Sunrise

Sunrise's CIO transforms telecommunications technology

DIGITAL REPORT **2023**

SUNRISE'S CIO TRANSFORMS TELECOMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

Anna Maria Blengino, **Sunrise CIO, discusses balancing her role, digital transformation, building a team that attracts diversity & being a mother in STEM**

When Anna Maria Blengino was appointed at Sunrise, she requested some posters for the office and invited the entire CIO team to bring in their own paintings and photographic art for the walls.

"You cannot imagine how many came with their pictures," Blengino says.

So many wanted to offer their art that they ran out of wall-space. Now Blengino has a long waiting list and every second month the art is replaced - except for December, which is a month reserved for the art made by the children of CIO employees.

"It's a surprise to see that these technical people have a creative side!"

Now working in Switzerland, Blengino was born in Italy.

"As a child I followed my curiosity to take things apart and put them back together," she says. "I was inspired by my father and by my mathematics and physics teachers, I fell in love with technology."

She graduated with a geotechnical engineering degree at the Turin Polytechnic and began work in the construction industry. At the end of the 1990s telecommunication was on the rise and captured her interest.

"I started my new career from the bottom and continuously used my curiosity to explore the different options, moving up from hands-on Software Testing to Director positions, in IT Operation and IT Delivery."

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Amdocs system remains at the heart of Sunrise operations

Riki Efraim-Lederman and Oleg Volpin explain how Amdocs' comprehensive Kenan system is enabling Sunrise to provide a flawless service to the end customer

The successful business relationship between Sunrise and Amdocs stretches back several years, thanks in large part to the excellent Kenan billing system, on top of the core CRM and Service Inventory platforms, provided by the latter.

When Sunrise recognised the need to upgrade its billing capabilities, the Swiss firm knew it could call upon a tried and trusted partner.

Riki Efraim-Lederman, Division Manager at Amdocs, explains: "Kenan is a really powerful engine that can monetise any product or business process for any customer. It can be deployed on-prem or on any cloud with open architecture, standard APIs and pre-built integration, to dozens of systems."

Kenan upgrade takes place without disruption
Sunrise uses Amdocs products in the vast majority of its features, resulting in absolute alignment between business processes and technical solutions. Kenan, it must be emphasised, is more than simply a billing system. It provides a whole range of services, including the capability to place new orders and provide new products to customers.

Amdocs' upgrade of Kenan for Sunrise was a smooth process from planning and execution through to post-production.

Oleg Volpin, Division President Europe and Telefonica Global at Amdocs, says:

> "You can think of the billing system as the heart; when the heart is functioning, we are healthy people. When the billing system is functioning, the operation of the telecommunications provider is smooth. Kenan is the heart and is allowing Sunrise to operate flawlessly."

Fruitful partnership set to continue
Efraim-Lederman and Volpin are confident the bond between Amdocs and Sunrise will remain strong for many years to come.

"If you think about a telecommunication and media provider," adds Volpin, "you need to do a few things: allow your customers to buy new products; address questions or issues that your customer has; and generate money by charging customers for services. These are the three key services Amdocs provides for Sunrise."

"This role needs a balance between technical expertise and strong leadership skills"

ANNA MARIA BLENGINO
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,
SUNRISE

"After the merger between Sunrise and UPC, where I acted as the IT stream lead, I became responsible for IT Strategy & Innovation. Just recently I have been appointed as Sunrise CIO." This was a new challenge for Blengino, who was honoured and excited to take on the role. She is well-supported by Sunrise's IT team and has been welcomed by the Executive Committee. The role of a CIO requires a strategic and holistic

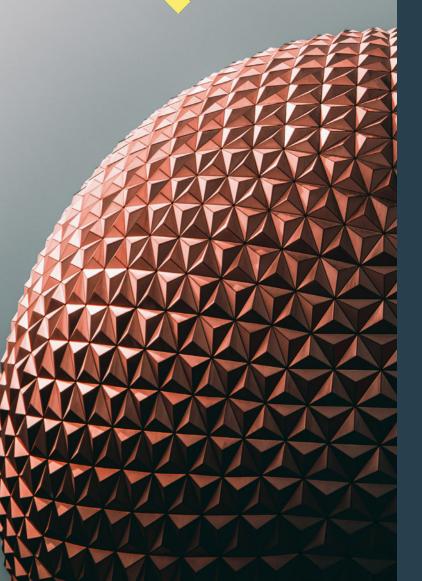approach to technology, including all aspects of the organisation.

