



Out-of-the-Box and on to success ...

Both time-to-market and costs were crucial issues when the German discount brand FONIC was launched by its parent company Telefónica O2 Europe. And since O2 had previously launched sub-brands such as Tchibo on the Rator platform with great success, the decision to go with Rator again was already taken before the FONIC organisation was even born.

Predefined platform caused concern

So the start-up team behind FONIC found themselves in a situation where they really had no choice about their billing and rating platform, but had to go with a system already selected for them. This caused some concern within the FONIC organisation as to whether an out-of-the-box platform like Rator was open enough to cater for the customisations needed and flexible enough to keep these customisations to a minimum. On top of this, some members of the team had unrealistic expectations as to what customisation could be done in the little time available – a factor which also caused some frustration.

But all these voices were silenced by the Rator team's smooth and fast implementation and by what actually could be achieved by a very small number of well-chosen adjustments and customisations – all helping to keep implementation costs down.

Hybrid on supermarket shelves

FONIC was launched in September 2007 as a discount brand and is in reality a SIM-only hybrid between pre- and postpaid, operating on O2's net and aimed at offering the lowest price on the German market. The hybrid-structure was chosen to ensure both appeal for younger segments (mainly prepaid) and a steady flow of income from direct bank transfer payments (postpaid).

And since there are no FONIC concept-stores, subscriptions can only be bought and topped up online at www.fonic.de or in about 4000 Lidl, real or DM supermarkets all over Germany. The FONIC website

runs on the standard Rator Webshop module, which contains all the functionalities needed for a no-fuss brand such as FONIC, thus eliminating the need for costly additional web-functionalities.

Rator and IN integration

"The chosen hybrid structure caused some challenges in the implementation process", explains Niklas Schübler, overall Project Manager for the FONIC project and the main person responsible for the implementation on the FONIC side.



*Niklas Schübler,
Project Manager for the FONIC project.*

"The fact that the Rator system had to interact with our IN (Intelligent Network) when handling the pre-paid rating for us offered some hassle, but the Rator team fixed it with a few work-arounds, and everything was ready in time to launch exactly on the scheduled launch-day."

And he adds, *"In general, all interaction with the Rator team was extremely smooth and professional – they always responded promptly and worked fast and in a dedicated way"*.





FONIC and the bright future

FONIC is currently using several Rator components, such as Customer Care, Self Care, Webshop, and finally Self-registration, which was developed especially for them.

In its first year, 2007, FONIC gained approx. 200,000 customers and Niklas Schüßler says the FONIC management feel confident that the Rator platform is capable of growing with FONIC in future. And they see absolutely no problems in scalability using the Rator system. The current aim is to be among the top three discount mobile brands in Germany by 2010 – so a lot of growth is planned.

O2 reference and acknowledgement

“The Rator/FONIC implementation has become a reference project for top O2 management because it went so smoothly and fast”, Niklas Schüßler adds.

The process was innovative for O2, who are not used to out-of-the-box solutions. *“But we found that the advantage of the Rator system over bigger, heavier systems is that, even though the Rator solution might not be as sophisticated as a 100% tailor-made system, it implements faster and worked perfectly from the beginning – no unpleasant production-stops or beginner hiccups.”*, he continues.

And the fact that CDRator personnel were stationed with FONIC made the entire process run more smoothly. Intercultural communication is always tricky, but Niklas Schüßler says that the fact that CDRator-personnel were sitting right across the table from FONIC and O2 project-members, offering a dynamic and informal dialog, overcame a lot of potential problems.

*For information about FONIC:
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