

# Sharpening sales focus



**Credit management fragmented across several departments can lead to unnecessary credit losses and defaults. Here's how one Finnish company is getting it right.**

WORDS DAVID NOBLE / PHOTO JUHA RAHKONEN

When times are tough like now it puts even huger pressure on enterprises to make the most of every competitive advantage to drive sales and generate profit.

Finland's fastest-growing mobile communication service provider, DNA, is no exception. Providing a mix of mobile and fixed network services to consumer and corporate customers, DNA ceaselessly hunts new and better ways to secure its competitive ability in today's extremely tough business environment.

"Our goal is to achieve good sales and profits by ensuring our customers are satisfied – and by minimising our credit risks," DNA Services' Chief Financial Officer Eeva Iivanainen tells Intrum Magazine.

Established some two years ago with the merging of a number of Finnish telephone

companies, DNA Group today has over 2 million customers and a 2007 turnover of Euro 534 million. DNA Group offers mobile communications and network services, fixed-network broadband and TV services, and its own retail network of stores.

"We've been working with Intrum with collection of written-off receivables, so when we decided to develop smarter customer segmentation tools they were a natural partner," Eeva Iivanainen recalls.

**DNA's overall target** is to integrate customer segmentation seamlessly into its sales and marketing efforts.

"We've spent the past year putting in place the right processes and information systems for integrating credit information, management of receivables and payments, credit ledgers, reminders and collection to debt surveillance, collection of written off receivables and purchased debt and, naturally, the customer service linked to them."

"Our main aim now is to make the processes for managing receivables and payments as efficient as possible to improve our cash flow. We have already taken the first steps using the CMS tool in targeting new customers, especially in new areas. And we are also using it to sell new or additional services to existing customers."

Although it is still too early to specify detailed success rates being achieved, Eeva

Iivanainen is upbeat about what has been achieved so far.

"Intrum's CMS experience and flexibility in applying its knowhow to our specific requirements is helping us reach our sales and cash flow targets. We see that when sales and account managers get the new information about potential customers, their sales efforts are more efficient and the probability of achieving targets increases. This makes us more competitive."

**So how does it work?** Turo Rytsölä, Intrum's sales chief in Finland, says basically the customer segmentation services being implemented for DNA involve more focused credit and existence checks on individuals and companies on the customer prospect lists.

"A client such as DNA supplies us their prospect list, often as an Excel sheet. We then carry out extensive checks that result in deleting prospects who no longer exist or have a critical payment history in our database. The great benefit is that the information we provide enables our client's sales force to concentrate on real prospects who are in a sound financial situation," Turo says.

Other benefits that companies such as DNA derive from a tailored CMS program from Intrum all involve achieving substantial cost savings in the sales process.

Turo Rytsölä adds: "Our clients save time by not having to sell to customers who cannot pay. This gives a client the time to focus more on a good prospect, which not only makes the customer happier but also helps the sales people close deals faster and make better commission. Not only is a customer with good liquidity more willing to buy, but our CMS approach makes it easier for a client company to predict its cash flow." ■



**Intrum Justitia's prospecting service is helping DNA reach its sales and cash flow targets.**



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**Eeva Iivanainen,**  
CFO, DNA Service.