Rapid Service Development with Acision's Service Factory

Market Context

The telecoms industry is facing change factors that have never been experienced before. These forces include entry by non-telco internet players, SaaS and hosting technologies, and radical changes in consumer behaviours. The impact on the operator is significant, forcing the need for rapid adaptations and nimble responses to business model threats.

Operator requirements though remain the same: increase revenue, reduce cost and reduce churn. However, speed and agility are also now key allowing the operator to respond to outside business threats such as Over-the-Top (OTT) applications.

For operators, time is the enemy – long vendor development cycles and 18 month implementations will not enable operators to be competitive. The operator that wins the race to the future will partner with a vendor whose delivery model enables rapid implementation of new services and revenue opportunities. That provider is Acision with its Service Factory delivery model and rapid development process.

Acision Service Factory

Acision's Service Factory is a services development and delivery model that enables rapid evaluation, development and delivery of services for the mobile telecommunications provider. This overall approach includes the internal development tools used as well as the techniques and processes used to identify interesting service concepts and quickly move them from prototype to live availability.

The following illustration shows the Service Factory concept in the context of the overall Acision architecture. Services are developed using the internal tool sets within the service orchestration framework and the functional capabilities offered by Acision core products or certified partners. This allows services to be created in a matter of days or weeks when other development cycles may take years. Services, once created, are then placed in the services repository called the "Service Factory Store", a web-based interface that allows the customer to discover, test, trial, order and manage their services.

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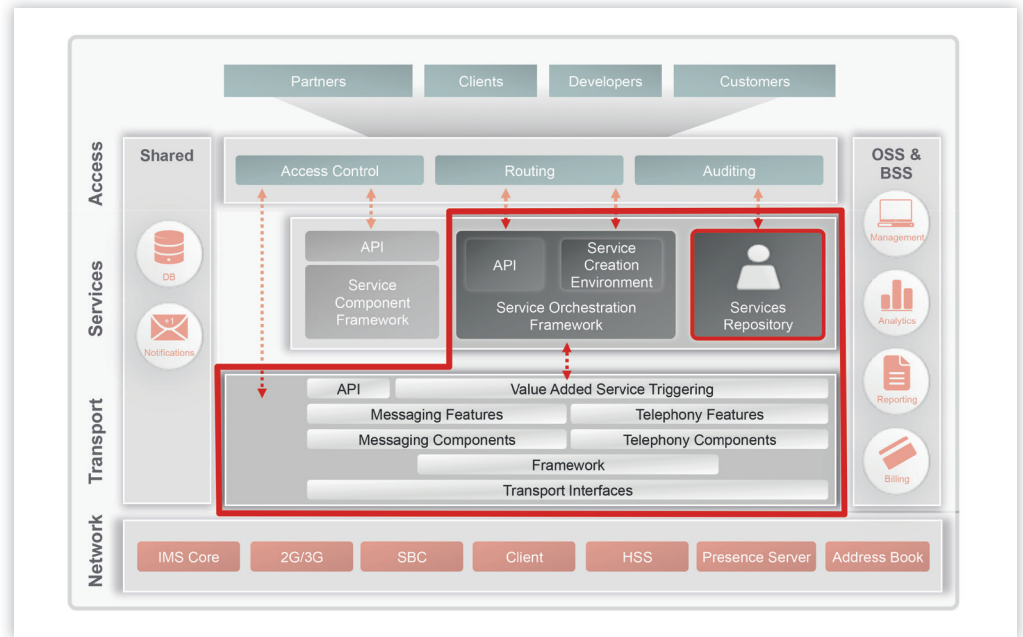
Acision's End State Architecture

