Vodafone Ireland

Connecting the Future:
An IT Architecture Perspective

"Celfocus's alignment and shared vision with Vodafone Ireland strategy were critical for project success. Vodafone Ireland needed a reliable partner to focus on enabling and developing a new customer engagement and experience layer, and Celfocus was pivotal in our digital transformation journey."

Shay Sweeney
Architecture Manager at Vodafone

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The Irish Wireless Market and Vodafone Ireland's Competitive Positioning

The Project in a Nutshell

About Vodafone Ireland

- **Founded in:** 2001

- **HQ:** Ireland

- **# of mobile subscribers:** 2.3 million subscribers

The Irish telecommunications market is one of the most competitive in the western world, with a very high penetration rate and more than 40 suppliers covering different segments. In this context, differentiation through innovation is pivotal to ensure customer loyalty and business survival.

Vodafone Ireland's network now has population coverage of 99.6% and 4G coverage of 98%. Vodafone is also Ireland's best mobile network, five years in a row - 'Best in Test', 'Best in Voice' and 'Best in Data' based on network test results conducted by independent third party Umlaut, on three major Irish networks in November 2019.

As CSPs worldwide move towards strengthening their role as a value-added partner for customers and enterprises by purveying a complete offering that includes mobile, broadband, fixed line and television, Vodafone Ireland wanted to extend its market leadership and innovation streak.

To adjust to a new market dynamic, driven by new customer needs and more aggressive competition, Vodafone Ireland embarked on a digital transformation journey supported, among other partners, by Celfocus.

About Vodafone Ireland's Digital Transformation Project

The digital transformation programme is the largest business transformation initiative in Vodafone Ireland's history. It covered all customer touchpoints and had a profound impact on the core CRM and billing systems, leading to the decommissioning of more than 25 of them, increasing the remaining system's availability by 75%, and reducing go-to-market times for new products and services by 80%.

The Challenge

How to be more agile, deliver great customer experiences and reduce product and service go-to-market across different customer segments?

Addressing this need entailed a complete overhaul of Vodafone Ireland's business model and IT architecture. Vodafone Ireland's digital transformation was anchored in three main building blocks:

Digital First

Ensure an excellent and consistent customer journey with a particular focus on omnichannel experience and digital channels.

Business Model Simplification

Simplify the business model and offer complexity to deliver the best products.

Automation

Empower customers to engage on their terms, favouring self-service and process automation.

These building blocks were pivotal in driving efforts and defining priorities for the overall project, ensuring alignment between all stakeholders and a sense of purpose regarding the defined objectives.

The Solution

Finding the best solution for such an ambitious transformation raised intricate questions. The solution would not only have to support the current business but also equip Vodafone for the coming years.

Available technological alternatives showed, however, that **the better equipped they were to support Vodafone Ireland current business, the less ready they would be to adapt to new and unknown business scenarios**.

Selecting a market-proven BSS solution would guarantee that most of the immediate transformation requirements would be met and gaps would be minimised, improving the chances of achieving the desired outcomes. Vodafone Ireland was, however, aware that no solution available on the market could, at the same time, deliver the customer experience that has become standard to today's consumers.

Combining these possibly conflicting goals demanded the ability to define a business reality driven by customer-facing processes without restrictions from the underlying systems.

System virtualisation was the approach chosen to tackle the tension between providing business teams with more flexibility to quickly adjust to customer dynamics without compromising the back-end systems' stability. By defining a formal separation between customer-facing processes, with its related data and underlying resources, this was made possible.

With this solution, the overall IT architectures preserved the ability to define business processes driven by customer experience separately from the modelling restrictions imposed by traditional systems.

Business and Technology teams have different drivers and priorities. Business teams favour **agility**, which translates to having more done in less time and with less cost. On the other hand, technology teams strive for efficiency and reliability, which usually reflects centralisation and reusability.

The untold truth is that the almost universal reusability principle kills the autonomy demanded by business teams. As an example, if the Customer Operations team idealises a change in the segmentation criteria to improve the handling of customer requests, they will have to validate and get approval from all other teams that reuse those criteria before being able to change them.

At the same time, giving each business team full autonomy creates operational inefficiencies and compromises customer experience consistency. This is the reason why IT departments create robust governance procedures that inevitably hamper the speed required to get things ready.

Enabling an **outside-in** perspective of Vodafone Ireland's processes and technology called for assisted and unassisted channels that could evolve autonomously, maximise the customer experience at each touchpoint, ensure the agility to respond quickly to market stimuli, and do it all consistently.

