KEY FACTS

Operator size: 20m
Technology: LTE, UMTS, GSM, IPTV
Scope: Domestic RA
Initial error rate of test calls: 3%
Impact after 12 months: Error reduction worth €4m
The operator with 20m+ subscribers had no visibility of the accuracy of the end to end billing process. Customer complaints and ad hoc manual test would generally be the way in which billing errors were identified. With total revenues exceeding €2.5bn there were large risks associated with potential under billing and the negative publicity of over billing. A more formal automated Revenue Assurance testing process covering as much of the risk as possible was required. A leakage rate of as little as 1% would result in losses of over €25m. Audits had shown potential billing error rates much higher than this.

To remain competitive in the marketplace it was necessary to regularly add new tariffs and features as well as introducing new technologies ahead of the competition.

These new products were verified for billing accuracy by manually generating a small number of test events on handsets and then investigating the network CDR’s to ensure the events were captured, metered correctly and billed accordingly. The manual nature of the testing and reconciliation together with the business pressures to not delay the launch of new products would result in a relatively small percentage of the revenue risk being adequately covered.

The operator was using a SIGOS SITE test call generating system in its network department to monitor Quality of Service. There was a good existing relationship with SIGOS and confidence in the future ability to update the system as new network technologies were introduced. By simply adding the Revenue Assurance Licenses to the SITE System they were able to use the same infrastructure to generate test events for Revenue Assurance purposes. The system would import live network CDRs for the same events and automatically check that the CDRs were present for each event and that they were metered and rated correctly according to the tariff and business rules.

The Revenue Assurance Team benefited from the Network Team’s requirement to keep the probes (test call generators) up to date with the latest technologies e.g. 3G, LTE, VoLTE, IP TV can all be tested with core probes and probes using the radio network. This allowed the RA Team to always be able to generate test events and CDRs for new technologies and validate any new services.

The customer chose a Managed Service with sharing of expertise to upskill its own staff to be able to run the process on their own after 12 months. The implementation plan was 4 weeks in which time the licenses were added to the system, the business rules and initial tariff tables were created and the import of the network CDRs was configured. The dedicated Project Manager and the SIGOS RA consultant hosted onsite workshops and offsite webex sessions with the network’s RA Team to begin the process of sharing the
expertise of how to use the system effectively to detect billing issues. In some cases customisation work was carried out to add specific new features. 35 tariffs and many tariff options were configured on the system.

When the operator upgraded its billing platform, SIGOS consultancy was brought in to provide support for reconfiguring the CDR formats of the network feeds and to provide confirmation that the tariff migrations had not introduced any issues.

Within 4 weeks of issuing the purchase order the operator was benefitting from having its main tariffs and revenue streams tested and validated every day. The testing is fully automated and takes place 24/7/365. Customer complaints due to billing errors were reduced as these issues were being detected and rectified before customers were noticing them. The operator is able to assign a value to each rectified billing issue to justify the operators’ investment in the Revenue Assurance Department.

The RA Team has now acquired a level of expertise and very seldom requires additional support from SIGOS. New product developments and service options are now thoroughly tested in a matter of days ensuring no unnecessary delays to product launches and no unnecessary risks.

The Regulator is happy that the operator is now using a TÜV SÜD BABT certified process to test its billing accuracy. The same amount of RA resources who were generating a few hundred test events are now able to generate many tens of thousands of test events and cover a far greater percentage of the operators risk. The initial business case for the investment in the Active RA solution was fully justified with the actual ROI being less than one month.