



Winding up on winding roads towards the mobile internet

How it happened we got internet on our phones

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Gunnar Östberg



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Winding roads to innovation

Even if it looks so in hindsight, invention and innovation aren't a straight path forward. People don't see all those hours spent without effect, because nobody writes about what went wrong or never happened as planned. Well, I do — here.

- This story is about my involvement and contribution to the attempts to create the mobile internet around 2000.
- Read about exciting things outside the straight path.
- Explore my ten mobile internet assignments behind the scenes, that didn't change the world.

This personal story might interest you if you are interested in digital history, or what working in business development could be like, in the hype years before and during the dot-com bubble.

Assignment #0 — The takeaway — People want wireless and mobile services

In 1998, I was a project manager in business development at Ericsson Telecom, the fixed line division that was then the largest part of Ericsson, the leading manufacturer of telecommunications equipment. I was well-established and had held middle management positions. I was in my late thirties and had already had my first two children. While the children were young, I didn't want a managerial role with staff responsibilities anymore, so being a business developer and project manager was perfect.

Now I was not a Business Developer to find ways to sell more of the same and not a Business Developer to develop business process operations, but a Business Developer who explores new markets for new potential products and services, based on brand new technology. I worked with home communication services, IP, and city networks. The offerings were professional and digital services, but not equipment.

When I spoke to potential new customers in customer industries new to Ericsson, such as utilities, it became obvious that people want wireless internet connections and mobile services as well as fast lines and fixed connections everywhere.

I became interested and started to study the current status of the mobile and wireless technologies Ericsson was working on. At this time there was, in Europe just 2G telephony, and mobile phones were thick and heavy, had antennas that pointed out and a one-line LCD. However, GPRS, Wi-Fi, 3G, and more exciting things were in the pipeline. Everything starts with a need and a needs analysis.



...or a vision

Mobile Internet Assignment #1 — Setting up a global service business for WAP development

In May 1999 I finished my business development projects and my reports were handed in and presented to management. I now needed to do something else and explore new areas.

As I followed what Ericsson did internally I snapped that some development unit in Ericsson had just released a new technical specification for something called WAP, Wireless Application Protocol, both for gateways and terminals, that is, mobile phones. The media had yet to write much about this new technology — it would take a year more. But as an engineer, I could understand the specs well.

There were specs like WAP/WAE for the development platform, WAP/WML for scripting applications or services with a markup language, and protocols for sessions, transactions, security, and pushing content to mobiles. I think Ericsson did most of the groundwork and synced with standardization partners Nokia, Motorola, Microsoft, and ten others like in the case of Bluetooth which was a couple of years ahead.

It became clear to me that WAP was the European response to the Japanese i-mode protocol that quickly became very successful earlier in the same year, in Japan only.

I envisioned the business opportunities of the Internet in future mobile phones and that Ericsson, as the market leader, should have a consulting business to help companies exploit the new technology.



Me envisioning in 1999

I researched Ericsson's organizational chart and business responsibilities to understand where such a consulting business would belong. I found a newly formed business unit called Ericsson Business Consulting, whose customers were companies and corporations instead of mobile operators like most of Ericsson. This unit was an off-spring from the business units Ericsson Enterprise Systems and Business Networks that made private branch exchanges, and other stuff. Ericsson Business Consulting had about 4,000 staff.

Fully into business development models and methods, I had the structure of a business case on top of my mind. In writing a proper and serious business case, I proposed that Ericsson build a global service business for WAP development. I

mentioned it to my closest colleague. I didn't talk to anybody else. I just emailed the top manager of the presumed responsible business unit, the Vice President of Ericsson Business Consulting, and waited. It was summer and vacation time.

In early August 1999, the business development director of that unit called me and wanted a meeting. My timing must have been perfect because they were looking for someone hungry like me to take on the challenge of building a tech-oriented consulting business for enterprises. My WAP consulting business proposal was the cherry on top.

I suggested they'd borrow me from the Ericsson unit I originally belonged to. So this way I was assigned directly to create a new organizational unit and start a new global consulting business. I was allowed to handpick three people to form a team. They wanted a global delivery capability as an externally focused consultancy by the end of the year. My focus was on mobile and WAP technology. Another team was assigned to handle "e-commerce", mainly electronic and (in the future mobile) payments. A third team was covering web portal and marketing site strategy consulting.

