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Differentiation through operational excellence

[Ahmed Zein](#), Digis Squared Co-Founder and Chief Operations & Delivery Officer, shares his experience and thoughts on the vital role the Operations function plays in differentiating your business. Plus, as his new Managed Services team gets ready for the commercial launch of a network, he shares insights into key areas of current focus.

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Differentiation through operational excellence. | Ahmed Zein, Digis Squared Co-Founder and Chief Operations & Delivery Officer, shares his experience and thoughts on the vital role the Operations function plays in differentiating your business. Plus, as his new Managed Services team gets ready for the commercial launch of a network, he shares insights into key areas of current focus.

Please get in touch if you would like a more detailed, exploratory conversation about how we can help you with your operational excellence projects. sales@DigisSquared.com

First published as a blog on the Digis Squared website, [here](#).

Differentiation and success

What differentiates leading organizations from their less successful rivals? More often than not, it comes down to how they manage their Operations. No matter how great the business strategy, or how large the investment, the Operations Team, the efficiency and customer experience they can achieve, can ultimately determine which business wins and who is left behind.

A workplace philosophy where problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership are core to the way people work together and collaborate, results in the continuous improvement of an organization,” shared Ahmed. “Focusing consistently on the customers’ needs, keeping employees positive and empowered, and continually improving the current activities in the workplace to deliver a better outcome in the future – all of this requires energy and commitment. However, this is a virtuous circle of improvement – keep doing it, and you’ll keep improving, the more energy and commitment you put in, the bigger the improvement you’ll get out.

There are five key areas I’ll be focussing on with the Digis Squared team during this phase. Working together, the team in the Digis Squared Delivery and Operations Centre in Luanda, backed up with staff in our Technology and Customer Support Centre in Cairo, will ensure an on-schedule, optimised network launch, and maintain smooth operational performance throughout.

One: Preparing the Squad

As with any project we work on, preparing the squad for this mission is our top priority. Designing a complete program, and establishing a high achieving attitude and sports-behaviour in the team and its structure, help us all to succeed. The squad needs a dynamic attitude to problem-solving, and an ambitious target to achieve success together.

With all our projects, we carefully consider the specific skills, experience and expertise we need. In recruiting the squad it’s also critical to our success together that we have a strong and aligned sense of purpose, and a strong fit with the Digis Squared culture and sports-team ethos. It’s vitally important to the way in which we operate that we work together as a squad – we help each other, we share knowledge, we learn from and help each other. It’s about both leadership and personal accountability, as well as knowledge sharing. In an area as complex as network technology, almost all issues can only be solved by working together, asking questions, and listening to the experience and ideas of others. We achieve and learn more together.

And this is one of the key differences between Operational Efficiency and Operational Excellence. Efficiency focuses only on how things are done, and doing them better – faster, cheaper, fewer errors, continuous improvement. These are the basics. But Operational Excellence is far wider, it aims to create a culture within the team and company that is conducive to efficient and sustainable long-term growth. The strongly aligned sense of purpose, solving problems and succeeding together as a squad, that is vital to achieving Operational Excellence.



Above: some of the Digis Squared Luanda Squad, February 2022

Two: Multi-Vendor Management

Vendor management is not as simple as monitoring a mathematical set of KPIs, and a lengthy document filled with SLA words. As a team, we know that the success of any operations is reliant on sound relationships, and clear communications. The Digis Squared way is to always try and bridge the gaps in understanding, to clarify discussions, to identify a mis-fit in technologies, or a gap within a contract and resolve misunderstandings before they become problematic – and critically, to propose a solution.

Yes, of course we report on KPIs, and when an SLA isn't being hit, but we also work hard to bridge that gap between the vendor and the operator. We work hard to build connections with the vendor's teams, and work collaboratively together, running user acceptance tests and handovers across all domains.

Three: Performance & Field Management through NOC

Digis Squared's Managed Services will ensure we achieve full monitoring of the network, corrective and preventive maintenance, network configuration and change management. All of this will be accomplished with operational excellence strategies by improving network availability, maintaining all network KPIs, enhancing quality of service to end customers, improving customer experience and reducing operating cost, as well as capitalizing on network automation and automating all automatable network procedures, across both front and back-office activities.

Active network monitoring. INOS is an intelligent, automated testing, benchmarking and analysis platform for network operators and service providers, delivering drive testing (DT), in-building solution (IBS) capability, end to end IoT system testing, and much more, whilst decreasing both the time taken to complete the work and opex cost.



[Read more about INOS here](#) – and the bottom of that page also has links to using INOS in LTE 450 or 600MHz network, 5G and customer case studies.

One of the most important KPIs in Managed Services contracts is the focus on Network Performance KPIs as one of the most important goals. Digis Squared's cognitive tools are used to provide active monitoring of the network. We use INOS for drive testing, and there are plenty of recent blogs about that! [See list at end of blog.]

Digis-One is a key tool for any Operations team. We typically passively monitor the network performance using Digis-One, our cognitive, multi-vendor, multi-technology Unified Fault Management (UFM) solution delivering centralized dashboard and alarming monitoring system for the Front and Back Office Teams. Digis-One facilitates all systems/interfaces monitoring, in addition to automating the most time-critical manual work, including automated generation and assignment of Trouble Tickets to the team responsible for solving the network issue. Digis-One delivers a significant impact on SLAs and Mean Time to Repair.

