

# Thomas Nys

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## PROFILE

### **Freelance Data Leader | Architect & Delivery Manager for Digital & Data Transformation**

I am a freelance data leader passionate about designing pragmatic data platforms that drive measurable business value. With a software engineering and architecture background, I specialize in scaling data capabilities within regulated and complex environments (e.g., GxP, clinical, public sector). I lead multidisciplinary teams, shape cloud-native architectures, and bring structure to chaos—always focused on delivering outcomes that matter.

## EXPERIENCE

### **Delivery Manager Data & Digital, Ghent (Freelance) — 2023–Present**

Cerba Research provides high-quality, specialized laboratory and diagnostic solutions, leveraging patient data and scientific insight to shape and advance clinical trials. With a global footprint and access to leading regional labs, data, technology, and patients, they support biotech, pharma, and IVD organizations worldwide.

I was hired to manage and lead two strategic data migration initiatives:

1. The redevelopment of the external client portal
2. The implementation of a GxP-validated enterprise data warehouse

Both initiatives involved replacing legacy systems and delivering compliant and scalable platforms aligned with Cerba's digital transformation objectives.

- Provided end-to-end delivery leadership: technical direction, project planning, team guidance, and stakeholder management via regular steering committees.
- Balanced long-term architectural decisions with short-term delivery constraints within a GxP-regulated environment.

- Ensured secure, future-proof, and maintainable solutions through pragmatic and structured delivery practices.

### **Client Portal (customer-facing legacy migration)**

- Oversaw the redevelopment of the legacy portal using a modern PHP-based stack with improved modularity, performance, and security
- Enabled external connectivity to brand portals and courier systems via API integrations
- **Core technologies:** PHP 8.2, Laravel, MySQL, HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript
- **Supporting tech:** Composer (dependency management), GitHub (version control), REST APIs, HTTPS access, Azure DevOps (CI/CD)

### **GxP-Validated Data Warehouse**

- Migrated from a fragmented reporting stack to a cloud-native, governed, and auditable platform
- **Core technologies:** Azure Data Lake Gen2, Azure Synapse Analytics, Databricks, dbt, SQL Server, Power BI
- **Supporting tech:** Azure DevOps, Azure Data Factory, Azure Key Vault, Microsoft Purview, OneTrust, ServiceNow, Azure Monitor / Log Analytics

### **Lead Data Engineer / Architect, Antwerp (Freelance) — 2021–2023**

The Port of Antwerp-Bruges is the second largest port in Europe. With connections to more than 800 destinations, it connects the European continent to the rest of the world. Port of Antwerp-Bruges generates 73,700 direct jobs and no less than €20 billion in added value.

At the Port of Antwerp-Bruges, I lead a team of Data Engineers building the next version of the port's data platform. The goal is to have a more engineered/automated version of the current platform and extend the platform's use cases beyond simple reporting. I facilitated and co-supervised an ML-ops trajectory maturing the port's data science / ML capabilities. Given my early background in more general IT, I can efficiently communicate and collaborate with many different teams.

- Part of this project was migrating around 150 on-prem SQL server artifacts to a new Cloud Data Warehouse.

- Some of the technologies used in this project are Azure (data and ML services), dbt, Kafka, Terraform, Gitlab CI, Python, Qlik replicate, Oracle, Databricks, and SQL server.

#### **Tech Lead Data Engineering Easyfairs, Woluwe-Saint-Lambert (Freelance) — 2019–2021**

Easyfairs has a history of doing things differently. Of being a disrupter and innovator in the events industry. A company that stands out. Today, our multi-format events span business-to-business professional and trade shows, business-to-consumer exhibitions, and fun-packed fan fests. Plus, summits, congresses, and conferences. So, you can understand why Easyfairs has become one of the Top 20 events companies in the world.

I joined Easyfairs HQ as 1 of the first people on the data intelligence team. Responsible for architecting/bootstrapping what became their prime cloud data platform built on Google Cloud. The primary purpose of this platform was democratizing data access across all verticals in the company, facilitating advanced analytics/machine learning, and building standardized reports on top of all company data. I had the technical leadership of over 6 BI developers and Data Engineers.

- Before joining Easyfairs, there was no real cloud data ecosystem. I introduced many best practices regarding architectural design, deployment, infrastructure as code, and security. This was beneficial for the data intelligence initiatives at Easyfairs, and it was successfully cross-pollinated to other teams in the IT department.
- Some of the technologies used in this project are Google Cloud Platform, dbt, Confluent Kafka, Scrappy, Google Kubernetes Service, Big Query, Big Query ML, Cloud Composer (airflow), AutoML, and AI platform (Tensorflow).

#### **Senior Data Engineer / Team Lead Big Industries, Kontich — 2018–2019**

Big Industries is Belgium's leading Big Data systems integrator. Offering expert consultancy for architecture definition, data lakes on-premise or in the cloud and data engineering.

- Before I joined Big Industries, there was no defined onboarding flow for new hires. Under my initiative, a clear and realistic learning path for all the distinct roles in the company was established.

- By joining Big Industries, I had the opportunity to work with big multinational organizations across manufacturing, public services, accounting, and the energy market. Some of the customers I worked for are:

- **Bridgestone:** IoT / data lake project on Azure (HD Insight, Hive, Event Hubs, Azure Data Lake Store, Spark structured streaming)
- **Nike:** data lake on AWS (Spark, Kubernetes, S3, Athena, Airflow)

- **Atrias:** data integration project on Azure (Kubernetes, Confluent Kafka, CosmoDb, Azure Data Lake Store)
- **Vlaams Energie Agentschap:** data lake on AWS (S3, Athena, AuroraDB)

#### **Data Engineer, FoodPairing, Ghent — 2016–2018**

FoodPairing helps food companies launch new successful flavors through a unique mix of data and food science. I was recruited because of my strong background in engineering and food.

- Before I joined FoodPairing, there was a significant variance in programming languages, leading to colossal lead and delivery times. I introduced Python as a common ground language, leading to a massive rise in productivity and cross-team collaborations.

By joining FoodPairing in their early data journey, I had the opportunity to pioneer many of the solutions that shaped their data strategy: web crawlers, ETL pipelines with Spark, dashboards in Bokeh, or custom reporting tools that made data scientists and analysts more productive.

#### **Software Engineer, Rialto, Ghent — 2015–2016**

#### **Software Engineer, Openminds, Ghent — 2014–2015**

#### **Support Engineer, IT department City and OCMW Lokeren — 2011–2014**

#### **Cook — 2007–2011**

I worked as a chef in several Michelin-star restaurants, holding positions from commis over chef de partie to sous-chef.

#### **EDUCATION**

VDAB — Java EE developer, 2014

Hotel and catering school Ter Duinen, Koksijde — Cook and waiter, 2008

Koninklijk Atheneum, Aalst — Humane wetenschappen, 2004

#### **HOBBIES**

- (Ultra)Running/weightlifting
- Movies/series