

timeline

- 2008** Tigerbay founded
- 2009** Development of the Tigerbay CMS, for tour operators
- 2010** First tour operator websites powered by Tigerbay go live
- 2011** Carl Morgan joins the team to design and guide development of the full Sales and Management system
- 2012** Tigerbay launches end-to-end sales and management system
- 2013** Initial customers go live on the full system
- 2014** Mark Warner, Sunvil and CV Villas go live
- 2015** Tigerbay's CMS redeveloped to be more user-friendly
- 2015** Beachcomber Tours, Martin Randal and Seafarer Holidays go live
- Dec 2015** Tigerbay acquired by ATCORE Technology Group
- 2016** Office move; David Urquhart Sky Travel goes live; third-generation CMS deployed

about us

Tigerbay was founded by David Jones and Rhodri Evans in 2008 in response to demand for purpose-built tour operator web technology.

They were joined in 2011 by Carl Morgan, who brought with him a wealth of technical design and development expertise and understanding of tour operator requirements.

For almost a decade Tigerbay has developed a full end-to-end sales and management system for travel unencumbered by legacy technology.

As Tigerbay's system has grown, so has the business. Still in Cardiff, where all the team is based, the

company now employs 27 people, with further recruitment planned in the immediate future.

The firm's ethos - prioritising customer service, upgrading the system continually and focusing on specialist tour operators - has seen it secure clients including Mark Warner, CV Villas, Sunvil and Martin Randall Travel.

In December 2015, Tigerbay announced that it had been acquired by the ATCORE Technology Group, providing it with investment and support from the leading supplier of high-performance and e-commerce platforms to the largest leisure travel companies.

key people



Carl Morgan,
managing
director

With 13 years' experience of designing and delivering technology solutions, Carl has managed systems deployment for over 130 UK tour operators. This has given him an understanding of the complexities of tour operating and a pragmatic approach to project management.



Richard Hodge,
software
architect

Richard has taken on some of the most technically complex challenges facing today's tour operators. Since joining Tigerbay he has designed systems that manage inventory control, pricing and cache management.



Vicki Tittley,
head of sales
and marketing

With a wealth of experience in travel technology, Vicki works closely with tour operators to understand how they work, gather system requirements and demonstrate how technology can make a positive impact on their operations.



Dave Cruickshank,
CEO, ATCORE



Justin Clarke,
development
manager,
Tigerbay



Stuart Whyte,
operations
manager,
Tigerbay



TigerBay sharpens its claws under ATCORE

Tech specialist eyes sustainable growth under new owner

A relative cub in the complex world of travel technology a few years ago, Tigerbay is now an established player and ready to sharpen its claws following the recent buyout by ATCORE.

The Cardiff-based firm, established in 2008 by Rhodri Evans and David Jones, who sold Travelink to Welsh rival Comtec in 2005, was bought outright by ATCORE in December 2015.

Building on the tiger theme, the firm's strapline, 'Taming the complex', is something managing director Carl Morgan says the company is even better placed to do under its new ownership.

Morgan says Tigerbay has slotted neatly into ATCORE, targeting

a "niche within a niche", namely specialist mid-sized tour operators.

He believes only the finance sector is more specialist than travel in terms of its technology requirements and this explains the number of specialist firms competing in the sector.

"We are really lucky to be focusing on specialist tour operators who compete with each other but don't have big direct competition within their niche," says Morgan.

Tigerbay was not looking to sell, or attract investment, when ATCORE's interest was signalled via a phone call "out of the blue".

But Morgan says that due to the founding directors having previously gone through a sale, the business had been primed

should an opportunity come along.

"There is always a chance of a sale, or exit, or investment at some point. We had structured the company and processes from day one to make that easy. We knew how to make a travel tech company viable for investment – although that was never at the forefront of our thinking."

Perfect buyer

ATCORE, previously Anite, has been a linchpin of the UK travel technology sector for decades and has over the years developed a suite of modern e-commerce solutions. Its enterprise solution ATCOM is tailored for large volume-based tour operators, meaning the tie-up with Tigerbay was a perfect fit, according to Morgan.

