Make every day convenient

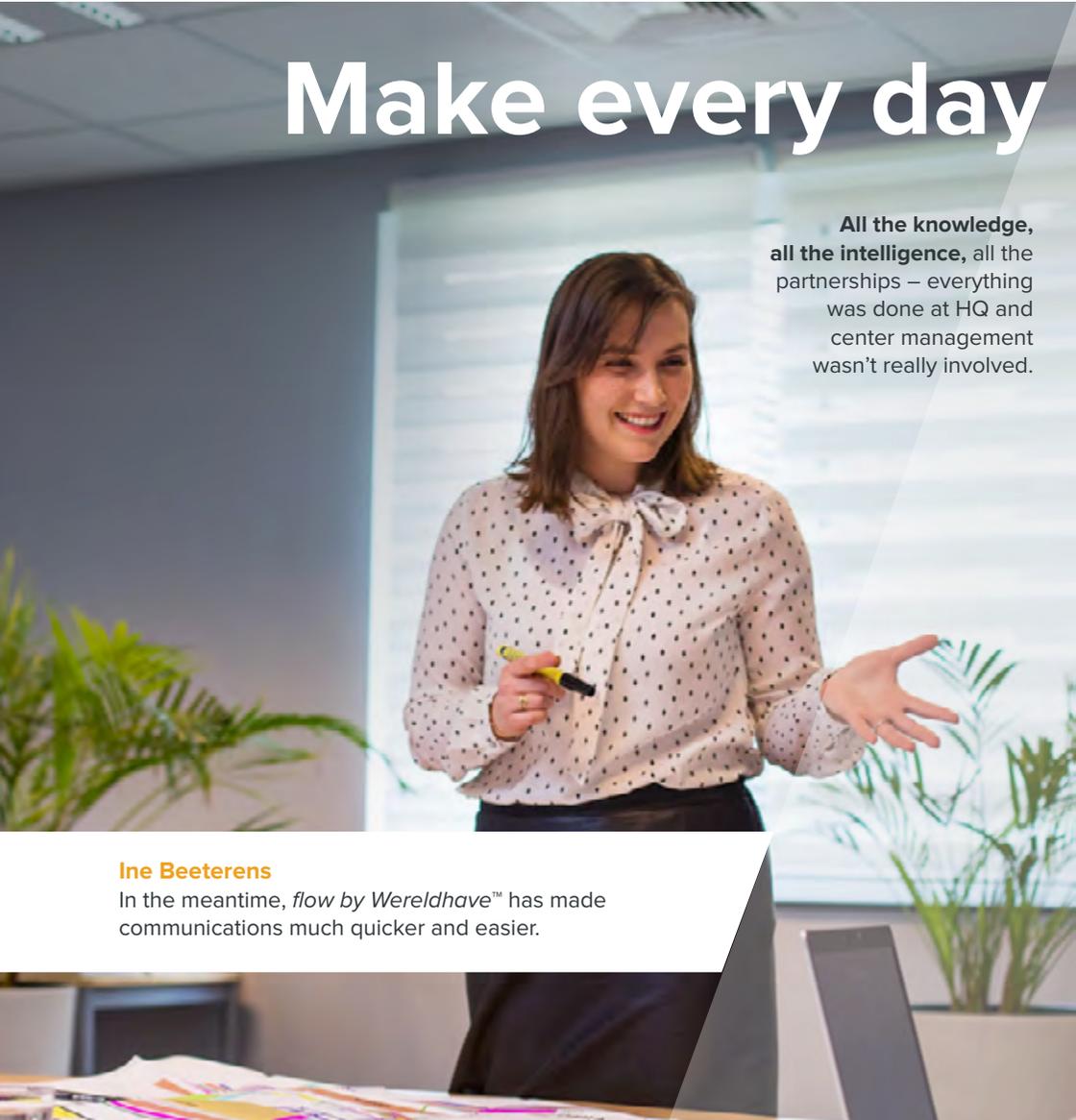**All the knowledge, all the intelligence,** all the partnerships — everything was done at HQ and center management wasn't really involved.

"We want to be our own service-shop manager," says Ine.

