

Case study Telfort

Improve customer contact, product development and call reduction with social customer service



2014



INSIDED

About Telfort

Telfort (part of KPN) is a Dutch discounter that offers simple, reliable services for mobile telephone, television and internet.

Telephone and internet products and services are indispensable in day-to-day life. Since customers need to be able to trust that these will work, reliability is very important for Telfort. Since Telfort was established in 1996, the company has worked hard to deliver the best products and services to its customers. All of its products are aligned with customer preferences, and

every customer is regarded important. Above all, the organization wants to be transparent in everything it does to its over 2 million customers. Always keen to keep improving, Telfort employees are ever-vigilant for ways to do it better, smarter, differently or with more fun. Learning from customers is a major focus, with the Telfort community playing a key role.

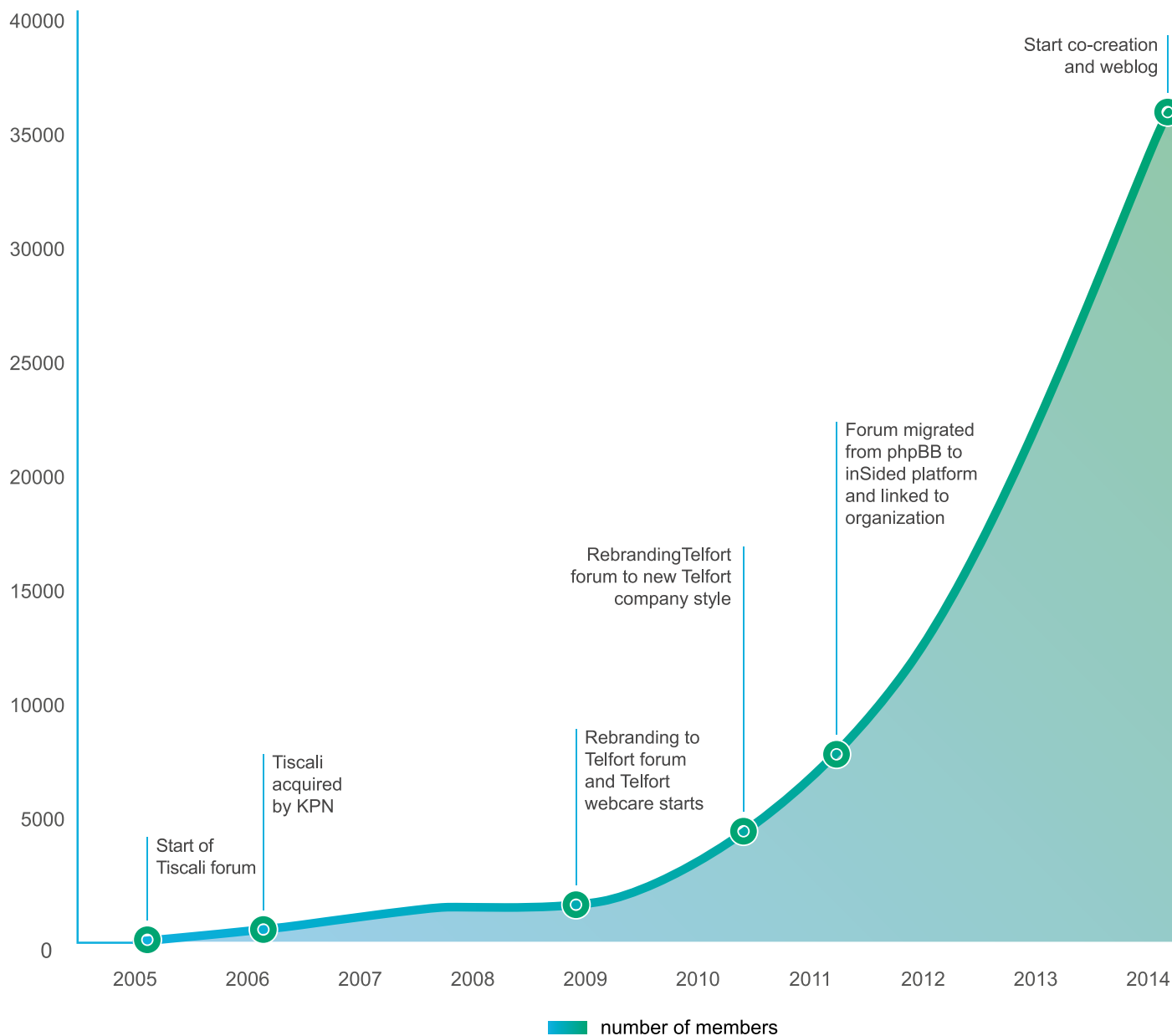


Telfort community

The Telfort community has a long history. Ten years ago, the first initiative was launched: a discussion forum for Tiscali (one of Telfort's predecessors).

