

Tough Times - FlexiTon's Responses

Mr. László Árvay, CEO of FlexiTon, talks to InterComms about the importance of and future for its Ariadne product line

Q: How are the world's economic problems affecting FlexiTon and how are you responding to the market market?

A: FlexiTon has two key messages for telco investment decision makers. First, that more reliable engineering planning leads to CAPEX optimisation. In order to achieve this, the network planning and operation staff desperately need reliable and up-to-date information about the telecom network to undertake their daily jobs properly. On the other hand, the documentation provided by the network builders or subcontractors undertaking maintenance work is normally far from complete; updating the multi-format, multi structure files and in some cases disjunctive papers, is hopeless.

Second, when technical departments ask for funding to buy tools and make orders based on the available data, the response is frequently negative by saying, "The network is working, isn't it? You can do your job now as well, can't you? But it won't generate any additional revenue, will it?"

Our response to these arguments is "Yes, but there is a lot of money thrown out EVERY day!"

Now, when cost cutting has become an extremely high priority issue for every company, nobody can afford to waste money on improperly planned investments. However, that is exactly happening when the network extensions are planned without using reliable data for the existing network!

Look at the figures on how much operators spend on transmission network improvements and extensions in a year! By using ARIADNE on an up-to-date database they could save at least 10 percent of their transmission CAPEX by optimising their plans and therefore avoiding unnecessary investments. This alone is a remarkable amount of money that justifies introducing a solution like ARIADNE to their organisation which can achieve a Return of Investment with a half-to-one year.

FlexiTon's other key message is about significant improvements on the field of QUALITY, COST AND SECURITY.

By using the ARIADNE solution, an operator can enjoy the benefits of:

- A highly consistent & accurate data for a total view of the network in just one single database
- Faster response time both for both commercial and technical aspects

- Better utilisation of the existing network capacity
- Optimisation of human resources
- Lower dependency on small groups of people
- System integration by the interfaces to other systems for example planning, NMS and roll-out, used at the company and synchronising the database via these interfaces
- Decision making support

All these above can be translated to additional actual cost savings, directly or indirectly.

Q: What are the main features of this "magic" ARIADNE solution?

A: The key functions of ARIADNE products are network inventory, capacity management and transmission network planning with plan version handling in a Vendor independent, coherent, single database that represents the overall network. That basis allows the operator to efficiently manage the capacity requirements, planning and executing changes in the network as needed either by the daily operation or by larger network extensions. The recently developed Traffic Module is to further improve these capabilities.

Q: How do you position your product on the market?

A: We are very proud on our self-developed product ARIADNE, which is a widely recognised product on the world market. We have feedback from our clients and visitors of specialized telecommunication exhibitions where FlexiTon has live demonstrations. In certain aspects – like graphical user interface, schematic drawing technology – ARIADNE is considered a market leader. Through its well-established functionalities, ARIADNE talks to the telecom experts rather than being a pure IT tool.

Q: Is ARIADNE a real off-the-shelf product or rather a set of user-defined, tailor made developments?

A: ARIADNE MNM is an easily customizable off-the-shelf product. FlexiTon believes that there is an optimum somewhere between the goals of flexibility and standardisation, which we continuously try to find and follow in our product development. We have to provide

flexibility but we also can't afford to neglect standard solutions. We are sure, that this is the way to ensure long-term quality and stability for our customers. They get a certain level of unique services but also enjoy the benefits of global standards.

Q: How would you differentiate yourselves from other software vendors?

A: Professional flexibility, flexible professionalism. FlexiTon is a real medium-sized company. By our nature, we have the stability, competencies and project management expertise. However, FlexiTon is flexible enough to serve its customers in the way that is requested and appreciated by them. We are big enough but not too big. We are small enough but not too small.

Q: Does your company provide ancillary services as well?

A: Yes, of course. We believe that in a project execution, the turnkey solution, which FlexiTon offers to its customers, is very important. They do not need to take care of several aspects of a project like data migration for example. FlexiTon just requests the contribution from them in those fields like network data collection. Moreover, FlexiTon has excellent support services of different categories such as level2, level3, 5x8 and 7x24. FlexiTon has several years of experience in remote support, which firstly is well appreciated and allows us to sell our products world-wide. Secondly, our customers do enjoy reasonable SLA independent from their geographical location.

Q: What about your recent successes?

A: Over the past two years, FlexiTon has had great successes both commercially and in terms of project execution in several countries over Africa, Middle East and Asia, besides Europe that is our traditional target. Emerging markets will remain in our focus for minimum two reasons. They like our solution and we like to work there. Overall, there are ARIADNE installations in 26 countries.

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