Building on the virtualisation principle, Vodafone Ireland designed a reference IT architecture defining a clear demarcation between Systems of Engagement and System of Record. At the core of this architecture is Celfocus Digital Overlay framework, playing a determinant role in **reaching out** to the business teams and in fulfilling their new demands.

Celfocus Digital Overlay Architecture was the first step towards fully embracing digital. It consists of a phased approach that paves the way to digital architecture and is instantiated through CELFOCUS Omnichannel Core.
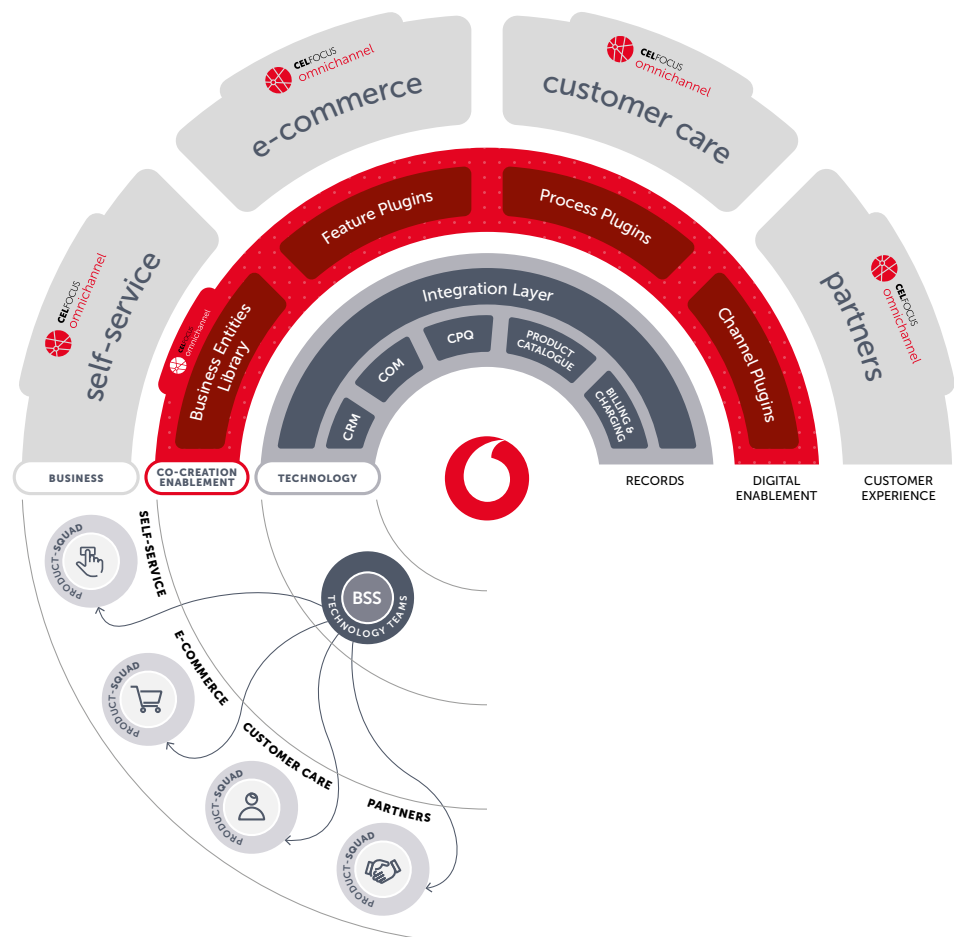
Vodafone Ireland IT Architecture

CELFOCUS Omnichannel is a telco-oriented solution, developed to ensure a consistent customer journey, regardless of the touchpoint.

It covers sales and customer care scenarios for assisted channels (shops, call-centres, partners, and field engineers) and non-assisted channels (eCommerce, web and mobile native self-care), supported by a shared and smart platform for a seamless cross-channel experience.

CELFOCUS Omnichannel Core is the foundation for a truly omnichannel experience and acts as the backbone for many customer touchpoints across different devices and channels. It's the central component of a holistic and transformative channel architecture which enhances customer experience by eliminating the software silos when customers interact with the company.

This module played a central role in articulating different requests for Systems of Engagement and System of Record, delivering:

1 **Business virtualisation** – Establishes the strictest separation of the business definition from the underlying technology.

2 **All customer processes available on all channels** – The logic is no longer locked down in a back-end system like billing or CRM, nor isolated in a self-care or eShop application. The CELFOCUS Omnichannel Core implements and exposes the business logic consistently to all channels.

