

High performance. Delivered.

Rheingau Musik Festival receives a standing ovation

The German Rheingau Musik Festival (RMF) is one of the biggest classical music festivals in Europe. Since 1988, the RMF has turned the region from Frankfurt to Rudesheim into a live concert stage of international renown. World-famous soloists such as Jessye Norman, Al Jarreau, Anne-Sophie Mutter and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra perform annually from June to September to an audience of international music lovers against a backdrop of romantic castles, monasteries and vineyards of the Rhine Valley.

German music enthusiast Michael Herrmann and a small circle of friends and family started the festival. The group turned their dream of integrating music, landscape and culture into reality in 1988 by offering 18 concerts at five venues. Today, the RMF has grown into one of the largest festivals of its kind in the world, offering more than 150 events spread over nine weeks and 50 venues, and attracting more than 120,000 people to the region. Classical music is the main focus but cabaret, jazz and lectures have a prominent position in the festival as well.

The RMF is growing aggressively in terms of the number of music events per year and the number of tickets sold. According to the leading German news magazine *Focus* (May 28, 2001), RMF ranks fifth among the most commercially successful music and cultural festivals within the Austria, Switzerland and Germany region.

Business Challenge

The RMF's funding concept is unique. It is the only festival of this scale that is financed with almost no public subsidies. Instead the RMF uses an intricate sponsoring scheme. The main sponsor and three co-sponsors are joined by a number of event sponsors, who support a concert of their choice. The sponsors finance nearly one half of the budget; the other half is covered by ticket sales.

According to Michael Herrmann, founder and CEO of the RMF, strong growth in recent years raised the need to review a number of important backstage processes. For example, RMF faced a major challenge to enhance its out-of-date IT and database systems, such as its customer information databases, which were not built to sustain such high demand. RMF also wanted to transform itself from a family-run business to a professional entertainment company without losing its "family entrepreneurial" spirit. Finally, RMF needed to develop a coherent and pragmatic business strategy that aligned its creative organizational culture with a business mindset.



Accenture helped Rheingau Musik Festival develop a new strategy, organizational structure and IT infrastructure to transform it from a family-run entrepreneurial business into a professional entertainment company with an international reputation.

Some of the questions that RMF needed to address were:

- What kind of additional services and products should RMF offer to its audiences in the future?
- What does the RMF brand mean to audiences the world over?
- How should RMF's future organization be aligned to its business goals?
- Should any organizational elements be kept in-house or should they all be outsourced?
- How should HR resources be planned for the short and long-term?

How Accenture Helped

Accenture works with some of the world's leading arts organizations, helping them to pursue excellence in the digital world, grow their global presence and explore innovative business ideas and solutions. Its clients have included La Scala Opera House in Milan, the English National Ballet and Sadler's Well Theatre in London. Since 1997 Accenture has been a principal sponsor of the RMF. Because of its long standing support, RMF asked Accenture to work with the management board to review and implement a series of new IT systems and databases, and to define RMF's future strategy.

Accenture began by creating a new IT and data infrastructure. The team developed the requirements for a complex migration program, which built the foundation for the conversion of the old customer data into a new dynamic IT system. In addition, Accenture conducted a visioning workshop with RMF's senior management to assess the strategic and organizational issues RMF would need to address in the coming years.

As Andreas Eckel, COO of the RMF, stated: "In the past, the Festival developed solutions only on demand and with a short-term perspective. Accenture helped us from a technical and organizational standpoint, and assisted us in keeping a long-term strategic focus while developing the solutions."

High Performance Delivered

According to Hans-Juergen Croissant (Accenture Partner): "the technical innovations designed by Accenture will provide measurable benefits for RMF and its audiences. For example, reservations and bookings will be much faster with the new systems, and audiences are able to access up-to-the-minute information on performances and venues".

Accenture defined a whole new series of data structures to support the IT and booking systems. The team also developed requirements for a complex migration program to help convert the old data into the new structure and implemented the transformation successfully.

Accenture also provided a number of critical human performance solutions to optimize workforce performance. For instance, the Accenture team assessed and designed new HR processes to improve management of the music festival. The team also outlined a new organizational structure and designed a succession planning solution linked into RMF's growth plans and future recruiting needs.

Finally, Accenture outlined several strategic alternatives to manage various backstage functions, namely whether non-artistic functions should be kept in-house or outsourced to third parties. RMF realized that its transformation from a family-run business into a professional organization would increase pressure to cut costs and boost efficiencies. Hence it needed to pare non-core functions so it could focus on the artistic and creative side of its business. Accenture designed a strategy that helped the festival management cut costs, boost productivity and increase flexibility. As a result, key personnel will be free again to focus on RMF's core business – organizing and hosting a great music festival.