

Following the purchase of the downstream assets of Shell New Zealand, **Z Energy** needed a local contact centre partner that would demonstrate the company's commitment to provide a strong consistent brand that resonates with New Zealanders

They chose Telnet, and have not only improved the experience for their customers, but are saving both time and money

In 2010, Infratil and the New Zealand Superannuation Fund purchased the downstream assets of Shell New Zealand, which was renamed Greenstone. The purchase included Shell's network of over 300 service stations and truck stops, their 17 percent share in the New Zealand Refining Company, their 25 percent stake in Fly Buys, plus all their commercial interests fuelling road transport, rail, marine and aviation.

After months of market research, Greenstone was rebranded to Z Energy in May 2011, in order to represent a New Zealand energy brand that is New Zealand owned, New Zealand run, with a heavy dose of Kiwi attitude. Z now owns and manages businesses which includes a 17.1% stake in Refining NZ which runs New Zealand's only oil refinery, a 25% stake in Loyalty New Zealand which runs Fly Buys (New Zealand's largest customer loyalty programme), over 220 service stations, about 100 truck stops, pipelines, terminals and bulk storage terminal infrastructure around the country.

At the time of sale the Shell service centre was outsourced to a contact centre in Manila, Philippines.

Z Energy quickly identified that there was discord between their emerging brand identity and the



existing service offered from overseas. In order to succeed from the onset, it became essential to align the contact centre service with the hard-yards that Z was putting into building a strong and consistent brand – one which New Zealanders would easily resonate with and support.

“Z is for New Zealand and bringing our call centre back from the Philippines was one of the first things we did, and one of the best ways to demonstrate that commitment.” – Z Energy

The largest privately owned Outsource Contact Centre in NZ, Telnet Services Limited's reputation in managing complex call types and customer service excellence became the natural candidate and recipient for Z's frontline.

“Have you ever tried performing open heart surgery whilst running a marathon? That's probably the same kind of concept as moving the heart of our business...from one side of the world to the other in less than four months” – Z Energy

What rapidly became apparent, when working through the transition period with Telnet, was that they were by no means a one trick pony. Telnet's experience in transitioning clients, with overseas contact centre providers, to their site in New Zealand meant they were able to move quickly and systematically through what otherwise would have been an extremely complex and stressful period. Impressively, Telnet were able to deliver on things that had not previously been possible.

“Service levels are better than ever. Calling us is an inconvenience for a customer and we like to keep the experience as efficient as possible so the customers can get on with their business. The amount of time we need to keep customers on the phone to sort out their requests has halved since we brought the call centre home, despite having fewer people answering the calls.” – Z Energy

At the centre in Manila training of a single Shell CSR had taken 5 weeks – Telnet applied its unique knowledge management approach and supporting systems and went on to deliver training in just under 3 days. In the past, the FTE count in Manila had been 20 CSRs; Telnet’s rationalisation and improved efficiencies means they perform a better service to Z customers, with only 7 CSRs. No easy feat, considering the complexity and multitude of calls that are processed through the centre. Telnet centre handles millions of litres of petrol orders per month for the country, amongst other call types that require varying degrees of technical accuracy.

“Our customers have been delighted with the ease of communication with local people with local knowledge. We’ve received consistently positive feedback from our customers from day one of the call centre operating back in New Zealand and it hasn’t stopped since.” – Z Energy

It was apparent from early on that the experience Z’s customers were receiving from Telnet matched with the Z brand values and promise – customers were even talking about it! But there was

desire to dig deeper than mere complimentary feedback and quantify the customer experience. Through an independent multinational surveying company, a customer satisfaction score was ascertained that validated the initial customer feedback and benchmarked the experience.

“Customer satisfaction scores improved dramatically and immediately once the call centre was up and running in Telnet’s offices.” – Z Energy

In fact trends continue to confirm that Z’s customers are increasingly satisfied by the service experience. Early on customer satisfaction scores were strong; furthermore they have increasingly outperformed the scores of other outsourced, and even ‘in-house’, centres – on not just a national but a global scale.

“We view our Telnet call centre team as a part of the Z family. They perform an incredibly important function in providing our valued customers with the service they expect and deserve, and in delivering the Z brand promise.” – Z Energy

Part of the success from the partnership is directly attributable to Z’s ongoing involvement and support, coupled with Telnet’s flexibility and flair when incorporating Z’s wider business with the identity of the frontline CSR team. Z is able to deliver on their business objectives at the centre and reflect their brand values in the interactions with customers at the frontline. Ongoing operational updates, business change and uptake of new business function is assimilated rapidly by the centre

and applied with consistency through the frontline team, ensuring that Z customers continue to receive a relevant and high value service, delivered with a heavy dose of Kiwi attitude.

“Bringing our call centre back to New Zealand and contracting Telnet to run it for us has saved us time, a lot of money and, most importantly, has significantly improved the experience for our customers; which is really what it is all about.” – Z Energy

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Z CEO Mike Bennetts with Telnet’s MD John Chetwynd



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