

SAP - Making the Most of 505 Title Sponsorship

By Lynn Fitzpatrick

SAP (Systems Applications and Products in data processing) was a significant sponsor of the 2003 America's Cup has been the title sponsor of major 505 regattas including the 2007 World Championship. It is omnipresent at the 2009 SAP 505 World Championship being hosted by St. Francis Yacht Club.

Over thirty years old, the company started with the vision of developing standard application software for real-time business processing. It ushered the business world away from mainframe computers to shared databases, applications and user interfaces. With over 75,000 customers and 140,000 installations in 120 countries and over 48,000 employees, it is the world's leading provider of resource planning and supply chain management, customer relationship management, product life-cycle management, and supplier relationship management software.

SAP co-founder and chairman of the software giant's supervisory board, Hasso Plattner, has a passion for sailing and a heightened one for 505 racing. His 505 program for the past five years has included top-notch equipment, coaching and sailors, including one of the winningest 505 North American Championship crews, Peter Alarie.

While Plattner gets the satisfaction of testing his mettle on San Francisco Bay against a deep fleet, the company that he co-founded, SAP, is making the most of the opportunity to entertain VIP's on Fighting Irish, a 147-foot power yacht, chartered for the occasion. Chris Burton, Group Vice-President responsible of Global Sponsorships and Global Marketing, commented, "The Bay Area is a very important base for SAP and the event has exceeded our expectations." The 505 World Championship and Fighting Irish have enabled SAP to host approximately 50 VIP's per day and, "the regatta has given us a platform to interact with our customers and enables our customers to build relationships with one another and spend time with board level representatives and members of SAP's National Leadership team," according to Burton.

SAP took their involvement a bit further by modifying Xcelsius®, the SAP data visualization software, and combining it with Google maps, GPS data, wind and current information and a sailing-planning application from third-party providers and adding a layer of data visualization, reporting and analytics to return a visual, interactive model that identifies the most efficient way to sail each leg of the course given wind and current conditions. Spectators from all over the world who are tuning into the St. Francis Yacht Club's website are seeing the product of all of SAP's application and their collaboration with software vendors Centigon Solutions, TracTrac and Local Knowledge. Computers displaying the application and the data from each race are readily available for the competitors and guests at St. Francis Yacht Club.

Some of the competitors are using it and Philippe Kahn, who is also racing in the 2009 SAP 505 World Championship and passionate about 505 racing, commented, "It's a great application that is extremely useful for analysis." In addition to being an avid navigator, Kahn is very familiar with GPS applications and user interfaces.

Fighting Irish, chartered by SAP, to offer the complete VIP experience.

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