

Infozech provides cost-optimisation and revenue management products and solutions to communications service providers and passive infrastructure players. The following is a case study of an Infozech client that has deployed its technology solutions.

The client is a leading passive infrastructure provider in India with more than 40,000 tower sites and about 100,000 tenants. The company plans to roll out 20,000-25,000 towers in the next few years. During this period, it aims to achieve a tenancy ratio of 2.8.

With this growth plan in place, the client has been taking a number of green initiatives. As part of these initiatives, it required a new, robust and cost-effective mechanism to optimise energy use and monitor the distribution and consumption of diesel. This is where Infozech stepped in.

Key challenges

Tower sites are spread across vastly different and, in some cases, difficult geographical terrain. This poses challenges for passive infrastructure providers in consolidating data. Moreover, these sites have variable power supply, making it difficult to track energy usage. Some of the challenges faced by Infozech's client were:

- Lack of a transparent data collection mechanism: Energy usage data was being gathered in traditional log books for a 30-day cycle. The data was sent to the circle offices where it was tabulated in Excel sheets and then forwarded to the decision-makers. This long and cumbersome cycle made identification of issues and course correction difficult as there was no centralised and transparent data monitoring process. The long cycle also led to data tampering.
- Reconciliation issues: Data collection cycles for fuel distribution and consumption spanned 30 days. There was no way to expedite the validation of fuel consumption volumes. This led to reconciliation issues between the customer and its fuel suppliers.
- High operational expenditure: With tower sites spread across the country, a major challenge was inconsistent power supply. In most cases, diesel was used to fill the gap. There was no transparent or effective mechanism to monitor the distribution and consumption of power and

fuel. This, along with the increasing cost of diesel, led to a rise in site operation and maintenance costs.

- Long billing cycles: Time-consuming data collection processes led to long billing cycles of 90-120 days. This resulted in a significant amount of capital getting locked into this process, leading to financial losses. Often, the data was erroneous, which led to billing disputes.

Solutions offered by Infozech

In order to optimise energy usage, a key issue that needed to be addressed was supply, distribution and consumption of fuel. Infozech offered an innovative solution in the form of a mobile application. The solution involved no capex and helped the client monitor its fuel supply and distribution, electricity usage, and sources of electricity through energy data records captured and monitored over the mobile network.

Multiple mechanisms were developed to source data from sites and circles. To deal with the variance in data resulting from the variety of sources, Infozech built multiple checkpoints in the system. The data quality was ensured by building strong analytics and undertaking trend analyses using statistical regression techniques. The operations team at the client location was able to slice and dice information to predict usage behaviour and follow-up actions.

To ensure seamless implementation of the service, Infozech offered operational and helpdesk support, hand-holding the client's field-level staff through the early stages of implementation.

Benefits

Infozech addressed the challenges faced by the client through the implementation of the energy tracking service (ETS). Some of the benefits derived by the client are:

- Time saving and improved decision-making: The client can access data in real time through

the Infozech ETS portal. This saves time that was earlier lost in collecting data, resolving billing disputes and undertaking reconciliation with suppliers. It also gives the client a comprehensive picture of energy usage and allows improved decision-making. Instead of a monthly dashboard of operational efficiency, a daily and hourly dashboard is now available to fine-tune operations.

- Lower operational expenditure: ETS has helped the client plug loopholes in fuel supply and distribution methods. Also, overall energy usage has been optimised. The entire exercise has resulted in lowering energy expenses, thus reducing the customer's operational costs.
- Improved cash flow: ETS has helped the client reduce billing disputes with operators. The working capital that would previously be held up for 90-120 days can be released earlier now, thus helping the client improve its cash flow and revenue realisation.
- Revenue leaks plugged: Increased data accuracy has facilitated reconciliations with suppliers. ETS implementation has helped improve operational efficiency and save at least 5 per cent of diesel costs.
- Going green: With the implementation of ETS, the client's diesel usage, and hence its carbon footprint, have reduced. This has enhanced the company's reputation as a green enterprise.

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