"There are a few of us providing solutions to the mid-sized specialist operator market, but ATCORE chose us," says Morgan.

"For me, ATCORE was the perfect buyer. They knew exactly what we did; I did not have to explain to them what travel technology was or what tour operating was." >

TRAVOLUTION SHOWCASE



› Morgan says Tigerbay appealed to ATCORE because the business was scalable, the technology built on modern platforms and the people, product and processes were all right.

While Tigerbay remains run entirely separately from new offices in Cardiff it will benefit from the infrastructure that ATCORE brings.

PCI-compliant data centres and access to hardware have allowed Tigerbay to focus on developing tour operator software, Morgan adds.

“It’s really nice to be able to carry on with what we are good at,” he says. “ATCORE did not want to change a thing. Their due diligence showed we were doing things in the right way.”

Sustainable growth

One of Tigerbay’s core tenets – to take on new customers only as quickly as they can be served – remains in place.

The firm grew to 20 customers ahead of the ATCORE deal, including well-established operators such as Wendy Wu Tours, Sunvil and Mark Warner. It now has 26 and aims to add six a year.

At the time of the buyout, Tigerbay had 22 full-time staff and



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moved into offices with capacity for 50. Within seven months headcount is 27, with five more due to start.

“We are still growing at a sustainable level,” said Morgan, “and being very careful not to overstretch our resources. Our customers are getting bigger and therefore require more resource.”

Morgan says recruiting the right talent is easier being part of a larger group due to the improved terms and benefits it can now offer, as well as the new modern office.

Another benefit is the ability to do research and development, a “luxury” Tigerbay could not afford previously, to spot gaps in its technology.

One of the recent enhancements has been a “third-generation” Content Management System (CMS).

“Medium-sized operators often do not have internal resources

to manage a generic content management system,” said Morgan.

“They may like the idea of creating their own website using something simple like WordPress, but that has limitations.

“Why build your own when there are large CMSs available, some free and some licensed? The answer is a tour operator has to have something that’s appropriate for presenting and selling specialist travel product.

“We have built a CMS integrated within our platform and tailored specifically for operators to suit their product, customers and to be easy to use and manageable with the resources most operators have available.”

Ten years on from when websites were a rarity, operators now need to have more flexibility to tailor their sites to specific product and customer expectations, said Morgan.



Mobile era

The last decade has also seen the rise of the smartphone. It's a channel operators have struggled to get a grip of, according to Morgan.

"Today everyone wants to book holidays on smartphone but this is very complicated and operators have had to outsource. We are empowering them to do it themselves."

Although online bookability is vital, Morgan accepts operators want to take a nuanced approach and not always seek to drive all bookings online for all product at all times.

Enhancing the opportunity to interact with customers pre- and post-booking has never been more important, particularly for specialists offering tailor-made holidays.

"There used to be a trust barrier to booking on mobile but that's almost gone: people are trusting household names and it's becoming the norm. It's now more about

the suitability of product. I have customers who will never allow online booking because they are then competing with all these volume tour operators and they do not work like that."

People priority

Morgan says this importance of people doing business with people extends to the selling and delivering of tour operator technology systems.

"In this business people are as important as the technology," he says. "The technology needs to be future-proofed. I see no benefit to an operator investing in a legacy platform that has been repurposed because the technical foundations will cause issues at some point.

"It is also vitally important that the functionality fit is right for the operator's business now and has the flexibility to cater for future changes.

"The full Tigerbay platform

is only four years old, built on latest technology and with latest, customer-focused best-practice methodologies. However, the management team we have at Tigerbay has decades of experience designing and delivering systems. Our system is built on new technology with the benefit of hindsight."

Morgan adds: "Many specialist operators don't have inhouse technology experts, and choosing and implementing a new system can be daunting. We need to provide the appropriate guidance and support and move at the pace set by them.

"We are used to this. In my 20 years of working in travel technology I think I have implemented systems with around 100 operators and each time it is different.

"Once the operator has checked the technology is sound and the functionality is a fit, the deciding factor can often come down to the team of people delivering and supporting the system. Are they easy to work with, experienced and knowledgeable? Do they understand my business? That third one is the most important. That's where we have always set our stall out."



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