

amdocs

**WELL BEYOND THE BASICS:**  
SELF SERVICE FOR CORPORATE CUSTOMERS

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# 1. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Corporations represent the most profitable and technologically advanced segment of the communications market today. Due to their size and complexity, they have billing, service and customer management needs distinct from those of the consumer segment.

Customer self service--empowering customers to self-manage significant aspects of their relationship with the service provider--is an integral part of service providers' efforts to differentiate themselves from competitors. It has been shown to be especially useful in helping to capture and retain the corporate customer--when strategically employed.

This paper provides guidelines for service providers seeking to establish robust self service capabilities for corporate customers that will serve as a competitive advantage. It discusses the challenges of corporate self service, why it's fundamentally different from self service for residential customers and how service providers can help corporate customers to "help themselves."

## **Want to Learn More About Serving Corporate Customers?**

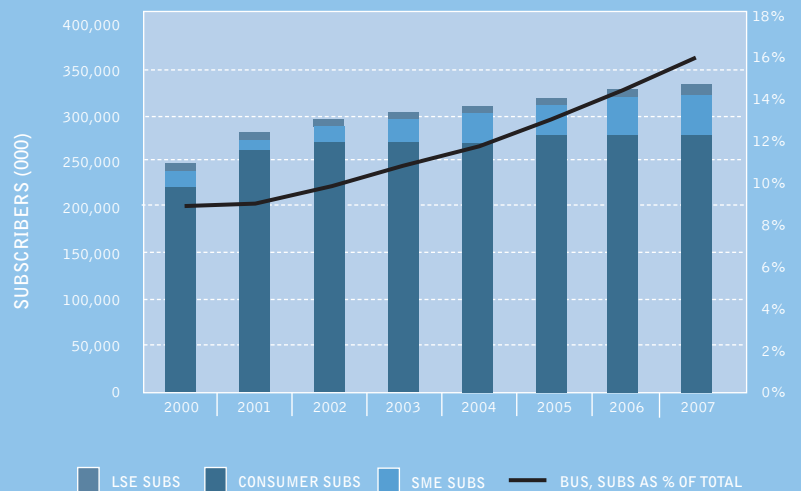
Amdocs offers a comprehensive whitepaper on corporate customer needs for business and operational support systems. The white paper entitled "Understanding The Complex Needs of the Enterprise Customer" is downloadable now from the Amdocs website ([www.amdocs.com](http://www.amdocs.com)).

## 2. IMPORTANCE OF THE CORPORATE SEGMENT

Corporations are the most profitable and technologically advanced customer segment in the communications market today. They historically have higher average revenue per user (ARPU) and higher recurring revenue per user (RRPU) than the average individual consumer. In the European wireless market, the corporate segment is the fastest growth segment, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) forecast to reach as high as 15% by 2009 (see Figure 1).

Given the tremendous revenue and growth potential of the corporate segment, it is not surprising that a service provider's ability to acquire, retain and grow corporate accounts is a key determinant of its success over the long-term. Many service providers have established strategies with which to target corporations in hopes of offsetting declines in their traditional core businesses and consumer segments. These strategies often involve self service, and so must take into account the complexity of most corporate customers' self service needs. In fact, if the self service offering doesn't adequately address and absorb this complexity, simplifying the experience for the corporate user, it loses its power as a differentiator.

**FIGURE 1:**  
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SME) ARE THE FASTEST-GROWING MOBILE SUBSCRIBER GROUP IN WESTERN EUROPE  
(PYRAMID PREDICTIONS, MARCH 2003)



### 3. FROM DE RIGEUR TO DIFFERENTIATOR

Service providers have offered what we know today as “web self service” since the late 1990s in varying forms, such as stand-alone websites or customer portals. The primary function of web self service historically has been to provide access to corporate account and billing information, with the aim of driving down call center costs reducing telephone billing enquiries.

Early attempts to implement advanced transactional self service capabilities like online bill payment and account maintenance were not consistently successful. As outgrowths of legacy systems developed on a line-of-business basis, they lacked the systems alignment required to complete end-to-end transactions. The result was channel, process and data inconsistencies and, worse, inconsistent, frustrating experiences for providers’ most lucrative customer segment.