Service Factory Store and Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is a critical factor in the success of the Service Factory. This is enabled by a user interface called the Service Factory Store that provides the format for continuous input and feedback from prototype to production delivery. The close engagement between the customer, Acision Product Management and the Development team eliminates the typical long requirements gathering process, and enables a "hyper-agile" development cycle. Working together, these teams hone the concepts, identify issues and explore market opportunities.
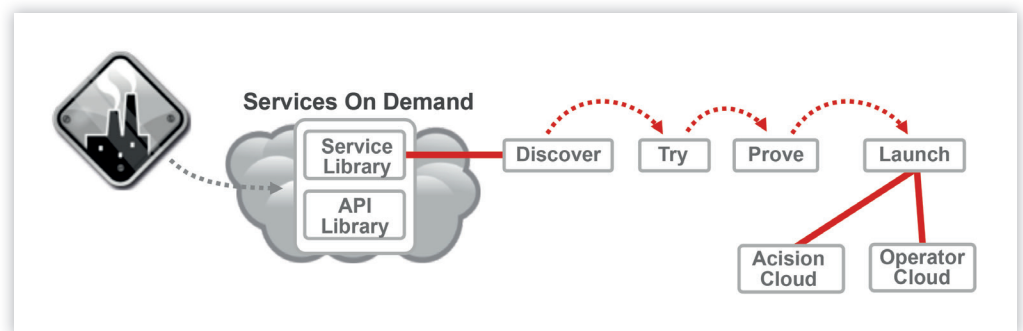
The primary function of the Service Factory Store is to enable mobile network operator customer to login anytime they choose and discover what services are available, what is being planned and what concepts are being investigated. Customer feedback is actively sought for service concepts in the prototype and proof of concept phases, and feedback may be provided directly on the services page for all authenticated Store users to review or sent privately to the product management team.
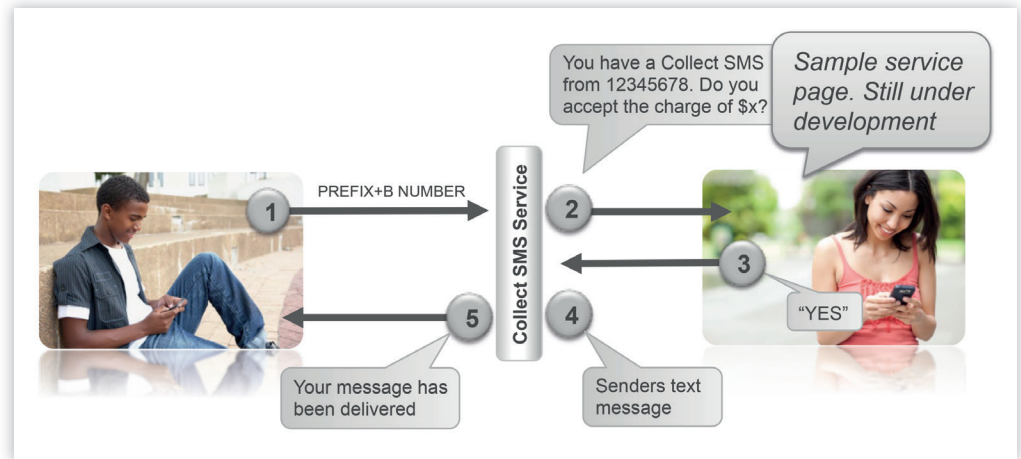
Sample Service Factory Store Page

Alternatively, for situations where the customer has a keen interest, a concept workshop can be requested as well to investigate the opportunity in detail. For services that are in live production state, the customer may also use the Store to start or request trials, plan market tests and order the live service.

Operator Impact

Mobile network operators seeking ways to remain relevant to the consumer need to act quickly to respond to new threats on the horizon. The historic process of multi-year long development and implementation cycles no longer allows an operator to remain competitive. What operators need now is speed, agility and some old fashioned experimentation.

Acision's Service Factory provides the operator with the ability to test, trial and launch services as quickly as the market demands. The specific services consumed can have a significant impact on the primary operator KPI's of increasing revenue, reducing costs and improving subscriber loyalty or reducing churn.

• Library of standardised services ready 'on demand'

• Services available as an Acision cloud service or for deployment in the customer's cloud environment.

• New offers provide marketing differentiation and subscriber revenue

• Customer churn may be addressed with specially designed services

• Trial process provides easy to prove business cases with minimal internal justification

• New service concepts can be explored and implemented rapidly using the Service Factory model

• Flexible product bundling – you can chose what products to offer and whether to package them as tailored offers

• The Service Factory model decreases risk allowing easy and rapid prototype and proof of concepts building out 'usage based' business cases.

The Service Factory & Rapid Development Process

The key value of the Service Factory is the ability to easily entertain and quickly act on interesting concepts. In this way, the Service Factory is not just a platform for design and implementation of Services but is a process that allows concepts to quickly move from conception through to production. Because the fundamental elements are already proven service capabilities, new services can be created and implemented quickly without going through long testing or development cycles. New services can be created quickly for Prototype stage and rapidly moved to Proof of Concept and then into Production where they are available to the operator as part of a library of services. This enables you to market test new products quickly and cheaply, with minimal investment in cost, time and resources.

New services are developed utilising a library of fundamental capabilities joined together in new ways. Examples of fundamental capabilities in the Service Factory library are:

- Message ingestion

- Message storage

- Message delivery (SMS / MMS / Voice / Video)

- Notification triggers

- Content transcription

- Contextual enablers

- Personalisation

- Reporting / Monitoring / Charging Enablers

- Subscription / Self Care / Provisioning Enablers

- Interface / Dialogue Enablers

The Service Factory model enables the rapid development of a wide ranging library of standardised services available on demand for our mobile network operator customers. The same development model may also be used to build specialised services custom-designed for a specific operator challenge. As a development framework, the Service Factory can also utilise capabilities provided by third parties either from certified partners or the mobile network operators themselves.

