

infonova

Smart Grid: A New Customer Experience

InterComms talks to Markus Berger, Salzburg AG and Daniel Kuschinsky, Infonova, about how Salzburg AG delivers a green solution and offers improved customer service based on an Infonova Service Management BSS platform



*Daniel Kuschinsky
Industry Lead CableTV and Utilities, Infonova*

Daniel Kuschinsky has more than ten years of professional experience including consulting and account management of leading telecommunication- and utility companies.

He is responsible for projects spanning Design, Implementation and Transformation of OSS, BSS and VoIP, as well as shaping new business models in the Broadband Cable industry.

Daniel's deep Telco and Cable knowledge is a valuable input to assist Utilities to evolve their capabilities to support real-time and customer facing requirements.



*Markus Berger
Asset and Project Manager for Internet topics at Salzburg AG*

Markus Berger has more than 23 years of professional experience in IT & Project Management. As Asset Manager and Project Manager for all Internet related topics at Salzburg AG, Markus has been responsible for the implementation of a number of successful several projects.

Salzburg AG is an Energy, Infrastructure and Utility provider based in Salzburg in Austria.

Q: Following on from our last discussion, how have you seen the market's need change and do you perceive an upward trend?

A: Definitely – the markets are experiencing an upward trend. Residential spending has increased, economies are on the growth-path again so the future prospects are seen positively and all organizations are focusing on the customer.

Telco-Operators, Utilities, Media-Houses, Financial Institutions

and HealthCare Providers are heavily investing in the means to support, enhance and maintain Customer Intimacy.

The race for the customer is on as new players enter the market. The central question for many companies is: "Who will reign the living room?" At Infonova, we believe the best way to address this is to enable ecosystems where multiple parties can partner together to deliver customers' needs with the certainty that the monetization faithfully delivers the appropriate revenue to all partners.

▶ of Europe's larger power companies. We expect to be able to announce more on this by TM Management World in Dublin.

Q: The R6 product is also described as helping with green issues, how does this work?

A: Installing a Smart Meter by itself does not deliver a green solution. Being able to define how to use the Smart Meter remotely or have it perform certain tasks dependent on certain conditions is where one is able to talk about green scenarios.

Infonova's multi-tenant concept-to-cash R6 platform provides each tenant operator with their own concept-to-cash capability so that each tenant can run their own business. Since R6 is service technology agnostic, this enables the tenant's product manager to define services in their own industry language, as well as the capabilities to define how the service will operate under any given scenario.

Looking at an example for a Smart Grid operator using R6... most utilities have a time of day when the power-grid has excess power that will be wasted unless used. The R6 SmartGrid Product Manager can automate a trigger at a certain threshold that sends out messages to those who have registered and ask the question, "if you have put the clothes in the washing machine, the powder in the tray and closed the door – we can now start your washing

machine and you will get a 10% discount for the next three hours". Several thousand customers reply with "yes" from their mobile device, and the available power in the grid is consumed.

Q: Infonova has been praised and awarded for your product line where do you see yourselves in 12 months time?

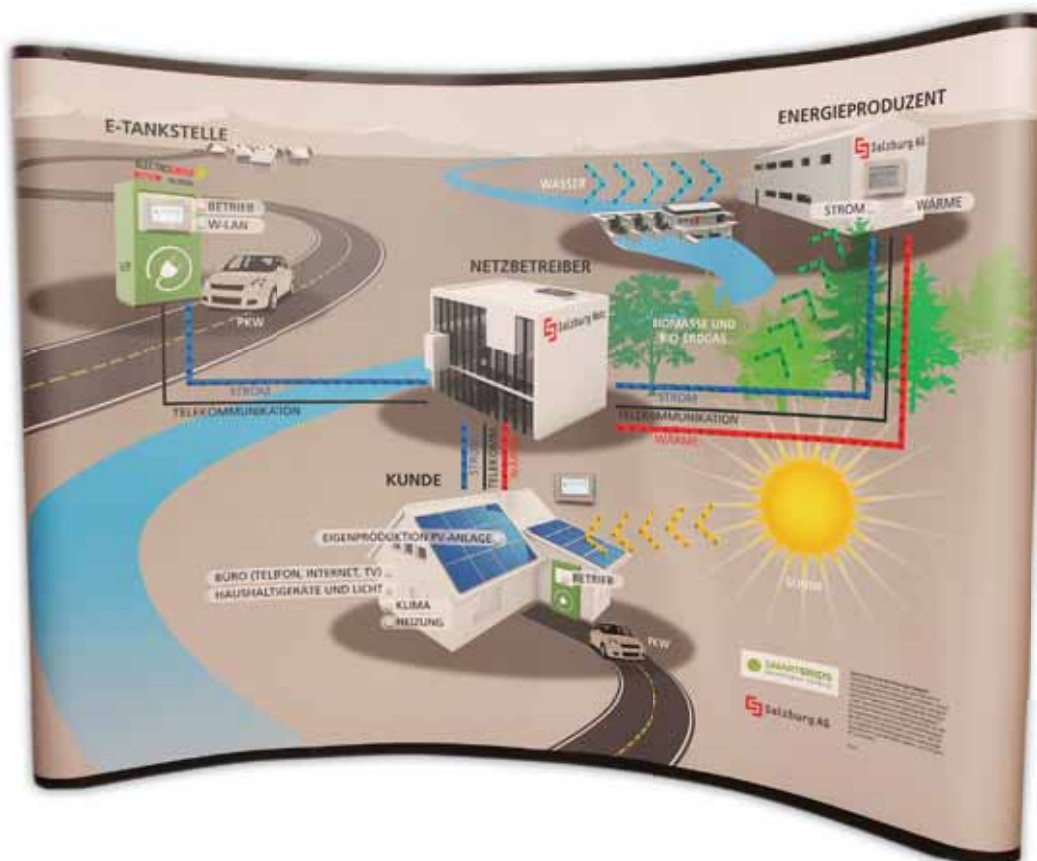
A: Infonova's R6 is proving to be very agile. It can overlay and orchestrate existing systems and can support multiple industries and business models at the same time – enabling true ecosystem orchestration and monetization. From the smallest Apps developer to the largest multi-nationals, many of them are seeking ways to deliver and monetize their services in combination as cross-industry 2.0 solutions.

