3 Uses Salesforce as Living, Breathing Case Study of Its Own Services

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— Hamish Michie
Marketing Manager, Business Field Sales

Hutchison 3G Australia Pty Limited is a highly dynamic company leading mobile innovation with the introduction of Australia’s only third-generation (3G) mobile network. It is using the 3G network to deliver an array of content-rich, mobile, multimedia services and applications under the global brand “3.”

As the only provider of 3G services in Australia, 3 is competing against the major telcos offering traditional mobile communications while promoting a new way of working. 3 is Australia’s first live person-to-person mobile, video calling and information, communication, and entertainment service. It is also the first mobile network to provide broadband Internet access when in 3’s video zones.

Hutchison’s 3 network covers most parts of Australia’s mainland state capitals. Its customer numbers are growing rapidly as consumer and business customers realise the benefits of 3G’s capabilities. Hutchison has over 500,000 customers on 3 and its associated 2G mobiles, offered by Hutchison Telecommunications (Australia) Limited under the brand “Orange.” Together, Hutchison aims to grow to one million customers by the end of 2005.

3’s business field sales teams (140 people) required robust systems and processes for capturing, monitoring, and managing prospective customer information. The company also needed a tool for sales forecasting and gaining marketing insights.

With the launch of a new generation of mobile telephony, 3 needed a customer management solution that was fast to deploy and flexible enough to grow and scale with the company’s success and its development of business processes and rules.

In September 2003 Hamish Michie, marketing manager for business field sales at 3, reviewed the options for rolling out a customer relationship management tool to two business sales channels.

“Since launch, we have aimed to be quick, flexible, and nimble and to support fast response, sales, and customer service without a need to focus on operations and IT issues,” said Michie. “Furthermore, we didn’t want a system requiring heavy ongoing maintenance and training.”

3 chose Salesforce because of its subscription-based service model, and its ability to integrate with 3’s existing outsourced, hosted prospect database and sales order management system.

“We needed a system with low total cost of ownership, ease of deployment, and flexibility so we could mould it to our business as it grew,” explained Michie. “The low-risk approach offered by salesforce.com suited our needs precisely.”

The one aspect in particular that convinced Michie that Salesforce was the right tool was its Web-based access and wireless capabilities. “We’re out there selling the concept of wireless mobility for business users, so it made sense for us to have a solution that allowed us to walk the talk,” explained Michie.
The evaluation process of all solutions took about two months, with the decision to roll out salesforce.com’s Enterprise Edition to the business direct group taking around six weeks, going live in December 2003.

With support for multiple divisions and processes, workflow automation, product line forecasting, and revenue allocation, Enterprise Edition is designed to flexibly support all the complexities that are the realities of many large companies.

Salesforce’s wireless accessibility provides easy real-time access to the application via common devices such as 3’s Motorola A925. Wireless access ensures the whole company always has the same up-to-the-minute information.

Users access Salesforce using a 3 Mobile or a laptop using 3’s NetConnect Card—the only data card in Australia that delivers 3G mobile broadband Internet in 3’s video zones. As a Web service, vital information is pushed to and from a centralised repository, ensuring all records are consistent and updated.

Integrating Salesforce with 3’s prospect database and Web site enables 3 to shorten the response time between expression of interest to customer contact to just minutes. Lead details are sent to sales consultants as emails on their 3 Mobiles.

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As the project sponsor, Michie also ran some training sessions himself, because he felt it was necessary to set the strategy and sell the tool. For salespeople, it has meant educating them about how updating and maintaining customer records helps better qualify sales opportunities while also allowing them to be more responsive and efficient.

“I also felt it was important to afford the users a sense of ownership to encourage take up,” explained Michie. “Salesforce is so customisable, if a user needs a field added or a menu altered, we can easily complete most change requests. This ensures the tool they are using is relevant to their jobs and also shows we are responsive as a management team.”

Doug Farber, salesforce.com's vice president of marketing, Asia Pacific, added, “Because our technologies complement each other, the relationship between Hutchison and salesforce.com is now two-way. Just as Hutchison is working with our technology, we are using 3’s mobile voice and data solutions to bring our real-time CRM solutions into the offices of prospective and existing clients.”