

Framatome ANP

Love at second sight

Their goal is in sight. With 50% of its business travel booked online, the nuclear energy specialist Framatome ANP has nearly exhausted the savings potential of online booking. With each booking made online using cytric by i:FAO, Framatome ANP saves 15 Euros. Yet Framatome's affair with online booking did not begin with love at first sight.

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The starter's gun sounded at the beginning of 2005 when the Finnish government awarded Framatome a nuclear facility construction certificate to build the nuclear power plant Olkiluoto 3. Framatome ANP has been awarded the contract for the entire nuclear facility. Since the end of contractual negotiations in northern Europe, business travel to Olkiluoto in Rauma province has increased markedly. Engineers from seven German Framatome ANP locations regularly fly with Lufthansa and Finnair to Helsinki and from there either with Blue1 or Golden Air to Turku and Pori. There, the German energy experts get into waiting rental cars and drive to the construction site.

Trips to Finland usually start with a visit to cytric. The system designed by i:FAO is especially effective for the Finland fare, since repeat trips are saved in the system and can easily be rebooked. It's no wonder that cytric quickly became routine at Framatome ANP, and that it is being used with ever increasing frequency. "As of March 2005, 40-50% of all reservations made by Framatome ANP are now made online," says Travel Manager Ulrike Forster. This is a high figure given that cytric v7 was only made available to the 1,400 Framatome

business travelers in the summer of 2004. Of course, the atomic energy experts are very used to computers. In addition, Ulrike Forster has evidently successfully convinced company employees that they are doing their company a favor by booking online. With every online booking, Framatome ANP saves 15 Euros. Whether the percentage of trips bookable online can be increased further is unclear. 50% online booking was Ulrike Forster's intermediate goal. The figure might well be raised further if cytric can be used to book complex fares, and if the system continues to improve in terms of user-friendliness.

Framatome ANP (Advanced Nuclear Power) thinks of itself as the world's leading and most innovative nuclear technology company. It is the result of a partnership between Siemens and the French company AREVA, and employs 14,000 people. 3,000 people work for Framatome ANP at seven locations in Germany (HQ in Erlangen). Of these, some 2,000 are traveling employees. And they travel frequently: Framatome engineers and advisors make constant visits to power plants worldwide. The miles flown by Framatome ANP yearly are substantial. The most important routes are currently those between Frankfurt and Nürnberg to Helsinki and to company headquarters in Paris.

Yet it was hardly love at first sight that brought cytric and Framatome ANP together. Quite the opposite actually. Soon after the company was founded in 2001, their travel agency partner offered to the Erlangen-based company to implement cytric as an online booking tool. At first, cytric was made available to only a few employees, and with what might be termed modest success. The percentage of flights booked online did not reach even ten percent. cytric was used by employees more as a flight information

tool than as a purchasing tool. Ulrike Forster knows why: "The user-friendliness of cytric 4 left quite a lot to be desired." Not only this, but online booking simply took too long. Ulrike Forster is no stranger to the industry, and has been in the consortium for a long time, and she was familiar with cytric 4 as a user. Her conclusion: "It was not the solution for us."

The Travel Manager was "pleasantly surprised", when in the summer of 2004 her new responsibilities as Travel Manager began, and when she got to know cytric from the other side. She liked cytric v7: "There were clear improvements in performance and user-friendliness." Their travel agency partner TQ3 was of the same opinion, and at the beginning of 2004, they actively promoted the new version to their client. TQ3 praised the ease of overview, the easier booking of hotels and rental cars, as well as improved system performance. The improvements that Framatome ANP had asked for had been integrated into the product. Ten users were selected from German headquarters in Erlangen -all of them managerial assistants who often book trips- in order to subject cytric to a grueling test. Their conclusion was so positive that in the summer of 2004, the optimized tool was extended to all German locations. Since then, the 1,400 traveling German Framatome ANP employees have been booking online. TQ3 provided training for all new users -not a big expenditure, as Ulrike Forster recalls. "You can learn to use the tool in just a few hours."

The travel agency is also integrated into the online booking system. Even though TQ3 has nothing more to do with the reservation at the time of booking, each booking is

quality-assured one more time. TQ3 also provides fulfillment.

The cytric users in Erlangen are critical users. cytric integrated Grid Pricing™ -a comprehensive representation of all prices, including the fares put out by low-cost airlines- does little for Framatome ANP. The reason is that low-cost carriers are not very important to the power plant company. This is because the company's offices are close to major airports not served by the low-cost carriers, and because the company finds it hard to live with the restrictive pricing conditions imposed by the low-cost carriers. Framatome ANP's clients call the shots, meaning that company travelers have to be flexible and book tickets accordingly. "Our work is very customer-oriented, which doesn't really fit with low-cost airlines," says Ulrike Forster.

She sees room for improvement in the rental car area: Travelers are notified of which type of car they will get too late in the booking process, she points out. Also, a ten-character limit for comments is too little for Framatome ANP employees because it makes it hard to order extras like winter tires online.

The Erlangen native does praise the improvements made to the system: Users no longer have to be placed in categories individually, but can be classified in groups. "Now it takes three clicks, where before it took 30." The best improvement of all however, is the Travel Arranger Dashboard, which displays all bookings in a simple layout, and which can easily be made available to other team users."

Simplicity is the measure of all things. Ulrike Forster reminds us that not all

cytric users in the company are "travel booking experts". Thus, a tool like cytric should not display excess information or display data that is not immediately comprehensible. The product will only continue to enjoy a high rate of use, she tells her colleagues, if the tool remains easy to use. After all, "less is more."

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