3 **Open architecture enablement** – Ensures that all processes and functions can be made available by exposing meaningful APIs that internal and external clients can use to implement their customer journeys.

4 **Performance** – Implements the components that elevate the underlying systems' performance up to the standards of digital services.

5 **Consolidation of fragmented back-end systems** – ensures the delivery of a consistent user experience across all sales and care processes.

6 **Cross-channel process continuity** - delivering a seamless experience across touchpoints can only be achieved by implementing the business logic in a layer common to all channels.

7 **Capability augmentation** – It also serves as a platform to incubate tactical components and to fulfil capability gaps left by underlying systems.

Traditional industry solutions strive to deliver pre-packaged standardised business processes. While this accelerates the deployment and addresses current needs, it also locks down the business and kills the ability to differentiate. The traditional systems-dependent perspective will inevitably have blind spots for the future role of telecom operators in the value chain.

Vodafone Ireland's IT architecture approach allowed for a truly digital transformation by combining the **implementation of a digital overlay using CELFOCUS Omnichannel** with a full **BSS stack transformation** to adjust and prepare the organisation to maintain its leadership in delivering a rich and diverse product portfolio with a consistent customer experience across all channels.

The digital overlay implemented by CELFOCUS Omnichannel Core was pivotal in contributing to establishing a modern and open architecture where business teams have the necessary flexibility and openness, and the IT organisation has the required control, reliability and robustness.

Winning Through Deeper Customer Engagement

Vodafone Ireland's digital transformation journey has enabled it to **accelerate the delivery of innovative and convergent solutions** through a myriad of seamlessly integrated channels, both assisted and non-assisted.

In a dynamic and very competitive market, Vodafone Ireland is well equipped to continue to serve and surpass customer expectations. It will withstand the next technological wave by using a digital-based offer which is more adaptable and guarantees a robust and future proof IT architecture.

Furthermore, the deployment of a digital overlay set the foundations for the business team to work more agilely and become increasingly flexible and responsive to market and customer demands.

Business Transformation Vectors
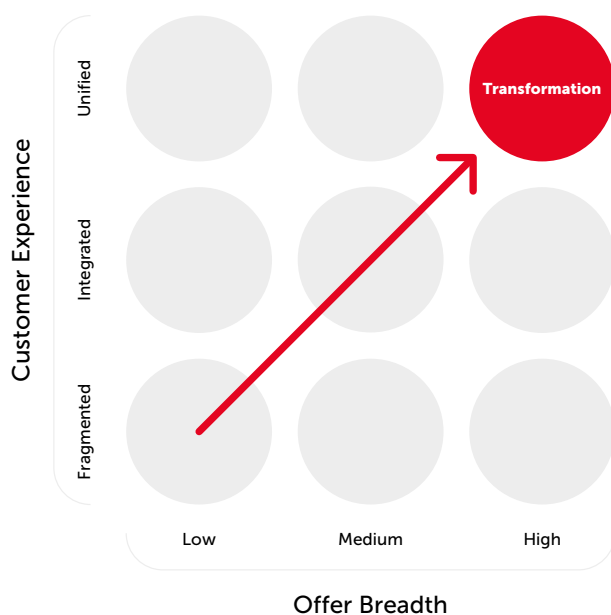
Compliance with Vodafone Group IT Architecture practices was, from the project's outset, an essential element for paving the way to developing DXL compliant journeys using cloud-ready microservices and for the adoption of Vodafone Group DevOps toolset, among other initiatives.

The digital transformation project represented a major overhaul of Vodafone Ireland's IT architectures by, in parallel and while running day-to-day operations, changing the BSS stack and deploying the new omnichannel solution: CELFOCUS Omnichannel. This option enables Vodafone Ireland to **leapfrog the competition** and be in the best possible position to reap the benefits from this new digital age.

Why Celfocus

Vodafone Ireland needed a reliable partner to work on enabling and developing a new **customer engagement and experience layer**. CELFOCUS Omnichannel played a fundamental role in addressing that need. Celfocus's experience and expertise in deploying similar solutions proved to be the perfect match.

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About Celfocus

Celfocus is a fast growing, global high-tech company with a reputation for developing and implementing successful projects and solutions that drive business value.

By combining a deep business knowledge with the understanding of different technologies, while never losing sight of the customer experience, Celfocus built a reputation leveraged on an unexcelled track record.

Serving Clients in 25+ countries, Celfocus helps organisations transform their business in order to improve competitive positioning and ultimately their performance.

For more information about CELFOCUS, please visit our website
www.celfocus.com

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