

Three Ireland's trusted youth brand 48 disrupts market with unique digital experience

By Michelle Donegan

Who: Three Ireland's 48 and Torry Harris Integration Solutions (THIS)

What: Relaunched its digital brand 48, providing the Irish market's first flexible plan that gives customers control over how they use monthly data.

How: Migrated legacy IT systems to the cloud and leveraged TM Forum's Open Digital Architecture, Open APIs, Information Framework, Business Process Framework, and Cloud & IT Network assets to create a new digital experience.

Results: Since the relaunch in March 2020, subscribers quadrupled to 110,000; churn reduced by 67%; the mobile-first customer portal increased mobile traffic by 40%; deployment times decreased by 80%; and 23-times more customers onboard each day on average.

When Three Ireland launched the 48 mobile service in 2012, it was the country's first digital-only, youth brand. It captured the excitement of the market with its challenger attitude but after eight years, the brand had faded as its target market grew older and the new crop of digital-native, Generation Z youth were less attracted to the no-frills offer.

Three Ireland decided to shake things up again and relaunched 48 in March 2020 with a new brand position, product and experience. The company said that it "stripped back to our bones and rebuilt ourselves from the ground up."

The new 48 still focuses on the youth segment but with a unique plan that gives Gen Z customers flexibility and control over how they use their monthly data, enabled by a digital operations environment that now runs in the cloud.

"Gen Z expect more from their brands. In addition to transparency, trust and authenticity, they want something different and experimental," said Paddy Leahy, Digital Product Lead at 48.

48 offers just one SIM-only plan: 100GB per month including calls and texts for €10.99. All customer interactions are digital via online or mobile portals.

In a first for the Irish market, subscribers can choose how they use their data allowance via "Flexi Data" in the my48 application. They can use it, save it, share it with friends, carry over unused data to the next month, borrow up to 1GB if running low, swap unused voice minutes for more data, or donate data to charity. For each gigabyte donated, 48 gives €0.50 to [FoodCloud](#), a charity that addresses the impact of food waste on climate change. 48 also builds trust with customers by offering a 30-day free trial without commitment and subscriptions can be cancelled at the end of each month, so there are no long contract lock-ins. Also, appealing to the Gen Z's climate conscience, SIM cards are sent in sustainable packaging.

Features



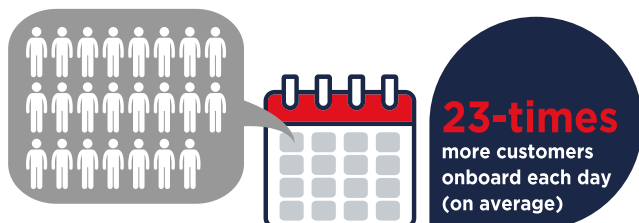
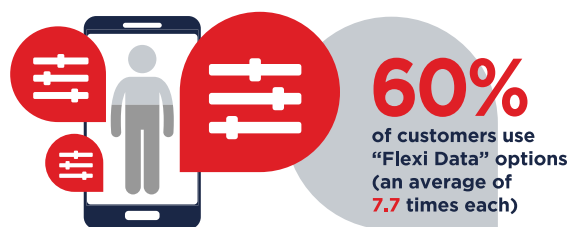
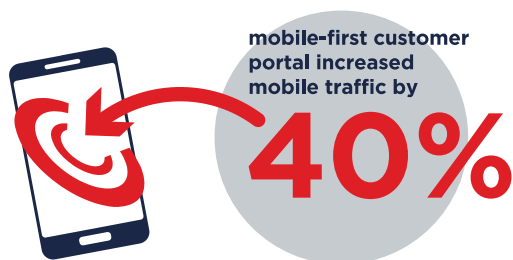
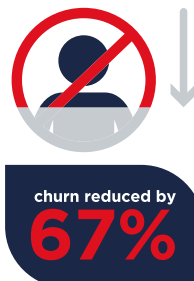
48 disrupts Irish mobile market again

Since the relaunch, 48's customer base more than quadrupled from 24,000 to 110,000 and customer churn has decreased by 67%. Customers are also engaging more with the brand, as nearly 60% use the "Flexi Data" options, which is an average of 7.7 times each. Furthermore, greater use of the my48 mobile app has driven up mobile traffic by 40%.