Managing communications services can be time-consuming for companies. Without self service, imperative activities such as bill analysis and cost allocations can only be done using CD or printed reports that lack the real-time capabilities and flexibility required by communications managers. Providing effective self service to this segment could be a real win, for both corporate customers and service providers. (See Table 1.)

Providing robust self service capabilities is not just a “nice to have” for corporate customers. It is an essential part of the corporate customer experience that can drive choice of provider, as much if not more than price. The easier and more transparent the experience, the more valuable it is--and the more likely to generate loyalty and long-term customer profitability.

SERVICE PROVIDER BENEFITS	CUSTOMER BENEFITS
Improved customer satisfaction and retention	Accurate and timely information
Increased intelligence about customers	Increased accessibility and 24x7 availability
Increased up-sell opportunities and revenue	Improved solutions to business objectives
Lower offline interaction and administrative costs	More integrated solutions to business objectives
Reduced call center reliance and staff levels	Automated troubleshooting process
Improved process integration and operational efficiency	Increased and faster access
Differentiation of customer service	Targeted problem resolution
Consistency in level of service	Targeted product and service information

**TABLE 1:**  
SELF-SERVICE BENEFITS  
THE YANKEE GROUP, 2003

## 4. WHAT'S SPECIAL ABOUT CORPORATE SELF SERVICE?

As discussed above, corporate self service has different and more complex requirements than self care systems for residential customers. But self service has another, less obvious benefit: if implemented well, it will be adopted at greater rates. Let's explore how these two factors fit into the differentiation equation.

### 4.1 COMPLEX REQUIREMENTS

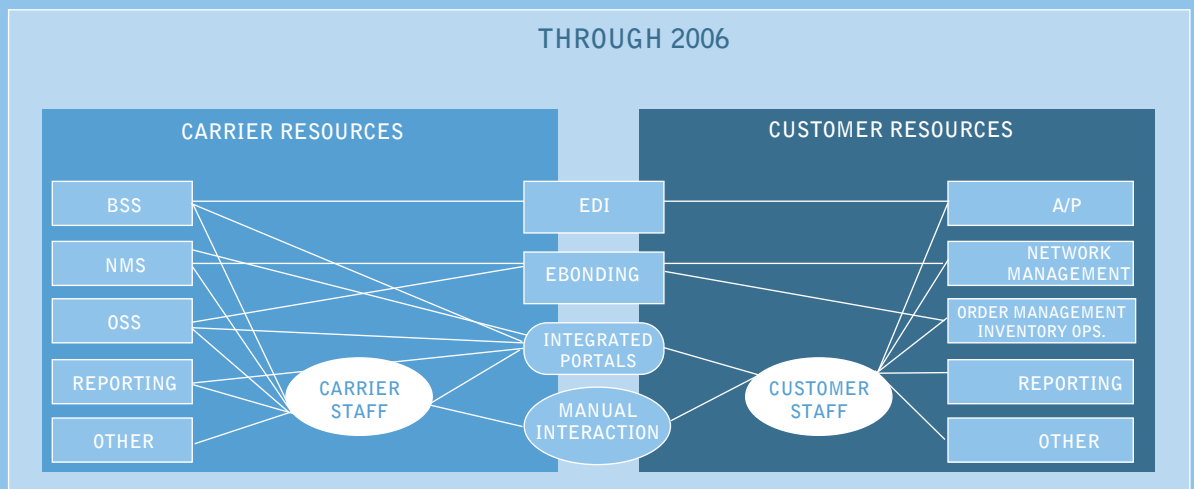
Stand-out self service for corporate customers goes beyond billing and account management functions into the realm of "e-service," which is the powerful combination of transactional capability combined with the ability to find information quickly and consistently across channels. In which ways do requirements for corporate users differ from those for residential self service users?

