

RELIABLE, FLEXIBLE and CUSTOMER FOCUSED

by Rebecca Hansen



Christian Sammut, Chief Executive Officer and R: Jack Mizzi, Chief Marketing & BD Officer

Since its launch more than ten years ago, BMIT has grown to become one of the leading companies of its kind in Europe. We talk with CEO Christian Sammut and Jack Mizzi, Chief Marketing and BD Officer, who explain why BMIT are definitely the number one data centre in terms of size, business operation, and expertise in Malta, as well as one of the leading online gaming providers in terms of data centre services.

BACKGROUND

BMIT's competence as reliable, secure, flexible service operator is backed by 24/7 service at both its two data centres. Working around the clock, they provide technical assistance, including expert hosting and colocation services, though they constantly strive to build on their facilities and proficiency across numerous emerging technologies.

The company offers three main categories of services: data centre services, cloud services and managed services, all on 24/7 basis. Within its data centre services category, BMIT supplies multiple and redundant connectivity to the internet, hosting space and power, all complemented by technical support. The second category is cloud services, with BMIT being the only provider of cloud services in Malta. Having invested a substantial amount of money, well over one million Euros to build a cloud platform last year, today the company has a fully automated platform, and they provide all categories of cloud services. BMIT are also leading online Gaming providers in Europe in terms of data centre services.

Jack Mizzi gives a brief introduction on BMIT and also on the type of cloud services being offered. "The first type are public cloud services, available on demand and with immediate provisioning via our website. These include cloud computing, backup as well as applications such as hosted exchange mail. Then we offer private cloud services to customers in a dedicated set-up and personalised offering. Finally, we have the "best of both worlds" offering – hybrid cloud consisting of a mix of public and private cloud environments. What we do is architect all this.

TEU: And your third pillar?

JM: Our third pillar consists of managed services, meaning our specific service offering is to provide technical and expert advice and support to our customers, including systems design, implementation and support for all type of IT set ups.

CS: The company grew with the development of gaming in Malta, and as gaming in Malta grew from strength to strength and capitalised on that, we made sure we were able to grow with the industry and evolve our services from a pure co-location provider to offering a full portfolio services in co-location, cloud and managed services. Additionally, we believe that another of our strengths lies in our ability to provide a one-stop technological solution to our customers, whatever their area of operation.

Gaming is very much a dynamic and evolving industry in Europe. Malta is a strong and large player in this market, but it is also impacted by changes in legislation and by whatever is happening in Europe. Therefore, we have to look at how we can adapt to those changes and also look at how we can focus on providing other services.

Looking at non-gaming business, in Malta I believe you have approximately thirty five thousand businesses, 97% of them are micro SMEs. A lot of them are also family owned businesses. What we find with such companies is that many of them underestimate the cost of running an IT system. Many of them relate only to the cost of a server or application - "I spent five thousand on a server, I spent another five thousand on an application to serve my business requirements." But then they forget that at the end of the day, they put it somewhere, so it is taking up space for them, they have to keep it running in a secure environment, and so there might be some security elements. You have to cool it, you have to invest in an UPS, since it is consuming electricity all the time. So you have to pay maintenance on it and you most probably need IT personnel to support you whenever you have a problem. You have to have access to the internet so you have to pay for that as well. You maybe have to look at a backup plan. So there are many parameters which many organisations may be ignoring when maintaining an in-house IT set-up. As a result we seek to advise customers on the real costs

involved and on the advantages of hosting an IT infrastructure within a data centre, or else make use of cloud services when applicable. The latter offer the benefit of a no up-front investment and pay-per-use payment model, and hence avoid the need for substantial financial commitments on IT infrastructure.

TEU: What kind of projects have you worked on?

CS: Our customer base is varied. At one end, we have some of the largest gaming operators in Europe hosted within our data centres. We also provide services to some major multi-nationals as well as businesses in IT, financial services, logistics and banking. On the other end, we provide services to micro businesses, start-ups and small professionals who use our services to minimise their IT costs and get flexible and personalised services.