The team I led did a quick business planning and started building all the necessary competence, functions, and processes.



Rapid business planning

Many related things happened in parallel. WAP development units were emerging in many locations worldwide. Our team would tie them to the head office in a network of expertise and initially assist with delivering consulting assignments to them. Our team quickly grew with more members into a small unit. This was about management, leadership, organizational development, and entrepreneurship. What drove me was to create a resourceful business.

We got it going. We had customers — mobile operators in Islamic countries who demanded prayer calls on mobile phones. We had professional service packages with pricing ready. We had methods and processes. We had the delivery capacity — we organized a working network of technical units that would be able to develop WAP services, once the technology was implemented in the equipment — hundreds of developers. We knew how to design and develop simple digital services based on WAP and had the global delivery and knowledge networking capacity. We were

ready to take orders, but we had to wait until there were any WAP gateways and WAP phones. So, then, what to do?

Mobile Internet Assignment #2 — The Internet joint venture

While we temporarily put the WAP consulting business development on hold, management put me, and a colleague, on another business development assignment. We should participate as representatives from Ericsson Business Consulting in a pre-study for a potential joint venture between Ericsson, Hewlett-Packard, and Telia (the main Swedish telecom operator). My real mission was to — secretly — assess the business case and reasonableness of the venture.

The technical basis for the joint venture was an interesting idea to create and integrate digital services on the Internet. It would be based on a new and innovative internet scripting language HP had designed and developed for service integration. Remember that this was in 1999 and scripting languages for the web weren't common. For example, JavaScript was used almost only for menus and forms and nobody was talking about web APIs — things like SOAP or .NET didn't even exist.



Internet service integration joint venture discussions

Ericsson and HP were already partners for network management systems and Telia was a big customer of Ericsson. Ericsson was on its way to securing several global standards — Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, WCDMA, and WAP. HP had approached Ericsson which had an excellent relationship with Telia.

The Telia guys wanted closer to their consumer and corporate markets with better services higher up in the value chain. HP wanted to be a player in the internet domain. And Ericsson — well, we wished for a market development of 3G (UMTS with WCDMA) that was under development, and we were shooting on everything that moved. Ericsson has always had a curious and open view — we were almost naïvely open to experience at any time — and we were aware of that.

In this joint venture prestudy, we were four people from Ericsson, a whole team from HP, and a few guys from Telia. From Ericsson, it was me and my colleague, our assignor — the business development director at the business unit Business Consulting, which was a global product-centric organization — and the Telia Key Account Manager (KAM) director from the Swedish market unit of Ericsson. From HP there was the Swedish business development manager and a team of developers (all of Indian origin).

We all participated actively in the creation of ideas and models. The workshops were fun and creative, and the atmosphere was great. The vision was to have something like “allnightout.com” where you can book the restaurant, show, club, taxi, and so on with the same personalized digital service, following conditions and dynamically adapting for delays during the night.

Apart from technology and the attempt to set a global standard for internet service integration, for both fixed and mobile, the three parties discussed customer benefits & customer experience, and business opportunities for the joint venture. We also discussed business cooperation, the relationship, responsibilities, and finances.



We had exciting and giving workshops

The Ericsson Telia KAM was charmed by the others to become very positive. Our assignor at the business unit wasn't positive, wearing the global product view hat, he was skeptical.

My gut feeling was that our KAM was tricked somehow. There were no real negotiations, just happy flow meetings where responsibilities and finances crystallized.

My colleague and I had a separate meeting with our assignor, which I led, where we assessed the resulting business proposal. I couldn't see what it was in this for Ericsson. We didn't have a case. I concluded that Ericsson should not enter this joint venture because

- it lacked the right organization to manage the joint venture
- the business set-up was not in line with the agreed strategy
- there was a lot of uncertainty
- the business model for Ericsson was not good enough.

We also had WAP/WML coming and wanted to focus on pure mobile technologies.



Serious assessments and considerations

Of course, all parties knew there were great risks with such a venture, but in this particular proposal for a joint venture, Ericsson would have the far greatest risk and

not enough potential benefit. We all agreed on this conclusion.

