

Shipping Giant Turns Touch Screens Into Sales And Marketing Tools



Case Study: TORM



Profile

In business since 1889, TORM is a premier global carrier of refined oil products such as gasoline, jet fuel, naphtha and diesel oil. Through a pooling corporation with other respected shipping companies, TORM controls a fleet of over 130 modern vessels ranging in size from 37,000 to 110,000 deadweight tons. From its headquarters in Copenhagen, TORM manages tanker operations 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The company is listed on the Copenhagen Stock Exchange and NASDAQ, and earned more than \$1.2 billion in revenues in FY 2008.





Challenge

Despite being a global organization with a long and successful track record, TORM recognizes that marketing and brand awareness are still critical to the company's success and ability to maintain healthy relationships with customers and partners. Part of this strategy involves hosting customers, partners and prospects at TORM's regional corporate offices in Copenhagen, Mumbai, Singapore, the Philippines, and Stamford, Connecticut. Such visits allow the company a rare chance to demonstrate its services and communicate its global reach.

In the past, however, TORM's ability to do so effectively and persuasively was limited: visitors wanting to know the status of vessels and shipments often had to meet with sales representatives behind closed doors to gain such detailed knowledge. Not only was this a considerable time commitment from TORM reps, it didn't allow visitors to view the information in a sophisticated, visually-rich manner. The company decided it needed to replace a large physical world map of its ships (manually moved around by the receptionist every day), with an electronic solution. By doing so, TORM could easily share non-confidential fleet information with anyone who visited its offices in a convenient, self-service manner. In addition to being educational and entertaining, the solution would be a valuable sales tool and serve to enhance the company's reputation as a pioneer in the use of advanced technologies.

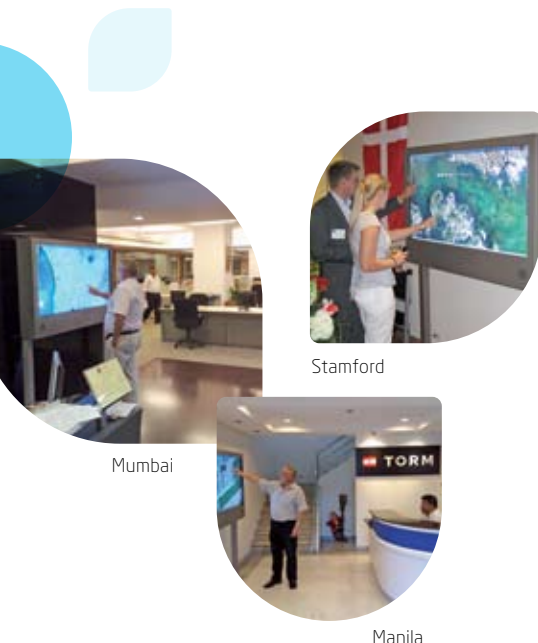
Solution

TORM partnered with VisionLine, a Denmark-based provider of touch screen-enabled computer systems, to develop an interactive display for its corporate lobbies. In the spring of 2007, VisionLine installed a 5-monitor system that included four 46" NextWindow touch monitors with a 19" kiosk from 3M that can control the larger monitors. The 4x46" monitor was designed to work as four independent monitors or one large single monitor.

The solution has a dual function: allow visitors to locate and track tankers and, serve as a digital signage solution to showcase company history, news and information. When guests enter the lobby at TORM headquarters in Copenhagen, the touch screens gives them something fun and informative to do while waiting for an appointment—not to mention, the display makes a memorable impression:

"It demonstrates that TORM is progressive in its use of advanced technology," says John Norup, Engineer at VisionLine.

Pleased with the results in Copenhagen, the company decided in 2008 to install 57" touch monitors at its branch offices in Stamford, Mumbai, Singapore and the Philippines, featuring the same applications and data.



“Working with NextWindow has always been a pleasure,” Norup says. “They have provided excellent sales support and a highly-skilled service level.”

User Experience

When a visitor approaches the lobby screens, a continuous slideshow of photos showing the shipping company through its history serves as the sleep mode. To wake up the screen, a light touch brings up a world map (developed on the Google map API), with icons of tankers and other vessels scattered in different locations. By touching an icon, you can see data such as where the vessel is headed, its country of origin, and other statistics. (Confidential information such as the contents of the vessel is not displayed.)

The information is updated from a data warehouse once an hour, Norup says. Once a visitor is done playing with the map application, he/she can access any other slice of information about the company using touch.

The solution has also proven useful to crewmembers, who can easily learn where the vessel is, which they are assigned to. And, since the lobbies are large enough to hold up to 80 people at a time, TORM has used the touch screens for delivering presentations to customers, employees, and even the media. As with the other applications in the kiosks, all the functionality in the presentations is accessible through touch.





NextWindow Technology

The company behind the touch technology is New Zealand-based NextWindow, which develops optical-image touch screens for displays ranging from 15 inches to 120 inches. While TORM initially considered using a projector-based solution, the idea was rejected because of the service requirements of the lamp and filter and the company's general preference for an LCD monitor solution. TORM selected the NextWindow technology because of its strength in optical imaging, which enables extreme precision in the touch interface and a high quality and durable screen, according to Norup.

Even though touch installations can be complex, Norup remarks that there were no technical problems in the various installations beyond a defective power supply in one of the lobbies.

Benefits

"We are providing enhanced value for customers and partners coming into our locations," says Michael Heiland, an IT project manager in application development at TORM.

While the company has not quantified benefits in terms of increased sales or other measures, the kiosks have conveyed professionalism and attention to information and detail that is pivotal to the shipping company's reputation in the marketplace, he adds.

"All the monitors, including the ones in Copenhagen, which have been running for almost three years, have been working flawlessly," he remarks.