When KPN acquired Tiscali in 2006, the forum was adopted by Telfort, leading Telfort webcare employees to play an active role in the forum. The number of members rose sharply after that period. Its growth was fed by the corporate style introduced by Telfort in 2011; the forum

migrated from the phpBB open source software to the community platform built by inSided in 2012. More members join the forum every day; the counter is now at nearly 36,000 members.



Community objectives



Reduce the number of calls because many visitors will be able to find an answer on the forum without needing to ask a question themselves



Make an active contribution to Telfort customer satisfaction (online and offline)



Increase traffic to the Telfort website through well-indexed forum content



Improve products and services based on customer feedback



Boost the percentage of customers helping customers on the forum, thus reducing pressure on web care



Develop an appealing, easily accessible and transparent platform to facilitate interaction about Telfort products and services for both customers and non-customers

Facts & figures



> €1 million
call reduction yearly



> 50%
of questions
answered by members



36,000
community members



200,000
comments



> 60%
of forum visitors arrive
via search engines



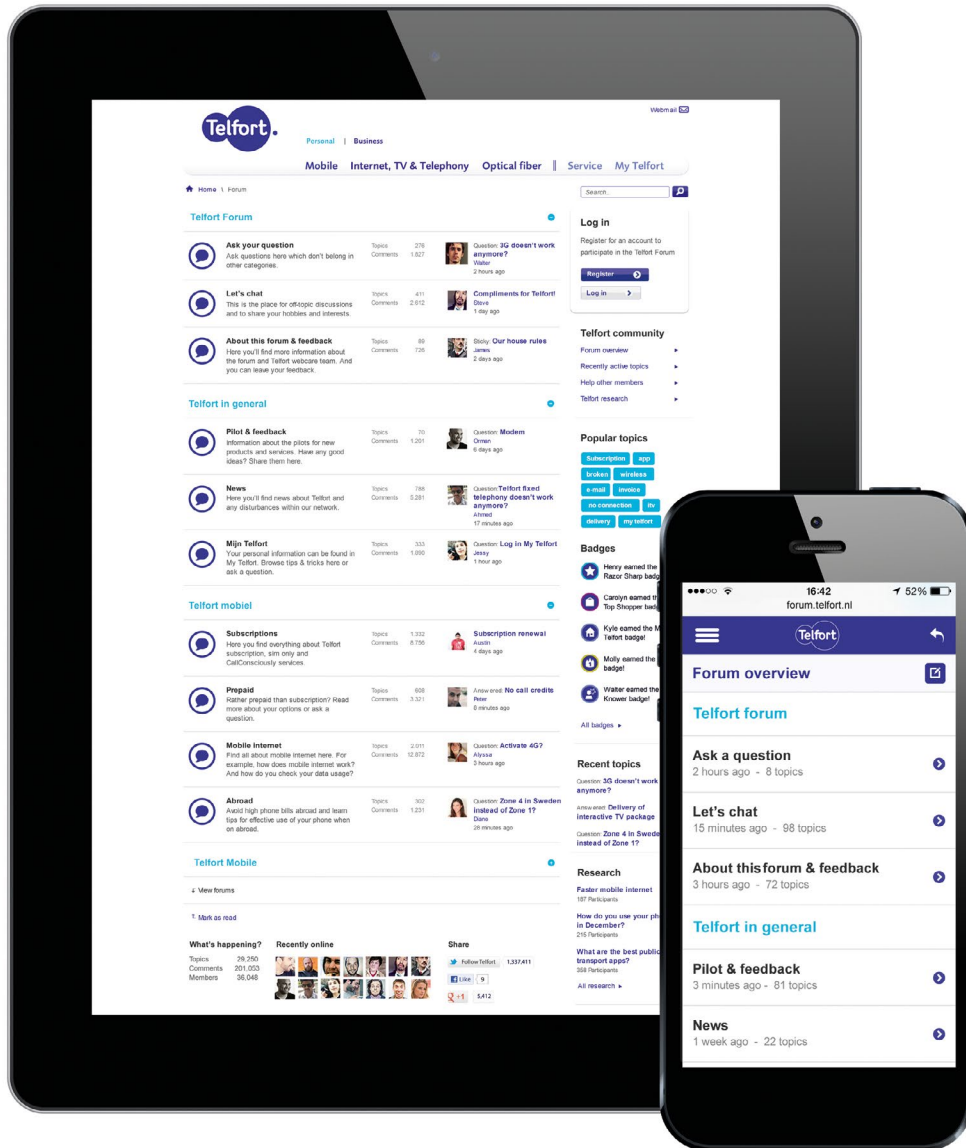
528,000
visitors find their answer
on the forum annually

Forum

How do you grow from a user-driven discussion forum to a fully fledged, active community that includes a service function?