Passive network monitoring. Digis-One is an AI-led Unified Fault Management solution delivering a single consistent interface into all the Network and IT nodes in your network, with intelligent troubleshooting and optimisation. Using automated rules, root cause is identified against a library of recommended actions and troubleshooting steps, thereby overcoming native compatibility issues.



Read more about [Digis-One, our cognitive UFM solution, here](#).

Generally, when undertaking a Managed Services contract, field maintenance is one of the top priorities. Responsive teams on the ground undertake corrective and preventive actions across the network, fixing issues before they become a problem. The Operations Squad assess KPIs, and proactively lead the way to ensuring improved customer experience. Working together, this delivers efficiency, expansion and business success.

The field maintenance service will utilise available data (network, environment, events etc.) and our cognitive tools to schedule preventive maintenance plans and optimise resource utilisation. Mindful of the various contractual SLAs and targets, together, I field maintenance and NOC teams will ensure complete coordination and alignment for all field and site access activities.

Four: Clear Change Management

A newly launched network encounters a lot of dynamic changes and interactions across all domains. I've experienced the dynamic situations new network deployments encounter many times before, and know that creative thinking, sound analytical practices and strong teamwork can together solve the issues which will arise. Actively managing and considering the sequence of changes require deep consideration and experience. Careful planning is needed to consider how unforeseen risks or incidents will be handled, what processes will be followed, and how unplanned changes will be addressed.

We're at a really exciting stage of this project. Combining the skills, expertise and experience of our staff, and our AI-led tools and processes, we're confident the squad we are building will deliver differentiation through operational excellence.

Five: Application Development Management

As a greenfield mobile network, benefits from the high demands and expectations of the commercial teams to launch ambitious, state of the art products & services to the market, pushing at the competitive and technological edge of possibilities.

With this in mind, the Digis Squared team believe it is important to bring the concept of Application Development Management, ADM, with a DevOps flavour to this Managed Service contract. Merging the development and IT/BSS operations, the goal of our ADM team is to reduce the time between a system needed development or change and its deployment into the production environments. In turn, this reflects on and enhances the time to market to materialize a commercial requirement into a real technical output, deployed on the product IT/VAS nodes. To put that another way, we'll be using ADM techniques to develop, test and deploy rapid, noticeable improvements in an ongoing continuous loop, perhaps even before the end customer notices there was ever an issue.



Working in this way, as a DevOps team, both the development staff, and the staff in charge of operations, are in deep communication with each other – they are ONE team! There is enhanced cross-knowledge and collaboration between the developers and IT operations, assessing and solving issues together, and a more seamless workflow that eliminates sizeable knowledge silo's which are found in traditional models. The result is the smooth deployment of technology, such as software and updates in the safest, most reliable way possible.

Differentiation through operational excellence

It's an exciting time for the Digis Squared team globally, and we're ready for this. It's great to work with clients with clear ambitions, and high targets for excellence. Sharing knowledge, ensuring utilisation of cognitive systems and clear processes, building a superb team. We're working closely with our client and the other partners to ensure this new network achieves commercial success, and one of the secrets in how we will achieve that together is with differentiation through operational excellence.

In conversation with Ahmed Zein, Digis Squared Co-Founder and Chief Operations & Delivery Officer.

Discover more

- Portfolio: [Digis-One • unified fault management](#)
- Blog: [Digis-One | Unified Fault Management for multi-vendor, multi-technology networks](#)
- Portfolio: [INOS solution details](#)
- Blog: [INOS | In-building coverage testing without an engineer on-site](#)
- Blog: [INOS & LTE 600MHz: Network benchmarking & optimisation with INOS](#)
- Blog: INOS & 5G | [now with 5G & multi-vendor chipset support](#)
- Blog: [Test and optimise LTE 450MHz, without handsets](#)
- Blog: INOS & Regulators | [Now more than ever, use independent tools and expertise](#)
- Blog: INOS & Africell | [Africell selects Digis Squared to support new network in Angola](#)
- Blog: [Optimising Africell mobile networks during Covid-19](#)
- Blog: [Intel case study | Video & TCP optimisation for Tier 1 MNO](#), also on [Intel blog](#)
- INOS uses [Intel® Xeon® Scalable Processors](#) | [Digis Squared awarded Intel Winner's Circle Membership](#)
- [8 Characteristics of Great Teams, in Sports and Business](#), Warren Strugatch

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About us

Digis Squared ◦ **Enabling smarter networks**

Managed Services, System Integration & Consulting

We transform telecom networks, deploy new technologies, and manage vendors, for operators, service providers and regulators.

Apply our expertise, automated AI-led tools and processes to transform your technical and commercial capabilities. We work with agility, deep experience, and our in-house cognitive tools to optimise and manage multi-vendor/technology networks.

Founded in 2016, Digis Squared has offices in UK, Egypt, UAE and Angola plus staff embedded with clients. The Digis Squared management team have decades of experience transforming, testing and optimising networks, deploying new technologies, and managing vendors.

Digis Squared. Independent telecoms expertise.

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