TECHNOLOGY BRIDGES THE GAP

Ten years ago, Denmark and Sweden settled a 300-year-old debate about linking the two countries and began building Europe's longest road and rail bridge, which today spans the Öresund strait.

At the time, Skånetrafiken, the Swedish transport authority that manages travel in the region — including Malmö, where the bridge would enter the country — anticipated a boost in traffic and traveler queries. To cope with this influx, the authority looked for, but could not find, a customer claims system to help support the increased business. So they contracted for a custom solution, now a CSC product, called Boomerang.

Boomerang gave Skånetrafiken the opportunity to begin shifting from a traditional mass transit mindset to a customer-centric focus. The results have been substantial, as Boomerang has played a key role in increasing the use of public transportation in Sweden.*

"We understood that we were at the center of things for 1.2 million Swedes," says Magnus Hedin, Skånetrafiken president. "We wanted to move from a production-oriented organization to one that really sees and hears its customers."

Boomerang integrates with the transit authority's smart card system, enabling travelers to log onto their personal home pages and perform a variety of tasks, such as order tickets, view smart card balances or report lost cards. The solution also handles customer reimbursements in case of travel delays. In this case, Boomerang integrates with Skånetrafiken's traffic system, enabling the authority to link specific routes to a claim to quickly verify and process it.

"Boomerang forms the cornerstone of our customer strategy, allowing us to tie together services, such as our smart card system, and create a unified front toward the customer," says Peyman Sabet, Skånetrafiken sales director.

In fact, Skånetrafiken has been hailed as a success by the Danish Industry Branch organization, partly due to the Swedish agency's increased focus on the customer during a time when the number of trips across the bridge increased from 80 million in 2000, when the bridge opened, to 130 million in 2009.**

Since Boomerang was developed, it has evolved into a customer relationship management software suite specifically for public transport organizations that deal directly with travelers. In contrast with generic CRM software, Boomerang integrates with public transport-specific systems, such as automatic fare collection systems, travel planners and real-time traffic systems, partly through prebuilt adapters.

Its modules, which support customer service, sales and eTicketing, operations, and marketing and communications, integrate to provide all teams with a single view of customers, products and cases. The solution is now used by 15 of Sweden's 19 public transport organizations, including Stockholm's transport authority.

This year, CSC will introduce a new version of Boomerang, featuring a complete rewrite of the technology platform with the goal of creating a product that can be tailored, extended and integrated with a minimum amount of work. The new platform, which uses a service-oriented architecture, was built using Ruby, REST and template-driven HTML.

"An exciting aspect of the new version is that new, custom business flows and rules can be created within a fraction of the time required by most other systems," says Jonas Westerdahl, Boomerang solution manager. "We want to support whatever processes and surrounding systems the client prefers to use, not only on day one, but continuously, as their business evolves." ∎

For more information, visit
www.boomerangtransport.com.

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* http://tinyurl.com/yhqmrwg
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