

Quality & speed— Swiss software in Asia

AdNovum, one of Switzerland's leading software engineering companies, entered the Asian market in 2010 via Singapore. Three years onward it is time to look back and sum up the experiences so far.



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Does Swiss quality software sell in the highly competitive Asian market?

The answer, at least in our specific case, is yes. Our regional client roster today includes international financial institutions, banks, insurance companies, government agencies, a certification organization and others. They are based in Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, and even the US. However, it has been a steep learning process.

**"It is essential to
differentiate strongly."**

Asia is highly competitive and our markets and competitors are in most cases advanced and mature. It is thus essential to be able to differentiate strongly. An obvious starting point here was to focus on quality.

Quality is very much appreciated in Asia, and AdNovum is rightly proud of its very high standards. Switzerland continues to be associated with high-quality work in Asia. At the same time, Switzerland is associated with 'very expensive', which can scare potential clients off. Therefore, it is also necessary to show that Swiss quality does not mean prices which are out of range for regional clients. Moreover, it is not enough to just state that your services and products are of high quality. You need to be able to demonstrate that this is the case, e.g. by giving extended warranties or explaining your quality assurance processes and tools.

Clients expect turn-key solutions

Another difference we found is that in many situations, clients expect true

turn-key, full-service solutions. Examples include digital marketing, business consultancy, and the provisioning, installation and maintenance of IT hardware. To meet clients' expectations, we needed to establish a broad network of trusted partner companies to whom we can subcontract certain services. In some cases, it can even make sense for a partner to be the prime contractor and us to be the subcontractor.

Regardless of the type of opportunity, we have found that a superior understanding not just of the technical needs, but also of the business aspects, the regulatory environment and IT security often gives us the edge. For example, when pitching for a project to implement a mobile website for an Asian insurance company, we were able to demonstrate that we understand the security, confidentiality and data protection considerations involved when selling insurance products over a website.

**"The Asian market places
a premium on speed."**

Speed and agility

Once you have convinced a client to work with you, the solution has to be implemented. The Asian market is more dynamic than the Swiss one and places a premium on speed. It is thus vital to have agile methodologies and processes in place and to work with pre-built, re-usable components. Also, communication between the development team and the client stakeholders is absolutely crucial.

asian market
high standards
prime contractor/subcontractor
cultural backgrounds data protection
talent
learning process high quality
true turn-key, full-service solutions
experience in automation



Singaporeans are used to dealing with a broad variety of cultural backgrounds.

To ensure swift communication with clients, we employ local software developers and project managers who can tap into our Swiss knowledge pool as required. Concerning talent, our experiences in Singapore have been excellent. The local universities provide world-class engineers and scientists (e.g. the National University of Singapore ranks comparably to ETH Zurich), and we have found our employees to be motivated, loyal and committed. Singaporeans are used to dealing with a broad variety of cultural backgrounds. This cultural flexibility is a definite plus, both internally when dealing with our branches abroad and externally when running projects for clients outside of Singapore. Moreover, our employees are fluent in English plus at least one Asian language, which is a great advantage for our regional business.

The Swiss engineering approach

In Singapore, we have been able to leverage on AdNovum Switzerland's experience and long-term approach to software engineering. Our clients reap the benefits of sustainable high-quality solutions. Also, while most of our markets and customers are mature, professional software engineering remains a relatively young industry in Asia. Being able to bring experienced senior engineers into projects with skills that would be exceptionally difficult to find in Asia proves a decisive advantage. Moreover, as globalization increases and skilled labor becomes increasingly scarce and costly in Asia, our mother company's experience in automation and in enhancing employee productivity gives us a big head start over our competition. AdNovum Switzerland benefits from Singapore's competitive edge in areas

such as the engineering of mobile solutions where the Asian market is more advanced. Our Swiss engineers profit by working for our Asian customers on short-term consulting assignments or in extended stays at our Singapore office. This enables them to explore new technologies and business models in a truly international work environment. Also, to survive in the highly competitive Asian markets, AdNovum has to streamline and speed up its processes, a factor that may well turn out to be a decisive competitive advantage in the long run.

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Short description: Application Development & Integration, Security Engineering, IT Consulting, Application Management, Security & Compliance Suite Nevis.

Additional details about AdNovum Informatik AG are available on pages 18-19, 94.