

A complex 3-year project with no signs of going live, turned around in 2 months and delivered in 8



A stalled project

Vodafone Group Technology had set out to create and roll out a common platform across all local operating companies.

The project was being driven by the Group Technology's Digital team and led by IBM, who were integrating Oracle technologies with a Velti content management system. The aim being to implement a standard customer portal template that was able to integrate with diverse local company back-end systems.

Vodafone Italia was the pilot operating company, adding the local IT function and its partners into the mix.

Three years on, there was no sign of the project delivering. The project was stalled and



nobody seemed to know why it wasn't moving forward nor how to change things.

Now was the time

Vodafone Group Technology had recently secured Marta Zarraga as their new Global Delivery Director and as part of her remit, Marta had inherited the project. Marta was determined that Vodafone Group Technology would turn the situation around and complete the delivery.

Having had previous experience of SQC, Marta knew of their ability to bring order to programmes and to drive the end game that leads to delivery. She asked SQC's principal, Neil Hudson, to accompany her on a fact-finding trip to Milan with the aim of examining the project and determining what needed to change.

A different outlook

A rapid assessment, with three days in the Vodafone Italia head office, surfaced many reasons for the lack of progress.

The situation on site was highly political and exceptionally fraught. Most importantly, there was a complete lack of ownership. There was no realistic plan in place and no chance of going live any time soon.

It didn't take long for SQC and Marta to recognise that an injection of leadership accompanied by a replan and reset would be essential. SQC were Marta's natural choice to lead this critical turn around.



Vodafone Italia was originally founded in 1994 as Omnitel.

Following the acquisition by the Vodafone Group in 2001 it became Omnitel Vodafone. In 2002 it changed again to Vodafone Omnitel, and then in 2003 became Vodafone Italia. In 2024 it was acquired by Swisscom and integration with Fastweb began.

Today it is managed by a single Executive Committee under the corporate brand Fastweb + Vodafone and head quartered in Ivrea and Milan.

- Turnover €7 billion (2025)
- 1,300 employees
- Over 20 million mobile phone customers and over 5 million fixed phone lines
- Operates more than 20,000 mobile sites and a proprietary fixed network spanning over 74,000 km

Focused leadership

The first thing SQC needed Vodafone Italia to do, was to replan. SQC put forward a plan for a three-stage delivery, so they could at least get a basic solution working, and then build upon that. Although the

culture and the politics were proving challenging, SQC had the backing of the senior executives, and so were able to convince all parties that collaboration, rather than contention, was in everyone's best interest.

SQC completely refreshed the way Vodafone Italia were running the project and took complete control of the leadership of the project, running daily calls, making key decisions and revising and directing how Vodafone Italia were testing the technology. On a daily basis, SQC were moving from strategic leadership through day-to-day direction to shaping the testing of this large integrated solution via critical technical problem management and resolution. All of this whilst maintaining relationships with the Vodafone Italia's CIO and with global account Directors from the partners including from IBM and Oracle.

Within three weeks a plan was established. This was followed by a period of refining responsibilities, processes and culture to accelerate delivery. After this the programme developed a successful rhythm of incremental progress and rapid problem resolution. Morale improved, conflicts dissipated and the teams became confident as the programme accelerated towards a delivery date and scope they now believed in.



Managing third parties

As expected on such a large project, there were multiple third parties involved. Oracle were providing the core technology. IBM were engaged as the systems integrator. Velti, based in Greece, were the supplier of a content management system. NTT Data were Vodafone's test service supplier.

SQC built effective relationships with all of these parties, demonstrating the knowledge and competency that allowed joint decision making even on the most specialist of topics.

"I had the opportunity to work with SQC on a critical IT program in Vodafone Italy - and I was really impressed. SQC showed a unique combination of interdisciplinary IT skills and managerial capabilities."

SQC were able to move from defining performance testing strategy to day-by-day directing and challenging the work of software vendors - outstanding! I would strongly recommend SQC."

- Michele Cosmi, Practice Director Cloud Integration, Oracle Consulting

Finally an outcome

By changing the ways of working and changing the culture of everyone involved in the project, SQC were able to get people collaborating and cooperating effectively on a common goal, rather than working in misaligned silos.

SQC delivered a functional project organisation in eight weeks and directed this organisation's successful delivery of a working solution six months later. That was eight months from first walking through the door to a successful conclusion.

"SQC joined our team at a very difficult time on one of the most difficult integration projects in Italy. Not only did they manage to get integrated and appreciated very quickly by the whole team, but they became an invaluable partner of the team."

With SQC's expertise and leadership we managed to conclude very successfully the most visible and important project of the whole year. Truly a great job."

- Nikos Angelopoulos, CIO, Vodafone Italia

"I had the pleasure of working with SQC on a complex project with a long history of issues that prevented the delivery. SQC contributed to the complete turnaround of the project creating a success story working with and coaching the entire team."

SQC combine the ability to move from whole program management to deep significant technical details that threaten the project. When you are in an IT battle without hope of victory ask for SQC's special force!"

- Emiliano Maina, Infrastructure Delivery Manager, Vodafone

About Us

SQC Technology was founded by Neil Hudson in 1991, initially as a provider of software testing services. Since our inception the range of services we offer has grown significantly. Our services now range from providing clients with advice and leadership through delivery and assurance work and into technology problem solving.

What sets us apart is our people. We have exceptionally deep expertise and we have been doing this for a very long time. Our people and teams possess both delivery and technical expertise and can work autonomously within a customer's ecosystem.

We have a culture of innovation, looking for, identifying and establishing smarter ways of doing things, with a focus on delivering the best solution for a customer's individual needs. For more information visit www.sqc.co.uk