



About Vodacom

LOCATION

Johannesburg, South Africa

DATE & TIME

10 weeks
June 2019 – August 2019

PARTICIPANTS

35 People
5 Teams

Vodacom is a leading African communications company providing a wide range of communication services, including mobile voice, messaging, data, financial and converged services to 116 million (including Safaricom) customers.

Their mobile networks cover a population of over 289 million people and offer business managed services to enterprises in 51 countries.

Vodacom is majority owned by Vodafone (60.5% holding), one of the world's largest communications companies by revenue.

Vodacom's goal with the ExO Sprint was to become a leading digital company and disrupt competitors. They wanted to create a unique position in the market and to be Africa's foremost driver of digital transformation.

Vodacom's Challenges

Vodacom's Challenges Prior to the ExO Sprint

- Vodacom was at an early stage of their digital transformation journey, in which they were looking for proper training and resources.
- They were seeing successes with incremental innovation, but were struggling with larger, transformational thinking.
- Vodacom struggled in implementation, and had a pipeline of over 2,000 ideas with a very low success rate of starting and completing these initiatives.



"The true gift of the ExO Sprint is the paradigm shift within a core group of individuals that are empowered to shift the future of a corporate giant. At Vodacom, we have been empowered to accelerate our business from a Telco to a TECHCo."

TERRYN SITHARA PALANI
Executive Head of Talent, VODACOM



Vodacom's Goals

Vodacom's Desired Outcomes from the ExO Sprint

- Add further value through external input on how to evolve their current business model.
- Learn to think “outside the box” effectively. Vodacom wanted to accelerate and evolve pending initiatives that had been created prior to the ExO Sprint, plus add new 10X initiatives.
- Transition from a traditional telecommunications company to a fully-fledged digital technology services company.

The Solution

Initiatives Created

The ExO Sprint resulted in 10 initiatives being presented to executive committee members.

The initiatives largely focused on open platforms that used AI and big data. Ideas included:

- Peer-to-peer lending application.
- Telemedicine and health monitoring applications.
- B2B platforms for “spaza” shop owners and farmers.
- B2C platforms for transportation.
- Mobile identification platforms.
- Drone management platforms.

The Solution

Initiatives Approved

3 initiatives were selected to be funded and implemented first, while the rest were substantial expansions of existing projects to dramatically boost the outcomes.

Certain executive committee members were assigned to each initiative to ensure their development.

Continued Learning

Vodacom learned to create more audacious and customer-centric initiatives, in addition to learning how to move beyond the ideation phase to be able to successfully develop and market multiple initiatives.

The mindset of the participants shifted towards a more innovative approach as the Sprint went on, and rippled throughout Vodacom.

Funding

Funding for Approved Initiatives

Vodacom's CEO, Shameel Joosub, announced a 50ML Rand (\$3m USD) budget to move forward the innovation initiatives that were created and approved during the ExO Sprint.

After the ExO Sprint

- Vodacom is now creating the second phase of the Connected Farmer app to connect small-scale farmers to potential suppliers, landowners and larger enterprises. This enables potential new farmers who lack access to land to be connected to those who have wasted excess land.
- "Mpilo", the healthcare app developed in partnership with Boxfusion & Gauteng Healthcare, was released in October of 2019 and has almost 33,600 users as of April 2020.
- One initiative using IoT and big data to create an open platform that monitors sky traffic is currently under development and trials are continuing; Vodacom is beginning to explore 5G technology implications for drones in their new trials.
- Prior to the ExO Sprint, Vodacom's average [ExQ score](#) was 22.5. One year after the sprint, their average score has more than doubled and drastically improved to 56.2.

View Vodacom's [annual report](#) citing ExO Sprints.