SPARK NEW ZEALAND IGNITES GROWTH AND INNOVATION WITH NETWORK VISIBILITY

Spark nz

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Customer

- Largest telecom services provider in New Zealand
- Headquartered in Auckland
- Over 5,700 employees
- 2017 revenues of $3.6B

Goal

Gain unified, end-to-end network visibility to improve operational efficiency, and support innovation and growth.

Challenge

Consolidate its disjointed collection of legacy network performance management tools onto a single, unified platform.

Solution

SevOne Data Platform with carrier-grade capabilities for collecting, analyzing and visualizing network performance data.

Results

- Consolidating five NPM tools down to one, improving TCO and streamlining the function.
- Greatly improved data collection and accuracy.
- Real-time, end-to-end visibility across IT operations.
- Better information more easily provided to customers.

THE ORGANIZATION

Spark is a word that connotes life, potential, energy, and creativity. That's what Spark New Zealand (NZ) strives to enable among New Zealanders every day.

With over $3.5 billion in annual revenues, Spark NZ is the country's largest telecom carrier. It provides fixed line, mobile telephony, Internet, data and wireless network services to millions of individuals and thousands of businesses throughout New Zealand.

To increase its business agility and drive growth, Spark is actively pursuing digital transformation. This involves using digital technologies to improve the customer experience with stronger wireless offerings, new efficiencies in service delivery, and streamlined and automated operations.

In each of these key areas, network performance is a critical element. Reliable, high-quality, and cost-effective network services are a 'must-have' for the superior customer experience that Spark NZ is striving to continually deliver. But doing that while the company is growing and changing was creating some challenges. That's why Spark NZ decided to invest in making improvements.

THE CHALLENGE

As a company, Spark NZ has experienced its share of transformational change over the years. The latest, its digital transformation initiative mentioned above, is a drive to operate with more agility, efficiency and responsiveness in order to become more customer-focused.

As it pursued these goals, the Spark NZ team quickly realized that it needed equally agile network performance management (NPM) capabilities to support the operational changes it was making.

What Spark NZ had, however, was a patchwork of legacy NPM tools. With each system providing only partial coverage, it was difficult and time consuming for Spark NZ's NetOps and IT teams to gather and analyze performance data, assess problems and come up with solutions, and then take decisive action to resolve issues. Following are brief descriptions of some of the more significant challenges these tools were creating.

- **Incomplete data –** With the inconsistent and incomplete polling capabilities of its legacy systems, Spark NZ's team had to manually piece together network performance data. This slowed event analysis and remediation efforts, and created risks of erroneous items being included in client reports.

- **Limited visibility –** Without unified, end-to-end network visibility, it was difficult for Spark NZ's DevOps team to model and test the impact of moving to automated networking processes. This was slowing down key network automation projects.

- **Inability to scale –** Spark NZ's legacy NPM tools clearly lacked the scalability and flexibility required to handle the more dynamic, digitally driven network operations the company was implementing. The company needed a more comprehensive, flexible and scalable NPM solution to keep supporting its growth and evolving operations.

In short, the company realized that its legacy NPM tools were too limited and cumbersome to support their changing needs—and they were too costly as well. Spark NZ needed to make a change. They needed to consolidate their NPM tool set while also driving down TCO. That's when they reached out to SevOne.

THE SOLUTION

Spark NZ's overarching goals for this project were to consolidate its NPM tool set, drive better TCO by reducing costs, improve customer reporting, and enable greater operational agility and flexibility. To achieve these goals, the NetOps team set three key criteria in its selection process. The system they were looking for needed to deliver:

- **More complete data collection –** Comprehensive, accurate and normalized coverage of all types of network, machine, and user experience data, including flows, logs, metrics, and metadata—with the scalability and flexibility to handle future requirements.

- **Enhanced network visibility –** Real-time, end-to-end views of the company's entire network infrastructure and IT operations from a 'single pane of glass'—all automated, with no manual stitching together of disparate datasets or reports required.

