

## FLOWSPARKS REBOUNDS WITH A PROFIT

# Successfully cannibalised

Flowsparks, formerly U&I Learning, has undergone a remarkable transformation. Five years ago, it developed customised digital training courses, and now it is a specialised software company that allows customers to make their own digital training courses. STIJN FOCKEDEVY – TRENDS magazine

**W**hen Trends spoke to CEO Guy Herregodts three years ago, U&I Learning was halfway through a difficult ascent. The Flowsparks software had been launched successfully, but the commercial acceleration still had to take place. At the same time, the company had a division in France developing online training courses which was suffering heavy losses.

Herregodts was convinced that the company had to cannibalise its traditional turnover by automating the development of digital training courses. He still thinks the same in this regard. "In 2008, you still had daily rates of 1,500 euros," Herregodts says. "In 2017, we lost a European tender with a daily price of 480 euros because a Romanian company offered 250 euros. And this while wage costs continue to rise. Our traditional activities were

a declining business. That's why, after the launch in 2017, we very soon started working on our own software with built-in didactic support, so that customers can make online training courses themselves. The company name changed to Flowsparks." Flowsparks now has customers in the widest variety of sectors, ranging from the chemical company BASF and the ICT services provider Atos to Dutch hospitals that use the software to train corona volunteers. It also recently hired a chief marketing officer with extensive experience at young technology companies. "Flowsparks is now a technology company with a software-as-a-service model (online software with a subscription formula, ed). So we have to go to the market in a different way. Worldwide, most e-learning companies stick to the classic model. We have an advantage because our solution allows for much more flexibility. In each of the past three years, we

**GUY HERREGODTS**  
"In each of the past three years, we have grown by over 50%."

have grown with our software by over 50%, based purely on word of mouth. We have strengthened our marketing and commercial department so that we can continue to grow. We now have 56 employees in Belgium and the Netherlands."

On the right track

In 2017, while the turnover was more than 9 million euros, the net loss was 721,256 euros. The non-strategic activities were halted. In 2019, turnover had fallen to 5.8 million euros, but there was a net profit of 780,000 euros. Herregodts, who controls the company along with management and friendly parties, cannot yet comment on 2020. Flowsparks is listed on the Euronext Free Market and has yet to submit its annual results. The share rose from 1.8 to 13 euros in a year and a few months. "Last year's annual report made it crystal clear that we're on the right track," Herregodts says.