On the forum, customers find answers to their questions, offer feedback and help other customers. Over 100,000 visitors find their way to the forum every month. Nearly 500 topics are posted monthly, with over 2500 responses. The topics are diverse, ranging from questions about internet, networks and connections to land lines.

The structured dedication to the organization and the right choice of platform were the key factors in the forum's success. The Telfort forum was updated by inSided in mid-2014. The innovations included improved functionalities and a completely revamped moderation environment for the webcare team.



Helping each other

The new forum environment gives customers immediate access to unanswered questions. When customers want to help other customers, it's easy to find which questions have not been answered yet. 'Help others' is a clear action with its own spot in the forum navigation. The fact that Telfort customers are eager to help others is evident from the fact that over 50% of the questions are answered by customers.

Following and inspiring each other

In order to continue promoting interaction between customers, the forum also includes a number of new functionalities, like a following system, activities page and the option to rank posts.

The system makes it possible to follow interesting users and start conversations with them that only the participating users can read. The activities page offers an overview of the actions that each user has taken on the forum, like posting topics and answering questions. The overview also shows when a user earns a badge (an icon displayed beside the user name that can be earned by performing certain actions on the forum).

Previous research conducted in cooperation with VU University Amsterdam shows that members greatly appreciate the interactive contact and may become more active as a result. These developments contribute to interaction and increased member activity.

Rewarding each other

In addition to mutual contact, expressions of appreciation can also be an important motivator. Telfort has set up a special reward system on the forum for that purpose. Besides the badges referred to above, this system includes reputation points. These points are awarded when members like a forum post. The number of likes is specified beside the post. This makes it easy to see which posts have received lots of likes, so the customer who posted the message feels appreciated.

The option of using a Facebook account to log in also makes it easier to take an active role in the forum.

Forum badges



Razor Sharp

You really know how to ask good questions!



Top Shopper

Both in store and online you are doing your part!



Number One

You have proven to be fully committed to this forum!



My Telfort

My Telfort has no secrets for you!



Elegant

What a beautiful profile picture!



All Knower

You have a strong opinion and dare to express yourself too!

.....

‘The community allows Telfort to improve its products and services. This is extremely valuable to Telfort and to our customers. The organization saves on costs (for example through call reduction) and has the opportunity to show what it stands for. It is also wonderful to see how customers brainstorm to find solutions with us. Telfort has many regular forum members who are greatly appreciated, because they keep us on our toes thanks to their critical contributions, demonstrating their expertise and loyalty by helping other customers.

