



The digital transformation of



FREDERIQUE CONSTANT
GENEVE



What can a Swiss watch manufacturer teach you about the future of work?

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Game Changers



Frederique Constant IT Manager: A Game Changer Who's Move to the Cloud Created New Opportunities

Getting its start in 1988, Frederique Constant isn't the oldest watch company around, but it has grown to become one of the top Swiss watch manufacturers in recent years. Every day, workers on the Swiss watchmaker's factory floor tackle the challenging but rewarding task of making products known worldwide for their high levels of precision. The workers assemble complex movements painstakingly by hand and then calibrate fully functioning watches carefully with help from advanced machines.

IT Solutions and Infrastructure Manager Francisco Manzano has brought that same level of precision to the watchmaker's IT operations. In the past five years, Manzano has embarked on a company-wide digital transformation project that has shifted virtually all of Frederique Constant's business software and services to the cloud. The idea to simplify and modernize the company is what fueled the digital transformation efforts for Manzano.

Manzano said he needed to make the move to keep the administration/sales and production costs and business efficiencies competitive with larger rivals.

"We are a family company, and we are trying to compete with bigger companies that have millions and millions in budgets and bigger teams," he said. "For us, it's important that we spend our budget wisely and work efficiently. With technology, the knowhow, and some creativity, it is possible to do a lot of things."

- Francisco Manzano





Exiting the Data Center

When Manzano arrived at Frederique Constant in 2013, the company operated a traditional data center in its Geneva headquarters complex. It maintained a roomful of servers, switches, routers, hosting all of its internal data and business software programs along with email servers, communication lines, DNS servers, and other assorted hardware.

Manzano gradually shifted it all to the cloud.

One key step in Frederique Constant's move to the cloud was its decision to shift to Fuze. Replacing multiple communication tools, Fuze has enabled the watchmaker to cut costs, improve the quality of communication and introduce a consumer-like experience to communication and collaboration across the organization through a unified platform.

A New Way to Work

The company replaced the desk phones in its home office with softphones and created a videoconference room for employees to conduct online meetings with colleagues, partners, and customers. Manzano said plans call for Fuze to be rolled out to other offices worldwide next year.

Manzano said the software has saved the company 33 percent on telecommunications costs. It spurred more communication within the workforce and enabled executives to work more seamlessly at home or on the road. At the same time, he added, the technology has encouraged the company to shift its culture and conduct more virtual meetings, saving on travel costs.

"We were using an analog phone system, and it was really hard to maintain," Manzano said. "The way we looked at it, if it's not necessary to have hardware inside, we wanted to have internet and that's it. Plus, you need to have experienced people to maintain the infrastructure. That's why we shifted it all to the cloud. Using Fuze, we've been able to concentrate on creating watches and not having to worry about telecommunications."

While employees were worried about the new system causing disruptions, Manzano said the shift was done fairly seamlessly.

"When we decided to change our telephony, everybody thought it was going to be a nightmare," he said. "People were scared, but in the end, we only switched one thing with the move to software. In the past, if you had a telephony project, it was a big change. You'd have people putting in big cables and connectivity, have everything centralized. It's much different today. Now, it is all deployed in one day. People are using the new technology, and they're happy."



Committing to Social Media

The resource shift to the cloud changed the shape of Manzano's job. For one, the reduced demand for traditional IT tasks enabled Frederique Constant to shrink Manzano's department from five workers to two, with the additional three staffers getting reassigned to other departments. It also enabled Manzano to spend more time on his other duties – overseeing the company's social media and ecommerce strategies.

He has made digital marketing and social media a primary focus. Manzano stepped up the level of engagement, introducing a series of campaigns and increasing the flow of content. The added effort is paying off: Facebook followers have increased from 80,000 to 1 million in three years, and Manzano said the activity is leading to more sales.



"Today, if you're not playing the game with social media, and playing it well, you can lose the company," Manzano said.



NAME:

Francisco Manzano

COMPANY:

Frederique Constant

TITLE:

IT Solutions and Infrastructure Manager

PREVIOUS GIGS:

Electronic Engineer and Communications, Digital Marketing, Video producer, arranger, composer at Humming.com.mx

INDUSTRY:

Precision watchmaker

EMPLOYEE COUNT:

200

HOW HE CHANGED THE GAME:

Shifted virtually all business software resources to the cloud and established the firm's commitment to social media marketing

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