SORGENIA’S “ROAD-TO-1-MILLION” USES CLOUD TO DELIVER CLOSER CUSTOMER RELATIONS AND INCREASINGLY PERSONALIZED OFFERS.

An ambitious end-to-end digital transformation journey supports flexible business growth during the transition to deregulation, improves communication and enables new services that attract and retain customers. This strategic collaboration with Microsoft, Accenture and Avanade is positioning Sorgenia as Italy’s first “FULLY ON CLOUD” utility.
A smiling Bebe Vio, Paralympic fencing champion, is a testament to the new way of telling stories in Italy’s utility landscape. “Clean energy, fully digital, your next energy” is the promise that Sorgenia, a producer and retailer of natural gas and electric power, makes to its constantly growing base of 300,000 customers.

Ranked number one by customer headcount and energy sales in Italy’s non-public utility market – and among the top five utilities on the market nationally – Sorgenia uses four plants for an installed capacity of 3,170 MW. Adding its Tirreno Power subsidiary brings this to 4,000 MW.

Sorgenia has opted for a “smart” positioning as it enters the new deregulated landscape: it will manage and serve domestic clients through digital channels. “No telephone vendors for our customer relations,” explains Simone Lo Nostro, Sorgenia’s Market Director and ICT. “For us, the future of sales is no longer ‘physical’. It’s digital. By deploying the right assets, we can simplify the life of consumers to the extent that they will choose to be our customers. That’s a good foundation on which to build greater satisfaction, awareness and loyalty.”

Sorgenia is the utility with the highest rate of customer acquisition through digital channels in Italy (100,000).

To optimize its strategic positioning and its costs, Sorgenia embarked on a complex digital transformation project that would put in place the backbone of innovative technological solutions the company wanted. The project centered on the cloud computing of Microsoft, the strategy and technology consulting of Accenture and the collaboration of Avanade, a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft. The goal was to design and develop the “JOURNEY TO CLOUD”.

DIGITAL ENABLES A QUALITY LEAP IN CUSTOMER RELATIONS. CLOUD ENABLES A QUANTUM LEAP IN GROWTH.
Migration to the Cloud necessitated a deep rethink of everything that was mission-critical for Sorgenia: an overhaul of CRM and ERP for customer acquisition and management, digital channel management and overall process efficiency; the opening of a Data Hub to analyze and manage Big Data; the adoption of collaborative workflows and new communication solutions to enhance productivity.

To prepare for the new market scenario, the company streamlined its information systems and injected innovation across the entire organization as part of the Digital Transformation project that launched in June 2017. The most impressive outcome is that today Sorgenia is one of the nation’s first Cloud-only utilities.

"WE LOOKED TO CLOUD COMPUTING TO HELP ACHIEVE A KEY BUSINESS GOAL: GROW FLEXIBLY IN STEP WITH INCOMING REGULATORY CHANGES IN THE UTILITY MARKET,"

says Simone Lo Nostro, in an overt reference to the sensitive changes outlined in Italy’s Competition Law (No. 124/2017) which will begin to take effect in the coming months in the run up to July 1, 2020, when the current consumer protections in the gas and electricity markets will be abolished.

Most of the 35 million domestic electricity meters installed in Italy today for a population of 60 million inhabitants fall within the “greater protection market” where contract rates and conditions are regulated by the Authority for Energy. The abolition of the protection afforded by the regulated market will require approximately 25 million metered consumers to select an alternative electricity provider in ways that have not yet been defined. This transition window offers exciting opportunities for Sorgenia to come into contact with a massive number of prospects – who may well become customers.
Sorgenia needs scalable technological tools to rapidly adapt to new market realities and be ready to better satisfy customers.

"THE CLOUD IS THE BEST SOLUTION THAT ENABLES US TO GROW FLEXIBLY AND SEAMLESSLY MANAGE THE GRADUAL ACQUISITION OF A LARGE NUMBER OF CLIENTS. IN A CONTEXT WHERE THE ABOLITION OF CURRENT CONSUMER PROTECTIONS AND THE EXPANSION OF OUR CUSTOMER BASE WILL NOT REQUIRE ANY NEW IMPLEMENTATIONS."

