

UFF USES FRAMEWORX AND APIS TO PUSH NPS TO THE TOP



By Dawn Bushaus

Ultrafast Fibre's (UFF's) 3,000km fiber network in New Zealand represents about 13 percent of the government's national Ultrafast Fibre Broadband (UFB) network. Today UFF supports about 50,000 broadband customers through retail service provider (RSP) partners, with a total addressable market of more than 200,000 residential and business end users.

In 2016 UFF began transforming its order-to-activate business processes and operational support systems (OSS) in an effort to improve customer experience for RSPs and their end customers. The initial phase has enabled omnichannel customer management, partner integration capabilities and automated flow-through to the network.

UFF selected Telflow, DGIT's Service Delivery Platform, which is certified as conformant to TM Forum's Framework suite of standards-based tools and best practices. The Telflow software won a TM Forum Excellence Award in 2015 for its catalog capabilities, which facilitate rapid rollout of new services and product lifecycle management.

APIs IN ACTION

The Service Delivery Platform uses TM Forum's Open Application Program Interfaces (APIs) to communicate with back-end network components and for integration with other systems. Companies using the APIs can make them available for both buyer and supplier partners to use for integration.

"As a supplier the great thing about the TM Forum APIs is that they are catalog-driven, and any offering we create is immediately available simultaneously through the APIs and dynamic web portals to our RSP customers," says Richard Jeffares, Chief Operating Officer, Ultrafast Fibre. "As an example, this automatic instantiation has allowed us to do programmatic load testing through the APIs with our actual products and processes, as the APIs work the instant the products are configured."

For buyers, the APIs have clear, easy-to-understand JSON message payloads, and the same API can be used to integrate many different products.

OPERATIONAL TRANSPARENCY

As part of its transformation, UFF has introduced automated process orchestration, which allocates automated tasks to machines and manual tasks to people. This takes the pressure off skilled operations staff and provides detailed process visibility, a view of which is shared with UFF's RSP customers. It also provides powerful and meaningful statistics for reporting and configuration notifications.

Customer self-service and empowerment, which includes self-management of orders and inventory, is a key goal. The UFF Service Desk (the customer-facing operations) works 'on behalf' of the customer and has the same view of the service as the customer, supplemented by a set of deeper capabilities.

These include a more detailed a view of business process management and visibility of product-service-resource decomposition, resource-facing processes, system messages related to the order such as transactions with partners, and enhanced order history with notes/chat.

As new operations staff do not need to be trained on the end-to-end process, exception management and process fault-finding are reduced and staff can be on-boarded more easily, with less training.

AN OMNICHANNEL MODEL FOR WHOLESALE

Through a web portal and using TM Forum's Open APIs, UFF provides a detailed view of the process to its RSP customers. For example, they can see current order status as illustrated by seven order states and 22 sub-states, whereas previously, order status was manually updated by operations staff and was limited to only five states.

"When consent is required from a corporate entity for fiber installation, the RSP now knows when the consent is given," Jeffares explains. "Previously the order would simply be in-progress until it popped out the other end."

WHO

Ultrafast Fibre, an open-access wholesale fiber utility and leading player in New Zealand's nationwide Ultrafast Fibre Broadband initiative

WHAT

Transformation of business processes and OSS to implement automated order-to-activate end to end within 6 months

HOW

Using DGIT's TM Forum-certified Service Delivery Platform and the Forum's Open APIs to implement a catalog-driven solution

RESULTS

NPS has increased 71 points, and the average lead time for fulfillment has decreased by a third

UFF's transformation is already paying off in a big way. The company's Net Promoter Score has gone from -46 to +25 to be the highest of the fiber companies in New Zealand

INCREASING AGILITY

Agility is another primary goal, and the Service Delivery Platform's catalog-driven capability allows UFF administrative users to visually define and manage offers, products, decomposition of products into services and resources, tasks, and programmatic events through TM Forum APIs, order types and executable processes. These solutions can then be published for immediate run-time use.

