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PARTNERS

Kallion

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Founder and Managing Director

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Managing Director

SUCCESSFUL
LEADERS

IN THE TIC INDUSTRY

Kallion

NICOLAS ROUSSELET
FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR

EDUARD RAS
MANAGING DIRECTOR

In this issue of our Spotlight Series Interviews we have spoken to the joint managing directors of Kallion, a company that specialises in Lean and operational excellence related services in the TIC sector.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN THE TIC SECTOR?

Nicolas (NR): I graduated as an engineer in applied mathematics and in management. I then started my career in consulting, supporting customers on their operations improvement. After a few years, I joined the Eurofins group, as part of the internal consulting team, targeted on Operational Excellence problematics. I had the opportunity there to set-up group wide programs, focusing on operational performance management and improvement, and to lead a global program aimed at sharing best practices between laboratories operating in the same field. This is where I got the TIC bug! Kallion was a natural step on that path, combining both my passion for the TIC sector and its unique challenges; and a real drive to train, coach, guide and support companies and individuals on their operational excellence journey!



Eduard (ER): I started out as an engineer in the steel sector in South Africa. As a result of the low steel prices in the early 2010's the company I was working for launched a huge continuous improvement / cost saving drive. I joined the team focusing on the optimization of processes and that's where my continuous improvement journey began. A journey which ultimately brought me to Europe. After a few years of continuous improvement in the



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steel sector, I found an opportunity to get involved on the ground floor of setting up a continuous improvement programme at corporate level for the Eurofins group. This is where I met Nicolas. Together we worked our way up to becoming the heads of our respective teams within the corporate Operational Excellence team and, along the way, started our journey to establishing Kallion.



THE TENDENCY IN THE TIC SECTOR IN THE NEXT DECADE WILL BE TOWARDS INDUSTRIALISED, AUTOMATED LABORATORIES CAPABLE OF ANALYSING LARGE VOLUMES OF SAMPLES.

CAN YOU SHARE WITH US A SPECIFIC PROJECT OR ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF AND WHY?

NR: Within a network of laboratories, working together is always a challenge. There can be resistances inherited from the past, the fear of giving out a competitive advantage, or simply the fact that despite quite normalised, many analytical methods are customised in each country or laboratory. In spite of this, my team managed to organise for the first time a successful two-day event, bringing together experts and leaders from more than 80 laboratories around the world to share their best practices and agree on joint operational improvement programs. This required relentless efforts at all levels of the organisation, convincing at the same time the senior leadership, each laboratory's individual management and the technical teams. The exchanges that resulted from this conference led to several successful joint projects for the group.

ER: At the start of Covid, I was tasked to lead a project to set up a Covid testing laboratory. With a core team of 12 and an extended team of dozens more, we worked tirelessly for 9 weeks to set up and validate a testing lab capable of analysing 45,000 samples per day. Setting up a Lab is already quite a feat. Doing so

in 9 weeks under conditions of full lockdown with travel restrictions and material shortages is a feat I will most certainly never experience again in my life. The way in which dozens of strangers came together and, with a unified goal, achieved "the impossible" was a truly magnificent experience to have been part of.

CAN YOU SPEAK OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU HAVE FACED IN YOUR CAREER AND HOW YOU OVERCAME THEM?

NR: I was asked to set-up a department at group level to transform and digitalise several group administration processes and the way the group was managing all master data related to its structure. We had extremely short timelines, linked to the upcoming deployment of some IT solutions relying on that data for their daily operations. I had no experience in specifying, building and deploying such master data management solutions. Setting up the right team was key in overcoming this challenge. We managed to deliver the solution as expected.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST FACTOR AFFECTING THE TIC INDUSTRY AT THE MOMENT?

Industrialization of large scale, common, analytics. During the Covid period the laboratory world came to the attention of the everyday man (and investment firms) in a big way. This has led to a lot of focus on efficiency and optimization with the idea of economy of scale being front and foremost in the movement. Although the movement had started pre-Covid, the post Covid times have seen an acceleration in the drive towards bigger, more centralised laboratories. With the exception of niche labs and specialized low volume testing, we believe that the tendency in the TIC sector in the next decade will be towards industrialised, automated laboratories capable of analysing large volumes of samples.

Besides, laboratories have at their disposal a huge set of information (analytical results, testing conditions, etc.). We believe that efforts to make the best out of this data will be key in the TIC sector moving forward.



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WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AND TEAM MANAGEMENT?

NR: Empowering. There is no better way to learn than to test your ideas, try applying them, and seeing them fail or succeed. I consider my role as a leader to provide the frame into which my team can grow. My job is to ensure that we transform potential hiccups into successes as a team. My motto when it comes to management: “A manager only shines through their team”.

ER: In a word, trust. I have found that people, in general, want to do their best and when given a true opportunity to do so, virtually always exceed my expectations. So, I provide direction, set expectations, provide input, training or coaching when needed and then get out of the way.

HOW DO YOU SPEND TIME OUTSIDE OF WORK?

NR: I really enjoy spending time with my friends and family. This is where I get my energy from. I love cooking, especially when food will be shared with people important to me! I enjoy visiting new places, in particular those filled with history, like museums or older cities.

ER: Work life balance is extremely important. At the end of life we don't look back and think of the hours we spent at work and in meetings. So I spend time with family and friends. I also enjoy spending time in the splendour of nature. Hiking in the forest and mountains is a particular favourite pastime.

IN 3 WORDS ONLY - WHAT IS THE SECRET TO YOUR SUCCESS?

NR: VISION
TEAM
CURIOSITY

ER: DISCIPLINE
PERSEVERANCE
SUPPORT (of friends and family)

With Kallion, clients experience the best in bespoke methodologies based on 25 years of laboratory operations leadership to support their journey to operational excellence and digitalization. Kallion combines training and consulting services with a fast-growing portfolio of products and strategic partnerships, to offer the best match for their clients' needs.

Sector agnostic, the Kallion team has worked on projects in almost every part of the TIC sector, from food and pharmaceutical to refractory materials. Their customer base varies from businesses with one laboratory to those that have multiple, global sites.

The outcome for their customers is proven impact on productivity, lead-time, capacity, error-rate and space utilisation leading to cost savings and increased profitability.

Kallion in statistics:

- **175+** laboratory transformations supported and coached
- **100+** laboratories designed for various end markets
- **60+** Operational Excellence training sessions held

Find out more at kallion.eu