

Letting campaigns fly

Helping the world move

KLM has been a customer of Schuberg Philis since 2004. According to Director of Digital Strategy Guido van Til, the mission of the airline is: “Moving your world, which entails offering inspiration to travel and making the journey as pleasant as possible.”



Guido van Til
Director Digital Strategy

But the bottom line is that tickets have to be sold in a market that is more and more dominated by cut-price airlines. Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport is a global hub where KLM has a leading position, but this is under pressure. Publicity campaigns are one of the ways KLM maintains a distinctive profile for service. Schuberg Philis manages the campaign platform, to ensure that the many new applications are available quickly and that they are reliable.

The most extensive KLM campaigns are the 'Werelddealweken' in January and August

every year. Customers can get discounts if they book early, package deals for a hotel or rental car, and, in the 'luggage tag' campaign, personalized luggage labels. There have also been shorter and more eye-catching campaigns, such as the Dreamliner campaign last year, in relation to the introduction of the latest Boeing aircraft. During the Space campaign, tickets for space travel were among the prizes. In another campaign, DJ Armin van Buuren flew around the world with KLM, taking his fans along. Travelers were also given the chance of an overnight stay in an airplane that had been transformed into a hotel room.

About forty external bureaus are involved with KLM in making new campaigns and developing the applications for them. When the campaigns are announced via





The KLM team, ready for development.

Improving the game of the KLM campaign leaders.

radio, TV, email, search engines and banners, the data volumes can reach high peaks, sometimes as much as 1 gigabyte per second. To ensure that the site functions optimally, interested people are first led to the landing page for the special offer. Site visitors are only redirected to the booking site, klm.com, if they are buying tickets. This 'click through' approach has to work flawlessly.

At Schuberg Philis we've managed KLM's campaign platform for over a decade. This enables greater control in implementing new applications and all elements can be thoroughly tested before a release. That way, numerous functionalities can remain stable when running side-by-side. KLM is ultimately

responsible for Quality Assurance, since they are the owners of the application. Schuberg Philis supplies the tools needed to implement the Quality Assurance, which in the course of time has involved us in orchestrating the development process, in addition to the purely technical management of the platform. The biggest challenge was to prevent deployment problems by setting good design rules, but not to hinder the flexibility and creativity of the agencies that develop the applications.



Carola Buur
Project Manager

Carola Buur is responsible for monitoring KLM's agreements with Schuberg Philis: "Campaign teams are free to choose the agency that will conduct the campaign,

and these agencies appoint their own development teams. Contractual agreements with the external suppliers set the framework they must work within." Schuberg Philis has a role in setting the technical requirements in these agreements.



Thomas Moreau
Mission Critical Engineer

Guido van Til: "As far as possible, we try not to lead the creativity of Campaign Managers in a particular direction, when we make these rules. They are there as support, and they help to ensure that things are done once and done right."

We have never dropped the ball

The agencies running the campaigns have access to the campaign platform via a self-service portal, where their applications are also tested. At any given moment, about fifteen to twenty of the forty agencies are actively engaged in implementing a campaign. Thomas Moreau, Mission Critical Engineer: "On average, we run eighty deployments a day, but in peak periods it can be 250, which is really hectic. Despite the unpredictability of campaign traffic, we have never dropped the ball." The progress of development is continuously monitored. Carola Buur says, "Schuberg Philis has fantastic data recording methods, and that eliminates any wrangling. We can look back in the data, analyze what happened, and make any changes that prove necessary."

The campaign leaders also receive training at Schuberg Philis to become familiar with working methods. Van Til: "Campaign Managers have to know the requirements an application must comply with, and they have to produce careful work. This ensures that

Schuberg Philis doesn't need to make last-minute changes. We've had three training sessions, with a total of about twenty to thirty Campaign Managers. Bringing these two worlds together was useful in terms of both knowledge and understanding."

Collaborate directly

Now that Schuberg Philis is assuming not only the technical support – via the platform – but also more organizational aspects of development, it may well be that more intensive direct partnerships with the developers will ensue. Van Til: "Naturally, I am familiar with Schuberg Philis in its role as a reliable provider of hosting, but I can see them growing further in the new role. Of course there will be discussions over the boundaries of responsibilities, but our IT people are expressing more and more confidence in Schuberg Philis and they recognize that they offer a much wider range of options than in the past." Thomas Moreau, Mission Critical Engineer: "Our dream is to create more velocity, as we collaborate directly with the forty agencies. At present there is still manual effort in application development, much of which could be completely automated. Co-creation is the next step, so that we can help build better solutions for KLM."



Velocity

KLM's Director Digital Strategy,

Guido van Til: "For us, velocity is an indicator we use to increase the output of an agile team. If we expect a certain impact, we look at the capacity of the team and compare that with what they have achieved. By measuring and making improvements, we can accelerate."