



Member Profile: Yves R. Sagaert

Yves R. Sagaert is an assistant professor at VIVES University of Applied Sciences, and he is doing research and teaching at KU Leuven in Belgium and IESÉ Management School in France. Yves describes himself as someone who operates comfortably at the intersection of academic innovation and practical business applications. He tries to keep the windows of his academic ivory tower wide open. His rule of thumb is simple: if he can't explain the model to a demand planner over a coffee in ten minutes, it stays in the tower until he can. Complexity is easy, utility is the real challenge. Yves has spent significant time "in the trenches" of the supply chain world, previously working as a Strategic Innovation Manager at ArcelorMittal for raw materials, internal railways and harbor, and as a Forecast Scientist in consultancy.

How did you become a forecaster?

I discovered the joy of signal processing during my master's thesis, where I researched industrial fault detection for heavy machinery at Cargill. I made the shift to forecasting in my second degree in engineering. I became fascinated by the unexplained variance and the potential of leading indicators: market shifts, economic turns, and external events. This led me to pursue a doctorate in operations research on tactical sales forecasting with leading indicators, using macroeconomic market signals. During my doctoral research, I had the privilege of visiting many fellow forecasters in Lancaster, Cardiff, and Melbourne. I will never forget the warm welcome I received at the forecast society and the IIF.

What areas of forecasting interest you?

My research focuses primarily on leading indicators, variable selection, shrinkage and practical constraints. These constraints include the need for transparent models and evaluating forecasts on decisions, for example, in [inventory management](#). On the application side, I like to keep things varied, from [tactical business forecasts and their business processes](#) to forecasts to reduce [food waste](#). While transparent "glass box" models and explainable AI techniques are often preferred in the industry, the best way to achieve this remains an open question.

How has the International Journal of Forecasting (IJF) influenced you?

I find the International Institute of Forecasters' approach unique. The IIF successfully reaches both academics and practitioners. Not only does the International Symposium on Forecasting (ISF) conference unite both groups, but the journals *International Journal of Forecasting* and *Foresight* appeal to both audiences. For me, this has had a significant impact, as the ISF is a unique platform to foster dialogue between researchers and practitioners and for receiving friendly feedback from both on my latest research.

Forecasting is a small world, and I enjoy helping to build its community. I'm helping to organize the [2026 Foresight Practitioner Conference](#), which will take place in the magical city of Bruges, Belgium. In addition to my work as lecturer, I am the director of [BELFORS](#), the Belgium's Forecasting Society. This is an initiative we launched to create a local hub where professionals and academics can share knowledge, much like the IIF does on a global scale.

What do you do in your free time?

I have a huge passion for cooking. I've spent the last few years taking some lessons from professional chefs to my sharpen my technique. I have a particular fondness for Asian cuisine, there is nothing is as satisfying as tasting a perfect result after hours of preparation.

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