"I believe that this role needs a balance between technical expertise and strong leadership skills. It is important to understand the technology landscape and how it can drive business value. At the same time, it is crucial to communicate effectively with stakeholders across the organisation, building strong relationships with business and aligning technology initiatives with the overall goals of the company."

Blengino is also focused on creating a culture of innovation and collaboration within the IT unit, believing that by creating

ANNA MARIA BLENGINO in

TITLE: **CIO**

COMPANY: **SUNRISE**

INDUSTRY: **TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

LOCATION: **SWITZERLAND**

Anna Maria Blengino has been Chief Information Officer of Sunrise since April 1, 2023.

After rejoining Sunrise in 2017 as Director of Platform Delivery, Anna Maria acted as the IT stream lead during the merger between Sunrise and UPC, and then became responsible for IT Strategy & Innovation.

From 2013 she spent four years at UBS, responsible for global worldwide automation shared services.

Anna Maria has over 25 years' experience in the information technology industry. After her start in a telco-software company, she joined Sunrise in 2005 with responsibility for test management and IT application support.

Anna Maria has a master's degree in Engineering from Turin Polytechnic and INSEAD Executive Leadership Business Administration and Management certification.

EXECUTIVE BIO

Qinshift: Supporting clients in transformation journeys

Qinshift, the product of several years of hard work and strategic acquisitions, is a new "family" of six companies across the technology industry

Following a series of strategic acquisitions in the technology space, part of Aricoma Group has revealed its new name: Qinshift.

This "family" of six companies has been assembled to create one of the largest custom software development firms in Europe.

"Qin, to us, means family," says Ludovic Gaude, CEO of Qinshift. "Shift means to embrace digital transformation and change. Together, we are here to support clients in their transformation journeys."

Seavus a key part of Qinshift's expansion

An important member of the Qinshift family is Seavus, a tech firm whose main clients fall within the telecommunications sector. The business employs 1,300 software engineers with know-how in quality assurance, custom software development, application maintenance and much more.

One of those key clients is Sunrise, with whom Seavus has been working for almost 15 years.

Kocha Boshku, CEO of Seavus, explains: "Sunrise had a tough nut to crack because it was necessary, in a short time frame, to do a full migration of BSS data into their Enterprise Data Warehouse. We were one of the few companies able to do that due to our niche expertise in the Telco segment, especially in the billing systems domain and its associated data."
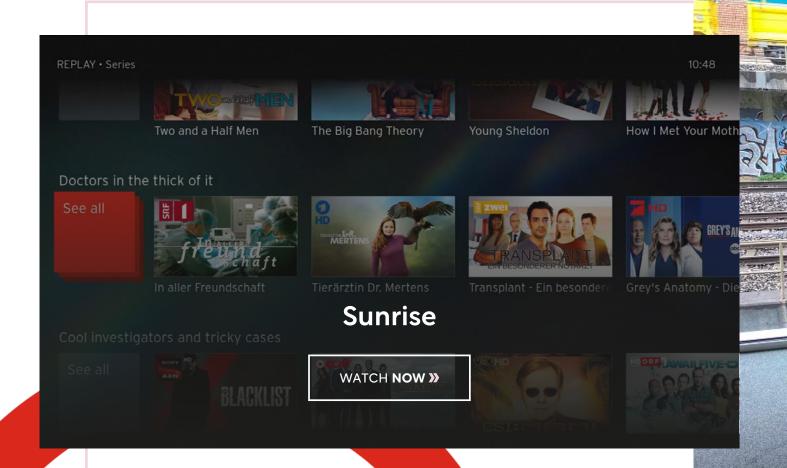
Seavus' 'amazing' record

Seavus has delivered a host of benefits to Sunrise, including an unblemished record when it comes to SOA breaches and 30% cost reduction.

