

CONNECTING YOUNG TALENT WITH TOP DUTCH EMPLOYERS



The Netherlands' labour market remains one of the most competitive in Europe alongside nations such as Germany and Switzerland, as employers vie for the best talent available. According to a report by the *NL Times*, there were approximately 450,000 job vacancies in the Netherlands by July 2023 – just two per cent less than the previous year.¹ Whilst this means that unemployment rates are lower, there are plenty of unfilled job vacancies still – including in the country's most skilled sectors – and matching up the country's brightest young graduates and professionals with its top employers is a high priority.

Taking the lead is Geert Nab, the CEO of recruitment and labour communications specialist Memory Group. From offering free group photos to student graduates in exchange for their contact details to connecting them directly with top Dutch employers through high-tech solutions and major in-person events, Memory Group has innovated the country's recruitment market. We spoke to Geert about the condition of the Netherlands' labour market, the challenges faced by job seekers and business leaders, and how both parties benefit from Memory Group's cutting-edge products.

How would you describe the current labour market conditions?

In the Netherlands, for quite some time now, it has no longer been a 'war on talent' but a 'war on people'. Labour market tension remains unabated in almost every industry, with the lowest unemployment rate in the EU. For every 100 unemployed people, there were 122 vacancies in the last quarter. And although the labour force is currently still growing by an average of 76,000 people a year, from 2025 onward, this growth will decline to zero per year by 2040.

Partly due to an ageing population, but also due to the shortest average working week in Europe of 32.4 hours, the Dutch labour market will remain tight for the next two decades. Put briefly, a labour market where the major shortages will continue to cause major challenges for many employers in the coming years and where the retention of current staff, together with employer branding and the recruitment of new colleagues, will remain high on the agenda. It is no coincidence that hundreds of top employers and training courses are now successfully using Memory Group's innovative products.

Can you talk us through the various careers fairs and talent games put together by Memory Group?

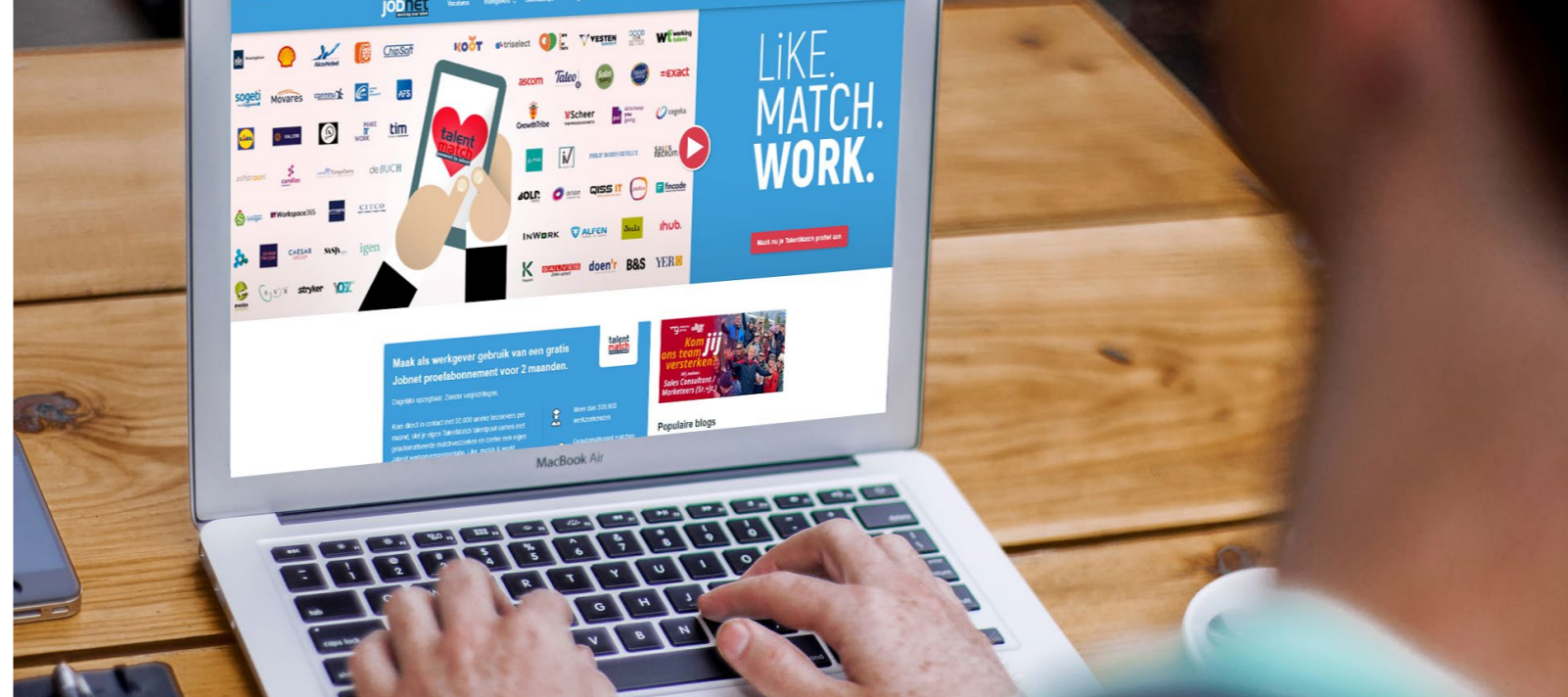
Memory Group is an ambitious company specialising in communication between (young) talent and employers in the Netherlands. For 25 years, our National Career Fair has been the largest careers event in the Netherlands where, last April, 10,500-plus visitors in Amsterdam were introduced to more than 200 employers and training courses from home and abroad. Next year, we expect a record number of more than 300 exhibitors on 22-23 March.