I had a one-to-one meeting with the KAM and presented all the pros and cons we had found. I made him understand that the right decision was to withdraw. This is business development. It is a strength to say no sometimes, even if it first seems good.

I don't know what happened later, but I know that there wasn't any joint venture and that HP's internet scripting language never took off. I don't even remember what they called it. It was smart though, and would probably have done its job building and integrating dynamic internet services.

Tech solutions can be excellent, but only with a good case, they are valuable.

With that done, my mission was completed. I had already started on a new assignment in parallel. It is now October 1999.

Mobile Internet Assignment #3 — Mobile flight booking

My new assignment was also a business development assignment — to design the service package for the world's first mobile application for flight booking and managing the frequent flyer's itinerary. Initially, they had used 2G data with a phone and a wired Psion handheld computer as a web browser, but now they'd added WAP capability to use a mobile phone only. This was probably the world's first WAP e-store.



Designing service package

Ericsson had a dedicated team developing this WAP service in a 'startup' called Wireless Travel Management. This was jointly done with the global flight booking giant Amadeus and their Swedish distributor Smart, and SAS. All members were handpicked and the best.

I was temporarily assigned product manager for professional services, and I was first tasked with defining the service package, and later to do two smaller technical investigations. These were more interesting — how could maps be used and how could GPS be used, in such a WAP application?

At this time there were no apps or phones with maps. Not any GPS in mobile phones either. There weren't any official WAP-enabled phones, but if I remember right, the

startup had access to some R320 prototypes, from the Ericsson WAP phones development department for testing, still with a few lines of LCD. For reference, this was 1999 and the iPhone 1 was 8 years away, and it was additionally four years later the iPhone 4 became a good product with a retina screen and useful cameras. The first smartphone wasn't invented yet. And we were developing mobile e-shopping of flight tickets in 1999!



Developing mobile e-shopping of flight tickets in 1999

It was high tempo and I felt a real start-up atmosphere. I delivered a portfolio of service products and reports as commissioned, which the project management was happy with.

Then, my investigations. Difficult to do, it had to be based on assumptions. However, for each investigation, I wrote a prestudy report stating that it was possible and beneficial to the application to have maps/GPS on the phones and together, provided that certain listed external conditions were met. Now it of course sounds obvious, but it wasn't back then. You could say I did both a customer needs analysis, a technical feasibility study, a business feasibility study, use cases or user stories, and acceptance criteria. The reports were much liked, but the realization seemed distant.



Would it be feasible to have maps/GPS on phones?

Sometime afterward, I heard the startup got some prize but then disappeared from view. I didn't know why back then, but I know now that Amadeus took over the

results and productized them in Sophia Antipolis in France. I always thought it was another failure, but after all, something came alive and gave some benefit. However, I could never book any flight using this fantastic WAP service.

Mobile Internet Assignment #4 — Analysis and coordination of service delivery

At the same time I'd finished my GPS/map assignments and had returned to the WAP consulting unit that I'd started up and continued to develop, the marketing department of the business unit Ericsson Business Consulting had something cooking and called for a management meeting. I was now invited to the management team meetings whenever the agenda was related to anything mobile or external consultancy services. At this meeting, we coined the brand name "Mobile Internet". Before that, *mobile* had only been used as an adjective before *Internet*. Now it was an Ericsson brand. At the meeting, we formally decided to start a major global marketing campaign around this brand. The whole world should know that Ericsson will change the world. The future was Mobile Internet.



What it looked like when we decided upon the Mobile Internet brand name at Nacka Strand, Stockholm

The campaign was well prepared. A call center was already set up somewhere that should answer all requests. The advertisement campaign was launched in mid-November 1999. The timing felt so-so from the perspective of consulting business. There still weren't any WAP-enabled phones on the market.

From the Ericsson Annual Report 1999

“Focus on the mobile Internet

The first major step toward the mobile Internet is now being taken with the help of WAP technology. Its current position as the focus of market interest clearly demonstrates the growing importance of the mobile Internet, even now before the higher transmission speeds of third-generation systems can be achieved.

As one of the initiators of the WAP standard, Ericsson is well prepared. We currently have the market’s broadest range of WAP knowledge, including hardware, applications development, consultants and terminals. In a campaign during late autumn, we offered the services of 400 highly qualified consultants to companies interested in developing WAP services.”