He adds: "Every day, there are other small things going on like data warehouse and CRM ticket resolution; we are three times faster in that domain over the last year."

Looking ahead, Boshku believes the future of telco is all about optimisation and says customer experience is where Seavus will continue to add the most value.

"Due to the breadth of our offering and exposure to other industries, we can benefit multiple clients," he concludes. "We are talking about AI optimisation, IoT, data monetisation – all things in which we have deep expertise."

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BLACKLIST

Sunrise

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"My mantra is: keep moving and stay on top of changes"

ANNA MARIA BLENGINO
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,
SUNRISE

an environment which encourages creativity and experimentation, Sunrise can drive technological advancements that will benefit the organisation as a whole and continue to attract talented professionals.

"I am a proud mother of a girl and a boy, who despite having had a busy mother in STEM, probably did not perceive it as such a bad experience, because both have decided to study engineering too! My mantra is: keep moving and stay on top of changes."

Monetisation of API's & 5G

Monetising APIs involves charging other businesses or developers for accessing APIs and using them in their applications. This can be done through a variety of business models. At Sunrise, the key is to provide value to customers and ensure that their APIs are easy to use, reliable and secure.

"When it comes to 5G, there are several monetisation opportunities," says Blengino. "On top of offering our businesses the ability to use our outstanding 5G network to provide faster and more reliable connectivity to their customers, we can also add to our portfolio value-added services such as analytics and security solutions to help businesses optimise their operations and improve their bottom line.

"In addition, we can explore new business models such as revenue-sharing partnerships with businesses that use our 5G network to deliver services to their customers. For example building Mobile Private Networks. MPNs are private, self-contained local mobile networks that operate independently of public networks and cover specific locations; a solution for all industries 4.0, such as eHealth or SmartCities, SmartFactories, where business-critical and mission-critical applications are used."

In April this year, Sunrise became the first mobile network operator in Switzerland to introduce a dedicated Mobile Private Network 5G solution for its business customers. Monetising APIs and 5G requires a deep understanding of customers' needs

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ZIRA'S AGILE SYSTEMS POWER DIGITAL INNOVATION FOR SUNRISE

Sunrise provides mobile, TV and landline phone and internet services to consumers and businesses across Switzerland. After merging with UPC in 2020, the new business needed to integrate both its portfolios into one new proposition, and launch new services.

Integrating two separate technology stacks into one was a big challenge, with Sunrise needing to reduce dependency on legacy systems and streamline operations.

Sunrise tasked ZIRA with implementing a holistic new Customer Order Management system to pave the way for new digital services, including HFC, XGS PON, and OTT media services.

ZIRA was able to apply its specialized Customer Order Management solution across both the UPC and Sunrise stacks. Thanks to the solution's open architecture, the ZIRA team managed the deployment from end to end, orchestrating new flows that allowed Sunrise to roll out the services to all consumers within a matter of months.

Since then, Sunrise has been able to quickly introduce new services like XGS PON and HFC while decommissioning legacy processes, never falling behind the roadmap's tight timeline.

> "
>
> *ZIRA's flexible, modular solutions work alongside legacy systems, so Sunrise has been able to fulfil their roadmap effectively.*
>
> **Lejla Pljevljak-Rašidagić**
> Chief Product Officer at ZIRA.

"The telecoms industry is changing fast, and it's our job to ensure Sunrise can quickly react to new opportunities and adapt to new requirements."

ZIRA delivers digital BSS solutions that streamline the entire order management process for telecoms companies. Over its 25-year heritage, the company has built a strong reputation as niche player for its unified, modular capabilities, fast implementation, and seamless integration.

