



## Top Entrepreneur of East Flanders

### Sophie Vandoorne of Het Veer is in the final of 'East Flanders Top Entrepreneur'

The search for the Top Entrepreneur in East Flanders is nearing its end. Based on a personal portrait, this week we introduce the five nominees. Today: **Sophie Vandoorne of Het Veer from Landegem. "My journey to this position was not always easy, especially because, as 'daughter of', I had to find my own way," Sophie says.**

Sophie Vandoorne (46) has 23 years of experience in the Landegem family business. She is married to Stijn and has two children. The CEO has a background in communications management and a passion for travel and photography. "I enjoy relaxing on holiday with a good novel by the pool. I don't like to read management books, so I like to have them summarised. For instance, I went to 'We Read For You at Vlerick' for years and recently went to the Unizo Topseminar where you get the highlights of 10 management books in one day."

## **Staying OP KOERS together**

Sophie is CEO of Het Veer, a holding company with several companies. Her entrepreneurial inspiration comes from her dad Rik Vandoorne, who founded the company in 1979. "Het Veer has been prominent in the medium voltage sector for over 45 years. It is the beating heart of the group, with four companies, namely Deba, SGC, Mevoco and Cotrabel, having built a unique medium-voltage story," she explains. "Meanwhile, there are 14 companies on board operating in various other sectors such as surface treatment, concrete, metal, real estate and ERP software. The group has some 230 employees together accounting for a turnover of 53 million euros."

As CEO, the Landegem businesswoman is responsible for guiding the company in the right direction. "My journey to this position was not always easy, mainly because as the 'daughter of' I had to find my own way," Sophie says. "As a communicator, I am adept at connecting people and enthusing the team to achieve our goals together. My role is to make sure we stay on course together."

### **7 core values**

"Staying on course aligns with our seven values that every company in the group carries: entrepreneurial, professional, quality, distinctive, enthusiastic, respectful and safety first. The last value is 'lightning fast', which is incorporated in the logo of Het Veer and other subsidiaries. This refers to lightning-fast response to every customer demand, but also in the day-to-day operations. As it were, I want to instill entrepreneurship in all our employees. Everyone can be entrepreneurial by taking initiative and doing business," it sounds.



## **In search of extraterrestrial life in Australia**

Sophie believes she owes her nomination to a unique project at SGC - SwitchGear Company in which Het Veer, with their Australian partner NHP, will supply as many as 141 switchboards for the SKAO project (Square Kilometer Array Observatory) in the quiet zone of the Australian outback. "Our material was chosen for its low-noise and durable properties, essential given the location. Participating in this scientific project, aimed at exploring the origin of the universe and searching for extraterrestrial life, has been an incredible experience for the SGC team," says Sophie. "We have also achieved beautiful growth in 2023 with all our businesses. I dare say myself that CDC - Cabines de Ciney will get a nomination for 'Trends Gazelle'," said the proud CEO of Het Veer.

Sophie calls on Made In readers to vote for her because of her perseverance and success as a woman in the tech world. "Many women opt for the traditional sectors like healthcare, human resources, education and less for manufacturing. I must admit that this also put me off when I was a fresh graduate. I wanted to set up an event agency, but in the end I opted for the family business, because there is also so much to organise and so much to do there."

"As a woman in the technical world, I proved that I can stand my ground by surrounding myself with strong people and specialists in their fields. By listening to them, asking questions and giving them enough freedom, I believe we can achieve great things together," Sophie Vandoorne said.

You can cast your vote for Sophie or one of the other entrepreneurs until 3 March via this link: <https://www.made-in.be/strafste-onderneemster/>.

Source: Van Biezen, W. (2024, 28 februari). *Sophie Vandoorne van Het Veer staat in finale van 'Strafste onderneemster van Oost-Vlaanderen'*. Made In. <https://www.made-in.be/oost-vlaanderen/sophie-vandoorne-van-het-veer-staat-in-finale-van-strafste-onderneemster-van-oost-vlaanderen/>