

CytaGlobal: Building a regional telecommunications centre of excellence

Yiannis Koulias, Assistant Manager of CytaGlobal and Managing Director of CYTA UK Ltd talks to Intercomms about CytaGlobal and Cyta UK activities...



Q: Cyprus' established reputation as an international financial and business services center owes much to its superior global telecommunication capabilities. How much does this mean to CYTA, as the leading telecommunications player on the island?

A: It has always been of strategic importance to CYTA to turn Cyprus into the most important telecommunications hub in the Eastern Mediterranean. Taking advantage of the island's privileged geographical location at the crossroads of three continents, CytaGlobal, the International Commercial Services Division of CYTA, has developed an extensive submarine fibre optic cable network, which connects Cyprus with the neighbouring countries of Greece, Italy, Israel, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt and thereafter with the rest of the world. CytaGlobal also participates in other regional and global cable systems such as the transatlantic cable system TAT-14 and the SEA-MEWE 3 system, which links Western Europe and South Eastern Asia via the Mediterranean and the Middle East. An extensive satellite telecommunications network that provides enhanced and high quality international connectivity supplements CytaGlobal's far-reaching fibre optic connections.

These along with our highly skilled personnel and the fact that we offer the cheapest communications in Europe constitute our hallmarks and allow us to play a key role in global electronic communications fulfilling our commitment to evolve Cyprus into the most important telecommunications hub in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Q: The telecommunications industry is, by its' very nature, highly competitive; how difficult is it for CYTA to maintain its position of excellence and what are the key capabilities of CYTA which make this possible?

A: Today we are witnessing and at the same time participating in the transition to the Information Society of the 21st Century. The changes currently taking place are major ones, characterized by increased activity on all levels: people, products and

information. Digital technology and today's global networks, spearheaded by omnipresent Internet are rapidly transforming basic economic and social activities, increasing productivity and changing our daily lives in an unprecedented way. The Information Society also affects the Business Model, creating new conditions, constraints and opportunities. Liberalization of the market has created a dynamic and competitive environment, while at the same time the consumer is growing ever more demanding and exhibiting ever increasing needs.

Success depends entirely on the degree on which an enterprise can adapt to the new situation. The demands of the new era require a constant technological and qualitative upgrading of the products and services offered to customers, as well as flexibility so that the organization can adapt to the constantly changing situation. CYTA listened to the signals of our times and in recent years has begun the process of adaptation. Today's challenge is that of the future, for us all. For this reason we are facing it boldly, with determination in a systematic and organized way. We are proceeding with dynamism only looking ahead. We are changing our structure and our culture. We are becoming flexible, we are increasing productivity, becoming extrovert and customer-oriented.

Q: [CytaGlobal is well known for its extensive telecommunications network. To this respect, how can you help global organisations improve their communications network?](#)

A: In today's business environment, telecommunications constitute the basic axis of business activity and the selection of the right telecommunication partner is a prerequisite for success. CytaGlobal relying on its international network, meets customers' ever expanding needs, by embracing new technologies generating competitively priced, innovative products offering high-quality, secure end-to-end global solutions. Emphasizing on the comprehension and full coverage of the complicated and specialized needs of our business customers, we plan, design, implement and manage integrated value-added solutions, tailor-made to the needs of our business customers. In addition to extensive product portfolios addressing the business needs, CytaGlobal focuses on the extras: Committed to continually improving value added services, CytaGlobal provides network traffic management support, customised billing formats to meet customers' specific needs and product facilitators to advise and consult on every business solution on offer.

Q: [Cyprus accession to the EU is now a reality. To this respect can you take us through the changes that have occurred on a national and international level with respect to telecommunications?](#)

A: Cyprus accession to the European Union is now a reality, and it constitutes not only an important milestone in the political history of Cyprus but in the telecommunications sector as well. The commitment of the Cyprus Republic on Telecommunications was to deploy the necessary regulatory processes that would allow for the complete liberalization of the sector. The first general authorizations issued by the Commissioner for Telecommunications and Postal Regulation regarded the provision of Value Added Services. The process of allowing entrance of new players in the telecommunications market continues with the award of special licenses, including a license for a second GSM operator in 2003. CYTA, whose name has been linked with the provision of telecommunication services in Cyprus, is no longer the sole telecommunications provider.

CYTA's prompt and determined response to market and legislation changes, contributed to the effective adaptation and prepared the way not only to meet the new challenges, but also to realize one of its main targets to become the electronic communications bridge between East and West. The accession to the European Union has created a new dimension to this target, as the island dwells on the prospect of becoming an international Business and Services Center, exploiting the advantages accrued from its strategic geographic position.