The National Career Fair is divided into various sub-fairs, such as The IT Career Fair,

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The Engineering Career Fair, The Government Career Fair, The Care & Welfare Career Fair, The International Master Fair, and Working in the Caribbean. On the floor of the fair, all employers and training courses are divided by sub-fair and industry so that visitors can quickly find their way to engage with the employers and/or training courses that are right for them.

We are also organising our IT Talent Game again in 2024. An exciting competition among mainly graduating IT Talent who can get in touch with up to 10 top IT employers via speed dating sessions and interviews at the IT Career Fair on 22-23 March, on special in-house days and at a finale at the F1 circuit in Zandvoort.



What are the main benefits for employers/recruiters attending these fairs?

The National Career Fair, and its sub-fairs, is the largest career event in the Netherlands, where online and offline talent acquisition and employer branding are flawlessly aligned to each other.

From four weeks prior to the Fair, employers will have access to their own online Match&Meet talent pools, powered by our own career portal Jobnet.nl. With these online talent pools, employers can approach pre-registered candidates via email or mobile phone prior to the Fair, to invite them for an interview at their own office or at the Fair. During the Fair itself, visitors can use our Career Fair app at the stand to show which profile of the employer in question they have a match with. And after the Fair, the employer can also use its own Match&Meet talent pools to see which pre-registered visitors did or did not visit the Fair. This allows recruitment to carry on in full swing even after the Fair, to get the maximum return on participation! For each Match&Meet candidate, a lot of data is available such as educational specifications, work experience, and hard and soft skills.

Compared to LinkedIn, for example, all those who are pre-registered in the online Match&Meet talent pools are candidates, with and without work experience, who are keen enough to come to Amsterdam for at least part of a day to find out about all the

hundreds of top employers and training courses present. In other words, visitors to The National Career Fair are much 'warmer' recruitment leads than those from online-only channels.

Another important USP of the largest career event in the Netherlands is that each participating employer benefits from the pulling power of the other hundreds of top employers and training courses. After all, together they have a huge appeal to the job-seeking Netherlands, which also fills the online Match&Meet talent pools with candidates that any employer could never generate 'stand-alone'.