CONTACT ZIRA

21%
21% of CIO staff members are women

24%
24% of CIO managers are women

32
CIO staff counts 32 different nationalities

and a willingness to adapt to changing market conditions.

"My objective is to ensure that our organisation stays ahead of the curve in this rapidly evolving landscape. We at Sunrise understand the future of these services, especially in the B2B sector, and are preparing the technical enablers to support the commercial demand, in a secure, protected and compliant way."

Blengino believes that delivering a business roadmap and transformation that is 'Fit for Future' while ensuring operational stability, can be a challenging task. This requires a comprehensive approach that considers all aspects of the transformation, from technology and infrastructure to people and processes. There are several key steps that organisations can take to achieve this goal.

Develop a clear roadmap
Start by creating a clear and comprehensive roadmap that outlines goals, objectives and timelines for the transformation. This roadmap should be aligned with the overall business strategy and should be communicated clearly to all stakeholders.

Prioritise initiatives
Prioritise the initiatives that will have the most significant impact on the business and focus on delivering those first. This will help ensure that the most critical changes are made while minimising disruption to the business.

Manage risks
Identify and manage the risks associated with the transformation. This includes both technical and operational risks. Ensure that there are contingency plans in place in case of unexpected issues.

SUNRISE-INFOSYS PARTNERSHIP: BOUND BY A DIGITAL THREAD

Does fine art have deeper meaning? Can an artists' community make sense of the real world? Do brush strokes on a canvas help unravel communication in the Swiss Alps?

Welcome to Sunrise, Switzerland's largest private telecom network, offering mobile, Internet, TV and fixed network services. When Sunrise appointed Anna Maria Blengino as CIO, she started with a flourish: on Day 1, she put art crafted by IT employees on the walls of her office.

Anna Maria, a native of Italy, grew up amid Renaissance art, history and literature, museums all over her country. She encouraged her team to bring their art to office. Soon enough, the office was converted into an art gallery with indigenous art. The campaign was a huge success. Artworks were replaced every alternate month, with December dedicated for drawings of children.

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THE DIGITAL CANVAS

This creative facet enabled Sunrise, under the stewardship of Anna Maria, to identify 5G use cases, specifically monetisation opportunities via application programming interfaces (APIs).

According to Anna Maria, Sunrise took this leap of faith, because "5G provides customers with reliable, lightning-fast connectivity, and on top of it, we offer value-added services such as analytics and security solutions to help businesses improve their bottom line".

A DIGITAL PARTNERSHIP FOUNDED ON SHARED VALUES

Infosys is proud of the partnership with Sunrise: a Swiss pioneer of telecom services and a global digital consulting services provider jointly developed customer-centric solutions to attract and retain digital consumers.

As part of the digital transformation, Infosys conducted design thinking workshops at Sunrise to address dynamics of the business. With the support of Infosys, Sunrise implemented a platform to help subscribers seamlessly register for new services and offers, rolled out a customised tariff plan, and adopted microservices and automation for near zero-touch migration across subsidiary brands.

Our Driving Force

Sustainability **Diversity** **Collaboration**

The Sunrise-Infosys partnership has grown from strength to strength. Driven by sustainability and diversity, this collaboration is set to shape the digital agenda.

Anna Maria believes that maintaining consistency in the quality of service is possible with a team of professionals who always think out-of-the-box. She takes pride in her team's diversity and believes "innovation is a journey of diverse viewpoints and perspectives". Today, the Sunrise CIO office is a shining example of diversity with a workforce from 32 nationalities, and women making up 21% of the staff and 24% of managers. Infosys shares this ethos, employing a workforce of 161 nationalities across 66 countries, with 39.4% women.

Infosys joined hands with Liberty Global to support Street Child, a charity providing children across sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Europe with education opportunities (Sunrise is a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty Global). Infosys established a digital footprint for Street Child to create awareness about the cause as well as provide tools for donors to follow outcomes of ongoing projects.