All services developed in the Service Factory will be available to the operator in a library of services for implementation as an Acision cloud service deployment and deployment in the customer's cloud environment. This makes testing, trials, and purchases of services a simple, fast process.

Service Factory Process

The Service Factory has four distinct stages for Services creation starting with idea/concept identification to final sale and delivery into the operator environment – **Initial Concept Backlog, Prototype, Proof of Concept** and **Production**.

Unlike traditional product development cycles, the Services Factory is not a linear delivery model in which one product must be completed before another is started. Service concept may be initiated at any time and move iteratively between Backlog, Prototype and Proof of Concept before proceeding to Production stage. As market or customer demands shift and change, Services will move up or down the prioritisation list. Ideally, we seek to have a library of service concepts in a continuous state of evolution in which customer feedback and input contribute to a final production service that exceeds customer expectations.
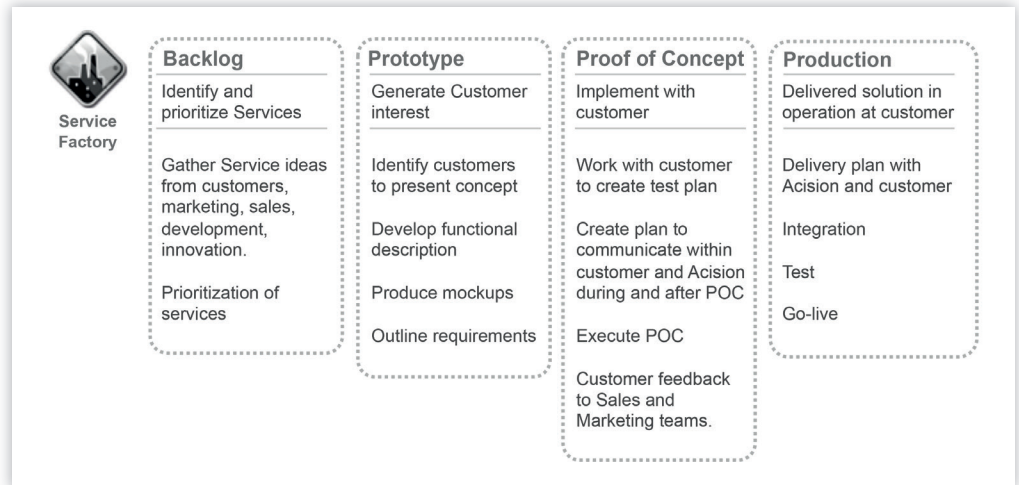
Service Factory Process

Backlog – The initial concept Backlog is the internal starting place for concepts that may become part of the Service Factory process. In the Backlog stage, ideas and concepts are gathered and communicated to internal teams, partners, selected customers or other stakeholders who may provide concept feedback. When a service concept has been validated as technically feasible and commercially sound, the concept is prioritised and moved to the Service Factory Store in Prototype phase to gauge customer interest.

Prototype – The Prototype phase allows the customer to get a first look at how the concept would function and to provide feedback. Prototypes may range from simple mock-ups to actual working software, whatever is sufficient for customer validation. Functional descriptions, commercial presentations and fact sheets are available for communicating the Service concept to the customer.

Proof of Concept (POC) – Development of a functional service and testing by the customer are part of this phase. Acision and customer responsibilities are defined for implementation of the POC. Upon completion of the POC, customer input is gathered to determine the next stage, which can be a return to previous phases in the Service Factory process for rework on the Service or progression to the Production phase.

Production – The outcome of this phase is a service ready for consumption by an operator. These services completed will reside in a service library ready for market launch by the operator. Ultimately, a service delivery plan is developed and agreed to by Acision and the customer, then the plan is executed. Service delivery options may include deployment in network or utilisation from the cloud services environment. Complete information and documentation required to enable the sales process are available including commercial presentation and fact sheets, sales guidance, pricing and billing.

