



# Swissport digital takes off with Ibexa



Swissport International AG is the world's leading provider of airport ground services and air cargo handling. Headquartered in the Swiss town of Opfikon near Zürich airport, the private-equity held company had revenues of €3.13 billion in 2019. The disruptions to international travel caused by Covid-19 had a serious impact on Swissport which is now recovering strongly. At the end of 2021, Swissport was operating at 285 airports in 45 countries on six continents and employed 43,000 people worldwide. The sheer range and geographical spread of Swissport's activities was reflected in a fragmented digital footprint which weakened its brand message. On the eve of the pandemic, in 2019, the company embarked on a huge project to rebrand and relaunch the website.

Aviation services giant Swissport deployed Ibexa DXP to update and modernize its digital presence and seized the opportunity for a refresh of its overall digital corporate design. Key to the project was to organize and display key information and background about Swissport's services and locations coherently across many thousands of data points. Along the group's vast global network structure, the main site also implements an interactive map, an innovative news and multimedia section, enabling visitors to easily publish content from the website to social media.

Swissport operates five business lines across 45 countries at 285 airports and needed a powerful and robust DXP that would not be overwhelmed by the complexity and sheer volume of this data structure.

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**Christoph Meier**  
Head of Group Communications & Brand Management at Swissport

## Challenges

- The outdated TYPO3 instance lacked modern DXP features and offered a poor, text-focused editorial experience
- The non-responsive design and navigation of the main site was tired and outdated
- It was just no fun to explore and get to know Swissport
- There were too many sites, running on a multitude of platforms and systems
- News and media feeds were poorly integrated and impractical for journalists and investors.

## Project Summary

- Swissport organized a beauty parade of DXP providers; Ibexa was chosen for its power and simplicity
- The network data structure was migrated to Ibexa DXP; custom content objects were created to help editors cope with the complex tree structure
- Work began on migrating individual country sites to Ibexa
- The new site went live in July 2021.

## Business Benefits

- System and platform infrastructure has been simplified by migrating multiple sites to Ibexa and moving to Ibexa Cloud
- Cohesive design and an attractive navigation via a mega menu that expands like a cinema canvas and retracts into the familiar burger menu icon, Swissport consistent branding is reinforced across network data, news and media, corporate and investor instances.
- Information on airports and services is much more elegantly displayed and above all, much easier to find
- News and media center allows for one-click zip downloads via a type of a shopping basket that visitors are familiar with.



## Why Ibexa?

Swissport’s technology partner Comwrap Reply recommended Ibexa DXP as the right platform for this complex and content-heavy project. While taking note of the recommendation, the company also looked at various alternatives as part of its standard procurement policy. “Ibexa and Comwrap Reply immediately gave us the confidence that we would be able to position Swissport in the digital sphere to what it is in real life: The world’s preferred ground services partner for airlines,” says Christoph Meier, Head of Group Communications & Brand Management at Swissport. “And the project outcome proved us to be right. We now have a flexible, potent solution, which at the same time is perhaps not as heavy and overbred as certain other traditional and older systems.”

Another advantage was that Ibexa DXP could be deployed both on-premise, as was Swissport’s original intention, and on the cloud as was its final choice. Ibexa Platinum Partner Comwrap Reply developed the site on Ibexa DXP 3.0 before its release. The result is that Swissport relaunched its site on up-to-date Ibexa technology, and sidestepped the disruptions of a medium-term migration.

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Head of Group Communications & Brand Management, Swissport

## Serving to millions

“A lot of people come into contact with us without knowing it,” says Christoph Meier, Head of Group Communications & Brand Management at Swissport. “Before the pandemic, Swissport provided world-class ground services to over 265 million airline passengers at hundreds of airports on all six continents.”

This is not the largest part of the business. “The other Swissport business unit is air cargo,” Meier adds, “where we operate over 100 air cargo centers, and move a total of almost 5 million tons of cargo from the trucks to the airplanes or vice-versa, including all the value-added [activities] such as customs clearance.”

The company also offers lounge hospitality at some 60 Aspire airport lounges, and executive aviation services.





## A flexible, potent digital solution

“This gives you an idea of the fascinating world of Swissport and the broad portfolio of services across our network which, before the relaunch, we did not communicate very effectively,” says Meier.

Many of the Swissport markets also operated distinct sites on a multitude of platforms. Investor and media information was poorly integrated with the main corporate Swissport site.

