

FROM TICINO TO NEW YORK CITY

How DAC System got to install their solution on the One World Trade Center

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The five-year-old Swiss start-up DAC System SA has been able to celebrate big successes, such as installing their antenna monitoring system on the One World Trade Center in New York. We talked to CEO Pietro Casati to learn how this success came about and to learn what tips would give other start-ups.



DAC System's success story started in 2013 in the Ticino incubator CP Start-Up. The company was able to take part in the CTI Start-up program, which resulted in the CTI Start-up label in 2016. Their solution provides antenna monitoring systems that predict and prevent failures in big antenna systems.

“We are operating in a niche market. There is no other technology on the market available that offers the opportunity of localization and failure prevention,” says CEO Casati. This means that failures and damages in broadcast towers are associated with high levels of maintenance and expense. The start-up's unique solution allows infrastructure owners to localize the degradation of the RFsignal. This makes it much easier to find the exact location and have it repaired more easily and quickly.

Their niche market Switzerland became too small

After starting out with Swisscom Broadcast in Switzerland, DAC System realized that Switzerland was quickly becoming too small in their niche market. The start-up therefore started to look for opportunities around the world.

“It was important for us to find a trusting business partner,” says Pietro Casati.

Through connections, they were able to find some interesting opportunities in surrounding countries. The US market attracted their attention after they were contacted by a small company. Pietro Casati tried to approach end-users directly on his own and visit trade fairs. “With limited resources and a small network, it was more or less impossible to get in touch with the big players in the market,” he says.

Looking for, and counting on, professional support

After having learned that there are initiatives from the cantons and organizations such as Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE), the start-up got into contact with S-GE and the Swiss Business Hub USA.

“We are very satisfied with the service provided. They put us in touch with one of our major customers. Thanks to the continuous support of S-GE and the Swiss Business Hub USA, the US market represents around 90% of our business.”

The Swiss Business Hub USA provided DAC System with an accurate and detailed overview of the sector, market know-how and relevant contacts in the US. “It was a very professional, customized offer, and I received a warm welcome whenever I went to the US,” Pietro Casati notes.

Ongoing challenges in the US market

“Global competition is tough,” says Pietro Casati. Administrative tasks take a lot of time and energy, therefore he feels the need to concentrate that energy to where it is used best: on the technology. The start-up, which now has eight employees, is looking to open a subsidiary in the US.

“We need to be where our major business is, but we have to be smart to find the right sources, contacts and lawyers. This is what S-GE can help us with.”

Another important topic is patents on the software and hardware. Some have already been granted and some are still pending. Pietro Casati is optimistic: “We want to show the rest of the world that

Switzerland is a big player in this niche market with a high level of technology.” It is now time to plant some seeds in other countries, which is why DAC System with the help of S-GE’s global network is looking for further market opportunities in Europa and Asia.

Tips for Swiss start-ups looking to export to the USA

Looking back on their export experience, Pietro Casati shares the following tips with Swiss start-ups beginning to internationalize:

- Scout for local possibilities in the export market
- Use local connections to get to know the market
- Get support from organizations such as S-GE
- Learn from the experience of others
- Spend money wisely to reduce the risk of wasting time and resources
- Leverage on the quality of Swiss products and services

Source: <https://www.s-ge.com/en/article/success-stories/20193-c1-dac-system>