



GLOBAL BENEFITS VISION

Knowledge & Wisdom for Global Employee Benefits Professionals

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NOTICES

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GENERALI EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Chief Network Officer



Thierry Mestach is GEB Chief Network Officer. He and his team are managing the partnership with over 130 GEB Network Partners across more than 120 countries and he also manages the International Lines department of GEB, providing solutions to international mobile employees.

Thierry has been in the Employee Benefits industry for more than 30 years in various commercial and senior management roles and previously spend more than 20 years in AXA and the MAXIS Network before joining GEB in 2017.

He has a degree in Politics – International Relations from the Vrije Universiteit Brussels and holds a diploma in International Employee Benefits.

HANS CALLEBAUT

VIVIUM

Commercial Director Employee Benefits

Hans started his career in the insurance sector where he has always been active till today in Sales, Sales Management and General Management roles.

In his role as Deputy General Manager Sales with AG Insurance he was also responsible for the pooling business with IGP and Insurope where he was part of the Advisory Board (IGP) and the MCOM (Insurope).

In 2019 he joined Vivium from Mercer Marsh Benefits Belgium where he was Country Leader.

Hans studied Germanic Philology at Brussels University in Belgium and he also has a Master's degree in Business Economics from Brussels-based Vlekho business school.



GLOBAL SCALE, LOCAL SERVICE

THE VITAL IMPORTANCE OF STRONG NETWORK PARTNERS





Hans Callebaut



Thierry Mestach

Generali Employee Benefits recently onboarded network partner for the Belgian market, Vivium. *Global Benefits Vision* interviews **Hans Callebaut**, Commercial Director at Vivium and **Thierry Mestach**, Chief Network Officer at GEB, to learn more about the added value this pairing will bring to the Employee Benefits market and more specifically to the multinational corporate customer segment.

HANS CALLEBAUT

Hans Callebaut is Commercial Director Employee Benefits at Vivium, a Belgium based Life and Non-Life insurance provider, that works almost exclusively with brokers. A top 3 player in the Belgian group insurance market, Vivium is part of the cooperative insurance group P&V Assurances; a market leading player that aims to offer its customers the best products and services at a fair price and actively contributes to responsible citizenship. Throughout its 110+ year history, the P&V Group has built a reputation for being strongly – and consistently – led by values focused on long-term sustainability.

The Life department of the Vivium brand offers global Employee Benefit packages, including Pensions (Branch 21 and 23¹ solutions), Life and Disability. For the past two years, Hans has led the account management and business development teams. Prior to that, he enjoyed many years in senior roles in the international Employee Benefits and Pooling sectors.

THIERRY MESTACH

Thierry Mestach is Chief Network Officer of Generali Employee Benefits Network (GEB). GEB is one of the leading International Employee Benefits Networks and services an important number of the world's major multinational employers.

¹
Branch 21 and 23 are life insurance savings products. Branch 23 policies are unit-linked whilst branch 21 refers to guaranteed-interest contracts.

NPS
Net Promotor Score

STP
Straight Through
Processing

What are the employee benefit trends in the Belgium market?

Hans Callebaut : Just like all big international corporations, Belgian companies are also focused on risk and cost optimisation; even the smaller ones. They're looking into international solutions, but the traditional Pooling market is, in our opinion, decreasing in popularity. There is increasing interest to corporations looking at alternatives such as a global offer or captive programmes. And for this we need strong partners who can offer these solutions.

How does working with GEB Network support Vivium's strategic development plan?

HC: One of the pillars of our strategic ambition for more organic profitable growth is based upon finding solutions for international corporates. We already have one partner for global employee benefit solutions, namely Zurich. But in order to accelerate and further develop this segment, it's great to link in with a partner like GEB: knowing the power it has in the international market, and knowing that GEB is offering the kind of solutions our mutual clients are looking for.

So, there was a clear strategic fit, but what else is key when assessing the viability of a potential network partnership?

Thierry Mestach: We quickly realised that Vivium was a company with a culture of Employee Benefits, a culture of dealing with international corporate businesses and that has the right people in place; dedicated and familiar with the environments we're operating

in, familiar with the concepts of multinational pooling and working with captives. So, it was an obvious fit.

Also, Vivium's reputation in the market is strong. It's clearly a company that is invested in – and will continue to be invested in – Employee Benefits.

HC: There was a strategic reason to make this partnership of course, but it was also built on a value driven view of the market. We felt that with GEB we had a very solid and sustainable partner and this fits with our own values.

Everything that Vivium puts into the market is built on solid, sustainable values. These might be considered cheap words if they're not felt by clients. But when you look at how clients are scoring us – for example, with regard to operational excellence – it's clear that we're far outperforming the market. Our Net Promotor Score (**NPS**), that measures the client satisfaction for the management of their Employee Benefits contacts, beats by far the Belgian Employee Benefits benchmark.

It's because we saw the same values in GEB that we were able to very quickly move forward with the decision to partner up.

What is Vivium's experience of servicing large global corporations?

HC: Our communication and management platform represented one of the first of its kind on the Belgian market and it's still considered state of the art. We aim to have 100% Straight Through Processing (**STP**) with regard to the management of employer contracts. Thanks to this technology, which allows for full automatization of large contracts,

implementation with large corporates can be completed within a timing that is quite spectacular when you benchmark this with the Belgian market.

For the employer, the platform provides everything they need to know about the management of their contracts in real time, allowing them to manage their own contracts and interfaces. This saves time and creates efficiencies. We also now have an internal communication platform for employees in place too.

Finally, for GEB, what advantages does this partnership bring to you and your clients?

TM: As a network, it's obviously important that we have really strong local partners. The upfront differentiator for networks used to be based largely on the number of partners – and the number that sat within our control: i.e., that were affiliated. Now, the strength of Networks is measured by the quality of local Network Partners. After all, they're the ones that are visible to the client and the insured parties, not GEB.

What's really important to us is that we have leading players in their respective markets. It's all about the service and capabilities that they put at our clients' disposal. That's, if you like, the first line of offence. In other words, even when we talk about international employee benefits, we're in essence talking about local employee benefits first. And it's related by definition as quality of service to international clients is based on local knowledge and expertise;



We quickly saw that we were mutually strong, with regards to both strategic direction and values

local regulations; local taxes; local customs even. It's also about having the capabilities to ensure that digital tools and interfaces work on a local level, ultimately ensuring that globally implemented benefits are accessible to local employees.

From the moment we met with Vivium, there was a genuine eagerness to work together; a meeting of the minds if you like. We quickly saw that we were mutually strong, with regards to both strategic direction and values. It took only 6 months from initial discussion to onboarding, a process that would normally take around 12 months.

Their parent company P&V Assurances is not your average group, in terms of their cooperative values and ethos. They're aiming for long-term sustainable solutions, as opposed to quick wins. And this is woven into how they work with all stakeholders. These are values that are very much aligned with ours. ∞