

# MENKEN and Mensura: co-authors of a unique reintegration story

Menken is a Belgian manufacturer and supplier of home brands, including nuts and dried fruits. The food company relies on Mensura's expert advice to cope with the health risks associated with automated production processes. Menken also seeks professional help to address long-term absence.



*"Through intensive collaboration with Mensura, we ascertain which measures and ergonomic adjustments are necessary to bring avoidable absenteeism down to 0%."*

Bert De Ridder, CEO of Menken

## Challenges

- › mitigate ergonomic risks associated with line work and repetitive movements;
- › successfully reintegrate employees with a long-term illness.

## Solutions

- › a preparatory, interactive risk analysis of ergonomics;
- › specific tools that automate ergonomically stressful work (e.g. vacuum tool);
- › customised reintegration programmes, with intensive preparation ahead of work resumption;
- › unique reintegration case: the gradual return to work of an employee with back problems, with the help of a rehabilitation programme, a job coach and new employee status among other measures.

## Advantages

- › physically less stressful work thanks to automation;
- › healthier employees with optimum capacity for deployment;
- › step-by-step reintegration and grants make sure neither the employee nor the employer are worried at the prospect of job resumption.



*Bert De Ridder, CEO of Menken*

Producing for the European market, Menken focuses heavily on automation. Since line work and repetitive movements entail potential health risks, the company is highly concerned with ergonomics. “We teamed up with Mensura to minimise the risk of static stress, repetitive strain injuries and absenteeism”, says Menken CEO Bert De Ridder.

## Ergonomics: the cornerstone for a healthy production environment

Ergonomic optimisation translates into a variety of improvement projects. “For instance, Menken is now using a telescopic conveyor belt fitted with a vacuum system to load and unload trailers”, illustrates Hanne Kenis, an ergonomist and reintegration expert at Mensura. “As a result, employees no longer have to drag heavy boxes.”

Mensura performed a prior participatory risk analysis of ergonomics in order to ascertain which improvements and installations were required. Hanne Kenis: “We started with a thorough observation of the workplace. We also convened all those involved to seek their views. What are the biggest health risks? Are there any suggestions as to how we can tackle them? These exchanges have allowed us to focus our efforts towards avoiding downtime.”

## Reintegration case: unique, personalised and successful

Whenever Menken faces a case of absenteeism or long-term absence, the company implements a customised reintegration process. Bert

De Ridder: “When one of our staff had to stay home for about nine months due to a lower back injury, Mensura’s occupational health physician helped get the condition recognised by the Occupational Health Fund. This allowed us to start a personal rehabilitation programme.”

“This reintegration case is unique in Belgium”, adds Hanne Kenis. “Even though the employee wanted to resume work, she was found to be incapacitated. Our negotiations were successful, allowing the patient to go through a reintegration process. In consultation with the employee, who was then given a unique status with the National Employment Office (NEO/RVA), the work load was gradually increased through a job placement.”

## Mensura does more than what is strictly necessary

“Thanks to Mensura’s efforts, we were able to obtain a grant for the reintegration that was linked to the long term medical condition of one of our employees”, continues Bert De Ridder. “This ultimately lowered the reintegration threshold for the employee and for us as employer: our employee received all the necessary guidance and the company is also supported. A win-win situation.”

## Is your company successful at reintegration?

Help long-term illness sufferers get back to work faster. Mensura can provide you with assistance in developing a reintegration policy, setting up specific reintegration processes and preventing fade-out by keeping in touch with absent employees. Questions? Call us on +32 2 549 71 00.