

➤ AKERYS Services Immobiliers builds on Selligent

Services

The AKERYS group is one of the leaders of France's real estate sector. It offers its 100,000 clients a full palette of products and services. Above and beyond real estate promotion, it is involved in home sales, real estate services, plus insurance, loans and financial product brokerage.

In 2006, AKERYS Services Immobiliers, the real estate services division of the AKERYS group, set up its Milan project and selected Selligent to co-ordinate the resources between its contact centre, the field sales force and the agencies responsible for the rental or sale of the real estate assets in its portfolio.

➤ A tandem to boost the Milan project

The idea of using a CRM tool took shape under the leadership of Gérard Mothais, manager of business information systems, and AKERYS Managing Director Fabrice Lecat. "We both started in our new jobs in 2006," Mothais recalls, "and by the September of that year, we were determined to set up a strategic customer relationship project. With a project of this kind, it is important to be able to count on top management's full support, and Fabrice Lecat ensured we had the resources to execute it successfully. So we had fulfilled the pre-conditions for the Milan project to take off." The project's name was particularly well suited to the objectives – a symbol of the rental division's take off.

➤ Clear objectives for measurable results

To rent out homes, AKERYS uses a complete battery of sales and marketing programmes that point its customers to a single nationwide phone number. This is a call centre comprising around 30 people who each handle an average of 7 – 8 calls an hour. These home-lease agents have the task of offering the callers a house or apartment that best meets their expectations and then arrange a visit together with one of the 150 sales people based in the 15 company branches.

Before the advent of Selligent, the call centre was equipped with a variety of industry-specific solutions that did not communicate with each other. The agent could access the sales reps' diaries, but not those of the properties. The sales people were advised of the visit by text message.

➤ The great dictator: growth

Over the years, the number of properties for rent has increased continuously, the call centre's work force increased tenfold and the number of sales reps quadrupled. For Lecat, "it was essential to have modern tools to keep pace with this growth and optimize our resource management, especially in the call centre." The objectives were:

- Raise call centre productivity to absorb the impact of the growth in the rental market at lowest possible cost (with close to 18,000 new rental accommodations in 2007, Akerys is achieving 15% growth a year);
- Reduce the vacancy rate on the books;
- Optimize the rental cycle of the properties;
- Considerably improve the quality of service as perceived by the owners and the home seekers.

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Gérard Mothais |
Manager of Business
Information Systems

➤ A provider who listens

Working together with IS Project Support and Operations Marketing, Mothais started looking for the best solution to replace the tools currently being used in the company. "We had to move fast, because we had set a target date of early summer 2007," he stresses.

Rather than opt for an industry-specific system, Akerys preferred to go for a general-purpose CRM solution, yet one that could be adapted to their business. "From the outset, it was clear that Selligent was the provider who best understood our needs. Among the demonstrations we were shown, the one from Selligent best met our expectations. We were persuaded both by the functionality as by the way it was implemented."

➤ A tool that adapts to the business

After an initial prototype phase, configuration work on the application began based on the specs.

To respond to AKERYS Services Immobiliers' atypical needs, the Selligent solution proved to be very agile:

- 1 In a single screen, it manages **several levels of scheduling**: the property itself; the main sales rep assigned to that property; and the back-up sales reps, who take over if the main sales rep is absent.
- 2 It has **interfaces** to two "in-house" applications – the management database that contains all the properties available for rent and the reservations management application – so that the call-centre agents have real-time visibility of the properties available.
- 3 It combines all the different elements – from the inbound call through to the arranging of a visit with the sales rep – in a **single screen**.



➤ Milan takes off in 90 days

The solution was installed on July 14, 2007 (taking advantage of the national holiday). As of the following Monday, all the staff in the call centre and the agencies, that is 130 people, were operational.

"Throughout the project to optimise our call centre, Selligent, our business teams and our IS showed considerable agility, pragmatism and engagement," says Mothais. "That's what allowed us to implement such a major project in such a short time. To succeed, you have to take decisions and move forward fast, but without losing sight of the original objectives."

The project was first presented to all the users, so user adoption was quite smooth, as testified by Clarisse Montochio, Director of Customer Service at AKERYS Services Immobiliers. "A big change like that is never easy, especially since the previous tools had determined all our practices. Implementing Milan required a radical change to telephone operations. The agents had only a half-day's training, and by the end of July even the most reluctant of them were awed by the productivity gain."

➤ Almost 40% reduction in the average call duration

The results came thick and fast. "Because it made the daily work of the call centre's rental accommodation agents easier, Selligent reduced the average call duration by close to 40%," Montocchio points out. "And, quite apart from quantitative improvements, it also raised the quality of the follow-up."



Before, several different tools came into play; now a single inbound call screen enables the caller to be identified, the request logged, corresponding properties to be found, complete with their detailed descriptions, and the timetables of the chosen properties accessed to set up an appointment. Clearly, serious time savings.

There's more. A history file of the contacts ensures the follow-up of unsuccessful requests so that the potential tenant can be contacted again when another suitable property becomes available.

➤ Real-time links with the field

AKERYS decided to reap even more benefits. A second phase started in October 2007, with the objective of hooking the 150 sales reps in the field into the Selligent database by equipping them with Selligent for PDA for their Blackberries.

Now the sales reps have real-time access to the list of their appointments for the day via their Blackberries. If an appointment results in a reservation, it can be registered online so that the call centre agents stop making appointments for that property, now that it is taken.

So all information on the diaries and the properties reserved are available in real time and shared by everyone – the call centre, the sales reps and the sales support people in the agencies responsible for handling the paperwork.

By facilitating the call centre agents' work, Selligent has significantly reduced the average call duration.



Clarisse Montocchio | Customer service director

➤ From wide angle to zoom on the key performance indicators

The Milan project included the creation of several dashboards. They enable management to analyse very precisely all the information contained in the CRM, to work out the win rate by sales rep and by residence or even by city, and to identify the high-potential regions, which will then have a bearing on expansion plans.

Thanks to all these indicators, management has the agility necessary to adjust its priorities to the business dynamics and effectively manage the assignment of resources. For Lecat, "the challenge now is to get the whole of the sales management team to leverage this information to drive their teams. We have a clear competitive edge, and we aim to keep it by making our business approach even more proficient."





➤ Taking stock

Mothais sums up, “today, Milan is used by close to 300 people in our organisation, and we have met all the targets we set ourselves.”

Lecat tends to agree. “We have shown the whole AKERYS group that it is possible to work fast and well at the same

time, provided the user department works hand in glove with IS, which was not originally part of our company culture. The Milan project has really opened people’s minds. Our other business units are now eyeing the system with great interest.”

➤ About Selligent

Selligent, the European leader in interactive marketing and Customer Relationship Management, has been developing and marketing since 1990 operational, collaborative and analytical solutions aimed at boosting the organization, actions, and interactive communications of teams in direct contact with customers, prospects, and business relationships. Selligent solutions enable marketing, sales, services and consulting departments to develop interactive, effective, and sustainable relationships with all their contacts and ecosystems. Selligent offers a unique approach combining agility, pragmatism, and engagement, and guarantees its customers a fast and significant return on their investment.

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