JM: Our objective is to allow our customers to focus on their core business and leave the IT support function to us. Our portfolio of services easily allows for this and irrespective of whether it is a two employee, or a two thousand employee set-up, we can provide with solutions

which add value and let business focus on their operation without worrying on support services such as IT set-ups.

CS: One typical example is a recent new customer – a Maltese living in the Far East. He is currently hosting with a US company but serving primarily the European market. He is having issues of time zones, issues of latency, performance, etc. He contacted us, not sure if we can cater for a one-man organisation. We provided him with a solution which we believe addresses his requirements in a cost-effective manner. As Jack said, we have a mix of customers in terms of size, operation and turnover, and whereas originally they were mostly gaming, we now have customers in IT, transport, legal, insurance and finance, amongst other.

Business is a game and only the team with the best players will win

We are currently doing a major implementation for an international customer, a well known brand in the communications market. They trusted us to set up their services here and provide them with a range of data centre services.

Any data centre has to comply with certain regulatory and technical requirements, even from a security perspective. We follow international standards and provide services within the parameters of such standards in order to ensure the highest level of service quality.

TEU: Where does security come in all of this?

CS: Obviously security is paramount for us. Customers trust us with their IT set-ups and their data, which is often the single-most important set of information a company possesses. We therefore ensure that any risks are minimised and preventive action taken. For example we are very strict regarding physical security and access to premises, with not only access control systems, but also with CCTV cameras all over the place. We also have very sophisticated fire detection and fire mitigation systems. Connectivity to the Internet is also critical – we are probably the only data centre in Malta which is connected to all fibre cables going out of Malta. This allows us to offer

peace of mind to our customers, in addition to any volume of bandwidth they require.

Power is also an issue. We want to ensure that customers have uninterrupted service and in this regard have put in place all the necessary infrastructure, including multiple power feeds, a UPS set-up that can handle all customers and more, as well as a generator set-up that can run uninterrupted for days.

JM: In addition to physical security we also ensure that we provide the best service in relation to information security. In this regard we have been recently granted the ISO27001 certification in Information Security Management by BSI – British Standards Institute. We are also PCI DSS certified, meaning that our data centres are certified to host customers requiring the handling of payment transactions.

The combination of all these gives a high level of comfort to our clients, who trust us with business-critical data and applications.

TEU: How do you intend to retain the competitive advantage of the brand BMIT?

JM: BMIT is a very well established brand in the online gaming world and is slowly but surely building a reputation among non-gaming customers. We are very conscious on what the company means to our customers, and our prime objective is to continue nurturing our relationships and build new ones in non-gaming markets. Also, business is a game and only the team with the best players will win. We are investing substantially in our team to ensure they remain on the forefront of knowledge, competence and ability, to provide customer with solutions that fit their requirements. To remain competitive, we have to remain and be distinctive. This was our most competitive advantage and the singular reason why we are still in business. 

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Bio

Christian Sammut - Chief Executive Officer
Christian is an experienced data centre and business development specialist. Throughout his career Christian has worked in the private and public sectors both locally as well as overseas, including the aerospace industry. His responsibilities have included the delivery and support of IT infrastructure services, as well as the management and operations of the Government of Malta's data centres. In 2001 Christian joined GO, Malta's largest telecommunications provider, to develop new business and data centre opportunities. More recently Christian held various positions at GO including that of Chief of Strategy and Business Development. Christian is a graduate in engineering from the University of Malta and holds a Masters in Business Administration from Brunel University.



Bio

Jack Mizzi - Chief Marketing and Business Development Officer
Jack has a long career in telecoms and broadband services, specialising in marketing and business development. He has developed and managed broadband and bandwidth initiatives for one of Malta's leading communication companies, and was responsible for product development, marketing communications and wholesale-related functions. Subsequently he managed a new telco content function spanning web portal management, newsroom and digital TV, as well as associated e-commerce and advertising sales functions. Jack is a graduate in Management from the University of Malta and holds an MSc in Marketing from the University of Leicester.