

mobilkom austria streamlines service provision with IBM



Overview

■ The Challenge

Streamline provision of data services based on a wide range of platforms, applications, channels and devices. Simplify application development to reduce cost and time-to-market. Allow standardized and controlled access for internal and external applications to its service enablers

■ The Solution

Single integration platform based on the IBM Service Provider Delivery Environment (SPDE) architecture

■ The Benefit

Flexible control of provisioning makes the business more responsive. New services can be plugged in quickly to meet customer demand. Improved development speed and lower cost

With nearly 3.2 million customers, mobilkom austria is Austria's leading mobile communications operator. It provides residential and business customers with a wide range of communication services through multiple channels and devices.

Provisioning pressures

For a leading telecoms company like mobilkom austria, staying at the top of your industry depends on the ability to meet customer demand for new services, and for new ways of buying and accessing those services. Whether it's an innovative pricing plan for an established GSM product, or live video through the latest UMTS technology, the aim is to bring new services to market as quickly as possible – and so offer the greatest choice and convenience for customers.

But it's not just the range of services on offer that's important: it's also the ability to connect customers with those services as quickly and efficiently as possible. This process, known as provisioning, plays a central role in a telco's success.

What makes provisioning tricky is the large number of business and operational support systems that must interact in order to give customers the service they want. Billing, CRM and legacy applications. Systems that manage specific delivery channels, like SMS. Content applications and different customer interfaces. Connections to third party content and service providers. In a large communications operator, provisioning might be a sixty-step process.

Minimise complexity and lag

mobilkom austria needed to simplify this complex environment. Complexity increases the risk of lag between a customer order and delivery of the service. It also makes it difficult to develop new services, because of the number of connections that must be built and maintained between all of these different applications, platforms, channels and devices to make the service work. mobilkom austria turned to IBM Business Consulting Services for the solution. Dr Andreas Damm, head of its Service Platforms department, explains:

“Everything’s more difficult in a complex systems environment: user sign-on, profiling, integration, security, brand management, reporting, and all the other key business and operational processes. Instead, we wanted an environment where a single customer sign-on would be recognized by every system, and where new data services could be developed and delivered in a simpler, more standardised way.”

A single integration platform

The challenge was finding an integration solution that could handle the complexity of many systems and processes involved in service provision. It had to offer device and channel independence, so new services could simply plug in to existing interfaces between key provisioning and other systems. It also had to provide the performance and security to support nearly 3.2 million customers and a fast-growing business.

The solution was the ASMP – a new Access and Service Management Platform created by IBM Business Consulting Services and mobilkom austria’s Mobile Service Network division. At the heart of ASMP is SPDE & IBM WebSphere - a flexible, high-performance platform for business integration in telecoms and other companies.

Invaluable expertise

“IBM Business Consulting Services offered invaluable business and technology expertise to help us build and execute our ASMP strategy,” says Dr Damm, “WebSphere was the most comprehensive technology platform available for what we were trying to achieve: a single solution for deploying and managing services, users and access.”

Now SPDE & IBM WebSphere handles all critical provisioning functions, providing the bridge between the systems, processes, data stores and customers that’s needed for seamless provision of services. Single sign on means that, once signed in, customer rights are automatically understood by all applications connected to the platform. Login, registration, order flow, payment flow and other key functions are administered centrally, and application development is simplified through the re-use of existing services and interfaces.

Simplified service development

mobilkom austria has already launched a unique digital signature service, A1 Signature, based on the new platform, and followed up with the launch of Vodafone Live! Services. With more on the way, its partnership with IBM is already proving its worth.

Using the B2B gateway of the ASMP, services developed internally or by third parties can access functionalities provided by the key services enablers of a mobile operator. For example, the Web Service interface provides functionalities to send SMS and MMS and to send payment requests to the mobile operator to charge the customer via its phone bill.

“IBM has helped us build an integration platform that lets us develop and deploy new services faster, so we can be more responsive to market demand and move to take advantage of new business opportunities,” says Dr Damm. “Our customers benefit from immediate improvements, such as single sign-on, and from the much faster introduction of new services. They don’t suffer delays in service activation because we’ve simplified the behind-the-scenes complexity.”

ASMP has proved so advantageous that mobilkom austria plans to expand the project to operations in other European countries within the mobilkom austria group. Working with IBM Business Consulting Services, mobilkom austria now has the platform it needs to build on its market-leading position.



IBM Deutschland GmbH
70548 Stuttgart
ibm.com/de

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