

HP customer case study: Vodafone Romania offers customers an advantageous alternative to the traditional fixed telephony services with an innovative HP solution

Industry: Telecommunications

HP technology helps Vodafone increase its grip on the Romanian market



“HP’s contribution to the design, implementation and technology for our new Vodafone Acasa system is enabling us to grow our customer base and positioning us as a total communications provider in the Romanian market.” Florin Geanta, technology and services director, Vodafone Romania

Objective:

Vodafone Romania wanted to position itself as a total communications provider and to grow its market share.

Approach:

- Vodafone Romania implemented the Home Zone system which is a worldwide initiative from the Vodafone Group.
- This enables users at home to make and receive calls on their mobile handsets for the cost of cheaper fixed lines calls.
- It engaged HP to provide everything from design, implementation and technology through to 24 hour support for the Romanian version of the system called Vodafone Acasa.

IT improvements:

- Using HP OpenCall platforms reduced the development time and cost of this new revenue-generating system.
- The system uses Intelligent Network (IN) technology which is a key framework enabler for developing, deploying and cost-efficiently maintaining large-scale voice services.
- No upgrade was required on the network interface, making the implementation simpler and cheaper.

Business benefits:

- Early indications are that Vodafone Acasa is enabling Vodafone Romania to grow its customer base by taking users away from fixed line providers.
- Vodafone has achieved its aim of positioning itself as a provider of total communications services to the Romanian market.



A subsidiary of Vodafone Group Plc, Vodafone Romania has eight million subscribers and covers 97 per cent of the country’s population. Like all mobile operators, it works in an intensely competitive market but there are additional pressures in Romania because Vodafone is in a close head-to-head battle with its main rival, Orange.

The constant offer of new services and charges is vital to secure a greater share of the available market and Vodafone’s latest tactic aims to take customers away from fixed line operators through a worldwide initiative called Vodafone Home.

Already launched in other territories such as Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain, Vodafone Home has recently been introduced into Romania where it is called Vodafone Acasa.

Handset fixes zone

Firstly, customers buy an Acasa subscription from their local Vodafone shop. They then have to set up their Home Zone and to do this they select Zone Register on their phone menu then walk around the area to be covered which can include the house and

Customer solution at a glance

Primary software

- HP OpenCall Service Controller
- HP OpenCall Media Platform Intelligent Network
- SeekerZone location server from Seeker Wireless

HP Services

- Design, specification and implementation services
- Ongoing 24-hour support

immediate surroundings within a 60 second walk. Signals are beamed back to special location-seeking software and the zone is registered in Vodafone's systems. If calls are made to or from the zone, they are then charged at discounted fixed line rates.

"We considered other providers but HP was the natural solution because it already provides other services for us, such as our prepaid system," says Florin Geanta, Vodafone Romania's technology and services director. "These systems are based on Intelligent Networks (IN) so it was easier for us to continue with HP than to bring another vendor in because part of Acasa is also an IN system that monitors the real-time difference between in-zone and out-of-zone tariffs."

Because this is a complex solution that comprises several different systems, HP provided Vodafone Romania with an end-to-end service, working with the customer right from the early stages to agree specifications then provide detailed design and implementation services and following that with 24 hour support contracts.

Rapid design and delivery

The Acasa service is based on HP OpenCall communications products which are designed to help the delivery of revenue generating solutions for telecoms service providers. The first is HP OpenCall Service Controller (OCSC) an open, flexible carrier grade platform for building multi-network based services and developing applications in 2G and 3G networks. OCSC was of particular value because it supports the quick development, testing and centralised off-switch deployment of wireline, wireless and next-generation services.

The second was HP OpenCall Media Platform (OCMP) which not only enables IN voice-enabled solutions to be delivered quickly but includes future-proof design that supports ongoing innovation.

A provisioning system provided by HP connects the Acasa service with Vodafone's IT systems and enables it to store extensive customers databases that include the full addresses required by the system. HP also provided a Graphic User Interface (GUI) for customer care and trouble shooting.

To register Home Zones, Vodafone has implemented an innovative handset location package called SeekerZone from Seeker Wireless. It is believed to be the first company of its kind in the world to use this solution which gives more accurate positioning than the alternative method of pinpointing zones by using existing networks. It achieves this by distributing responsibility for zone status detection and reporting to the handset, enabling operators to scale Home Zone operations to millions of handsets without any need for extra capital investment in networks. With knowledge of the handset's location at all times, real-time billing and a host of related messaging services can be enabled via the operator's IN platform.

Customer savings

"We offer discounted tariffs for both mobile originated calls and for mobile terminated calls," adds Geanta. "Almost all outgoing calls to all destinations are discounted so long as they are made from your home and our international tariffs have been positioned to compete with fixed line operators.

"We also provide a telephone number that is in the fixed number range and not the mobile number range, so when you are calling into the Home Zone, other operators will charge you as though you were calling a fixed line rather than a mobile."

Vodafone sees the Acasa service as an advantageous alternative to traditional fixed line telephony. It covers features like SMS (Short Message Service) and gives free access to additional services such as Cost Control and Customer Service.

"Vodafone Acasa gives a clear message to the market that we are a total communication provider, not just a mobile one. We are positioned as a total provider and it is important to note that, unlike some other systems, incoming calls are no more expensive than to fixed-line destinations.

"So far the results are good and this is certainly enabling us to grow our market in Romania because we bring to fixed telephony customers not only advantageous tariffs but also a new customer experience that is possible only on mobile networks, like sending and receiving SMS or free access to cost control services, concludes Geanta.

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