“It felt like we were stuck in the early 2000s, certainly before the digital world moved to mobile first,” says Meier. “We needed a technical relaunch for our digital presence and a brand refresh that took us to 2020.”

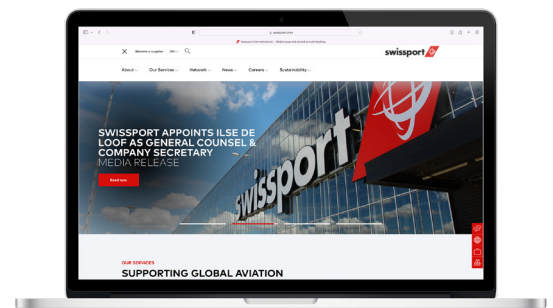
This undertaking was given the green light in 2019, on the eve of the pandemic.

Swissport then looked for a technical partner and DXP solution that would not be overwhelmed by the enormity of the task. The new corporate global website had to cater to the diverse expectations of Swissport’s many external and internal stakeholder universe – our airline customers, their passengers, the freight operators, forwarders, as well as potential employees, the media and the general public of course – and across all the geographies. And the clearly stated goal was to achieve this all in a user-friendly, entertaining, fluid and responsive way.

The company organized a beauty parade for alternative DXP platforms. “We looked at various possible partners and solutions in a very orderly selection process,” says Meier. “Ibexa and Comwrap Reply immediately gave us the confidence that we would be able to position Swissport in the digital sphere to what it is in real life: The world’s preferred ground services partner for airlines. And the project outcome proved us to be right. We now have a flexible, potent solution, which at the same time is perhaps not as heavy and overbred as certain other traditional and older systems.”

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## Communicating the fascinating world of Swissport

The Ibexa DXP technology was implemented by Comwrap Relply, a leading German digital agency and Ibexa Platinum Partner.

“By far the biggest challenge was the complexity of the Swissport network,” says Markus Saalwächter, Project Lead and Principal Project Manager at Comwrap Relply. “Before the migration to Ibexa DXP, this information was just a list of airports on a TYPO3 website. It was not user-friendly to say the least and information was often outdated too.”

The new site makes the data far more approachable. A world map indicates the number of airports Swissport is active at in different regions: 47 in Western Europe, six in South Africa. Clicking on Durban, we see two custom content objects representing “passenger services” and “ramp handling”.

“We use these content objects in the backend too,” says Saalwächter. “The tree structure is extensive of course and the icons make it easier for editors to find their way around this long list.”

For each service at each airport, the site provides detailed contact information. In the case of Swissport passenger services in Durban, South Africa, for example, we get the name and contact information of the commercial manager, the operations manager, the acting chief operations officer, and the head of HR.

“This is an incredible resource for Swissport’s customers with thousands of details at your fingertips,” Saalwächter says. “Naturally, everything can be filtered according to region/ country and service, or both.”

Another innovation on the relaunched site is the news and media center which was built in Ibexa DXP with a headless approach. “You can consume all the information through an API because we think there will be use cases for that in the future – for example, to push or pull the news from the intranet which is run on SharePoint.”

We are impressed by how easy it is for users across the globe to edit content and create new pages. We are not dependent on developers – we can quickly react to new challenges and requirements, such as when we need additional pages or even a microsite.

**Christoph Meier**  
Head of Group Communications &  
Brand Management, Swissport



## Catering for diverse expectations of external and internal stakeholders

Journalists can access the Swissport newsroom and search stories, corporate reports, photos and videos (“grouped by service in the multimedia center,” adds Saalwächter) and drag these to a media cart to upload as a zip file with a single click.

An investor portal runs from the same instance of Ibexa DXP but is only accessible with a personal log-in.

The new Swissport website was launched in July 2021, just as the global economy and international travel were beginning to open up. “My team is of course thrilled with the beautiful front-end, and just as much with the easy-to-use backend,” says Meier. “It’s all very intuitive, fast. And I think it’s also open. You can easily connect other things to the platform and then use Ibexa DXP as a uniform backend.”

The project is not entirely finished. Currently, the site is only available in English, but a Spanish and French version are expected to launch soon. “We will also create more country-specific pages for Swissport,” says Saalwächter. “For instance, there are still distinct pages – outside Ibexa DXP – for Israel and Finland to name just two. That is not necessary. The target is to have just one site for the entire Swissport group. In Ibexa DXP.”

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