- **Improved customer reporting –** Provide more accurate, timely and insightful performance reports to customers to document SLA conformance and other performance metrics, and facilitate communication and collaboration that promotes greater customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The Spark NZ project team conducted an extensive and rigorous evaluation of several NPM solutions from industry-leading vendors, including SevOne. Each of these other products fell short for reasons that included insufficient data collection, overly complicated reporting, and limited network visibility. In addition, none of those products offered the scalability and flexibility that Spark NZ required.

Unlike the other products tested, the SevOne Data Platform checked off all of the boxes on the team's must-have list. It offered the most comprehensive data collection, complete end-to-end network visibility, and intuitive reporting. And with superior flexibility and unlimited scalability, the SevOne Platform could keep pace with Spark NZ's changing business and NPM needs.

With the SevOne Platform winning the head-to-head comparison test, the Spark NZ team decided to give it a trial by fire. That came in the form of proof of concept (POC) projects with some of Spark NZ's most demanding and critical teams, including Tier 2 and Tier 3 network groups, as well as senior NetOps teams. Each of these POCs was very successful, with highly positive feedback and strong user acceptance across the board.

"These are tough reviewers who weren't big fans of some of the tools we trialed with them before," said Graham Prowse, Dev Ops Manager for Spark NZ and the lead on this project. "When the glowing reviews for the SevOne Platform came in from all the teams, we knew we had a winner."

RESULTS TO DATE

After finalizing its selection, Spark NZ began rolling out the SevOne Data Platform during the summer of 2017. Most of the initial deployment was centered in the company's core network which covers its voice and data offerings. Today, the SevOne Platform is monitoring over 385K objects in that core network, as well as more than 20K objects in Spark NZ's Global Internet network. Additionally, the company is continuing to deploy the SevOne solution for its Digital business unit Managed Data customers, where it will become the primary collection system driving both internal and customer-facing performance dashboards.

With comprehensive data collection, complete network visibility, and powerful yet easy-to-use reporting functions, the SevOne Data Platform is certainly meeting and often exceeding the Spark NZ team's expectations.

"In all our deployments so far, we haven't encountered a single device that couldn't be polled or a metric that couldn't be captured by the SevOne Platform," added Graham Prowse. "Given the diverse and highly complex nature of our network environment, we found that really remarkable."

As for consolidation, Spark NZ is on track to replace five legacy NPM tools with the SevOne Platform. With some of those tools now swapped out, Spark NZ is already seeing significant reductions in OpEx costs with elimination of software licensing, maintenance and other associated costs. The company is also reducing CapEx cost through not having to replace or upgrade the appliances that the legacy NPM tools required.

The consolidation also is reducing the time staff members used to spend cobbling together data and reports from the various systems. Now, internal teams have detailed dashboards showing real-time and historical performance data, and corporate customers have instant access to dashboard and reports customized to meet their needs.

Based on the successes of its initial deployments, Spark NZ has plans to expand its use of the SevOne Data Platform in 2018 and beyond. One notable POC is already underway in Spark NZ's mobile network, a strategic area for the company due to its growth potential, and other expansions are planned.

CONCLUSION

By switching to the SevOne Data Platform to meet its network and infrastructure monitoring and management needs, Spark NZ is no longer having its growth and flexibility hobbled by outdated, legacy systems. Spark NZ is aligning its resources and processes for transformational change. It's a move toward more dynamic, flexible, and customer-focused ways of conducting business.

With the SevOne Platform, Spark NZ now has the data, visibility, and operational insights it needs to support this change—and the growth it will generate. Partnering with SevOne has helped Spark NZ put its energies behind this change and ignite its next phases of growth.

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CONTACT US.

To learn more about how SevOne can help your organization monitor and manage its network and digital infrastructure with speed at scale, please contact us via email at solutions@sevone.com or visit us on the Web at www.sevone.com.