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—Faisal Huda, President & CEO of CSL Silicones



CORPORATE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

Former leisure company succeeds with VIP corporate travel offerings and strong customer service

BY ZACH BALIVA

IN THE COMPETITIVE WORLD OF LEISURE and corporate travel, Tom Osovitzki, CEO of Toronto's Corporate Travel Management Solutions (CTMS), has helped cast his company as a trusted negotiator in minimizing travel costs—one of the biggest, yet controllable, expenses on corporate balance sheets.

CTMS began 21 years ago as a multi-market leisure agency, but it soon shifted its focus to the corporate environment. Buoyed by strong sales and marketing teams, the growing business expanded its base network of

corporate clients and increased travel options, including a commercial online booking tool. Osovitzki, then vice president of operations, collaborated with his peers to create a heavily customer-focused model.

Working as second-in-command at CTMS gave Osovitzki the opportunity to influence the decision-making process at a crucial time.

Osovitzki joined the company in 1997 and became CEO in 2008. He was instrumental in developing the company's trademark

“concierge and VIP level of service,” through which sales agents are expected to build sincere one-on-one relationships with each client.

“We refuse to have a call-centre environment, and we do more than simply booking flights,” Osovitzki says.

Through CTMS's value-added concierge service, agents provide personalized assistance like sending flowers on behalf of clients, making dinner reservations, and providing “culture” coaching for international travelers—as



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* Offer ends March 2011 - Some restrictions apply.

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well as handling practical tasks like renewing passports and exchanging money.

The extra care is welcomed by CTMS's clients—high-level CEOs and executives who travel frequently. "If I were travelling weekly, I'd like to feel that I had someone to fall back on whom I could call with any questions or to make any arrangement," Osovitzki says.

The company's growth validates its approach: CTMS quickly ballooned from a small business to a 70-employee corporation, and Osovitzki says its revenues have experienced 100 percent annual growth for the last five years.

The company serves clients who spend anywhere from less than \$1 million to more than \$20 million a year on travel. While CTMS typically books travel for CEOs from the oil and gas, gaming, pharmaceuticals, and finance industries, Osovitzki launched a sister company—Athletics Corporation—to reach professional sports teams in the NHL, NBA, NCAA, AHL, and NLL, as well as university and other traveling teams. Under Osovitzki's leadership, CTMS has increased its exposure at trade shows and with the National Business Travel Association.

In all markets, maintaining client relationships is of utmost importance. "We exceed what's required," Osovitzki says. "By providing accurate and timely information and services, we keep clients happy."

Quarterly meetings and seminars help cultivate those crucial relationships, as CTMS keeps an active presence with each client. Nevertheless, budgetary concerns often are the deciding factor in attracting and maintaining travel clients, and Osovitzki says his company saves businesses money. "CTMS is successful in constantly winning new business because our unique and proven model is attractive and successful," he says.

CTMS now has a global sales team with offices in Toronto, Miami, Dallas, and the United Kingdom (other locations in Moscow and Singapore are projected to launch in 2011). In each office, sales staff members use an approach based on "people, process, and technology."

"Our approach is very intricate," Osovitzki

explains. "We look at who our customers are, what they need, and how we can deliver it best."

CTMS provides the tools required for easy corporate travel by maintaining high-level reporting and online booking functions in addition to its personalized services.

Still, the Internet does not trump all else. "We could not succeed without a sophisticated online booking tool, but we strongly believe in personal customer service," Osovitzki says. "The online booking system is available for most clients, but in many instances clients prefer to speak to a corporate-travel professional instead of interacting with an anonymous system."

Shifting from VP of operations to CEO has changed Osovitzki's day-to-day functions. Formerly, he reported to the CEO while overseeing several managers. Now he reports to a board of directors and interacts with four senior staff members. Osovitzki helps those managers build their teams and works with CFOs to identify new opportunities.

Most recently, the group decided to delve into European markets to tap into the "exhibition travel" market (travel associated with large conferences or events). CTMS was the appointed travel provider for the LNG-16, a large international conference on liquefied natural gas, which this year was held in North Africa. Osovitzki's company handled all logistics and booked travel for more than 6,000 people.

Following the success of this venture, CTMS has expanded into event planning. Planned offices in Moscow and Singapore will provide similar services, and Osovitzki is developing the model in North America.

Despite new programs and markets, Osovitzki and his staff continue to offer their unique concierge services with a relentless focus on meeting the unique needs of each client.

After more than 20 years in business, CTMS is proving that companies can overcome fierce competition and shifting industries. Osovitzki's leadership has enabled his firm to do just that. *CEQ*

LOCATION

TORONTO, ON

EMPLOYEES

70

AREA OF SPECIALTY

CORPORATE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT

GLOBAL OUTPOSTS

UNITED STATES AND UNITED KINGDOM

CEO Tom Osovitzki.

