

How business analysis helped support Farmlands in creating a world class Telephony Solution.



When one of New Zealand’s biggest farm supply operators looked to introduce internet-powered communications with Amazon Connect, it engaged Assurity Consulting for a crucial service underpinning quality delivery: Business Analysis. The Business Analyst supported Farmlands in delivering a clear, detailed, and focused understanding of what was needed to enable outstanding experiences for both team members and customers.

Farmlands Co-operative was formed by farmers for farmers almost 60 years ago, with the aim that everybody should prosper. Farmlands are the largest buying group of its type in New Zealand, transacting more than 2.5 billion dollars worth of business annually. It is listed in the top 20 companies by turnover in New Zealand. This buying power helps reduce the input costs of more than 80,000 Farmlands shareholders nationwide. For farmers, growers or lifestyleers, Farmlands offers assistance and technical expertise in the field and across 82 stores throughout New Zealand.



From left: Standing - Graeme Wilson (Farmlands), Zoe Newton-Clark (Assurity) and Bevan Scott (Farmlands)

Situation

Like many organisations, when the pandemic struck, Farmlands accelerated its objectives of introducing new ways of working, including cloud solutions enabling seamless, consistent, and future-proof access to the services necessary to get things done. This included a bid to improve confidence in its Customer Hub, allowing people to work from anywhere with the introduction of cloud omnichannel contact centre solution Amazon Connect.

“We handle around 12 to 14 000 interactions per month through the Customer Hub, and a key emerging requirement was an effective and continuous work-from-home-suitable system. Even outside of the pandemic, we’d appreciated that a more flexible system would be advantageous as we routinely had people working while farm-based, out of local branches, or at home,” says Farmlands’ Head of Customer Engagement, Graeme Wilson.

He notes that Amazon Connect offers integrated features that would position the Customer Hub for greater success, such as real-time sentiment analysis, transcriptions, and more.

“These features would ensure we were more connected with our customers daily – but only if they are appropriately configured and rolled out to suit our business operations.”

Solution

The Farmlands team brought in Assurity Consulting Business Analyst Zoe Newton-Clark to help drive greater success from the project, with a particular focus on examining user requirements through customer and team member lenses. “We’d previously used their Business Analysis consultants and knew that Zoe has a testing and contact centre background, making her ideal for the task. This meant we very quickly got the necessary clarity on things like internal call flow – and a lot more,” says Wilson, adding that Zoe’s work proved invaluable in achieving clarity on exactly how the Amazon Connect system would look, feel and work in practice.

With a background in customer support in a contact centre environment (as a Customer Services Officer and later a Digital Customer Services Test Writer) at Inland Revenue, Newton-Clark offered unique operational insights which helped guide requirements definition and process flows for Farmlands. Since joining Assurity Consulting in 2020, she has worked as a tester before moving into the Business Analysis environment. The experience proved invaluable, as Newton-Clark was able to understand how an effective contact centre should work and provided insights into common pitfalls, challenges and shortcomings from a quality assurance perspective.



Results

Newton-Clark defined requirements for:

- TV-displayed wall boards with at-the-minute updates, team statistics and combined performance numbers across all contact centre teams, easily visible to leads.
- A customer API dashboard displaying caller/account details so agents can access account information to verify and assist callers.
- User functionality, including admin permissions for reporting and adjusting IVR (Interactive Voice Response) flows
- AWS and MS Teams interaction requirements allowing staff communication with customers and staff as required
- AWS Call Flows, IVR Messaging and AI Decisions and process documentation.
- Updated end-to-end call flows
- Processes managing Amazon Connect's Telephony System, on- and off-boarding users.

Wilson says the inclusion of Assurity Consulting's BA skills into the project team eliminated uncertainty and brought the project to a better conclusion "Basically, a great Business Analyst knows what questions to ask, how to be curious, how to challenge and how to expose details, rather than resting on assumptions on how things might work."

"They play a valuable part in delivering a successful project, no matter how big or small."

On a more personal level, Bevan Scott, Farmlands' Digital Project Manager, notes that Zoe stood out as curious and persistent, relentlessly digging deeper to expose every detail of Farmlands' user requirements and, in doing so, reducing project risks and amplifying the quality of the delivery of the Amazon Connect solution. "Zoe helped us understand the tangibles and turned much of the theoretical advantages and features into practically deliverable specifications. This means we got more features and benefits from the technology and ultimately derived full value to the business from the project. That's a major benefit to Farmlands, of course, but also to Digital Island, which wants to deliver the best project possible for us."

Finally, Wilson says a lasting impression of working with Zoe is a no-fuss attitude towards value creation. "And that meant a common focus on solving problems and delivering an optimal outcome for all concerned on this project."



At a glance

Company:
Farmlands Co-Operative Society

Industry:
Agriculture

Requirements:

To deliver a clear, detailed, and focused understanding of what was needed to enable outstanding experiences for team members and customers via the new Amazon Connect.

Solution:

Bringing a blend of Business Analysis and Contact Centre knowledge to help Farmlands define and understand how an effective contact centre should work; and provided insights into common pitfalls, challenges and shortcomings from a quality assurance perspective.

Outcomes Achieved:

Helped the client understand the tangibles and turned much of the theoretical advantages and features into practically deliverable specifications, resulting in the Farmlands team gaining more features and benefits from the technology, and ultimately, derived full value to the business from the project.



“We’d previously used Assurity Business Analysis consultants and knew that Zoe has a testing and contact centre background, making her ideal for the task. This meant we quickly got the necessary clarity on things like internal call flow – and much more.”

Graeme Wilson – Head of Customer Experience, Farmlands Co-operative Society

“The inclusion of Assurity Consulting’s BA skills into the project team eliminated uncertainty and brought the project to a better conclusion. Basically, a great Business Analyst knows what questions to ask, how to be curious, how to challenge and how to expose details, rather than resting on assumptions about how things might work. They play a valuable part in delivering a successful project, no matter how big or small.”

Bevan Scott – Digital Project Manager, Farmlands Co-operative Society