Independently of the future deregulated market scenario, Sorgenia has ambitious plans to grow: the goal is to jump from 300,000 customers today to ONE MILLION WITHIN FIVE YEARS."
SIMONE LO NOSTRO,
Market Director and ICT, Sorgenia.
When selecting the players who would lead a strategic migration to the Cloud, Sorgenia chose Microsoft, Accenture and Avanade based on their track record. “Competence and reliability differentiate these three players in projects of complex digital transformations. Microsoft solutions and platforms have revolutionized information technology. Accenture and Avanade go the extra mile to ensure a strategic project is successful,” says Simone Lo Nostro. Continuity was also important. Sorgenia’s information solutions are based on Microsoft Dynamics and their legacy system was Microsoft based. The large scale interoperability provided by Microsoft platforms facilitated interactions with third-party solutions and ensured compatibility with industry standards.

“NO COMPLEX PROJECT COMES WITHOUT CRITICAL PHASES BUT IN OUR CASE THE PROFESSIONALS AT MICROSOFT, ACCENTURE AND AVANADE MANAGED THEM RAPIDLY AND EXCEEDED OUR EXPECTATIONS. WITH PARTNERS OF THEIR CALIBER ON BOARD, DOUBTS NEVER CROSS YOUR MIND,” ADDS SIMONE LO NOSTRO.

The cloud migration project impacted all aspects of Sorgenia’s core business. The Microsoft Dynamics 365 Cloud platform not only helped the utility optimize the acquisition of new customers without compromising existing customer relationships, but also enabled minor customizations required by the utility market, such as enabling CRM to dialog with the credit-check systems to verify a new customer’s credit rating.
Dynamics 365 running in synergy with Dynamics AX on Azure has made processes more efficient. Both tools are deeply integrated with Sorgenia’s other business solutions and deliver efficiencies by simplifying process automation. System integration gives Sorgenia extra synergy across diverse areas and generates insights that feed into everyday business activities. Microsoft Dynamics AX resolves two major needs for Sorgenia: it gives the utility the scalability it needs to address surges in energy demand and allows it to rapidly build robust design environments for testing and developing pilots which are fundamental for generating a competitive advantage in the utilities industry.

“IN OUR MARKET, BEING THE FIRST WITH NEW PROJECT IDEAS IS MAKE OR BREAK. ENERGY IS A PURE COMMODITY: IF WHAT WE OFFER CANNOT DISTINGUISH US PARTICULARLY, HOW WE DO IT CERTAINLY CAN. THE FIRST TO LAUNCH AN INNOVATIVE SERVICE IS PRACTICALLY GUARANTEED A COMPETITIVE EDGE,” EXPLAINS SIMONE LO NOSTRO.
FASTER OPERATING TIMES, NEW CUSTOMER DATA ANALYSES AND BRINGING NEW SOLUTIONS FASTER TO MARKET. SORGENIA’S BUSINESS KEEPS EVOLVING TO CAPTURE NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

Speed, precision, punctuality, excellent customer experience, cost savings: in the Utility sector, these are increasingly the benchmarks which savvy consumers – especially the younger demographic – use to select a provider. For Sorgenia, Cloud operations have enabled better business management. The results are impressive: execution time has been reduced by 15-20% for every 100 operations.

“THIS KPI IS SET TO IMPROVE AS WE CONTINUE TO IMPROVE AND GENERATE MORE COST SAVINGS”, SAYS SIMONE LO NOSTRO.

When Sorgenia decided to jump from on-premises to Cloud, the company estimated it would amortize the investment in 3-4 years on the back of new customer acquisitions. Operations would also benefit: as automation accelerates back office activities, personnel can be deployed to higher value-added activities and better customer care. Billing cycle performances have also improved.
In the ultra-competitive Utility market, EBITDA margins count less than elsewhere. “To beat the competition, you have to work on cost efficiency. In our case, knowledgeable IT choices are helping significantly. We also drive growth by leveraging the moment we acquire a new customer: it is imperative that we respond rapidly when Sales & Marketing need new sites or apps,” explains Simone Lo Nostro.