So, Ericsson had done the first-ever Mobile Internet marketing campaign. We got many requests right away, and after New Year 2000, the campaign led to an explosion of requests for WAP services development for Ericsson worldwide. It was more than we’d expected. The call center handled the calls and collected the necessary information, but what happened then?

I was tasked as the coordinator for order handling and service delivery. I had the competence to assess and analyze the requests, and I knew the capability and capacity of each development unit because I had led the business development unit and set up the networked organization earlier. All requests and customer demands went through my eyes, and I directed each request or order to the right WAP development unit or service delivery organization. I was also assigned to grow the virtual organization and industrialize the delivery with common processes. So, this mission was all about delivery coordination and organizational development for a few months.



Analyzing and coordinating WAP requests and orders

During this time my colleagues left for other opportunities, and I became alone with this job. Internet competence, especially mobile internet competence was very in demand on the market, and some of my colleagues got more than double the salaries at other companies, outside of Ericsson. However, I liked Ericsson and I had two small kids at home. I saw risks with leaving — when there is a hype like this, it is a bad omen. I had worked at Ericsson for 11 years and had made a career there. I *was* Ericsson. I didn't want to leave. I chose to stay and see what happened.

When, after a few months, we drew up the accounts for the WAP consulting business, we concluded there was a great interest, but less concrete projects with actual income. We thought banks would place orders for a WAP bank account statement, as people would want to view their bank balance on their mobile phones. So naive we were. Banks are incredibly slow-moving creatures — what others do in days, they do in decades. But we got some more prayer calls.

As there still were no WAP phones available, the requests ebbed out. At the same time, two things happened. First, Ericsson reorganized again and the responsibility for WAP consulting should be moved elsewhere. Secondly, my manager, the business development director, got furious about the bills he got from the Ericsson unit I originally belonged to, which was another legal entity. I don't know what he thought — that I was for free? So, now they gave me a choice — either return to the fixed line Ericsson Telecom, or become employed at a new legal unit called Ericsson

Process & Applications Consulting, still within the business unit Business Consulting. I chose the latter and got a significant raise in salary.

Assignment #5 — Mobile Internet Strategy Consulting

At Ericsson Process & Applications Consulting I first got training in Management Consulting to match the certification standards. It was advanced courses and practical training in, for example, workshop facilitation, process modeling, strategic visioning, business case modeling, and consulting skills.

My new assignment was to deliver management consulting services related to the mobile internet, both in-house Ericsson and externally. It was high demand so no sales activity was necessary.

I delivered many smaller assignments for a few months, mainly facilitating strategy workshops. It was great fun and I learned a lot doing this. However, I don't think that this work led to any particular measurable benefit or effect. I still wanted to change the world.



Facilitating strategy workshops

Assignment #6 — UMTS process modeling

I got a larger assignment, where I could do some good for real.