Last but not least, everyone in the Netherlands also knows The National Career Fair for its great media campaigns on social media, outdoor, TV and Radio, among others. Where possible, employers and courses benefit from this through the publication of logos, vacancy placements or, for example, their own tag-on radio commercial, all of which contributes to (even) better employer branding.

What are the biggest recruitment challenges currently facing employers and how can you help them to overcome these?

Especially with the current and continuing competitive labour market, finding and recruiting the right candidates quickly and efficiently remains key. Besides continuing to



Geert Nab, CEO Memory Group

work on a strong employer brand, of course. The data-driven Match&Meet recruitment software of our career portal Jobnet.nl, taken with the fact that simply participating in The National Career Fair gives employer branding another huge boost, and that everyone benefits from the pulling power of the other hundreds of employers and training courses as well, means that participation in the largest career event in the Netherlands has proven to be the ultimate innovation in recruitment services, and one that easily pays for itself. After all, the costs of participation are often lower than those of recruiting just one candidate through, for example, a recruitment and selection agency.

What about the challenges facing prospective employees?

We are living once more, and for a long time to come, in the age of the 'applicant employer'. As a result, employees are and will continue to be constantly approached online with the most fantastic job offers. As a candidate, you then want to be able to quickly and efficiently separate the wheat from the chaff.

¹NL Times – Dutch labour market still tight... (25 July 2023) www.nltimes.nl/2023/07/25/dutch-labor-market-still-tight-slightly-fewer-vacancies-last-summer



The biggest career event in the Netherlands where online and offline talent acquisition and employer branding seamless connect to each other!



A large platform like The National Career Fair and its sub-fairs – including the Match&Meet talent pools – provides the possibility of efficient and maximum orientation for the first or next step in your career. In addition, with TalentMatch, our career portal Jobnet.nl also offers a 24/7 matching tool where the candidate sits in the driver's seat. He/she decides which fully automated networking request from an applicant employer is accepted or not. And once accepted, a recruiter receives notification of this in his or her mailbox at least once a month, including the candidates' personal details and contact details.

To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the recruitment market and how has Memory Group altered the services it offers to accommodate this changing landscape?

Prior to COVID-19, you saw the recruitment market moving towards online tools and solutions. By the time of COVID-19, there was no longer a choice between off- and online and it all had to be online to the point where it had become boring and irritating. For career fairs, this turned out to be a blessing in retrospect, as everyone longed for live meetings like our National Career Fair again.

For Memory Group, the COVID-19 crisis also turned out positively in retrospect. After all, we were given time to escape the turmoil of day-to-day activities and invested a lot of time and money into IT solutions such as Match&Meet. As a result, The National Career Fair is now a superbly effective combination of online and offline talent acquisition. But we were also able to develop the highly innovative Career Fair app which, shortly before and during The National Career Fair this year, ranked number two in the Appstore of social networks, just behind WhatsApp. A world-class achievement that I, my team, and our IT supplier are really proud of!

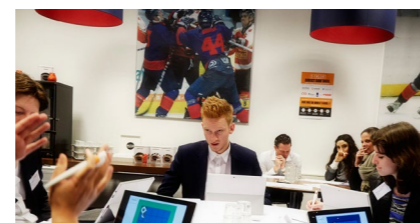
Are there any exciting future plans and developments in the pipeline at Memory Group?

Success always leaves you hungry for more, especially now! Next year, with a special Lawyers' congress app, we are once more organising The National Lawyers' congress at the time of The National Career Fair. And we are investing heavily in new colleagues to make The International Hospitality Fair and the Retail Career Fair bigger and more international next year. But we are also going to organise The Chemistry & Life-sciences and The Maritime Career Fairs in 2024.

