



## **Optus says “Yes” to MapData Sciences helping to map customer territories September 2009**

In the competitive telecommunications industry in-bound services are a highly profitable product. They appeal to almost any organisation with a network of branches or offices which wants to streamline customer service. With just one phone number customers can contact the organisation, regardless of where they are located in relation to that organisation.

Selling in-bound services means helping those organisations to define the location where a telephone call –for a pizza, lawn mowing or government service – should terminate.

In the complex world of telephony that used to be a difficult task. However, major telecommunications company Optus realised that by helping organisations plan in-bound services based on a geographic location, it could win and retain very profitable business.

To achieve this, Optus sought the expertise of MapData Sciences (MDS) which specialises in digital mapping and spatial information solutions. MDS helped turn tables of otherwise complex figures into meaningful maps on which organisations could plot sales and service territories.

Optus commissioned the Professional Services Group at MDS to create an online solution; a customised application with which Optus consultants would help clients build territories, whether for a fast food franchise network, services company or government agency.

MDS was also commissioned to train Optus staff in how to best use the new system and continues to provide up to date geographic data and services which help ensure the Optus Territory Builder is a powerful service and marketing tool to help organisations manage in-bound calls.

The provision of in-bound services began in the early 1990s and uses a technique known as “call origin routing”. This allows calls to be sent to the nearest local office, or any destination the organisation wishes, depending on the origin of the call. A single number can be used and calls can originate Australia-wide, state-wide or from a combination of states or area codes. The organisation pays either all or part of the charges associated with the call.

Industry vertical sectors that make up the in-bound market include government, IT & T, finance & banking, call centre outsourcers, retail / wholesale, utilities, transport & freight, insurance, manufacturing, entertainment, hospitality, health and education.

Optus products and services manager Rick Stern said Optus customers enjoy two major benefits from the project undertaken by MDS to enhance “call origin routing”.

Organisations are able to segment zones or areas with greater granularity, therefore providing more detailed data on customer behavior and/or buying patterns. This demographic information can be used by business to generate marketing campaigns and advertising that is more targeted.

Additionally, organisations like franchise groups are able to ensure an equitable spread of traffic across business outlets.

“We wanted to present our customers and prospects with maps showing them areas or territories based on their preferences. A mapping tool to determine boundaries is far better than trying to use a tabular approach,” Mr. Stern said.



Previously Optus had only been able to help customers establish territories based on existing (telephone) exchange areas and postcodes. It wanted to add additional boundary levels starting with what are called Mesh Blocks which comprise about 50 households and progressing to Census Collection Districts (about 200 households), suburbs, and entire states.

The project uses an extract of "location dependant carriage service" data from the Integrated Public Number Database (IPND) which comprises the numbers and address details for all Australian businesses, households and individuals with fixed or mobile phone services.. This is an approved use of IPND information under the Telecommunications Act.

MDS then applied a geocode to each fixed number record, matching a geographic co-ordinate to the address. These co-ordinates are then used to provide information to assist accurate routing of inbound calls.

On top of the geocoded data, MDS built a hosted online interface that brings up detailed maps covering the whole of Australia, including the various boundary levels which Optus clients use to determine origin routing and their preferred territories.

Combined, the data and maps give Optus an online territory builder application now used by the company's consultants to create the boundaries which dictate call origin routing services specific to each client. The application provides complete national coverage.

Among the many benefits to Optus internally was a dramatic improvement in the time required to design a complex routing table for 'provisioning', the telephony industry's term for actually providing various equipment and services.

"Significant cost savings result from reducing from days to just minutes the time required to do this", Mr. Stern said. "The graphical capability delivered with the Optus Territory Builder has improved the design turnaround time and improved the client experience," he adds.

Ultimately the configuration of a customer's service is determined by information held in a database within the Optus network.

Not surprisingly, Optus uses the service itself to help customers and prospects to locate Optus retail stores.

The training provided by MDS to ensure Optus staff could use the Territory Builder application was customised to the company's requirements. Optus now provides that training in-house to its own staff.

On an ongoing basis, MDS provides Optus with first level support for the operation of the Territory Builder, geocoding of updated IPND records and updates to the various boundary layer changes. The relationship also provides a mechanism for discussion of future enhancements to the application.

Looking not too far ahead Mr Stern says Optus will provide its customers with a web interface by which they will be able to manage where calls are routed to, as well as creating and changing as required, text messages sent to callers using mobile phones.

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