- > **Service Dashboard:** Corporate account administrators increasingly rely on their self service portal to be a "dashboard" where they can quickly assess the state of the relationship with their service provider. All aspects of the service relationship--financial, network, service-level agreement (SLA), inventory, contract status--should be represented.
- > **Portal As Workspace:** Differentiating portals enable complex tasks such as bulk ordering, SLA and contract management, price negotiation, and in-portal analytics. Notifications of events and changes to services need to be provided in real time and the tools to address these changes are provided in the same workspace.
- > **Billing and Payment:** E-billing has long been considered the bedrock requirement of self service. But alone, it's not enough. Differentiating corporate self service also requires: dynamic bill presentment, (allows data from invoices to be manipulated and analyzed within the portal), dispute management (reduces time to payment for the service provider while increasing customer satisfaction), and expense management (powered by personalized address books and offering split statement capabilities to simplify employee expense allocation).
- > **Account Management:** Corporate customers need to manage account information as it exists in their backend systems, so self service portals can add tremendous value just by allowing end users to structure account information the same way. The creation of user-defined virtual hierarchies based on billing and customer care information supports end users in critical daily tasks such as cost center reporting.
- > **Ordering:** Not only do self service portals need to manage bulk add, change and cease, but further complexity is added when customer-specific pricing, work scheduling, installation issues, and physical inventory are needed to complete complex orders.
- > **Support:** Entering and tracking trouble tickets is a fundamental requirement but support for corporate customers is based on specific service level agreements, which could entail integration between even more support management systems.
- > **Analytics:** By exposing data and processes to end-users, service providers are now more frequently asked to give end-user the tools to slice, dice and analyze the data. Not just billing data but also order and service-related data for cost control and capacity planning.
- > **Corporate Branding:** Self service sites often become highly visible tools used by corporate employees and so must support corporate customers' branding guidelines.

These requirements illustrate the fundamentally different and more complex nature of corporate self service. Furthermore, in order to be a differentiator for the service provider, corporate self service portals must allow customers to own and manage complex business processes and data that have traditionally been exclusively controlled by the service provider. Analyst firm IDC calls this the "integrated portal" (see Figure 2), which acts as the primary system that bonds the customer and service provider. While these requirements for the integrated portal make for more complex self service deployment projects, the rewards of successfully building it are real.

FIGURE 2:  
THE INTEGRATED PORTAL

SOURCE:  
THE CHANGING FACE  
OF TELCO PORTALS:  
AN EVOLUTION,  
MAY 2006,  
BY RONA SHUCHAT



## 4.2 BETTER TOOLS, MORE ADOPTION

As the expression goes, “If you build it, they will come.” That can be said of corporate self service. Research shows that well-built corporate self service portals are adopted at a very healthy rate, indicating that investing in rich functionality quickly pays off. For example, a May 2006 IDC report, *The Changing Face of Telco Portals* by Rona Shuchat, looked at adoption of the self service portal functions of leading US-based service providers. The following results were stated in the report IDC report:

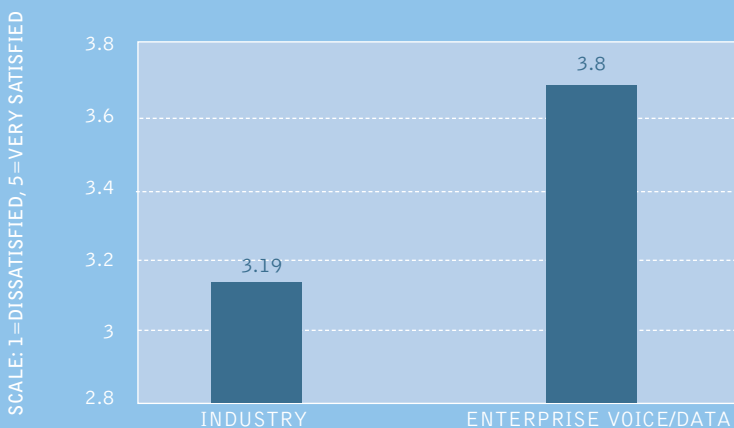
### AT&T’s BusinessDirect:

- > 80% of orders were originated electronically in Q1 2006.
- > Electronic ordering has grown from 22% in 2003 to 40% adoption in 2005.
- > Use of electronic maintenance tools for tracking and reporting has grown from 36% in 2003 to 74% in 2005.

### Global Crossing’s command:

- > Nearly 50% of major enterprise customers are showing portal usage. Multinational corporations tend to require more account support, alongside portal usage.
- > 43% of trouble tickets are entered online through the portal.