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Hugo de Vries

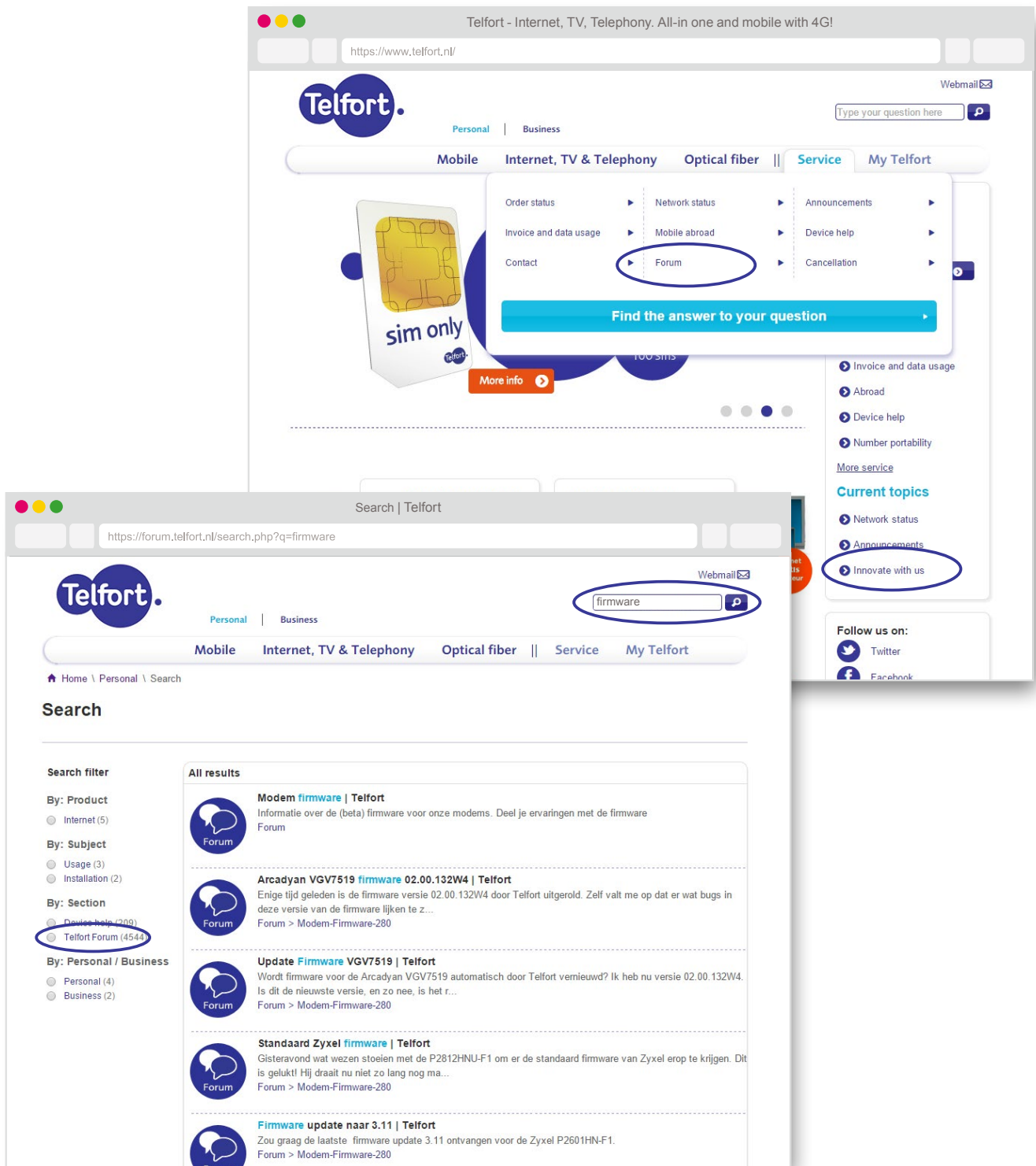
Community Manager KPN



Integrations

The forum is an important service channel. To ensure it can be found by those seeking advice, it has been integrated into the Telfort corporate and mobile websites.

The forum features prominently on the website in the navigation structure, homepage, search function and customer service page. This approach allows the forum to serve as a knowledge database.



Organization

Professional moderation

Professional moderation ensures a clear overview, a pleasant atmosphere and a customer-centered approach. The moderators play various roles, including answering questions and keeping track of the overall mood on the forum (for example by intervening if members violate community guidelines).

The clear structure of the forum is maintained by moving topics to the correct subforum and editing topic titles as needed to make sure they are easy to find.

The moderators also act as hosts/dialogue facilitators: they welcome new members, display and interest in and express their appreciation for active users, and identify customer feedback to pass on to the right department within Telfort.

Embedding in the organization

The Telfort community is solidly embedded in the organization and widely supported.



Senior Online Marketing Manager **Maarten Goedvolk** is responsible for the Telfort community and closely involved in its continued development.



Marlous Heiser heads the web care department that handles forum moderation.



Hugo de Vries (Community Manager at KPN) was involved from Telfort's end in establishing and later rebranding the forum. He also played a leading role in the transition to the inSided platform and the continued development of the forum, e.g. in the research component that facilitates brainstorming and co-creation.



Henk Harsevoort is the current community manager of the Telfort forum. He is in charge of the day-to-day management as the main link between the community members, the moderators and the rest of the Telfort organization.

Service value for Telfort and its customers

Providing service is the biggest driver behind the forum. Customers are pro-actively provided with information and can interact with each other about various topics.

Over half of the visitors arrive at the forum via a search engine. They often have a specific question and directly find the information they need in nearly 40% of all cases. Over 44,000 customers are helped every month. Information about network disruptions and so on is proactively announced on the forum, as are the answers to frequently asked questions. This cuts down on call volume for the Telfort call center, which represents a significant saving on costs. If a visitor cannot find the answer he's looking for right away, he can create a new topic to ask a question. Telfort webcare employees and/or other visitors respond to that question.

