

MTN, Digital Skills Academy project boosts FTTH success

MTN and Digital Skills Academy has discovered that thorough consumer engagement has boosted the success of MTN's Fibre to the Home (FTTH) strategy.



Eric Jacobson, learning solutions manager at MTN Group.

During an Industry Partnership project between MTN and Digital Skills Academy, it was discovered that telcos stand to expedite progress by engaging directly with customers as they roll out new services across South Africa.

As part of the partnership, a cross-functional team of six participants on one of Digital Skills Academy's International BSc programmes worked remotely over a period of four months. Their primary objective was to exploit new digital methodologies to support the fast-tracking of MTN's FTTH strategy.

The team, which included employees of MTN Group, found that engaging the residents of a user-testing community resulted in an increase in take up of FTTH products - within the community and for the duration of the project.

Engagement is the solution

Eric Jacobson, learning solutions manager at MTN Group and a project participant, says that disruptions caused by the installation of physical FTTH infrastructure initially created a level of resistance in the Parkmore community, located in Johannesburg's northern suburbs. But once the participants engaged in the project began working closely with around 3,000 residents, the community gained a deeper understanding of how FTTH networks operate and the benefits it can offer.

“In conducting our research and engaging the community, we became very visible, and residents’ acceptance of the products grew,” says Jacobson. “The lessons we learnt during this project have helped shape our community engagement strategies and the learnings were passed on to Smart Village, our outsource partner in rolling out fibre networks.”

Another core part of the project was applying the user research findings to redesign the current FTTH self-help portal. This improved visibility, accessibility, desirability and credibility of the FTTH product offering”, says Jacobson.



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“As we enter the 5G era, or Fourth Industrial Revolution, economies will shift from bricks and mortar into always-accessible, virtual economies with global reach,” says Jacobson. “To support this rapid change, networks must evolve to meet shifts in customer demand. Telcos will have to reinvent themselves to become ever-connected content service providers delivering a much more customer-centric service.”

“The workforce challenge telcos need to tackle - as they face this revolution - is to efficiently and effectively develop the skills needed to build a radical transformation.”

Jacobson says that in a time of ‘doing more with less’ and driving enhanced agility and efficiency, telcos can no longer rely on traditional upskilling methods, such as classroom-based training, to improve workforce competencies

The model of the industry partnership project also gave participants a valuable opportunity to apply their skills and knowledge to a live project and build a portfolio of professional evidence. Learning-by-doing is a key component of Digital Skills Academy’s teaching approach. It enables both participants and the organisations they work for to upskill and enhance services in an agile way.

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