TKT Magazine: Interview with Speranza Mitsney, Business Development Director at Etere
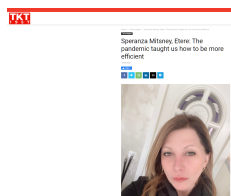
TKT Magazine speaks with Speranza Mitsney to discover a new perspective on how the pandemic taught Etere to be more efficient.

Etere logo

TKT 1957

TKT1957

How do you manage business during pandemic and what are the changes in your sales' and support's organization?
The pandemic resulted in a significant change in being unable to meet people face-to-face. From a sales point of view, this is a big adjustment. You have to think outside the box and evaluate the management structure to develop a more effective one.

So, we have started to understand these new forms of communication better, including conference calls, and we can change how we generate sales. In the beginning, it was a huge transition. However, over time we found that it is more efficient. With the remote way of working, our employees can work from any location, which we find very productive. For a long time now, we have had 3 offices in 3 different countries with 3 different timezones. Thus, we are used to communicating remotely internally but not doing this on the customer side. With this change, we made a few adjustments within the company; for example, we set up a centralized demo team for a more efficient organization. In addition, we developed new technological tools to enhance our communication channels and keep our customers close to us for easy follow-up. This development is caused by the absence of face-to-face meetings, it is essential to have an effective platform to manage all the communication; this is the biggest challenge. Now that we have arrived at this point, we are thinking we will never return to the old way of working. Also, before the pandemic, Etere had 11 trade shows per year. Now we are thinking of conducting only one. Before the pandemic, we travelled a lot. Now, most of the communication is through conference calls. It is so efficient, and everyone is used to this way of working; we think we will never return to the old model of working. During the pandemic, Etere's revenue has decreased. However, our expenses have decreased more due to the enhanced efficiency.

What are the changes in your organization of R&D during the pandemic?
The first thing about the pandemic is how to manage remote working. We started working remotely due to the lockdowns and travel restrictions all around the world. Before this, we had 3 offices; each had teams working from the office. Then we created a virtual office where all our staff can access information stored on a centralized database. You must have all the security protocols, credentials, and shared databases to set this up. We did not move everything to the cloud as we are concerned about privacy on the cloud. So, we created the Etere cloud.

On the other hand, having an employee working from anywhere creates a very flexible system. We started to employ people not based on their physical location but their skills. As a result, we can diversify our workforce in 6-7 countries. It has allowed us to find employees who are a good fit and can work from home, perform their tasks efficiently, and contribute to the company. We also opened our office in Ukraine, one of the places where there are great software developers. Today, this is still a virtual office due to the war. We are very efficient; we can connect all our workflow effectively. For a company of fewer than 50 people, it is not so easy. Throughout this transition, we can enhance productivity and reduce development costs. We also learn how to do better; for example, every software finished by a team in a one-time zone gets tested by another team in the next timezone. Thus, in one day, you can have the result, we shorten the development cycle, and we become more efficient. The pandemic taught us how to be more efficient. During the pandemic, Etere's revenue has decreased. However, our expenses have decreased more due to the enhanced efficiency. Thus, we can have more profit despite the reduced revenue.

Etere is well known for automation, what is your primary product now?
Automation was our secondary product and our best seller for many years. In total revenue, our top product now is Media Asser Management.

MAM is our flagship solution and a complete system with all the features you need, and it is a market-proven product in the industry. Our Newsroom is our new top seller. We have invested in it over the years, and now it is another area where we have a large customer base. We also see its potential for future growth as it continues to be a highly sought-after product that people request, especially for newsroom software that allows people to work from anywhere, without the physical office. When we're designing our Newsroom, we have created it with this workflow in mind. Today, our flagship product is Media Asset Management, but Newsroom is catching up to be on par.

Do you have any new products in the horizon?
It's old yet new as we are sort of going back to the past, radios. Our latest project is a very innovative solution that allows normal radios and visual radio to treat everything as one and therefore have the classic radio controls with all the precision needed, but all connected with the video in one system, including a web presenter view, featuring real-time data such as current events, live status, and time remaining to the next event from any web browser, so broadcasters to manage multiple radio stations, playlists, live and recorded shows, all from a single interface. this reduces the personnel needed and boosts efficiency as it's all controlled by one system.