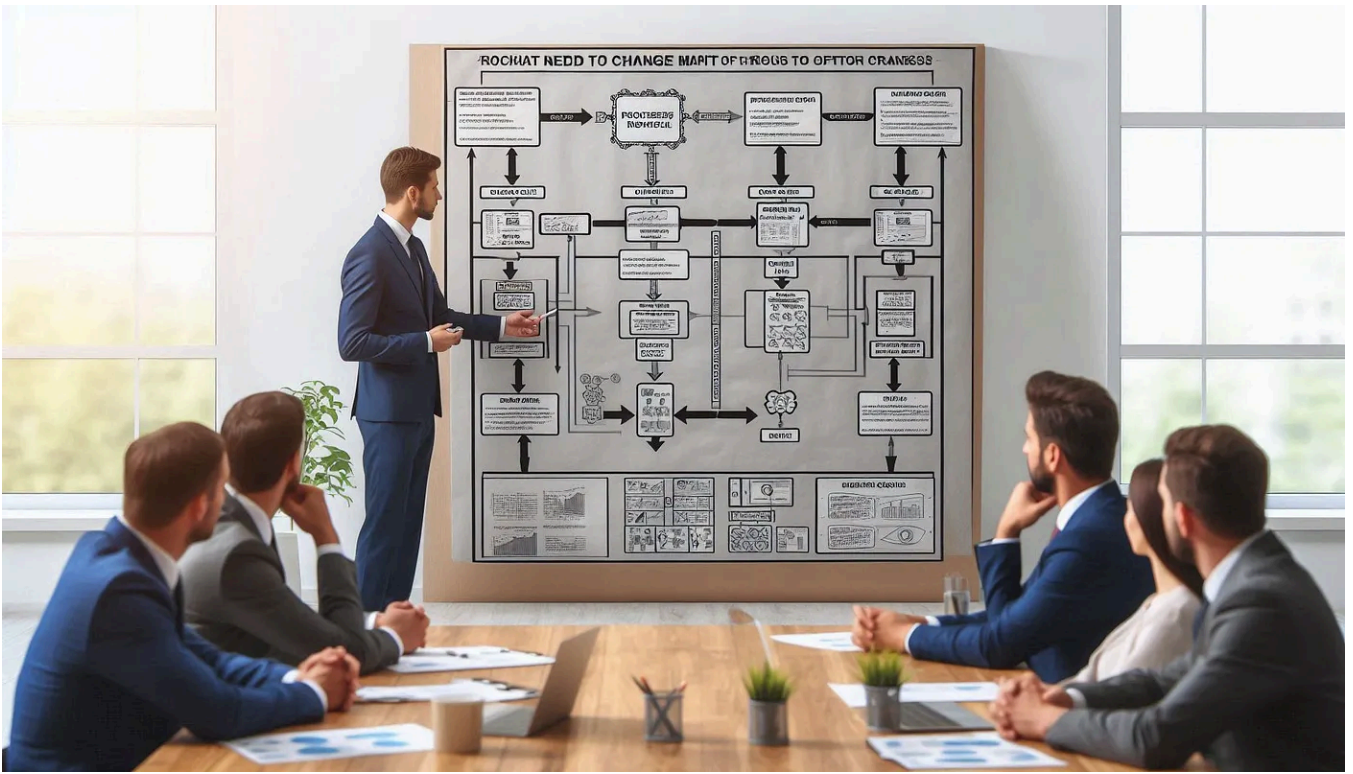
Ericsson's UMTS (3G) organization needed to model its development processes to analyze how they could meet end-user requirements. In the system tests the user experience was a disaster. One of several UX issues was that with a 3G test terminal, a user had to wait much longer for the call to connect than in the public 2G network. There was also a longer latency for data traffic than for the new GPRS 2G technology. End-users expect a better overall user experience from the third-generation mobile networks than from the second-generation mobile networks. This is also what marketing had promised. The problems must be solved.

A UMTS system is complex. It consists of several subsystems developed at different units worldwide, to meet specifications. The UMTS product line manager was concerned. He hypothesized that each development unit had sub-optimized their work and that a process view was needed to manage change. It was not a technical issue but a management issue. Nobody had looked at the process view before.

The UMTS product line manager was an intelligent but timid elderly gentleman who seemed afraid of conflicts. This is the kind of situation where it can be fruitful to hire a management consultant, that does not have anything to lose. So that's where I came in.

My assignment was to model the complete set of processes for UMTS development, analyze it for improvements, present the findings to all the development managers in a grand meeting, and use this work to influence them to change their behavior. Make everyone share a common goal and counteract sub-optimization.

I made a detailed and accurate process model that was and looked professional to impress any onlookers, and my analysis identified several issues. I gained everyone's full confidence with my presentation. I convinced them of what needed to change for Ericsson to succeed in its 3G endeavor. The carefully elaborated process maps helped significantly to reinforce the importance of change.



Presenting my process model

My client, the product line manager was very pleased as everything that needed to change changed almost immediately, and Ericsson's UMTS solution was successful as delays and latencies disappeared.

This was a good example of management consulting, which I am proud of. UMTS was necessary to realize the mobile internet and I made a small but important contribution to push it forward a small step.

Large companies always have many internal problems that need to be solved quickly and neatly where external expertise is required temporarily. And the solution is sometimes different from what it first appears to be.

Assignment #7 — Business planning for mobility solutions

The new gigantic business unit Global Services took over all tech-related professional services within Ericsson, so I had to move to another organization again. I was transferred to a unit called Mobility Solutions which was globally responsible for professional services product management for Service networks, a dynamic area. Service networks were a technical system layer above the ordinary telecom network layer, to handle various digital services for the telecom operators and their consumers. Our focus was on mobile, my new specialty.

