

Eskom reaches CRM milestone

Eskom, Africa's largest electricity supplier, has reached a significant milestone in its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) journey with the implementation of new processes and a CRM system. This brings to an end a four year CRM strategy to implement new technical, people and process changes to improve service delivery to Eskom's customers.

October 26, 2004 saw the implementation of Graham Technology's GT-X Framework Solution across Eskom's seven contact centres and 50 walk-in centres with a user base of about 2000 people. The project has been managed by a joint Eskom/Accenture/ Graham Technology team. It is expected to pay for itself within three-and-a-half years. Eskom provides more than 95% of South Africa's electrical requirements and more than 50% of the electricity produced in Africa.

Says Accenture Director, James Arnott: "Over the last three years, Accenture has worked with Eskom to define and implement its CRM Blueprint. The Blueprint and its associated business case provided the foundation for the implementation of new telephony and a CRM solution within Eskom Distribution. Accenture has been a proud partner in this journey. Now the Ubuso (the face of Eskom) Project has gone live with the implementation of Graham Technology's GT-X Framework Solution. This is a significant achievement for Eskom, Accenture and Graham Technology in light of the complexity of the solution and its integration requirements needed within the business," Arnott explains. "Strategically, it also positions Eskom in terms of infrastructure, to integrate with the restructured Electricity Distribution Industry being managed by the EDI Holding Company."

Eskom's previous CRM systems and processes lacked key integration into customer billing and were heavily reliant on proactive management and manual tracking and follow up. The new solution will improve workflow, case monitoring and escalation, as well as providing improved CRM functionality such as better integration of communication channels.

According to Hugh McGibbon, Divisional Customer Service Manager for Eskom Distribution, Eskom manages an average of 260 000 customer interactions per month. McGibbon says the solution integrates and complements Eskom's existing CRM systems, optimising previous CRM investments and adding new functionality.

Says McGibbon: "When choosing our team we took two main factors into account. We wanted a recognised world-class CRM implementation partner with a detailed understanding of Eskom Distribution, so that implementation could be fast tracked. We required an innovative framework CRM product that was able to provide integration into key systems through modern software. The resulting solution is an exact fit for our customer service vision."

The implementation of the UBUSO project was delivered within an aggressive timeline of 11 months. Since the software solution combines certain core process management elements with custom-configured software developed specifically for Eskom's environment, it matches Eskom's CRM business processes perfectly and minimises future upgrade costs and complexity. Design, building and testing of the solution took nine months and integrates eight key business applications. "The value proposition of our Framework Solution," says Paul McGlynn, Graham Technology Country Director, "is our ability to define customised

solutions for our customers that make use of previous CRM investments in reduced timeframes. We believe that this project at Eskom epitomises teaming and highlights the value of our solution."

Ubuso has been implemented in all seven of Eskom's Contact Centres, back-office and Walk-in Centres. The total number of users on the new application will be approximately 2000, and the system will help Eskom manage the customer service needs and interactions of over 3.7million customers.

Says McGibbon: "This project forms part of Eskom's ongoing commitment to improving customer service and service delivery. The scope of the Ubuso Project includes generic CRM functionality, service request/case management, workflow, call scripting, case-based reasoning, reporting, campaign management and knowledge management — and all core business processes supporting Eskom's Optimise Customer Interactions (OCI) value chain have been accommodated.

The three week pilot phase has been completed successfully. There are currently over 600 users live on the new system with the 1300 user mark to be reached by middle of December. All users will be on the new solution by February 2005.

"This has been a strategically important project for Eskom. Accenture and Graham Technology are proud to be a part of assisting Eskom in continuing its quest for high-levels of customer services," says Arnott

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