

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SKYGUIDE WILL GO THROUGH A CULTURAL CHANGE



ANNE BOBILLIER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEMBER

Anne Bobillier, born in Geneva of Swiss and French origins, has a Masters in computer science from Geneva University and is working for Bechtel Group. She is a member of the board of directors at Romande Energie, SkySoft and skyguide. For Anne Bobillier, the major question is how skyguide can improve its ability to change and how it can capitalize on artificial intelligence and business intelligence in the near future as the logical continuation of the existing technology roadmap.

“THE QUESTION IS HOW CAN WE IMPROVE OUR ABILITY TO CHANGE, BECAUSE IT IS CLEARLY OUR SURVIVAL WHICH IS AT STAKE”

SKYGUIDE In a paper called “Vision 2035”, skyguide CEO Alex Bristol develops his ideas about the company’s future. Is it, in your opinion, possible to foresee what the world and air navigation will look like 17 years from now?

ANNE BOBILLIER The vision was elaborated with the board of directors. It states that skyguide will be a small but leading air navigation service provider, setting the pace within the European industry by its service quality and innovation capability. Alex talks about a frame, a vision, not a precise goal, and not everything in his vision will become true, but it will not be too far away from that either. Today technology – generally digitalization and in the future, the impact of artificial intelligence – has reached a level of maturity that makes it easier to imagine its significant impact on the business than 20 years ago.

What are the key success factors for the future of skyguide?

AB Skyguide has a good reputation within Europe and has received some important recognition and prizes. Other ANSP are watching closely what we are doing, in particular around our technology programmes. The question is how can we improve our ability to change, because it is clearly our survival which is at stake. Switzerland is a small expensive country, and we therefore have to offer added value and a unique selling proposition (USP) to all our stakeholders.

What is skyguide's USP?

AB We want to be a leading provider of highly efficient and effective services for ANSPs based on distinctive technological competencies in clearly defined areas. Together with our sister company SkySoft we have very strong and recognized capabilities in developing solutions in the ATM space. Human-machine interface is a major strength in our portfolio. We are well positioned to capitalize on artificial intelligence and business intelligence in the near future. Both are the logical continuation of the existing technology roadmap.

Technology, which is at the core of transformation, is particularly complex at skyguide. Which guidelines are the BoD following in view of the future development?

AB As in many industries, we are very often taking technology as the aim of change. Nevertheless, technology for technology's sake is worthless. Technology allows us to enter new businesses, like the U-Space, or to evolve with new, more effective and efficient business models to achieve better results. But it is not technology itself that carries out the transformation; technology only makes the change possible. Standardization and integration of service-oriented architecture are important. We want to buy things off the shelf where it's possible while in the past we developed everything ourselves. It is important to have a clear separation between business and operations on the one hand and technology that will enable them on the other hand.

Air traffic is increasing rapidly, and the sky will soon be considered overcrowded. Do you see technical possibilities to master this situation?

AB It is not primarily the airspace that is confined, but the handling capacity of the airports. In GVA for example, the number of passengers increased much more than the number of planes. Concerning airspace, we have safety rules that define limits between flying objects. It becomes obvious, that in order to increase capacity, we will have to reduce these distances while maintaining the same level of safety, and here technology plays an important role.

What does it take for skyguide to successfully drive its transformation beyond technology?

AB We will go through a cultural change which will happen quicker than many might think, and I feel a certain sense of urgency. We should shift from a rather conservative "does

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not work here” attitude into a more agile “we will find a way to make it work” attitude. The existing monopoly will have to give way to increasing competition with continued pressure on margins, as is already the case in other sectors. Our market will dramatically change and we will see new competitors emerging from unexpected areas, but that will also open up new opportunities for us. Skyguide's right to exist is not God-given. We also have to become more consistent and disciplined: quite a few projects have been started and then abandoned or radically changed. That means we have to improve decision-making processes, analyses and the capability of sticking to decisions and executing them. As in all other aspects of life, it is always the people that make a difference, and we all are fully committed to making our contribution to this fascinating journey into skyguide's new future.