There is also evidence to suggest that end-users of self service for enterprise voice and data services are more satisfied than users in other industries. Commenting on the results of the Service and Support Professionals Association (SSPA) benchmark study (see Figure 3), industry-expert John Ragsdale observes, “Service providers should consider themselves lucky because (the) corporate segment is very receptive to having better self service tools. At a minimum, I would advise service providers to assess their investment in corporate customer self service because of this.”



**FIGURE 3:**  
SATISFACTION WITH SELF SERVICE AMONG  
CUSTOMERS OF ENTERPRISE/DATA SERVICE  
PROVIDERS VERSUS OTHER INDUSTRIES.

SOURCE: SSPA 2006 BENCHMARK SURVEY DATA

## 5. WHAT'S NEXT...

Investing in corporate self service is becoming an ever-more pressing priority for service providers. While customer service for large corporate customers will always include the personal, human aspects such as focused, dedicated account management and call center agents, there is a clear customer mandate for improving the effectiveness and functionality of self service portals.

What can service providers do to keep ahead of the curve and provide self service that continues to drive value and customer loyalty for corporate customers, despite their inherent complexity? These four capabilities show strongest promise for differentiation today:

- > **Blending Personal and Automated Service:** Corporate customers demand personal attention and better self service tools. Companies that can get this mix right will engender more satisfaction and loyalty from its most valuable customer segment. To this end, service providers should start to look at collaborative technologies that are intended to blend the agent presence and web technologies. Service providers are starting to roll out chat and co-browse features to corporate clients so that self service portals can more cross-over into personalized service when customers need it.
- > **User Management and Personalization:** The full range of corporate self service functionality has been largely limited to account management personnel who oversee corporate communications activities. It is likely that companies will want to allow individual corporate end-users access to their individual corporate accounts to perform more tasks directly, such as expense management and split statements. Broadening access will require self service systems to have robust authorization and user management features that will provide users with access to personal information (such as address book and preferences) and scalability to the corporate account.
- > **Network, Inventory and SLAs:** Self service portals already deliver rudimentary reporting on network, inventory and SLA status. Service providers now need to enact improvements that will allow end users to dynamically drill down into network-facing operations-support systems, like they already do for customer-facing business-support systems like billing and customer care. In addition, the same reporting and analytical tools for billing should be used for network and inventory analysis.

- > **Shared Business Rules and Process:** The idea of the integrated portal implies a new level of shared responsibility and access to account data, service metrics and even the business rules and processes that govern services. Self service not only should expose these business rules, but act as a point in which end-users can configure rules based on parameters the service provider defines. In this way, service providers can start to define the bounds of how processes such as notifications and approvals are carried out while giving end users the flexibility to shape rules to fit their processes.

### ABOUT AMDOCS AND AMDOCS SELF SERVICE

Amdocs has a proven track record of supporting our customers' corporate lines of business. The world's leading wireless service providers, including AT&T, Sprint Nextel, T-Mobile, Vodafone and many others rely on Amdocs to support their valuable corporate customers. As the customer experience systems innovator, with solutions spanning BSS and OSS, Amdocs continues to develop our in-depth knowledge of the corporate customer's complex requirements, identifying best practices and building capabilities to better manage and support the needs of this increasingly strategic segment.

The Amdocs Multi-Channel Self Service Solution combines industry-leading Amdocs software applications, focused implementation and systems integration services, and business consulting services that help service providers optimize the performance of self service channels. With more than a decade of experience in self service, Amdocs is a recognized leader in self service for corporate customers. To learn more about how Amdocs' self service solutions can help you address the needs of the corporate segment, visit us on the web at [www.amdocs.com](http://www.amdocs.com)

#### ABOUT AMDOCS

Amdocs combines innovative software and services with deep business knowledge to accelerate implementation of integrated customer management and dynamic banking by the world's leading service providers. By delivering a comprehensive portfolio of software and services that spans the customer lifecycle, Amdocs enables service companies to deliver an *intentional customer experience*<sup>™</sup>, which results in stronger, more profitable customer relationships. Service providers also benefit from a rapid return on investment, lower total cost of ownership and improved operational efficiencies. A global company with revenue of more than \$2 billion in fiscal 2005, Amdocs has about 15,000 employees and serves customers in more than 50 countries around the world.

For more information, visit Amdocs at [www.amdocs.com](http://www.amdocs.com).

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