One of the major business management problems for the Mobility Solutions unit was that it was difficult to make a profit because the resources — the specialists and technical experts — were scattered globally and everyone was reinventing mistakes. It was a new and hot field with fierce competition and fast moves. Processes were not in place and there wasn't a global knowledge base.

- I was assigned to solve this inefficiency problem by working with knowledge management and introducing support systems.
- I was also tasked to facilitate strategy development workshops and to write the business plan.
- My third task was to develop methods and IT support for Business Intelligence, and then we meant external market analysis, not non-advanced data analytics.

I worked with these things for a year and it went well — at least it felt well and I got a lot of positive feedback from the field — and I started to prefer service product management over consulting or pure business development. For instance, I developed and introduced two web-based global systems for user-generated content, supporting knowledge management, and external market analysis (or BI which we said at the time), and got it going. Communication is key. We aimed at full control over productivity, knowledge management, and our competition, and at having a proactive and aggressive plan forward. Unfortunately, the upcoming reorganizations destroyed all useful measurements of business results.



The dot-com bubble burst

During the time of Mobility Solutions, the dotcom bubble burst. From just going upwards, the stock market went down rapidly, starting in March 2000. For an investor, this was a sudden and horrible change. For us, it wasn't. It was a long slow decline, hardly noticeable in the good business. The effect for us at Ericsson was layoffs because the board got cold feet. From now on and for years to come, there were biannual reorganizations, and half of the staff had to go, in my units. I always felt safe, though. Some of my former colleagues who had left Ericsson had to find another career.



Top of the line

By the way, I got my first WAP phone! A R380. The Ericsson R380 was launched in 2000, and released in November, but I got it later. It was an advanced feature phone that was instrumental in paving the way for the modern smartphone as we know it today. It had a full-size 16-grey b/w touchscreen with personal digital assistant functionality and downloadable apps, and this meant I could retire my Psion Series 5 PDA and replace my old SH888 phone.

When we were just getting started with Mobility Solutions and getting everything in place, we had to disband. Various similar units were formed instead. For a few months, I did other similar specialized assignments for business planning, of a new line unit, and a proposed new product area. I wrote thick business plans. At least some people should have read them. Today I know that this isn't the right way to work, you should create visual models in workshops, but then the norm was different.



Maybe not quite like this

Assignment #8 — Ericsson Microsoft Mobile Venture

I was moved around again. This time the Ericsson Microsoft Mobile Venture. This was a joint venture that basically should make a mobile Outlook email inbox for corporations. I arrived in late 2001 when business should have taken off but wasn't. I performed some assignments but never got any management position or real business problem-solving tasks. I was an unknown outsider and everyone held their positions. This was another project that didn't change the world or even deliver on its promises. I couldn't do much good and wasn't happy with this.



A phone with Outlook

As a reader, you may have noticed that at this time Ericsson staff, even specialists and managers, were seen as resources that management possessed and could shuffle around as they liked. This worked because of the constant layoffs. There weren't any job adverts or job applications. I worked for Ericsson for 18 years in multiple positions on different levels, without ever applying for a position — I was either promoted or moved with a few choices. Or I just asked for a move, which was never a problem.

Assignment #9 — Service Networks — Video streaming

When the Ericsson Microsoft Mobile Venture ship sank I asked for a move to the Service Networks division within Global Services. Here, the telecom operators were the main customers.

The assignment I got first was good for learning about the new organization. I recognized some staff from Ericsson Microsoft Mobile Venture and Mobility Solutions. The third round of dotcom layoffs happened, and some genuinely skilled people had to leave. My assignment was to develop a complete professional services product package suitable for a technical multimedia streaming solution for a telecom operator that hadn't already outsourced their operations to, for instance, Ericsson Managed Services. The task was similar to what I did earlier at Wireless Travel Management, but more comprehensive and with a more commercial focus.