When UFF has a new product to market, the company uses the visual tools to edit the product and define the business operations that may be performed like new, change and terminate order types. The workflows behind these order types are defined visually as executable BPMN (Business Process Management Notation Language).

The company then can create offers allowing different groups of customers to buy the product, and define decomposition to map the product (a customer-facing presentation) to the underlying services that need to be delivered (a resource-facing presentation).

With this capability UFF is able to tailor product offers for customers, and the company intends to deploy network functions virtualization and software-defined networking in the future to support Layer 1 fiber unbundling – that is, the regulatory framework that gives service providers other than the owner of the infrastructure access to fixed connections between the telephone exchange/central office and the customers' premises so that they can offer competitive services directly. Unbundling is already done at Layer 2; UFF provides Ethernet access services at a regulated price and service level to all service providers. But a proposed next step is to provide access to the raw fiber services.

The market is currently evolving, with rural fixed wireless (LTE) and IoT solutions that can be bundled with fiber access to increase competition. The New Zealand government is currently funding two broadband expansion initiatives: UFB 2 is commencing with the success of UFB 1 and will extend fiber access to 85 percent of the population, while the Rural Broadband initiative has been extended to offer higher fixed wireless speeds and to support the Internet of Things across New Zealand's farming communities.

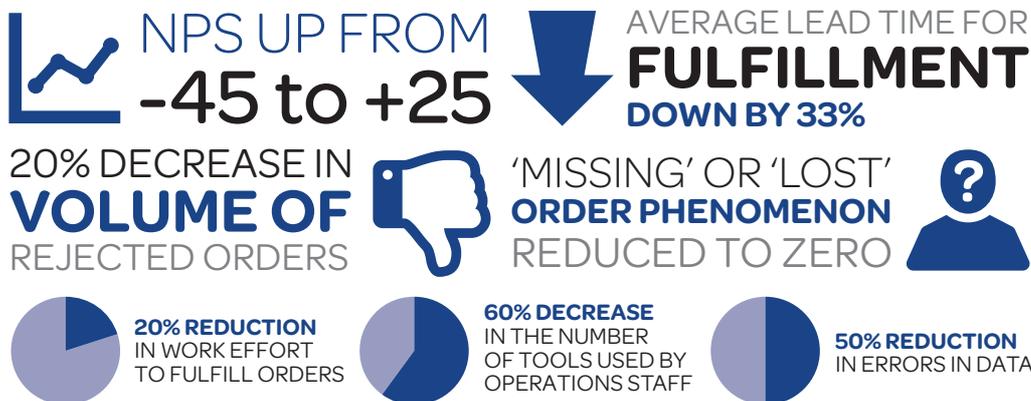
ENCOURAGING RESULTS

UFF's transformation is already paying off in a big way. The company's Net Promoter Score (NPS) increased from -46 to +25 and is now the highest of the New Zealand fiber companies. Other positive results include:

- Reduction in total call center volume – the visibility of order status through self-care means customers don't need to call in to find out order or inventory status;
- Invalid order rate has fallen from hundreds per month to zero;
- 6,000 work-in-progress items have been whittled down to 2,500;
- average lead time for fulfillment is down by 33 percent;
- 20 percent decrease in the order rejections;
- 'missing' or 'lost' orders have fallen to zero – in the past some orders disappeared or were stuck in the email system awaiting action, but an automated escalation process now addresses this;
- the 20 percent reduction in work effort to fulfill orders has allowed the operations team to focus on tasks that impact customer experience;

- metrics are now available for individual team members' performance, with variations of plus or minus 60 percent from median performance – which allows the company to address weaknesses in team performance;
- bottlenecks have been exposed to support significant workforce optimization – metrics from the new system have exposed variation in operator performance of +/-150 percent. This visibility has led to team re-structuring and focused training initiatives;
- new metrics are now available which will be used to measure the success of new market initiatives;
- 60 percent decrease in the number of tools used by operations staff; and
- the system's structured process has simplified operational roles, reduced operational and training costs and improved accuracy with a 50-percent reduction in data accuracy errors.

Transformation pays off for UFF



Source: Ultrafast Fibre & TM Forum, 2016