



➤ Alliance Hospitality welcomes Selligent in its hotels

Hospitality

Alliance Hospitality, the multi-brand, multi trademark hotel operator, is in charge of the management of over 40 hotels, mainly with the Holiday Inn brand name. Founded in 1990, the company is present in France, Belgium and Italy and is currently part of a major international investment group. In order to increase its sales efficiency and measure the value and potential of the group and its hotels, Alliance Hospitality has worked with Selligent for many years.

➤ A volatile global market

The global hotel market has become volatile and its variations are totally unpredictable. This situation is aggravated by the current downturn in the economy. Today only 20% of the group's hotel bookings come from integrated booking and pricing systems for which there is almost no commercial negotiation. In order to efficiently manage the remaining 80% which cover the business-to-business market segments (including both business and leisure), it has become crucial for Alliance Hospitality to have a CRM tool.

The initial project had two key objectives: firstly, to lighten the administrative workload of the sales force so that it could concentrate on its core business and increase its efficiency; and secondly to be able to measure the group's value and potential, by brand and by individual establishment, and the relevance of the sales actions of the sales persons in each establishment.

➤ A well-conducted first project

The first milestones of the CRM project were laid down in 2003 when general management asked Sales and Information Systems management to draw up specifications that would be given as a request for proposal to 9 editors. Selligent won this step in the face

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Valérie Prillard-Ramesan | E-commerce Director

of two international giants. The choice was based on objective criteria: Selligent offered perfect suitability to the needs and an excellent price/quality ratio. But what finally tipped the balance in convincing the group was a visit made to an active Selligent reference in the same sector of activity which gave the possibility to visualise the future solution. In January 2004, only a few months later, the solution - named SAHM (Sales Alliance Hospitality Management) - was operational.

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» « Back to basics »

Valérie Prillard-Ramesan, E-Commerce director, was called in to continue the project in 2006; she praises the work of her predecessor: "He succeeded in moving our sales force from paperwork to leading edge IT systems and made them have a group level vision of sales." When I arrived our sales force couldn't even imagine working without CRM. However all the potential of the tool wasn't yet used." Valerie Prillard's double set of skills in the world of international tourism and new technologies in Canada made her the ideal candidate for the project. "SAHM had a high number of custom functions. It is true that it is tempting to customise when each hotel works differently, on different markets with different objectives. But we were running the risk of losing the true value of the CRM".

To get back to the basics of CRM, Alliance Hospitality set up a Project team to rework SAHM. First objective: re-examine the methods and procedures from a global customer relationship point of view. "At first the application was more oriented to quotation management. In 2007 when we migrated our Selligent solution from the old client/server platform to the new web mode version, we included lead and opportunity management and a view of the customer life cycle. The "quotation" module was also reviewed, considered that after 3 years of use our sales force had a better view of the tool and its performances."



» More room for analysis

SAHM also acquired a more evolved analytical dimension with Selligent AnalytiX. "Today we are capitalising much more on this aspect" says the director. "In order to achieve this we had to make data entry of some fields mandatory, analysis is meaningless if it is made using incomplete data. We implemented new dashboards that, because they are fed with better data, allow us to better measure the efficiency of our teams, give us a better visibility of our three-month forecasts in the business-to-business segment and help us to better segment our market and identify the sectors that need to be developed."



» Centralised marketing - free sales people

Analytics have especially let Alliance Hospitality highlight the multi-task aspect of its sales force which answers to both the sales manager and the hotel director. "The reworking of the process enabled me to understand that our sales force was doing as much marketing as they were sales, this prevented them from spending 100% of their time on their sales objectives", underlines Valérie Prillard.

Since 2009 the sales objectives are part of the application, the sales force can measure its progress compared to these objectives. In order to leave them free to concentrate on their business, the marketing, e-mailing and online survey aspects have been centralised at group headquarters. These tools are available in SAHM. All that is left to do is to train the sales managers in the use of the campaigns. They can then use these tools to carry out targeted actions on the most promising markets.

Valerie Prillard adds: "today we use an external platform to send our mass e-mailings and we can't identify the 'openers' in our CRM. This means many segment upload and download operations. The new Selligent interactive marketing module will have its place in the achievement of our objective which is to 'work better with the customer life cycle', because we will have a real-time visibility on the results of our e-mailing campaigns and our sales force will therefore be more reactive in their work."

➤ Involved users

When the project team was set up, Valérie Prillard made sure that a representative panel of users was part of it, including two Belgian sales managers. "This helped us take into account the specifics of the Belgian market, especially the use of three national languages. We thus managed to re-motivate the Belgian sales force to use the system. I was truly able to count on involved users committed to the project's success. "The project group still meets once per quarter to discuss evolutions and enhancements." In this respect we have a permanently pragmatic approach to evolutions and problem resolution while keeping in line with the CRM best practices on which the Selligent solution is based."



➤ Change management

If the users are currently convinced of its benefits, management had to fight a battle against the idea that the solution was there to "spy" on them. The reluctance of some users to share their data had to be overcome. This change was not easy and a true change management policy based on intensive communication, meetings and the creation of a forum were implemented from the start of the first project. According to Valérie Prillard, "in order to ensure the success of this type of project it is essential to remain attentive to the users. We managed to convince our sales force that the main objective of the tool was to help them. Our next objective is to make them even more responsible on data entry before prospect qualification and on sharing with all the hotels."

Our sales force
has a **better visibility**
over its **customers** and a
better understanding
of the **market.**



Valérie Prillard-Ramesan |
E-commerce Director

➤ Continuing training

After the migration and the implementation of the new processes, Alliance Hospitality had to train all its users again. For Valérie Prillard "the new version represents a major change and is much easier to use. But, as the subject is very wide, there are still many areas to be learnt. We are therefore considering implementing an e-learning solution to supplement the training and are considering working with the Selligent Academy for our future training on the coming version upgrade. The project team is, of course, at the users' service and is ready to give all the necessary support."





➤ An indispensable tool

SAHM, with its centralised database, groups together no less than 16000 companies and 35000 contacts. Since it was implemented it is used on a daily basis by the sales force and the group hotel directors, almost 120 people, in order to manage the prescribers file, the contacts and sales actions, the contracts, the services... True corner stone of the group's entire sales activity, it has become indispensable

for the sales force, as Valérie Prillard says: "Our sales force has a better visibility over its customers and a better understanding of the market. They can identify the value-added customers and spend more time in increasing their loyalty, giving a more efficient and more successful sales approach. They are now more 'agile', more reactive to the customer. They will never look back. »

➤ 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.

You can find all our customer success stories on

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