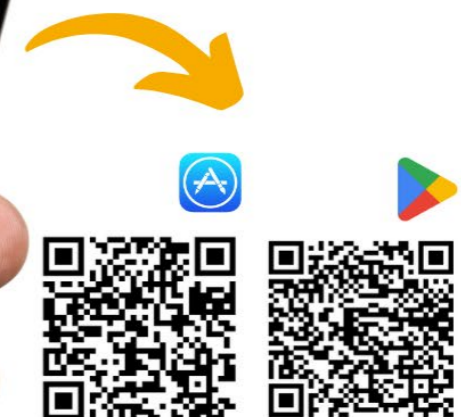
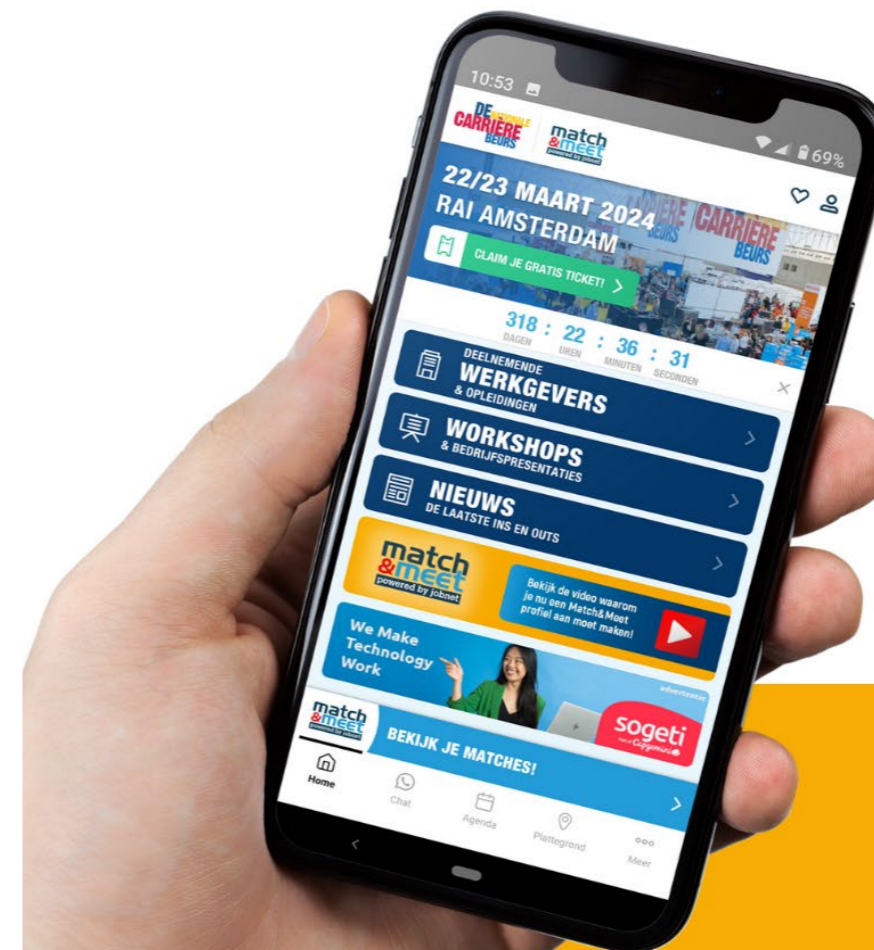
With all these plans, we are ensuring that we can reach even more target groups in the labour market and, as a result, even more specific employers and training courses can benefit from our innovative recruitment services.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Innovative online talent pools, career fairs, career portals or talent games – Memory Group has it all in its portfolio. But what many people still don't know is that Memory Group once started taking free group photos in exchange for the personal details of graduating students, which many intermediaries in the job market use. We still do this with our school projects department and I am very proud that this part of Memory Group was also able to contribute to us being honoured with the Innovation in Recruitment Services award!



To download a brochure and to find out more about Memory Group's products, including the National Career Fair and Jobnet.nl platform, visit www.memory.nl.



Download the app from March 20!

Exhibition organizer

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