



Today, Business Actor brings you an interview with Stephane Croce, CEO and founder of COBOL-IT.



Florent Hernandez: Stephane Croce, could you please give us a quick review of your biography?

Stephane Croce: Sure. I've been working in the IT industry for over 25 years now. I began my career as a Developer, and worked with a number of different companies in both the areas of software development, and integration. In 1999, I joined Acucorp, where I served as General Manager for the Southern European region, and Vice President in charge of Strategic Direction. After 9 years, I decided to take the next step, and start my own company.

In 2008, with Philippe Fraysse and Alain Corchia, we decided to get together, and launch the COBOL-IT venture.

Florent Hernandez: Please tell us briefly about COBOL-IT.

Stephane Croce: COBOL-IT provides a COBOL Compiler and a wide range of Technical Services to large enterprises that want to migrate, deploy, and maintain their COBOL applications at the lowest cost, and lowest risk.

We have quickly become recognized as one of the industry leaders world-wide, with successful migrations for hundreds of clients, representing millions of users, and hundreds of millions of lines of COBOL source code running in Production.



Florent Hernandez: Why do Companies choose COBOL-IT?

Stephane Croce: The combination of our software and our systematic migration process allows our Customer to preserve their strategic COBOL assets, while realizing improvements in both performance and agility.

At the same time, we provide our Customers a way to break free from the constraints and costs associated with new license fees for their COBOL compiler and runtime. As a result, our Customers benefit from the very highest possible level of cost savings.

Florent Hernandez: Why did you decide to compete in this market?

Stephane Croce: COBOL is a programming language that was created in the 1960's, as a Business Oriented Language. It is still the most widely-used programming language in the world, with 200 billion lines of code in production, and 5 billion new lines of code developed every year. Its use is widespread, and it is integrated as a central, critical element in the information systems of the largest enterprises in the world.

For decades, one major actor dominated this marketplace.

In 2008, it seemed to us to be an opportune moment to challenge them by proposing a superior solution, with superior technology.

Florent Hernandez: After 7 years in operation, where does the company stand today?

Stephane Croce: We are currently in a consolidation phase, even as we continue our rapid growth!

COBOL-IT's success relies on a supple structure and an extended network of partners. Our company headquarters is in Paris, our technical direction is located in New York, we have a pool of R&D software engineers based in Belgium, Russia, and in the USA, a technical support installed on every continent.

In this respect, COBOL-IT is a very modern company, offering both visibility and agility.

Florent Hernandez: Does this "internationalization" mean that COBOL-IT has a presence all around the world?

Stephane Croce: Yes. To be more precise, we have assembled a wide network of service providers, distributors, and technical hubs to relay our know-how around the world, in the USA, Canada, Latin America, Europe, Israel, India and China.

This model allows us to guarantee flexibility and a high level of responsiveness. It's without a doubt the reason that we have been able to sign, since our creation, prestigious references with both large corporate accounts, and industry-leading partners.



Florent Hernandez: Can you give us a few examples?

Stephane Croce: Sure. The Certification campaign we have been running for the past two years has resulted in certifications from industry-leading technical partners, including IBM, HP and Oracle.

These partnerships continue to strengthen as our collaboration increases on projects with large enterprises and governmental organizations. Our successes in France include the French Ministry of Finance, Mutuelles Sociale, Agricole, and HSBC. In the rest of the world, our successes include Carrefour Spain, Verifone USA, Pepsico, and Pelephone Israel.

Florent Hernandez: How would you best characterize your approach?

Stephane Croce: The markets that we are penetrating and the critical nature of the applications that we work with, requires an irreproachable process, executed with absolute discipline.

We never engage in a project unless we are absolutely certain that we will be able to work with the client all the way through to the successful completion of the project. Both the value and the reputation of COBOL-IT have been enhanced due to this approach.

It took us 6 years to establish our reputation, and to obtain wide-spread recognition in the marketplace. Now, everyone knows who we are and what we offer. At this point, our goal is to become number 1.

Florent Hernandez: Where can we find you online?

Stephane Croce: You can visit our website at www.cobol-it.com and/or follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/cobol_it.

For more information about **COBOL-IT**, and our products and services, please visit www.cobol-it.com

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