Moreover, we are seeing a strong interest to use repeatable solutions as opposed to bespoke that are normally "hard-wired"... therefore, Infonova's multi-tenant, technology agnostic concept-to-cash R6 platform is a strong candidate to be the corner stone for a number of significant cross-industry ecosystems.

Infonova are excited about the future!

For more information visit:

www.infonova.com



► **Q: Infonova is working with Salzburg AG, to provide better customer access information, how did the project come about?**

A: Salzburg AG is a multi-service operator, offering power, gas, cable TV, internet and VoIP services. The project was initiated due to our long standing relationship over many years – supported by multiple successful project implementations.

Some years back, Infonova implemented a central Service Management Platform “SMP” to transact product information between legacy systems, connecting Salzburg AG’s legacy ERP system and the access networks (both HFC, IP). This platform handles the provisioning of IP services over HFC as well as the workflows. It also supports the customer information portal and other channels such as iPhone App, interactive TV portal and Customer Self Care Interface.

Then several external influences occurred: firstly, the European Commission introduced regulation specifying the replacement of traditional meters and that new Smart Meters must support 15 min intervals for meter reading, secondly customer demand was rising to receive real time information, thirdly utilities are facing increased competitive requirements for short time to market, quick turnaround cycles for new products and lean processes.

Accordingly, Salzburg AG decided to run a customer experience trial using Smart Meters, managing them in a similar approach as they had incorporated and integrated their IP service offerings, using mediation, real time rating, and the customer interaction portal. Infonova implemented a Smart Meter Data Management system and integrated this service within the existing Infonova SMP so that the central customer information portal spans both utility & telco services.

As a result Salzburg AG provides their customers direct access to account information such as power consumption, Internet Data Volume, itemized Telephony billing and latest invoices, as well as personal settings through their channel of choice.

Q: How are customers receiving the changes and what do they feel are the main benefits?

A: The success of Smart Meter Implementation & rollout is heavily dependent on customer’s acceptance of the value of the additional information provided as well as the experience by which the information can be accessed via the channel of the customer’s choice.

Salzburg AG offers its customers several ways to have access to their meter information. The service can be accessed by a customer with an iPad using the Salzburg App which is available via Apple® App Store. It can also be reached by customers via an interactive TV SetTopBox Portal as well as via Salzburg AG’s customer-facing web portal within the Customer Self Care. Users can even download a demo version to experience the App.

Salzburg AG received positive feedback from the customer

field trial. “This underlines Salzburg AG’s smart positioning in the market – providing the customer with a next generation experience” says DI Reinhold Ratzinger, Director for Telecom-Networks at Salzburg AG. “This project perfectly adds to our efforts in the respect of the country-wide program called Smart Grid Salzburg” he adds.

The main benefits identified in the customer field trial include instant customer information on latest spending and consumption in real time and accessible anywhere – independent from the means of communication, all enabled by the real time processing of the customer’s meter reading.

Q: What does the company feel are the main benefits and are they seeing cost reductions as part of this?

A: The prime benefit is that customers take responsibility for their own power consumption since for example, they can see what they have consumed in intervals of 15 minutes. The customer can then take the choice to vary their behaviour at their choice.

From a Salzburg AG perspective, such initiatives and similar projects do not directly impact in cost reductions. The indirect outcomes include: churn reduction, customer intimacy, customer loyalty and retention.

In addition, this type of service definitely supports Salzburg AG in both the brand positioning (“companies go green”) and marketing. The PR team can leverage the advantages from the implementation and build public awareness of Salzburg AG’s commitment to a green environment.

From the company perspective, the main benefits are: enhanced customer information, the central positioning in the end-customer’s living room (using the interactive TV portal as starting point for customer interaction). Salzburg AG has also committed to support the integration of “prosumers”, which are consumers, who additionally provide power generation and therefore are financially compensated for their contribution of power to the grid. The platform as deployed is ready to support this type of new “prosumer” relationship.

Finally, Salzburg AG expect that the future can only become more sophisticated, customers will expect detailed demand analytics and instant management of power generation and private power consumption throughout the whole Smart Grid. For the more sophisticated of these scenario requirements Salzburg AG is considering overlaying Infonova’s multi-tenant concept-to-cash service agnostic R6 platform on top of the existing systems.

Q: Where can readers see other application uses of R6 for Smart Grid?

A: The capabilities of the Infonova SMP deployed at Salzburg AG have been incorporated into Infonova’s multi-tenant concept-to-cash R6 platform.

The R6 is currently being used in a proof of concept by one ►