Kiwi innovation makes waves in SE Asia

New Zealand is a popular test bed for new technology. Here's how Schneider Electric's New Zealand-based Kevin Lynn works with Pyrios to develop and test new approaches to customer communication for wider deployment in the energy management and automation giant's offices in Asia.

Tailored care

Customer expectations of service and attention are now so high that businesses who fail to deliver a personalised experience risk falling from favour. But turning up the dial on customer experience is no easy feat when, like Schneider Electric, your customers cover the spectrum – from householders to electricians, to building designers, specifiers, and industrialists.

The job requires smart systems to empower agents with better information drawn from historical transactions and a slew of systems and channels. At a deeper level, data must also feed a decision system connecting the right agents to the customers they're trained to handle.

Kevin Lynn, Schneider Electric's commercial operations manager in New Zealand, is in the customer service hot seat. Working with Pyrios, he's shaped the company's New Zealand customer care centre into one of the most efficient in the region. Along the way he's introduced a few winning ideas to the company's offices across Asia.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT:

Client: Schneider Electric, global specialist in energy management and automation
www.schneider-electric.com

Scope: Call platform management, service innovation, testing and rollout, including call surveys, workforce optimisation, and desktop automation

Payback: Low cost innovation and test bed for offices across South East Asia. Agent productivity up 30%

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Kevin Lynn, *Schneider Electric's commercial operations manager in New Zealand.*
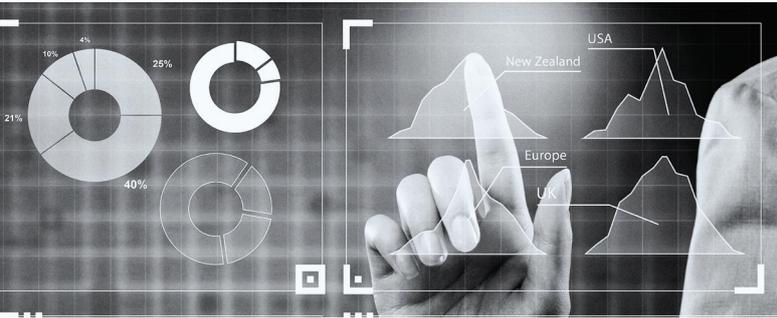
The beauty of managed services

The right style of engagement is key to getting the best from suppliers. Schneider's engagement with Pyrios is a managed service arrangement that covers the company's telephony platform as well as jointly developed tools for local testing and wider rollout to offices in the region.

"We know our customers – Pyrios knows the system, the tools, and how to marry everything to our processes," said Mr Lynn. "With an expert like Pyrios you're in a stronger position to align technology with business ambitions – and that's the real value of our partnership."

Having an expert on board also minimises mistakes, according to Mr Lynn. "Technology provides many answers – and I enjoy pushing the envelope. But you've got to get it right, and the right partner helps," said Mr Lynn.

Survey automation

One of Mr Lynn's early innovations introduced a post-call customer survey. Knowing the potential imposition of additional questions, Pyrios built an automated system to make feedback quick and easy, asking customers to push one of four buttons on their phone to indicate satisfaction. They're also invited to leave comments.

Reporting functions deliver a real-time view of customer feedback, enabling Schneider to intercept dissatisfied customers. Building on this success, Pyrios launched a cloud version of the application, called *TellUs*, providing Schneider – and others – with an on-demand service.

Workforce planning

Mr Lynn also turned the spotlight to workforce planning. Delving into data uncovered opportunities to improve the company's workforce planning tool, with changes to off-line tasks and emails managed by agents, boosting agent productivity. Schneider's customer care agents are consistently productive for 7-hours a day, comparing favourably to the industry average of 6.2 hours per agent/day. And as more of the company's offices across Asia adopt the planning tool refinements, agent productivity across the region has climbed 30%.

Desktop automation

Customers notice when agents flit between multiple screens to get the information they need. Response times slow and confusion creeps in – never mind the dent to agent productivity.

Moving to keep agents fast on their feet, Schneider is integrating a range of applications to pre-populate agent screens with information. So rather than having to navigate individual systems, agents are primed to take a more proactive role when dealing with customers – a development also predicted to improve accuracy and reduce customer handling times.

Desktop integration follows earlier work involving CTI (Computer Telephony Integration) to simplify phone orders. Linking caller ID to CRM and inventory systems prepopulates screens with customer profiles, inventory availability, and credit information.

66 *We know our customers – Pyrios knows the system, the tools, and how to marry everything to our processes* 99

Kevin Lynn

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