

# A nurse named Jos de Blok created Buurtzorg in 2006 ...

Jos had been working as a nurse for ten years and experienced firsthand the changes forced onto his profession. Disgusted, he quit his job and created Buurtzorg. It would operate entirely differently. Quickly, he found that a self-organizing team of ten to twelve nurses with no manager and no team leader was perfect to provide great care—and a great work place.



## With a whole different perspective on health care

Care, at its best, is a small miracle that happens, or not, in the relationship of a patient and a nurse. That miracle never shows up when a mechanical perspective is applied to care. The best care will happen, de Blok is convinced, when nurses are seen as professionals, when they are trusted. Give them freedom, and they will offer truly great care.



# The first thing a nurse from Buurtzorg does with a new patient is **to sit down and drink coffee**

*Tell me—what are you still able to do? And what can't you do any more?*

*Do you have children who could help you?*

*Oh, you haven't spoken with them in a while? Why don't we call them and ask them to come by? I'm happy to be there with you.*

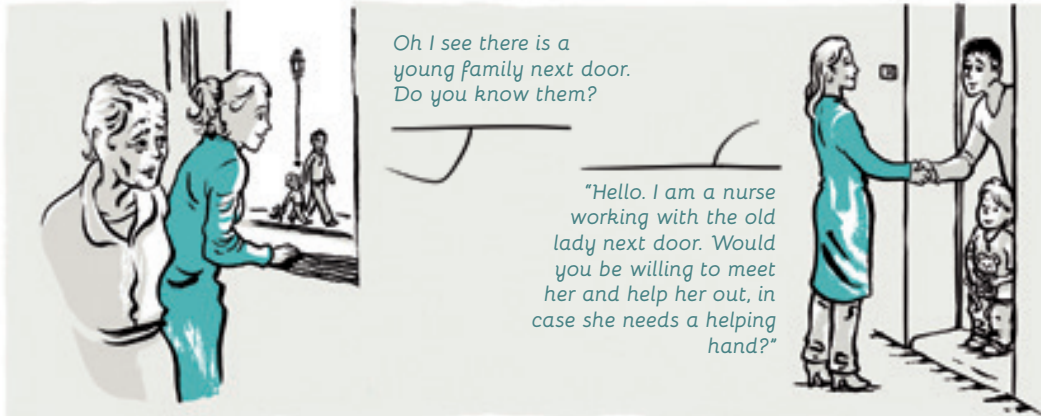


Nurses often assist the patients in creating a network of support, to feel less alone and less dependent. For instance, they often help older patients and their children learn how to be there for one another during illness.



*Say, your mother doesn't invite her friends over anymore because she doesn't feel very presentable ... Could you maybe buy her a new dress?*

*I can call a hairdresser to come by.*



It's not unusual that nurses help their patients get to know neighbors to tie a network of support. The degree of care and intimacy between the nurses and the patients can be quite extraordinary. Often they journey together for years, sometimes until the very last moment, helping the patient depart in peace.

## Buurtzorg has become a spectacular **success story**

Patients and nurses love Buurtzorg so much that nurses have been deserting traditional nursing companies in droves. Every month, Buurtzorg receives hundreds of applications from nurses wanting to jump ship. Buurtzorg now employs more than nine thousand nurses, or two-thirds of all neighborhood nurses in

the Netherlands! The nine thousand nurses all work in small teams of ten to twelve nurses, without a leader in the team and with no manager above them. No one times the nurses' interventions with patients. The whole nine thousand-strong company is managed with a headquarters of just twenty-eight people.



Oh, that's just  
WON-derful.  
A nurse that takes time  
to sit down and have  
a cup of coffee ...

But we live in a world  
where there is no time  
for that! Time is money!!  
We can't afford this!

Well, that's what you would think. But  
here is the extraordinary news: Buurtzorg's  
financial and medical outcomes are off the  
chart—in the good way of off the chart.



A few years ago, a study from Ernst & Young<sup>9</sup> found that Buurtzorg uses less than 40 percent of the hours prescribed by the doctor.

*Because instead of just working off a crazy schedule, we now help patients become autonomous as much as possible*

Thirty percent of all emergency hospital intakes are avoided.

*We know the patients so well that we can detect problems early on.*

Buurtzorg saves the Dutch social security system hundreds of millions of euros every year.

*We have colleagues who are now trying to apply the same principles in psychiatric care, youth care, and other fields. And nurses from all over the world are setting up similar organizations in their countries.*



# Buurtzorg is just one of several extraordinary pioneers that are reinventing management

## Buurtzorg

Home care nonprofit in the Netherlands, 9,000 employees



## RHD

Human services nonprofit, United States, 4,000 employees



## Sun Hydraulics

Manufacturing of hydraulic valves and manifolds, global, 900 employees, for profit



## Heiligenfeld

Network of mental health hospitals, Germany, 600 employees, for profit



## Morning Star

Tomato harvesting, transport, and processing, California, 400-2,400 employees, for profit



## Holacracy

Organizational "operating system" adopted by many organizations throughout the world



## FAVI

Brass foundry, automotive supplier, France, 500 employees, for profit



## ESBZ

Publicly financed grade 7-13 school in Berlin, Germany, 1,500 teachers, students, and parents, nonprofit



## Patagonia

Outdoor apparel maker and retailer, United States, 1,350 employees, for profit



## AES

Global producer and distributor of electricity, 40,000 employees worldwide (2001), for profit



## BSO/Origin

IT services, 10,000 employees worldwide (1996), for profit



## Sounds True

Multimedia publishing company, United States, 90 employees and 20 dogs, for profit