There was another reason why Sorgenia chose Microsoft cloud solutions to simplify its IT infrastructure and ensure robust security. Adopting the Office 365 cloud productivity platform enabled the utility to embrace smart working. Business applications and user-friendly communication tools allow employees to share information and conduct activities anywhere and anytime. Today, approximately 300 Sorgenia employees work one day per week from home. Despite the change in mindset required, smart working has already improved collaboration levels, business productivity and employee work-life balance.
THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES WE ADOPTED ARE PERFECTLY ALIGNED WITH OUR AMBITIONS AND ARE THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR SORGENIA AS THEY HELP US RAPIDLY BUILD INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT WE CAN MANAGE EFFICIENTLY.

SIMONE LO NOSTRO,
Market Director and ICT Sorgenia.
WE CAN ACHIEVE OUR GOAL TO GUARANTEE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND QUALITY ONLY IF WE OBTAIN COST SAVINGS AND FASTER OPERATIONS. TODAY, WE ARE LEAN AND AGILE: WE CAN COMPLETE PROCESSES END-TO-END IN MINUTES.

SIMONE LO NOSTRO,
Market Director and ICT Sorgenia.
A cornerstone in Sorgenia’s digital transformation project is the creation of a Data Hub on the Microsoft Azure cloud platform. Its computational and analytical capacity delivers increasingly personalized communications and services. This solution has enabled Sorgenia to lay the groundwork for efficiently managing Big Data in compliance with the higher standard of security and privacy guaranteed by the Microsoft cloud in the new GDPR. The project is currently ongoing and partial releases will go live over the coming months.

“TODAY, WE HAVE PERSONAL DATA, LOGISTICS AND MONTHLY CONSUMPTION FOR EACH CUSTOMER. TOMORROW, OUR NEW DATA HUB WILL ENABLE US TO OBTAIN DEEPER CUSTOMER INSIGHTS AND ADD PERSONALIZED ENERGY OPTIMIZATION OFFERS TO BILLS. WE WILL LEVERAGE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TO STUDY MADE-FOR-ME PRODUCTS AND IDENTIFY THE COMMUNICATION LANGUAGE AND CHANNEL MOST APPEALING TO EACH CUSTOMER. SORGENIA’S DISTINGUISHING FACTOR WILL BE THE WAY IN WHICH IT INTRODUCES ITSELF AND DIALOGUES WITH PEOPLE,” CONCLUDES SIMONE LO NOSTRO.
Accenture, Avanade and Microsoft help companies to create new solutions for transforming their business and customer experience. The combined strength of our alliance can help you become more agile, innovative, competitive and ready for long term success.
Pierfederico Pelotti  
Managing Director – Accenture, Utilities  
Lead Italy, Central Europe and Greece  
pierfederico.pelotti@accenture.com

Maurizio Salvaderi  
Accenture Managing Director, Intelligent Cloud and Infrastructure Resources Portfolio  
Lead in Italy, Central Europe and Greece  
maurizio.salvaderi@accenture.com

Fabrizio Conte  
Accenture Managing Director - Intelligent Cloud and Infrastructure  
fabrizio.conte@accenture.com

ACCENTURE

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions—underpinned by the world’s largest delivery network—Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With 477,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives.  

www.accenture.it – www.accenture.com

Copyright © 2019 Accenture  
All rights reserved.  

Accenture, its logo, and High Performance Delivered are trademarks of Accenture.

This document makes descriptive reference to trademarks that may be owned by others. The use of such trademarks herein is not an assertion of ownership of such trademarks by Accenture and is not intended to represent or imply the existence of an association between Accenture and the lawful owners of such trademarks. Information regarding third-party products, services and organizations was obtained from publicly available sources, and Accenture cannot confirm the accuracy or reliability of such sources or information. Its inclusion does not imply an endorsement by or of any third party. The views and opinions in this article should not be viewed as professional advice with respect to your business.