



Customer Case Study

Syndication Partners

At a Glance

Company: O2 / Telefónica Ireland

Industry: Telecommunications

Customer Profile

O2 is the commercial brand of Telefónica Ireland, a leading communications company with 1.6 million customers. Based in Dublin and Limerick, O2 employs 1,000 people and has a retail network of nearly 70 stores. O2 is also a key part of Microsoft's syndication partner network, offering business customers its Office 365 productivity suite, to complement its own fixed line and mobile business.

Business Challenge

- To establish a 'white glove' activation process and tier 1/tier 2 support model for Office 365 that delivers a perfect customer experience.
- To help O2 to articulate Microsoft Office 365 business benefits to internal sales staff and to end-user customers.

Solution

- Establish an activation desk to transition customers from on-premise to cloud-based Microsoft Office 365 service.
- Provide tier 1/tier 2 support desk to O2 customers transitioning to Office 365.
- Support the O2 Office 365 sales support team to articulate business benefits and generate concrete lead opportunities.
- Create an intelligent, transparent reporting function on the Azure platform for sales performance measurement back to Microsoft.

Benefits

- Met substantial Microsoft Office 365 revenue targets for O2 in the first year.
- Achieved Microsoft Office 365 activation rates of at least 92%, significantly higher than average global levels.
- Delivers an exceptional customer support experience for those transitioning to cloud services, thus maximising revenue potential.

MJ Flood Technology helps O2 and Microsoft achieve significant Office 365 revenues

O2, one of the country's leading telecommunications providers has achieved significant Microsoft Office 365 revenue targets, thanks to an activation, sales and support model designed and delivered by MJ Flood Technology.

The model ensures an exceptional customer support experience for O2 customers moving to the Office 365 cloud service and is an integral part of O2's sales strategy to transition from a traditional telco to a total ICT solutions provider.

"We've invested very heavily in this strategy because we firmly believe that this is the way we need to go as a company," explains Gary Dempsey, Office 365 Product Manager at Telefónica Ireland, which operates the O2 brand. "We've seen phenomenal results. Everywhere we go, we're asked by Microsoft to act as a reference for other telcos and share our systems and processes. That's testament to our success."

From its launch a little over one year ago, Office 365 revenues have grown to the extent that O2 is now positioned as a leading force in the market and a key Microsoft syndication partner in Ireland.

Go-to-Market Strategy

In preparing for the Office 365 launch, O2 openly acknowledged that it didn't have the internal expertise to "crack it first time around". O2 recognised that activation, (the process by which customers activate their new Office 365 software license and move their communications to the cloud) would be a critical success factor.

"My experience points to the fact that when you get setup and activation right, customers are satisfied and will not leave you," according to Gary Dempsey. "For me activation was always going to be a key part of our proposition and we needed the customer experience to be perfect from day one. We already had a profitable relationship with MJ Flood Technology and they had a solid relationship with Microsoft. It just seemed like an obvious fit."

Natalie Inman, Microsoft's Global Partner Services Account Manager for the Telefónica Group agrees: "As customers move into cloud technology, a strong activation strategy acts as a safe haven where the support organisation can anticipate a lot of 'how to' problems early on. This ultimately drives down support costs and transitions the customer to the cloud in a much faster timescale."



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**Gary Dempsey, Office 365
Product Manager, O2**

The Model – Activation, Tier 1 and Tier 2 Support

Faced with this challenge, MJ Flood Technology designed and delivered a best practice activation, tier 1 and tier 2 support model.

“The model was designed with scalability in mind,” explains Brian Murphy, Director of Cloud Services with MJ Flood Technology. “It can easily be adapted for other Microsoft syndication partners such as ISPs, hosting providers or telecoms operators and our ‘white glove’ approach means our involvement in the activation process is completely transparent to the end-user customer,” he adds.

When the Office 365 license is purchased, the details are updated on O2’s CRM system. If the customer decides they need assistance with their activation, staff from MJ Flood Technology’s virtual activation centre have full visibility of this and can schedule the request accordingly.

Customers who purchase and do not activate within a certain period of time are proactively contacted by the activation centre with a view to encouraging activation or offering additional professional services to assist with migration. This has a dual objective of maximising activation rates and generating additional professional services revenues for O2.



The importance of choosing the right activation and support partner is reflected by average activation rates of 92% since service launch. This figure represents a significant uplift on activation rates in other geographies and has been continuously highlighted by Microsoft globally as a great example of best practice. Denis Meade, Business Development Manager for Cloud Services with Microsoft explains:

“We consider MJ Flood Technology to be a leader in the activation space. They have developed a robust model and a compelling offering that accelerates the learning curve for syndication partners, who wish to position themselves as a total solutions provider.”