There are a number of highly active forum members who enjoy helping other customers. Collectively, they answer half of all questions. Over 193,000 responses have been posted on the forum by now, and that number is still rising fast.

High-volume customer feedback based on interaction

The forum is used both proactively and reactively to collect customer feedback. Based on their interactions with customers, the moderation team is the eyes and ears of the organization. They identify any problems and unclear issues and can communicate this information to the rest of the internal organization.

Feedback is actively solicited on the Telfort forum through 'pilot forums'. In these subforums, Telfort engages in dialogue with a select group of members with the aim of improving products and services. Pilots have taken place for such topics as technical migrations, VDSL and interactive TV. Since these pilots involved a substantial number of actual users testing a product over a longer time period, they produce more specific areas for improvement than normal tests. This approach also prevents potential disappointments or misunderstandings when the product is distributed to the general public.

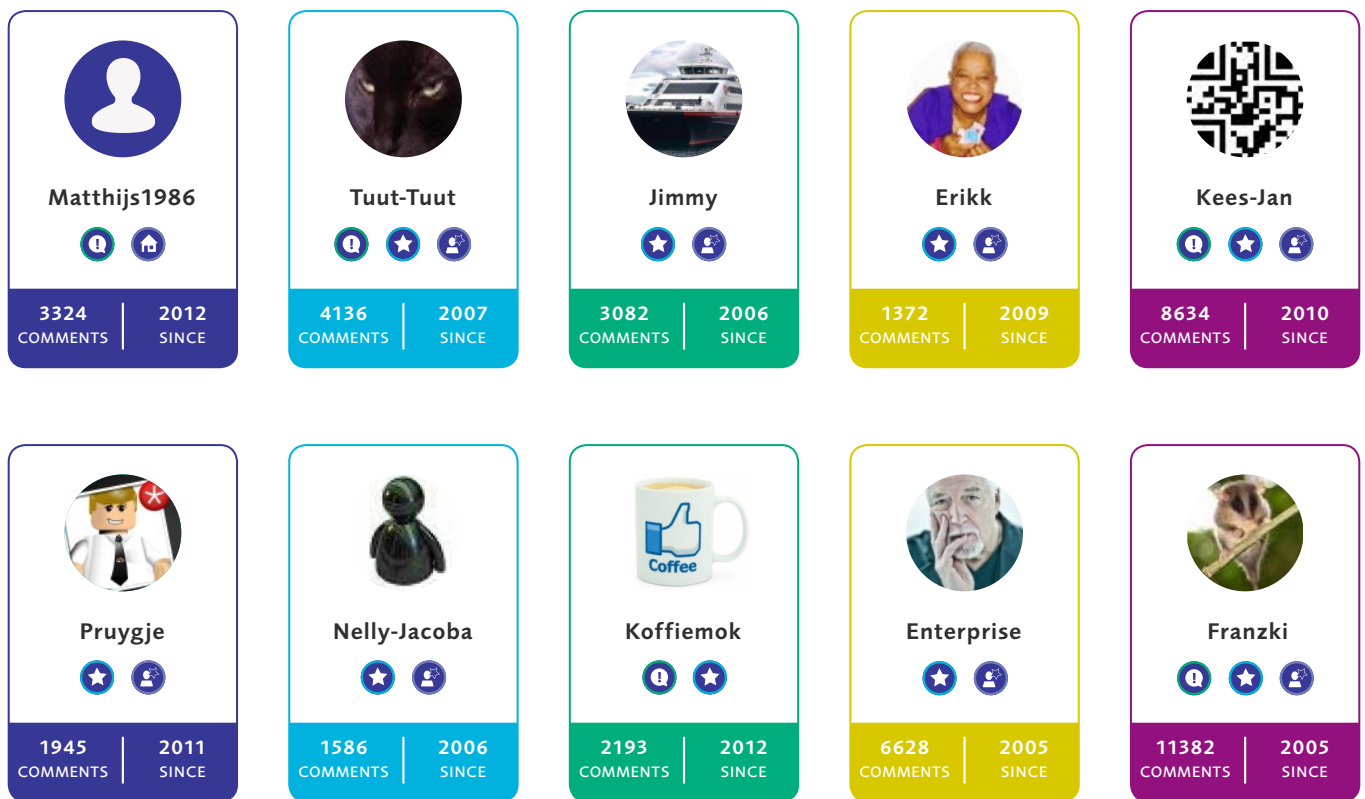


Super users and customers helping customers: interaction improves the mood

The customers-helping-customers percentage on the Telfort forum is over 50%. Some of the members have been active for over ten years. They answer most of the questions and have their own private section on the forum where they can talk to the community manager and the moderators. Meetings regularly take place where they can hear about the latest developments in Telfort

and on the forum, get sneak previews of new products or services, and have informal chats with each other in real life.

