



BOLDT[®]

The shape of things to come

Interface Magazine talks to Boldt Group CIO Miguel DeSantis regarding the massive digital transformation programme at the Argentinian technological services giant...

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Boldt Group is the leading Argentine company in the development and delivery of technologies and systems, applied at scale, to its clients: a comprehensive portfolio of entertainment and tourism enterprises. Boldt provides communications and transactional technology to clients, including digital coverage, applications and tools, often in some very remote areas, as well as more traditional services such as printing and supply chain management.

As the 87-year-old Boldt Group strives to deliver more for its clients against a wider global backdrop of massive technological change and increased customer expectation, it has seen to reorganize and realign the six distinct business units that offer up its range of client-based solutions and services as well as its internal infrastructure and support network.

In 2019, Boldt made a change to the Group's operating structure by making each business head responsible for overseeing all activities within their business units. The six business units comprise of Communications (split into two companies: SPTI (corporate internet for business) and Orbith (satellite-based internet service for rural areas), Entertainment (platforms for hotels and casinos),



Transactional Services (Gaming Lottery and agency operations, casino administration systems, online gaming and other transactional platforms), Intelligent Traffic Systems & New Business (an operational service), Printing & Graphic Services (legal printing and on-demand publishing) and The Software Factory & QA (technological development and quality assurance). Each business unit has a unique



responsibility and operational focus within the Boldt Group.

We caught up with Miguel DeSantis, Group CIO at Boldt SA. “As part of that organizational change last year, they defined a few service areas that were to give service to the entire group,” he explains. “This included IT, Human Resources, Finance and Legal. In the particular case of IT, each business unit

had governance of IT up to a certain kind of level, which was not standardized,” he reveals. DeSantis and his team are now deep into the process of a standardization and integration of all the business units as part of a comprehensive four-year transformation.

The changes occurring at Boldt are expansive and complex, the Entertainment business unit alone has

12 different locations within its realm. DeSantis and his team are working hard to integrate these locations in order to balance the cultural gaps in the way they work while building out new processes too. "So, we are in the middle of that change, which is a big and interesting challenge," he laughs. "It wasn't that IT wasn't governed, or that there was no governance, just that the governance was perhaps not aligned at a corporate level. As part of that reorganization, I became a CIO responsible for all IT and information services and product development such as IT support, infrastructure, security

and networking, Applications, Software Factory and Quality assurance."

Such is the scale of the changes at Boldt, DeSantis started to build a PMO (Project Management Office) to deal with it. "We have to integrate every line of business, currently with different infrastructures and applications and so managing the portfolio is a really complex thing. So, I'm working on building a PMO so I can see all the portfolio projects together in one place. Imagine all the projects and in addition to that, the IT guy has to standardize all the locations so we can use the security and the networking... this is four



years of work, that's the plan. So, it's very complex trying to manage the portfolio and all the different requirements. For example, when they build the platform for on-demand book printing, IT has to be involved."

The Software Factory and QA report directly to DeSantis in order to maintain and align the quality of standards and certification. The main objective is to standardize the processes as each business unit has a different certification, perhaps with a different vendor and processes. "Perhaps they don't know that the other business units have expertise

on the same certification," he says. "The idea is to give a one-stop service of support, centralized for everyone and we're working on defining how that should be done. It's a big challenge." To those ends, Boldt has a steering committee every three months that presents to the business units, so a focus can be placed upon needs and requirements.

Another major change at Boldt is the introduction of an IT Business Partner into each business unit. "That person can review initiatives, right? For example, what do you need in your business? What are you thinking you need? What





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—
Miguel DeSantis

Group CIO, Boldt SA

do you need to solve? The Software Factory is following the same message as part of this one-stop shop model. The Software Factory can put initiatives and developments to the other committees to prioritize with the same business unit. Let's suppose that Entertainment has a requirement... the IT department can deploy a system to do that. They define their requirements together, and if it is in development, they go through the committee and help them to build the case. It could be that they're in a position to buy software and so we can help them in order to make the comparison between different solutions to get to the final decision. Or, if someone has an initiative that impacts in IT or in a corporate system, The Software Factory can detect that and involve the correct people. If it's an IT project, they send it to the person responsible. If it's a mixed project, they take the responsibility of the follow-up

and work together in order to build the final requirement of the program. I think that IT in most organizations is getting simpler every day, yet every day it gets more complex too. The business units often don't know what is behind the complexities and our role is to help them. Just tell me what you need, and we will help you to build it, or we're happy to let you know what exists. That process in the previous organization was impossible.”

One of the new tools deployed by Boldt is RPA (Robotic Process Automation) and DeSantis' team made a hard evaluation and comparison of different tools before deciding on Automation Anywhere, which they are in the process of deploying. “We are working with different business units to gather all the things they have to automate,” he explains. “Our idea is to deploy the software and then hire a vendor to train our team so I can then train internally thereafter. In addition to