The Model – Sales Support

In parallel to their best practice activation model, MJ Flood Technology also developed a sales support model to directly assist O2 staff in closing end-user sales opportunities. By strategically placing Office 365 consultants within the sales function, they help the O2 sales team to qualify, specify and propose the most appropriate license plan for the customer.

Gary Dempsey cites their input as “invaluable” to the overall success of the project.



“It’s great working in partnership with MJ Flood Technology and O2. We’re all passionate about delivering a great support experience to our Office 365 customers.”

Natalie Inman, Microsoft’s Global Partner Services Account Manager for the Telefonica Group

“The sales support team can split Office 365 into simple messages that customers get and can easily understand,” he says. “They have the business sound bites but they’re also capable of having an in-depth technical discussion with an IT manager and we don’t have to engage three or four O2 staff for that conversation.”

Knowledge transfer also forms a key part of the relationship where over time, communications and technical skills are imparted to O2’s individual account managers. Denis Meade believes that this approach is critical to the sales success of Office 365 through the Microsoft syndication partner network.

“Although you have to build awareness in the market, you have to build awareness and education internally as well. Office 365 is not the only ICT service O2 provide to their customers and we recognise that syndication partners also sell other services. Building awareness coupled with ongoing training for the sales team is key. That’s something that MJ Flood Technology has been tasked with and has done a great job implementing.”

Reporting and Performance Monitoring

As part of the activation and support model, MJ Flood Technology has also rolled out a customised reporting solution for O2 and Microsoft. Built on Microsoft’s Azure platform, it tracks the full lifecycle of each technical support incident, giving full visibility of time spent on calls, call types and resolutions. It provides full transparency to O2 and Microsoft and meets all the reporting criteria with outputs generated for the joint quarterly business reviews.

Reports are typically broken down by number of tier 1 and tier 2 support calls and then by the nature of incident, e.g. Lync online, Administration, Exchange Online, SharePoint Online and Office Professional Plus.



“This reporting is incredibly powerful,” explains Natalie Inman. “At the press of a button, we can look at the top call drivers and get a greater understanding of the type of support issues customers are experiencing. We feed this back into the product group to identify what product or process improvements can be made by Microsoft to improve the customer experience. This level of information is really valuable to us,” she says.

“The reporting function is a prime example of why MJ Flood Technology is such a good partner,” says Gary Dempsey. “This was a piece of work that they could have taken a shortcut on. Instead they threw themselves into designing and building a customised reporting tool that was sustainable and scalable in line with our sales plans.”



“We consider MJ Flood Technology to be a leader in the activation space. It’s a robust model and a compelling offering that accelerates the learning curve for syndication partners moving towards a total solutions provider.”

Denis Meade, Business Development Manager for Cloud Services, Microsoft Ireland

An Agile Approach to Business Success

Having achieved aggressive sales targets set for Office 365, Gary Dempsey acknowledges that it has been a “steep learning curve” for the organisation and revenue hasn’t always come from the market segments they expected.

“When we looked at this prior to launch, we thought the sub 25-user market would be the ideal target for Office 365. It does everything they need with a contract commitment and they can get up and running very quickly. But we’re getting most traction from the 50 – 150 user space, where customers have an existing IT department but their infrastructure is fast approaching end of life. When we get in front of these customers, we have conversations about the “evergreen” benefits of Office 365 and taking a cloud-based approach rather than re-investing in hardware that’s going to age quickly. This is where we are generating real sales opportunities for the solution,” he says.

Advice for Syndication Partners

Many other syndication partners have already embarked on their journey towards a total ICT sales model and are looking to upsell and cross-sell Office 365 to enhance their value proposition to customers. Gary Dempsey is keen to share his experience and thoughts on what has helped O2 to succeed.

“The key behind the selling message is that you believe in what you are doing. Some syndication partners are dipping their toes in the water because somebody has said they should do it. They’ve gone into it without understanding what their strategy is. All of our sales and product development teams are using Office 365 on Windows mobile devices. There’s nothing more encouraging to a customer than when you arrive with a product that you can personally demonstrate. We’re not just trying to sell you something. We’re selling you something that we really believe in.”

Natalie Inman adds: “Think about your customer journey, end-to-end. Organisations that are successful think about the entire journey and make their bundle of products and support really strong. They really think about entry to support and build a strong support organisation to make the transition to the cloud as seamless as possible for the customer.”

Gary Dempsey believes that if syndication partners get the experience right at the start, it will allow them to use that momentum from within their own customer base to drive additional business.

“If you wait too long to invest, you’ll be too far behind to catch up,” he concludes.

For more information on MJ Flood Technology syndication services, please contact Brian Murphy, Director of Cloud Services at bmurphy@mjf.ie