

Case Study

NTT DATA helped Three overhaul digital infrastructure to better connect IT with business and transform both employee and customer experience



Ensuring better interconnectivity between internal departments means improved ability to serve the end user in a timely and efficient manner.

- NTT DATA helped support Three with its digital transformation programme
- Cloud optimisation ensured the ecosystem was simplified and helped Three better assist its customers with multiple data sets stored in the same location rather than across estates
- A collaborative approach meant embedding expertise into Three's operation and generating knowledge amongst its wider team
- NTT DATA also assisted on the consultative side by obtaining the correct design and architecture in the Cloud, which was a substantial transition for Three
- An automated and adaptive cloud-based DevOps platform enabling agile deployment across development, test and production environments in a timely, accelerated and consistent fashion

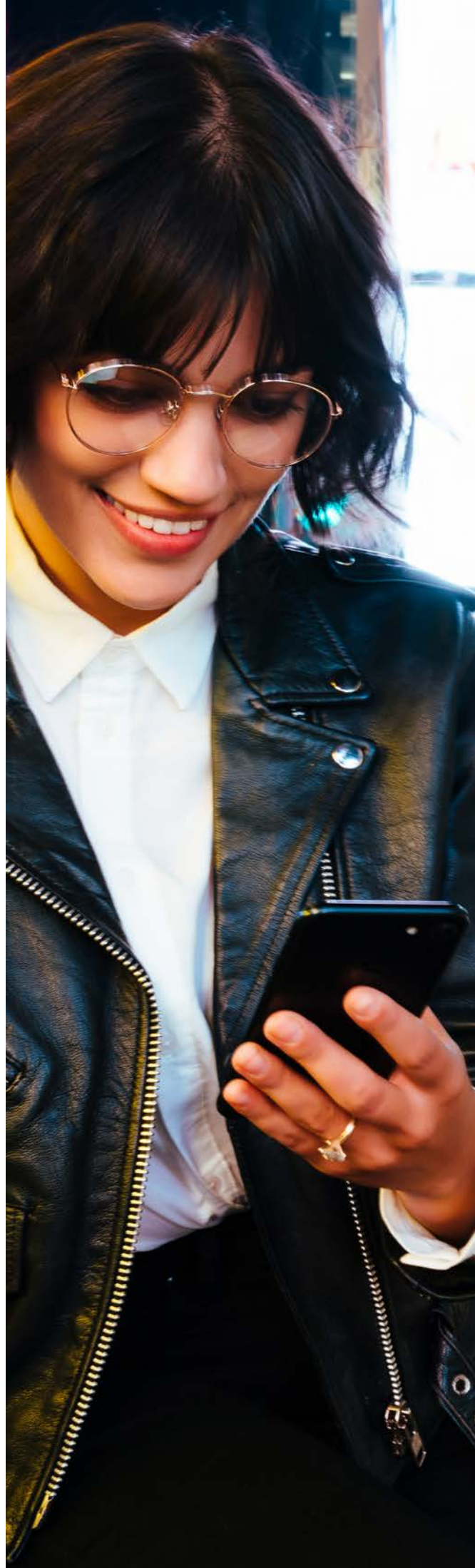
As one of the UK's foremost mobile network providers, Three is the market leader for network spectrum and download speeds. The telecoms and internet service provider has invested heavily in 5G during its transformation programme. Currently, Three is also the only operator able to meet the International Telecoms Union (ITU) 2020 standard for full 5G services.

Much of the basic systems had remained the same as those first 3G networks Three had when it began operations in 2003. As time went on, business areas such as billing, mediation, and fraud, to credit and collection resulted in the company using over 100 different systems, making it increasingly difficult to serve customers quickly and efficiently.

Simon Gratton, Three's Chief Data Officer, said: "As people in the industry will know, setting up a DevOps cycle where you can deploy daily is a huge undertaking for a company, where we have been more waterfall in nature. The strong competency of having NTT DATA engineers in our team educating our internal team and delivering that capability, is a core reason why we have them with us."

"In data terms, we needed to be able to have all the information we have at our disposal in a single location, so that we were always ready for that next business question when it comes in, that next business outcome to be delivered. Then test concepts quickly, change them, scale them and use technology as a component part rather than an afterthought."

Initially, NTT DATA was brought in to drive cloud optimisation and simplify the ecosystem that had mutated to that point. Because Three had experienced dramatic growth in cloud services expenditure and the consumption of cloud services, whether that be on an IAS basis or a PAS basis, there was an opportunity to drive down costs while overseeing what it was consuming, what it was planning, and on an ongoing basis, the increased benefit the company could achieve from using the cloud. This is across and encompassing compute, storage and applications, as well as ensuring optimised design patterns, governance and processing moving forward in order to maintain efficient use of cloud-based services.