As prominent Telfort ambassadors, these 'super users' create a positive atmosphere in the forum by offering constructive criticism and keeping a close eye on the content and tone of the conversations. Customers who have a question can benefit from Telfort's expertise and from the knowledge and experience contributed by other forum members.



Results

The Telfort forum has achieved provable results. The costs saved significantly outweigh the costs incurred. Results are achieved in call deflection and customer satisfaction, reducing churn and improving products and services.

Over 1 million euros saved through call deflection

One of the most important drivers in saving costs is reducing traffic to the call center. Telephone-based customer service is an expensive service channel, since the costs per call are relatively high and it involves one-on-one communications. Thanks to the forum, many customers are able to find answers without calling customer service.

This is shown on an ongoing basis by using an exit survey to see what percentage of visitors find an answer on the forum and therefore did not need to call

the customer service line. Forum visitors are asked three questions:

1. Were you looking for specific information?
2. If so, did you find the information you were looking for?
3. Would you have called customer service if you had not been able to find the information?

The results show that about 75% of visitors are looking for specific information, and 37% find the answer to their question. Since over 144,000 visitors come to the forum every month, more than 44,000 customers are served by the forum on a monthly basis. 56% of them would have called customer service. If we assume 5 euros per call, Telfort saves over one million euros on calls every year by maintaining the forum.



Improving products and quality through pilots

In addition to offering an effective service channel, the forum is also used to improve products and quality.

In a separate members-only section, members share their observations about specific products or services with each other. For example, there were pilots about interactive TV (300 participants), VDSL (150 participants) and a network migration (150 participants).

Customers test the products thoroughly themselves, thus saving test hours Telfort would have had to arrange

otherwise. These pilots save Telfort an average of 250 test hours, which is about €15,000. Of course this approach does not eliminate all testing costs, since it also takes time to communicate and interact with the people involved and recruit participants. These hours and costs do not exceed the money saved by using this approach. Moreover, these participants spend many more hours testing compared to the customary approach.

For example, see the costs of the VDSL Pilot below, with and without using the forum:

	Testing via forum (hours)	Testing via forum (€)	Testing without forum (hours)	Testing without forum (€)
Participant costs	-	-	-	€ 521
Communication and support	30	€ 900	6	€ 180
Recruitment of participants	5	€ 150	0	€ 0
Test hours	0 by employees	€ 0	250	€ 15,000
Total costs		€ 1,050		€ 15,711

In addition to the cost savings, the pilots also produce valuable insights. For example, thanks to the interactive TV pilot, the user manual and remote control were changed, the signal was improved, and a malfunction in the video library was fixed. These updates led to satisfaction amongst pilot participants, 90% of whom renewed their subscription after the end of the pilot.

Member engagement was so intense in the network migration pilot that they even wrote an application to measure download speeds and collect valuable data for Telfort and KPN. During this pilot, the cause of temporary dips in download speed during peak load was identified and fixed.

Stronger customer focus through service and interaction via the forum

The use of the forum as a service and co-innovation channel increases customer focus. Answers provided on the forum are accessible to everyone.

Optimal findability

Over 60% of forum visitors land on the forum via Google (representing more than 10% of the total search engine traffic to Telfort.nl). The forum has also been incorporated into the search results produced by Telfort.nl. By using the forum as a service channel, Telfort has created a large knowledge bank which is partly compiled and updated regularly by the customers. Moreover, unlike channels like Facebook and Twitter, Telfort is able to maintain its own forum and manage the content. The forum offers the additional advantage that messages do not disappear from a timeline, as happens on Facebook and Twitter. The information is adapted to the customer's needs (since customers can also state which one is the right answer) and easy to find for customers who have a similar problem.

Lower churn

The combination of customer engagement in the forum and the improved services and products means that forum members are less likely to switch to a different provider. The personal attention on the forum make customers feel more connected to Telfort. Research shows that engaged forum members are more loyal to Telfort.

