

DigiPlex will build the leading data centre brand in the Nordics

Online Swedish interview by Dagens Opinion with DigiPlex CMO Fredrik Jansson – English translated version.

DigiPlex builds and deploys data centres, halls with stable operating environments and the highest possible security and availability where companies and organizations can outsource their servers and run their IT systems and services out to customers.

"We see a historic shift when companies and organizations increasingly choose to outsource their data centre (which is often found in the company's basement) to a professional data centre. Today, 60% of Swedish companies operate their own data centres, this will drop to 40% over a 48-month period," says DigiPlex Chief Marketing and Communications officer, Fredrik Jansson.

However, not only DigiPlex has done this analysis. Global giants like Google, can see its future growth in cloud services rather than keyword advertising.

"We are often asked whether the cloud giants are competitors or opportunities. We see them absolutely as opportunities and that we are a complement. All clouds are physically resident in a data centre."

As a marketing case, a data centre may seem meagre. Large halls with endless lines of servers and plenty of competitors with generic services. But DigiPlex has been around for 17 years, founded by two Americans; entrepreneur Byrne Murphy and the businessman Bill Conway, who placed DigiPlex first data centre in Norway. From there, the company has built out into the rest of the Nordic region

Fredrik Jansson, enlisted just over a year ago from the Indian Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) where he was part of the journey from 30 000 to 400 000 employees as brand manager for the company's 21 European markets, when DigiPlex knocked on the door.

"What attracted me to DigiPlex was the opportunity to make another exponential business venture. The data centre industry in the Nordic region is growing stronger. Domestic companies outsource their data centres increasingly and international large companies are attracted to the Nordic region by the unique conditions we have as a data centre destination. Sure, I've gone from big teams and budgets to a smaller organization, but the goal is the same: to grow fast! And for that, sharp marketing and communication is needed."

Now Fredrik Jansson has developed a marketing strategy.

"DigiPlex has previously had a very technical type of communication. We have now created a new message platform that is more connected to major issues that data centres can be the solution for," says Fredrik Jansson and gives examples:

"Every time we use our mobile or computer to check social media, watch a movie, send email, or use the Internet in any way, a process is started in a data centre. With Digitalisation, the strong growing trends that come under the concept, such as the internet of things (IoT), artificial intelligence, increased cloud use and a growing share of digital services, the datasets processed in the data centres will increase exponentially. Globally, the data centre industry today accounts for 2% of world CO₂ emissions and 3% of world power consumption. Digitalisation means that this too will increase exponentially. However, the connection between data centres and environmental impact is seldom made. If you as a company have your data in an inefficient energy-consuming data centre driven by fossil fuels, then you become an environmental polluter. Most companies try to influence their carbon footprint by reducing paper consumption and transport. Both CIO and management should shift focus to the environmental impact of the IT function, highlighting and combating the large and growing digital carbon footprint."

DigiPlex data centre in Upplands Väsby, north of Stockholm, is run exclusively on renewable electricity and is one of the world's most green and energy efficient data centres. DigiPlex main customers are primarily CIO's (IT managers).

"They should also be digitisation leaders, i.e. the person who drives digitisation. In this role, the IT manager should actively choose the right data centre to protect both their brand and their entire business. Virtually all companies are today very dependent on having a constant connection to their data and downtime in the data centre becomes devastating, for a bank both in terms of brand value and market capitalization. The data centre selection is business critical. We have chosen to make communication easy to understand, so that there is a public interest to read."

Why do you want your communication to be of public interest when you turn to IT managers?

There is a small understanding of how important the data centres are for our future. Data centres are the foundation of the ongoing digitalisation and as a society we will have problems if we do not ensure that we build digitisation on a sustainable basis. Today you as a consumer can make an active environmental choice when you buy your laundry detergent or your next sweater. For almost all products there is eco-labelling that helps the consumer. Should there not be a similar option for digital services? What if consumers could choose to stream your next TV show in an environmentally friendly way?

How do you carry out the messages?

We have a number of activities where we meet the target group. We have rebuilt our PR page. Previously, we had three agencies, now we use an umbrella agency for all markets. This makes it easier to produce material and gives us better opportunities to pitch in articles and get editorial content. We have also been at the forefront on native articles and work with DI Digital in Sweden and Finansavisen in Norway.

Fredrik Jansson seems to be happy with the Native-advertisement?

It has provided a good exchange. At DI Digital, we have averaged 40 000 readers on each article and an average reading time of 1.5 minutes. The Native articles allow us to measure the

effectiveness of real-time and get direct feedback on our content which we then modify and optimize for optimal value to the reader.

DigiPlex also has an event.

Among other things, we presented the prize at CIO Awards 2017 for this year's most sustainable projects. Environmental sustainability is in DigiPlex DNA and a key issue for IT managers. How energy efficient the data centres are that a company is using, makes a big difference for how environmentally sustainable that company is.

Fredrik Jansson has also set off on DigiPlex social media channels and content production.

Previously, you were relatively inactive. Now we have started a social media program that flies where we have seen an extremely large exchange. For some, LinkedIn or Twitter is the primary way to click through to content. Instead of going through a news site, you log in to social media, read what content your contacts have uploaded and click through to what you think seems interesting. We try to create content that not only works for the target group, but it should be easy to understand, informative and interesting so that everyone can learn something new and, in this way, get viral dissemination

Content strategy is one way for DigiPlex to make itself independent of editorial content, thus deserving media, which is the backyard of the PR agencies.

In our current *modus operandi*, we are not so dependent on editorial content. We can reach out anyway. In the transformation we make, it has been important to quickly increase our visibility and take a position as thought leader. It has been important to me that even if the journalist does not think the news fits, it should not end up in the trash. This is not to say that we do not come out in editorially, we increased our media reach by 1000% during 2017.

Where will the PR agency come in for you?

It comes primarily as a front line alongside journalists. Secondly, they help us to create press releases and thought leadership.

DigiPlex has also had time to redo his graphic profile.

We have made the brand profile and the imagery we use on the website. Today it looks quite different compared to a year ago. Now we have an imagery that matches the new message platform. Previously, the average for a visitor on the website was a minute. Now it's up for over three minutes. We mainly have more interesting content that people click on and read.

DigiPlex has several competitors such as Equinix and Interxion, but the goal of DigiPlex is clear: "The goal is to be the leading datacentre brand in the Nordic region."

And there is much to be gained.

This is an industry that is very much talked about and that is growing stronger. According to analysts, the data centre industry will represent 0.5-1 percent of Sweden's GDP by 2025, the same size as steel and the metal sector, or larger than the aerospace and textile industries together.

DigiPlex Marketing department was nominated at the end of 2017 for “Communications Team of the Year” at the European Excellence Awards and were also finalists in the “Best Marketing Team” and “Best Marketing Campaign” at the Global Carrier Awards.

Fredrik Jansson explains why the marketing department is successful:

"I have five superstars in my team with cutting-edge expertise in different areas. We work closely as a team with a stated goal that what we do should be the industry leading. During 2018 we will win at least one international market/communications prize."