

HP Mission Critical Partnership Drives Business Results for NEC



NEC

A major New Zealand telecommunication provider's popular 0800 and 0900 services support tens of thousands of New Zealand businesses every day. For many, they're a business life-line and a direct channel to their customers. Their success is built on service availability and dependability.

HP customer case study:
NEC New Zealand
Industry: IT and Telecommunications

Objectives:

- Support NEC's Advanced Intelligent Network platform with high availability and ensure no more than three minutes downtime a year is achieved (99.999% availability).
- Improved change management processes, risk mitigation and achieve a better return on IT.
- Evolve IT operations to industry best practice.
- Enhance business agility and employ continuous process improvement.

Approach:

- Evolution of the partnership to deliver a formal ITSM assessment and create and execute a Service Improvement Plan (SIP).
- Partnership between HP and NEC to align the IT and business goals and introduce a process of continuous improvement.
- Deliver Mission Critical Partnership with 6hr Call-to-repair reactive support.
- Manage the IT infrastructure and ensure high availability via single point of accountability and direct connection to technical specialists.
- Leverage best-in-class practices by employing ITIL methodology to create continual service-level improvement.

Benefits:

- Improved performance and return on NEC's IT investment through reducing operational costs and improving IT operations performance.
- Improved agility and synergy between IT and the business via the adoption of ITIL and proactive change management.
- High infrastructure availability with accelerated recovery and restoration processes and direct access to technical specialists, leading to NEC meeting and exceeding customer availability requirements of 99.999% year-on-year.
- Reduced financial risk and increased marketplace credibility.
- More flexibility and agility-customer support features are tailored to the business.



Telecommunications solution provider, NEC, is responsible for maintaining these 0800 and 0900 services and other intelligent call management services to a level of 99.999% availability. Based on their service level agreements, downtime not only impacts on the Telecommunication Providers' customers, it impacts on NEC's revenue and reputation as well.

In partnership with HP's Mission Critical Services, NEC has delivered guaranteed platform availability and management for the past eight years. Not only has the partnership delivered a 100% record of fault-free operation, it has helped the telecommunication provider manage ongoing platform expansion and change.

NEC in New Zealand

For over 30 years, NEC has carved an enviable reputation in New Zealand as a highly effective and reliable supplier of information and network technology solutions to a range of organisations in New Zealand, including those from the electronic, broadcasting, and communications industries. Interestingly, NEC built New Zealand's first digital telephone exchange in 1982 and continues to be a pivotal force in the evolution of New Zealand's communications network.

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Leonard Dench, General Manager, NEC



Supporting New Zealand's telecommunications backbone

NEC developed, deployed, and now maintains the NEAX telephone exchanges and its Advanced Intelligent Network (AIN) used throughout New Zealand.

The AIN is a highly-available platform that delivers intelligent call management and routing features across public communications networks, supporting advanced telecommunications services such as number portability – a feature that was incorporated in early 2007 – as well as 0800, 0900, and Calling Card services.

Together, this technology forms the basis of New Zealand's telecommunication backbone, supporting up to 80,000 calls every five minutes, every day.

Prior to 2001, NEC supported the platform in conjunction with its global colleagues and partners. However, increasing customer demand for the NZTP's 0800 and other advanced call routing services, as well as new service levels that required NEC to ensure the platform's 99.999% availability, prompted a change in approach.

“Not only were our existing support processes convoluted, but they meant any issues were taking days to resolve. As a result, our risk management costs were high and there was a flow-on impact on our customer,” says NEC General Manager, Leonard Dench.

NEC took the opportunity to consider what support a New Zealand-based partner might provide as a first point of call, with global support available if required.

“We required a solution that would allow us to refresh what we called our mission critical offering, while reducing double-handling and delivering to the required service levels,” he says.

“HP responded with a tailored mission critical solution that did just that. Since then, we haven't looked back and neither have our customers.”



HP Mission Critical for NEC

HP has been delivering its Mission Critical service to NEC since 2001, maximising infrastructure availability and improving performance using an ITIL-based management framework – an internationally accepted approach to best practice, designed to ensure the delivery of high quality IT services.

HP's Mission Critical Service ensured the high availability of NEC's AIN platform by implementing a holistic approach to service management; one that extended beyond the management of the NZTP's infrastructure to incorporate the management of people and processes as well.

"It's an approach that resulted in improved reliability and quick and efficient problem resolution", says Leonard Dench, General Manager.

"By extending the scope of support beyond the technology layer, HP developed a much deeper knowledge of our business. With increased knowledge came an intuitive knowledge of our business that in turn helped enhance our internal technology performance and service quality without compromising availability or performance."

"HP's Mission Critical support solution involves assigning a dedicated Account Support Manager (ASM) to work closely with NEC, complemented by a dedicated on-call support team located in HP's Australian-based Mission Critical Solution Centre."
Leonard Dench, General Manager, NEC

The Mission Critical Solution Centre provides NEC with a proactive 24 hour monitoring service, tailored to ensure critical platform failures are recognised and remedied before they lead to expensive downtime of the platform.

As well as first-contact problem resolution, the Mission Critical Solution Centre identifies trends and potential problems and verifies that calls are handled in a timely manner. This helps NEC to resolve problems quickly so that business disruptions are minimised and customer satisfaction is increased.

It's an approach that finds favour with NEC. "The entire HP support team understand NEC's business as well as the technology behind it. More importantly, they intimately understand the real business cost to NEC if the platform fails.

"The ability to identify trends and areas of performance enhancement is an added benefit. Our relationship has deepened as a result, to the point where HP Mission Critical is an integrated part of our market offering," says Dench.

HP Mission Critical is all about enabling customers to meet their most demanding service level agreements, says Mark Penfold, HP Technology Services Business Manager NZ.

"The simple philosophy is to make changes proactively to avoid any failures or issues from arising and having a plan in place to respond and repair within committed times."

"With NEC, we achieve this by focusing on maintaining platform availability, managing change and mitigating risk. For example, NEC's AIN platform uses HP servers located in geographically diverse data centres to distribute calls to their required destinations. Based on time of day, geographic location, and required destination the platform directs the call to the most appropriate place."

"With our Mission Critical service and highly reliable hardware we could deliver what was required. Eight years later, the platform has a record of 99.999% availability, and because we are constantly working with NEC in their upgrade planning, we're confident of maintaining that record," says Mark Penfold.

The business result

For NEC, HP Mission Critical Services has delivered real business results:

- 99.999% platform availability; maximise availability and performance across the environment
- A significant reduction in risk to financial position and marketplace credibility
- Accelerated recovery and restoration process and direct access to technical specialists who take action to resolve problems and have leading-edge remote technologies and tools
- Customer satisfaction and confidence in NEC

"We could have spent a huge amount of money on an absolutely fault tolerant architecture. But the delivery price would be much, much higher and even then there would be issues," says Dench.

"By providing high reliability systems and better support in partnership with HP we can deliver the same or better for less. And that cost-saving is passed on directly to the customer."

Looking to the future

The NEC and HP Mission Critical partnership is about constantly looking for ways to improve the service delivered to the customer.

"The key with HP is that they are very proactive," says Dench.

"HP is constantly auditing our practices and looking for improvement. Overall the risk to our systems is lower, reducing the likelihood of penalties for not meeting service level agreements. We pass those cost savings on to our customer and obviously their risks are reduced as well."

"The relationship is open, informative and proactive. There are never any surprises. They also offer a good cultural fit. We're both about delivering what the customer wants."

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