

An Aspire Technology Success Story

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# Orange is the New Black:

## Establishing a New Industry Standard

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# Introduction

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Aspire Technology has been supporting operators in achieving considerable improvement of their network operations while reducing costs and increasing service quality for their subscribers.

The challenge taken by Aspire Technology was to come up with a new model for network support for a multi-country operator that would be proactive, less costly and more efficient.

By the end of the first year, the results were remarkable:

- More than 50% reduction in support costs
- Almost 100% support requests handled by Aspire Technology
- Full SLA compliance
- Almost 60% early detection of incidents
- More than 85% of reduction in alarms received in the NOC
- 25% proactive improvement of data service throughput



# Background

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As with many telecom operators in the recent years, this multi-country operator was in the process of transforming their network and looking for smarter ways to optimize operational spend, mainly to reduce OpEx without compromising the service availability and quality.

It was determined that in terms of value for money, the traditional 'network vendor support' model was no longer in line with actual requirements as it was based on the number of installed hardware nodes and not on the actual support provided.

Additionally, the operator was amid rolling out a second vendor in the Radio Access Network (RAN) which brought its own challenges, in particular allocating responsibility within incidents that involved multiple vendors.

After a thorough analysis of all raised support cases, Aspire was able to propose a novel solution to network support, a disruptive model which would bring additional value and reduce the overall spend in network support that is independent, multi-vendor and end-to-end.

# The new model

Traditionally, the NOC (L1) raises issues to the 2nd level within the company (L2), and depending on the severity of the issue or the elapsed time, the NOC then involves the vendor as the 3rd level of support (L3), as depicted in Figure 1.

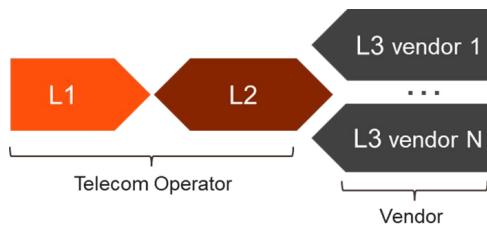


Figure 1: Traditional vendor support model

Aspire's proposed model has all incidents that would typically be escalated to one or more network vendors go directly to the 24x7 dedicated Aspire team. This team would be comprised of experts with experience in operator environments and 2nd tier traditional vendor support. Only software bugs requiring vendor correction would be escalated to vendors (as depicted in Figure 2).

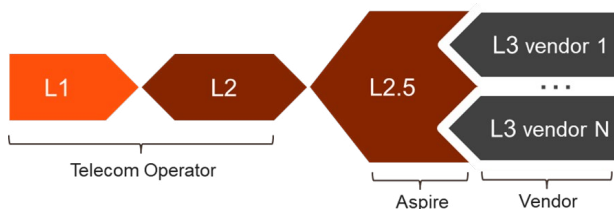


Figure 2: The new model

Due to this new model, Aspire Support became the 'go to' entity for the NOC, and functioned between the operator and the various network vendors, acting as a level 2.5 (L2.5), which not only offloaded some of the workload in the 2nd level internal engineering, it also reduced the number of issues raised to the vendor by 98%.

A dedicated Service Delivery Manager was allocated to the operator group office to ensure the quality of delivery while Aspire followed a step-by-step approach to onboard all the OpCos that would over time switch to the new support model.

In order to make the onboarding process more efficient, Aspire Support started by auditing all the supported nodes and applying corrective actions in conjunction with the operator's organization.

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# Challenges

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## Initial Resistance

As with any change, there was some resistance from the different layers of the company that were used to the traditional model that was in place for more than 15 years. Therefore, it was not unexpected that staff would not easily change their established way of working.

However, as it became apparent to each OpCo that levels of service were measurably higher for all types of interactions, from small queries to emergencies, resulting in the enthusiastic acceptance of the new model.

One of the biggest advantages for the operator was that they no longer needed support from remote call centers and assigned different people to each case who were not familiar with their network and would always attempt to apply their standard solutions before engaging experts.

From the beginning, the NOC and 2nd Level engineers were immediately in direct contact with the Aspire experts who quickly ascertained the network specifics. This was reflected in the quality of the support service and much increased satisfaction of NOC and 2nd Level engineers.

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# Benefits

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In summary, the operator started to realize the key advantages of this disruptive model versus the traditional one:

1. The service was proactive instead of reactive, therefore not waiting for incidents to happen
2. Multi-vendor issues became easier to solve by avoiding ping-pong between vendors, i.e. the operator opened a single ticket with Aspire Support and Aspire deals with all the rest
3. The Aspire Support team became an extension of the operator's team, which created synergies between the support organizations
4. The operator was able to reduce OpEx by renegotiating existing vendor contracts based on volume of tickets (which were minimal and required vendor software corrections)
5. The operator was able to get support for legacy from Aspire in cases where network nodes went out of vendor support

# Conclusion

Despite the initial resistance of adopting this new network support model, the short-term and long-term benefits were a success in terms of cost reduction and higher efficiency of the support organization, which was the initial goal. This translated in better network quality and overall reduction of stress levels in operations. After the first year of the engagement, SLA Compliance was consistently at 100% across all supported technologies, with emergencies resolution averaging 2.7 hours.

As the service progressed, other benefits were evident as a result of the synergies created and new capabilities were introduced including automated routines and health checks and the utilization of AI to predict without human intervention abnormal behaviors as well as clean-up of node alarms in order to reduce unnecessary noise.

The number of incidents raised to 2nd level was reduced by 57% due to proactive detection which in turn reduced the amount of 'fire-fighting' activities, while the amount of alarms was reduced by 86% with immediate benefits on the time to find faults and relieving the NOC from managing high number of alerts.

As part of proactive actions and health checks, 3G data performance was improved by 25% with the change of sub-optimal parameters set in the radio network. This is not done at all in traditional network support services, including those that are proactive in nature.

Most importantly, there was a mindset shift in this operator, which allowed them to take control of their operations and choose what was to be done inhouse and what was to be handled by vendors.



Figure 3: The new model success

Aspire developed this model of operations after years of engagement with different operators and identifying the traditional network support model as low quality and high cost.

This problem was exacerbated with operators due to increase of multiple vendors for CapEx optimization. As vendors seek to retain control of network expertise in order to maintain dependency and leverage, operators can be fixed with multiple expensive contracts and non-business aligned SLAs in which each vendor passes on responsibility of the issues to the next. Not only does this lead to an inefficient use of the operator resources that spend more time pushing cases to vendors, but it ultimately leads to more network downtime, customer complaints and churn.

# Next steps

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What if in one go, you could improve the quality of your network support, regain control of your network operations and yet decrease operational costs?

Whether it's a mobile or fixed network issue, end-to-end or function specific, Aspire have a novel approach to your problem.

Aspire's orange really is the new black, as a new network operation standard is established.

Talk to our network support specialists and understand how you could evolve to a future mode of operation. Aspire can perform a free audit based on your current FM data and help you build your business case to disrupt your operations support model.

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