48's flexible, digital-only proposition

since the relaunch in march 2020:

Leveraged TM Forum's Open Digital Architecture, Open APIs, Information Framework, Business Process Framework, and Cloud & IT Network assets to create a new digital experience.



THIS
TERRY HARRIS INTEGRATION SOLUTIONS



"Our experience with the new 48 has been nothing but positive," said Leahy. "It is not easy rebranding and relaunching a new digital estate while also growing our base. Planning and executing a relaunch can only tell you so much but you can't predict how users will respond until they start interacting."

Migration to cloud pays off

48's flexible, digital-only proposition was made possible by migrating legacy systems and infrastructure to the cloud and a complete overhaul of customer portals and user experience with partner Torry Harris Integration Solutions (THIS).

48 needed a highly scalable and reliable infrastructure that would reduce deployment times and overall operating costs. THIS and 48 knew that operating in a cloud environment was the only way to achieve that.

THIS migrated legacy systems to the cloud, including moving on-premise database to Amazon Web Services (AWS), and set up a scalable, highly available, web-based cloud storage service to store application-related data, such as software, configurations, logs and artefacts.

The cloud environment enables 48 to move quickly as resources are spun up automatically with demand and new functionality can be added in a continuous improvement cycle. This means new features can be introduced to customers more rapidly. In fact, the move to the cloud cut deployment times by 80%.

“We can continuously update and better the 48 experiences for our customers without having to onboard numerous new vendors and services,” said Leahy.

Also, the cloud platform’s monitoring and redundancy ensures services are reliable by enabling 48 to mitigate potential outages. For example, the database running on AWS provides 99.95% availability. Today, 48’s website, customer self-care portal and application, web services, communications and databases are all cloud based. Legacy SMS and email notifications were replaced with cloud-based push notifications. 48 found that moving the mail server to the cloud and using cloud notification services reduced the operating cost by 50%.

How 48 changed the digital experience

Since 48 wanted to create an entirely new service experience for its youthful customers, it had to rethink its legacy website and customer service platforms.

THIS rebuilt 48’s customer portal with a mobile-first approach and introduced microservices components. This accelerated customer onboarding and resulted in a surge of subscriber growth. More than 40 APIs were implemented using [TM Forum Open API](#) standards, exposing new features as REST API services. For example, static content was exposed as REST APIs through a headless content management system, which enabled the marketing team to keep the website and mobile app up to date with the latest news and relevant content. TM Forum assets were instrumental in recreating 48. The [Cloud Native IT & Networks](#) themed program helped THIS to visualise 48’s digital journey, which facilitated the migration of various components from on-premise to a cloud-based architecture.

[TM Forum’s Open Digital Architecture \(ODA\)](#) enabled THIS to identify the critical components to be migrated, including the business and data layers, order management, agent’s care tools and payment modules.

[TM Forum’s Business Process Framework \(eTOM\)](#) was used as a blueprint for conceptualizing the unique features for 48’s digital portal, including Membership, Swap, Save, Share and Donate.

Among the Open APIs used, the project specifically leveraged the following:

- [Customer Management API](#) – for the management of customer identification and financial information.
- [Product Catalog Management API](#) – for rapidly adding partners’ products to an existing catalog and managing the lifecycle of catalog elements.
- [User Roles and Permissions API](#) – for defining sets of privileges that are allocated to different user roles.

TM Forum’s guidelines and Swagger Open API specifications, along with the [Information Framework \(SID\)](#), simplified and optimized the process of communicating with and obtaining information from multiple vendor backends. They also helped to develop user interfaces and marketing changes that could be pushed live on the cloud at a fast pace.

48 is cloud operations trailblazer at Three

48 is one of the first operations at Three to run fully in the cloud. The successful implementation has become the standard for measuring cloud instances at Three and its approach has been replicated in other parts of the operator's business.

"48's ability to change fast allows us to work with our partners THIS to understand quickly what configurations work best for us and why. We can then take these learnings and apply them right across the business," said Leahy.