Savings far exceed costs

1.2 million euros is saved annually through call deflection alone. Thousands and thousands more are saved by using online pilots rather than having Telfort schedule test hours itself. It can be assumed that the improved products and services also lead to savings because customers are more loyal and have access to higher-quality products and services. The total costs of the forum (moderation, platform and support costs) are only a fraction of the amount saved.



Co-creation

Along with the improved forum environment, 'Brainstorm with Telfort' was launched. This community section allows Telfort customers to have a direct influence on Telfort products and services by taking surveys.

These surveys are used to figure out customer preferences and identify possible improvements in products, services, processes, communications and more.

There have been successful pilots on the forum in the past. These showed that Telfort customers give valuable

feedback and enjoy contributing to the brainstorming process. The open research environment in the community gives more people a chance to participate in the brainstorming process and express their opinions in an informal setting. Users can log into the Brainstorming environment with their current forum account, or create a new account that also offers forum access.



**Brainstorm
with Telfort**



Brainstorming via surveys

In contrast to the forum, Telfort can use various different types of surveys in the specially designed Brainstorming environment. For example, members can state whether they agree or disagree with a claim, rank topics in order (e.g. most to least important) and vote.

The insights gained from the resulting conversations are an important aspect of this interactive environment. Each survey includes the possibility of asking open questions, and members can always offer their opinions by posting a response after completing the survey. Branddoctors Dialogue, an inSided partner, guided Telfort through the implementation and execution of the surveys (from timeline and structure to analysis).

The results of brainstorming

Participants greatly appreciate receiving feedback. They get their first feedback immediately after answering the questions. The participant can immediately see what the other participants answered and compare it to their own answers. After every survey, Telfort lets the participants know what the results were. To consumers, 'Brainstorm with Telfort' is a platform where they can exert a direct influence on Telfort products and services. To the telecom company, it offers a powerful tool for testing ideas, gaining fresh insights, and continuing to develop products and services. Survey topics included how customers prefer to see their invoice structured and whether customers feel a need for Telfort WiFi hotspots. Within the first six months, this section of the community had over 10,000 page views and more than 400 participants.

Case: research & co-creation

During a pilot for the network migration, customers shared their experiences in a pilot forum. Over 300 forum members took part in the nine-month pilot. The intensity of testing carried out by community members was overwhelming. The findings of the participating members made it possible to identify and resolve the cause of drops in download speeds at full network capacity. As a result, performance could be verifiably improved.

The intensity of participation in the pilot was apparent e.g. from the fact that participants wrote their own applications to carry out download tests and collect data for Telfort and KPN. Thanks to these participants, far more testing hours took place than Telfort would have been able to arrange on its own. Moreover, this approach saved more than 14,000 euros in research costs.

