

MARKET RELEASE

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Market Release: Spark New Zealand completes multi-year, major systems upgrade to underpin future digital services for customers

Spark New Zealand announced today it has successfully completed a four-year long, \$200 million programme to upgrade its key customer service IT platforms.

One of the largest upgrades of its type in New Zealand corporate history, the full programme collectively saw over 52 legacy systems retired, 41 systems consolidated and over 100 million customer inventory records migrated.

Managing Director Simon Moutter said, “This is a huge milestone for Spark New Zealand. The completion of this IT systems upgrade, known as our Re-engineering Programme, has completely modernised the engine of our customer management systems ‘under the hood’ and is a foundation for future delivery of new and improved services to customers.”

The programme saw millions of customer records migrated in a series of planned upgrades from decades-old legacy systems, centred on a phone number linked to a copper line, to next-generation customer management systems based around world-class digital systems.

Planning for the programme of work commenced more than four years ago, with work beginning in earnest in 2013. The programme was completed on-time and on-budget. The final planned upgrade of the programme, focused primarily on post-paid customer systems, took place just over a week ago.

Mr Moutter said, “It’s a quantum leap that ensures our customer service systems are now fit for the digital future. It gives us significantly better customer management capabilities, with all our customers now on one system and our front-line staff having much better visibility of their products and services with us.

“It also gives us a significant competitive advantage, with Spark now arguably the only major telco in New Zealand with fully integrated and modern customer management systems providing a single view of the customer.



“Ultimately, it will provide us with a terrific platform to build the innovative and improved digital customer services that our customers want from us. This links to the formation of a new business unit, Spark Platforms, which takes effect from 1 July. This new unit will be led by Claire Barber as Spark’s Chief Digital Officer, a promotion earned through her outstanding leadership of the Reengineering Programme from start to finish.”

Dr Barber said, “Someone has described the programme as akin to changing the engines on a 747 while the plane is still flying. Given the enormous scale and complexity, we were pleased with the outcome – out of millions of customers, there were only a few thousand customers needing urgent post-upgrade assistance to correct minor problems.”

“That said, like others in the industry we know we have ongoing customer service challenges, primarily because of the increasing complexity of new technologies and the increasing demand for those complex services. We have plans in place to fix pain-points and do a better job for customers, and this programme helps give us the tools we need to do so.

“I’d like to thank our customers for their ongoing support of our business, and their patience while these system upgrades took place over the last few years. It’s up to us to now turn the benefits of this programme into truly useful and improved customer experiences.”

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