Service Factory Example: Sponsored Messaging

Sponsored Messaging is a Service developed using the Service Factory process. The initial concept came from a network operator with a specific challenge. They had a significant volume of Collect SMS messages that were not acted upon because the receiver did not have adequate credit to accept the collect charges. Sponsored Messaging allows the operator to provide a backup funding mechanism for the transaction using the value of a sponsored message. This not only provides out-of-credit consumers with additional funds but also creates a new revenue stream using advertiser's sponsorship. Using the consumer opt-in, advertisers can deliver sponsored SMS credits to engage consumers who would otherwise be inaccessible.
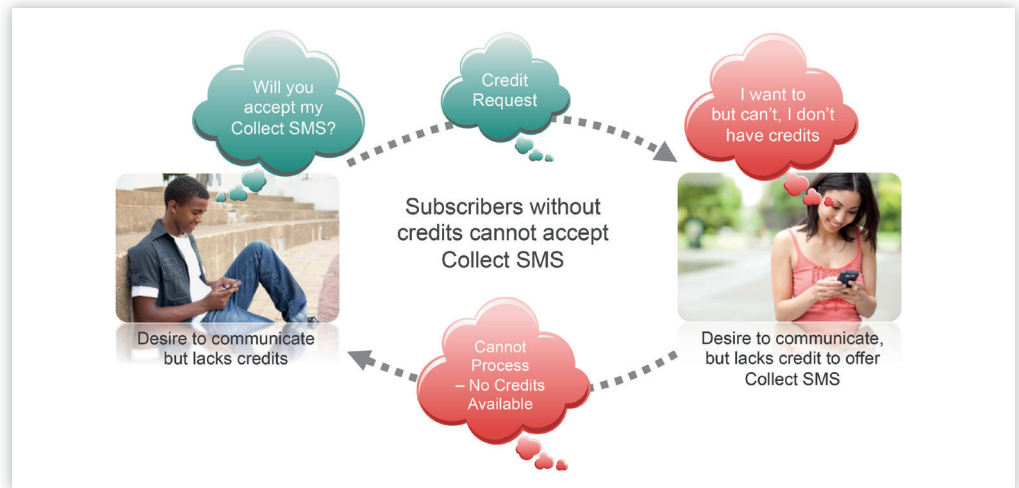
The specific challenge the network operator faced was a high volume of Collect SMS messages being rejected by the recipient, typically due to lack of credit. Acision's Sponsored SMS service solves this challenge by allowing the out-of-credit recipient to opt-in to sponsored messages and receive credits to allow them to accept Collect SMS messages. With Sponsored SMS, operators are able to provide advertisers the ability to sponsor SMS messages with advertiser branding and messaging embedded in the text.
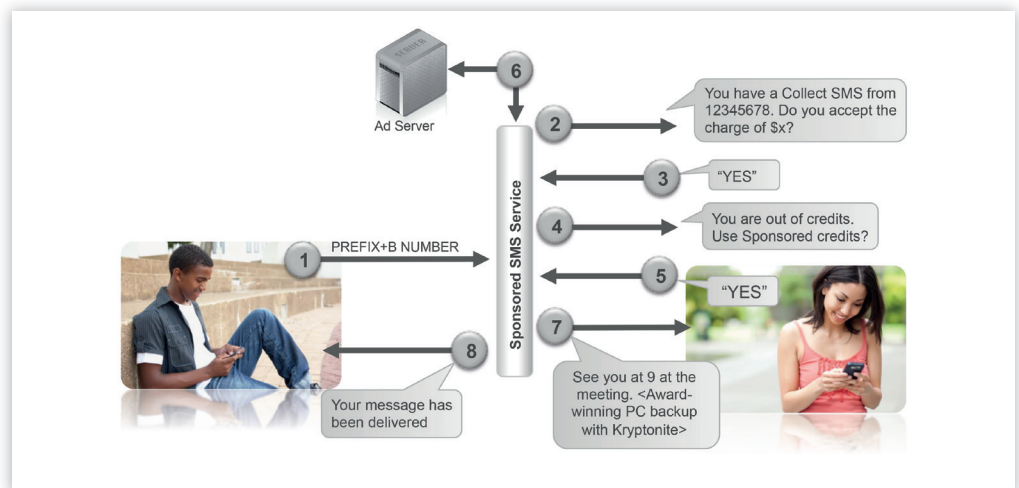
Conclusion

Acision's Service Factory is a new concept in the Telecommunications industry to rapidly and cost effectively identify, develop and implement services for the operator. Proven Acision Service capabilities are used to assemble new services that are exposed to customers, via the Service Factory Store, for feedback, further development and later, production. By enabling the operator to test and trial a service using real world experience and validation, the Store enables the customer to create real "usage based" business models. Plus, typical service pricing models are based on actual usage so that costs are balanced with value. These values to the operator include creating new revenue opportunities, reducing costs, improving subscriber loyalty or positioning the operator against other business threats.

Why Acision

Based on its unparalleled experience in messaging, Acision is uniquely equipped to deliver the future of mobile messaging services. Acision's messaging solutions power innovation and profitable growth for operators and service providers across the globe:

• The No.1 enabler of the world's leading messaging service – SMS

• Powering more than 2 billion subscribers around the world

• Delivering over one trillion text and multimedia messages annually

• Over 2,000 messaging systems live today