Anna Maria Blengino
CIO, Sunrise

"Sunrise has pivoted deeply to digital technology to better serve hyper-connected customers. In this journey, we appreciate the role of Infosys to implement key digital programmes as part of a broader digital transformation at Sunrise."

Manish Juneja
Senior Director, Client Services, Infosys

"The telecom landscape is being disrupted by next-generation digital technology. For a decade, Sunrise has been an early adopter of new and emerging technologies. Infosys is proud to partner with Sunrise in its mission to become the preferred digital services provider."

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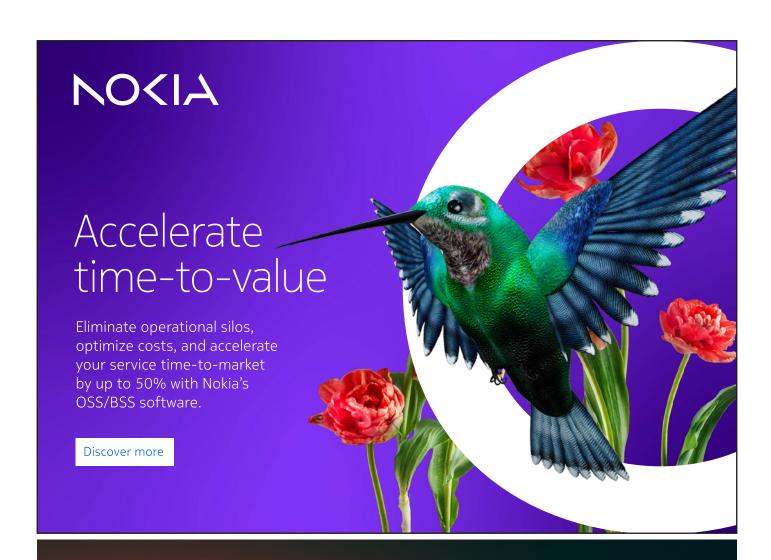accenture

Engage stakeholders
Engage all stakeholders, including employees, customers and partners, throughout the transformation process. This will help to build support and buy-in for the changes and ensure that everyone is aligned around the vision for the future.

Invest in technology and infrastructure
Invest in the technology and infrastructure needed to support the transformation. This may include upgrading legacy systems, implementing new software solutions, or improving data analytics capabilities.

"It is crucial to communicate effectively with stakeholders across the organisation, building strong relationships with business and aligning technology initiatives with the overall goals of the company"

ANNA MARIA BLENGINO
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,
SUNRISE

Develop a change management plan

Develop a comprehensive change management plan that includes communication, training and support for employees. This will help ensure that everyone is prepared for the changes and understands how to adapt to new processes and systems.
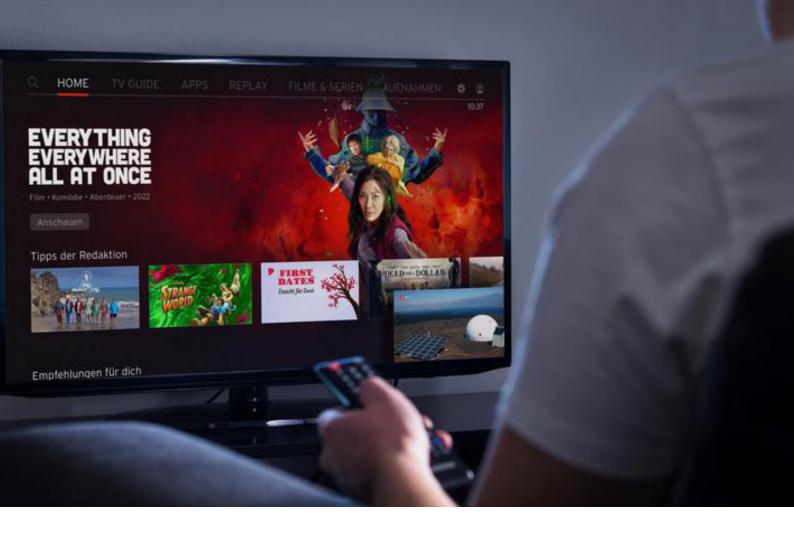
Monitor progress

Monitor progress and adjust the roadmap as needed. Regularly assess the impact of the transformation on the business and make adjustments as needed to ensure that it remains on track.

