

Focus Amsterdam Testimonial

The ideal location for our company

When 35% of your business activities are international and you have a great number of logistical manoeuvres in the Netherlands as well, it is almost obvious to be located close to Schiphol airport. Yet Focus fell for Business Park Amsterdam Osdorp for very different reasons: "It was primarily the location with respect to the A1 and A2 motorways. We provide sound, lighting and video for events and theatre productions throughout the country, so that accessibility was really important to us."

Gerard Koster - Sales Manager



ADVANCED EVENT TECHNOLOGY



But that wasn't the only reason; Focus Amsterdam also selected this location because it could completely design a brand-new building according to its own ideas and tastes. From the lay-out to the décor, everything is typically Focus: neat and clean! The atmosphere is created by the people who work there.

New direction, new building at Business Park Amsterdam Osdorp

Focus's story goes back almost forty years. For many of those years, the company was located on Isolatorweg in Amsterdam-Sloten. It was a large building with various sound and recording studios. Even the Rolling Stones have practiced there. Koster explains the reasons for moving: "When the company became part of Rent-All in 2009, all of the business activities were scrutinised and it was decided to give up the studios and focus on what we're really good at: creating a unique experience for large events and theatre productions,

using spectacular lighting, sound and video. This change of direction meant that we needed to find a new building that fit better in terms of function and size."

Friendly contact, professional implementation

Clearly, Focus opted for 'good accessibility' and 'new'. But there are other plus points. The park's appearance is certainly worth mentioning. "When you drive in here, it is immediately obvious that this isn't a usual business park. The greenery, the spatial arrangement and the well-maintained public spaces are like a calling card for our company. Everything is new and looks sharp. The interaction between the companies and the park management is also particularly pleasant: friendly contact, professional implementation. For us, all of these things were reasons to be happy with our decision to move to Business Park Amsterdam Osdorp," says Koster.



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Focus brings illusion to life



You never really think about everything that goes into the organisation of an event or theatre production. And that's the whole idea. As a visitor, you just walk in and experience the atmosphere - an atmosphere that doesn't just happen on its own. Often the given is an empty hall, a bare stage or, even worse, a rainy park. Try to make something beautiful out of that! Good lighting, sound and video are crucial. And who provides that and everything needed to make it work? Focus Amsterdam! We went to visit the Rent-All subsidiary at Business Park Amsterdam Osdorp.

Focus was named after the rock band Focus, which was headed by Thijs van Leer and Jan Akkerman, known for the song 'Hocus Pocus'. The company was founded in 1975 by the band's production assistants. First Focus limited its specialisation to sound, but it later joined forces with lighting experts Jansen en Jansen. On Isolatorweg in Amsterdam, the company expanded its range of services; bands and productions could also make use of their recording and practice studios. These studios have since been given up. Now Focus concentrates on what the company is really good at: creating a unique experience for large events and theatre productions using spectacular lighting, sound and video. But that's all history; which way is the wind blowing now?

From sound design to musicals

We talk with Sales Manager Gerard Koster. In the new, super-hip, tastefully decorated building on Maroestraat, he takes us through the world of entertainment. "We work for companies and theatre productions. Look; in this room, the production team for *Hij gelooft in mij*, the musical about the Dutch folk singer André Hazes, is 'prepping' the sound equipment; getting it ready. Then, on the

set, it's only a matter of plugging it in, tuning and playing." The sound designer outlines how something like that works: "The performance is walked through step by step. Every sound and every silence is considered. This is the foundation for a design, and a wish list of necessary equipment is made from that design. When wishes match the available budget, Focus adds the equipment to create a working unit. The same procedure applies for lighting and video, only then the light and visual designer makes a plan that suits the production's character." Focus also works for other large productions by Stage Entertainment (Joop van den Ende), V&V (Albert Verlinde) and other theatre producers. The lights and sounds of *Lion King*, the sound for *Soldier of Orange* and *Volendam the Musical* and the lights and sounds of street dance production *Blaze* are just a few of the gems in the impressive portfolio.

The whole picture

Walking through the warehouse, Gerard tells us more: "What we just saw is only a part of the work we do. We also do a lot of work for companies. In that case, we provide the total production: lighting, sound, video, sets, crew and transport to various locations in the Netherlands and abroad. For our clients, the one-stop-shop is ideal; the

responsibility is entirely in our hands and the company has a single contact. We take the work and the concerns off their hands so that that company can focus on its own core activities. Since we joined the Rent-All Group in 2009 we have been able to offer a more complete and up-to-date selection of equipment.

Every party an experience

The technical organisation of large events is of growing importance for the company, as it turns out. Focus takes responsibility for large-scale productions like the ADP Awards ceremony, and organises the technology for Esomar's worldwide congresses. One of Focus's clients is Sanoma Media Netherlands, initiator and organiser of the Libelle Summer Week. Year after year, the publisher lures the women of the Netherlands to spend a day on the beach in Almere. But they don't do it alone; Focus helps. Gerard comments: "We ensure, for example, that a frame is installed in the tents where we can hang up lighting and sound equipment, so that the stages are free for the artist or speaker. In this case, we prepare everything here first, and our crew on location makes sure that it works."

Crossing borders

As is often the case, the best news has been saved for last. It turns out that 35% of the business activities are for foreign clients. Gerard explains: "It's not that there are no companies like Focus abroad, but us Dutch people are just really good. That's mainly because we are happy to roll up our sleeves and work hard. Although we work in showbiz, we don't put on any star-like airs."