We are also developing:
■ Etere router control panel to manage complex multi routers switching from a single interface. Etere simplifies complex workflows
■ New online customer manual and customer portal with a sleek and efficient interface, better flow, improved business intelligence data generation and 360 degrees analytics
■ Integrated newsroom graphics inserter for lower-thirds, rolling text and news graphics. An all-in-one newsroom interface without external graphics inserter for a more streamlined workflow and enhanced efficiency
■ Enhancements to Etere Web in the pipeline to prepare for a digital future.

What is your winning edge in the video over IP competition?
We all believe that IP is the future, the question is really just what format we use, while 2210 is a step forward from the previous standard it still has a lot of connectivity issues, whereas you don't get this in NDI.

The NDI concept is simple: you supply a video source. At that point, anyone else on that network can see it and work with it just as if it was locally connected to their system (unless you deliberately limit access). You also enjoy freedom from dependency on distribution amps, video matrix routers etc.

Right now the market hasn't got a clear route because small and mid size broadcasters chose ndi since it's a no brainer, less hardware, less complications. Meanwhile big broadcasters tend to choose 2210 as it keeps a structure that we all know and retains about the same amount of hardware from SDI.

What are the industry trends and growth opportunities that will shape the broadcast and media industry in the next few years?
In the foreseeable future, we anticipate that demand for digital solutions will continue to increase and we align our research and development to prepare our users for the future. The decline of the traditional broadcast as compared with the new content distribution and VOD will continue, moving monetization away from playlist generators (traditional broadcasters) to content generators. This will create opportunities in the supply chain; and accelerate demand for content monetization, personalized advertising and on-demand services. And we are ready to prepare and support our users for the future of broadcast as we already sell products that are helping our customers to progress and evolve.

www.etere.com   19102021

What's new in the content monetization and how is Etere helping its customers to effectively monetise content?

Responding to the market's growth for personalised content on demand, Etere continues to ramp up its digital distribution workflows and solutions. OTT and VOD distribution channels have opened up new opportunities for Etere customers to drive multiplatform distribution and content monetization.

Pay-TV operators and cable networks can leverage on Etere's smart advertising and remote ad insertion opportunities to effectively manage their workflows. OTT delivery allows you to target advertising to a specific audience. Etere empowers broadcasters with the tools to manage dynamic ad insertion as well as drive SCTE-35/SCTE-104 signals to reach consumers across different markets and increase content monetisation revenue. Etere ad insertion solutions deliver SCTE-35 signals that send personalised ads to each viewer. This means that it is possible to deliver advertising content based on the unique viewer profile and each group of viewers can see a different commercial. This in turns increases the CPM rates for broadcasters and allows you to maximise revenue for content monetisation. Etere opens up new media monetisation opportunities to drive remote ad insertions and to tap on advertising opportunities in different markets.

Additionally, Etere OTT delivery solution provides an advanced toolset to prepare, manage and monetise both live and VOD content for multiple devices including smart TV, PCs, tablets and smartphones.

Last year Etere launched the Etere Multi-Bitrate Encoder that offers an integrated advertising management with SCTE and Google Dynamic Ad Insertion markers for OTT advertising. Can you comment on its advantages?

Having a system that is robust enough to deal with complex media workflows, last minute changes and copyrights accurately can be daunting. Etere Ecosystem connects multiple departments and ensures an accurate information exchange across all departments in the company. Etere presents an integrated system that requires less hardware and enables unlimited video/graphics/content replacement. You can use virtual machines to manage a centralised monitoring and management of all system processes including rights management and the management of tasks including program replacements. The solution is driven by customizable workflows with automated and accurate transfers and transcoding capabilities that prepare your media for any OTT video delivery platform.

How does Etere help customers adapt to the changing work environments with the decentralization of studios and more remote operations around the world?

Decentralized workflows are increasingly common for the broadcast industry and the pandemic has accelerated this process. Besides establishing business continuity in the face of a situation like the pandemic, together with virtual sets they enable the artists/journalists, technical crew and production set to be located in multiple locations around the world.

In addition, production is no longer exclusively linear. Broadcasters today have to deliver to a series of content platforms including TV, mobile, social media, OTT, VOD, streaming sites and more. The production teams need to be ready to create multiple versions of content to be ready for multi-platform delivery.

Etere is a software company and its solutions are designed to interface with external software and hardware with no compatibility issues. Furthermore, Etere supports any cloud platform you wish to have. By choosing software-defined production tools, broadcasters significantly reduce the need for ownership of expensive hardware, large production rooms, and bulky cabling.