Collaborative approach

At Three, digital, data, core IT, and the existing transformation programme were in separate physical locations and did not have any interaction with other teams. Expert external assistance was needed to join these departments together in order to achieve maximum synergy and realise large financial and operational efficiencies.

Following discussions with Three's Chief Information Officer, Belinda Finch, NTT DATA set about supporting a transformation programme which required successful results within a twelve-month period. Having one single partner supporting the overall environment and keeping it stable, paired off with a team engineering the new features all contained in a tight construct, is one of the reasons NTT DATA's services was retained.

NTT DATA also helped on the consultative side by obtaining the correct design and architecture in the cloud, which was a substantial transition for Three. Leveraging the right technology for the right outcome and generating knowledge within the wider team as part of those interactions meant that it was also having an educational impact as well as a consultative one during the transition. But primarily, bringing a cloud philosophy and mentality to the data team has been the consultative nature of NTT's work.

Finch said: "It was obvious that we needed to pull everything together and make IT both closer to the business and closer to

the customers.

"We do a lot of sharing with NTT in terms of what our strategy is going forward and what we are doing. They also give us industry information - what is happening out there, what are the new trends - which is extremely useful for us, so we know we're on the right track."

NTT DATA had been involved in cloud design, development, implementation, as well as the broader infrastructure ecosystem for several years. Both parties saw an opportunity. Three wanted to drive down costs in terms of what it was consuming and planning- then on an ongoing basis- the benefit it could get from Cloud. Looking ahead, the main reason Three is eager to continue to work with NTT DATA is predominantly because the firm offers data engineering, and more specifically cloud data engineering at the core of what it provides.

With the information on subscribers spread across three IT estates too, the sheer time it was taking to pull together all data that could enable Three to make agile, competitive business decisions meant despite having a compelling 5G offer, it was taking too long for its products to cut through.

In a telecommunications industry where innovation and new products are key, this was clearly a major issue. "We were developing projects and by the time the solution was delivered, the business had moved on," said Simon Gratton."



Mutual benefit

NTT DATA and Three created a distinctive partnership which not only tackled cumbersome processes at the heart of the company, but it also had a mutually beneficial theme throughout.

NTT DATA Vice President, David Counsell, said: "Some might call it risk reward. We collectively call it gainshare. Firstly, they get a motivated partner who is driven and incentivised to generate ideas, to execute initiatives, actions, and activities, and are ultimately motivated to deliver and realise cost savings on behalf of Three.

Throughout the partnership, there were several guiding principles that informed NTT DATA to help in everything it does. The foremost principle is putting the client first, and the second revolves around bringing foresight and innovation to the client and delivering value day in and day out. The third principle is teamwork and collaboration both with the main client, its own NTT partners, and with other partners that Three UK has itself. Counsell believes those three ingredients helps guide and form the basis of the engagement and relationship that is fostered between Three and NTT DATA.



Prepared for the future

Gratton believes that the investment in NTT DATA's ability to make a difference has made this one of the most successful business transformations any of the parties have ever worked on.

Having additional expertise embedded into the existing team has benefitted Three immensely, as it has helped speed up the change in internal processes and has made sure everyone understands what they are using, and why.

Gratton concluded: "They work from inside as part of the team - that's been evident throughout. Their engineers are treated like members of the team. In fact, it's

indistinguishable when we're developing things, or having meetings, who is working for NTT and who is working for Three. The 'one badge' ethic is a big part of the transformation philosophy."

The positive difference is already being felt, and will continue to be, according to Three's own management team. From the agent picking up the phone, to the customer experience and even the retail stores, people's lives will be easier. Even though the transformation was initially described as "audacious" by Counsell, the NTT team has successfully delivered on combining the IT with the actual business.

Next steps

If you would like to know more about our partnership with Three or understand how NTT DATA can help you on your digital transformation journey, please contact:

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About NTT DATA UK&I

NTT DATA is a trusted global innovation partner employing over 140,000 people in over 80 countries. Our focus is on leveraging information technology to create new paradigms and values, which help contribute to a more affluent and harmonious society. Alongside our global reach, we think and act locally to support our clients in their digital transformation journeys, delivering measurable business impact. We achieve this through a comprehensive portfolio of consulting, applications, infrastructure and business processes, IT modernisation and managed services, and deep industry expertise. Innovation is at the heart of our business. We continue to bring pioneering ideas to market that respond to shifting customer needs. For more information, visit: uk.nttdata.com

