

Goal:

Provide new telecommunications equipment quickly and accurately to Telstra, a key Alcatel customer.

Challenge:

Expedite network ordering and configuration processes.

Solution:

Cincom Acquire™

- Guided Selling and Product Configurator Software

Key Results:

- Cut order-placement and delivery times from eight weeks to less than two
- Simplified a complex ordering system
- Virtually eliminated order-entry errors
- Enabled rapid conversion of customer business requirements into technical specifications

Profile in Success: **Alcatel**

Delivery times cut from eight weeks to less than two!



Situation

Alcatel Australia's expertise covers the full communications solution life cycle, including; business analysis and modeling, market development, network and systems, architecture, proof-of-concept, network and systems design, planning, deployment, network operations and support. With operations in more than 130 countries, Alcatel enables its customers to focus on optimising their service offerings and revenue streams. Alcatel enables carriers, service providers and enterprises to deliver contents to any type of user, anywhere in the world.

The company provides broadband internet solutions, transit exchanges, network management, telephone exchanges, remote integrated multiplexers (RIMs) and Intelligent Network (IN) platforms to a key customer, Telstra.

An Electronic Customer Information Centre (ECIC)

Developed specifically for day-to-day interactions with Telstra's network planners, Alcatel's new telephone network unit configurator, also known as "ECIC," is an enhanced version of an existing ordering tool that Cincom previously developed for Alcatel. The configuration solution is based on Socrates® the software engine of Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator, distributed worldwide.

The challenge for Alcatel is to provide, quickly and accurately, new telecommunications equipment to key customer Telstra, at the same time as adhering to thousands of deployment rules and taking into account intricate details of equipment already in place around the country.

Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator Software simplifies the configuration process

Fortunately for Alcatel engineers, the configuration process is now a great deal simpler, thanks to the implementation of an advanced online ordering system from Cincom. The software inputs Alcatel customer, Telstra's requirements for end services, and in minutes instead of hours, transforms these into a complete order for parts required to deliver those functions in the network. Now incorporating a database containing past orders and the components with which network sites are already equipped, the tool all but eliminates the potentially costly risk of error.

"The enhanced configurator is an incredibly complex, comprehensive piece of software. It incorporates all the application and deployment rules relative to the network cards, cables and racks that Telstra buys from us for its networks," says Phillip Lawton, Alcatel CMUX Program Manager.

"The Cincom configurator tool is an integral part of the ordering process for Telstra. Without it, the network planners would find it very difficult to convert their business requirements into technical specifications".

– Phillip Lawton
Alcatel, CMUX Program Manager

"At a high level, Telstra's network planners can define the system they want by outlining how many broadband and narrowband subscribers it must serve, how many customer services are wanted in a particular system or what type of housing or network interface is there," explains Lawton. "Telstra's authorised personnel can do this on a very easy-to-use, multi-tab interface accessed via our intranet. Then the tool very quickly produces the layout of the system required and the list of the materials and quantities they will need in order to deliver those features in the end network."

Simplifying complexity in the world of telecommunications

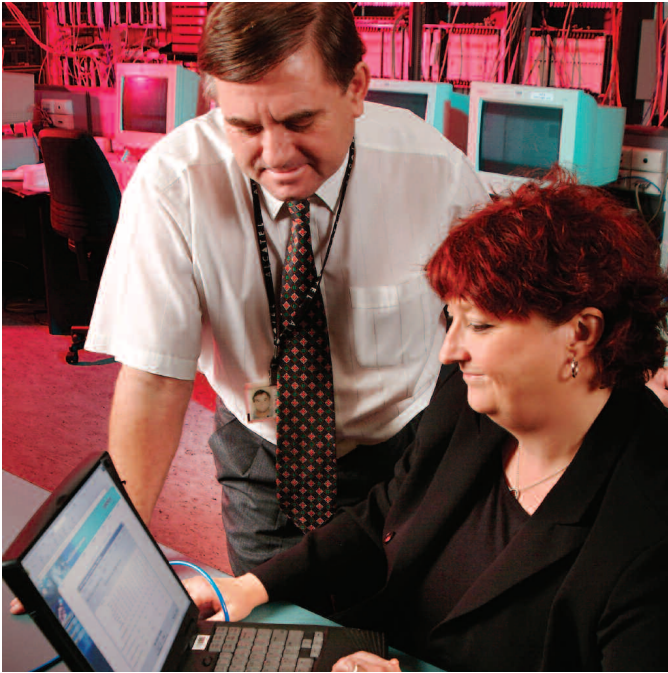
Tools such as the one produced for Alcatel by Cincom, are a direct result of the increasing complexity of telecommunications networking products and configurations. In the past, fewer cards and cables and one-panel systems meant it was possible to encode design rules in a spreadsheet because they were much simpler.

"These days, Telstra has a thick document of technical deployment rules and we couldn't configure orders manually. Cincom embedded these rules in the ECIC tool so that our engineers do not have to remember them or refer to manuals, which slows down the ordering process. It is also easier to test and obtain feedback on various scenarios using the tool, which was much harder to do from a technical document," says Lawton.

Converting business requirements into technical specifications

"The Cincom configurator tool is an integral part of the ordering process for Telstra. Without it, the network planners would find it very difficult to convert their business requirements into technical specifications," added Phillip Lawton, Alcatel's CMUX Program Manager. "The ECIC tool takes all the technical knowledge, which would normally reside in an engineer's brain or in a manual, and puts it into a box so that others without that expert knowledge of the rules can specify product."

Lawton adds, "Telstra is an extremely important customer to us and by providing its network planners with this tool, we are minimising its business risk in ordering. The tool greatly reduces the chance of errors being made in the first place and it also eliminates the cost of reprocessing incorrect orders."



Cincom collaborates with a key Alcatel customer

Cincom collaborated with Alcatel engineers to ensure the configurator tool was optimised for the Telstra environment, building in Telstra's design and deployment rules. The Cincom team continues to be involved, as new hardware releases from Alcatel necessitate periodic re-coding, and as Telstra's network planners also provide feedback on using the tool.

"Before implementing the Cincom Acquire Guided Selling and Product Configurator software, Alcatel's order life cycle-the time required between order placement and order delivery – was averaging eight weeks. The first tool we designed for them reduced that to two weeks and the recent addition of the database will further streamline the process because previous orders are automatically taken into account," said Paul Hargreaves, Managing Director, Cincom. "This is the kind of challenge that complex manufacturers face more and more and we are happy to have assisted Alcatel in transforming a complicated technical process into a very simple ordering system for an important customer."

"The Cincom team provided great support, going out of their way to really understand what we needed. We receive very fast turnaround on investigating any problems or issues. I have worked with them for a number of years and always found them to be great in responding to us," said Lawton.

About Cincom Systems, Inc.

For nearly 40 years, Cincom software and services have helped thousands of clients worldwide simplify the management of complex business processes. Cincom specialises in the areas of business where simplification brings the greatest value to managers who want to grow revenue, control costs, minimise risk and achieve rapid ROI better than their competitors. Cincom serves thousands of clients on six continents including BMW, Citibank, Boeing, Northwestern Mutual, Federal Express, Ericsson, Penn State University, Milacron, Siemens, Rockwell Automation and Trane.

For more information and additional resources, contact Cincom by sending an e-mail to acquire@cincom.com, or visit the company's website at www.cincom.com/acquire.

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