

Operational Excellence with FlexiTon



Mr. László Árvay talks to InterComms about the importance of and future for its ARIADNE product line



László Árvay, CEO of FlexiTon Ltd., Hungary

László joined FlexiTon in 2006 as CEO. He has worked in the IT and telecommunications industry for almost 20 years. He started in telecom network planning and operation management for a Hungarian alternative wireline operator called UTI. That 10-years period was a very exciting and challenging part of the history of Hungarian telco industry due to the privatisation and market deregulation. Later he continued in sales management for the company called Vivendi Telecom Hungary, which was the successor of UTI after its acquisition by Vivendi France.

He is Hungarian and lives around Budapest. He is Electrical engineer (Technical University of Budapest, 1977).

He postgraduated at the University of Economic Sciences, Budapest in 1993.

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

A: Economic problems reached the operators in different phases of their investment cycle. FlexiTon has two key messages for telco investment decision makers.

a) For those operators that have already established infrastructure the main headache is the capacity constrain caused by increased traffic associated with advanced services. Network optimisation is the best solution to capacity constrains. Poor capacity utilisation is killing their CAPEX and OPEX.

b) For those operators that are in expanding phase the biggest challenge is how to invest most efficiently into network building. CAPEX constrains force companies to avoid unnecessary investments by building an over-engineered network. More reliable engineering planning leads to CAPEX optimisation.

In both cases the key is to OPTIMISE network planning and optimise available capacities. ARIADNE is an ideal tool for reaching operational excellence.

In order to achieve this, the network planning and operation staffs 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.

We hear from our clients many times that 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 just 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.

Q: Many operators decide to outsource their network operation. How does ARIADNE help them?

A: Before an operator wants to outsource network operation it is essential to know what they own and what they hand over to their partner. ARIADNE database can be the technical base of an outsource negotiation.

After the agreement a platform is needed where up-to-date technical information about the complete network is available and modification data can efficiently be interchanged between the operator and the outsource partner. To get a complete view on a multi-vendor network a platform is required for the managed service provider where the complete network information is built up from the different vendors' NMSs and other data sources. ARIADNE can be this platform for both parties.

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 (that was supported by the EU sponsored New Hungary Development Plan) is to further improve these capabilities.

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

A: We are very proud of 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/Mobile 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.

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 27 countries.

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