To this respect, CYTA is charged with the obligation of promoting the development of electronic communications in Cyprus. Amongst the most important projects that took place in the context of implementation of this strategy, was the publication of the Reference Interconnection Offer by CYTA, that includes a detailed description of the interconnection services and relevant tariffs offered to the new entrants. Along with this, CYTA also proceeded to develop wholesale products and services at competitive prices, to meet the new requirements and demands. Other important changes, include the upgrading of CYTA's costing system adapting it to the requirements of the new regulatory environment, the provision of enhanced value added services to customers, as well as the creation of new and more user-friendly billing formats.

Q: CytaGlobal is pursuing an expansion strategy. Greece is an obvious choice for CYTA to establish a presence, the UK less so. What's the rationale for the UK expansion? What are your goals for Cyta UK/HELLAS?

A: Actually, the UK market offers more opportunities since the Cypriot community in the UK has largely remained attached to Cyprus in general, and therefore we expect that the UK- resident Cypriots would enthusiastically support the entry of Cyta UK in the UK retail market. In Greece, Cypriots have been assimilated into the rest of the Greek population because of common language and close ties with Greece.

CYTA understands that business development in the new era depends on the ability to respond to market opportunities. CYTA, through its International Commercial Services, CytaGlobal, is realizing this strategy through its expansion and the quest for new markets. Intense efforts are therefore made to establish presence in countries with significant Cypriot communities like the UK. In Greece our approach is much more aggressive: We aim to become involved in all sectors of the telecommunications market, through strategic partnerships and acquisitions of established operators. CYTA and in particular CytaGlobal, is committed to establish a strong international presence in global telecommunications. The wholly owned subsidiaries in Greece and the UK fully support this effort to globalize through an integrated corporate strategy deeply rooted on the basis of collaboration.

In association with CYTA, CytaHellas and CytaUK have already established a state-of-the-art private optical ring between Cyprus, Greece and the UK. A newly developed IP-MPLS Platform, branded as CytaWorld.Net, consisting initially, of three Points-of-Presence in London, Athens and Nicosia with international extensions beyond, is used to integrate voice, data and video into total solutions over one single global network. CytaWorld.Net enables Cyta to offer a complete portfolio of International network-based IP-MPLS applications. These applications include IP Transit, MPLS - VPNs with Class of Service (CoS), Voice over IP (VoIP), ATM/Frame Relay, and Clear Channel (CES). High quality end-to-end total solutions

are already offered to service providers and other business customers, on a wholesale basis, in both Greece and the UK. Recently, Cyta UK's efforts have concentrated in the retail market through the provision of fixed telephony services, targeting mainly the Greek-speaking communities in the UK.

Q: [CYTA recently signed a Network Partnership Agreement with Vodafone, the world's largest mobile communication company. Can you tell us more about this partnership?](#)

A: This exclusive Partner Network agreement provides for the development and provision of products and services that are directed both to the Cytamobile customers and to the Vodafone customers that visit Cyprus. The dynamics that are generated from this partnership both for the organisation and for the Cytamobile customers are huge. As a result of the Partner Network agreement and the services to be introduced, our customers will benefit from bigger prospects in developing their quality of life and business activities both in Cyprus and abroad. With this agreement, Cytamobile entered the world's largest mobile family and it will offer to its customers premium mobile telephony services that Vodafone provides in other countries.

The Cytamobile customers now enjoy among others a number of services: access to many of the services that they enjoy in Cyprus in all the countries that Vodafone has either a presence or a partner network in the same way as they are used to here such as accessing their voice box using the same codes. New advanced and well tested, value added services that will make their life easier and more fun both in Cyprus and in countries where Vodafone or its Partner Networks have a presence. When they travel in countries which are part of the Vodafone community, they will be served with preferential rates, which will not exceed a predefined price level. Better quality of service both due to the introduction of already tested products as well as due to strict specifications by Vodafone. CYTA is committed to continuous service and customer care improvement aiming to the addition of value and to the increase of the satisfaction of the contemporary Cypriot consumer.

Q: [Can you give us your views on the developing future of the telecommunications industry as a whole? What are the biggest challenges facing organizations such as yourself with this profile?](#)

A: In recent years we have all witnessed the telecommunications arena becoming ever more demanding and challenging and unforgiving to organizations that deliver less than excellence. The leading players know well the rules of the game which is "More for Less". Organizations of our size and profile should also know that success depends on the ability to develop and maintain strategic alliances that reinforce the constituent parties, imparting on operations based on economies of scale, new competences and creating synergies and added value.

CYTA has been built on particularly strong foundations and has been very successful in making Cyprus the most important telecommunications hub in the Eastern Mediterranean. CYTA is well equipped to meet the new challenges, and to become the electronic communications bridge between East and West maintaining its international reputation as a reliable and advanced telecommunications global provider.

For more information please visit www.cytaglobal.com

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