Mobile journalism has empowered the newsroom to manage the demand for relevancy and speed of content delivery. Etere Nunzio Newsroom includes a mobile app that allows journalists to create, edit, approve and manage content on the go from any smartphone or tablet. With Nunzio Newsroom Mobile, journalists can work from any location as long as they are connected to the internet. In a matter of minutes, you can upload content and media files to social media,

websites, website and in E-paper. Updates are in real-time and you can even view the tasks and agenda of all team mates, for a more efficient collaboration.

In addition, Etere ETX allows broadcasters to deliver rich content with different media elements including the superimposing of graphics, live video streams and feeds. When broadcasters have at least 2 or more layers of live graphics or videos, PIP allows the superimposing of layers on top of each other with customisable layouts. It's a great tool for news productions where multi-camera coverage from different venues are streamed to a live studio while newscasters piece together the latest updates with the field reporters.

Furthermore, production speed and quality are critical consideration factors of many broadcasters. In remote working involving remote sets, Etere integrates a total graphics management without any external graphics editor. Now you can insert and edit your lower thirds, logos, on-screen text and graphics on the same interface. The customizable templates allow you to easily adhere to brand styles and guidelines for all your content easily.

Our expertise in creating the most seamless workflow helps our users to adapt easily in a post-covid world. As an innovator, Etere rolls out software updates and upgrades several times a year and they are completely free for users on a support contract, ensuring that they are always at the forefront of technology as a new generation of powerful software-defined tools continue to enhance our users' decentralized workflows.

How does Etere support its customers who are adopting new cloud workflows and what is the impact of the cloud on the future of broadcast?
Etere Channel in the Cloud encompasses all the features you need for a cloud playout, management and distribution. Etere supports all the commonly used platforms including AWS, Google Cloud and Microsoft Azure. With Etere's centralized database management, real-time updates and seamless integrations with cloud-based services, our customers on the cloud are empowered with a simplified software-centric solution that does not require local equipment and hosting. With one interface to manage the end-to-end operations, Etere Ecosystem is designed to eliminate integration complexities, reduce costs and shorten the time-to-markets.

Moreover, Etere enables content distributors on the cloud to manage dynamic ad insertion for both linear and non-linear services without the complexity of on-premise solutions. Running on either automatic or manual mode, Etere Ad Insertion is able to handle real-time insertion of video clips, logos, CG graphics, graphics overlays and scrolling text in both stored content and live content for an unlimited number of channels. Etere Ad Insertion also integrates seamlessly with traffic and scheduling workflows to ensure the commercials are automatically and dynamically aligned with audience demographics in different markets. Etere unlocks new content monetization opportunities across multiple markets, even for customers on the cloud.

You have celebrated over 3 decades in the industry, what is the secret of your success in this fast-changing industry?
The secret to longevity in anything is being able to adapt to changes and being able to evolve. Just like humans evolved from apes or like a racer improving his line around a track according to weather conditions, we evolved and morphed into what we are today. We learnt that in this market you need to always think years ahead as it moves so quick there's never time for settling.

You also have to be able to recognize your mistakes and have no fear of turning back, for example around 20 years ago we stopped doing products for radios, yet now we realized that there's a new market for visual radios and we went full 180 on the decision made 2 decades ago.

About Etere

Since its beginnings in 1987, Etere has been preparing users for the future. Etere is a worldwide provider of broadcast and media software solutions backed by its mark of excellence in system design, flexibility, and reliability. The revolutionary concept of Etere Ecosystem promotes real-time collaborations and enhances operational efficiency across the entire enterprise. Etere Ecosystem software solutions manage the end-to-end media workflow and feature an integrative Web and Windows architecture that is customizable to fit perfectly in any system.

Etere delivers on its service excellence commitment with a 24/7 worldwide support and inclusive software updates. Its portfolio of digital technologies and market-proven remote/on-site services such as consultancy, training, installation, and demonstrations are ready to run with your business no matter where you are. Etere enhances your adaptability for the future and empowers you with the most innovative software tools to drive your business to greater heights.

To find a media management strategy that works for your business, visit www.etere.com

About TKT Magazine

TKT Magazine was founded in 1957. It is one of the world's oldest magazines about Broadcasting Technologies. **tkt1957.com**