Ine Beeterens
In the meantime, *flow by Wereldhave*™ has made communications much quicker and easier.

Five years ago, when she joined Wereldhave, Ine Beeterens asked for a wild card. "At that time, the focus was really on the investment side. We weren't focusing enough on the tenants or the customers. We invested, we renovated, we built extensions – but we didn't attach much importance to what happened after the leases were signed. I said, 'OK, if I'm going to be responsible for the operations, I need a wildcard. I need to be able to optimise things here'." As Wereldhave's Head of Operations in Belgium, Ine is now putting tenants and customers front and center, expanding services and building local networks across the country's 9 centers. Her changes are in line with the new LifeCentral strategy – to move away from traditional shopping to centers that offer a mix of retail, leisure, health & beauty, food and entertainment.

Local management

In Belgium, Ine's first step was a simple one: increase communications between Head Office and local centers: "There was a gap between HQ and the centers. All the knowledge, all the intelligence, all the partnerships – everything was done at HQ and center management wasn't really involved."

Ine brought in local management to help renegotiate contracts for services like cleaning and security – and gave them access to reports on traffic and turnover of tenants. "That's when I saw the tenants were also getting involved," she says. "Now, we work more together. We share results from our client studies, for example, so tenants can see how they fit into the center. If there's a new shop opening, we'll sit together with the marketing teams to have an effective and successful launch. It's the same if there's a shop struggling, we'll go to management, and ask 'how can we help?'."

Click of a button

In the meantime, *flow by Wereldhave*™ has made communications much quicker and easier. Tenants can keep up to date with the latest news and research at the click of a button. Crucially, they can also share information. Stores now input sales data, for example.

This gives Wereldhave more insight into what customers are buying and what shops they're visiting. In Belgium, *flow by Wereldhave*™ now has 1,200 users, just 6 months after launch. "We're not sending emails anymore, or distributing flyers," says Ine. "Either tenants read it on flow, or they miss it – that's the only way to get everybody on board."

Gradually, Wereldhave's centers are changing: they are bringing in more local businesses, not just the big retail chains; they're also providing additional services – reduced-price theatre tickets, wifi connections, phone chargers, and co-working spaces. In some centers, customers can pick up products ordered online – even, in the case of clothes, have them adjusted on site. "We want to be our own service-shop manager," says Ine. "We want to be a shop for services that other shops don't provide, but where there is clear demand from customers. In one center, we had a lot of customers at the information point, asking for dry cleaning. So, we added the service. A dry cleaning firm comes, picks up customers' clothes and brings them back, cleaned and ironed." Moreover, the services are used by our tenants, they can call on a seamstress for adjusting customers' clothes, or pickup online ordered packages as they work in the centers. Even with the progress that's been made, there are still some challenges ahead. Finding space for new

entertainment or leisure tenants won't be easy – a mark, says Ine, of Wereldhave Belgium's recent success. "That's the downside, we don't have a spare 1,000 square meters for a cinema or a bowling alley. We are now rethinking our assets and try to expand vertically." Ine also wants more data, particularly as some data was lost with the introduction of the EU's GDPR. "With customers, we know when they're coming, how they're coming, how long they're staying. But we don't know enough what lies behind that – about their preferences or interests. We're working on it with tenants, to have an exchange of accurate data. We're experts in this business and it is in everybody's interest that we can help our tenants grow and be successful."
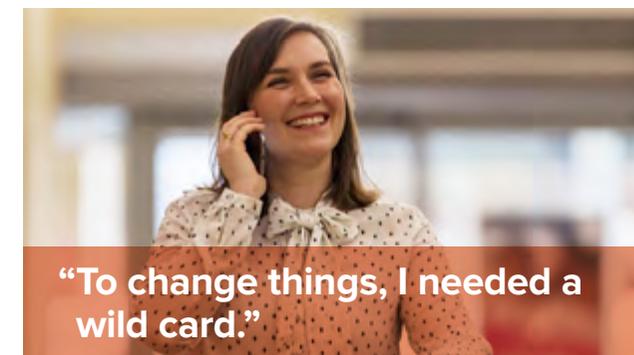
"To change things, I needed a wild card."