

CommsDay Wholesale Congress

Kim Iliff speech as part of the nbn Showcase

Wednesday 16 October 2024

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thanks Andrew.

Hi everyone.

You might know someone just like me inside your company.

The type of person who is hard-wired to challenge the status quo and persist until there's a better outcome.

My name is Kim Iliff and I am nbn's General Manager for Field Improve and Transform.

In any given week we roll approximately 27,000 trucks with 2,500 active technicians across Australia with our internal workforce and delivery partners.

The work ranges from helping to resolve customer service and network faults, performing new connects and upgrading customers to Fibre to the Premises.

The key purpose of field operations is to ensure we have appropriately skilled technical resources in the right location, at the right time and at the right cost.

Sounds simple enough... Except for a long time it has been a challenge.

And so, two years ago, nbn developed a Field Evolution Strategy.

Today I will talk through the 'then' and 'now' by highlighting four of the key changes we've made that have positively impacted the industry and customer experience.

First to our field capability uplift...

In 2022, 93 per cent of service and network faults, and activations, were performed by our Delivery Partners.

This was not in line with global best practice and at times the customer experience wasn't great.

Technicians were simply too far from where the job needed to be done.

We had to do better in regional and remote locations to reduce appointment lead times, uplift the quality of work and meet more customer appointments.

After extensive industry research, we took action to expand our internal workforce.

At the time, I could count with both hands how many women we had in technical and leadership roles in the field.

So... the nbn Field Traineeship program was established. This involved training individuals new to the industry supported by global industry recognised certifications.

This program is already kicking goals.

90 out of 95 trainees recruited last financial year are women or First Nations people. This effort was recognised across the industry as last year we won the Accom Award for Diversity and Inclusion.

We started out with 51 points of presence across Australia. We are now in 134 locations. Places like Ballarat, Bundaberg, Darwin, Alice Springs and Hobart.

Technicians are now living in the communities that they service.

At the completion of FY25, we will have an internal workforce of approximately 900, which will service about 30 per cent of the work, up from 7% where we started, and that's getting us in line with global best practice.

Regarding the HFC Evolution program that Ohnmar discussed earlier, our internal workforce is performing at least half of the upgrades.

The strategy behind this is to ensure the same workforce who performs a large proportion of the upgrades will service that same network well into the future.

Now to the second change... our fibre upgrade transformation...

Initially when nbn started to upgrade customers to Fibre to the Premises, appointment lead times were too long and it took too many truck rolls to perform each upgrade.

The customer experience wasn't great.

To transform the overall experience, changes were made to field practices, communications, commercial constructs with our Delivery Partners, systems and processes.

What is now termed 'Fibre Delivery in a Day' was born, coupled with new functionality where nbn could remotely activate the NTD post remediation where it is needed.

Despite working with 50+ year old conduits, homes and other infrastructure, we've halved the number of truck rolls on average to perform a fibre upgrade.

Appointment lead times have reduced by 70 per cent.

The order provisioning cycle time has reduced by more than 50 per cent.

And the cost of each upgrade has also significantly reduced.

Like everything else, our work won't stop there.

Now to the third change. The Field Control Tower Evolution...

When you hear "Field Control Tower", think air traffic control. Except we're dealing with trucks and technicians rather than planes and pilots.

The objective is to ensure we're planning ahead for the workforce to be in the right locations at the right time so that we keep the promises we're making to customers.

The Field Control Tower function was once a highly manual and decentralised model.

nbn has since invested in developing its systems to optimise the service work in real time.

Say a technician is on a job that's taking longer than anticipated. This may pose risk to meeting the customer appointment on the technicians next job assigned.

The system automatically assesses this risk, identifies alternate resources available and assigns it to another technician to ensure that the commitment with the customer is met.

Around 80 percent of service work is now automatically optimised.

In parallel to the systems investment made, nbn also took action to perform all its Field Control Tower services operation in-house. Previously some of these functions were managed by Delivery Partners.

The systems, process and operational model changes have resulted in a consistent way our services work is optimised and managed nationally.

As a result:

- Activation Appointments met increased from 94.4 per cent to 96.4 per cent; an increase of 2%
- Assurance Appointments met increased from 97.2 per cent to 98.5 per cent; an increase of 1.3%
- And 'No Resource Available' Rates decreased from 2.4 per cent to 0.3 %; a decrease of 2.1%

Now for the fourth and final change. Our Digital Self-Service Tools...

Extensive focus has been placed on field technicians' ability to self-serve.

This means reducing, and ideally eliminating, the need for our technicians to have to contact other support teams when they are on site at a customer's premises to get the job done.

One of the applications deployed is an NTD Swap app that allows technicians to perform the swap digitally, without the need to contact a support team to perform the task.

On average, this is saving around 15 minutes in the customer's premises.

That's 15 less minutes that the customer needs to wait.

This is the tip of the iceberg, and the team are iterating through further opportunities to convert into digital applications.

These self-serve apps are helping to reduce the time required to complete a task and the costs involved, it means less time in the customer's premises. It means improved quality and happy customers.

It's a win-win for everyone.

To summarise.

27,000 trucks, 2,500 active technicians, appropriately skilled and dispatched to the right location, at the right time, at the right cost.

Diverse technicians and leaders. They prioritise safety. They're focussed on quality and the customer experience.

And they're focused on getting it done right the first time so we have fewer repeat visits.

All of this goes toward improving customers' experience and relationship with the nbn network.

At nbn we are giving customers the freedom to do great things.

But, that's only possible by having great partnerships with industry.

Thank you all for your time today.

That concludes the nbn Showcase today, but our work together continues.

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