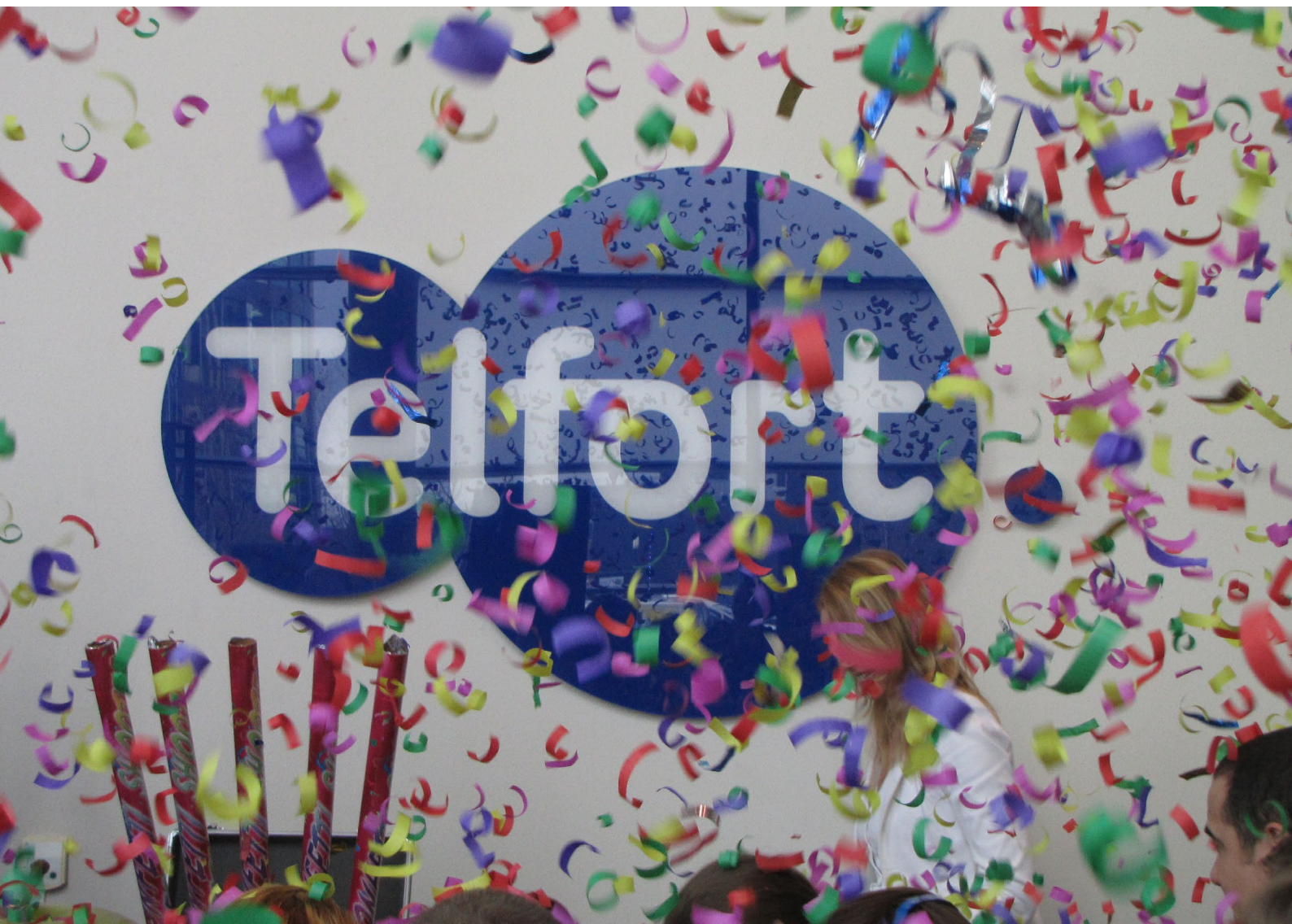


Further growth

In future, Telfort wants to expand customer involvement through the community sections. A blog will also be part of this.

Via a blog, Telfort can get customers even more closely involved in the organization by letting them know what's happening, by informing and entertaining them. This also gives Telfort its own channel for posting the results of the community surveys. The blog offers the marketing department a great tool for increasing brand engagement and communicating Telfort's brand values. Telfort also wants to continue expanding current engagement and ROI.

A new platform does not fully achieve Telfort's objective on its own. In future, Telfort wants to use the forum even more widely and make the most of it. For example by involving more employees from different departments. Whether you work in customer service or marketing, the increasing flood of customer questions and feedback on the forum offer useful insights. Telfort also wants to continue integrating the forum more closely with the Telfort website. This integration can take place through the customer service page, but also in the My Telfort environment, where customers can view all their own data.



inSided Community Platform

The cloud-based inSided platform delivers an enterprise-grade solution to build, integrate and manage branded customer communities across digital touch points and devices.

On community pages, customers engage with each other and your company, get an overview of all relevant information and can browse new or popular topics related to your brand and products. Content can furthermore be embedded on your website, on your support pages and in your product using plug and play widgets that provide your customers with relevant information when and where they need it.



Q&A forums

Give your customers a place to ask questions, get relevant answers, and engage with each other and your company



Ideas & surveys

Improve products with research and feedback (surveys, ideas, news, tips & sweepstake submissions)



KB / FAQ content

Build a knowledge base as you go, and serve out the most relevant content using machine learning and AI

True SaaS



Content Intelligence



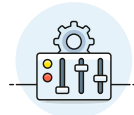
Gamification



Moderation



Analytics



API



SSO & social authentication



CRM integration

Technology is just one click away. Success is not.

Success is much more than just the right technology. As your dedicated partner, it is a mindset for us. Success is about a great kick off, continuous growth, focus on ROI and creating a world class team with thorough experience. Use our proven approach to ensure you get all essential knowledge and support, in every step of the way.



We help you to start and show success within 6 to 12 weeks



We help you to grow your platform and continue to deliver value



We help you set ambitious yet achievable goals and show ROI



We help you to build and train your team, and learn from peers

Drive real, measurable impact

The inSided platform will help you improve user engagement and increase product adoption. It enables an efficient CSM and support organization while keeping service levels high, and improves retention. Our customers typically see 15-25% reduction of support costs, 10-15% higher NPS scores & customer advocacy, and 8% reduction in churn.

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