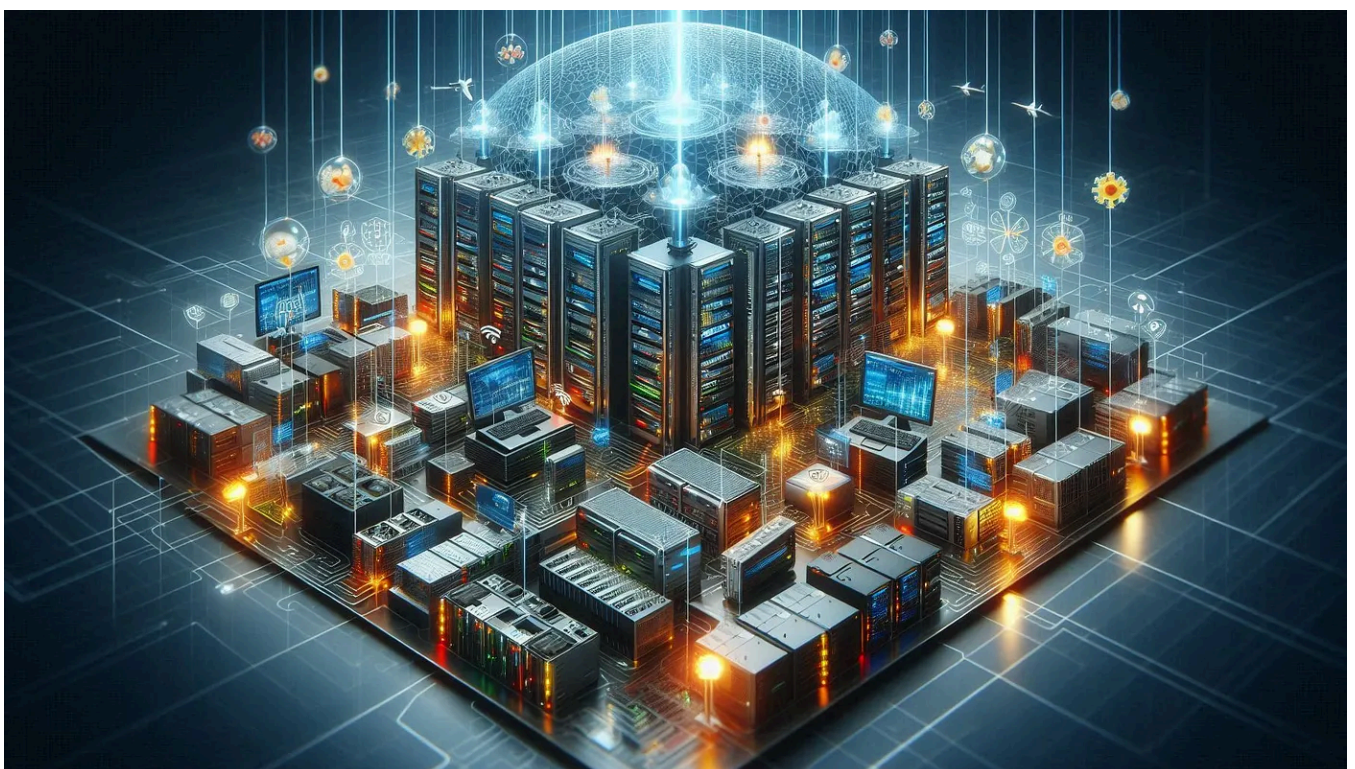
Multimedia meant the combination of moving images and sound, that is, shitty quality video.

However, streaming multimedia on mobile was super-hot. It was at the cutting edge — possible in laboratories but barely technically and industrially possible in the early UMTS networks. Both Ericsson and their customers wanted to climb the value chain. Ericsson by offering telecom operators multimedia systems in the “service layer”. Telecom operators didn’t have the competence to install, implement, integrate, operate, and maintain these technical solutions, so we offered them this as a professional service.

I was the appointed service product manager. I delivered a product portfolio of defined and described service products complete with

- product marketing materials, responsibility matrix, and pricing (the commercial view), and
- processes, methods, and competencies (the delivery view).

At Global Services we used only two views of a product package, the commercial and delivery view. Two perspectives of the same product. The commercial view is aimed at product marketing and the sales force, and the delivery view is aimed at the service delivery units. We should be able to sell what marketing promised and deliver what we sold. And charge for value, with enough profit.



Assignment #10 — Service Networks — J2ME aPaaS+

I was getting the hang of things at Service Networks when given a more challenging task and stimulating responsibility. I was excited and I had lots of energy.