Powerful partnerships and a team that attracts diversity

Like most technology companies, Sunrise relies on external services when it comes to the implementation and operation of IT solutions that require skills, agility and scalability to support the business.

"Since the new organisation is in place, our strategy with suppliers of professional services has been to progressively move from a Vendor to a Partner relationship," says Blengino.

To bridge that gap Sunrise plans to:

• Consolidate the ecosystem of traditional Partners operating from on-site, near-shore and off-shore
• Build a solid foundation of trust with the preferred Partners, also based on joint investments on strategic and innovative areas
• Extend the Partner relationship to new players like the Cloud Providers

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Sunrise are transforming the telecommunications landscape using Pega (CDH) and BPM, in their groundbreaking strategy, building tomorrow's connections today.

Sunrise are part of the Liberty Global Group - learn from their insights on how you could break down barriers in your organisation and empower employees to deliver unparalleled customer experiences

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• Move from classic T&M agreements to value based, KPI-driven engagements also opened to value share propositions.

"We can count on extremely solid partnerships with software providers and system integrators," says Blengino. "We work very closely with Infosys, Seavus and Accenture to run our transformation projects on our key platforms. The backbone of our architecture is the Amdocs BSS (CRM, Billing, and Inventory). We decided to adopt it as our strategic target as it provides full FMC capabilities, and we serve both B2C and B2B markets with a single stack. CRM10 and Kenan Billing are fully integrated. Network Inventory has been consolidated for the two original companies into the target Cramer platform. Pega omnichannel serves as an orchestrator layer to the various front ends.

"Nokia played a pivotal role in driving the automation and optimization of Sunrise's B2B operations.

By leveraging Nokia's Open API catalogue-driven fulfilment solution, Sunrise empowered itself to seamlessly integrate and thrive in the expanding digital ecosystem.

"The order and service management are dealt in an integrated COM/SOM provided by Zira and Nokia, which also hosts the real time charging. Our strategy around the e-commerce platform leverages SAP Hybris to deliver an engaging and omnichannel e-commerce experience for our customers.

"Furthermore, the availability of a proven accelerator for the Telco market (TUA),

"**It is important to understand the technology landscape and how it can drive business value**"

ANNA MARIA BLENGINO
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER,
SUNRISE

allowed for a fast onboarding of industry specific items like the commercial product catalogue. Ours is a data driven architecture, where one of main roles is played by Teradata and GCP platforms. All our employees collaborate by profiting from a modern digital workplace concept, based on Microsoft suite."

Sunrise also collaborates with Microsoft to exploit the new frontiers of OpenAI.

"Last but not least the simplification of the financial processes has been completed by converging our ERP to the most modern SAP solutions."

Over the next 12 months at Sunrise, Blengino's team will undoubtedly keep creating office art to make their workspace a little brighter. But there is a lot of work ahead.

"We will continue to deliver a roadmap (IT and BUZ) with stable operations and accelerate the technical enablers for the agile transformation," says Blengino. "We will optimise the engagement and partnerships with our vendors, spread the Sunrise values and leadership principles to the new team."

Fit for the future is not only limited to the upcoming technologies, but also to new skills and competences. Sunrise will need to identify the future needs and map with the as-is capabilities, identify the gaps (in terms of skills and age of retirement) and set up an upskilling programme, together with a recruitment approach that attracts young talent and embraces diversity.

"We'll be working with graduates and apprenticeship programmes, partnerships at universities and hackathons," says Blengino. "At Sunrise, we will keep dreaming big and doing big, supported by a fabulous team!" ◉

Sunrise GmbH

Thurgauerstrasse 101b
8152 Glattpark (Opfikon)
sunrise.ch