal administrations and end customers particularly appreciate this formula."

E-commerce

François Cornelis: "Radial is one of the major e-commerce players in the United States, offering a range of services covering the entire e-commerce logistics chain. With this acquisition, bpost has established itself on the world's leading market. We want to consolidate this position and deploy the same activities in Europe. We have taken the first steps by establishing ourselves in countries like Germany, the United Kingdom and Italy. We are developing these activities based on the Radial model in the United States."

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet: "It is clear that, in a very large market like the United States, an interesting segment has developed alongside the major commercial players in e-commerce. We must strive to develop a similar alternative offer in Europe, complementary to the existing market."

Innovation

François Cornelis: "Innovation is becoming a major theme for the company. The extremely rapid technological development characterized by artificial intelligence,

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The digitization of our society brings many challenges in this regard, but at the same time, I see it as a solid growth driver.”

François Cornelis,
bpost group Chairman

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Jean-Paul Van Avermaet,
bpost group CEO

robotics, blockchain and machine learning is transforming our professions and confronting us with permanent evolution. So, in order to respond to this evolution, we needed to strengthen the technical teams and develop an innovation expertise centre."

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet: "Technological innovation is at the top of our agenda. This is reflected in initiatives such as bpost's Future Lab and an 'innovation committee', but also in a number of pilot projects in the field of robotics and artificial intelligence. That said, we view innovation as an instrument to absorb and manage our future growth, not as a way to cut our workforce."

The human factor

François Cornelis: "Few professions are as visible to the public eye as that of the postman and we are still the largest private employer in the country. The human dimension is therefore of great importance within our company, at all levels."

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet: "People are the strength of our business. For many years, bpost has also been recruiting people from vulnerable target groups to train them in their workplace, within the company. Right now, we are one of the largest employers of short-schooled employees, offering them the opportunity to graduate from secondary school. In this sense, we can say that bpost is present and active at all levels of the community."

Digitization

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet: "Digitization was of course the main driver of the explosive growth of e-commerce and therefore of the increase in the number of parcels. I also consider digitization as an important pillar in the development of new services for citizens. We are already carrying out experiments in that direction and hope to develop them into real-life solutions as soon as possible. Regardless of that, I think bpost has a duty to continue to serve customers who have not yet jumped on the digital train."

Society

François Cornelis: "bpost provides an important social service and wishes to be able to provide it over the long

term. To this end, bpost will seek to develop additional services to society in partnership with the State."

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet: "Digitization has contributed to the fact that there is less contact between people, that society is perceived as less welcoming. In my opinion, bpost has always acted as a kind of physical intermediary between the government and the citizen, and I would like us to be able to continue to take on this prominent local role."

Transformation

François Cornelis: "A first example is the introduction of a new distribution model. The automation of sorting processes as performed by Active Ants is a second example. The transformation of the company that started several years ago should lead to the creation of a new European player."

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet: "When we talk about the 'last mile', we are of course referring to the Belgian level, where we want to stay at the forefront, in a sustainable way. E-commerce certainly still has room for growth in Belgium. To be convinced, you only need to look at the development of e-commerce and logistics in our neighbouring countries."

Clients

François Cornelis: "bpost is growing in increasingly competitive and customer-oriented professions. The Board of Directors therefore wishes to put the customer at the centre of bpost's concerns."

Jean-Paul Van Avermaet: "Customers must be our top priority, and in this regard, I think we can do even better than in the past. More behind the scenes than in direct contact with them. Customer value, whether this customer is big or small, must be the starting point for each of our activities."