My new position was as Business Solution Manager, a product manager with full Profit and Loss responsibility for an aPaaS+ product package of a J2ME media download server solution for mobile. My assignment was to develop this offering from scratch and put it to market. I need to explain all this.

aPaaS+ is a solution for an on-premises application platform as a service. The plus indicates it includes a complete service package as well. Professional services integration, support, maintenance, security, education, and consulting are included.

J2ME stands for Java 2 Platform, Micro Edition, and was an architecture for portable code on embedded devices and mobile phones. It could be used to download apps for feature phones. Remember that this was still years before we had smartphones. J2ME for mobiles was new and burning hot.

The technical solution centered around a download server which doesn't sound too complicated today in 2024. But then it was not so easy. It was an e-store as well.

The user stories were like...

- As an office clerk, I want to download and use calendars, to-do lists, simple web browsers, and messaging applications to be more productive at work.
- As a private person, I want to buy, download, and use music or video players for entertainment.
- As a gamer, I want to buy, download, and play games, such as Snake or Tetris — on my mobile phone — just for fun and to kill time.

An app store before smartphones.

We expected a great demand from the telecom operators as we would provide them with everything and they could charge, say €3 per download. With zillions of downloads, it would be a good business for them. And a good profit for us — as we would be creative and implement a value-based pricing scheme.

There was only one issue — we had to create the offering first. It's not a piece of cake.

When the giant Ericsson provides the large telecom operators with such an offering you'd believe there would be many people behind it. But it was only me working with the product management, my small team in Ireland that did all the technical solution and service delivery testing, and one Irish product marketer reporting to me who traveled around and, together with the local Ericsson KAM, talked with the customers, doing the selling.

What did I do?

- I did an external market analysis and competition analysis
- I did business planning, strategy alignment, and coordination with other Ericsson products and units
- I developed an innovative business concept (extended on-prem aPaaS+)
- I defined all the product packages the solution consists of
- I made all the product marketing material
- I prepared the responsibility matrix and the parts of the solution-specific Terms and Conditions, the basis for a contract agreement
- I designed the pricing model
- I designed the supply & delivery processes
- I worked in Visio, Word, and Excel, but not in PowerPoint — my excellent and hard-working Irish colleague did that part and demo
- I led and coordinated all work related to this business solution
- I reported upwards regularly
- I did probably many more things now forgotten

What happened?

We did installations at several well-known European telecom operators for their evaluation and based on them we expected the market to take off quickly with the

popularity of Java games (J2ME) on feature phones becoming popular.

What happened then?

Make a guess.

Unfortunately, the whole division of Service Network was closed down, including all the service layer offerings. It wasn't much to close down. There wasn't much left of Service Network, after the fourth halving of the staff in two years.

It was more cold feet, just because of the stock market, and not because of the actual business. Ericsson had to prioritize the core business — mobile telephone exchanges and RBS networks. So, much of the hot stuff on top was wiped away. In a cold climate, the dishes become less spicy.

The few of us who remained to the end were all offered a transfer to another unit within Global Services. For me, it was in pricing that management saw my power and potential, so I was offered a position as Global Pricing Manager for Network Roll-Out (NRO), a 2 Billion USD p.a. business, an interesting position I then held for more than five years. NRO was a product unit for professional services mainly for the installation & integration of fixed and mobile telephone networks. It was Ericsson's cash cow, and I increased the gross margin by two percentage points. How I did that might become another story on Medium later on.

Conclusion

During these ~3 years I worked hard, did the right things the right way, and got or chose the right and timely assignments, yet almost nothing came out of it, measured in revenue or user benefit. Innovation can be tough, also at a large company with great resources. I am glad all these assignments weren't my start-ups. I wanted to change the world into a mobile world. I didn't succeed with this. Others did, many years later. However, I learned a lot and had an exciting, relatively well-paid, and comfortable job considering my family.

I have learned that it is almost impossible to predict what will happen. You can study data and conduct surveys, make perfect business cases, and develop careful strategies — it doesn't matter. The only thing you know about your plan is that it will not last. Unforeseen external factors are drivers in a dynamic world like this. I have

learned that innovation roads are winding, and we must accept all waste and difficult turns.

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What are your thoughts?