

CASE STUDY

The Health and Social Care Network (HSCN) – generating healthy results for industry association Innopsis

In mid 2016, Innopsis, the industry association for suppliers providing network services to the public sector, advised Mantis that it would be working closely with its members and NHS Digital to develop the standards and procurement framework for the Health and Social Care Network (HSCN).

HSCN replaced N3, which saw BT deliver the UK's largest private network to the NHS, in March 2017. HSCN is a new disaggregated model designed to create a level playing field for all network suppliers, service providers and resellers, regardless of their size, to transact with public sector bodies. For Innopsis, this opened up the potential to attract new members, and build its profile by association with a key industry topic.

Despite the huge market opportunity, much of what was being said publicly about HSCN seemed to reflect the potential transition issues and mistakes made by NHS Digital in the past. Very little detail was provided about what HSCN would mean for service providers and the NHS as a whole. With a rapidly approaching deadline, there was also media speculation that timescales were slipping and the deadline wouldn't be met. Concern was expressed that NHS Digital, NHS Trusts, and suppliers simply weren't ready for the roll out of HSCN.

Innopsis was keen to dispel these myths, highlight the enormity of the project and the entirely new, innovative and collaborative approach that NHS Digital and telecoms suppliers were adopting to deliver HSCN. And, most importantly, it wanted to position itself as the go to association for telecoms vendors and resellers, both large and small, looking for information, guidance and commercial advice.

As such, Mantis worked closely with Innopsis to advise on when, how and what it should be communicating to its existing members and prospects, as well as NHS buyers. With N3's termination less than six months away, the HSCN Summit planned for early October 2016 and Innopsis set to run its own members' event just a couple of days later, timely media engagement was key.

Mantis proposed and developed a virtual media tour with Innopsis' director, Michael Bowyer, to raise awareness about HSCN, highlight that the roll-out was in fact on target and, above all, herald the undertaking as a fine example of public sector procurement. Indeed, for Innopsis, formerly PSNGB and the developer of the Public Services Network (PSN), the roll out of HSCN was its biggest undertaking since the development of PSN in 2011.

Mantis executed a media tour that resulted in seven media interviews, media attendance at the HSCN Summit, two opinion articles and a total of nine high quality pieces of media coverage that delivered on Innopsis' key messaging. We also know that the industry association's membership base has grown and it continues to attract new vendors and the associated innovative technology now available to the public sector.

As a long-servicing PR and communications consultant to Innopsis, Mantis' primary objective was, and still is, to support the industry association to retain and grow its membership base. By identifying, contributing to and, in this case, leading conversations on key industry topics, Mantis supported Innopsis to engage with the telecoms industry, media and influencers.



Mantis identified the following key objectives:

1. Highlight that the roll out of HSCN was tracking to time and set to meet the March 2017 deadline.
2. Position HSCN as a fine example of how the public sector should work with suppliers going forward.
3. Highlight the opportunity for smaller vendors and resellers, including SMEs, to transact with public sector bodies, creating a level playing field for all network suppliers. (For Innopsis, this opened up the potential to attract a whole new membership base.)
4. Communicate the link between joined up health and social care and a reliable network with underlying standards, infrastructure and services.
5. Highlight what can be achieved with the HSCN programme, positioning it as more than just a replacement service for N3.
6. Establish spokesperson, Michael Bowyer, director at Innopsis, as the primary representative for industry wishing to engage with the NHS/healthcare market.

OUR APPROACH

From just a short briefing with Michael, Mantis crafted a compelling media pitch highlighting key messages around HSCN. This was used to develop a virtual media tour to engage with key trade media – local government, healthcare, IT, telecoms and channel/reseller press – to reach Innopsis' target audiences. The pitch was used to secure nine media opportunities all resulting in high quality coverage.

Innopsis was positioned as leading the HSCN debate with original comment and content. PR activity also provided the opportunity to build Innopsis' profile and membership base through association and leadership on a hot industry topic.

RESULTS

- 7x interviews secured:
- Computer Reseller News – “Innopsis flags up healthy reseller opportunity”
- UKAuthority – “Interview: Michael Bowyer of Innopsis says the Health and Social Care Network will give organisations more choice in their connectivity services”
- Computer Weekly – “NHS Digital picks peering exchange provider for HSCN”
- Networking Plus – “NHS and its suppliers ‘not ready for N3 replacement next year’ (the article went on to challenge this myth)
- Computer Weekly – “As HSCN transition begins, NHS trusts prepare to make the leap”
- Government Computing – “HSCN compliance checks to commence as N3 termination nears”
- Channel Web – “Redcentric crowned winner on ‘vital piece’ of HSCN framework” (including Innopsis quote)
- 1x media attendance at HSCN Summit
- 2x opinion articles:
- Adjacent Government – “Health and Social Care Network: Connectivity in public sector procurement”
- Comms Business – “HSCN... a healthy opportunity for the channel”
- Mantis secured 9 pieces of media coverage in total between November 2016 and April 2017 across local government, healthcare, IT, telecoms and channel/reseller press



Michael Bowyer, director at Innopsis, said: “Mantis supported us to develop our messaging around HSCN and advise on the best channels to reach our target audience, securing excellent results in the media.

“NHS projects are usually treated by the media as an opportunity to point out mistakes in the past or to raise doubts regarding the project. However, with Mantis’ careful management we have taken a previously negative media view to one of interest, engagement and support for one of the largest network replacement projects undertaken in the UK.

We’re soon to embark on another wave of activity now that contracts are in place. We will continue to work with Mantis to deliver coverage that positions us (Innopsis) as the thought leaders in this space. I wouldn’t hesitate to recommend Mantis to organisations looking to build a profile in the public sector technology space.”



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