

Delivering

A SUPERIOR PRODUCT THROUGH COLLABORATION

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WITH TODAY'S RAPIDLY CHANGING
BROADBAND LANDSCAPE, SUCCESS IS BEST
ASSURED WHEN EQUIPMENT VENDORS AND
SERVICE PROVIDERS COLLABORATE IN THE
PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.



By involving customers in creating a product, vendors can unlock a range of benefits that contribute to the best outcome as well as a stronger relationship between the two companies. A recent example of this development model is the LiNC™ product created by Amphenol.

To be successful, collaboration must include open communication, mutual trust, and a shared vision of the desired outcome. As a vendor, we looked to gain a comprehensive understanding of the service provider's needs, goals and technical specifications. The provider's "champion" provided insight based on his network expertise as well as operational requirements.

Both parties worked together using an iterative process to define the product's scope, features and functionality. When examining the product's scope, it was important to fully understand the current approach to the network problem being considered. The service provider's champion plays a key role when defining the problem as well as how that challenge is currently being met, assuming that it is. Is there a legacy product that no longer fully meets the service provider's needs? Is the current process labour-intensive?

Is there newer technology that may be developed that will more fully meet the needs concerning the problem while lowering costs, improving operations or generating a higher level of customer satisfaction?

Our technical capabilities and experience in product development were complemented by the champion's deep understanding of the unique challenges and goals of the service provider. Initial design and prototyping were based on the product's intended functionality as defined by the service providers' needs and requirements. Features were dictated by the operational needs of the network, tempered against the cost of adding each feature.

Once designed, initial product models are built and tested against original assumptions and design intent. Often, during this stage additional operational needs may be uncovered, or perhaps even additional opportunities to improve beyond the original intent of the new product. The team may decide to further refine the product based on new findings, while still ensuring it continues to meet the original expectations and aligns with engineering and operational

requirements. Of course, endless design cycles can add to product costs while also delaying the implementation of the solution to the original problem. By having both the supplier and the service provider champion involved in product development, the champion is in a much better position to make an educated decision on when the new product is ready for network deployment, and which features can be added in future product releases.

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FROM THE INDUSTRY

As the new LiNC product is successfully released for general use within the service provider market, there are several key takeaways from this approach to product development.

- **PRODUCT RELEVANCE:** The product is extremely relevant when matched against the specific pain points and needs expressed by the champion. Attention to these details resulted in a product more closely aligned with their unique requirements, while also assuring that it fits in with the service provider's existing infrastructure. While the product is viewed as a custom fit for a specific customer, the similarity between the broadband fibre infrastructures of all service providers makes it a solution that may be deployed industry wide.
- **STREAMLINED DEPLOYMENT:** The processes within a service provider to secure and deploy new technology can be quite complex, and unique to a given geographical area or network topology. Collaborative efforts of the joint product team ensured a smoother integration within these as well as other unique complexities.

- **INNOVATION SPEED:** By tapping into the champion's unique expertise, our product developers were better able to use their own design and manufacturing knowledge to introduce new concepts and features, advancing innovation beyond what might have come were the product developed without customer involvement. Of course, this has catapulted the product ahead of possible competitive solutions, while also allowing the customer to benefit from the innovations sooner.
- **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:** Naturally, the champion has an "ownership" of the product beyond a simple customer-supplier relationship. Others in his company interpreted his active participation as an invitation to provide their own direct input as well, further advancing the goals of both companies. The resulting satisfaction as well as a sense of ownership will likely serve well to promote more long-term collaboration moving forward.

Our collaborative partnership with a knowledgeable customer champion has brought numerous benefits along with the delivery of a new network product. These

include driving innovation, enhancing user satisfaction and streamlining deployment. By leveraging the insights of the champion, we have created a product also relevant to the customer's network, more fully meeting the unique needs of this service provider and positioning the product to be marketed to additional network owners. This collaboration led to a superior product while simultaneously strengthening the relationship between the companies.

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Building Your Network Just Got Easier

The LiNC™ panel is Amphenol's revolutionary rapid deployment multi-fiber end-to-end solution. It can easily lower fiber congestion, and it eliminates the need to store extra trunk cables or figure out slack storage solutions.



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