The postal organization employs more than 155,000 people and boasts a network of 14,000 post offices, 40,000 vehicles and around 200 sorting centers for mail and parcels. Poste Italiane generated net revenues of 17.8 billion euros for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2008.

Highly competitive and no stranger to innovation, the company is keen to prepare for the fast-approaching liberalized market by focusing on a customer-centric approach to achieve profitability and, ultimately, high performance.

The business challenge
Poste Italiane is preparing for the European postal market liberalization, planned to impact Italy by 2011. As a part of this liberalization journey and to remain profitable while extending the scope of its traditional services, Poste Italiane identified the vital importance of its customer base.

The postal organization recognized the need to balance acquiring and retaining customers with extending the relationship between public administration and citizens, especially with respect to e-government initiatives.

In March 2006, to support its customer-centricity strategy, Poste Italiane launched a customer relationship management program aimed at improving customer strategy, standardizing processes across its business units and providing a unique multi-divisional (postal, financial, etc.) view of customer information, helping the sales force to better understand customer behavior.

“Poste Italiane considers the customer relationship management platform a key asset to our business strategy definition, planning and execution.” Massimo Sarmi, CEO, Poste Italiane.

Next-generation postal services
How Poste Italiane is using customer relationship management to achieve high performance

Poste Italiane is Italy’s leading postal services operator offering universal postal services and integrated communication, logistics and financial services and products throughout Italy.
How Accenture helped

As result of a public tender Poste Italiane selected Accenture to work on the design and development of a new, large-scale customer relationship management capability. This capability would affect all of Poste Italiane’s commercial channels (private and business customer markets), Poste Italiane’s postal services and Bancoposta business divisions and the whole of Poste Italiane’s customer base: Business customers, comprising close to 100,000 large and top account customers, 1.7 million small and medium business and small office home office customers and retail customers numbering almost 32 million.

Accenture played a primary role in scoping and implementing the customer relationship management (CRM) project. It put together a team of 50 Accenture professionals with diverse skills in SAP-based solutions including SAP CRM, technology architecture with public service, along with postal and banking industry specialists. The cross-functional skills of the team helped in a number of ways—from understanding the user requirements, to the design and implementation of the solution and undertaking the rollout.

Accenture has developed deep experience with customer relationship management solutions that leverage SAP’s CRM technology. Accenture was able to draw on the cumulative functional experience of some of its 10,000 professionals with SAP CRM-related skills who are spread across the globe. The team made use of the industrialized assets available within the Accenture Delivery Center in Naples, Italy to accelerate the project’s software development. From the beginning, Accenture used the expertise of its technology architecture professionals to design, to size and implement the technical architecture and was also responsible for the management of the entire project environment, including the production environment “Above all, we had a solid team, both from a functional and a technical point of view,” says Roberto Marinelli, senior executive—Public Service industry group, Accenture. “With strong collaboration and a keen orientation toward measurable results, we were able to focus on the real requirements of Poste Italiane users. Moreover, we were keen to support end users in Poste Italiane branches across the country. We knew from experience that the cooperation of the people out in the field would make a significant difference to the project’s overall success.”

As part of a staged approach, Accenture teamed with Poste Italiane to deliver the customer relationship management capability by focusing on two aspects: customer segments and the business processes.

Customer segments
The project team started with the business and small to medium business segments and then moved to consumer segments.

Business processes
Sales force automation, customer analysis and marketing strategy were all identified as key processes with the end goal of transforming the postal operator’s sales approach to customers. Initially, the processes implemented were presales, postsales, marketing and customer analysis which were then followed by the implementation of campaign management and sales processes.

“The customer relationship management system proved to be an enabler for business transformation, integrating and standardizing business processes across business divisions and commercial channels. Benefits gained along the way include: identification of potential opportunities for cross-selling, transformation of sales approach towards customers, enablement of a customer-tailored offerings, support for launching new products and services and the availability of integrated customer views through segmentation and purchase history analysis.”
Stefano Sappino, Head of CRM Program, Poste Italiane.
High performance delivered

As a leader with a 30-year track record of delivering highly complex systems integration projects at speed, Accenture was able to bring a wealth of experience to help Poste Italiane achieve high performance.

Critical success factors included using an enterprise data warehouse to ensure the consistency of data transferred from legacy systems.

In addition, Accenture took a thorough but pragmatic approach, introducing prototypes and customizing them to gain the acceptance and cooperation of users. Accenture collaborated with the Poste Italiane team to manage the change program, helping the Poste Italiane workforce to embrace change through a series of communications. These communications clearly set out the new customer strategy and the benefits to both the workforce and Poste Italiane from the new customer relationship management program, highlighting achievement milestones and reinforcing the rewarding nature of the process.

A large scale project with a high-volume activity, the new customer relationship management system is reaching 24,000 users in 14,000 Poste Italiane post office branches across Italy and more than 33,000,000 customers (across large and top accounts, the small and medium business and small office home office and consumer segments).

Ongoing work includes further development of the sales processes (through better integration with the back-office system), multichannel customer relationship management (employing the Internet and contact centers to better effect) and the general rationalization of back-office processes.

Having achieved its transformational goal, Poste Italiane can now enjoy the benefits of diversification through its enhanced customer relationship management capabilities. Above all, Poste Italiane recognizes the importance of its relationship with the Accenture team in realizing a successful result.

“I've perceived enthusiasm, professionalism and effective teamwork in our joint teams. I feel confident in saying that, through the customer relationship management project, Accenture and Poste Italiane's relationship moved into a real partnership.”

Agostino Ragosa, CIO, Poste Italiane.
Diversification differentiates
Accenture’s groundbreaking—and
ongoing—research program determines
the characteristics and practices that
define high-performance businesses
and/or governments. Accenture research
undertaken in 20061 indicated that high
performers in the postal industry display
strategic clarity, a solid focus on cost
management and a strong talent
equation. What was unusual about
these results is that strategic choice
appeared to have little effect. Now, in
an updated survey launched in March
2009,2 Accenture discovered that the
factors driving high performance appear
to have changed significantly, with
strategic choice and capabilities
emerging as critical drivers to high
performance. A strategy of
diversification—away from the
traditional mail product—has emerged
a clear winner, and it is here that Poste
Italiane has proved to have strong
performance indicators on parameters
like return on capital and employee
spread.3

About Accenture
Accenture is a global management
consulting, technology services and
outsourcing company. Combining
unparalleled experience, comprehensive
capabilities across all industries and
business functions, and extensive
research on the world’s most successful
companies, Accenture collaborates with
clients to help them become high-
performance businesses and
governments. With approximately
177,000 people serving clients in more
than 120 countries, the company
generated net revenues of US$21.58
billion for the fiscal year ended

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1. Source: Achieving High Performance in the
Postal Industry: Accenture Research 2006
2. Source: Achieving High Performance in the
Postal Industry: Accenture Research and
Insights 2009
3. Employee spread is defined as revenue per
employee less operating costs per employee.