



## INTERVIEW

# INERTIA IS NOT AN OPTION. ORGANIZATIONS NEED TO MOVE FASTER AND BETTER

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### 1. What has been your company's dynamic for 2020? What are the prospects during this corona-crisis?

At the end of 2019 we have invested a lot into our Sales and Marketing department aiming to grow our business in 2020. The delivery organization was and still is stable, mature and very scalable thanks to our geographical distribution. So we were ready for a stronger, wider presence on the European market and attracted about building a global presence, extending our operations in ASPAC and US. Of course 2020 was not an accelerator but we did not change the strategy. We figured out that while the active customers are slowing down we needed to focus a lot more on prospecting and adding new customers to our portfolio. We had more time so we have strengthened our delivery capabilities, upskilling, reskilling, getting certifications. We have become Google Cloud certified partner and SAP Partner Edge. We have also improved our internal IT systems, improving our CRM environment, our

Reporting and Analytics platforms and our core system for planning, service execution and quality assurance.

I would say that the corona crisis determined us to act faster on implementing our programs and act more motivated in exploring further the market. The prospects are showing exactly this, a revenue reduction with our current, active customers and a market growth in terms of new, strategic customers.

### 2. Your company has a very strong presence in Europe, with large corporates as clients. What was their behavior until now?

Most of our current customers across Europe have reduced their IT activities with us, as a consequence of a general reduction which had an impact on our teams as well. The reduction was variable depending on the industry. For instance, we have experienced more than 50% reduction in the aviation sector, approximately 25% reduction in the automotive, 10% to 15% reduction in the financial sector. Instead we have registered a revenue increase in the FMCG, Retail, Tobacco,

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Food and Beverage. We have not lost any customer, or at least none significant and this is thanks to our product/ service strategy based on high quality at competitive costs. When you have a high quality product/ service, which in our case is based on our Talent Management, it is difficult to be left out. But we need to gain more market and become more global because the competition is becoming extremely aggressive. In the past ten years there was a stable distribution of the outsourced IT services by IT service provider, depending on dimension, markets, and skills. The playground was set and the general rules were clear. I feel that in the next two to three years the playground will change again, our proven areas of collaboration will be challenged and in the same time we will challenge the other players. This means more competition, which generally is a good thing, since a strong model based on high-quality and competitive costs is a successful one. In any case inertia is not an option and companies need to move better and faster on the market, to defend the current business and gain new one.

**3. How the new economic reality, will look for the software industry?**

Which are the top 5 priorities on your CEO agenda today? The new economic reality is a very complex discussion, but in terms of software industry, in relationship with the business environment, now more than ever the IT shall act in perfect synergy with the strategy of the organization and even behave as a proactive business partner. Many of the organizations are doing two things in terms of IT:

a) They are reducing as much as possible the cost of RUN IT leveraging on competitive and skilled IT service providers.

b) They are investing in IT areas with added value for their business. Added value is not only money, it can be optimization and simplification of processes, it can be collaboration platforms, digital channels for customer engagement, better data insight and better data foresight, usage of hybrid cloud platforms, strong partnerships that provide

commitment and engagement etc.

With this in mind, I think a software industry CEO needs to focus on talent management, optimization of its capabilities, consolidation of the relationship with both customers as well as industry partners, increase market presence and let's not forget the health and safety of all personnel.

**4. The crisis accelerated digital technology usage. What are the sectors you think would accelerate the most out of the digital transformation?**

For sure the collaboration platforms are becoming and will remain a hot topic. In many cases this is the only way of working. Insights and analytics is another sector moving very fast in this period and this opens the room for at least two more digital areas of transformations which are internet of things and cloud based data platforms. And the domino continues since once you have solved the issues of data capture and data processing you need to focus on building patterns, predictive models, forecasts and this has to be done fast and accurate, so artificial intelligence will be very present around us. Digital archiving and digital signature will also be accelerated.

Most of the industries will find business cases where the digital transformation will be present.

**5. There are endless possibilities opened by Big Data, Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of things, Sensors and Robots. Which are the first solutions that you would recommend in the actual context?**

Actually, this has already happened in the past two-three years and what will happen next is an accelerated adoption. The first solution, in general terms, is the Data Environment. By now we all should be familiarized with the concept of ERP (Enterprise Resources Planning) meaning end-to-end process driven and integrated IT management systems. But the reality of an organization is not being managed, from an IT perspective, by a single ERP system. This has many reasons like, for instance, the merger and acquisitions which opens the reality of more than one ERP system, business

evolution, and variety of software vendors, each specialized in a certain area (either management areas or industrial areas). These systems are generating a lot of data and until recently the data management had a silos approach. At the same time, IoT came along generating even more data. So now we are talking about big data, travelling at high speed, at high volumes and from different sources. All this data volume carries within it insights and can generate foresights and creates the foundation of a Data Driven Organization. Of course, processes are extremely important and there is a continuous focus on process integration, simplification and optimization. But processes are more related to IT transactional systems, a process starts, ends and serves a function or more functions. A Data Driven Organization needs to produce added value from its data and the data around it. And this is why the mythical "E" standing for Enterprise, is now delivering the right importance to data and to Enterprise Data Platforms. Data needs to be managed at enterprise level, in a common environment and most likely a cloud environment.

**6. How do you prepare for a permanent shift in the working relationships? How do you think it will affect your company culture?**

Home working is the solution for us. But we are lucky from this point of view since we are an IT Engineering and IT Consulting company which from day one has delivered its services remotely. In a way we were prepared for a permanent shift, not because we were planning for it, but because our business

and delivery models were designed from the beginning in this way.

**7. What's your „Focus on ...“ advice for the managers of the large local companies after the sanitary crisis will end?**

Focus on innovation and added value. I strongly believe our local IT sector needs to pay more attention to added value IT services and products. There are two main reasons why I give this advice. The first one is because we can, because we are very talented. And the second one is because we are becoming expensive in terms of costs and since no one is willing to gain less money, we need to delivery more value to the market.

**8. Your company is investing in nurturing Romanian software talents. What would be the 3 things you would like to tell people who want to start a successful software business in Romania?**

If my message should reach young talents, willing to start a successful software business in Romania, the key element is definitely innovation. Do not repeat what has already been done since from this point of view the market is in any case saturated. Instead find your identity in a modern and innovative segment, build your proposal around data scientists, artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities. Do not fear to contact large organizations since many of them suffer from a lack of innovative ideas and they are willing to listen to start-ups, work together with them and create together with them. Be authentic and courageous.