Security
above
all

ARTICLE
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Robert Gebel, Head of Business Process Solutions at Swisscom Business Customers, talks about heavy security requirements in outsourcing; the increasing demands of mobile banking and digital banking services; and how curiosity and customer proximity are still essential in the 21st century. And the potential of digital services evolving around healthcare.

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_ROBERT GEBEL, HEAD OF BUSINESS PROCESS SOLUTIONS AT SWISSCOM BUSINESS CUSTOMERS.

"We believe that customer proximity, spliced with agility, is vital for quality, security and trust. These factors must not be underrated in a market where the only constant is change."

In the eyes of the public, Swisscom is mainly perceived as a major telco enterprise for private clients and, thanks to its avant-garde IT services, its expertise and image are equally strong in the business-to-business arena. The offer ranges from smart workplaces and data centres to IT outsourcing – mostly industry-specific to banks, healthcare and SAP companies. With more than 400 SAP experts and 800 IT banking specialists, Swisscom is the nation's largest provider of SAP services and the leading outsourcing partner for banks.

They offer full outsourcing to these industries with technology and a deep understanding for operations. By managing a company's entire application environment, Swisscom becomes an integral part of the client's value chain. Gebel highlights the importance: "We believe that customer proximity, spiced with agility, is vital for quality, security and trust – these factors must not be underrated in a market where the only constant is change."

Seamless security

Security is a key component of today's applications because cross-system integration of different peripheral systems is crucial for next-generation business procedures. And it doesn't stop there. When constructing ecosystems and including SaaS elements, it also means that application environments are scattered across different providers, making IT systems and data security more demanding than ever. As a major telco player in the public spotlight, Swisscom needs to constantly provide reliable cyber-security solutions – not only as a developer but also as an operator and trusted adviser. So, how does one actually measure the performance of a security system?

"An essential indicator is the amount of internal and external incidents: how one reacts and uses them to improve your security level," says Gebel. The company takes great precautions in technology and operations, and also invests in staff training. After all, Swisscom is a trusted provider of security services, offering threat detection and 24/7 services from its Zurich-based operation centre. He adds: "We work with Ergon's security solution Airlock, which we find to be both

_SWISSCOM'S P51 OFFICE COMPLEX AT PFINGSTWEIDSTRASSE 51
IN ZURICH ACCOMMODATES ALMOST 1700 EMPLOYEES.

fail-safe and scalable. In our humble opinion this application is state of the art."

Bank to the future
Banking is the biggest sector of Swisscom's industry-specific IT services, as it operates and maintains the core banking systems of over 60 Swiss banks. Even though it has good relations with all the relevant software developers, its focus is on Avaloq and Finnova, which are the most widely used systems among the many regional banks of Switzerland. What about the big banks?

"The big banks usually develop their own applications but the small-to-medium-sized banks prefer to outsource their IT to us, as they trust in our vast experience," explains Gebel. Swisscom caters to their individual needs and also offers industry-proven standard packages. At the end of the day, the personal dialogue paves the way to the ideal solution.

The increased demand for digital services challenges the providers of core banking systems to up their game. Younger generations prefer mobile banking and chats; they see no need to talk to a client adviser. How do banks adapt to changing user behaviours by the use of modern technologies, let alone keeping client relationships personal? (And we haven't even talked about open IT architecture yet!)

"Modern technology allows one to not just work with core banking and their related systems, but to adapt to changing circumstances, in an agile way. The question is, how agile can a system adapt to outside influences, such as fintech organisations – core banking systems usually only have four major updates per year," explains Gebel. "We need to be able to develop and incorporate agile solutions to meet fintech requirements; quickly and cost-efficiently, with smart, cross-system integration that allows a highly flexible interaction between the two worlds. If you solve that, you have an edge on the market."

Healthy progress
Apart from banking, Swisscom sees a huge upside potential in the fields of health, healthcare and medical services, as well as the countless digital products evolving around them.

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_CODE TO SUCCESS
By Robert Gebel

_PROXIMITY TO CLIENTS
No matter how senior you are, it is vital to spend time with your customers and engage them in con- versation. That is how you disco- ver their needs and challenges.

_CHERISH YOUR PARTNERS
Maintain a constructive dialogue with your business partners. It is the best way to innovate products and optimise services in line with the market. A good example is our valued partnership with Airlock – together we are stronger!

_INNOVATION NEVER STOPS
Keep an eye on trends happening at global tech hubs, such as Silicon Valley or Shanghai, and consider where they can go, what possible conclusions can be drawn. Not just for your company but also the whole industry and market you are in.

_CONVERSING WITH ROBERT GEBEL, HEAD OF BUSINESS PROCESS SOLUTIONS AT SWISSCOM BUSINESS CUSTOMERS.

Gebel outlines the future: "We will definitely focus more on these business areas, especially as we wit- ness the rise of electronic patient files in Switzerland." Swisscom is now developing cutting-edge software together with Axsana, the nation's largest master community, and also handles their IT. On top of that, Swisscom has further industry-specific applications in the pipeline, such as Avanti. It is a new core system software for the emergency services; police, fire brigade and other rescue services."

The secret sauce?
"In my humble opinion, it is our curiosity that lifts digitalisation constantly to the next level. Partner it with speed, high-quality standards and a bit of budget, and then collaborate with strong partners who share your vision of the future, like Airlock." />

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