



VISIONARY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH HIGH ADDED-VALUE SERVICES



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Margherita Tonan, Vice-President of IT, Costa Crociere.

The Costa brand first appeared in 1854 when Giacomo Costa founded “Giacomo Costa fu Andrea,” a company trading in fabrics and olive oil between Genoa and Sardinia. Rapid company growth set the stage for major developments that saw the purchase of the steamer Ravenna in 1924, followed quickly by Langano, leading Costa to enter the shipping market. In the 1950s, the company expanded its activities with a commercial passenger service on the famous “Linea C,” a transatlantic line connecting Italy with North and South America. With the establishment of Costa Crociere SpA in 1986, the group shifted its focus to holiday cruises.



BUSINESS CHALLENGES

In 2000, the group decided to expand its fleet, putting four new cruise ships into service by 2003, with two more to be ready by 2006. Today the Italian company has offices in 23 cities located in 14 different countries. It is the biggest cruise line operating in Europe and South America. A member of the prestigious “World’s Leading Cruise Lines” Association, Costa Crociere belongs to the Carnival Corporation & PLC. Its staff of 10,000 comes from 60 different countries, with 70% of personnel under 40 years of age. The group’s great strength lies in its inexhaustible ability to evolve and renew its customer service.

The continuous change and innovation that shaped Costa Crociere’s early years continue to impact the group’s growth today. A clear need to improve its broad-reaching IT system’s performance was identified in the late 1990s, however. Margherita Tonan, Costa Crociere’s Vice-President of IT, explains how Atos Origin got involved in the evaluation and re-engineering of the group’s various IT systems. “Our partnership with Atos Origin began in 1998,” notes Tonan. “The dynamic approach that has always been a feature

of our company, together with the need for optimal and continuous cruise and tourist service reservations, led us to seek a partner able to support us with real expertise, flexibility and speed.

Our booking procedure had been purchased in 1996 from an American company with whom we also signed a maintenance contract. We were, however, dissatisfied with the performance in response to our request for application enhancement and so terminated the agreement and sought a new partner to deal with booking management.”

Fabio Agostini, Atos Origin’s Enterprise Intelligence & CRM Delivery Unit Manager, explains why consulting support is every bit as important as technological competence for high-profile clients. “One of the things that particularly distinguishes the consulting area for a client like Costa Crociere, as well as being one of the most challenging features, is the constant need to solve new problems in the fields of business and marketing that arise from the frequent changes that Costa Crociere introduces into its services.”

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SOLUTIONS

The work group dedicated to the client is currently made up of about 25 people managing three areas of business and consulting. The first of these is the booking area, using traditional application management projects and above all the new layering and optimizing project. "We are working to create a new front-end Business-to-Employee (B2E) system that is quite different from the call center interface currently being used," Agostini explains. "The new Web-based system is managed by a dedicated intranet which is simple and user-friendly thanks largely to a new type of user interface built with Microsoft NET that enables front-end dialog with the booking system using a new API set sharing other electronic booking channels such as B2B, B2C and GDS—international multi-company booking circuits like Amadeus, iCruise and Revelex. It is a carefully organized, balanced and sophisticated project whose ease of use belies this complexity.

After two years in the making it will very shortly be operational."

The second area in which action is being taken is that covered by the data warehouse management project. "We needed to improve and optimize our fleet's inventory processes in such a way as to fill all available places as efficiently as possible," states Tonan. "Atos Origin has been working with us to improve and integrate cabin occupancy analyses, thus facilitating introduction of the new yield management system which will use specific techniques to improve finished resources sales efficiency and thus maximize profits. The starting point must of course be the data warehouse system which cross-references data and develops effective sales strategies for ourselves and for the sales channels."

The customer service area is growing constantly as is the area of internal processes optimization. "The last project we are collaborating with Atos Origin on is in the strategic and delicate supply chain area," adds Tonan. "Carnival has selected I2 as the tool for planning materials purchasing in the various ports, particularly with regard to catering. The plan drawn up will then be integrated with the on-board logistic systems for maximum efficiency and effective cost and resource monitoring."

BENEFITS

In Agostini's opinion, the partnership between Costa Crociere and Atos Origin has been a great success. "The working budget is most definitely positive," says Agostini, "fully in line with forecast times and targets. Our working relationship has become more consolidated and broader over the years so that we can now unequivocally say that a mutually beneficial and satisfying partnership has now been established between us."

Tonan agrees fully with Agostini's latter remark. "The result was a profitable exchange of ideas with the people at Atos Origin and the development of what has proven for us to be a strategic partnership operating on several different fronts," concludes Tonan. "The partnership between the two companies began with strategic booking application management support and went on also to embrace a re-engineering of the whole shopping and booking system with Web channel integration. We thus implemented a new e-mail management model and work group operational organization."

Atos Origin is an international information technology (IT) services company. Its business is turning client vision into results through the application of consulting, systems integration and managed operations. The company's annual revenues are more than EUR 5 billion and it employs 45,000 people in 50 countries. Atos Origin is the Worldwide Information Technology Partner for the Olympic Games and its clients include ABN AMRO, Akzo Nobel, Alstom, BNP Paribas, Ericsson, EDF, Euronext, Fiat, France Telecom, ING, KPN, Philips, Renault, Royal Bank of Scotland, Saudi Aramco, Schlumberger, Shell, Standard Chartered Bank, Telecom Italia, UK Department for Work and Pensions, Unilever, Vivendi Universal and Vodafone. For more information, please visit the company's web site at <http://www.atosorigin.com> Atos Origin is quoted on the Paris Euronext Premier Marché and trades as Atos Origin, Atos Consulting, AtosEuronext and Atos Worldline.